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A Table of SCOTS Phrases.

A.

Aent, concerning or, or about.
Arith, a point of the heavens.
Aurband, to restrain, or have command of a thing.
Aulone, frightful, or astonishing.
Ater, earnest given for something bought.
Aye, always.

B.

Blint, to shine for a short time.
Busied, dress'd, or adorned.
Bafli, to have a fit of sickness.
Birte, to spring out of the ground.
Blear, to be shamefaced, modest, or shy.
Bonn, beautiful or comely.
Bairne, a child.
Bod, a sign of good or evil to come.
Bryn, the brow of a hill, or bank of a river.
Bally, bravely, or finely.
Blaite, to live and enjoy any comfort of life.
Ban, to curse or swear.
Blipte, pleasant, or glad hearted.
Blagg, to boast or flump of any thing.
Blim, to be admitted to the greatest familiarity.

Weib, behoved, or obliged to do.
Benfall, with force and vigour.
Boar'd, is to sport or be merry.

C.

Cautioner, to be surety, or engage for a person.
Coldtife, to be lukewarm or indifferent.
Caff in a name, caft in a mould.
Cam, good humored, or sometimes saving.
Challenge, to accuse or charge a person.
Caff out, to fail out or disagree.
Comple with the, to match or equal them.
Caff, to vomit, or spew.
Caption, is a writ against a person to feize them.

D.

Downcast, griefed, or sorrowful.
Depose, to depose, or swear as a witness.
Dat, to be indulged.
Daff, unwife.
A Dpbeir, a bankrupt.
Dyke, a wall or fence.
Dorg, petiff, or crofs.
A Dali, is an ill housewife.
Diyep, frightful, or sad and mournful.
A Table of SCOTS Phrases.

A Table of SCOTS Phrases.

E. 

F. 

G. 

H. 

I. 

J. 

K. 

L. 

M. 

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R. 

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U. 

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W. 

X. 

Y. 

Z. 

A Table of SCOTS Phrases.

A Table of SCOTS Phrases.

A Table of SCOTS Phrases.
The Church's Triumph over DEATH.

A

Funeral SERMON
P R E A C H E D

Upon the Decease of the blessed Mr. ROBERT FLEMING, late Pastor of a Church in Rotterdam.

By D A N I E L B U R G E S S.

To the Right Worshipful

Sir HENRY ASHURST, Bar.

S I R,

HERE is a frenzy abroad, of which Men do together adore the pipes, and neglect the fountain. Make great court to his ministers, and flight the King, the King eternal. Worshipping the stars that do lead to Christ, and crucifying to themselves atheis, the Christ that they lead unto; yes, by unbelief and disobedience, putting him to open shame. But, I must hope better things of you. And believe it to be your love of Christ, that constrains you to receive a Paul, and an Apollos, as an angel of God, yea, as Christ himself.

Wherefore, as your extraordinary kindnes to another renowned saint hath been told to the world by incomparable pens; I do resolve, that wheresoever this sermon shall be read, your like affection to our heavenly Fleming shall have its memorial.

Very deeply I am impressed with your favours done unto both: for their love was eminent, and much exceeded the fame of it, to a man born to reprove. And not pretending to be richer than his brethren, in any other treasure.

A love to be wondered at; had it not been so known, that God is love. And that, therefore, love is godliness. And, where godliness abounds, loving-kindness over flows. As we see in angels, they do gratefully love the leaf of Abraham's children. And highly honour the meaneft of sanctified worms.

As for the former, Jonathan must needs have known his David: and the world will by and by have his life in Folio to read. And, as concerning the latter, as little as any man do you need to be told, with what a fulness of God he was fill'd. Sir, your wondering eyes were your witnesses. The great love he bare you, gave you more than common knowledge of him; whole humility and modesty hid him so, that he was not much known, unto thee that knew him most. As Ezekiel speaks of other angels, his wings so covered his feet. However, so much you saw, that, as very well you might, you singularly loved him. And esteemed his love unto you, to be of that kind which is most valuable next unto God's own love.
For the information of others, somewhat is said of this man of God, in the following pages. Wherefore I can add this, which was said of the famous Antoine; he hath this praise crowning all the rest, that he hath no gain-fayer of his praises, I hear not of any dust to be blown off from this diamond.

Honoured Sir,

Two or three of your letters to me, bewailed the world's loss, the Church's, and your own, in the departure of holy Fleming. Nor do I doubt, but the best of the Church and world, do lay it to heart. Even, generally, all that hear, how much light, and falls, and balms, is taken from a needy age.

For your relief and others, this is all in this place to be said. It is elsewhere shown, how we may hold departed saints in our sight, and in our service. If the course there preferred be duly followed, I am certain that the saint's death shall not be only his own gain; but his accession to Heaven, shall be made to further our conversion therein. And notably contribute unto the victory, joy, and triumphs, of faith, which this sermon defirites.

Thereto I dismiss you without any fallacies of flattery; the common sin and scandal of dedications. It must be confessed, that if all praise of Sir Henry Abfarsft be flattery, Old England and New, are over-run with that hyperboly. And, the Frenchmen are much more sick of its plague, than the Egyptians be. The name of Absarst was left richly perfumed by your excellent father. And, I hear not but it is so kept by your self and your honourable brother. Otherwise, you had before this time loudly heard of it. For they do sink deeper, who fall from pinnacles highest; they who were at first the least angels, are now the worst devils, faith Du Motin.

And by the Old Law, you had been condemned to be burnt for the profanation of such a father's name. Lev. xxii. 9.

Surely the sun must have looked pale, and the spheres have cast out their stars, if such as Tons and my Lord had forsaken your God, and the God of your fathers! and had left no better to be said of you, than Philostratus says of Perinthus; barely, that he was the son of Rufus.

But, Sir, as you very well know, my office is to bring low all mountains and hills; nor, the contrary. And, as my own heart sweetly knows, my ambition is to edify, not magnify you; to serve your faith, not your fame; which as it less needs it, cloth less deserve it. Much rather would I provoke you to one good work, than make known all that ever you did. And be the meanest instrument to make you a better man, than a trumpet to proclaim you a good one.

Plain dealing is a jewel; and will appear so one day, though now there be much more of it in the mild than about the throne. And, I do account that earthly-gods themselves are seldom so richly treated, as my friends that be-entertained with these complements. Sc. That Baro- nes must perish without the new-birth. That, a reposing Lazarus is of better estate than a jovial Drives. That, a grain of holy faith is worth more than a mountain of pure gold. That, in the day of judgment, Christ will be ashamed of the greatest, that are now ashamed of christianity. That royal heads, honourable, and worshipful ones, must worship God's majesty, or bear his fury! That, there is no safety for the highest on earth, without trust in the most High in heaven. That, they shall suffer eternal death, who love not Christ: eritis above the richest life. That, no greatest can spare them from vengeance, who deny Christ reverence. That, whatever their rank is in this world, their portion shall be everlasting shame, who do not all that they do to God's glory. That, the most prosperous who will not submit to God's afflicting hand, shall not escape his revengeful hand! That, if they love not their enemies, and bless them that curse them, and do good to them that hate them, and pray for them that despitefully use them and persecute them; they shall not be the children of God. Finally, that, whatsoever of them shall live without dying thoughts, he shall die without living comforts.

S I B.

My prayers cease not to ascend for you, your pious comfort, and eminently hopeful branches: may you ever be more and more honourable to them; and they be more and more joyful unto you. May neither of you, now sleep in the afternoon; for to that time of day it is come in your lives! And may both of them have their noon and evening answerable to their fair morning. May self-denial be your and your business; without which all religion is
but your play: may your prosperity neither fray, or so much as wound you; in your eye may the paradises which have no tree of life in them be contemned, though they are posses-
sed. May great roots under ground make you great trees above it; rich truth in the
inner parts make you rich in good works. May you prefer heaven above earth, as mani-
festly as others prefer it above hell! not accounting your selves to have much profited in
christianity, till you count that you have nothing else to profit much in. And always
remembering, that if you take not the kingdom of heaven by force, the kingdom of hell will
take you by it. May the mercy of the Lord rest upon the family of the Ashhurfts, and his
righteousness be to their children children.

Under many obligations, and in sweet hopes, thus prayeth;

S I R,
Your honourer, and humble servant,

DANIEL BURGESS.

A SERMON on the Death of Mr. Robert Fleming.

C O R. xv. 55, 56, 57.
O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Je-
fus Christ.

Πάσας, θάνατος, τὸ κίνητρον, πάσας, ἐκεῖ, τὸ νικόν.
Τὸ ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου, ἡ ὁμορραγία, τὸ ἀνακυκλώσεις, τὸ νόμος.
Τὸ δὲ Θεὸς ἐκεῖ τῷ διδόσκει ἡμῖν τῷ νικάν, διὰ τὸ Ὀμορραγία, Εὐσεβ.

Ubi est aculeus tuus, O mors? Ubi est victoria tua, inferne? Syriac. Ubi
suprema vis tua, O mors? Arabic. Ubi igitur mortis victoria? Ubi igit-
itur mortis stimulus? Æthiopic.

P O N this mournful occasion I present this text as a pearl-cordial
and the most restorative that I could find in the divine dispen-
satory. Wonderful words it consists of, such as seem too high to be
uttered below heaven, and too soon spoken before the resurrec-
tion. But what heavenly scribe wrote them, you do all know;
and with how like a boldness and bravery of faith our holy Flem-
ing did use to sing them, all of you are not ignorant.

They are made the theme of this discourse for this end, that they may also become,
our song in the house of our pilgrimage.
There are obvious in them; A triumphant song, v. 55. A justifying reason, v. 56.
An holy gratulation, v. 57.
A triumphant song, wherein Rhetorick hath even exhausted it self; such is the melody of its Proposelia, speaking to death and the grave, as perfons and not things: such is the pungency of its interrogation, which doth not here doubt, but upbraids and infults: such the elegance of the Memfis, covering the biggest part of its meaning, asking no more than what is become of their power to hurt, though meaning, that both are made to work for good: such is the glory of the Celephina and shout, wherein victory, faith, and joy, as above expression, are published in form of admiration.

O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? O death! O grave! our one enemy bearing these two names, once so strong as to conquer all, and so cruel as to spare none; once a dragon that swallowed up the world! an Abaddon and Apollon of Jewish world and gentile! Christian faith now dares to look thee in the face, and ask, in Zebul's words to God, Where is now thy mouth? I proclaim thee to be as the beast in the revelation, which was and is not; yea, as a corrected viper, of an horrid poison to be made a sovereign medicine! of a king of terrors to be made a gracious prince of peace; the loathfom prison of thy grave to be turned to a quiet bed-chamber; and thy sepulchers to be no more hell's gates, but heaven's porches.

It is true, thou retainest power to kill the bodies of saints; but having so done thou canst do no more: and what is it that thou dost therein? thou kill'st, but makes not an end of them: thou curest them of sin, their loathfom dilesse; and art a real Saviour, and but a seeming defroser.

Power indeed thou hast, sometimes to affrighten soules. Abraham our father was affrighted by thee, Gen. xii. David the valiant was scared, 1 Sam. xxii. Miserably thou didst terrify upright Ezekiel, Isa. xxxviii. And Peter's magnanimity vanished at a shadow of thee, Mat. xxvi. But egregiam laudon, spona ampla! Is this thy praise? To affrighten is no more than every shaddow can do; and what is more inglorious than a bug-bear that is harmless? thy affrighting believers speach much weakness in them, but not any strength in thee.

It is confessed, as for thy appearance, it is as a curfe and not a blessing. Thou comest with a warrant in thy hand from the supreme king, and irrefitibly turnest all flesh into destruction. Upon thy devouring sword Christians do read sin's terrible mark, though Socrates eyes fee nothing but mere Nature's. Funiflura peccati moriar, is the faine morto: They believe thee fent from their God to execute wrath on their sins; and full often do fear thee to inflict it on their soules; so much do thy cruel hands look like God's vinditive ones: but fimilimons non eff imdem. And what art thou, O death, but as the end of plants and brutes, and the ruin of sinners, so the gran of believers? such a gain as poffefth underftanding, and maketh their holy faith to proclaim thee more than a spoiled foileter, even a good and faithful fervant become unto them; a fervant unto thy old fervants, who were all their days subject to bondage through fear of thee; all the days of their Christ'ses estate subject to bondage: but now that they are Christ's, thou, O death, art theirs! Thy name hath a place in the inventory of their goods, 1 Cor. iii. Feed on then upon thy Egyptians, Phil. xliii. 1. But know, 0 Pharaoh and thy Princes! O death and thy harbingers! the heads of Leviathan are broke in pieces, they are given to be meat to fiuailethes inhabiting the wilderness, Phil. lixiv. 14.

If it be insolently told, that this triumph is too loud; that death is the fear of none but little fouls, and deferves not to lofty a song; or that it is not yet so dead but that it has fling enough left to pinch and pain, and poison its most exulting victors; and strength enough to hold them in its dungeon till the refurefction. This mouth of infidelity is prettily stopped. Here follows,

A juftifying reason, such as clears the triumph from the charge of absurdity. It is confessed, if death were but it self, and not Pars minima fict, it would be unworthy of the honour of being influted over; it would be an infect of an inaccessible fting, if not a perfect drone. An enemy too defpicable to be triumphed over with harp and psalmery; nor would Christians blow a trumper for the overthrow of a waft. But death's name is Legion, and as it's an host of enemies in one, it is a formidable one.

The fling of death is sin, q. d. sin is the whole element of evil, it is all the evil of doing; nothing beside is evil effentially, or meritoriously. This hell of sin being influted into death, makes it self like it self; even the whole element of misery, and all the evil of suffring; where then, if not here, shall be found a trophy for faith? here, in death envenomed by sin; by sin, whereof a fpark made devils of the most bleffed creatures. And no more than the imputed guilt made the ever-living God to sweat blood! seems this to be a paradox? hear then,
The strength of sin is the law, q. d. No wonder that sin is so pernicious a thing; for the curfe of the divine law is on it: And who can think what is God’s power, or his law’s terror? His law must be like himfelf, as in its precepts and promifes, fo in its threats. The punishments of fo great a king muft necessarily be great; the breach of his law’s duty can deferve no lefs than extremitv and eternity of mitery; and the curfe laid upon it is no lefs. No marvel then that fin’s guilt maketh an hell of death, being the law’s curfe maketh fin a worse thing than death or hell; an evil that hell it felf muft have all eternity to punish.

But over both law and fin God giveth us the victory. As fiery as this law is, Chrifi’s blood quencheth it: as boiling a furnace it makes of fin, it cannot make fin to be the death of a believer’s soul. Thefe, the worft of enemies, are firft flain: for upon our firft believing Chrifi’s righteoufnefs is imputed, and by that imputation the law’s curfe and fin’s condemnation are removed. Over them we have triumph founded, Rom. vii. 4. Ye are dead to the law by the body of Christ. And, ver. 24, 25 Who fhall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jefus Christ our Lord. Death’s dominion is therefore at an end, though its power to kill the moft holy body, and to retain the moft sacred dust for a time, be not taken from it. In short, the grace of Chrifi hath made fin a broken enemy, the law a kind friend, and death an ufeless fervant. Doth the faints triumph therefore precede or exceed victory? let the wise judge.

When Israel was brought through the Red-Sea, what songs of praise were ftraitway fung? though they had an howling Defart to be paffed through, and were not prefentially in Canaan. Their fongs injected terror to the dukes of Edom, and the mighty men of Moab. Yes, the Greeks no fooner heard the articles of peace purchafed for them by Titus Flamininus, but they cried Salute. Salvation. A Saviour. And with fuch hours of joy, as made the air to ring, and the birds to drop down afonifhed! A deep lethargy it is that maketh chriffians joy to be lef, while there refton for it is infinitely more: that refrains them from fuch triumph, as fhou’d make the infidled world to tremble.

But O where fhall offerings, and whole burnt-offerings be found? for this victory, this inchoate one, Lebanon is not fufficient, or the caftel upon a thousand hills. But, as Jebofaphat in Beracab, the faints throughout the earth do blefs the captain of their falvation and conquer. The next verfe and breath, is

As holy gratulation. A lovely heaven of it, in a little globe of words.

Thanks be to God! To the Father, Son, and Spirit, our one God, be all holy obedience! whereof gratitude is the principal part; that which contains and animates all. Laws bind to obedience, and benefits unto thankfulness. But God our Law-giver is in all things our benefactor. His very laws, all, are benefits. To him be therefore all obedient thankfulness and all thankful obedience! to him,

Who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jefus Chrifi. Of his saints victory, we publish the truth. We declare his gift of grace, to be the original. We teftify the limiting of this gift, unto believers only; and the extent of it, unto all believers. As well to babes in the cradle of chrifiannity, as the oldeft Menagin’s in God’s kingdom. We proclaim the never to be forgotten Porobifer of it, the Lord Jefus Chrifi. Whose death gave the angel of death his mortal wound. Whole resurrection certified and exemplified believers. Whole righteousness, by faith received, inflamed them in the power of an end’s life. Whole sanctifying Spirit mortifled finful lufts, which be not the least flings of death. Whole comforting Spirit takes out the pain and anguish that fin sticketh into our souls. And whose glorious appearing one day, will fulfill his old word to a tittle; 0 death I will be thy plague, 0 grave I will be thy deftruction!

Waving all others, the argument I take hence, is this.

Holy believers on Chrifi, do rejoice in their victory over death. Truly, righteoufly, and holily, they rejoice in their salvation by Chrifi. They sing, 0 death, where is thy sting? 0 grave, where is thy victory? &c.

The plural number in which he speaks, may affure us that the apostle fung in comfort: Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory. And it fhall be fhown, that this text is all the holy catholick church’s fung. Which while milcent, is fo far triumphant. We may fay of death, and of all enemies in combination with it, as St. John’s faith of the world, Whomsoever is born of God, overcometh them. And this is the victory that overcomes them, even our faith. Confequently, he that overcometh fhall not be hurt of the second death.
must take it for his duty, and make it his practice, to joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of his salvation.

But left, with the Dogs, I should shut children out of the church-doors, and wound any that have already the arrows of the Almighty sticking in them, I must premise two things.

Objections are allowed for. It is not affirmed, that all, or any believers, do always rejoice. Full oft they are hindered, by bodily maladies, by mental mistakes, by Satan's buffettings, and by divine defection. Under which, their heart is, turned to mourning, and their organ into the voice of them that weep. And secondly,

Degrees be wonderfully different. Of them that sing triumph; the voice of some is as thunder, which all hear; the voice of others is scarcely audible whisper. Some have but a drop of oil of joy; others, in comparison, a very sea of it.

However, this is affected by all believers. The joy of faith is the chief joy of every sort of them. Of them that want it none dare to flight it. None can relit be very easy, till they have it. The new nature in them panteth for it, as the hart panteth after the weary brooks. And as oft as they get from under the foresaid obstructions,

§ 1. Believers do truly rejoice in their victory over death.

Here examples shall show that they do so, and reasons shall satisfy why they must so do.

The time would fail to tell of Abraham, forseeing the day and work of his victorious Lord, and rejoicing in it. Of Jacob, cheering himself under heaviest pressures, with the same comforting prospect. Of Job, inflicting on death, and glorying in his assurance of a blessed resurrection. Of David, proclaiming that his God would not leave him in death: and that he would fear no evil, when he walked through the valley of its shadow.

The heart of the faints of the Old Testament, is to be seen in the song of Solomon. Hear it uttering itself to the Lord Jesus; we will be glad and rejoice in thee: In thee, that is, by whose stripes we are healed. In thee on whom the Lord hath laid the iniquities of us all, and by the faith of whom he justifieth us. In thee to whom a portion is divided with the great, and does divide the spoil with the strong, as the evangelical prophet speaks. We will remember thy redeeming love more than wine: I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. Confruits, with these manifestos, the palms and longs of his father David. It shall appear, that the church was dancing for joy, before the day broke, and the shadows flew away, and the Son of righteousness arose with the light and glory of the New Testament.

Under which, who needs to be told, what a spirit of joy was prefently poured out? Glad tidings of great joy, the heavenly heralds called the gospel. Where-er it comes, a torrent of joy follows it. Gladly it is received, at its first publication, though with the loss of all things adventured. Philip preaches it at Samaria, and there is great joy in all the City. We glory in tribulations: we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: we are more than conquerors. We are always confident, and willing: rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. He is—always rejoicing. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Thus speak the Apostles, as well of their converts as of themselves.

And what faith Ecclesiastical History of the ages ever since? The same spirit of joy and gladness hath been in all the times of the church: they that have loved the Lord Jesus, have rejoiced in him. And in his name have withied for death, have welcomed it, and have been unuttered with its most gailyly shapes and pompoms. Poet and orator defines his executioners to let him shew them, that he could burn at a flake without being tied to it. Latins, thankest a barbarous judge for the favour of sending him to his God and Father. Cyprian, thanks God for his Goal-delivery by death. Hilarius cries, Out of this body O my soul! what is, there any thing for thee to fear? for thee, an old fervent of Christ! but to come nighter our own days. Cranmer thursts his right-hand into the fire, to be revenged on it for subduing a damned flesh, as he called it, for fear of death. Think you that I have not learned to detest Adam Damophil? Be at my burning, ye shall see and say, There's a soldier of Christ, said Kirby. Ridley called his death his wedding. And Latimer told the Bishop going before him to the flake, he would have after him as fast as he could: and when fire was put to him, with a smiling face, he uttered the words, God is faithful, who doth not suffer us to be tempted above our strength. Latimer, in the fire professed he felt no more pain than on a bed of downs.
downs. Death in the most hideous shapes, hath been thus triumphed over. Clouds of infinities are to be read, even in English books.

And do we not know multitudes of surviving friends and neighbours, whom we discern to be of the mind of the martyrs, Adam Wallack? If death be ready, we are ready. Blessed be God this age is not forsaken by him, but that there are multitudes to whom Christ's word is verified; Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy shall no man take from you.

Is it yet, with any of you, an hard saying, which holy Hilderbrand hath written? He that doth not desire, and strive to be willing to die, he hath cause to suspect that there is no true saving grace in him. Or that harmonious passage of great Calvin on Hebrews ii. 14. He that is not able to quiet his heart in holy contempt of death, let him know that he hath made but little progress in the faith of Christ. For as excessive fear of death arises from ignorance of the grace of Christ, so it is a sure sign of unbelief. Or, that of Dr. Hammond on Tim. i. 15. If the conversion of a sinner be not accompanied with unsurpassed joy and sorrow, a godly sense of past distress, and a godly triumph for his deliverance. I counsel not to difficult but to fear; to a solicitous, though not a suspicious trembling. Let me add one more of Mr. Ward of Ipswich; If we had but half the strength of St. Paul's faith, or life of his hope, or fore-imaginations which he had of his future felicity, we could not but have the same desires and longings for our fruition of them. I think few truths to be more evident. But it is possible that th'c following reasons may add to its evidence.

The reasons I give, why believers must needs rejoice in their victory over death.

Firs:t, Believers are men: and it is the nature of men to rejoice in his most desired good, when he knows it to be obtained.

Victory over death is certainly most desired, and the obtained good of believers. And, ordinarily, they do know themselves to have obtained it, through Christ their Lord. For, the law of grace, through faith they do understand. Their own acts of grace, by sense they do perceive. And, their state of grace, by reason they do infer. And the spirit which is of God they do receive, whereby they know the things which are freely given them of God. 1 Cor. ii. 12. What our Saviour, in his days on earth, said to the ears of some, the Holy Ghost faith now to believers hearts, Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven: witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God, Rom. viii. 16. Not only enlightening their minds to see the truth of their graces, and theuce to conclude themselves in a state of grace; but, verbi membra, by secret spiritual words, by internal mysterious whispers, testifying unto them that they are in that blessed state. For, the matter witnessing is more than enabling a person to read his evidence. In Westminster-hall he would not be taken for a witness, who should do no more than hold a candle to one reading his evidence. But the Holy Ghost the Comforter is expressly named a witness to believers, of their being taken into the number, and being blest with all the privileges of the sons of God.

Ordinarily, therefore, I say, that believers do know the cause of joy that they have. Though, as hath been aforesaid, times of desertion there are, in which they know it not. And it is most certain, the heavenly Comforter, doth not at all times comfort. Nor is joyful assurance, of the very essence of justifying saving faith. But, by reason of fore-named obstructions, children of light may sit all their days in the dark and in the deeps; and ascend to heaven at last, in a thick cloud. Otherwise, we do all generally believe and teach, that the spirit of adoption being given unto sons, as sons of God, he is given unto every child of God: and, commonly, they do know themselves conquerors, who are in Christ, and are not reprobrate, unfound christians.

This being admitted, they must be dead, and not lovely living, as St. Peter calls them, if they rejoice not. They must cease to be men, if they become not joyful ones. They must be fluxified, as soon as justified and adopted. For the human nature hath an inexpressible instinct and power; which on good tidings heard, doth transport minds and bodies into expressions of gladness. Diffusing spirits, and by them sending forth the news; trying it as it were, by communicating, to multiply it. Gaudia, cogni providentia; The Roman orator says, all men feel it: joy enters with a violence, with a grateful violence, that we are not able to resist, breaks forth from us. Who thinks that David was able to forbear his dance before the ark? Or, that the healed Cripple could contain himself from running, leaping, and praising God? We have read of them who have died of joy: and it is true which one faith, Should believers have the degrees of assurance, which imprudently they do sometimes desire, they must presently die for joy, or be kept alive by miracle. In short then:—
Believers must put off nature if they rejoice not in Christ's grace: they must be without natural affection if they be without any spiritual consolation, if ordinarly they be so.

Secondly, Believers are wise men: and it is wisdom to rejoice in such felicity as victory over death.

In the day of prosperity nature necessitates joy, and reason enforces it: for happiness is a feast made for mirth; and how monstrous a folly must it be to frustrate so kind a design upon us? Wisdom is a true guilt and right rethit of things; Sapit cui res fremet ut in funt: but how far be they from it who taste no sweetness in the milk and honey that flow in this victory? Hearts delighting not themselves in substanfes, do most certainly delight themselves in shadows: and what a delusion is that? what a gathering together of all folly, and what a very feas of it?

The laughter of wretches laden with iron, or standing on the ladder ready for execution, seems no greater madness than the deceived of them when they are both pardoned and advanced. Should the Saints and Angels in heaven cease rejoicing, it were to be asked, What wisdom is in them? they would be charged with extreme folly, Unreasonable it would be for them to give over rejoicing, as it would be for Devils and damned ghosts to begin; and yet it is most certain, that justified and adopted believers have as true cause of joy as angels and glorified spirits: are in a state, only in degree, left bleffed; consequently have as true reason to sing Hosannah's here below, as they to sing Hallelujah's above; and cannot but hold on songs of joy in the house of their pilgrimage, without firft becoming fallen of their conquest: joyful praise is become for them. Nor is triumph on the way to hell more unreasonable, than on the way to heaven it is discrete. In a word;

To think that saints did ordinarily incur and indulge the guilt of its neglects, would be to think them, what the world fliles them, Men besides themselves. This guilt would be a dead fly in their ointment, and make it to fend forth no flinking a favour of the most loathfome folly.

Thirdly, Believers are righteous men; and it is their justice to be glad, and triumph in their victory over death.

Justice withholdeth not what is due, when it is in the power of its hand to repay: to repay vengeance to evil-doers, and praise to them that do well. Death and its complices, the law, sin, Satan, and hell, are enemies that have tragically used believers; made them to bear God knows what, flamed them, and tempted them to curfe the day of their birth; held them subject to bondage, through fear, all the time that they lay under their power. An holy revenge is now owing to flin and to Satan; and now that through Christ they are taken out of thofe cruel hands, they are able to pay it; able to expofe them, and put them to open flame; to fliw abroad how they themselves have been used by one mightier than they; how the law, as damning, is abolished; fift in condemned; Satan's head is bruifed; death is plagued; the grave is destroyed; and hell hath its mouth ftopp'd.

On the contrary, there is no finding out to perfeftion, the breadth and length, the depth and height of God's grace. The love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord paffeth all understanding: His grace, and his gift by grace unto believers, are ineffable; infinitely free, without merit in us or any motive. Astonishingly rich, while we were enemies, most defiled and deformed ones; and equally without power to refift damning justice, and without the prudence to ask faving mercy: angels, our elders and betters, were not pitted, but irreversably doomed to destruction. More than angels and all the creation was worth, was given to redeem us; even as much more than they are worth, as God by Efience exceedeth the mere creature. Christ is God by eternal Efience; and yet God spared not his Son, but gave him up to redeem rebels: whereat hell envious, and heaven wonders. A vall tribute of praise muft hence rife due; so due, that if believers be fliers, the ftones muft needs cry out. Believers, that are no longer mutes, have the dumb Devil expell'd, and their mouths opened for praise; their tongues touched with a coal from the holy altar, and qualified to lift up the name of their Redeemer.

But what safe triumph in their victory, through him, can render to death the things that are death's, or to Christ the things that are Christ's? If faith do not now play on the hole of that afp, and boldly put his hand on that cockatrice's den, what flame does it there to? If it doth not joy in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of its salvation, what honour doth it pay him? Who makes it to be seen, either that death is difarmed, or that it was Christ who did take away its two-edged sword? That, of worst los is made our gain; or that Christ was he who fo bleffedly converted it? Wherefore, Believers
Believers must not be thought to put on righteousness, or to preserve the name of just men, but to be most unlike to their righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, if they are taken for men void of David's resolution; I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

Fourthly, Believers are crowned heads, men of honour, kings and priests to God; and it is their honour to rejoice and triumph over death.

Fight is not honourable without victory, nor victory without triumph. Believers fight the good fight of faith, and overcome by the blood of the Lamb; but without the joy and triumph of faith they appear but as Salsom, when flowered, like any other man. Joy is there sensible and visible principality, the conspicuous crown of their glory: take away that, and they are kings deprived of their crowns; priests undressed with their holy garments for beauty and for glory, inglorious and unlike themselves; eye-sores, and offensive to them that made them kings and priests; and, in the world's eyes, the vilest objects; yes, many an one becomes a Major-missabul, a terror to himself and all about him. The Israelites, when their ornaments were off, were naked, to their shame: believers are so when their joy ceaseth. If there come in among them those that are unlearned or unbelievers, they cannot think God to be in them of a truth, or fe what they are, or do more than others.

Certain it is, that God doth not willingly grieve them; and the world and Devil cannot take away their joy from them, till they themselves do call it away. Divine grace falls not to admonish comfort to them, while they keep in the way of comfort: so that their joy never dies but when they kill it; their honour is not laid in the dust but by their own hands. Wherefore,

How unworthy a judgment must we make of believers, if we take them for a generation of careles of their honour? yes, such murderers of it? for they are no lefs who call away the joyful confidence and hope which keeps them from appearing of all men the most miserable. The garment of praise that can very much distinguish between God's heirs, and Satan's flaves.

Fifthly, Believers are lovers of true pleasures; and it is their only pleasure to enjoy and triumph in Christ Jesus, and in God through him.

Pleasure is the life of life, the end of action, and the strength of agents unto it. Carnal men do in all things pursue carnal pleasures; and spiritual men spiritual ones. Pleasure is the spring of action in both; and in both, joy is strength, and sorrow lays amart.

Heaven lies in the heart of a man boweth it down: like a moth in a garment it bites at the strings and its strength; insomuch that the counsels and determinations of disconfortable souls are faint and tottering, like the motions of wounded bodies. But mery hearts do good like medicines; they prevent and remove indispositions: they are also continual solaces, and preserve spirits: s¢t and fawce they are, to sweeten all things in peace; and as drums and trumpets they inspire courage in war. Wherefore the love of action draws with it the love of joy: and inseparable are the desires of holy life and holy mirth; mirth and joy (as the water of Efehlonaps his well was feigned to be) uncapable of purefaction.

But what joy is so, fait joy in the salvation of the Lord? All others, corporal and intellectual, are vanishing themselves; and without this are delusive and corruptive. A nature they have that is clogging, and such as makes variety needful to keep out bashful. Believers do fe: this, and therefore despise the cucumbers and melons, which they did eat freely in their dark Egyptian flat. Manna they must have now, or they die: a bread and a joy that the world knows not of; one in a higher object, and perfect without defect, perpetual without decay; wherein all desires may be satisfied, and all wants be supplied. Now,

What charity, which thinketh no evil, can think believers to be a number of bewitch'd creatures? which they must be above any heard of upon this earth, if having a desire of joy as of life, and having no other joy, or at least none that they can exercise without this of their victory by Christ, they do not constantly rejoice herein. Is it credible that the new creature is one that is averse from his sole pleasure? negligent of what is dear to it as its life?

Sixthly, Believers are the lights of the world, and salt of the earth: and it is their capital service to the church and world to triumph over death.

The work of converting, confirming, and comforting souls, is the whole business of a minister; but it is the true business of every believer. Doing good unto all men is the duty of
of all, and the practice of all that be truly good: it is sure that all such do desire and endeavou"r, in their places, to make others good; and accordingly have the honourable names given them in the word, which speak them to be very useful in the world.

Touching the means of their usefulness, it is known even to a proverb, that precepts do far less avail than examples: and of examples of holy life, it needs not to be said how incomparably most beneficial those are which are most replete with divine consolation! how much more than others these do attract and wins the tractable, frame and silence the incorrigible, quicken the supine and stupid Christian, strengthen the weak and wavering, and solace all! These, it is confessed, do singularly lift up the hands that hang down, and the fee"ble knees; and keep what is lame from being turned out of the way, and heal it. But it is to be awfully thought on, what I add.

Unspeakable are the sad effects and consequences of holy men's sad and utterly comfort"less walk. Weak Christians see it, and call in question the truth of christianity: sufferers do open wide their mouth; ignorant wanderers from the truth are hardened against it: the lovers of God are grieved. And till such me as good men flockcloth is put off, and they become girded with gladness, their light hardly lends forth any convincing or converting beams: their light emits little piercing and purifying favour.

If therefore the love of God, or the love of men moveth them, believers must watch and pray for the voice of joy and gladness: without which, as their own souls be disqu"eted, others are dismayed; and the ways of their God are by them exposed to the jealou"sies of his children, and to the prejudices of his enemies. Their character is blacked, and they must be taken rather for the defiling pitch than the cleansing balm of the earth.

Lastly, Believers are obedient children of God; and it is their required obedience to triumph in their victory through Christ.

It is not only a licence for it that the gospel giveth them, but it is a precept. The old primitive law bound man innocent to enjoy and glory in his blessed life: the Redeemer's law doth not less oblige man renewed, to joy and glory in his more wonderful salvation; in his more blessed life brought out of death.

Who knows not how expressly and repeatedly this precept is proclaimed? Ec glad in the Lord, and rejoice ye righteous! Shout for joy ye all that are upright! let the saints be joyful in glory, let them sing aloud. Rejoice and be exceeding glad: rejoice in the Lord; and again I say, rejoice: rejoice evermore. Because they served not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, thou shalt serve thy enemies, &c. texts are numenous. Under the law it fell many were the teachs instituted for one fault. In the gospel-day the Holy Ghost is sent to be a comforter extraordinary. It were endless to enumerate the ways in which God expresseth his zeal for his saints joy. The reasons of which zeal are both great and evident. For,

Joy is the commanding affection, the end of all others, that which all do subserve and seek: And if this ruler be corrupted, all its servants are necessarily wicked. If this potentate be not obedient to God, it draws the whole man into rebellion. He that rejoiceth not in Christ Jesus, feels a thousand temptations to forsake him; yea, in a fearful degree he doth forsake him: for not to delight and rejoice in him is to vitify and dishonour him; and that is to forsake him, with whatever unpleasing services you shall all the while follow him. All is carrión that is not charitably given: it is not pure sacrifice that is not offered with joy and gladness. In short, thoughts of a Christ not delighted in, will come but seldom, and fly but little in any mind: and an heart not delighted in him, will soon believe a little meditation of him to be enough; and all the duties which are laborious to be an excess. Why are secret ones, and publick, so generally neglected? what makes backwa"rdsness to them? whence rife christian inclinations to footleth forbidden chats and games? whence cometh their quarrellomen with each other, and with their spiritual fathers and masters? To these and many like questions it must be answered, They rejoice not in Christ Jesus. It needs not be said how impossible it is, without joy in him, to rejoice in tribula"tions, to take joyful the spoiling of outward goods, and to lay down our lives for him! fen't doth sufficiently certify it.

What shall we then judge of believers, if we take them for men that make no con"fidence of rejoicing in Christ? we must judge them in the worst sense to be selfishmen; very demonstrably that break all bonds, and cast the strongest cords of God behind their backs; which is as truly impossible as it would be unrighteous for a sound believer ordinarily to do.

Extraordinary is the case of persons obstructed by a melancholy habit of body and tem"porary temptations: to will is presently with them, though how to do they find not: they are not fugitives, but captives, and sail under sorrow: so that it is a duty they would do, which they
they do not do: while remembering death, they are troubled, they complain, and their spirit is overwhelmed. Of other christians I speak not to say, they do not rightly seek the Lord who rejoice not, and are not glad in him through whom they are conquerors of death; who are strangers to the peace, the joy, and the glory of faith, Rom. v. 1, 2, 3.

I am next to shew, that

§ 2. Saints do righteously triumph aloud over death.

To shout for joy as soon as they are in Christ, is their reasonable service: the equity of the command is apparent as the authority of the Law-giver; and the objections against it are chaff easily blown away.

The sum of them all is this: heaven only is the seat of high joy. On earth 'tis absurd, and out of place. It is a business proper for none but spirits made perfect; unformed with sin, unclouded with sorrow, unalarmed with fear: but most unfit for souls that are amidst with corruption, laden with guilt, clothed with infirmities, surrounded with temptations, and in jeopardy every hour.

The answer is of no difficulty: though the King's presence makes the fulness of joy above, it gives abundance below. The victory given to believers is vocation and adoption, possession of a heaven on earth. We which have believed do enter into rest, Heb. iv. 3. Ye that believe on the Son of God, may know that ye have eternal life, 1 Joh. v. 13. This but inchoate victory of believers, makes all old things pass away, and all things become new. The believer's corruption is mortified, guilt's pardoned, infirmities gradually healed, temptations subdued, perfections perfected, death disarmed: and all things are made to serve his interests: all things are yours, 1 Cor. iii.

What is there to hurt, after removal of sin's guilt, and the law's curse, which is the divine hatred and wrath? what is lacking to his comfort, where transgression is forgiven and sin covered? In short, there do meet in this inchoate victory of believers, all things requisite to make an object of joy unapproachable; and, thereby, to justify the most lofty triumph. For, what should put a soul into exultation, if not,

First, So great a blessing? one if it must be called, it is one and all. And of a greatnes shining forth in the extreme and eternal evil, from which it exempted; and good, wherewith it endows. If the pitch of joy should be proportionable to the good of its object, here can be no excess.

Secondly, So everlasting an one? The greatest things, if like Jordan's streams, they hasten to a sulphurous lake, are unworthy of delight. It is a lofty feast, on which death it itself must one day feed. But, duration makes things of value to be invaluable. And nothing is more durable than a believer's victory. His crown is immortal: and heaven shall no longer be a kingdom, than he reigns in it with Christ. Pecunia non redenen; his pardon is irrevocable; the love of God to him is unchangeable; the seed of God in him incorruptible. If then immortality it itself doth app raise; all joy is not too much for him, whose object is for all eternity. 

Thirdly, So fitable an one? The more durable goodness gives little joy without fitable topleasure, is applicatio convenienti. Convenient. All the mines of India would let transport a famishing man, than a morsel of bread. But never was gift so suited to a creature's need, as believer's victory is. Herein, being in themselves dead, in Christ they are made alive. Being blind, they receive their sight. Being weak, they are made strong. Being miserable, they are made blessed. Being mutable, they are eternally established. John vi. 57. As the Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that catch me shall live by me. They must, therefore, die for joy, who joy too much for their victory: and fearfully could that it self, be called too much.

Fourthly, So sumptuous an one? all the world rates high what is bought dear. But, was there ever such a purchase as the Believer's conquest? It astonisheth the angels. Our Saviour mentions it, not without wonder, John iii. 16. The price, was the very blood of God. And only the mind of God, can comprehend the worth of the blood of God. Wherefore, of the most triumphant joy herein, it is boldly to be asked, Is there not acafe?

Fifthly, So rare a blessing? rarity doth extremely enhance value. Diamonds would be no idols, if they were no rarities. Yet, what would crowns be, if every head wore one? It is what few attain, that all do admire. Now of believers victory, who knows not how little there is of commoners, to take away from the comfort? alas! of the many called to it, how few are chosen, how few will come to Christ for it? And of the lapsed angels, not so much as one recovered his fall. Believers highest joy is then purely unblamable, if rarity makes good things delectable; and adds sweetness to honey it self.

Sixthly,
§ 3. Believers do triumph boldly over death.

Their laughter is not madness. If it be asked of their mirth, what doth it? it must be answered, it doth on earth, what saints and angels doth in heaven. It gives, praise and thanks to God, and to the Lamb: For,

O death, where is thy sting? never goes before, but thanks be to God follows fast after. Thankful repentance, thankful faith, hope, and love, thankful new-obedience.

Blind fears are the Romish hills and others; who teach otherwise: And would bear us in hand, that assurance of victory over death, is a wine too strong for the head of a waster, any living believer. Such, whose mirth would be madness; and the joy of it, turn the grace of God into wantonness: Dipose us to nothing but flesh and security, pride and presumption. But, what do the arguings of men so sensual, and void of the spirit of faith, avail?

It is true, there are wretches of flight and frothy spirits, who will be boasting of a false gift, a cloud without water. Proclaim their wondrous joy, and speak swelling words; though their eleven-feet do manifestly confute their flaming tongues. And, not walking in the fear of the Lord, it is sure they do not walk in the joy of the Holy Ghost. No small fumbling block this hath been to men of senses, not exercised to discern. But these following particulars will confute or confound all gain-layers.

First, The efficient worker of the joy and triumph we speak of, is the Holy Ghost. Exprely it is named his; whose operations, no doubt, are holy, and make: for holiness, His comforting work tending as much to sanctify, as his sanctifying work tendeth to comfort us. A contrary thought would be blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and plainly make him a minister of sin.

Secondly, The law of this joy, is the Holy Gospel. Believers joy is as surely by the gospel’s warrant, as by the spirit’s work. For, he never speakseth of his own; never, as a judge, speaks life and joy to any; but thofe to whom the gospel, as the law of grace and peace, doth assign it. There is a perfect confute between Christ’s spirit and his word. The joy given by one, is given by both. And, to think that the joy by them given is a servant of fin, were fearfully to blaspheme both; belying them with a brow of hais.

Thirdly, The end of this joy is holy conversation. Whereby is our heavenly Father glorified but by our bringing forth much good fruit? Or, what doth he either constitute in his word, or dispense with his spirit, but for the end that he thereby be glorified? If we imagine that this joy of believers, so constituted and so dispensed for this end, is no apt means for it, but for the contrary; how foolishly must we change him, who is only wife?

Fourthly, The means whereby this joy is wrought, are holy ordinances and vigorous exercise of grace therein. The holy spirit ufheth not to lift souls out of the hell of their farts; much les to lift them up to the heaven of triumphant joys but in this way. And, is it likely that the effect should be an enemy to its caufes? That the believers joy, like a viper, should be death to his parents? That communion with God should beget such a delight in him as should make us by and by weary of him.

Fifthly, The subjects of this joy are holy souls; others are uncapable of it: nor need we say what ufe they would make of it, who make the worst ufe of all the grace (objeotive and subjective) that do receive. Most sure it is, the holy Spirit first worketh grace, then winefeth it to be in a man; and so comforteth him, and caufeth him to triumph.
umph in his state of grace. Christ is formed in the soul before the soul rejoiceth in Christ; and it is then a prepared subject for joy; is it not? And who can believe that then, like a dunghill, it will be made the fuller of stench and noisom fumes by the fihnes of heaven on it? and nor, like a garden, have its spices flow out more abundantly. Bees do suck honey out of sweet flowers, whatever it be that spidors do extract.

Sixthly, The very essence of this joy is holy obedience: And is not obedience the womb of obedience, as sin is the womb of sin? What carries to obey God more than obeying doth? Naturally acts do strengthen habits; and intuitively also, God of admirable love rewards grace with grace. The believer's joy answering a known precept, prepares his ear and heart to answer all the divine ones. In a word, how fruitful of holines is the joy of fains in heaven? Believers joy is is the very same nature; and why should it not be their holy strength also?

Seventhly, The constant visible concomitants of this joy are extraordinary holy. Satan's delusion it is, and not divine consolation, which sweth not, out of an excellent conversation, its works with mockeries of wisdoms. Holy joy hath these jewels finning in the crown of it. High echoes of Christ Jesus. No star leads to Christ more than joy in him doth. Profound humility: The most joyful Apostle filled himfelf leaf of fainth, chief of finnerst. Spiritual flame is herein natural; the higher it rises the more it trembles. Sorrow for sin after the most godly manner. No where are fo bitter herbs eaten, and so greenly, as in this joyful feaft of pallove. Stronger guard is set upon it against the robber: Because joy breeds jealousies, omnia tuta timent, the disciples for very joy believed not, Luke xxiv. 41) and jealousy sufferers not to sleep or flumber. Thoughtfulness of heaven. The joyful Israelite had Canaan in his mind all the while he was in the desert True contempt of this world's gaudies. What are candles or flars when the sun appears? When the good of all the land of Egypt was before Jacob and his sons, they regarded not their fluff, Exod. xl. 20. The joy of paradise stains the glory of a Paris. Sweet content in the most bitter worldly state. The joy of faith finds meat in the eater, and sweetness in the strong. The God whom we serve is able and he will deliver us, say the hebrew heroes. And what follows? Upon their bodies the fire had no power; not an hair of their heads is flung; they walk in the midst of the fire, and have no hurt. Lions dens are quiet rooms to Daniels. Prifons are mufick-houses to such as Paul and Silas. Exquisite pleasure in all holy services. Being full of holy joy, St. Paul was well pleased to be kept out of heaven for a time, to serve Christ's interest on earth. And joyful Luther professed, he had rather honour God with his service, than be honoured by God with any gifts which made great and noted in the world: Maledic obedere quam miracula facere. Lastly, a real indifference towards this present life. It is only the joyful christian that can posfe this, but the heart of every one that is such doth say as his Lord, father, not my will, but thy will be done. Concerning his fly in the body, it thus faith most sincerely.

To conclude, is God to be thought now a loser and not a gainer in his glory by believers joy? or is it poffible that holines shoulel languifh in a joy wherein fhefe fruits do flourifh? In a joy that to evidently maketh God to be the center of the rejoicins heart? the center toward which it moves, and in which it refts.

There are many infurances of moft humbling, instructing, and comforting truth, which do here offer themselves; and, I presume, will be darting in their beams upon minds not shut up againft them: Their light is fuch as is ready for every prepared eye.

It is therefore a tripartite exhortation, wherewith I conclude;

1. To those that have not ever sunk triumph over death.
2. To those who have sung it, but have lost that voice of joy and gladness.
3. To those who have for any time sung it, and are still singing it.

I must have leave to think that all three forts are prezent among us. Unto the firft, I fuff address my fel.

§ 1. To such of you as have not yet sung triumph over death.

If now you believe the truth which hath been irrefragably proved, I exhort as follows:

First, Acknowledge your selves to have no saving faith, if you have no stirring defires to attain a joying faith. It hath been said by what means a child of God may be kept, it may be all his days from the joy of faith; but it cannot be said, whereby he should be so kept from
from defiring it and from pursuing it. Nothing but a regning and damning presumption or despair is able to keep a soul from these. Review my seven arguments, which I may not repeat; and assure you, it is no child of light that lies unconcernedly in the dark, as if nothing sied him; and unto whom it is not as death at last, that he cannot triumph over death; who travels not from ordinance to ordinance, for the power and the act; and follows not heaven with unutterable sights and groans until he gains them. Conformists believers are represented to doing; (not. iii. 1, 2, 3, and v. 6, 7.

Secondly, When you beat your selves for the joy of faith, be not impatient if it doth not presently become triumphant. To be using the means appointed for getting it, is your unquestionable duty; but to fret against God, as though he wronged you if he made you wait long for it, is your certain sin and folly. Doubt not but God will give it as soon as he sees you fit for it: And nothing saves ignorance and pride can make that wild question, why should I wait on the Lord any longer? In a word, let him not go till he beads you with it; but let him take his own time to bless you with his richest gift. It is unbelief that makes hale, and that hale makes woe.

Thirdly, When you are waiting for the joy of faith, be praising and blessing God for putting you upon the pursuit of it, and enabling of you to wait therein. This grace well defereth your best thanks. Had you ever ran after it, if grace had not drawn you? or had not you laid violent hands on your selves, as others have done under their errors, if grace had not restrained you? Thanks are sacrifices with which God is well pleased. And who was ever known to be thankful for twilight, but he had e'er long a shining noon-day? On the contrary, from him who is unthankful, fun, moon, and star-light is full often removed, and he is left as without hope.

Fourthly, When you are blessing God for drawing you to seek the joy of faith, fail not to multiply the two first acts of faith. That which prepares for union to Christ, and that which saith unto him, Fearly thus, night and day tell your souls, that God, propitiated by Christ, will surely save them if they truly repent, and believe on him. Proceed also, and perpetually be saying to your God, that, as far as the Holy spirit doth and shall assist you, do, and you ever will commit you to his saving-mercy, and submit you to his ruling authority in Christ. Multiply direct acts if you would have the comfort of vestiges, lay all our Divines. This is the only way wherein a trembling faith may be expected to be made a triumphing one.

Fifthly, When you all holy faith attend upon God in all holy ordinances. It is at wisdom's gates that the hearts of the poor and sorrowful are made to sing for joy. Be you constantly found at every one of them; for you know not whether your waiting at this or that shall be better; but you may be certain your neglect of any one will provoke God to send you away empty from all the other. Sometimes it is in reading and hearing that joy is infused: Sometimes it is in prayer, that, as Peter's bonds are loosed: Sometimes it is with sacramental wine that hearts are cheered: Sometimes it is the conference of holy friends that sharpeneth a man, as iron sharpeneth iron: Many times singing of psalms and hymns, and spiritual songs, do together make glad the heart of God and man. Try all, and continue in them, and fear not but you shall have beauty given you for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning.

Sixthly, When you attend on holy ordinances, cast away all your transgressions. As soon shall heaven's joy enter hell, as a presumptuous sinner's heart. It is only the conqueror that is capable of triumph; the conquerors of all wilful sin: he that being made free from all such, hath now his fruit unto holiness. We lie, faith St. John, if we say we have fellowship with him, and do not the truth. They, who, like Devils, are ever in the fire, and be never refined; be ever using holy things, but are not made holy by them; they are, as certainly as Devils, held in chains of darkness. Old and new Testament say, there is no peace to the wicked. Allow then no sin, if you would attain any peace.

Seventhly, When you cast away all your sins, be ye doers of all Christ's word. Negative good-nets is a very chimera. Christ loves and manifests himself to them only who have his commands, and keep them. Though duties be not the merits, they are the means, and commonly the measures of peace and joy; and of all duties, those arduous ones that do most cross the grain of corrupt nature, and most thwart our secular interest. Would you have your light to rise in obscurity, and your darkens be made as noon-day? draw out your soul to the hungry, satisfy the afflicted. Would you be made appear to be children of God and co-heirs of Christ? love your enemies, bless them that curse you. Would you have your confidences, and all the world, be made to know that God is not ashamed to be called your God? Be not ashamed then of the gospel of Christ at any time, but courageously own and confess him and
A Funeral-Sermon on Mr. Robert Fleming.

and it, in the midst of gainfayers. Would you be most certain you are not reprobates? Keep under your bodies, and bring them into subjection. By rare duties you may rise up to as rare joys.

Eighthly, When you are doers of the word, give not way to such scruples as have no bottom on the word. Unreasonable fears are the fins of our hearts as truly as they be thorns in our sides: they grieve the Holy Spirit; and they together deny and impair, and tend to destroy his work in us. Thieves they are that do waste the candle of the Lord; and worms that eat up the hidden manna.

As many as are lable to these distempers would do well to take to heart these like antidotes.

God accepteth mites, though his due be ten thousand talents: else what would become of the richest in faith and works?

Holiness is left than filthiness. The field which hath millions of weeds in it is a corn-field for all that: there were none upon this earth else.

Damning fins be somewhat more than terrifying falls: yes, we receive the least hurt by the fins that put us into the greatest fright. He that exclaims, I am dead, expresseth a conceit which he confuteth. David's fall and Peter's, were terrible, but were not mortal. It is keeping under water drowns a man; it is not his falling into it that kills him.

Smoking flax hath more fire in it than is thought of. No doubt but Heman was scorched with God's graces while he was distracted with his terrors.

Travellers be not out of their way as oft as they be out of sight of the city they would be at: No, but they are as truly moving towards it when they are in the vale, and do but think of it, as when they are on the top of an hill, and do pleasantly behold it. The way to heaven is through great changes and many vicissitudes, up hill and down hill: but in the deep as truly as on the mount, in temptation as truly as out of it, a saint makes way toward heaven. The will and work of his God he very profitably sufferers, when he knows not what he does. And on he goes toward heaven, as sinners do toward hell, not knowing whither they go.

Trees do grow downward when they have scarce sap enough to flow that they be alive upward. Wondrously gainful are many spiritual loaves themselves: good words and works are a chriffians leaves and fruits. Self-denial and faith in Christ are his root. By the winter-feast, which doth deaden him to those former, he is enlivened and strengthened in these latter. And the temptations and temporary defterions, which take from him his activity, do make him amends by notable additions unto his humility, even all days of his life. Most true are judicious Hooker's words; Happier a great deal is he, whose soul by inward deflation is humbled, than he whose heart, through abundance of spiritual delights, is lifted up above-measure. Remember, troubled soul, remember it well, bitterly humbling winters do make sweet and fruitful summers. And know thou,

If the corn upon the ground be good, it matters not how little deep the plough went. Do not torment thyself, as the manner of some is, with fears that thou art not of the good ground, upon a surmise that God hath not broken thee up with convictions and humiliations sufficiently deep. Examine more thy corn, and be less concerned about the plough. If thy reliance on Christ's righteousness be entire, and thy imitation of his holiness be constant and cordial, the plough hath done its part upon thee. Consider on the other hand too, that

There are valuable things kept in brine as well as in sugar. Dream not, that because thy life is made sorrowful, God intends not ever to advance thee to his fulness of joy. The fruits which are preferred in sweetness that exceed honey, be not more intended for the table of the Lord, than the meats that are buried in salt and bitterness.

All the fruits of Christ's garden be not of a size, not equally riperipe. Conclude not, that thou art none of his plants, because others do vastly excel thee in all christian virtues, and out-do the in all the works of righteousness. One rose upon a bush, though but a little one, and though not yet blown, proveth that which bears it to be a true rose-tree. Look well to thy fincerity, and to thy sincerer labour for proficiency; then know, that neither God nor Men do cut down good trees, because small; or despise unripe flowers and fruits, if they be ripening.

A forsyeker may be a most excellent wrestler. Milo had not the tongue of Cicoero. Moses, that great prevailer with God, was a man of a very low utterance. Do not lay, you cannot pray because you cannot speak much, or well, or long. Praying is wrestling with God. The heart is the wrestler: holy faith is the strength of it. If by means of this strength thy heart be a good wrestler, though thou art ever so tongue-tied, thou wilt be a prevailer. Rhetorical goes for little in the heavenly court; but sincerer groans have a kind of omnipotence.

A note
A min of gold may be a long time unknown. The heat of the sun may make it many a year before the light of the sun doth discover it. It is long before the Spirit doth witness to some, what he works in them.

A king is not the left a king for dreaming himself a beggar. Supposito nil ponit in efs. Victorious believers are most truly so. when they are not feftibly so.

The most bruised need make no little melody to the Lord. Our compassionate Saviour tells his affrighted dove, when driven into the cliffs of the rock, that her voice was sweet. Cont. ii. 14.

The little flees in the milky way be as real stars as the sun. We must not argue that we are darknes it self, because we are not the most burning and shining lights.

The crying child is alive as sure as the laughing one. If whatever flese away our joy, did flese away our faith also, where would faith be found upon earth? The world and church will be loon at an end, when all shall kill that maker to cry.

It doth often rain and shine together in the heart of a believer. His soul hath the joy that is his duty, and shines with grace acted in defires and endeavours to triumph: when as yet it hath not the joy that is the largeness of God's bounty, by which its clouds must be chased away; no, but is lamenting after the Lord for it: Doles, & de dolore gaudet. Joyfully it lament after him for it, singimg our renowned Gataker's most delectable lamentations.

I thirst for thine joy, I weep for tears; Well pleas'd I am to be displeased thus: The only thing I fear, it want of fear; Suspecting I am not suspicious! I cannot choose but live, because I die; And when I am not dead, how glad am I? Yet, when I am thus glad for sense of pain, And careful am, lest careless I should be; Then do I griev for being glad again; And fear, lest carelessnes take care from me! Amidst these reflex thoughts, this rest I find.

For those that rest not here, there's rest behind.

And as for sinful sorrow it self, be it observed, A believer may gloriously conquer, even when he is miserably conquered. And he doth so, when the fin strikes him down, it cannot make him yield. Pofitive nofion is conquest of fin. Of the unconfenting and outcrying virgin, over-powered by the ftrength of a ruffian, God did pronounce that there was no fin in her worthy of death. By refilling she made the deftrayer flee, even then when she could not make the defiler flee. The believer that refills, is not fluck down under the wrath of God, when he is fluck down into the mire of fin. Glory be to God in the highest. Fight against fin, though it be upon our knees, is conquest.

And therefore, laftly, Rahab is in heaven as sure as Abraham, St. James faith, that dwarf in faith was justified by it as well as this giant. And it's sure, if justified, is glorified. Now Who's is wise and will observe these things, they float to the joy, understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

My exhortation is;

§ 2. To those that have formerly sung triumph over death, but have left that voice of joy and gladness;

All fuch, are to be thus exhorted. Firft; Delpifet not your left. For it's a left of more than all the world is worth. It's a left of heaven upon earth. A left, that was to David as a fword in his bones: and cannot but be grievous to a heart that is not perfectly fenfible. Unto any other, to joy in Chrift's love is sweter than life; and to have that joy taken away, must be more bitter than death. Yet,

Secondly; Delpair not under this left. You are not the firft that have fallen under it. David lost his joy, and cried, O spare me. Jeremias was afraid to die, Jer. xxxvii. 20. Hesekiah turned to the wall, and wept at the tidings of death. Holy Latimer told his Rikey, that sometimes he could run into an hole for fear. A balm in Gilead there was for them, and a physician that restored them. Nor is there any reafon, why your wound should be profumed to be incurable. It is surely your duty to pray for the cure. And it were a fond conceit that you might not look for, the things you are bound to pray for.

Thirdly; Enquire how you came by your left. Whether pride were not dwelling in you; and made needful this left, to keep you from being exalted above measure. Or, whether earthly-mindednes got not into you: for, as in nature, it cannot be night till the earth interpole between the sun and us; so I question whether ever a very dark night fall on the face of a foul, but by some earthly things interpofing between Chrift and it. The Achan that is the trouble.
troubler, must be stoned if you are like to be quiet. To which purpose, you are to make diligent search after it.

Fourthly; Blame not God for your loss. Justifying God, as David did; and to yourselves take all the blame and shame. To be sure, your own sin was all the culpable cause. And this know: till a Job let's go his hard thoughts of God, and abhors himself in dust and ashes, his captivity is not to be turned. But then, it is presently turned, and his comforts be forthwith multiplied.

Fifthly; Cancel not your loss. Hide it not from those to whom God, faith, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people. Peace and joy are created by God, but they are administered by his servants. Whom, not to consult in your troubles, is to despise. And whom to despise, is to despise Christ and him that sent him.

Sixthly; Comfort to God's terms for the repair of your loss. With a thousand thanks, go and enter a new the covenant of grace. He cannot in honour make the terms thereof any lower. But if you humble you so low as the gospel demands, you will be fearfully exalted to the glorious joy that it promises. Lazy desires of comfort on other conditions, will shame you much, and profit you nothing.

Seventhly; Plead all the appointed means for recovering your loss. Be much in the ordinances wherein you first found comfort. Read much the gospel, which was written that saints joy might be full. Hear it much, as preached by Christ's ministers; who are given to be helpful of your joy. Pray much; our Saviour having said, Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Look much to Christ in the feals of the covenant also, until you are lightened. Of all ordinances, they are the highest restoratives.

Lastly; Resolve to follow God, though he never in this life repair your loss. To follow him, and perevere in his service mournfully, if you cannot comfortably. Yes, and labour to show all about you, that you are so fensible of your transgressions, of his punishing you less than they deserve; that your soul loves him and bleffes him for his effential goodness and his benignity, even if whilst he gives you no kid to make merry.

Thus, Wait on the Lord, and he shall renew your strength; be given power to the faint, and to them that have no might be increafeth strength.

A few words remain to be spoken.

§ 3. To theft of you that are going, O death, where is thy sting? &c.

First; Forget not your unceasing enemy. Satan envies none so much as you, who are mounted on the highest pinnacle of the temple. If he casts you down, the greatness of your fall gives an eminence to his conquest. And he will spare no pains for his glory in your shame.

Secondly; Remember your undoubted duty, i.e. of doing more than others. Walking more holily, righteously, and soberly than other saints; even saints more aged, and more richly gifted. For it is to you, of all saints on the earth, that much is given; and from whom much is required. Much more than was required from you, before you were taken up into this third heaven.

Thirdly; Consider the difficulty of kindling again the fire, that is easily quenched. Your joy is a holy flame; but it is extinguishable by one sin of presumption. And then where are you? That measure of repentance that fitted you for your first conflagration, will not fit you for its renovation.

Fourthly; Bind the gospel-covenant about your neck; write it on the table of your heart. It hath been said, he who understands this, is a good divine. Sure I am, he that shall not keep it as the apple of his eye, it not like to be a joyful christfian very long. Let the terms hereof flip out of our minds, we are straight-way like the waves of the sea, at the mercy of the next wind that blows.

Fifthly; Fear nootes as truly as beams, gnats as camels. Your greatest danger is of incurring the guilt of sins, comparatively, least. And fear of falling into them, is a means of keeping free from them. Bear it ever in your minds then; though rapes do not violate wedlock, yet a wanton glance, which is a wilful wickedness, strikes at the heart of it. And badkins do flab as mortally as broad swords.

Sixthly; Defer not to pay your vows. Few, I suppose, do come to the joy of faith without this natural worship of vowing to God. But, surely, none that perfidiously break their vows do long hold their joys. Jacob, filled usually the Father of vows, paid dear for his unmindfulness of them.

Seventhly; Be eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, and make the hearts of your disconsolate brethren to sing for joy. As much as in you lies, this do. For this end, among others, are you comforted, that you might comfort others by the comfort wherewith you are comforted of God.
God. If you neglect this duty, no wonder if your fun be turned into darkness, and your joy into mourning. No wonder if God withdraw from you, and sin and Satan getting advantage against you, do again plunge you into the pit where there is no water. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him; he that withholdeth spiritual bread from the poor and needy, his God will chaffife him. But, the liberal soul shall be made (and kept) fat; he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. His heart shall rejoice, and his joy no man shall take from him. To conclude;

Would you not lose the sense of God's love? would you not bear a new his hot displeasure? would you not be loaded with oppressing apprehensions of his temporal judgments? would you not be scorched with fears of being eternally rejected by him? would you not be perfectly dispirited unto duty, and be made to cry as David, I am not able to look up? These things, then do, and the God of peace shall be with you. God your Master, shall give you songs in every night. Your Redeemer shall be a Prince of Peace, as well as of Righteousness to you. The Holy Ghost your Sanctifier, shall make you to know him and his glorious Attribute, the Comforter. Wherefore, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Some MEMOIRS of the Author's LIFE.

Piety and Charity do require, that somewhat be now said of the rare servant of Christ, whose demise hath occasioned this discourse. Mr. ROBERT FLEMING; a name most worthy of precious and everlasting memory. A saint, in whole life and death the whole triumph of my text hath been admirably exemplified.

Piety, I say, requires it; for saints characters, are God's praisers more than theirs. And Charity requires it; for the example of their graces and comforts, more edifieth the church than doctrinal arguments and motives. Very favourable therefore it would be, a robbery of God and his Church, to be silent of this saint; this one of a thousand. To cover his unexpressible graces, as painters used to do Agamemnon's grief, with a vail; and to say nothing, because the one half cannot be told, would be but a proud humility.

Pompeyick and Encumbrance, indeed, here needs not be any. The Jews say true in this; ?such men do find sufficient stones for their monuments. All that is needed or intended is plain narrative what our FLEMING was, and what he did. What he was, through the Grace of God; and what he did, or rather, what the grace of God did in him.

A copious subject this is; and left the multitude of things memorable overwhelm us, in this order they are presented.

His Country, was Scotland. Honoured by God, the Fountain of Honour. Honourable with saints, the next-best judges of honour. And the more honourable for the birth of this renowned saint therein. Which was An. 1670, at Buthens, alias Easter; the seat of the Earl of Tweeddale; where his reverend father Mr. James Fleming, was long a minister of the gospel. Serpent's hislings are defiled; if any thing less earthly flirs its tongue against the Church of Scotland, as sufficient to their shame, it is here told what is well known. The most learned Prince that ever swayed the scepter of these kingdoms, affirming it to be the purest of all the Reformed Churches.

Of his Parentage, suffice it to be said, He was the seed of God's friends. His family was honourable in his relations, and most eminent for religion.

His Education, was first in the college of Edinburgh: wherein he ran through the course of Philosophy with great applause. And made laudable progress in the learned Languages. Then, translated to the University of St. Andrew's; he travelled through Theology under the conduct of the learned and holy Mr. Rutherford.

His Natural Parts were excellent; his Understanding quick and penetrative. His judgment clear and profound. His fancy rich and fluent. His memory strong. His expression masculine, and of a grace that did take with those who were not unacquainted with his discourses and accents. By which it was indeed clouded to us of England.

His Acquired Learning was great. Answerable to his happy parts, and their culture. Through the divine blessing on his pious diligence, it was rathrice. His eye, the eye of learning, he singularly affected. Especially, Sacred History, the right eye. But unto him all history was sacred; for he considered God's actions more than man's in all of it. Nor valued he man's, but for the knowledge of God's. With whose holy counsels and ways he was so well acquainted, that, before he was 23 years old, he was called to a pastoral charge. And was settled therein at Campfield, in the shire of Clidddsfide. Where he served his
his God till the year 1661. In which the florn reate that drawer out thousands, whereof the age was not worthy. He had taken in marriage Christian Hamilton, justly famed for her person, gifts, and graces, which were all eximious. By her he had seven children; and with them and himself sweetly committed unto his God's provision, he humbly received the honour of his ejecution. Of the children, the Lord received to himself three of them before their mother, and two of them since. Blessed be his name; two do still survive!

As for Worldly Substances, his share feems according to Ayre's desire. He hath told me, that, as Luther, he never, to his knowledge, defired much of it, or was very careful about it. During the moft tragiical days, his table was spread, and cup filled, and head anointed with fresh oil. Liberally his children were educated; and in good works he was profoundly rich. Of his own laying up, I have good warrant to say, he had no treasure but in heav en. His own testimonies of his life was this: It was once made up of seeming contrarieties: great outward trouble, and great inward comfort. And I never found (said he) more comfort, than when I was under most affliction.

Touching his Name and Note in the world, this only shall be said; Against all his projects and pains to refrain it, his fame had flown thro the christian world. His conferences, sermons, and writings, made it too big and too bright to be covered. A name more sweet and precious, and more generally so, to christians of all minds and gusts, I hear not of, nor read I any one!

To the praise of our English Courts, I write it; the Sun and Moon, as well as other rare stars thereof, admired holy Fleming, and phone propitioufly on him. May the everlasting love of his God, be the reward of their love unto his faithful fervant.

But I am yet in the lower hemisphere. More high and honourable things remain to be said of this man of God!

His Conversion to his God was early and illustrious. It was but a little while that he had dwelt in this world, before God dwelt in him, and be in God. And that, so evidently, by the eilexence of all christian virtues, that little doubt more was made of his being born of God, than of his being born of a woman.

His Walk with God was admirable: and to many of this age will seem incredible. It is certain, not one Enoch of many doth walk so exactly. So univerfally in all holy ways; and so humbly, with self-denial to extremity. It was extraordinarily that his spirit was compated for adoration; and accordingly his life was a life of worthip extraordinary. His solemn dedications of himself to his God were frequent. His Soliloquies with him, almost perpetual. He was ever with him! And his always-fereene countenance spake it enlightened always by the divine One. H's always-gracious speech thewed from what the coal touch'd his tongue. Not without cause it hath been a fear, that, should his diary come abroad, most readers would be too weak tost to his strong wine.

His Activity for God in his miniftry, was such as was to be expected from a Mr Fleming. From a large soul, comprehensive of the interests of God and his Church and the world, the preent age and future. And from a soul moft enflamed with love; and thereby constrained to spend it self, and be spent, for no petty Faction or party, but for certain and Catholic christians. What a writer he was, needeth not here to be written. In preaching he was Boomegeres, and Barnabas also. Nor knew any man better, how to use law and gospel; without either opposing or confounding them. For converses, and for all things useful, what might Campfiaung teffify of him? what might Edinburgh, and adjacent places, wherein, after his ejection, he lived and laboured? What might Rotterdam say, where, from the year 1678 to this present year, he burned and thined? The fun, I think, flood all the time wherein he had no design for God going on. It is well known, the fun of his life did fet upon an excellent design. Which was of sending forth a Treatise concerning the way of the Holy Ghost's working on the souls of men; especially, after conversion, in communion between God and them.

His Success from God given in his work, was not ordinarie. He had a numerous spiritual progeny. And they are very many who have thankfully commemorated in my hearing, their benefit from his writings. The Holy Spirit that bloweth in whose books he lifteth, hath singularly honoured his. And, I well know, doth still continue to honour them. Of both his surviving sons, it must be said, though it be here a very high word, they do Paterwars: and do make it manifest that the holy saint's prayers were heard, and his pains richly prospered unto them.

His Peacefulness in God's House is by no means to be omitted. Controversies he declined, not because of insufficiency, but of dislike. Seeing better than others do, or will see, that many errors will be sooner struck to death by a just contempt, than by a full confutation. And will be left apt to revive, after they have been generously disdained, than after that they
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they have been operously exploded. Well he knew, and oft he would say, what a servant the bond of love is to the unity and purity of faith.

Speaking of the differences of brethren in this city, he thus expressed himself; I am amazed to see good men thus tear one another in the dark. Nor can I understand how they should have grace in due exercise who value their particular designs above the interest of the Catholic Church: and who confine religion to their own notions and models.

To another complaining of reproaches from pretended friends, his answer was; To me to be judged of man and of man's judgment is a small thing, I blest God I value not my own name, but God's only. I do confess, when men wound the credit of the gospel through me, it is hard then to bear up.

Nor may it be forgotten what he hath said to his dear and excellent friend, and spiritual son of this city, (Dr. D.H.) I blest God in fifteen years time I have not ever given any man's credit a thrust behind his back; but when I had ground to speak well of any man, I did so with faithfulness; and when I wanted a subject that way, I kept silence. O in what concord might Prelatifs and Diffenters walk, much more the Diffenters themselves, had they more of this bal¬fanmic spirit?. What? agree in principles of faith, in all substantial parts of worship, and affirm, all of us, the fame necessity of beliefs, and yet bite and devour one another? Blessed Saviour! fend down thy spirit to us with the wisdom that is pure and peaceable.

But to return: of the man so pure and peaceable it must be added;

His Triumphs in the favour of God were transcendent; triumphs over laws, sin, death, grave, and hell: too few do I discern to aspire to such as he had long attained. O how dwelt he on the mount? How oft was he in the third heaven? what a Jacob, what an Israel, was holy Fleming? Such a wrestler and prevader with God; such a Moses, to whom God spake as it were face to face; such a Nascanie, with a soul, with a life, and with a name, darkned with no cloud; except but that, of his own humility, which doth together darken a man to himself, and beautify him in the eyes of God and faints. A man so highly favoured of God, and blest with so much of heaven upon this earth, is not oft found, I suppose, in any one age. There is no end of inferences, every day seeming to have been an holy sabbath and communion-day, and day of spiritual jubilee unto him. In his last sickness he had more than one wondrous manifestation of God's love to his soul: and one which he declared he had not strength enough to have been born much longer. But now.

Of his DEATH in the Lord what shall my trembling heart utter? It was but July the 17th that his sickness feiz'd him; and the 25th, he who had so much seen the salvation of our God, departed in peace. On his full arrest, O friends, said he to such as were about him, Sickness and death are serious things. But till the ipsars of his fever had rifen to a flame, he was not aware that that sickness was to be unto death; for he told a relation of his, that if it should fo be, it was strange, being the Lord did not use to hide from him the things that he did with him and his

His heavenly Father knew his thorough preparation for glory, and pleased not to give the premonition which he faw him not to want. Sudden death is sudden glory to such faints. Yet before his expiration he was apprehensive of its approach. Calling to him a friend, he asked, What freedom do you find in prayer for me? Seens God to beckon to your petitions? or does he bind you up, and leave dark impressions on your mind? this way, said he, I have of¬ten known the mind of the Lord. His friend telling him he was under darkens in the cafe, he said, Well, I knew your mind: trouble not your self for me. I think I may say, that I have been long above the fear of death.

His groans and struglings around his fifth to be under no small pains: but his answers to enquiring friends certified that the iron did not enter his soul. Always he would say, I am very well; or, I was never better; or, I feel no sicknes. Thus would he say, while he was feen to be very sensible of every thing beside pain.

The malignant di.ferenter wafting his natural spirits, he could speak but little. But what he spake, was all of it like himself. Having felt himself indisposed for his wonted mediation and prayer, he thus said to some near him; I have not been able in a manner to form one serious thought since I was sick; or, to apply my self unto God, he has applied himself unto me. And one of his manifestations was such as I could have born no more.

Opening his eyes after a long sleep, one of his sons asked him how he did? he re¬plied, Never better: do you know me? said the son; unto which, with a sweet smile, he answered, Yes, yes, dear son, I know you! This was about two hours before his acception. About an hour after it, he cried earnestly, Help, help, for the Lord's sake! and then breathing weaker and weaker, he soon gave up his precious ghost. The renowned eagle took flight to the mountain of spices.
And his life, his death also speaketh. And whatsoever hath ears to hear, let him hear what the spirit speaketh by both of them, unto the churches.

His diary, the rich treasure of his experiences, is not at hand: And therefore cannot, as yet, be brought into public view. But from the few manuscripts which are here found, I shall add some hints that I judge to be very directive and incentive. I mean the faith of reliance and of allusion, in which he was so eminent; unto the love of God and men, wherein he was so vigorous; unto meditation and prayer, and heavenly-mindedness, wherein he was so grand an exemplar.

They are indeed but hints: And, if any difference be, they are the most ordinary of his memorials. The more sublime and extraordinary ones are kept back, of a fulcrum that the generality of good and honest readers might be more amused and edified by things so stupendous. And so very much out of the common road of christian experience. But to proceed:

Aug. 16, 1685. Thus he wrote; I found some sweet access to the Lord in the morning, and in the lively acting of grace; and after I had this day set down some remarks of the day before, I had some clear impress of this: 'Since thou art careful to improve thy talent of observation, more shall be given, and the edifice will stand, whilst there are vessels to receive.'

And now, O the sweet evening of this same day, when in the outer-walks, (where I had found a sore damp for some time) the door was as it were cast open, with such a clear imparting of these great communications, that I hope with assured confidence, was the voice of my beloved God and Master; yea, as indeed it had been, with an audible voice said: 'I will do for thee even exceeding abundantly, &c. I will surely give thee a deliverance, that shall make thee glad above all thy sorrowful past. I do remember thy prayers and groans oft in this walk; and though I was only a witness of them then, yet now as I have seen in feet, so will I reward thee openly. The time is now come, and it shall linger no more; rejoice and be glad, O my prisoner of hope, for the time of thy release is come! I remember thy kindnes, and know thy love; be still and know that I am God. I know thy desires, and that thy frowns now draw near: but fear not, I will take care of thee: and the greater thy extremity be, the greater testimony thou givest to me, &c.'

This Thursday evening, the 17th of Aug. when I came in, with some challenges, I got first great access to my dear God in confession, and the sense of his peace; which was so lively and sweet, as is unspeakable. After, I found some sweet renewing of former communications, with Powers impressed on me, thus: 1. As your latter works have exceeded your former, so shall your latter days also. 2. As you have not made haste, until my time, so this is the time I have watched for; when you are now so low, to make my power known. 3. And do you fear to trust me? Are the confolations of God finite, or have they ever failed you? 4. You know not, my Child, what I am to do for you, and how near it is, &c.

After I went down this last night, what confirmation had I from God further? And now this morning, Aug. 18. I had some exercise of the nature as before, &c.

And now this Saturday, Aug. 19. how clear an evidence did God himself give me of the evidence of the work of grace in my soul, in some most lively acting thereof, so as to rejoice in him as my alone portion, so as to say, he only is my salvation and my defence, my all, in whom I defire to triumph and boast! And therewith what a sweet inbreaking followed from himself, when he said thus to my Soul: 'I will deliver you, in a way you know not; and when all means fail, then is the time I chose. I know thou hast none to look to but me. It is not yours to see now. But blessed are they that believe; for there shall be a performance of things promis'd. Doth thou see the pledges I have given thee; and the conversation of them with such feelings and embracements of my love? I remember the text, that hope makes not a foamed, because the love of God is filled abroad in thy heart. Thou hast been long trading with the talent of the crofs, for some fruit unto me. But now I will also give thee a talent of comfort, and put it in trust under thy hand, &c.'

And O how remarkable hath this evening been, and close of this week, which I may call a most solemn confirming week! And now in its close had I most near and sweet access to my dear God in prayer. And I hope I may owe these immediate communications from himself: As, '1. What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour, to whom my honour and service hath been dear? 2. Have I said I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; and can I leave thee now, when thou hast most need of me, and when all refuge faileth? 3. I know thou art at the hardest part of that lefson, to believe in hope against hope: but fear not, I am with thee, (which in an extraordinary way was then spoken) and though thou see not what thy Outgate shall be, leave that to me. 4. And what a marvelous and sweet confirmation did the Lord give to his poor servant, as I came down? Return unto thy rest, and be still! What did so deeply surprize and astound, as answering
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ing so directly to what that day had been my exercise; what he would do with my hope, which seemed to be against hope: This was the giving me a new text to answer what I had long been upon, &c.

He spent his days and years after this manner. And in order to have the year rightly carried on, it was (we find) his custom from the 15th or 16th year of his age, to his last, to set a part the first day of every year, in renewing his covenant with God, in a new self-surrender and dedication of himself to him; or, if interrupted the first day, then to take the first convenient day following. We cannot give any account of the manner of his doing this, for the first years of his life; but we may guess what they have been, by the few instances following.

1691. It is the entry of this new year, (as I have done now for many years past most solemnly) that I desire to renew again my personal engaging of myself to the Lord my God, and for him; and with my whole heart and desire to enter my self into his service, and take on his blessed yoke, and humbly to lay claim, embrace and take him, (O him!) to be my God alone, my all, my light and my salvation, my shield and exceeding great reward. Whom have I in heaven but thee, O Lord, or in the earth whom do I desire besides thee?

And now, under thy blessed hand, my soul desires, and does here testify my trusting my self, and forsaking my whole interest, my credits, my comforts, my affi Buccs, my throw-bearing, and my poor children; and to leave my self hereon, on the gracious hand of my dearest Lord, whilst I am within time. As I write this the 2d day of Jan. 1691.

R. Fleming.

1692. It is in the entry and first day of this new year, that I desire here as formerly, to enter (in this hidden record) a new surrender and offering of my self to my dear Lord and Master, who hath been wonderfully tender and gracious to me; and hath brought me by his immediate conduct through the days and years of my pilgrimage past; hath still cared for my poor servant, and given more singular mercies and evidences of respect than to many else; and now (as still formerly) hath taken me through this last year with singular evidences of his presence and assistance. And as I trusted my self to my Lord, so hath he graciously answered: for which, and his special grace hitherto, I desire to infer this witness of my soul's blessing the Lord my God.

And now I do here, with my full and joyful confidence, testify my giving up myself again to the Lord, and to his work and service here, and where-ever he shall call me, with desire to confederate my old age to my God, and the guide of my youth. I love my master and his service; and let my ears be nailed to the posts of his door, as one that would not go free from that blessed yoke and service; and lays, in hope, the whole assistance hereof on his grace and help. And now, in so extraordinary a case, as is alone to my Lord, I desire to witness and renew the same here, with my humble and entire reliance on him, who is my trust from my youth to this day, my shield and exceeding great reward. To him I commit my self, my ways, my work and service, which with my soul's desire, I offer to my Lord: In whose hand I desire to secure my credit for the gospel's sake, my comfort and enlargement in this day of deep trouble and anguish: together with my poor children, and the whole interest of my family and concerns; desiring to put my self, with humble confidence, and all that is dear to me, under his care and conduct. O my soul bless thou the Lord! This I write the 1st of Jan. 1692.

My Lord and my God,

R. Fleming.

1694. It is in the first day, and moonday of this new year 1694, that as I have formerly through most of my life past, so now do desire to renew my dedication and engagements to the Lord my God, and to join in the same witness with what herein hath been formerly, with my whole heart and desire; and to offer unto my dearest Lord praise, in remembrance of what he hath been through the year past, and in the whole of my life; whose gracious tender conduct hath been so wonderful (and well hast thou my Lord dealt with thy servant according to thy word) in all hath befallen me. And, as my soul does now move, and betake my self alone to him, as my own God, my Father, my Redeemer and blessed Comforter, and my only all; so do I hereby witness the settling of my trust, my hope, and reliance alone upon him, for this new year, or what time of my life may yet remain, with earnest desire to enter yet again, and continue in his service, even in that delightful service of my dearest Lord and master.

And now I do again, by a new surrender, witness my entire commitment of my self, my poor children, my credit for the gospel, my conduct and comfort, in so extraordinary a juncture, to my dearest Lord, to his gracious and compassionate care and providence; together with my works, and any small design to serve him and my generation. And I do intend new supplies of his grace and strength, to secure and make this poor servant (if it were his blessed will, yet more abundantly forth coming to him.) And with hope and acceptance, I write this, Jan. 1. 1694.

Post tendras fpero Lucem.

R. Fleming.
At another time, thus floweth his sacred pen: O my soul, never forget this solemn Wednesday night, nor the last Monday night; what solemn visits I had from my Lord, after so serious a work of trial about the warrant of my hope, and petition for the heightening of my faith, and sealing testimony of his Spirit: In how marvelous a way did my dearest Lord, I hope, bear evidence to the great assurance he had formerly given me! &c.

O let my soul blest and adore the Lord for this sweet and marvelous visit this Monday night, which my dearest Lord, I hope, hath given this poor servant, when so near sinking; and I hope said to my soul: Fear not, I forget you not, for I have graven you upon the palms of my hands, &c. I look on thee with delight, and the time is come when I will give thee an account of thy prayers and tears, of thy many groans and long on-waiting. Have I spoken, and will I not do it? &c. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, in an acceptable time have I heard thee; I trust thou in the Lord, for I will make thee a sign to this generation, &c.

I am leading thee right, and thy strength is to set still. Is the Lord's hand shortened, that it cannot save? &c.

O how shall I entertain this marvelous day, and appearance of my dearest Lord to his poor servant! O wonderful condescension this morning, after so sweet an evening before, that he should please to give so near an approach of himself! O, I hope, it was his voice! I am come, I am surely come, my servant, in the fourth watch of the night, to bring such my prisoner and set him at liberty, who hath flayed so long for me, &c. — I embrace you as an over-comer; rejoice, for great is your reward in heaven. I am now entering thee on a day of rejoicing; Be not doubtful, it is I who comfort thee, &c. And when I said, O how shall I manage such a wonderful enlargement? how differently was it returned, I hope from himself! I will manage it for thee: Thou hast blazed for me; but thou hast got the victory, and the day shall be thine, and thou shalt have what I have been doing with thee and for thee.

O let me never forget the 25th of December, at night; when after 60 years under the Lord's special conduct, he gave me so sweet and remarkable a visit, never to be forgotten! O what a night was it, when I went home, professed to sing the psalm!

But it was endless to name passages of this nature; since almost every Day was a communion-day between God and him. And how remarkably God hath answered his prayers, may easily be inferred from hence. One instance to this purpose we may see in his epiftary discourse, Page 68. of a minister, who had a violent colick immediately taken upon him, praying to God for that end. It is known to be himself he speaks of there; though he expresseth it modestly, in the third person.

I shall now present a few things, which he sets down in writing by themselves, under this title a short index of some of the great appearances of the Lord, in the dispensations of his providence to his poor servants, &c. And, although the brevity and obscurity of the hints, must needs leave us in the dark as to the full meaning of most of them, (as being written only for his own memory, as the title shews;) yet: they will serve to shew us, the particular care of his great Father, over this his faithful and eminent servant. They are the remarks, which he calls the appearances of the Lord towards him; in his own words.

1. How near was I brought to death in my infancy, given over, yea and oftentimes a burden to my friends, so as my death was made desirable to them, I being the refuge of my father's children: yet even then I was God's choice, and in a most singular way restored.

2. That remarkable deliverance and receiving a blow by a club, when a child, which was so near my eye, as endangered both my sight and life.

3. That strange and extraordinary impression I had of an audible voice, in the church, at night; when being a child, I had got up to the pulpit; calling to me, to make haste, &c.

4. That I, of all my father's sons, being four, should be spared, when the other three were so promising and desirable above me; and should thus come to be the only male-heir surviving of such a flock.

5. That solemn and memorable day of the communion at Gray-Friers, in the entry of the year 1648, where I had so extraordinary a sense of the Lord's presence; yea, whence I can date the first sealing evidence of my conversion, now 40 years past.

6. The Lord's gracious and signal preservation and deliverance given me at Dunbar-fight.

7. Those solemn times and near approaches of the Lord to my soul: the first at the Elbe, when I went there; and the other a little after my Father's death in the high-flud.

8. That scripture Acts xii. was by an observable providence given to be my first text; and how I was unexpectedly, and by a surprizal, engaged therein.

9. Those two great deliverances at sea, in going to Dundee: the first time in company with the Duke of Lauderdale; the other time in company with Mr. Andrew Gray of Glasgow.

10. That extraordinary dream, and marvelous vision I had twice repeated, with the unexpressable joy after the same.
11. Those memorable impressions and prefaces about my health, when it seemed hopeless, at my first entry upon the ministry; and the strange expression of Mr. Simpson to that purpose at New-Mills. 12. The Lord's immediate and wonderful appearance for me, in my first entry upon the ministry; with that extraordinary shower on the day of my ordination; and the amazing success which followed the same, in what befell; -- wherein Satan's immediate appearance against me was so visible. 13. The great and conspicuous seal given to my ministry from the Lord, in the conversion of several persons; with that marvelous power which then accompanied the word on the hearts of the people. 14. That signal appearance of the Lord, and his marvelous condescension, in my marriage-lots, and in the whole conduct of the same. 15. My deliverance from so eminent hazard of my life, in my fall from my horse at Kilmarnock. 16. The Lord's marvelous assistance and composure at the two communions of Cathcart and Dunlop; with that great enlargement I had at the last of these places, at the last table. 17. That as my entry to my charge was with so bright a sunshine, so was less did the Lord appear at my parting from that place; wherein all things did meet, in a remarkable juncture, to make the same both honorable and comforting. 18. The Lord's special providence, as to my outward lot, after my removal thence, in many instances that way. 19. His gracious sparing my dear wife so long, when her life was in such hazard in the years 65 and 72. 20. The preservation I had in going over to Fife, in the year 72, with the solemn times I got there. 21. That dream at Bonily, wherein I get such expressive warning as to my wife's removal; with the Lord's marvelous appearance and presence with me the Thursday after St. John's. 22. That extraordinary warning I got again of my dear wife's death, and of the manner of it, at London, in the year 1674. 23. Those two remarkable scripture-places given me at Weil- niber, in my return from London, 1674; viz. that in Rom. iv. in the freewill, and that in 115 psalm in the afternoon. 24. Those great and signal confirmations given me, at my wife's death: and that extraordinary voice so distinct and clear, which I had a few nights after her death. 25. Those special confirmations given me, at my first leaving my country, at Weilnibs, Richmond, Stanton, and the last at sea from the Shells. 26. Those solemn passages to confirm my faith, from Heb. xi. and Exod. xxxviii. and at other times at London; and the last night there, before I went away. 27. Those extraordinary and signal times I had, at my first entering at Rotterdam. 28. Those two observable provinces which did occur to me at Wordsden, and about the businesses of William Mader. 29. The marvelous sign given me of the state of my family, in what happened as to sudden withering of the tree, and its extraordinary reviving again, at my first entering into my first chaise in Rot- terdam. 30. The great deliverance from fire in the High-court. 31. The special providence in preserving my son from perishing in the water. 32. The godly providence in returning my diary, after it had been lost long. 33. The surprising relief, when cited by the council of Scotland to appear; with that sweet regeneration to the Lord, which I had then under so pungent a trial. 34. The remarkable event of a warning I was forced to give, that some present should be called away by death before the next Lord's-day. 35. The Lord's immediate supporting under a long series of pungent trials in this place, by a series of wonders (I may truly say:) for which I am obliged in a singular way to set up my Ebenezer, that hitherto hath the Lord helped. 36. The remarkable appearance of the Lord with me (which I omitted in its place) in that strange province relating to Mr. Moneyenny's death at Prellon-pans. 37. That most solemn providence and wonder of my life, my fall under the York-attack in Aug. 1674, when the great wheel was over my leg, so as I could feel it pressing me, without hurting, far less breaking my leg; as if it had been carried thus over in a just poise, to let me see how providence watcheth over me, &c. 38. The comfort God gave me in my children, and these extraordinary confirmations I get from God, upon the death of those sweet children whom God removed from me to himself. Now, go reader, go and do thon likewise for blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing; Matt. xxiv. 26.

As a spiritual memorial to the memory of the reverend and worthy Mr. Robert Fleming, who deceased July 25, 1694. By a Friend.

My pen must be like to an angel's quill. And my weak parts must equalize my will; should I perfume him fully to set forth, (though in rude characters) or draw his worth. Exult him as you please, yet fill you shall remaining find behind, this is not all.

Enraptured men and righteous are this day, (O fat prodigals!) quickly pluck away. Both had felt his gone, as if he grieved enjoying of his life, whilst here he lived. Are fruits soon pluck, and fouls to ripen grow and oo good for earth, are snatch'd up to the throne.

See and unbash'd for the truth he food, £ I'd, &c. all he knew; knew all that's understand'd. Earch virtue in him did so equal dwell; M en hardly could perceive which did excel. I must be his character, whist most mortal. N other can think, but bo y' he pierce'd the sky. G of into heaven, and men's amiz'd to cry. R reviewing (O behold!) aeternity's rich throne, F from living earthy mount! I'm now gone.

—Hoc acer nobis dolorem; Sed aeterni tempus vadeat Amor.

To
King Solomon made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars as the very Sycamore trees for abundance. I would be allowed to say, the author of this treatise is a New-Testament Solomon, a right princely divine. His works are truly silver and cedar ones; excellently rich in their subjects and the management of them. His rare and royal liberality (which the title-page is commanded to publish) maketh them as plenty and as easy to be come by, as the writings of vulgar scribes are.

Unto my disposition it pleased him to commit a good number of these his books; which, without his commission or knowledge, I assume to send forth with these short advertisements.

The author is that Mr. Fleming, of whom in another * treatise, thou hast the honourable thoughts of Dr. Bates, Mr. Mede, Mr. Howe, Mr. Cole, Mr. Sylvester, Mr. Williams, Mr. Showers. A Treatise laden with the praises of several eminent church-men, as well as Diffenters, (as we must still unhappily distinguish). This work of his, full like unto Moses, was born in evil-days; not at all propitious unto so masculine sacred issues. By reason whereof, it was in a manner hidden in these dominions, while extolled beyond the seas. Indeed the zeal of good families in Scotland (and of some devout ones in England) kept it close unto their holy Bibles, valuing it next thereto, because of its mighty service to the Faith, Life, and Joy thereof. But till (through the kindneps of God) the foresaid winter-days were past, and their rain was over and gone, this flower appeared not much in our land. So that this third edition is unto us but as a first.

Heartily
Heartily I congratulate the needy age, this antidote against Atheism and Medicine against the languors of faith and virtue. For though I do competently know how rich our London-Empory is in both, I do not know any equal to Mr. Fleming's that are to be found in our shops. Wherefore, I praise and thank those religious persons, who have promised to make known this hitherto hid treasure. And I humbly and earnestly beseech, both Ministers and private Christians, especially Gentlemen, and the few Noble, who love God, and are known of Him, to consult well this Book themselves, to commend it unto their relations, and to bestow it upon the poor in their neighbourhoods.

With this sacrifice God will be well pleased; and, by this service shall they gain the good report of all good men, and of the truth itself. So testifieth,

One ambitious to promote the
Common Salvation,

Bridges-street near
Covent-Garden,
July 17, 1693.

D. Burgess.
THE

EPISTLE

TO THE

READER.

Reader.

This is like you may expect some account of the rise and occasion of this discourse, that on so great and weighty a subject so small an essay should venture abroad, especially in a time, when it seemeth more safe and prudent to keep silence, to be swift to hear, and slow to speak, which seldom hath an after challenge; the author will say little for his apology herein, though he hopeth he may find it more easy to satisfy others, than he did himself: this freedom only he shall take to confess, that sometime it hath been matter of earnest, yea, hath caused some toiling, and exercise upon his spirit, and pressed a more serious enquiry and search, with a respect to his own case, to be persuaded anent the scripture's divine authority, that godliness is not an empty name or shadow, but of an undoubted truth, which indeed of all other things is the greatest, and of most near concernment: and truly anent that, this grave convincing argument of the scripture's certain accomplishment, hath not only oft stared him in the face, with a satisfying discovery and impression thereof, as a most quieting and unanswerable demonstration of the truth, but he must also say, that by very remarkable confirmations from the Lord, this hath been so convincingly witnessed to his experience, as leaveth him under engagement (were such a poor teste...
The Epistle to the Reader.

mourn of weight) to put his seal to the word, that it falleth not to the ground, neither doth the promise of God fail.

It is a dark time now with the church of Christ, which we see every where almost suffering and afflicted, whilst the whole earth besides seemeth to be at ease, christians also even beyond others, in their private lot, tryed with very sharp trials, though I think suffering may be the least of our fear at this day, while Atheism doth now appear on so formidable a ground, and hath a more threatening aspect than the rage or violence of men: we see a sad decay likewise on the churches abroad, religion every where under a great consumption, and wearing out, that seemeth to have reached it in its vital parts, men search after an unusual way of sinning, as if they scorned to be wicked at a common and ordinary rate, prejudice easily taken up and entertained against the way of God, whilst the good man doth alas perish, without any affecting observation thereof, the choice and excellent of the earth plucked away, and none to fill their room; christians burials now frequent, but the birth, and bringing of such to the church, rare. This is indeed a sad subject, and so much the sadder that few are found whose eye affeeth their heart, whose tears and groaning seem to answer such a stroke and ruin, which now is like to fall under our hand, but I shall leave this; prayer will be the best cure, and is this day more fit, than complaining, to turn unto him who seeth the ways of his people that he may heal them, and can prevent these with mercy, who seem least fit for the same; only two or three sad remarks of this time, I cannot altogether pass, which indeed are strange symptoms of the churches present case and distemper. 1. To see men own the doctrine of justification, who yet can professedly disown, yea, make it their work by reproach to beget a prejudice against the practice thereof, oh strange! To find such as will dip their pen in gall against a tender and strict walk in religion, and recite it in the power thereof, whilst they do not deny these truths and principles that necessarily oblige to such a tender practice; who in the most grave concerning duties of christianity think it enough to charge their brethren with pharisaical ostentation and hypocrisy, whilst they must confess these duties to be unquestionably binding, and that they can be no competent judges of such a challenge, which the grave witness of the heart and inward parts of men, can only determine. 2. It is a sad remark also of the time that Protestant writers, professing the Reformed Religion, shall state themselves in opposition to the most concerning grounds thereof, such as imputed righteousness and justification by faith, which are well called Articulus sanitatis & cadentis Ecclesiae. I cannot have that charity, that it is from ignorance, but from a height of malice, that some of late reproach the Protestant Doctrine, in this great fundamental of justification, as if it prefed believing and resting upon Christ, without respect to works and holiness; I confess, we put not inherent righteousness in the room of imputed, though we assert each is necessary in their own place, the one in order to our right, the other in order to the actual participation of that right, yea, that holiness is absolutely necessary not only necessitate præcepti, sed mediis, and justifying faith doth necessarily require works, sed non qua, & quatenus justificat, but sure, if these men grant we are justified by the satisfaction of Christ, they must needs confess it is by imputation, since if the debtor be acquit by the cauioner's payment, is it not by the imputation thereof to him? O sad! to see some put their invention upon the rack how to wound the church (yea, a death wound it would be) if they could
could reach their end) in that great truth of imputed righteousness, but it were belit they denied that 6. v. of chap. iv. to the Rom. to be canonick scripture, which none can read and shift, it being so clear, that the blessed man is there held forth, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, sure that cannot be inherent righteousness, else it were contradiction in ad-

jectio, I profess these whatever they pretend, I must look on as adversaries to the Reformed churches, and there is nothing more dangerous than a pirate going forth under a counterfeit flag. 3. Is it not like-

wise sad, yea, astonishing to see ministers now in these times, who are the express embassadors of Christ given to the church for her edification, stand so directly cross to the very end of their work and ministry, many of whom may be said, that knowingly, and deliberately they oppose piety, that such should persecute, whose work is to feed, and wound instead of heal-

ing, grieve the spirit of the godly, who should be keepers of their joy, that none are a greater plague to corrupt the church, and cause the sac-

riifice of the Lord be abhorred, than some of these who should be the salt of the earth, yea, none more obstruct the treaty of the gospel, betwixt Christ and his church, then ministers who are called the friends of the bridegroom. Oh, what a strange and astonishing contradiction may this seem, but it should be no reproach to that holy and excellent calling of the ministry, for of such the scripture hath expressly warned. I confess it may be said no Atheist like an unfruitified minister, yea, no Atheism of so black a die as theirs, who being still imured with holy things have yet no sense thereof.

Now in this very dark hour, wherein the church seemeth to have fallen in a death like pang, and oh, many of her children in a sad lethargy, that if we looked in an ordinary way, her wound might seem incurable, there are two great and concerning queries that I think should much take us up. The one is to know what the scripture speaketh to the church, what solid ground of encouragement is there held forth, for truly if we had not that sure testimony of the word, we might fear religion should quite wear out, and truth perish from the earth, but doth the scripture speak peace? all then is well; that, O that is sufficient security to put the churches hope beyond further debate, though men should threaten, though the earth were overturned, and the foundation shaken, this is a determination above men, above all the rules of human policy, yea, above the liars, which frustrate the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad, even that revealed counsel of God, taking place anent his work and people.

I know some grave writers of these late times, do express their fear that the horrid wickedness and apostacy of the Gentile church may at last resolve in the Lord's departure and universal darkness, that as the rejection of the Jews made way for the Gentiles incoming, so their fall may as remarkably proceed that solemn return and restoration of the Jewish church, it is also become the fear of many that Popery may yet once overturn the whole Reformed churches before Antichrist fall: but since these sad thoughts, nor any appearances of the time, are no part of our Bible, we should learn neither to stretch our fears nor ex-

pectations beyond that which the scripture warranteth, and if the Lord be God, and this his very word, let us adhere to it and wait for its accomplishment. A second querie which is indeed no less concerning in such a time, may be anent Duty, what so imminent an hazard of the hurch,
church, and this great decay of christianity doth most pressingly call for, 
but this is a subject which requires another pen, and too large, to 
touch with a passing word, yea, we may say the great want of these 
days is not anent the discovery of duty, but of the practice of known 
and disowned duties, for the scripture growth a certain and distinct 
found in the darkest time, and hath not left us to doubtful inquiries and de-
bate in this matter, I shall therefore leave it with a few things only to 
be in the general considered. 1. It is sure, that every time hath its pre-
sent duty, and the wise discerners thereof will know thence what they 
ought to do, what work and service the present circumstances of that time 
call for, shall the earth have its seasons wherein things are beautiful, 
shall the fook and swallow know their time, and yet christians not know 
how to bring forth fruit in their season, and discern the special time and 
opportunity of duty? 2. It is also sure, that every christian in what-
soever capacity or condition as he hath his measure and talent, so hath 
some work and opportunity of duty, wherein they may serve the Lord in 
their generation, yea, it is not the meanest lot or condition that must be 
that doth upon any, that they have no work for God, who doth to 
be faithful for him: Ob that in this threatening time when darkness is 
like to overspread the church, it were more upon the heart of christians 
to strive together, and contend by a serious improvement of their several 
capacities to preserve religion, and transmit the knowledge of Jesus 
Christ to the posterity, that the christian Parent or Master of family did 
witness more that great resolution in a time when many are drawing back, 
but as for me, I and my house will serve the Lord. 3. It is found that 
the most eminent and honorable service of the church doth usually try to 
ker in a low and suffering condition, when there hath been but little 
strength, many outward disadvantages, then both their call and furniture 
hath been most observable to confess the truth, to endure for the gospel 
of Christ, to overcome by the word of his testimony, a piece of service 
whereof more prosperous times do not give such an opportunity, yea, it hath 
been in such a case, Dan. xi. 32. that these who knew their God, were made 
strong to do exploits. 4. It doth much concern us to put an high value on 
the truth in a time when men must either lost it, or buy it, and O what a choice purchase is that which cannot be bought too dear, though at the 
rate of our liberty, estate, credit and reputation, yea, with the life of peace 
when it cometh in competition with it? For it is that great depositum 
once delivered to the saints, the inheritance of our children, that way 
whereby Jesus Christ keepeth intercourse with his tride on the earth, 
yea, the charter of all our mercies, and of our hope through eternity. 
5. Though every line of divine truth is inestimable, yet it is sure 
there is a more pressing call for our adherence to that truth which is 
most contumaciously in the time, for it is the word of his patience and 
the matter of our present testimony, and it is known through all ages 
what a singular blessing hath followed the contending and witnessing of 
a few for the truth in a spirit of public defection, to keep it a-
live, when it was like to be swallowed up, yea, to effect's above rational 
b-left, Unus Athanasius contra tetum orbem, many such remarks have 
not been wanting. 6. I shall only add that which is always ne-
cessary and binding, yet we may say in a time of the church's bastard and 
suffering is more pressingly called for, even the study of christian prudence, 
a duty convincing necessary, for regulating of duties, according to the 
cir-
circumstances of the church's case, which doth so nearly concern the interest and preservation of religion, that I must say, a breach in that concord betwixt zeal and christian prudence, when there is not some equal respect studied in the exercise of both, cannot but give the church a sore wound, this is indeed a large theme, but I shall only point at three things.

1. In our avoiding and being tender to give offence, not only to keep a distance from evil, but from the smallest appearance thereof; I must say they are bad cathiffs, and have little respect to the churches edification, who make it their work, not so much to keep men from sin, as to fiew them, quam prope ad pecatum fine peccato accedere licet, O what a becoming fear is that, not to lay a fumbling block in the way of others, to grieve the weak, or confirm such who sfe to found their prejudice against the truth, and way of God, upon the miscarriage of such as profess the fame. 2. This excellent study of christian prudence hath a respect to mens taking offence as well as their giving it, to our being sober in judging in personal reflections, to cover and hide the infirmities of others rather than spread them, even for the gospel's sake, yea, to font as it were our eyes, and cast a mantle on their nakednes, who overthrown with the violence of some temptations may yet be serviceable to the church, but especially this should prevent us to a watchful regard of any breach, and rent in the church, and to study an healing spirit so far as is possible without prejudice to truth. 3. It is also a concerning piece of christian prudence, how to walk wisely towards these who are without, when prejudice against the way of God is now in such a growth to study bow we may convince, gain ground, and by christian prudent and tender carriage conciliate respect to the truth, and thus commend holiness, and these who profess it to the conscience of men, to study that rule of expediency much in things of themselves warrantable, what fitnes and advantage present circumstances may offer, or deny for edification, and promoting that great interest of the gospel in our converse with men.

I shall now cease to trouble you further, only would premiet some few things with a respect to the subject of this following essay. 1. Should we not with wonder and astonishment look on this great record of the scripture? by which the glorious Majesty of God doth speak to men, yea, doth as certainly communicate his counsel and mind, we may say more certainly, than if we had an immediate audible voice from heaven, O could we have such ordinary thoughts of this, if we consider how near God cometh therein to us? I think if there were but one corner of the earth, tho' in the remotest parts, where men might go and get a look of so wonderful and important a thing as God's express will written and sent from heaven to the earth, anent our duty here, and blessedness for ever, would we not think it worth our crossing the sea, and of the greatest expense of time or labour? it is truly a wonder bow we can read and consider the scripture without wondering.

2. It is a great concernment to know that the scripture hath such a witness as experience, and that there is such a trade and correspondence as this betwixt the faints and the word, which lieth not in the common road of the world. O what an empty thing should religion be if it had not this word experience in its grammar, that secret and sure mark whereby the christian knoweth the scripture is of God, bow thus the Lord hath oft sealed their infraction in a dark plunge; bow life and power, enlivening influences to the melting of heart, hath oft tryed them there in a very dead frame; and now they know that verily God beareth prayer, now they are persuaded and have learned by the cross that he is indeed a comforter, yea, many can show bow by the word their first acquaintance with the Lord did begin, bow some
particular truth, like a pickle of corn thrown in at their heart, by the blessing of the great husbandman was made to take life and grow. 3. It much concerneth us to know what an excellent key the scripture is to unlock that sealed book of providence, and that no other key can fit the same, many have tried another way but lost themselves on the search, and the more they prey by human wisdom, they became the more dark. I truly think there is not a more satisfying discovery within time than this, to trace divine truth back until we see its first breaking forth out of his eternal decree and council; who is the author thereof, bow hence it taketh bold of the word which is in the adequate sign, and declaration of his purpose, and that bow the word taketh bold of his work and providence, where we may see the face and condition of the church clearly written out through all the changes of time, how providence keepeth a certain and steady course even amidst the most perplexed motions and reelings of the earth, yea, bow all things, even these which would seem most contradictory, run within that straight channel of the word, and cannot go without these bounds. 4. It is the principal and most concerning scripture promiseth, that are only touched in this following discourse, thes which carry along with them a clear continued series of the church's condition through time, and shews the most remarkable changes of her lot, for it is clear that in diverse prophecies and in a different manner the spirit doth point at one and the same thing: and truly it should cause no mistake or prejudice, that we find several of the scripture prophecies express in such dark terms, since the wisdom of God saw it fit that for a time these truths should be locked up, and sealed; but now light hath so far broken up with the event, as we may see how very significant and suitable to the matter these most dark enigmatical terms are. 5. We should upon no account shut our ears where the scripture is clear, and give us ground to wait that the outgoings of the Lord for his people in their deliverance, and for the destruction of bis enemies now in these last times, shall be very glorious, yea, by some flately and stupendious acts of providence that he shall accomplish his judgment on Antichrist; neither must we take a prejudice at truth, because of the wild fancies of many who would extend it beyond its bounds, or that near resemblance which the terror of some in this time may seem to have there to, for that hath been an old stratagem of the Devil to prejudice the world at some of the truths of God, by setting up a counterfeit thereto. I shall add no more, only what account is given upon the close of the last argument of some remarkable passages of providence in the late times, as here in the author hath some confidence to profess he did endeavour what could be attained for certainty of the same, and if any circumstance of these relations should be found a mistake, he dare say before Him who is greater than our confidence, it was not the neglect of a serious inquiry, so he must also permit, the inferring of them was upon no further intent, than to be a witness to that truth of the Lord's eminent appearance for his church in the last days: it would be of great use and profit to the church that some more fitly qualified would study a more large collection of this kind. O that this might go forth with a blessing from him who by the meanest things can serve himself and promote the edification of his church, and that the Lord would raise some up with much of his spirit to make a further search and enquiry in this great and weighty truth.
HERE are two means by which the blessed Majesty of God hath chosen, to reveal himself to the sons of men, his word and his works, which may be called these two great luminaries, for giving light to the Church, though the one be the greater, I mean doth more clearly shine forth, yea doth communicate light to the other; these men must not divide, which by so strait a yoke the Lord hath joined, and by a marvellous correspondence hath set the one over against the other, that it may be easy to see his faithfulness, and the accomplishment of the scripture therein, and indeed this is a great concerning truth, that calleth for a serious study, the solid perfusion of which should afford a sweeter ground of repose, and rest for the soul, though the earth were all in a combustion round about, and give a satisfying answer to our most solicitous thoughts and fears. Now this being the intended subject of the following discourse, I shall first touch it a little in the general, and then hold forth some more particular grounds, whence it may be clearly demonstrated.

1. That the scripture of God hath a certain accomplishment here in the world, and what is to be understood by the same, I shall endeavour to clear in these things, which may be considered.

1. This is the very unfolding of the Lord's decree, and secret purpose, the bringing forth of his work, now within time, to the view of angels and men, which was before him in the depth of his thoughts and counsel from eternity; it is an opening up of the sealed book, which we must not understand to be that secret roll of election, and the book of life, wherein the names of the elect are written; but liber fatidicus, the sealed book of God's dispensations in the world, shewing out his counsels and designs which should be brought forth in the after-ages of time; for as the Lord did fully comprehend what he was to do, and all that was to befall his church and
people, from the beginning to the end, long long before there was a beginning, before the mountains were formed; so hath he copied and written out his heart in the word herein, wherein he hath most plainly shewed forth, what were his blessed purposes, and counsel of old; and thus the thoughts of his heart, his word, and his works do sweetly agree, and each one wonderfully answers to another, for his work doth bring forth and accomplish his word, that his decree and counsel from all eternity may take place.

2. The scriptures accomplishment is the transcript and writing of it over in providence, where we may see and admire how the word doth shine upon all the paths and footsteps of the Lord towards his church in every age, and gives light to the fame, and what an evident reflection his word hath again upon the word; so that through the whole sories and course of providence in the earth, we have a most exact portraiture and image of the scripture, and answering one to another, as face answers to face in the glass, where it may be easy to discern the copy by the principal, and that resemblance which is twixt the building and that excellent pattern and model which is held forth thereof in the word.

3. The accomplishment of the scripture is the very turning that, which was the object of our faith and contemplation, to be the object of our sense and feeling; it is the real birth and bringing forth these truths unto the world, in their appointed time and season, concerning the church and particular christians, which were hid in that womb of the promise, and many dark predictions of the word; it is such a thing as giveth the promises and prophecies a visible being, yea bringeth truth so near within the reach of our senses, that we may even touch, as it were, and handle the words of life. O what an excellent interpreter is experience! taste and see, for thus the serious christian geteth a view of the scripture and spiritual things, which the most subtle and piercing eye of unchristian schoolmen cannot reach, yea, by the practice of truth, and nearness to God, and retiring of the soul to him, hath oft got more light in an hour, than others by many days putting their judgment and invention upon the rack.

4. This is God's own seal, which he putteth to the word to confirm and ratify the same: I do not only mean the secret seal of the spirit within, but something more external, that solemn testimony of his works, whereby he doth every day appeal to mens confidences concerning his truth; for his works are very manifest, wherein there is so clear an engraving of his truth and faithfulness, that as the impress and image of the seal is upon the wax, men may also see whose superscription and image that is, which doth appear on such and such passages of providences.

5. This is something we are not to seek only in the extraordinary acts of providence, or in any singular and eminent path of a christian experience, nor doth shine forth in the smallest and most casual things that fall out, yea, in every page of that great volume of providence may be clearly read.

6. The scriptures accomplishment is such a thing as concerns every christian in his personal case to which his ordinary experience doth relate, whereof these have a large regifter, what of the word hath been certainly proven in the several steps and changes of life, whose practice doth much lye betwixt improvement of the word, and observation how it is fulfilled; such can witness how under a spiritual decay to be carnally minded is death, and when it's well, that great peace they have who love God's law; they have oft found that in a trait he is a very present help, and in the way of duty that it's surely good to draw near to him, and in the close of their life, can from many remarkable and convincing providences, declare the truth and faithfulness,
fulness of God: and truly whilst I speak here of the christian’s experience, I think it’s sad, and a great short coming, that there is not a more serious improvement of it for this end, which is a very concerning duty on such who have tasted that the Lord is gracious; and O what an excellent addition would this be to their testament, when they are to leave the world, to leave a testimony behind them to the faithfulnes of God in his word, and thus put their seal to the same, from what they have oft proven by sure experience, for this should prove a singular help to strengthen others, and spread abroad the fame and good report of religion; yea, thus one generation should declare the works of the Lord to another, and transmit the memory of his goodness to succeding ages.

7. This is something which not only the christian’s experience doth witnes, and in every time take place, but hath also a peculiar reference to these ages and periods of times, wherein such particular truths should have their accomplishment; for it’s true, that the prophets of old did not only in their predictions hold forth in general, the truth and certainty of these things, which should fall out, but they also inquired and searched diligently what manner of time the spirit, by them, did point at, 1 Pet. i. 11. For this truly clear, that a part of the word was under the law, to have its peculiar accomplishment; that part of it also under the Messiah’s kingdom, in the daies of the gospel should be fulfilled, and we find a very concerning part thereof belongs to their latter times; and these are betwixt such periods of time, and revolution of the church’s cafe, and the bringing forth of such a part of the scripture to a performance, a very certain and undoubted connection. This true we do not yet well understand (which will be one of the last manifestations the church shall have at the end of time, when the mystery of God is finished) how to fort the event exactly to the word, but it is sure (and were worthy of our study and observation) how every age hath something of the scripture peculiar thereto, yea carrieth forward the Lord’s work and design a further step: may we not see how one age fulfilleth such a part of the church’s sufferings appointed for her, and puts some great tryal and sad persecution over her head which she was to meet with? whilst an other age carrieth her thorow an other change, and giveth her a time of rest and breathing, how such a time bringeth anticriff forward to his height, and such a following age begins the turn of the Church’s cafe, yea every several period and revolution of time, still addeth something to that excellent history of the word and providence which we have since the beginning, and bringeth forth something further into the world of the Lord’s counfel and design about his church.

8. The accomplishing of the scripture is such a thing, we are to look after in a special way here, which concerns this militant and travelling condition of the church; for if the scriptures were once fully accomplished, and the great mystery of God therein finished, there were then nothing more to do, his work of providence were at an end, and time should be no more. This is something that is not here perfected at once, but is still gradually carrying on, and then shall be compleat at the resurrection of the just, and second coming of the Lord, which is the last part of canonick scripture to be made out, when both his work and his word, and time, shall be all finished together; but while the faints are yet by the way, they have the written word, and all these precious promises therein for present use and encouragement, for that is its proper work to take them safe thorow this labyrinth of the world, and when it hath brought them to the land, it hath no more to do; there will be then no more need for a christian to go to a promise, and
and adventure upon it; we shall then no more watch with the watchmen in a dark and stormy night, and hope for the breaking of the day; faith then shall not be at a stand how such a word shall be made out, because of invincible difficulties in its way: no, then it hath done its work, and that which is written shall be swallowed up in that which is seen and enjoyed, all the streams of our encouragement will then lose themselves in a greater depth. O then it's finished and done what all the promises, prophecies, and threatenings of the word was bringing forth, and then no more need of something as a pledge and earnest in hand to them who have the full profession of the inheritance, under whose feet the God of peace hath trod Satan and all their enemies.

9. I shall add this, The accomplishment of the scripture, is something which is not only demonstrative to a christian by sensible influences, and God's secret working with his spirit, but is made out to the observation of men in the way of providence, and not only witnessed by that internal evidence of the spirit, but by an external testimony, which both rationally holdeth this out to the judgment, and sensibly to the fight and experience; and this is the strongest and most full of all outward evidences, since the world must shut their eyes if they do not see it, and a christian must deny what he both seeth and feeleth, if he denies witness to this.

II. We shall consider the accomplishment of the scripture as that which is the Lord's peculiar work and design in the world, and that great business which is upon the wheels of providence, amidst the various changes and revolutions which are here within time, for bringing about whereof the blessed thoughts of his heart are fixed and unalterable. This is indeed a grave and serious truth, worthy to be more noticed and laid to heart by men, that the glorious providence of God which goeth throughout the earth, and doth particularly reach all things which came to pass, the smallest as well as the greatest interests of men in all these, doth move certainly and infallibly for the accomplishing of the scripture, which is that great thing God hath before his eyes; for it is no personal interests of men, how great soever they be, that can answer this end, it is something beyond the setting up of kings, or overturning kingdoms and nations, that he doth mind amidst these various changes which are in the world; 'tis some greater thing than that which we most notice, the Lord thereby designs how such a party is advanced, and others brought low, for these things come within the reach of his care and providence, in so far as the fulfilling of the scripture is therein concerned; the outmaking of the promises and threatenings, one syllable whereof he doth more value than all the crowns and kingdoms of the earth, yea will not let it fall to the ground, though it should be at the rate of laying cities and countries defolated; for it's in this the Lord taketh pleasure, and exerciseth his blessed thoughts, even the bringing about what he hath spoken in his Word.

Now to clear this further, I shall hold forth these following grounds, whence it may appear.

First, The fulfilling of the Scripture, and written Word is so great a thing, and of such concernment, that the blessed Majesty of God thought it worthy of a place in his heart from all eternity, this was before him in his thoughts and counsels of old; even that marvellous work which should be the after-product, and manifesting of his Word to his Church here within time, and surely was such a plot and contrivance that as no less than infinite love, wisdom and power, was required to bring it about, so it was well becoming the Majesty of God, and worthy to be the work of all the
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

the three blessed persons of the Trinity; O if we could go down a little to this deep, and see the wonders that are there, we would find that knowledge which usually lefsleneth our admiration of other things, would heighten it here, it would be new to us every day to think how great and marvelous a thing is which the Word is bringing forth.

2. It is upon this, even the performance of the Word that the present encouragement, and the after blessedness of the saints doth lyce, for the great interest of the Church is adventured upon the Word, and embarked with it, which should be lost, yea their flock and treasure which is laid up in heaven, and all that a Christian is worth, which is laid up in the promife, were then perifhed, if the Scripture should want an accomplish-

ishment, the Godly man hath then run and labourd in vain, and these who are fallen asleep in Christ have dy'd in a sad delusion, providence would be like the work of the foolish builder, who begun and knew not how to finish. O how highly then is the Lord concerned in fulfilling of his Word? That he may perfect what concerns his People, and having surely paid the price put them also in possession.

3. There is yet more than the interests of Angels and men, yea and than heaven and earth is worth that depends upon the outmaking of the Scripture: the glory of God and especially the praise of that great attribute his faithfulness, which he will have no less shine forth in the performance of his Word, than his power and wisdom in this great fabric of the universe, and these marvellous productions of nature; for he hath magnified his Word above all his works, therefore is his heart greatly set upon this, even the bringing to pass what he hath spoken, which if in the least should fail, were no less than to make God a lyar, and falsify his Word, who is through all the Church known by this blessed Name, the God of truth.

4. We shall consider this, as that great truth, which is put in his hand who only in heaven and earth was found worthy to open the Book of Gods decrees and counsels, and loose the seals thereof, a trust which the Lord did not adventure upon the Angels, the smallest promise being such as requires no less than an omnipotent power and the arm of Jehovah to bring it about; for which end, he whom the father hath anointed, is gone forth as a mighty man who rejoiceth to run his race, that he may perform his Word, and through this great design in the administration of providence, about his Church and People which he will not cease or give over, until the mystery of God in the Scripture, and all that was spoken by the Prophets be put to a close, when heaven and earth at the pouring out of the last vial, shall give that solemn shout and exclamations, It is finished, it is finished. O if this were once fully perfected, there would be no more to do, then the Winter were past and the summer come, the song of Moses and the Lamb should be heard, because the bride hath made herself ready, then let all the trees of the wood rejoice, the hills break forth into singing, and all that is therein be glad, because the Scripture and great design thereof is fully finished, and the day of the perfect liberty of the Sons of God is come.

5. The accomplishment of the Scripture is of such concernment that nothing can be done until it be once finished, for this, time must wait; the Sun must keep its course, and the ordinances of the Heaven continue as they are, the World is but a scaffold until this building be perfected, for this the grave doth still retain her prisoners and the dust of the Saints must yet rest in hope, the creation still groaneth, and the marriage supper of the Lamb is deferred, the cry of the Souls under the altar get not a full return, until all that is written in the Word be fulfilled.
6. We shall consider, this is the great thing which the Lord this day is carrying on, even the accomplishment of his Word, for this is most brought upon debate of any thing besides; the World challengeth it, and the hearts of the godly do oft call it in question; the Atheist scoffs at it, and faith, where is the promise of his coming, there are often to appearance insuperable difficulties in the way of its performance, therefore doth the Majesty of God so much concern himself in this, for bringing about of which he is in a holy way reflefs, and providence in an unceflant motion, until he hath done that which he hath spoken in his Word. It was for this caufe that the Scripture might be accomplished, that the Word was made flesh, and he who counted it no robbery to be equal with God, did take upon himself the form of a Servant, this is of such account in his eyes, that what time he speaks concerning a Nation or People, ere it come not to pafs, he will rather put forth omnipresence, for the working of miracles, and change the very course of nature, for this, he will make the deep dry, make a way through the red Sea, and caufe Jordon stand as in heapes, that he may keep promise to his People; if there be no way for bringing about his Word, but through a Sea of blood, and over the bones and carcasses of his enemies, he will do it and bring it to pafs, tho' walled Cities, and the ions of ANACE mighty and strong shoul'd stand in the way thereof. ABRABAM's old age and SARAH's dead womb must not frustrate this, if the promise of the Churches reftauration cannot be made out without a wonder shewed upon dry bones scattered at the graves mouth, this shall not be wanting; when God faith he'll bring down the enemies of his Church, if the dust of the ground shoul'd arise, down they must come; how many great designs of men hath this bleffed design (that the counsel of the Lord may fland) crushed and broken? so that their work and counsel hath been as the Spider's web, when it flood cros to this end, the godly need not fear, that he be not a present help in time of trouble, for he will keep his word herein, though the Earth shoul'd be overturned and the Mountains cast into the midst of the Sea; O who hath refifled his counsel! What are all these vicifitudes and changes here in the World? But making way for the Scriptures accomplishment, with what desire doth he move towards this end? So that as in ZECHAR. vi. v. 8. the instruments by him appointed for executing his judgment and the threatnings of the Word, it's faid they have quieted his Spirit, his decrees are mountains of brafs, which are unchangeable, the thought of his heart takes place in all generations, therefore the Word which is gone forth out of his mouth shall not return in vain, but the pleafure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

III. The accomplishment of the Scripture is a truth very clear and manifeft, whereof none can pretend ignorance, if they do not shut their eyes, and force their own light from the fear of such a discovery; for the obftuction doth not lye in the darknes of the object or that men cannot fee this, since we have it fo clearly held forth in great and legible characters, nay, we must fay the caufe is culpable, there is much of the will in it, which renders fuch an ignorance without excuse. O that this should be fo little look'd after, a matter of fuch near and weighty concernment, when there needs not another demonstration, but come and fee the works of the Lord through the earth, for he hath here fo far condefcended to his People, to bring the truth near, that they even feel the fame, yea doth in a manner fay to every one as to THOMAS, put in your hands, touch the Word and truth thereof, and be no longer faithlefs, taffe but and fee, that the Lord is good and that he is true in what he hath spoken.

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We are indeed to look after a more clear and full discovery of this truth the nearer the Church is to the end of time; there is a labyrinth as it were of turnings and windings, through which we may see the Word oft brought about, so as we lose sight thereof, and are ready to stagger about its performance; but as that the most eminent confirmations the saints ever had of truth, has been after the greatest shakings concerning it, yea, the Lord hath in all ages, so visibly sealed his Word by its performance, that we may say, can he be a Christian and a stranger to this in his experience, and a serious on-looker on providence and the dispensations of the time, wherein he lives, and a stranger to it in his observation; yea, can any be so wholly brutish, not to discern a thing so clear that oftentimes these, who run, may read?

But to speak a little more to this I shall here point at some things that may shew how manifest this truth is.

1. Is it not very clear, which we see every day brings to light? A truth so conspicuous, both in God's ordinary way with his Church, and in the several steps and passages of a Christian life: For these mercies which bring the Word and promise to pass, are new every morning, and cry aloud, if we could hear, great is his faithfulness, this is indeed tried; and needs there more to convince a blind man that his sight is restored to him, but that he certainly seeth; sure they never wanted confirmations here who do but seriously seek to be confirmed.

2. Is it not a clear truth, which not only is found upon the exact and trial, but is witnessed by such who ever tried it in their most pressing straits and extremity; for it's in the darkest night this truth hath most brightly shined, and these the most remarkable ventorious acts of faith, have they not still brought forth most convincing experiments thereof? We may say there is none can give a better account of the performance of the Word, than these who against hope, have believed in hope, that this never made them ashamed.

3. Is it not also clear, whereof there are such solemn extraordinary confirmations in all ages? For that his name is near, his wondrous works declare, I am sure no time could ever deny its witnesses, how by great convincing providences, both of judgment and mercy it hath been so sealed, as hath forced Atheists to keep silence, no time wherein the Church had not cause to erect a pillar, and engrave thereon, We have seen with our eyes the great and wondrous works of the Lord, by which he hath witnessed the truth of his Word.

4. Is it not a manifest truth which even in the most strange and dark footsteps of providence so clearly shineth forth, these which at the first look are an astonishment, and hard to be understood, yet after most clearly verify the Scripture, that whilst the Lords way goeth out of our sight, yea, out of the ordinary road of his working, through a labyrinth of turnings and cross dispensations, yet at length it doth evidently clear and disentangle it self, which men may oft see break forth as the Sun out of a dark cloud that shineth the more brightly the more it was obscured.

5. Is it not very clear which can be demonstrated by such visible effects in these great changes of the World? For the fulfilling of the Scripture is not a thing hid in a corner, but oft published on the houfe tops, that men may see legibly written upon Kingdoms and Nations, the desolate ruins and devastation of cities and houfes great and fair, which are made to be without inhabitants, so as these who go by may clearly read the cause, and bear that witness, Lo there is sin visibly punished according to the Word.

6. How
6. How clear is this, which we have so evidently drawn out, and acted over in a Christian walk? For what else is the spiritual conversation of such, these visible effects and evidences of the grace of God all along a Christians way, but a visible convincing witness to the performance of the word? Hath not such a very audible echo, and refund to that which is the great drift and scope of the Scripture; where men may see the Bible turn'd over into a practical History, written forth and acted on the heart and conversation of the faints, as on a stage or theatre: the Word living, speaking, moving, and clearly diffusing itself through all the veins, as it were, and conduits of a Christian's life, so that if the truth and reality of the grace of God be a thing manifest and unquestionable, we must also see therein the real performance of the Scripture.

7. I shall add, we may clearly see how one part of the Scripture is nothing else but the punctual fulfilling and accomplishment of the other; how that which was shadowed out by dark types under the law and held in prophesy through the old Testament, is written before our eyes in a plain and real history in the New Testament, and that the gospel is only a fulfilling of the Law and the Prophets.

IV. Though it is very manifest, and by undeniable proofs can be demonstrated, that the Scripture hath a real accomplishment and doth certainly take place in the constant course of providence here in the world, that I am sure if men do not darken themselves they can be no strangers to such a thing; yet we must say, This truth which most nearly concerns us, is to the most of men (even such who seem to give a large assent to the Word) a mystery and dark riddle. There are few who do but enquire if there be such a thing, if the promises and threatenings have indeed a certain evidence; few do seriously ponder the providences of God in which the truth and faithfulness of the Word shineth forth, that they may thereby be further confirmed, we see that too many (alas too many) the great concerns of the Law and everlasting happiness are a trivial and an impertinent business, this is a truth, the World doth pass without regarding: such as sport at Religion when they come to earnestly here, dare not stand before this discovery, it concerneth them much to reconcile their principles with their practice, their fear begeteth hatred, and both put their wit and invention on the rack how to dispute away any remainder of a conscience, to imprison their light, and under the pretext of reason, run down godlinesfs and the absolute necessity thereof, yea, besides doth nor senality, wherein many wallow and steep themselves, so dull and drown the soul, put such an interposition of the Earth between them and this truth as wholly darkens it? And, oh how sad, that many having a large profession to be Christians scarce ever knew, what it is to put the Word to an essay and tryal in the concerns of their life, to have their light followed with experience, wherein the very truth and reality of Religion lieth.

To clear this, I shall hold forth some things which may shew how little this truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is known or studied by the most of men.

The abounding of so much Atheism that there are so many who not only disclaim the practice of that Religion they seem to profess, but do stake themselves in a most direct opposition to the rules and principles thereof, these to whom the Scripture is but as a romance, yea, do only converse therewith to prove their wit and parts in impugning the same, who avowedly mock at the judgments and providences of God; I confess these may be reckoned Monsters, a very prodigy in the time, wherein they live, though alas, it is
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is not the least part of the World; and which is strange, we see the most horrid Atheists do usually abound where the light of the Gospel hath most shined; the savage places of the Earth bring forth no such monstrous births as are hatch'd within the visible Church; for thus the judgment of God putteth a blacker dye on them than others; O what a terrible sound should the fulfilling of the Scripture have in men's ears if they once came to have serious thoughts thereof, since they cannot admit this but they must certainly read their own sentence of death, which a few days shall put in execution, and if the Scripture be true, they are then unspeakably miserable.

2. That indifference which we see amongst men about Religion, and the most concerning truths of Scripture doth shew how little this is known or laid to heart, whence there is such a generation who do not professedly deny the Scripture, yet can turn it over in a slave problem, and wonders that men should engage so far upon it; it is not that it is hid from them, but they truly choose to hide themselves from it, as more suitable to that interest they drive, that the truth of God should be rather a matter of opinion than of faith, a thing which they would dispute but not believe; but O, what other thoughts would a clear sight of this cause? That within so few days the truths and threatenings of the Word shall be sad earnest; the fulfilling whereof no sharpness of wit no subtil arguments will be able to evade.

3. That there is so much barren theory of divine truths in the world, with so little serious Christian diligence, doth it not sadly witness how small acquaintance men have with this truth? Whence we see so great a part of these who professedly acknowledge the word, and are daily conversing with it, yet can give no other account thereof but report, so many that can satisfyingly discourse of the Scripture, could never put their Seal to it, that God is true therein, whence are so many great school divines and able Ministers for parts, such visible Atheists in their way and practice? Is it not, they really judge Divinity and Religion, rather a science and matter of speculation than a matter of sense and feeling, which men should more live than speak, and cannot be known without experience the true end of knowledge; but, O this cannot be found in books, men will not meet with it in a throng of choiceflet notions, it confounded the wife, and disputers of this world, whilst the meanest and most simple Christian oft knoweth more than these of greatflet parts.

4. The great Hypocrisy which is in the world, I mean within the visible Church, doth too clearly shew that this truth is little thought on or laid to heart; for what is that false shew and appearance (which we may say is not a sin, but the very finfulness of sin) Is it not the height of Atheism? and a real contradiction in their practice to this, that the Scripture of God is true and will have an unquestionable accomplishment, O could any be so monstrously irrational, to drive this poor plot how to appear that which they are not, to be at such pains to act the part handsonly of a serious Christian, to perfonate his tears and grief, his spiritual frame, his zeal for God, if he did think gravely on this truth, and did believe the threatenings of the Word; that they will purely take place and be within a little no complement, but sad earnest, and that he is every hour standing under that Scripture-woe against Hypocrites? I am sure it would make his hair stand upright, his joynts loose; and his thighs finite one upon another, could he but seriously think upon this.

5. These unwarrantable ways which in a time of tryst men take for their escape, may witness this, that the word they do not judge a sure ground to
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adventure on; whence is there hesitation in suffering times? From that day many taking their leave of Christ, who have rather choofed sin than affliction; O is it not? They judge the testimony of the God of truth is not sufficient security to carry them through such a trial, and are not fully persuaded that it must come to pass what he hath promised, for if this were, they should reckon it their greatest safety to embark their interest on so sure a ground, and with much quietness reposè their soul and disburthen their care by putting it over on the Word.

6. What doth the frequent discouragement and uncomfortable walk of the People of God speak forth, doth it not witness how little they are in earnest with this great truth of the Scriptures accomplishment or establishment therein. What meaneth these distressful fears and perplexed complaints: if their eyes be but open to know, they have such a well as the promise of God at their hand; how is it that the smallest trials are so puzzling, and ready to out-wit them, that they so usually stumble at the crofs? And as things from without do appear, the encouragement made to ebb and flow? Is not here the cause? That they stagger at the promise whilst probabilities in some visible way do not go along for its performance: It's truly easy to have some sweet notions of faith at a distance, but whilst the trial comes near, upon such a close approach, that there is not another way, but to put the whole fires of their particular interest on the Word, and on it alone many are then at a stand, because they are not thoroughly assured that though the earth should be overturned, there is an absolute necessity for the promise of God to take place.

Now from these things may it not appear that this grave truth of the Scriptures accomplishment is but little known or studied? I confess we may think on it with astonishment, how a matter so nearly concerning is not more our work, there are indeed many things worthy to be known, but our short life can scarce allow time or give leisure for the study thereof, but O this, though we had only two days to live I think might require a person to be sure and persuaded concerning the truth of that whereon our heaven and eternal blessedness lyeth, to which we must lay the dead hold when we are in the passage at the strange step betwixt time and eternity. O what a wonder! how rational Souls who walk on the border of the greatest hope and fear imaginable, can yet be so unconcerned there anent; such serious thoughts might force men to retire and go fit alone; and truly these things gravely considered, may seem strange and hard to reconcile.

1. That there is such a thing as the very Word and Testimony of God this day upon record, wherewith we have so much to do, which doth offer it itself to men's trial and exactest search, and yet we put it so little to that touchstone that we may know it upon another account than report or hearsay.

2. How in a matter of such high importance as salvation through all eternity, and the ground of this hope, men should take the truth on an implicit faith or satisfy themselves with a common assent thereto, as though it were enough to witness our believing the same, because we did never doubt or call it in question, I am sure men would not be so lax and so easy to satisfy in the most common interest they have here in the World.

3. How can men render to others a reason of their hope when it is enquired who did never ask a reason of this at themselves, or will these seal the truth with their blood, who never had it sealed upon the heart by experience.

4. Whence
4. Whence is it that men can have comfort in Scripture who are not well grounded in the faith thereof? Indeed these who are solidly persuaded about the truth and its certain accomplishment may have much joy and peace, whilst they know the ground of their confidence can bear up any frets or burden they lay upon it; and for what end did the Lord witness the certainty of his word by two immutable things, wherein 'tis impossible for him to lie, but that from so sure and strong a ground, his people might have strong consolation?

5. How can any think to adventure their immortal soul upon that whereon they fear to venture an outward interest, or put over their dearest things in his hand and keeping who could never say, they know in whom they believed?

6. May it not seem strange that men can believe a certain performance of the Word and promises, and not be more deeply affected therewith? O is this true, shall it surely come to pass, and not one jot thereof fall to the ground, and should it not cause us awake in the night and keep us company? Ought we not to think our selves at a loss that day wherein we take not a turn in the meditation of divine truth if we be sure that these must take place?

7. It would add, if this be indeed the Scripture of God which surely hath an accomplishment. O how are we so little Christians? Why do men's walk so sadly jar with so great a hope? What manner of persons should these be that are persuaded within a little these heavens must pass away as a scroll, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up? I think if this will not prefer home on men to be serious and diligent they must be in a very sad lachrymose.

V. The accomplishment of Scripture is a most clear and undeniable witness of it's divinity, that it is his Word who is not like man to lye or the son of man to repent, and hath this as its distinguishing character, that not one syllable thereof falls to the ground: This is the undoubted privilege of God, and of him alone, to fore-see things contingent which are many ages after to fall out, and hath no dependence upon necessary and natural causes; and truly this may be a convincing argument, yea, we may say of all external testimonies the greatest; but it's strange to think what a generation there is who can sport at the Scripture and question the truth thereof, who yet did never once seriously enquire if such a thing be true, else so clear a witnesses might stare them in the face, such a party we should look on with compassion; it's also sad to think at how poor a rate, far below their allowance, many of the Saints do here live, because there is so little of that excellent and more noble Spirit, to search the Scripture for their further comfort and establishment thereby.

It is true this blessed record doth bear witnesses to it itself, and is known by its own light wherein there is such a visible impress of the glorious God, such convincing marks of its true descent as may thoroughly shew whose it is, and how far it exceeds all human invention; and thus by a clear manifestation of the truth, doth commend itself to men's consciences as a safe ground wherein they may repose their Soul: It is also clear, how wonderfully the Scripture hath been preferred, and the original copies thereof kept through all ages, that whatever small variation there may appear as to some Apiculi, which in some places hath caused divers readings, yet, in any necessarv or saving truth the greatest critics will confess they do not in the least vary; and it is known (wherein we are to adore that special providence of God) that the Jewish Church, to whom this sacred depositum was delivered,
vered, did with such exact and singular care look to the same, even in the least titile or letter thereof, this being the great work and study of the Mazarites from one age to another, to see to the preserving of that great record from being in the least vitiate or corrupt; and the greatest adversaries of the truth cannot possibly deny that agreement bertwixt these many original copies in the whole substance, which may be very convincing to the World. And do not men see how marvellous the whole frame of the Scripture is? What a correspondence bertwixt all the parts thereof that nothing in it doth in the least vitiate the proportion and beauty of the work, but all alongst an evident tendency to advance holiness and conform the soul to God: With a wonderful consent and harmony in answering to this great end, we see the simplicity and plainness of its style, yet back'd with a convincing Majesty and authority upon the conscience; yea besides it hath been attested by miracles that were great in themselves, famous in their time, transmitted to the Church in after ages, with unanswerable evidences of their truth, that not only the witness of the Word, but other pressling and rational grounds may let us see there could be no deceit or imposture there-in.

These are a great testimony to the truth, but I may say, on very sure ground, that next to that great witnesses of that Spirit, there is no argument more convincing to reach Atheism a stroke and thoroughly satisfy an exercised spirit who may be plunged about this great thing, the authority of the Scripture, than a clear discovery of its performance whilst under the assault of such a temptation; if this be the very word of God they may but retire within, and then turn their eyes abroad in the world to see what a visible impress of the Word is stamped on every piece of the work and providence of God. Now for further clearing I would offer these few things.

1. First the accomplishment of the Scripture is a very publick testimony from Heaven to its divinity, whilst the Lord by his works through the earth which are done in the view of Angels and Men doth solemnly avow that this is his word, for we must say his work within on the hearts of his people, and without about the Church is such, whereby men, yea all the magicians of the earth may stand amazed, and confess that nothing less than a divine almighty power can accomplish the same.

2. This gives in the witnesses of all the generation of the righteous, who from the beginning have proven the truth thereof, yea, sealed by the blood of many excellent Christians, some of whom thought they could not well dispute for it, yet had so strong a demonstration of the truth within, as made it an easy work to dye for the same.

3. This doth clearly shew the Scripture is an unchangeable rule of righteousness, that alters not but takes place in all ages, whence such as are wise to bring providence in to the word and compare the experience and remarks of one time with another, may have a great reach and be thus led in a sure path as to the foreseeing of events.

4. This also doth demonstrate that it is his Word who doth rule and guide the World, and hath a sovereign dominion over the same, whilst we may here see such remarkable events, which both in the present and in former times have fallen out, as may shew a power that can reach the greatest with a stroke, shake the most established kingdoms and even over the belly of insuperable difficulties accomplish the Word, yea, that surely the Spirit of the wheels that moves them, is from him whole word this is; for it is not more clear that these curtains of the heavens are stretch'd forth over the earth, than that the Scripture is stretch'd out over the whole work and frame of providence,
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vidence, so as all the motions and steps thereof, even of the most casual things that fall out hath a visible tendency to accomplish the ends which the Scripture hath held forth.

5. This clearly sheweth, it must be his word who hath foreseen all things that were to befall the Church, and the various changes and adventures of every Christian's life through time, whilft it is so wonderfully shaped and suited to every new trial of the Church, as if intended only for that time and to every case of a godly man, as though it had been alone writ for them.

6. This also sheweth, that he who is the author of the Scripture, and hath framed that admirable piece, must have some immediate correspondence with the Spirit of man, knoweth our sitting down and rising up, yea, doth search the heart and the reins; for experience can tell how the Word is directed to the heart, doth reach the most inward contrivances thereof, doth so clearly reveal and open up a Christian to himself, that we may say of a truth, he is the God of the Spirits of all flesh, and one greater than our heart whose it is.

7. I shall further add, the fulfilling of the Scripture in the experience of the Saints doth shew it is not a dead letter, but hath power and life; and there must be an enlightning, quickning Spirit, that surely goeth along with the same; this clearly demonstrates something above words, yea, above nature in the written word, that can make such a change upon the soul, give life to the dead, open the eyes of the blind, yea, can turn a lump of earth that formerly tended downward, now, without any violence, to move from a principle of life towards God as the farks flee upward.

VI. The accomplishment of the Scripture is a most pleasant and truly delectable subject, worthy of our serious thoughts and study; for here is held forth the highest truth for the judgment to contemplate, the truth and faithfulness of God in the Word, and here is also the greatest good for the affections to embrace and delight in, as that wherein our whole happiness is certainly wrapt up; it is undeniable that it is the godly man, who knoweth best what true and solid pleasure is; which he doth not lose by turning his heart from the creature to God, but maketh a bleffed exchange; O how far doth the joy and delights of the soul exceed those of the fenses! and the delight of a Christian how far doth it surpass that of a natural man, even in his bleffed estate! and sure this precious study of the daily performance of the Word, is one of those paths of pleasure which would bring in more folid joy to the spirit in some few hours, than in some years wallowing in the carnal delights of the flesh, which is but as pleasure in sport, but quickly turneth to grief in earnest; it is one of the great mistakes of the World, that religion tends so much to grieve and disquiet the soul, nay, it is certainly the want of this, because we are so little truly religious, when we scruple over our duty, and take but a paffing look of the ways and work of God in the World, then it is indeed very affrighting and unpleafant; but when in a more Christian way we do seriously look thereupon and get our heart near God, taking the Word along with us, O how delightful and ravifhing a fight will this be! I truly think though there were not a command, though it were no duty, nor such advantage in the study of this grave truth, yet that joy and refreshment which the soul would find in such a diligent fearch in going down into this bleffed deep, should invite us thereto.

But when I speak of this, what a sweet and delightful subject the performance and fulfilling of the Scripture is; it must be understood, that it is so only to the fains; and it is no wonder the World keep at a distance from it, for this is a truth they cannot bear, they hate it, which, as Micajab, doth prophecy
prophecy always hard things, and carrieth a message of death to them, which doth foretell their approaching ruin, and should cause them all to tremble; the knowledge whereof must encrease their sorrow and disquietness, yea, cause them to cry out, O, do not torment us before the time! for they are surely undone and ruined, if the Scripture of God be true and hath a performance; but O, what pleasant and refreshing tidings doth this carry to a Christian! What a sweet view doth he here get of the inheritance and blessed estate of the faints, which may cause such an exclamation, how great is that goodness which is laid up for these that fear thee!

To demonstrate this, I shall hold forth some things, from which we may see how delightful a subject the accomplishment of the Scripture is for a Christian to study.

1. Serious converse with this grave truth leadeth forward to practice, and thus helpeth to bring down theory to experience, which is the most sweet and desirable of all other demonstrations that we can have of the truth of the Scripture, and maketh our light, clear and pleasant to the taste; turning the exercise of our judgment and reason thereon into sensible and feeling; we are then made to see what a difference there is, betwixt discovery which a spiritual man (whose religion is his practice) hath of this, and the cold winter-light of natural understanding that hath no heat or warmth therewith, which is as great a difference, as betwixt hearing of such a thing by report, and seeing it with our eyes.

2. This blessed study how the Scripture hath a certain accomplishment, would help to read the word with another kind of pleasure. O, what representation should then the truths and promises thereof have to the godly man! It would be as one going in to look over his charters, and the great things therein contained, which he doth not in the least debate or question, since they are past the seals and fully ratified, and now considereth all which is promised as his own, which he look'd in former times upon but as a common thing, whilst he made not earnest of the certainty thereof, and what an interest he had in the same; O, when he readeth that promise of a new heaven and earth, and that glorious estate which abideth the Saints! He cannot turn his eyes and thoughts so easily off it, but is made to stand and wonder that so great a thing that will make such a marvellous change in his condition is even shortly to come to pass; how sweet and pleasant is it for such to turn over these promises, who can set to his seal and bear this witness, that he hath really proven the truth thereof by sure experience; as he knoweth he hath a real being. Surely the Bible is another thing to these, than it is to the great part of men who only make it the subject of their contemplation.

3. In this blessed study we should have much ready to our hand to observe and our observation made sweet and pleasant to us; for there we might see how all the paths of the Lord towards his people are mercy and truth, this would give you a refreshing diary of providence, how in such a plunging strait we found the Word sensibly sealed; what observablc confirmations we have had therewith at such a time and in such a condition, the after re-counting of which in an hour of trial or in the evening of our life, would exceed these greatest pleasures the men of this age can have in looking over their gold and greatest treasures, which for many years they have been laying up.

4. In the serious study of the daily accomplishing of the Scripture, we should have a most satisfying view and prospect of what God is doing up and down the earth, what purpoies and designs he hath on foot; and how things here beneath do work together for carrying on of the same, we should see what
what an excellent and curious piece of work this frame of providence is, which the more it is considered, it will be the more a wonder, how perfect in all its various colours, what an observable concurrence there is there, how several discordts, which we see here, do yet agree with one content for the compleating of God's design, which is still going on, and whilst we think there must be some disorder amongst the wheels, we are made after to see that this confusion was an excellent step of providence confounding the wisdom of men, every part of his way being so knit to one another, as discoverst to such, who make this blessed truth their serious study, a moft rare contexture beyond the reach and understanding of the greatest artists that ever were. Here also we might go up that watch-tower of Christian observation, and from thence take a grave look of God's way, and lay his work in the World to the Scripture, as the measuring line, (where we should see and find the sight thereof very pleasant) how the Word every day takes place, doth illustrate through all the veins and arteries of providence, each line whereof is so exactly drawn, as by a pencil in some skilful hand, to that great exemplar of the Scripture; here we might discern these eminent examples of judgment and mercy that in every age are set before us, how wicked men prosper for a time, yet have a dreadful ill fate and are suddenly call into destruction; they spread as a green bay-tree, and within a little their place cannot be found, how the godly are oft fore afflicted, yet flourishing as the palm-tree, and the more they are depreded the more they grow; how the enemies of the Church are oft lifted up for a forer fall, and the Church brought low, in order to her greater enlargement; how judgment findeth out sinners, and is oft exactly proportioned in measure and kind to the sin, and on the other hand how integrity is oft fore toffed, yet falleth upon its feet, and overclouded, that it may shine more brightly after; how the threatenings of the Word do visibly overtake kingdoms and nations, bring down great houses, caufeth those brought up in scarlet to embrace the dunghil, and leteth not the hoary head of cruel and wicked men go oft into the grave in peace; and again how the Lord forfaareth not his people but sheweth respect to their way, the good man walketh in his integrity, and his feed after him is blessed. O, how sweet an exercise were this for a Christian even to lose himself in!

5. From thence we might in a great measure discern what of the night it is with the Church; if there be any evidences that it is near day, and what such a sinful case doth threaten, we shoulcl be skilful to feel the Church's pulse, and thereby find what symptoms there are of life and death, and perceive a dark cloud of judgment casting up, when it is but like an hand-breath; surely this study should make us wise to know the times, and what we ought to do therein; for amongst these various events which fall out in every age, the Lord's way is constant with it self and with his truth, if we be right observers.

6. Here we should have a moft pleasant and clear view how the Scripture of God comprehendeth the whole state of the Church, from the beginning to the end of time; that it is a moft full and perfect register of all the vicissitudes and alterations which he is to meet with whilst in a militant condition; and doth also moft exactly point out these occurrences and remarkable events which fall out in the ordinary way and course of providence, that we may read them as evidently in the Word, as we see them with our eyes fall out in the World; for in following this study we should clearly see how the Scripture bringeth the Church to light, out of the Womb of an external decree, and doth trace it from the first promulgation of the Gospel after the fall through these dark times before the flood, whilst it was but in families,
families, and through that long trial in Egypt, and all its settled and flourishing condition in Canaan, and carrieth her forward through all the several changes of her state, under her following decay and in the times of the captivity, even to the manifestation of Christ and dawning of the gospel; and as it thus taketh in, within its reach, the whole estate, and the special events which did befall the Church under the Law; so we may see how the Scripture also followeth the Church through the whole time of the gospel, and bringeth her as a grain of mustard seed from a day of small things until it bring her to perfection, taketh her as it were by the hand from her infancy, and goeth with her through all the turnings of her condition; through that long and dark night of antichrist's reign, pointeth clearly out her condition and various assaults that she should endure in that time, and that blessed victory which she should after have, though not all at once but gradually, over her enemies, and that the word and the Church do never part, but one watchthep for flep with the other until it bring her safe to land, and as it were deliver her off its hand and guard, at the coming of Christ.

7. This would also help us up to sweet thoughts, and give us matter of a song in the faddest night of the Churches condition, when we see how God's great design in the World is the accomplishing of the Scripture, and know that his ends which he hath held forth therein, cannot be frustrate, it would serve to silence all our complaints with wondering at God's way, and triumphing in the works of his hands; we should not then be afraid of evil tidings; a stormy time would not ouit us; being persuaded that though the earth should be over turned it shall surely be well with the righteous, the Church must flourish and all her enemies be found liars, because he is faithful that hath promisèd, whose Word will as surely come to pass as the sun doth return after a dark night.

VII. It doth now more specially concern the godly in these latter times, to study this great truth of the accomplishment of the Scripture, and set about a serious enquiry and search therein as a truth that shall yet be in a further measure discovered and opened up, the nearer the Church is to the end of time, which may thus appear.

1. Herein is the Word express, that one part of the Scripture, which from former ages was sealed up, shoul'd in the latter days be clear and easy to understand, Dan. laft chap. ver. 4. 9. The seal is there put on; but go thy way Daniel, for these Words are closed and sealed to the time of the end, but Rev. laft chap. and ver. 9. We have that bar taken off; seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand; because then the time did draw near, to which a more full discovery and opening up of the Scripture was referver, and a more large manifestation of the spirit beyond former ages. Now by the laft days we are not only to understand the whole time of the gospel, though it is thus termed in the Scripture; but the latter part of these last times; which is more especially pointed at, even the close and evening of time, that laft Epocha and period of prophetick chronology, to which a great accomplishment of Scripture prophecies is referver.

2. This also is expressly promisèd, that in the latter days the Church shall have a more full discovery of this truth, how the Scripture is verified, Dan. laft chap. v. 4. many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, which increaseth as it clearly pointeth at the laft times, and that bright day the Church shall have, when Irael shall be brought in to Christ; it doth also point at and promise some greater light, and a more full manifesting of the mysteries of the Word and fulfilling thereof; for the former part of the chapter
part I. the fulfilling of the scripture.

chapter sheweth, that increase of knowledge doth relate to these things which were before sealed; we wait and believe the further accomplishment of this promise to the Church beyond all we have yet seen, that many Scripture truths now dark and abstruse, shall be made to clear as shall even cause us to wonder at the gross mistakes we once had thereof, yea, that after generations shall have a discovery and understanding of some prophecies now obscure, which shall as far exceed us, as this time doth go beyond former ages, which comparatively we must say were very dark. O! when that promise of the recalling of the Jews shall once take place, what a wonder will they be to themselves that their understanding should have been under such a vail when the truth shall be clear and evident to them in that day? Will it not be a sweet and easy Work for the Godly to match together the predictions of the Word and events? And truly there is much now wrapt up in Scripture Prophecies, not yet fulfilled, which we may say, in after times when the events shall unveil their meaning, will exceed, yea confound all these comments many have had upon them.

3. Is it not also clear, that these prophecies which of all the Scripture were most obscure and overclouded with dark figures and allegories, concerning which there had been such mistake and hesitation by the Church, so many perplexing queries have a peculiar respect to the last times? And that then they shall be made plain and easy, when so notable a key as the event doth open them up, such of these of the witnesses taking life and rising again, Babylon's fall and ruin, Christ's reigning with his Saints a thousand years, which now are in some measure already cleared, from their begun accomplishment beyond former times, but we wait for a more full commentary, that time shall give upon the same.

4. It is in the latter times that the glory of God in his truth and faithfulness shall most eminently shine forth, that is a part of the solemn congratulation of the Church upon Babylon's fall, Revelat. xv. v. 3. not only great and marvelous are thy works, but just and true are thy ways, for truly in this stroke of the judgment of God, and these remarkable providences concurring therewith, the fulfilling of the Scripture will be so plain and undeniable, that we may say it will then dazzle the eyes of men, even the greatest Atheists, alarm the World, yea very effectually contribute (we have ground so to judge) to that promised increase of the Church and incoming of the Jews, when in Antichrist's fall and ruin, they shall see so convincing a seal put to one of the most considerable prophecies of the Word, in the accomplishment whereof much of the prophetick part of the New Testament relating to the Church's state, and her long trial under Antichrist's reign may be seen clearly verified.

5. The Lord hath reserved his greatest Works to the latter days, wherein his judgments shall be manifest, and the Word confirmed by such solemn convincing providences, that men will not get them pasted without a remark; we are this day witnesses to many such, and are looking what these times shall yet bring forth, that the great and remarkable acts of the Lord must force the World to see a divine power, and say, lo there is an undoubted accomplishment of the Scripture.

6. The Church in these last times hath peculiar advantages for understanding this truth of the Scripture's accomplishment, which former ages had nor. First a great part thereof is now fulfilled that men may see with their eyes, if they but know how to lay the Word and work of God together, the christian Church had in former times but dark glances at these great things, which we have this day visibly transcribed in providence; the promises were
then traveling in birth of that which is now brought forth. 2. Are we not mounted as it were on the shoulders of that experience and observation of former times? which hath been transmitted to us, and we must lay upon that account, the Church hath now a greater seal and confirmation of the truth, than what it had in the days of the Prophets and the Apostles, even when Christ was in the flesh. 3. The Temple of God and Ark of his Testament is now opened in heaven, light more fully abounding and the means of knowledge; And, 0! should not this be much our study, who have a greater talent than former ages! certainly this will be a sin of a deeper dye, than in times of ignorance, since we can be no strangers to this truth without shutting our eyes, blinding the conscience, doing violence to our light, when the Lord doth give his People such solemn confirmations.

7. I shall add, is it not clearly foretold in that Dan. xii. v. 4. that in the last times this will be one of the special exercises of the saints to enquire and make a diligent search concerning the Scripture’s accomplishment? For it’s there said, many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased, importing that this shall be much their study, and cause a diligent search whereunto the great works of God in these times shall invite them: and what should be the posture of the Godly in these days (on whom the end of the world is come) should it be like the watchman in the last watch of the night, who looketh oft what appearance there is from the east of the day breaking? a serious enquiry what of the Scripture is fulfilled, whereby we may know on very clear grounds if the night be far spent, the day at hand, and that the coming of the Lord to judgment draweth near.

VIII. This is a great and concerning duty; for Christians to study this truth, that they may have something more than report, how the Scripture hath a sure accomplishment, and doth take place in the providences of the time wherein we live. I must think strange that there is such a great help as this so near, and yet we see it not, nor do seriously ponder the same, when the command is so express to observe the works of the Lord, which for that end are shewed forth, that men may enquire and read the faithfulness of God therein, yea, that so great a truth which would induce the search of all the critics of the World, a truth wherein our blessedness through time and eternity lieth, should offer it self to our trial, and yet is so little known; O, who can dispense with the neglect of this duty? by which we answer that solemn call and invitation of the works of God, do honour him, serve our generation, are helpers to our own faith, and are thereby helped to strengthen others, yea are brought to see with our eyes, and from experience what before was as a strange thing unto us.

Now to clear how much this is a Christian’s duty, to study a practical converse with the Word, and to be serious observers of its accomplishment, let us consider.

1. We are thus helped to declare the works of the Lord and give him the glory of his faithfulness; and is not that a grave duty? Which at all times in every station and condition of life should engage men to this study; thus every Christian may become a witness to the truth and put his seal thereon, for which he should think his life truly desirable, and doth in no small measure attain the true end thereof, though he had no other opportunity for his master’s service; we may say, this truth of the Scripture’s accomplishment like a great roll, hath been transmitted from hand to hand, from one age to another, attested as it were subscribed by so many witnesses, it doth thus come to our time, and to every man’s door and require their personal witnessing and sealing of the fame.

2. This
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

2. This should make it an easy work to trust the Word, and to adventure thereon in the ordinary occurrences of their life, they may well trust God in a strait, who have so strong an argument to make use of, that oft they have tried him and the truth of his Word by many, many experiences; will not these that know his name trust in him? Which was a notable testimony from a serious Christian in a very sharp trial; oft have I tried God, and shall I not learn to trust him once?

3. This doth lay the Christian in the way of that promise. Psalm. 107. last ver. A promise truly large and comprehensive, but little considered, that such as are wise to observe the works of God, they shall see the loving kindness of the Lord, even in their own particular case made out to them, yea whilst they are serious to observe his works abroad in the World, and his ways to others they shall be no losers thereby at home, but find this promise meet them and turn their general observation under personal experience of the loving kindness of the Lord.

4. Thus the faints by experiencing the truth of the Word get a convincing seal thereby to their interest in the promise; for begun possession is indeed a strong witness to this right, when they can say they have got as certain returns of the Word which they have put to an essay in some particulars of their life, as they are sure of any thing they did ever see, so that from unquestionable experience they may set up a pillar, and write thereon Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

5. Thus should Christians with much advantage be helped to convince gainers; for it's sure, Atheists could not make so bold and publick an appearance if men did not so much take their religion on trust, O the serious experienced man, can with another confidence own the truth, whose experience and observation of the works of God give him an argument that none can answer, while not only he can assert but conduct and lead man to the things themselves, that they may see if in such and such particulars, the Scripture be not fulfilled.

6. Thus the providence of God should have a more sweet refreshing countenance, when from this great height the watchtower of Christian observation we take a look thereof, and truly otherwise, men will stumble at the most ordinary dispensations, and think God's work is a mass of confusion, but here we are taught to see how the written Word and his way are linked in a most sweet agreement.

7. We may thus trace divine truth, even by our sense and feeling, and join the Word and experience in a regular correspondance; yea thus we should have a clear transcript of the Lord's way with his Church taken out of that great authentick original of the Scripture; and thereby see on what a solid basis and foundation that magnificent structure of providence is raised up, what a noble key should we thus have for opening the Scripture, by a serious humble inquiry after the works of God? Where not only the impression and sign of the power, but of the truth and faithfulness of the Lord are so very legible.

8. This is a piece of our talent wherewith we are entrusted, of which every Christian should study a serious improvement, knowing they must render an account what their observation of this great truth hath gained and what further establishment and confirmation they have thus attained.

9. I would add, the concernment and weight of this study may press it much on us; for if the Scripture's accomplishment be an undoubted truth, O! then this is sure the Saints have a great inheritance; they are Princes though now under a disguise, and though yet minors, they are heirs of more than
than the World can shadow forth; the Christian is then more happy on a dunghill scraping his fore, than such who are cloathed in purple and fare de-
cately every day; if this be sure we should look with compassion, rather
than envy, on those whom the World doth account happy; we need not
question the gain of godliness, then it is sure, that such as few in tears shall
reap in joy, and the righteous, though now trampled under, in the morning
shall have dominion; yea, in a word, we may then on sure ground solace
our selves with the thought of that great change, which will be within a
little time, when the grave must render back her Prisoners, and may with as
much assurance of a blessed resurrection lie down in the dust, as we are
sure there will be a morning when we lye down at night. O! then
there is a heaven and a hell, that is certain, eternity is a night dream,
and one moment shall shortly put an end to all our services, yea, the shut-ning of our eye-lids at death, shall but open them in the Paradise of God.

Having touched this truth a little in the general, I shall now propound
some Arguments whence the accomplishment of the Scripture may be
demonstrated; they are these five which I intend to prosecute in the follow-
ing discourse.

First Argument, To prove the Scripture is certainly fulfilled and hath
an accomplishment is this; That which hath been in all ages the testim-
omy of the Saints, what every particular Christian doth feal from their frequent
and sure experience, what is found and proved by them in their daily walk
upon exactest trial, yea, what as many as ever were serious in religion do
witness must be certain and true.

But the accomplishment of the Scripture is such,

Therefore, &c.

II. Argument, That which is manifest and legible in the whole course and
tenor of providence about the Church and by clear convincing instances
both of judgment and mercy, is made out to the observation of every age,
must be a certain truth, but the Scripture's accomplishment is such.

Therefore.

III. Argument, That which hath not only the Christian's testimony from
experience, and of the Church from constant observation, but is obvious e-
ven to the view of the World, which from the conscience of the worst of
men, doth force a testimony that they can neither shift nor deny; which also
may be demonstrate to the conviction of ordinary observers, and hath a pub-
lick acknowledgment from the greatest Atheists and mockers of religion in
every age, must surely be a clear truth.

But, &c. Therefore.

IV. Argument, That which was to take place in such and such periods of
time, and hath accordingly come to pass, the event exactly answering to the
prediction, yea, that whereof the great part is now fulfilled, and but a little
at this day remaineth to be made out, must be a certain truth.

But the great part of the Scripture is thus already fulfilled, and but a little
thereof now remaineth.

Therefore.

V. Argument, That which not only is for the most part already accom-
plished, but is a thing whereof we have such sure confirmations, yea, so
great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remains shall be
certainly fulfilled, muft it not be an undoubted truth? But the Scripture as to
these special predictions, that are not yet made out, is such concerning which
the Lord hath given his people a very large pledge and strong confirmations,
now
now in these latter times, to believe their certain accomplishment. Therefore.

**ARGUMENT FIRST.**

That the Scripture of God contained in the old and new testament, wherein our great hope, and comfort doth lye, is certainly true, and hath a real accomplishment, may be thus demonstrated, That it is tried, and proved in the godly mans experience, to which in all ages, yea, from innumerable proofs the saints have put to their seal, that this is a sure and faithful testimony.

Experience is indeed a strong demonstration, and it is such a witness as leaveth no room for debate, for here the truth is felt, proven, and acted on the heart, which the christian knoweth well, and is as sure of as he is perswaded that he liveth or that the sun when it shineth hath light, and warmnes therewith, it is true the world liveth at a great distance with this, they only converse with the sound of such a thing, and we know the naked theory of scripture-truth hath but a short reach and that it differeth as far from that which a serious practical christian hath as the sight of a country in a map is from a real discovery of the same; where the difference is not in the degree, but in the kind: yet though this grave testimony of experience is a thing where too many (alace too many) are strangers, we must say so much thereof is obvious, as may force its authority on mens consciences, and shew there can be no fallacy, or delusion in this witnesses, if they but allow the use, and exercise of reason, seeing it is not the record of a few, at one time, or in one corner of the earth, but a solemn witness from the saints and followers of God, whose judgment and integrity, their adversaries must often confess, yea, of all the saints in every age through the whole universal church in parts of the earth most remote from other, and this, by most frequent renewed proofs hath found, and experienced the truth and real accomplishment of the word: and now if this be not sufficiently convincing, I would but add, O! will you then come and see, be but christians indeed, and then ye will no more debate that testimony; and truly it is a very poor shift, for men who have the scripture before them, which of it self doth witnesses its authority, and this backed with so solemn a seal from the Lord, by his works and providence, to debate the christians witnesses, from their experience, because they do not see this themselves, for what is the cause thereof, is it not their choice? that they do not follow on to know the fame, the truth of God seeketh credit from no man upon truth, yea, reveth no more but that by a practical converse they would put it to a trial, and then it shall not decline their judgment.

Now to prosecute this argument a little, I shall point at some special scripture-truths, with which christians have most usual trade, and converse in their own cafe; and give in therewith, their testimony, how these are clearly proved and verified by most sure experience: it is not to be here understood, the giving a particular account with respect to persons, time, or other circumstances, how the word doth thus take place. I think it may be sufficiently convincing to instance in the general such clear uncontroverted experiences, which are well known to the godly, and have by them been oft proved amidst the various changes of their life (though not by all in the same measure but some suitable proportion to their different sizes, trials and wrestlings) which can witness that real correspondence which the word hath with the experience of the saints; and truly concerning these I may with some confidence assert, they are not naked, or airy notions, but such as can witness their truth to the serious experienced christian, whom on this account I dare att.3
The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

I shall here instance. 5. Special truths of the word, which are much tried, and proved in chriftians experience. 1. That there is such a contrary betwixt the flesh and the spirit, as the scripture holdeth forth. 2. The deceitfulness of mans heart. 3. That there is a spiritual, and invisible adversary, with whom we have war. 4. That the promises of the word have undoubted accomplishment. 5. The truth alfo of the threatenings, I mean such under whole reach the godly may fall.

1. That there is contrariety betwixt the flesh, and the spirit, a Law in our members rebelling against the Law of our mind, is a truth very clearly proved to the chriftian, whose experience though sad doth undeniable verify, and confirm the scripture, Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. xix. 23. this is a part of the word which holds forth mans nature in its true shape and form, whether their byafs and inclination most easily tumeth, yea, so marvelously answered their experience, that to question the same were to put it far beyond question that they know nothing of a new nature or principle of grace within. For who ever made earnest of religion but their first acquaintance with the peace of God, was the beginning of this war; it is then that the houfe divideth, and corruption setteth up a standard, yea, no sooner can any begin to be a chriftian, but he must be a soldier also; and we may say none ever attained such a measure of mortification, or was so old in the grace of God, as could privilege them from the stirrings of the old man; and necessity of that complaint, who shall deliver us from a body of death, but whatever advantage some of the saints have above others, yet in this their experience can witnes.

1. They now know two different parties within themselves, that until once grace came they could not understand, which at the same time in the very same action do act oppositely one to the other, yea, that there is no spiritual duty, wherein the flesh (though not always in such a prevalent degree) doth not shew some active resistance.

2. That all the stirrings, and motions of the flesh have still a tendency congruous to their own nature, to turn the heart carnal and to alienate it from God, so as it is easy to discern, how in these the rife and the end do thoroughly correspond.

3. That this is a cruel taskmaster if once it bear sway; impetuous in its command, and violent in its pursuit, so that their experience may herein tell, its a fore, and an intolerable thing for a servant to bear rule.

4. That to things most forbidden, the flesh moveth most impetuously, so, as it will even break through the hedge, though sure thereby to be scratch'd with thorns, yea, it is oft so eager in its pursuit, that it will follow the bait, while the hook is most discernible.

5. That when once this doth swell, and wax fat, they may upon another interest cry, who's us, our leases; for like the scales of the balance, they find a proportional abatement and depreffing of their spiritual life, as the flesh goeth up, yea, they have cause to know how every step of their heart going forth to the world is a step that doth put them further off from God.

6. That the more closely the Law is preft in its spiritual extent, yea, the more spiritual a duty is, the more fully opposite they find their carnal heart, and though the flesh may bear up a little with the form of Religion, and hath more complacency with that way, which lieth most in externals, yet it cannot endure the power thereof, it can suffer men to be hypocrites but not truly chriftians.

7. To restrain, and bring this under bondage they find that it doth put the spirit so much at liberty, which getting loose reins for a little will leave the soul
foul work for many days, and with sad after groans pay back an hours plea-
sure, yea, they also know, when the outward man is low, and upon a sen-
fible decay, it hath not then hindered but rather effectually helped their in-
ward joy and strength.

8. That indulgence to the flesh caufeth a sensible thick interposition be-
tween heaven and the soul, whence they are so clogged and hampered in
their flight and motion toward God, yea, thus have often their choicest du-
ties been made a fore and grievous task.

9. That this is the true rife of their usual perturbations, and doth fill put
some jar betwixt them, and their lot, and doth hinder a satisfied enjoying
of that which they have, through murmuring at that they want, yea, they
know, that to please the flesh hath been oft the cause of their greatest grief
and displeasure.

10. They also find how the defilement of their spirit, doth help to darken
it, which overgrown with the flesh, can have no clear discovery of spiritual
things, but the more separate from the body, and purged from these great
dregs, they find themselves at a further advantage to converse with divine
truths, which thus they get discovered beyond all that nature can reach.

II. That the heart of man is deceitful, and desperately evil, Jer. xvii. 9.
Jer. iv. 14. Prov. iv. 23. Is a Scripture truth, whereto the Chriftians ex-
perience doth answer, as the face answereth to its self in the glass, yea we
may say it is so clearly demonstrated to these who were ever serious about
their inward cafe, that while they thus read the word in themselves and are
made to read themselves in the word, they may with wonder acknowledge,
that he, who can found this great deep of the heart, and draw so vive a
portraiture thereof, is surely one before whom all things are manifest; who
doth search, and try the reins, and know what is our mould, and fashion;
this is one of the very first lefions which practical religion doth teach, and the
more nearness with God, and further measure of grace, that is attain'd, the
more clear discovery there will be of this; O! what sad hours, what bitter
complaints, hath it caufed? this oft doth obstruct the chriftians heart, and ming-
gle their wine with gall and wormwood; I am sure if that excellent com-
pany of the saints, who have been from the beginning to this day could be
brought together, to give in their suffrage, and witnefs concerning the deceit-
fulnes of the heart there would be one joint testimony to this truth: we should
find that Enoch who walk'd with God, Mofes with whom he spake face to face,
that beloved servant, who leaned in Chrift's bosom, and he who was caught
up to the third heavens were no strangers thereto, but could witnefs thus.

1. That it is within which aileth them most, and their greatest adversaries
are men of their own house, yea, that in the worst of times, there is still
more caufe to complain of an evil heart, than of an evil and corrupt world,
there being no worse company, than they are oft to themselves.

2. That no time of their life, but might give them, some further proof,
that they are fools who trust their own heart, which oft will escape and over-
reach their quickeft reflection, even when both their eyes are on it; yea, that
there is no time that alloweth the putting off their armour, or to dismiss their
guard, not the least cafe, the greatest establishment in grace, nor the evening
of the day, though they were within some minutes of the crown, and com-
plete victory, doth priviledge them from the experience of a deceitful heart.

3. That under the best frame they find, there will often lurk that which after-
time doth discover that for the present though it had been told, they could
not have believed, until frequent experience maketh them fee that the word
knew their heart better than themselves.

4. That
4. That to bring home their heart when once it goeth abroad, or recal the liberty they have given it, is not easy, which doth no sooner parley with a temptation at a distance, adventure to sport therewith, but it quickly turneth to earnest, and is ready to yield.

5. They know the constant need to have a watch upon their senses, and to make a covenant with their eyes, which do quickly betray their heart; so easy it is to be deceived, yea, to grow warm, catch fire upon the smallest touch.

6. How quickly also their spirit doth slacken, and loofe its keenes even in the greatest advantage of their cafe, their experience can tell, that when in some measure they have been raised up in any spiritual enjoyment, they were then in hazard to be lift up to the wind, and to have their substance dissolv’d in the more solid part of christianity.

7. What a sight have they sometime of themselves, such as would be a terror to them, if the heart and motions thereof could be writ out to the view of others, or that any were witnesses to that which in one room will dwell beside the grace of God as its door-neighbour.

8. In a word, their experience doth witness, how soon the strongest resolutions will evanish, that they are not oft in the evening, what they were in the morning, nor for many hours do they keep the ground they had attained, but Reubens character unfaile as water, may be still their complaint, yea, I am sure as many as ever obtained mercy to know themselves, can tell that its past all reckoning, how oft their heart hath deceived them, when they trusted it most: This every day may cause them fit down, and admire the grace of God, which can mend, what they so oft marre, and is stronger to save and preserve than they are to destroy.

III. That as there is a body of death within, they also know there is, An adversary without, Eph. vi. 12. 1 Pet. v. 8. Job. viii. 44. whose way, and devices, and method of tempting doth most exactly answer the discovery of the word; this is indeed a truth, which christian experience in all ages doth witness, that no sooner they had a serious look after God, but found themselves pursued by an invisible party whose approaches though spiritual, are yet certain, and most sensibly demonstrated, beside that which the word doth clearly teach; yet it is sure none of the faints were ever priviledged from such experiences, for herein doth the christians warfare, but O how sweet may the evening be while they fit down, and can sing that song, Our soul hath escaped as a bird from the fowler. I shall here give in something of the godly mans experience, which can bear witness to this.

1. That there is surely another party than the world, or themselves, with which they have to do, an invisible adversary, without whom they perceive by that sensible correspondence he keepeth with their heart within, by these violent inroads, importunate solicitations, these unpetious motions, wherewith they are so strangely hurried, and oft driven over light and judgment, yea, over their strongest resolutions, so as he may be as discernible to them, and that there is something therein beside themselves, as if they conversed with him in an outward visible shape.

2. That since the time when they began to look after God, and to know any thing of his work upon their spirits they have been acquainted with most affrighting, dreadful temptations, and do now perceive his rage, and violent pursuit to bring them back, which they knew not before, when at peace with their idols and sinful way.

3. That the mark he levelleth at, to which his usual temptations have a tendency, is their soul, and inward man, to hinder communion with God, and to turn their heart off from him, to break the Law, and lay aside commanded duties.

4. That
4. That his ordinary approaches to the heart are oft by a very small thing, he needs no more but an open door, or a sinful look for the dispatch of a temptation, and knoweth by a wound in the eye, how to carry death in to the soul.

5. That he is such a party as knoweth his time and opportunity, can change his weapons, and busk the look with divers baits, and yet he is always at hand, when the heart is lifted up, when they are out of their duty, and in a a carnal frame, to put in then with some temptation, and fish in such muddy water.

6. That his way doth truly answer his name, spiritual wickedness in high places, this being so discerned by daily experience that he hath the advantage of the ground, is a most subtil observing adversary, who lieth in the dark to us, while we are in the light to him, and knoweth how to correspond with our corruption, and to suit his temptation to our natural temper (wherewith he is well acquainted) and to our calling, and our company, to the present trait, to our predominant inclination and to our retirement, and solitude, yea that he is one who knoweth how to follow in, and ply with such a gale, when we are in hot blood, or in any diftemper, and discomposure of spirit.

7. That he can transform himself into an angel of light and suit his temptations to the spiritual exercises, and enjoyments of the saints; that there are temptations on the right hand as well as the left, which are so refined, and so like a christian exercise that they can scarcely discern the weed from the flower, and most dreadful errors from the choicest truths, to which they oft have a great resemblance, though at last it doth appear that the native tendency even of the most specious errors in the judgment is to looseness in practice, and to make men religiously irreligious.

8. That he is also a roaring lion, which they have oft proved by the dreadful blasphemous injections, these fiery darts which are thrown in with violence, wherewith there is no concurrence of the inclination, or content, but a discernible force put upon them, assaulting them with most horrid atheistical thoughts, even while their heart doth rife with abhorrence, and enter their heart against the same.

9. That he is a most relentless adversary who is going still about and giveth no ceasing, but with purpose to return at some greater advantage, and is no less terrible in his flight than in his assault, and that he can speak out of a friend as well as out of a foe, yea, and doth then most dangerously tempt, when the temptation is least seen, or discovered.

10. That his temptations do not only drive at engaging of the heart to bring fin to the thought, but also the bringing it forth to the act, for putting some blot upon their walk and conversation.

11. That he is one who is overcome by resistence, and doth flee before these that withstand him, which they have oft proved, that they have returned from prayer with the spoil of their adversary, and at such a time have been made to wonder, how that which hath oft foyled them, should have been their temptation.

12. They also find by frequent observation, that though he is most subtil, being indeed one who through long experience and continued practice hath attained a great deal of dexterity in tempting, yet, that he hath one usual method, and such devices which the serious christian, by daily experience and watchfulness, may easily discern and perceive his temptations in their rise, and at a distance while they were as it were, creeping up the wall; yea thus in some measure he may find out the depths of Satan, and know how to avoid the net spread by that great fowler.
IV. That the promises of the Word which are held forth to the godly for their use, and encouragement while they are in the way, have a certain accomplishment, and are a safe ground to adventure upon, and worthy to be credited, is a truth tried in all ages, whereeto experience of the saints can give a large testimony.

Now in speaking to this grave subject, it is not needful to speak any thing of the nature, and diverse kinds of promises, nor whence it is that we live at so poor a rate, and so uncomfortably while such a well as this, is at our hand, for its easy to read the cause within our selves, we sow sparingly, and venture little out, therefore we have so small an increafe; there is a price for wisdom, but it is in the hands of fools who have no heart thereto, but this doth not concern us here, for I only aim to hold forth this, that the promises which God hath given his people in scripture, are of unquestionable verity, and have as real and sure performance in the saints experience, as they are sure of that which cometh most necessarily to pass, by the work and concurrence of natural caufes as that the fire doth burn, when combustible matter is added, or the sun rise after it's going down; for indeed this truth is so manifest, proved by such innumerable experiments, amidst the various changes of a christians condition, that we might summon as many witnesses as have been followers of God in the world, which are not a few, who in all ages have put the promises to an eflay, and put their feal thereto that God is true, yea, to ask at faith, if they know whether there be a truth in scripture promises, that cometh not to pass, I think were to enquire at a living man, whether he feeth and feeleth, or if there be such a thing as motion, since they have as sure and fenfible a demonstration of the one as he hath of the other. But e're I speak any thing particularly to this, I would first premise some things to clear what we understand here, by the saints experience of the truth of the promises, in these following considerations.

1. We would consider, though the scripture hath here it's accomplishment and is intended for the use of the church, and every particular christian, while on the way in his militant condition, yet there are some promises of the word, yea the greatest, which belong to the saints, that will not be fulfilled, until they have call'd off their armour, and are called to divide the spoil, their experience of which, will be the high prize of the calling of God in Chrift, whereof all which they enjoy is but an earnest.

2. We would consider that the great intent of the scripture and promises thereof is not for contemplation, but that we may know them by experience, and drive a blessed trade and commerce therewith, the merchanzie of which is better than that of gold, for here lyeth the christians life in the world, yea, it is a great part of their talent, the promises, which are not to be laid up in their heart, and memory, as in a napkin, but they must give an account what experience they have gained thereby, and thus the diligent hand should make rich.

3. What ever be the different sizes and degrees of experience among the saints, according to their growth, and age in Chrift, yet it is certain that the meanest who have interest in the promises, and did ever lay hold on them in earnest and put them to trial must know something of the performance of the same in their own cafe; for the, Lord doth not suffer his work in his People to want a feel.

4. The godlies experience hereof, is then much made out, when they are much in observation, and we know little of the truth and performance of the promises, because we are not more habitually in a frame to observe; thus he goeth by, and we perceive not; but they never wanted confirmations, who were seriously seeking to be confirmed in the truth of the word.

5. The special mercies and providences of a christians life are a certain return of the promise, and in that way do meet them,
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them, as the proper channel of their conveyance; for they are the sure mercies of the covenant, and how refreshing is it, that all the several cases of the saints, and their deliverance therefrom, their meanest as well as their greatest necessities, are comprehended in the word, and under some promise, and were all foreseen in his everlasting view, who hath so marvelously suited the same to all that his People stand in need of, as if it had been directed to such, and such a Christian only. 6. This helpeth to make the mercies of the godly man to have a peculiar and sweet relish, and to be some way twice his mercy, when he gets them in so immediate a way reached to him as it were out of the promise, and as an observable return from heaven, when thus the Lord sealeth his word to him by his work, and the way of the word he findeth hath been the way of his comfortable deliverance; that when he hath had no other escape; but to turn in to the promise and to cast himself upon it, he gained this experience; he trusted in God, and was helped and can give in this testimony of him, that he hath both spoken it and himself also hath done it, according to his word. 7. It is not any extraordinary thing, we here understand, by the Christian man's experience of the truth of the promises, it is not a rapture or revelation, or such as some of the saints have upon some singular, and special account had; for we have not any promise for these things, but it is something well grounded upon the word, which constantly holdeth in the Lord's ordinary way of procedure with his people, according to the tenor of the covenant, for his word doth good to them that walk uprightly, and doth certainly take place in the experience of every serious and diligent Christian. 8. This is not the testimony of a few, but the record of all the saints since the beginning, whole experience doth all most harmoniously agree, and bear one witness that he is faithful who hath promised, and it is not that which a Christian hath found once or twice in his life, but the daily food of such as live by faith. 9. This doth put a strong obligation on the godly man to the word for the time to come, for these who have tried it often, may with much confidence trust it, in the day of their trial. 10. The experience which the godly hath of the real performance of the promises is a most convincing evidence of his state in Christ, it is the earnest and pledge of the inheritance, and full accomplishmenf of that which remaineth, that the Lord will make perfect what concerneth him, who hath been his help hitherto, and will be his exceeding great reward in the end, who hath made him find so much of the same way godliness here by the way. Now having premised these things, I shall here infance some particular promises, wherein the Christians most usual trade and commerce doth lie, and to which they give in their feal and witnesses; I confess if all these proofs which the saints have had of the fulfilling of the promises could be gathered together, we might make use of that divine hyperbole, The world could not contain the books that should be written thereof. O, what an admirable volume, what an excellent commentary and copy should this be of the scripture, to see it thus turned over into the experience of every Christian; it would be some way as easy to number the drops of rain and dew since the creation, as to reckon all these precious drops and emanations of love, these sensible returns, and fulfilling of the promises, which they have had in their experience; I truly think it could hardly be believed, though it were told, what some of the godly here, have found in the way of the word; but it is sufficient to answer the design of this work, to shew that there is a sensible demonstration and performance of scripture promises, concerning which the experience of the saints in all ages do agree; that by many confirmations the Lord hath oft sealed the truth thereof to their souls.
There are 10. special promises held forth to the godly in the word, which I shall here instance, and therewith hold forth, what a clear testimony their experience can give of the undoubted truth and accomplishment of the same.

First. Instance, is that promise given to believing, to such who credit the naked word, when there is no probable appearance of its outmaking, and thus give God the glory of his faithfulness, which we have expressly held forth, 1 Chron. xx. 20. Psal. cxii. 7. 8. Job. 1. 50.

To clear the accomplishment of this promise, I shall but appeal to that testimony the saints in all ages have left thereof, yea to the present experience of the godly at this day, if they have not certainly found it so. 1. That when in a particular they have trusted God therewith and got their spirit quiet, in a recumbency on him, he hath dealt with them according to his word, yea if then from clear convincing returns of the promise they have not been made to say, it did never repent them, that they gave more credit to the testimony of God, than of their own hearts. 2. That they have not found a more sweet, and observable issue than when their help lay most immediately on the word alone; never a more sensible deliverance than when leaf of leaf, and most of faith was in carrying them through, when little of the creature, and much of God appeared in their mercy, and where they were at the lowest, no way of escape but to throw themselves on the promise; they have then had the best retreat, yea, their supply as sensibly felt, as their need and burden had formerly been. 3. That their greatest difficulties, and shakings concerning the promise have helped to their further confirming and establishment, so as they can say, the Lords way, by wrangling with them first, yea, to their sense loosing their hold, hath helped to fasten it better, and that which for the time did speak their case most helpfully, hath made way for his more eminent appearance, and manifesting of himself. 4. That their greatest venture, and giving most out hath usually had the richest income, the most eminent experiences of their life have followed the most adventurous acts of their faith, yea, upon an after reckoning they have oft found, that their adventuring of life, estate, and credit on the promise of God, even in these things, hath very observably been their making. 5. That where they have most been a friend to their faith, there hath faith also been most a friend to them, in their standing to the credit of the promise, over the belly of greatest objections, and false reports raised thereof, they have found a very evident mark of Gods respect to the same, causing them to see, that he will honour such who thus honour him. And it is indeed worthy of a remark, what we have of Caleb upon record, that he took part with the promise of God against that discouraging report which then was raised of the Anakims, and their walled cities; and therefore the inheritance of the children of Anak was given to Caleb and his sons, in their lot, from the Lord. 6. That believing doth always make way for sense, and in their closing with the naked word of promise, they have not wanted the seal of the spirit of promise, but have found a sweet calm, their burden sensibly caved, when once they got it laid over on the word, which they can say hath been their first resting place, like the very fixing of the motion of the needle towards it's right point, when their spirit had been restless, and in greatest agitation. 7. That these greatest disappointments, which their hope in the word seemed to have, they have found afterwards most to their advantage, when their returns have not only been according to their faith, but have often exceeded their adventure, and been far beyond what they believed, yea, that from frequent experience they may say, the issue of trusting the word, how long soever they thought it deferred, yet, came always in feacon, was never too late and out of time. 8. That this
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this did never occasion bitter reflections, or was their upcast before the world, that they trusted God in a day of strait and were not helped; but this testimony have all such left, who have most credited it in a dismal hour, that none should be afraid of them to hazard upon such a hand, and venture on the promise, for, their faith hath oft taken them well and comfortably through, where both sense and reason have been ready to sink.

Second Instance, whereby we may see the performance of the promise in Christian experience is this, That God truly heareth prayer, is near unto his people for what they call upon him, agreeable to his word, and will answer their desires, we have this promise most express, Phil. iv. 6. Psal. xxxii. 16. Psal. lxv. 2. Psal. xci. 15. Now the accomplishing of this part of scripture is so very clear, that I can attest the experience of all the generation of the righteous, since the beginning, what frequent and unanswerable confirmations they have got of this truth in their Christian walk, so that I am sure, no man ever was in earnest in the matter of religion, and a stranger to this; yea, that he was never more certainly persuaded of any thing, than of this that God doth hear prayer. O if men fouls were but in their fouls stead whole evening wrestlings, and tears, the Lord hath oft turned into a morning song, they should know this is no delusion. I shall here touch somthing of that experience which by many proofs the faints can give as a witness to this promise.

1. That when they have oft with Hanna gone in before the Lord in the bitterness of their spirit, they have been made to return with a sensible and marvelous change in their case; yea, when in going about prayer, they have been put to wrestle with much disquiet and deadness, they have oft seen the wind discernibly change, and therewith their spirits lightened from under that burden, an observable calm, and serenity after much inward perturbation, yea they can say that they have found their hearts thawed, and put in a flush of tenderness, upon the back of a most sensible restraint. 2. That access and liberty to pour forth their souls to God when he hath filled their mouth with arguments, and enabled them both to wrestle and wait, they have found a favourable Crisis and begun deliverance, yea, the very turn of a sad case, which they have got from the Lord, as the pledge of a further answer, and that when he thus prepareth the heart, he doth cause his ear to hear.

3. That when they have been under a most dark cloud, they have found their sky clear, have got a very sensible taste of Gods acceptance in prayer and of his taking their fute off their hand, even while the matter was still in dependence before him, yea that they have oft had such a satisfying impression of Gods mind, and persuasion of his answering their desire, as hath helped them cheerfully to wait, yea sometimes to sing the triumph before the victory. 4. That when they had been much in prayer, they must also say, it hath been the time wherein the spirit hath flourished, was most lively, yea then they had their best days, then the candle of the Lord shined upon their paths, and his dew lay all night upon their branches, and they have found there is an evident and proportionable abatement of their spiritual life, and encouragement in God; according to their slackness in the exercise of this duty. 5. They have many times found, that when there was nothing left them, but to return in to God, and they knew of no other way to come through but to pray, and look up, they never found a more sweet and seasonable deliverance; so that most observable times of prayer have been also the most observable times of their experience, and they can say from many proofs, it is no hopeless business, which is put over upon God by prayer, though there be small outward appearance. 6. That
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it is not in vain to follow out a future before the throne, but access and interest in heaven is as sure a way to come speed (which they know well) as greatest interest upon earth; having so evidently found, while many seek the rulers favour, that the determination of every thing is from the Lord. 7. That prayer with quiet waiting in the use of means getteth comfortably through, where overcaring and carnal policy, in the use of all other shifts hath been forced to flick. 8. They know by experience, that as there are judicial times, wherein an inhibition as it were is laid on them from the Lord, in their wretflying, yea, and a fore restraint on their spirits, which hath been very sensible, so also they have found times of prayer let forth, before some special mercy, and deliverance to the church, whereby they could in some measure discern its near approach. 9. That after some solemn addresses, and application to God by prayer and falling in a day of strait, they have oft seen cause even from that day and upward to date a remarkable return and deliverance, in which even common observers might discern what an evident answer the churches intercession with God in times of extremity hath had. 10. I may add, the faints know this so well by experience that fiirely God heareth prayer, even in such a particular, that they can with much confidence adventure and make an errand of the meanest, as well as their greatest concerns to him, having so oft tried and found that seriousness and sincerity in address to God was never in vain, but whatever be the times, therein his promise taketh place, their heart shall live that seek God.

Third Instance, Is the promise of the spirit, and pouring out of the same, which we have clear in the word, Is. lxi. 21. Job. xiv. 16. Luk. iv. 49. Rom. viii. 16. The accomplishment of which is so manifest, such a sensible demonstration thereof, in the experience of the faints that I am sure this can no more be denied, than those who are warmed with the heat of the sun can deny their sense and feeling, that the sun hath such an influence: and doth not the christians spiritual walk bear as convincing a witness to the fulfilling of this promise, as any living man, by walking in the way sheceth that he hath a soul, and principle of life within him. Now to demonstrate this a little I would but touch some of the ordinary experiences of the faints therein, which they do testify and by clear undeniable evidences know to be no delusion.

1. That which causeth so real a change upon them, which maketh them alive to God, who once were dead, creating them as it were of new, that which bringeth a cloud of earth so near heaven, raiseth it far above themselves to a delightful converse with things not seen, that while their place and abode is here, their company and fellowship is above; that which maketh all things new to them, and doth so far change their nature and inclination, as causeth them find more sweetnefs in a spiritual life than in the pleasures of sin, yea, reconcileth them with the law and exercises of a chriflian, where once there was such contrariety, O! is not this a real effect of the spirit and no imaginatory thing. 2. That whereof they were altogether ignorant, when they were strangers to God, and knew not if there was a Holy Ghost, but by report, now, since their being born again they find themselves entred in another world, brought out of darkness unto a marvelous light, and of this are sure, that once they were blind, but now they see, is not this a proof of the truth of this promise? 3. That which maketh them see more of God in his word and works, at one time than at another; whence is this difference, and unequality, the scriptures are at one time the great found of the law, which are at an other time, but a common found to them; the object is the same, but O! what different manifestation thereof? whence is it that such a light spring-
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springeth up in the word, that openeth up this deep, and maketh them feel the wonders of his law, and within a little but dark night, do not the saints know this well, and that it is no delusion? 4. That which maketh such sensible liberty in their soul and confidence in their approach to God, after fore bondage and fear, which raifeth them often so far above their ordinary frame as they are not only quickned and refreshed themselves, but do observably warm others, O how piercing and savour are their words, which fhew what difference there is oft, betwixt a christian and himself, betwixt a dead exercize of a gift which reacheth the ear, and that which melteth the heart, and doth even reach by-flanders with a pleafant perfume. 5. That which maketh such a sudden change in their cafe under ordinances, that their heart that died within them as a fhone, e're ever they were aware hath taken life, and need-fire with a word, yea, hath been poured out within them so as their beloved's voice hath had an other found; O then they think not the time long, the word is the honey from the comb, fo as they have oft within a perpetual arreft upon their spirit in fuch a condition, that none may stirr up their beloved until he pleafe; can that be any delusion? 6. That which bringeth in promifes feafonably into their mind in the day of their trial, and caufeth the word agree so suitably to their present cafe with fuch a fatisfying impression of the fame, as doth give most fensible and present cafe. 7. That which so clearly by the word difcovereth to men their own heart, and doth search them out in their moft clofe and retired thoughts, that they have been oft made to wonder, how the word is upon all their secrets; is not this the candle of the Lord? 8. That which doth demonstrate theirflate and being in Chrift, by an argument which is beyond all words, and doth by power in an irrefifible way anfwer all objections, and turn the moft froward cafe into a bleffed calm, and hath made a fimple word more effectual in a moment, than moft perfwasive arguments could be. 9. That which maketh such abundant joy spring up in the heart, when there is no visible grounds for the fame, like the dry bone gulfing ouer water, muft surely be fome supernatural and excellent power, that cannot only bring it out of nothing, but out of contraries. 10. That which giveth them fo fensible a taste of the powers of the world to come, fuch a ravifhing glance of the inheritance, that they could hardly sometime forbear to rife at midnight and fing for joy in the hope thereof, and hath given them fuch a discovery of God at fome fpecial times, as hath made them judge that all they ever knew of him before, was but by hearing of the ear. 11. That which is fo discernible and fensible felt in the prefent time, that Chrifts return to the foul and the outlenting of the spirit, hath been as evident oft to the saints, as to that martyr who was forced to cry out at the flake, He is come, he is come; and hath been fo fweet when enjoyed, that the remembrance of fome of these times hath been very pleafant and refrehing, yea this is fuch a thing as moft observably melts the godly man in the way of his duty, according to the word. 12. That is no delusion, the withdrawing whereof is fo fensible to them, as it maketh their duty wherein they have had delight, become their burden, when they are put to row with oars, the wind being gone, and maketh it like night to the foul, when the fun is gone down, and fad experience hath oft fhewed them, how the overclouding of their soul, the withdrawing of the spirit and comfort doth observably follow a fitting up of duty and yeilding to any known sin, by which it is grieved.

Fourth Instance, is that Promise for direction which God hath given his people in the word, that he will guide them with his Counsel, will order, and direct their steps, who do commit their way to him, and teach them the way they shall chooef, Pfal. xxxvii. 5. Pfal. xxv. 9, 14. Pfal. lxxiii. 24. The
The fulfilling of which hath been so manifest to these who ever made earnest of acknowledging of God in their ways, and committing the conduct thereof to him, that I shall but attest their experience, if they have not this testimony to give.

1. That to trust God with their case, and give him the guiding of their way hath taken them much more easily through a plunging case, than over-caring anxiety, yea, the Lords directing their steps, and making things successful, when they have committed the same to him, hath been often as sensible to them, as their strait and difficulty was. 2. That the way of the word hath been the best expedient for taking them safe and comfortably through, and that they never repented that they did more consult their duty than inclination, when they were at a stand about a particular, and did not debate the command, even while there seemed a lion in the way. 3. That they were never left without counsel and direction, when their eye was single and serious about it, and it was not so much want of light as of an heart to close therewith, that made their way oft so dark, but when they subjected themselves to Gods mind, they found, that such who follow him, shall not walk in darknes.

4. That light and counsel doth meet men in following the command and the practice of known duty, hath helped them to know more their duty, and that light did most abound when it was their serious study to follow the same. 5. They found it was never in vain after Gods mind by prayer, and also in the temple to make a reference of a particular to him, when it was too hard for them, but have often seen the word evidently directed to such and such a case, as if they had gotten a return from heaven by an audível voice. 6. They also know, that Gods following in light, with a powerful impression, his teaching the reins, and instructing with a strong hand is no delusion, but the sure and well grounded experience of most solid christians in all ages, yea, most sensible from any false impulse, and that some special piece of work and service, which God hath lay'd in their way, wants not usually some special call, backed with such light and authority, as in an irresistible way, can answer all objections, to make them go bound in the spirit, about such a duty.

7. How Gods special directing hand hath been oft very observable, not only in preventing and crossing their way to withdraw them by some sharp dispensation from their purpose; but sensibly overpowering them, so that they have been plucked as it were back from unavoidable hazard, that they could not find their paths. 8. I shall add, they have oft observably found, how eazy their way was made to them when the Lord doth countenance and prosper the same; what sweet concurrence of providences, how then difficulties have most sensibly been taken out of the way, yea, wind and tide going along with them, in such a manner, that they have been forced to see and confess a divine hand therein.

Fifth Influnce, is the promise of pardon and forgiveness which God hath given his people in the word, that for his names sake he will blot out their iniquity, and remember their sin no more, yea, is ready to pardon, which is expressly held forth to these who are truly humbled, Mic. vii. 18. Jer. xxxi. 34. If. xliii. 25. Now that there is a real accomplishment of this, I am sure the experience of the saints can in all ages clearly witness, what joy and peace this hath occasioned, what a sensible demonstration and solemn confirmations they have had of this promise, so as their very bones might sing; Who is like unto thee, O Lord? It is true real pardon of sin doth not always infer the sensible feeling thereof, and when it is remitted in heaven, there is not always a declaration of it in the conscience, but it is also sure, that this is sensibly felt, and that it is tried by all, even all the generation of the righteous.
ous to have had as powerful an operation on a disquieted, troubled soul, as ever wine, or the choicest cordial could have on the sick, or faint; O! if thes who question this, were in their case, to whom God speaketh peace after a storm, they should know how real and certain that is: I would offer the christians witness to this promise, from many, many experiments, by which the Lord hath sealed it to their soul, whereby they know assuredly it is no fancy or delusion.

1. How this hath as sensibly a connection with the serious exercise of contrition and repentance in their experience, as it certainly hath in the word and promise; while they find, that in silence, and keeping up their cafe from God, their bones have been troubled, their spirit in a reflexion and disquiet condition, until once they made an address, and got their soul vented by confessing to the Lord which was then like a kindly turn and cool of a fever. 2. They know it is no delusion that is found so certain a cure to a wounded spirit, under the sense of sin, a wound which the world and all its diversions could never heal, whose pain and grief no medicine can allay (a drop of divine pleasure being enough to turn all their pleasures into wormwood and gall) but, O! a taste of this unspeakable cordial, one warming look of a reconciled God, they know by experience, can give present ease.

3. It is no delusion which they can command no more than the sun to shine when overclouded, or the wind to blow, but when it lifteth, which the most persuading moral arguments can no ways effectuate, nor all their former experience, yea, the letter of most refreshing promises, which sometimes are to them, but as the white of an egg without taste, until once the spirit breath, which not only discovereth the ground of their joy in the word, but doth also cause them to rejoice therein, when it shineth upon the same. 4. It must be no delusion which causeth so marvelous a change that after greatest disquieting fears, they have found most sensible manifestations of love, the greatest flood on the back of the lowest cobb in their spiritual condition, which oft hath forced them to retreat, what their fears and jealousies did utter; yea, hath made them enquire with wonder, whence they are so cheerful to day, who yester-night were so broken and crushed: whence their spirit should be in so sweet a calm, that so lately was like the raging and troubled sea. 5. That this hath oft met them, as a blest surprizal and unexpected welcome, when they have in a backsliding case come in to God, they certainly know, that when they knew not how to adventure, and at what end of their raveled condition to begin, counts having run long over, yet on their very first adresses have got a sweet disappointment to their fears, been helped to their feet, yea, some times have had as it were the fatted calf killed to make merry with their friends. 6. That which hath an audible voice within, so strong an impression upon the soul, which carrieth with it such a clear satisfactory discovery of God's heart and love, is surely no delusion, while the intimation of that one truth, 'Tours sins are forgiven'; or any other word of promise for that end, they have found to be an argument beyond words, which they could not resist, but for the time, have been as sure, they see and feel this, as that they live, yea, can no more now call it in question, than formerly they could get it believed. 7. That is no delusion which causeth them with another kind of freedom, approach to God, maketh them know there is a spirit of adoption which fets the soul at liberty from the servile bondage and thraldom under which their former backsliding had put them, yea, a thing not only sensibly felt by themselves, but may be discerned by others, while they cannot smother the joy of their heart or hide in their countenance such a change of their condition, that truly God hath dealt comfortably with them. 8. Hath not
not this the saints in all ages witnessed even a joy unspeakable and full of glory, which though but of short continuance, yet for the present so strong, as hath ravished their soul with the hope of the inheritance above, and clear view of their interest in it, yea, sometimes, made them sing for joy, in expectation of that blest day, but, O! this is better felt than expressed. 9. And in a word, can that be a delusion that hath oft turned the poor mans hell into a heaven, which tryts the christian in the way of his duty, and the work doth to exactly answer the promise, most sensibly felt after greatest shakings of the conscience by the law, and can make a sad outward lot so very sweet and pleasant, cause them triumph over the wrath of men, to sing in a dungeon, to abound and have all things under greatest wants, look grim death cheerfully in the face in its most dreadful aspect, yea, doth make so great and visible a difference between the christian and himself.

Sixth Instanc, Is that promise of encouragement and support under the cross, which is expressly held forth in the word, that the Lord will own his people, bear their charges, and be with them in trouble in the day of their suffering for his truth; yea, will bind up the broken in heart, and heal their wounds, Psal. xci. 15. Ísa. xliii. 2. xli. 17. and xlix. 14. Psal. ix. 9. Ísa: li. 12. Now that this promise is a truth, and hath a certain accomplishment, the experience of the saints in all ages will witness, and we know their testimony is true, what at solemn times of Gods presence they have had in a barren wilderness, how great a cloud of witnesses doth seal this, and give their testimony to the cross of Christ, of which we may say, the fame and sweet favour hath gone forth and spread abroad through the church, the fathers have told it to the children, and one generation to another, but how little a part thereof can be expressed! I think it would be a marvelous record, if the suffering and prison experiments of the saints were particularly set down, what they have found under the cross, but it is well, we know this promise hath been, and this day is evidently sealed, concerning which I dare attest the experience of as many as did ever drink of this blest cup, and were counted worthy to suffer for the testimony of Christ, if this be not faithful and true witnesses.

1. That they have oft attested what communion with God is in the secret duties of a christian, also in the publick ordinances, and in a special measure, at some more solemn times, but O! never knew his presence and communion with him more sensibly than under the cross, yea, have found that the work, and service of a suffering time, as it is not the ordinary service of every day, hath also a peculiar, and more than ordinary allowance. 2. That they never knew divine strength more sensibly, than when they have been most pressed above their own strength, that in the day they were cast on Gods immediate care and ordinary means of their help most withdrawn, they had never less cause to complain, but might often say this as their experience, they thistled not when he led them through the wilderness, yea, that they have no times of their life found their mercies more observably come to them, more sweet and satisfying, than when by prayer and believing, they were put to dig the well, and wait for the rain coming down to fill it. 3. That they never found more true liberty than in the house of bondage, more refreshing company than amidst their greatest solitude, while they found him near, whom gates and bars cannot shut out in the day when all things else seemed to frown upon them, that their midnight fongs have been sweeter than all the prosperity they sometimes enjoyed, and that they have oft proved, that the deeper any are in affliction for Christ and his truth, they are also the deeper in consolation. 4. They must say the most satisfying, and clear discoveries of
of the word are under searching and sharpest trials, that a fanctified exercising affliction, they have found one of the best interpreters of the Bible, and the word then to be another thing, than it is at other times, yea, even to have been that to them, which they could desire it to be, so as they are sure it hath been shaped out and directed for that present plunge their soul was in. 5. That there is a very easy passage and dispatch betwixt heaven and an oppressed afflicted soul, an observable bent by prayer, and more sensible access to God's face, when other things have most frown'd, yea, they can witness from experience, he stayeth his rough wind in the day of his East wind. While he shutteth one door he hath fet another open, that when the storm without hath been very sharp, they have found a sweet calm and fun-shine within to make it easy, and when he layeth on one fore trial, he will take another off. 6 They can tell what a sweet comfortable parting they have oft had with some sharp trial, which at the first was bitter as death, but in the close, after sanctified exercise under the same, they have found cause to leave it their bleeding, and confess that the time of greatest jealousy, and fear upon their part, they have found on God's part, hath been a time of greatest kindnens and love, the sharpest wounds from such an hand and heart as his, hath tended to a cure, yea, that circumstance and ingredient in the same, which of all was most bitter and grievous, even there they have found their deliverance and encouragement most remarkable. 7. That the peculiar advantage of a sanctified trial is not so well seen in the present time, as afterwards, when the case hath altered, then they found a long and rough storm recompenced at their landing, with a rich loading of experience, another kind of discovery of God, his way, and the certainty of his word than they formerly had attained to; so as now they can speak of him, and the good of the crofs, and adventuring any thing for Christ, with some greater esteem, on an other ground than report, or an hearing thereof by the ear. 8. I shall add what hath been the frequent testimony of these who ever endured tribulation for the gospel, that their remembrance and after reckoning, upon this account hath not been sad or bitter, when they fell down, and compared their gain with their los, their upmaking with these days of trial that have gone over their head, that they would not then exchange their experience, or want what they have found by the crofs, no not for many more days of trouble and affliction.

Seventh Inflance, is that promise of the word which integrity, in an evil time hath, that it shall preserve their fleps, and be the best mean to help these through that keep Gods way, yea, even in this life shall not want some witness of Gods respect, Psal. xviii. 25. Psal. cxii. 4. Rev. iii. 10. Now to hold forth the accomplishment of this, I may with confidence appeal to the observation of the saints in all ages, who ever made it their serious study to keep their garments clean in a time of trial, if their experience hath not this testimony to give.

1. That though at present, honestly in evil times hath brought them in hazard, and with Joseph to a prison; yet, it hath brought them out also, with observable advantage, yea, however the Lord did order their deliverance, they have found this did land them well, and always bring them to a comfortable harbour. 2. That honestly and faithfulness hath an authority even on the conscience of their enemies, and leaveth usually a conviction upon them: yea, hath forced a testimony and approbation from such men, and they have oft found better entertainment, than these who in a sinful way have sought to please them. 3. They have found this always the choicest expedient and best policy in a dangerous time, which hath observably met them, when they had
had most to do; a thing whereof they have reap’d the fruits in the day of their fault and times of judgment, yea, though it hath occasioned sometime their suffering, yet it hath been also their safety and protection from further sufferings. 4. That though integrity is oft under a dark cloud of reproach, yet it getheth still well out from under the same, and hath thined usually more bright afterward: So as they might have had cause to observe, what unexpected means the Lord hath made use of, for their clearing. 5. That while their enemies might have (were it not for the preventing goodness of God) quarrell’d upon some other ground, they have been observably led to pursue, and make them the but of their malice for their honesty and that wherein they have peace before God, and have been keepe’d from hitting on the right cause. 6. They find how unspeakably sweet this is upon an after reckoning, and in the evening of their life, that then they reap a comfortable harvest of that they have sown with much suffering, and tears; O! then it doth not repent them that integrity was their choice. 7. They have sometime found a hundred fold even in this life, and an observable advantage in that which they have been willing to lose and hazard most. 8. They must also say, integrity was never their ruin, but deliverance was oft brought about in a way they could not have expected, yea the Lords put ting all other doors upon them, hath been that he might open one himself, like Hagar’s well springing up in the wilderness. 9. That in making their aim, when they had a large heart for God, they have not then wanted an opportunity for evidencing the same, their encouragement hath abounded with their duty, and they have got much in, in giving much out for Christ, that there was no such feast in the world, as they have sensibly found in the testimony of a good conscience.

EIGHT Instance, is that promise which is held forth to the christian in the word, of strength, and assistance to go about duties, Isa. xl. 29, 31. Psal. xviii. 6, 14. Psal. lxxxiv. 5. Psal. lxviii. 28. To clear this, that it hath an unquestionable performance, I attest the experience of the generation of the righteous; who ever knew what it was to serve the Lord in the spirit, who by many sensible confirmations, have not proven the certainty of these things?

1. That when they have gone about duty under much deadness and straitness of spirit, they have found a very sensible enlargement, and got their bonds loofed, which surely they could no more command, without the concurrence of divine help, and something above nature than these who spread out the sail can command a fair wind, when it is crofs. 2. That Cold’s help and concurrence was never more discernible carrying them through, and making stronger than in the day, that, to their own sense, they were most weak, when they have gone about duty under greatest fears and fainting in spirit. 3. That when they had most confidence in themselves, and judged they were at greatest advantage in their going about some duty, they have usually had the faddest retreat, and found that a sure truth, the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. 4. They know well what an influence divine concurrence hath, not only upon their inward frame, but also upon the exercize of their gifts, yea, upon the common stabilities of judgement and memory, and that there is a most remarkable difference, between themselves at one time, and another, according to the blowing of this wind. 5. They must also witness this as their experience, they found duty never more easy to them, than when they have had most to do and were kept throngeth therein; yea, when much work was laid on their hand, they then wanted not an enlarged allowance for the same. 6. That their spirits have been fitted for duty and carried through difficulties, where at some other time, and
and in another frame they would have fainted, and thereby seen, that none need to fear at any piece of duty, when God calleth them to it, for while difficulties have appeared greatest at first, the less they have found them afterward, yea, the hardest piece of service oft made most easy. 7. They find God doth raise the spirit of his followers with a suitable elevation for their work, and can fit them for the service of that time and other trials thereof, even beyond their ordinary reach. 8. That there is an open door, and sensible affiitance, when there hath been work for the Gospel in such a place, while on the other hand they have found an inhibition sensibly served on them, the door as it were shut when the tide was going back, and the word of the Gospel at a stand in such a part. 9. That it is not greatest abilities which make undertakings successful, it being in vain to rise up early without the Lord. 10. It hath oft been their experience, that in following the way of God, his candle did then shine upon their paths, the spirit of the Lord was with them, and sensibly let out, the withdrawing whereof hath been no less discernible, while they turned aside from him, that they have then been put to bear the burden alone, and found difficulty and despondency of spirit at once growing upon their hand. 11. I may add what these who are serious in religion have oft tried, that there is no such help and furniture, for going about duties as a spiritual frame, and nearness with God, for then light and counsel, inward freedom and sweet composure of spirit have brought most sensible advantage to them, their greatest, yea and in their most common undertakings, this hath been very evident.

Ninth Instance, is that great promise, we have Rom. viii. 28. That all things shall work together for good to them who love God, and Psal. xxv. 10. All the paths of the Lord are mercy, and truth to such as keep his covenant. I confess it is not easy sometimes to reconcile God's way and this piece of his part together, these who take only an ordinary paffing look of providence, and cannot well judge, how such things, wherewith oft the godly in their life are tried, should contribute to their good and advantage; while nothing would seem more directly cross to the same; but the christian and wife observer can give another account, they know what a sure truth this is, that there is no real jar betwixt the promise and providence of God in this matter; and whatever be the present thoughts, patient on waiting hath had cause thus to say this.

1. When his way and their thoughts have most differed, in the accomplishment of his word, and bringing about their mercy, they have found it was to their advantage, that his choice was always better than theirs, yea they have been oft made to confess that their faddest disappointments therein have tended to their further advantage. 2. That the Lord's denying them some outward thing which they have most desired, they have found (as afterwards hath appeared) was to grant them more than their desire; he hath refused them as it were an Ishmael, that he might give them an Isaac. 3. They can oft say they had been undone if they had not been undone; that it was their mercy, the Lord took such a way to cast them in a fever, to prevent a Lethargy, and by some sharp cross, gave them a wound in the flesh to cure and let out some gross impostume in their soul, which should have made their case worse. 4. How greatest shakings have helped their further establishment, so as they were never more confirmed than in that about which they have been most wrangled; yea, they have also found this the Lord's way to cure their frowardness, and unbeliev by some further addition to their cross; that when they would not believe, he hath caufed them come in upon a greater disadvantage, while as a small affliction hath made them impatient, a more
more heavy and pressling trouble hath been their cure, and helped them to keep silence under God's hand. 5. That the growing of difficulties in their way, and some further presslure in the trial, they have found it was from the Lord, in order to its removal, and to the bringing forth of some greater good, and that all visible grounds of confidence have been oft broken, but with this advantage that their mercy, they had it more immediately out of God's own hand, yea that the less moderation was whilst their trial hath come to an extremity, they have found it then upon the turn, and their hope and encouragement oft made to spring up therewith. 6. How the Lords deferring their mercy which they had oft sought hath been indeed their mercy and advantage, which did always come to them in season, yea they must say his way is always nearest, and waiting on God without making haste doth truly make the quickest dispatch. 7. Their experience can also witness, how men reproach and venting their malice that way to ruin their reputation, hath oft been the very mean ordered by the Lord, to bring forth their further clearing and vindication, even by that very mean. 8. How by some sad cross he doth oft prevent a sadder, which though strange at first, have been forced upon after discovery to confess: "The man who riding in haste to the sea-port, to have passage over seas with a ship going then off, fell and broke his leg by the way, which was the saving of his life, for the ship, and all its passengers perished in that voyage, yet this was a bitter atoning providence to him for the present." 9. How their loss even by some sad slip, and failing in their spiritual condition hath really tended to their further humbling and advantage, yea, that which brought them under some visible decay, as to the wondred luftre of their Christian profession, hath helped them to grow more under ground, to the root and substantials of christianity. 10. They can tell how these steps of the providence of God, which seemed most cross to that design he was carrying on, yea, looked like the very crushing of their hope, have oft been the very means which hath wrought effectually to bring about their mercy. 11. I shall add but this, as the christians witness to the truth of this promise, that sharpest reproaches they have seemed the wounds of a friend, most pressling straits, made the mean for their further enlargement, how the Lord hath brought them into some dark and plunging trial, which then looked like a fearful pit, that he might bring them out with advantage, let their feet on a rock, and estabish their goings, yea, that in the hottest furnace, they lost nothing, but what they might well spare, even some of their dross.

Tenth Instance, I shall here set down, is that general promise made to Godliness, and these who make it their serious study, that it shall be great gain, that verily it shall be well with the righteous, for they shall eat the fruit of their labour, and in keeping of the command there is a great reward, 1 Tim. vi. 6. 1 Pet. iii. 12, 13. Psal. xix. 11.

This is indeed a great concerning truth, but a truth which I am sure none who did ever make earnest of religion will call in question; many sure convincing experiments hath the christian had thereof through his life, such want not some diary and record, wherein they can call up the advantage they have reaped in close following of God and their duty, yea from most remarkable providences, they may oft say, This I had because I kept thy precepts, now that this promise hath a large witness I shall here touch some things which I may with some confidence say, both in the present, and in former times have been proved and sealed by the saints in their experience.

1. That they never more effectually consulted their good and advantage than when they did with greatest singleness consult their duty, and least with flesh, and blood; they did never more truly seek themselves, than in the practice of self denial, yea in that they intended God most, and least their private interest,
ref, they have therein found a very sensible upmaking. 2. That a serious endeavour to walk before God acceptably they have found still the best policy, even in the worst of times, and have found his way then very satisfying, while it was most their study how to please him, yea they have been obliged to confess, that when the Lord's way was their choice, they have found it also their reward. 3. They have found more real joy and peace in withstanding temptations, than in any thing temptation offered, and in laying their interest at God's feet, and their will underneath his, more than in all their carnal enjoyments: O the taste, and testimony of God's approbation! how sweet a smile is his, in whose countenance heaven lieth. 4. That inward peace and tranquillity of mind, a sweet calm, and composure of spirit, doth as really attend a spiritual frame and walk, as the shadow the body, and their best and most comfortable days, wherein they have truly walked at liberty, have been when their heart was most subject to the law, with a single respect to the same. 5. That religion and a spiritual walk is the best friend even as to a contented and comfortable life here in the world, and that they have then most access to enjoy themselves and their lot with satisfaction, when they enjoy God, yea, that nearness and communion with him, tendeth to the sublimating and refining of their natural spirit, and hath been an observable help to their common abilities and parts. 6. That there is truly a reality in the blessing, which maketh a small thing signify much, and yield more than greater abundance. 7. That when they give God their heart, it is then sweet and matter of satisfaction to observe his ways, and their observation thereof is very refreshing, how far the Lord condescends to their desires when they sum them all up in himself, and make him their delight. 8. That the pleasure of religion is in the practice thereof, and the way to have religion easy, is to be thoroughly religious, duty is then sweet when men do it from an inward principle; and holiness should be a more pleasant work, yea, a reward to its self, if there were less mixture of hypocrisy. 9. That real humility and walking low in their own eyes, and before God, did never lose to them respect and credit from men; but self-abasement doth observably go before lifting up, and true honour followeth such, who left hunt after vain applause from the world. 10. That when they were more faithful to observe and improve a little, for their encouragement, more hath been added, and they never wanted matter to be thankful, when opportunities laid to their hand were improved and taken hold of for that end, yea, they have found there is a mercy within a mercy, and some peculiar mercy in every cross, which is only found and brought forth by the exercized serious improver of the same. 11. That much sincerity hath also much sense following the same, secret honesty before God hath met them openly before men, and faithfulness in christian freedom purchased them more favour and respect even from the worst, than when they studied most to please them in a sinful way. 12. That they never saw more clearly the gain and real advantage of godliness, and what a difference there is betwixt these that serve God, and those that serve him not, as in time of trouble and trial, how that in tenderness their former walk, and that which they entertained in the morning, doth now meet them at night, and pay them home with advantage in an hour of temptation. 13. They have been forced to observe that there is an invisible guard about his people in their duty, that the ministry of the angels towards such is no delusion, and have oft been made to wonder how hazard within an hair-breadth hath been prevented, relief and help come as betwixt the bridge and the water; how they have been sensibly preferred amidst greatest dangers, while, as it were, an inhibition hath been served upon these, that they should come near, but not hurt, and only met with them,
them, that they might read their preservation from them. 14. That an enlarged heart doth meet with an enlarged allowance, and bearing burden with others of the people of God, hath helped to make their own private burden the lighter. 15. That real godliness and religion hath as much in hand, as may be a reward to its self; which beautifieth the soul, and maketh the face and conversation to shine with an observably lustre, that guardeth and preferreth the heart from many vexing croffes, preventeth sad strokes and forrows that others are pierced with, who will follow their idols and the ways of sin, which are bitter in the close. In a word, this is surely found, that God is the best friend, and when there is peace with him, things without do not offend, but they shall then underfiand what it is to be in league with the beams of the field and stones of the ground, having a sweet agreement with all providences and dispensations that come in their way.

V. That the Scripture threatenings have also a certain accomplishment, are found to be sad carneft, and do not fall to the ground, the chriftian can also feal from his experience. It is not here to be understood the threatenings of wrath (from which believers are freed in Christ) but of a fatherly displeasure, which because of sin, may draw deep, yea, bring forth very dreadful effects; to witnesse that it is an evil and bitter thing to depart from God, and that their own doings shall chaftifie them, and these threatenings of the covenant, If thy children forsake my law, I will punish their transgression with rods, &c. Psal. lxxx. 30. are sure truths which want not in every time a performance. To clear this ite I speak any thing particularly I would premitt somethings to be confidered.

1. That the word is a perpetual rule, which in every time must take place, and though affliction is a piece of the common misery of man, yet, doth it not arise out of the dust, neither fall out at an adventure, but doth oft visibly follow the track of sin, as a flouth-hound, pointing at such evils as the cause, by the froak, and at the truth and fulfilling of the threatenings, written upon both.

2. We should adore his sovereignty whose way both in the meafure and manner of his peoples chaftisement, is so various, as that none can infallibly conclude, what he is to do in such a cafe, I mean we are not to limit the Lord to such a way and method in his working; yet, this we may affert and firmly conclude, that not only the threatenings of the word have a performance, but men may also have, even beforehand some more than probable conjecture, yea, a clear difcovery, what such a cafe doth threaten, and what will be the issue of a sinful course, by confidering the Lords ordinary procedure, both with themselves and others, how sin hath very sad effects, and his way in all ages is still uniform agreeing with its self, and with the word. 3. Tho' a gracious flare doth surely fave from wrath and condemnation, yet not from affliction and strokes of divine anger because of sin; for he taketh vengeance on mens inventions, even when he will spare the inventors. 4. The Lord doth oft contend with his people for their folly and misccarriages, more severely than with others, and will not let pafs in them that which he passeth by in the world, without being a reprover; but when light and love and the law will not hedge in their way, he will set briers and thorns before them, yea, speak by chaftisement upon their bones, to withdraw men from their purpofe. 5. It is known, how very deep the holy anger of God may draw against his children; even sometimes, to pursue them out of the land of the living, and follow them to the grave, with some remarkable stroke, yea, it hath made them dreadful examples of judgment in this life, for whom, he hath accepted an eternal sacrifice in Chrift. 6. I shall add, this is the Lords blessed end in making out his threatenings against his people, that they should not perish with the world. O! what a bleft exchange is it, that the flaming
flaming sword which once stood to guard the tree of life, doth now stand as it were in the way of the saints, to keep them from running into the paths of death.

Having premitted these things, I shall now instance some particular evils, wherewith the godly are ready to be overtaken, which the word doth expressively threaten and hold forth the hazard of, both as to outward and spiritual storks, and give in here the christians witness from their experience in all ages of the truth of these threatenings.

First Security, and carnal confidence, which we find the word doth threaten, is an evil wherewith christians are ready to be overtaken; but they do also know by sad experience, what bitter fruit this brings forth, and that wherein the word falleth not to the ground, which is held forth, Hos. ii. 1. 9. Hos. vii. 9. Isa. xxx. 16, 17.

1. That a secure condition is the usual forerunner of some sad change, that when they are most at ease in a dull and dead temper of spirit, some sharp rousing dispensation is upon the back of it, either a grots sin, or a searching crofs, as a thorn in the bed of their security to put them to their feet.

2. That seldom reckoning with the confidence, the running on of accounts for some time upon their hand, doth put their cafe into a sad confusion and maketh it a bitter, and burdensome work to retire alone, or within themselves, yea, hath a most direct tendency to a further hardening, and real giving up of their duty.

3. That when security, and deadness growth within, it quickly maketh them dry up and wither without, in the external performance of duty, and in that vigorous lively appearance which did formerly lustrate their walk and carriage before others, so as very bystanders may read the languishing of grace in the dead exercise of their gifts.

4. That going about duty with most confidence in themselves doth usually give them the most clear discovery of their weakness, yea, when they have least lookt for any crofs, they have then been fure to meet with it with that sad addition, of being a surprizal in a secure condition, whereas on the other hand they may tell, what refreshing disappointments they have got where some trials have been most feared and lookt for.

5. That secure sporting with a temptation may soon turn to sad carnal, and they have found it very hard to dance about the fire and not be burnt, and the temptation, which at a distance seemed small, upon a nearer approach, they have found more bands on their heart, and was another than they could have believed.

6. That the means whereon they have laid most weight, they have also found, have given them the faddest disappointment, the putting of them in God's room, and out of their own place hath been the way to cause them miscarry, yea, to turn their crofs, whereas they have oft seen some thing unexpected made the mean of their help, that they might know means are ordered of the Lord, and are useful, because he maketh them so.

7. Their experience can also witness that carnal confidence defying the trial at a distance, is usually punished with carnal diffidence and delpondency of spirit under the same, one extremity made the punishment of the other, like the hot and cold fits of an ague, which do mutually make one the other more intense, yea, that their immoderate confidence and expectation of a thing, hath after resolved in as immoderate discouragement, as their stroke.

Second, The christians unwatchfulness, and intermitting in the exercise of that so necessary and commanded duty, we find the word threateneth, and holdeth forth the hazard thereof, Left ye enter into temptation, the proof thereof their experience can also witness, Luke xxi. 34. 36. Matth. xxvi. 41.

M 1. That
1. That it is not easy to guide their walk and conversation when their guard 
over the heart doth slacken, but the giving loose reins for a little may make 
such a fad and large breach, that many many days will not easily make up, 
yea they do also know, how a sensible withdrawing of the spirit, and dry-
ing up of their life and liberty is the usual fruit which unwatchfulness 
brings forth. 2. That this helpeth to make their fun-fhine short, causeth 
a low ebb after the greatest enlargement, whilst they do not guard against 
peculiar evils, and that usually there doth haunt such a condition, the swelling 
of the flesh, when the spirit is most enlarged, which will soon put them as 
far behind, as they formerly thought themselves at an advantage. 3. That 
when once the heart lieth open, it is quickly set on and made a prey, with 
what a bitter thing doth it return, after it hath taken liberty to wander? yea, 
doth find there is a swift progress that fin hath from the thoughts to the roll-
ing of it to the imagination, and thence to the affection, wherewith it is 
more easy to engage, than to shake this off. 4. That unwatchfulness hath 
oft turned the most special times and opportunities for advantage to the greatest 
lofs which through their neglect of these, hath put them further behind 
than they were, it hath turned their retirement and solitude to be their snare 
made the defect worse, and more dangerous than the city, and made them 
find that vain thoughts the following whereof seemeth pleafant to the mouth, 
will prove gall and wormwood in the belly, there being no fadder company 
than a man spirit let loose upon it self, whilst they cannot ftop that current, 
where to they had given a vent. 5. Their experience of this can witnesses 
that unwatchfulness hath an undoubted tendency to cast off prayer, how hard 
is it in the evening to retire to God, whilst the heart is abroad all the day? 
To be religious in worship, when men are not fo in their walk? Yea they do 
find that this will bring their diftemper within out at doors to some diforder, 
impertinency, or passion in their words or outward communication, a thing which 
experience may tell doth wound the soul, make a sad breach in their peace, and 
dothing quickly overcloud the spirit, and unfit them for communion with God 
and going about of spiritual duties.

T H I R D, To refrain prayer, and neglect calling on God is an evil also 
which the word doth threaten, and hold forth the fame hazard thereof, as of 
unwatchfulness, let ye enter into temptation, yea, that this is even a step to 
the calling off fear, the chri{tians experience, from frequent trial can witness, 
that this scripture threatening is true, Matth. xxvi. 41. Job xv. 4.

1. That they have found this the rife, which giveth life and increafes to 
their prevailing evils, and that corruption then is upon a sensible growth, as 
the lively exercise of prayer begins to be intermatted. 2. That this wear-
eth out their spiritual life and bringeth a consumption upon the vital spirits of 
chrifiannes, fo that thefe who sometime flourished and kept green, as by the 
scents of water, that correpondence which they had with the fountain of their 
life, while his dew did lyce all night on their branches, hath through neglect 
of prayer been brought to a poor shadow; fo although sometimes the great-
ness of their lofe and diftemper hath been hid from themselves, yet, might be 
easily discerned by on-lookers. 3. That wearing out of prayer and of de-
light therein will quickly make them difriflie any other part of religion, put 
them out of frame to meditate, or to give thanks, or entertain fellowship 
with the faints, yea, the more lively and spiritual thefe are, it maketh them the 
more burden and torment to them. 4. That wearing out of this is a 
strong temptation to a further forbearance, and will fensibly wear them out of 
yany fene of their need thereof, and make them strangers to themselves and 
to their own cafe, fo that they fhall find, the lefs they are in this exercise, 
the
the further they shall be indisposed and the fewer errands they have, the less felt necessity of the same. 5. Their experience can also witness that little prayer makest a heavy burden, doth multiply their straits and cause their care grow as this is abated; they must then bear their burden alone, and with heaviness take counsel within themselves, while they ply not this blest tried remedy to make their requests in all things known to God.

FOUTH. We find the word doth threaten defection from the truth, and turning from the way of God in a time of trial, as an evil into which they that are kept by grace from final apostasie may yet through the violence of a temptation fall, Jer. ix. 13, 15. Psal. lxxxix. 30, 32. Jos. viii. 11. and their sad experience can witness, the truth of the Scripture threatenings concerning this also, while they have found.

1. That in one day they may adventure on that, which through most of their life they have not got above it, but hath made them go with their back bowed down to the grave; that there giving the Lord's work a wrong touch is one of these things which doth scarcely leave them all their time, but, beyond other sins they have found this will come up with a bitter and heavy reflection, yea, in the evening of their life they have found this to fore on their spirit, that it could not lye hid or silent but were forced to witness their sense of it before the world, ere they could get to any cafe. 2. That this the Lord doth usually meet with some sharp and publick reproof even before men, that though he pardon his people, yea, give some sensible intimation thereof to their souls, he hath not past them, as to some visible mark of his displeasure, because of such a thing. 3. They fee that a crooked and uncleanly way proves not the means of extricating them out of trouble, but their straits have been made to grow therewith, yea they have found that which they eschewed in God's way, hath more sadly met them in another rod, and that there is a thick dreg in the bottom of the cup, which maketh it worse to drink thereof at the close, than at the beginning. 4. That it is not easy to make a stand in turning aside from the way of God, when once they are engaged, a retrograd motion is very violent, and yielding in a little will bring with it some necessitie of going further, as a judicial stroke. 5. That neglecting of some clear opportunity, to give a testimony for the truth, when called thereto, hath turned to be their judgement, that they should not have further access or be made useful that way; a thing truly obvious to such, as are wife to observe the judgements of God in their time; yea, likewise that publick back-sliding, doth oft visibly wear men out of personal tenderneff.

Fifth. Unsubduedness of spirit, and want of mortification to outward things, the word doth clearly threaten, and hold forth its hazard, the accomplishment whereof chriftians experience can witness, Rom. viii. 6, 7.

1. That God hath oft turned their idol to be their crofs, put a mark of his jealousy on their dearest things, when once they put them in his room, yea, frequent observation of the Lord's way both with themselves and others doth shew, if they would be rid of a thing, they may fet their heart immoderately on it, such eagernes and exorbitancy of affection being a sure preface, it shall either be their judgement or forrow or ceafe to be. 2. That outward things did never yield less than whilst they preft them most, that when they are eager in pursuit of the world, and satisfaction there, their spirits are sensibly hurried with many perturbations, so that they must say, that which keepeth them from enjoying of God doth also hinder the comfortable enjoying of themselves. 3. They have found that slow advance in the work of mortification, hath at last doubled their smart, and been the concurring caufe of some very sharp cure, when the disease did come to that heigh,
height, that a small and ordinary potion could not do the turn. 4. That
immoderate desire, and prelting after an outward thing, they have sometime
got anwered, but therewith a sharp reproof from the Lord, yea, usually have
found small satisfaction in their enjoying that, about which they were so in-
tent in their pursuit, give children, or else I dye, said Rachel, the got chil-
dren and she dyed in bringing one of them forth. 5. Their experience
can also witness how overcares anxiety hath oft caufed things thrive worse
under their care, whilst they found never a more satisfying issue in a partic-
ular, than by a quiet, submi{f{ve dependence on the Lord for the fame.

SIXTH. The doing violence to light, and finning with a witnes{s against
the conscience, as it is clearly threatened in the word, so likewise the sad ef-
fects thereof hath been clearly witnessed, in all ages, Prov. xxix. 1. Psal.
.xxx. 11. 12.

1. What a direct tendency this hath to the further darkning of their light,
and to a judicial hardening, and that reproofs not entertained do usually be-
come lefs frequent, yea, lefs pungent and searching; their heart then doth
not so easily finite them, and put the tear in their eye, as sometimes a word,
or secret rebufe of the conscience would have done, so as they can now di-
gest greater things, who would sometimes have stood at that, which compa-
ratively was very small. 2. That when they would not read their bosom
diftemper, which both by the word and conscience was pointed out, others
have got leave to read the fame written on their forehead, the shifting of dis-
covered guilt, and of all serious endeavour to get the quarrel taken away in
secret betwixt God and them, hath brought the matter at laft, to some pub-
luck hearing, even before the world. 3. That their darkening of their light
upon some private intere{t, while they would again and again enquire if such
a thing be warrantable, concerning which the Lord had once cleared their
mind, is a most perilous thing, yea hath got an anwer according to the idol
of their heart, and their choice made to be their judgment. I shall but add
what bitter and sad experience can tell, how dreadful it is to give the consi-
cence a thrust which is more easily hurt than healed, that deliberate adventuring
on the occasion of temptation, when they would go to the high priest's hall
without warrant, or a calling, hath cost them dear; and they have found that
bold finning doth afterward make faint believing.

(5) I know it is by the serious and experienced christians, and by these on-
ly, this argument in the meaning thereof can be reached, and it is sure, such
will not debate the fame, who know the truth and have it dwelling in them,
and on another ground than report are established in its certainty; for these can
witness what sweet comforting hours they have had with Jesus Christ in a
sad uncomfortable time, that he hath both spoked, and himself also hath done
it, and must therefore seal his word and the truth thereof, because he hath feal-
ed it on their heart; yea, do so surely know, it is God who worketh all
their works in them, that with their last words and dying breath, they have
confidence to affert this, and commend that excellent study of godlinefs to
others.

I know that with a great many of the world, this grave convincing argu-
ment of experience hath no weight, for strangers intermedle not with that
joy, and therefore fancy it a pure fiction, as the only expedient and preserva-
tive to their heart, from the horror and inexpres{sible torment, which must
scare on them, if the certainty and necessity of godlinefs were granted, these
 scoff at this excellent thing, as some vain conceit or distemper; because they
would have it so. But with such, I must here crave a serious and free com-
muning, yea in so great and concerning a business must obste they would not
but
shut their eyes, but allow reason that room, they would do in any other case; 0 what do you allledge, on what ground do you reject this great witness of experience? If you deny it, because you have not found it, do not others affirm this, because they surely know it? And their assertion hath these two advantages, one, that they once had the same sentiment and opinion with you, which now they reflect on with much horror. 2. The reality of its effects on them proves, both the reality of the cause, and the excellency thereof; and now if there be indeed serious, and their testimony true whom you thus challenge, are you not in a sad and dreadful case; since you cannot think to lodge together at night, or that your interest and theirs will meet in another world, which hath been so very opposite here by the way; you must surely part with these at death, and land at some other port, to whom all your life you have walked so crofs: O fit but with your selves alone, and consider this, you hate serious religion, and therefore you reproach it; will you take such a revenge on your selves, and out of prejudice to it, run on so great and eternal a ruin? But know assuredly, it is not what you judged, and if once you pass in this declension that great and last step betwixt time and eternity, you are undone, oh undone for ever! And sure if you admit the authority of this Scripture, you cannot debate the christians experience, while there you have so great a cloud of witnesses, who bear that same testimony, but it is on your part you must reflect, not on the truth, that you know so little in this way.

Now to leave some conviction on the atheists of this time, and those who take liberty to scoff at serious religion, I would here offer some rational grounds, which even to the world and bystanders may convincingly demonstrate, if they would but consider the same in earnest, that this testimony the saints do in all ages bear, from their experience, to the truths, can be no cunning device or fallacy, but is most certain and true; for,

1. That must be a sure testimony, and is no cheat, if you judge these who declare the same have the sense of a deity and have any truth, or moral candour, for it is a clear dilemma, either such, whose witness this is, are impollers of the highest degree, yea in atheism and grofs deceit must exceed all the world beside, or, it is true and valid what they witness; now for the first, I shall crave no more in their behalf, but an appeal to your conscience and sober thoughts, if you could judge thus. 2. This testimony must be sure, if you but allow these the use of judgment and reason who bear it, and do not judge them wholly demented; for it were a strange and unheard madness, that men would pursue a shadow, with so great seriousness, and on this interest venture so far, if religion and the power thereof were not a reality; sure one of these two must hold, if christians do not experience themselves, what they hold out to others, that they are either in the highet measure profigate and wicked, even beyond the ordinary rate and depravation of humane nature, or, they must be under a strange madness and delirium; they must either design to cheat the world, or themselves; but though their adversaries could will to have it so, I think their malice will not make them so mad, as to own that challenge, and since these cannot be allledged, I profess were I the greatest atheist who did not own the scripture, I could not seriously consider the way, and walk of such who are serious christians without astonishment, or conceive how in such a world, and at so many visible disadvantages, they should be thus engaged, on any other consideration, than the truth and reality of christianity. 3. Do you not see, this is their testimony, who are willing to be tried therein, and render a reason of that hope which is in

N them?

them? yea, do in this offer themselves to trial, and with greatest seriousness ob-
teet the world, not to credit implicitly their witness, and take it on trust, but
themselves put it to the most exact inquiry and search, and truly if there be
an appeal and reference to mens senfe and feeling, which can admit no de-
bate, I know not what access they have to question this witness, until they
first put it to an eflay, that from their own experience, they could contradict
the fame.  4. Should you not admit this for a sure testimony, if you grant
any moral certainty of a thing, that there is some case wherein a human te-
\ымimony can allow no debate, which in this present case must be undeniable;
for you know by two witnesses a matter is judicially established: but is it not
more confirming when they are of known judgment and integrity? yea out
of diverse and remote places of the earth, and otherways strangers amongst
themselves, but yet more, not only when dying they own and affect this, but
are willing to dye upon a testimony thereto, and seal it with their blood, and
this also through all ages renewed; O what can be more convincing as to
moral certainty? Now I do attest the world if this argument of chrititian ex-
perience hath not full and unanswerable proofs of it's certainty.  5. This
witness can be no counterfeft, and you must judge they are worthy of credit,
to verify the scripture from experience, on whole practice you see it so con-
vincingly transcribed, should not the declaration of such concerning the truth
of the promise, have much weight whilt you see what a serious respect these
have to the rule, to have their walk ordered in that way, where the scripture
warrants them to expect the fulfilling of the promise; and are not these seen
to be the moft tender serious chritians, whose way utch to have greatest au-
thority over your confience, who do moft own this witness, and hath the
largest account to give thereof.  6. Is not this their testimony also, whom
on your exacteft and narroweft notice, you may fee study religion, in the se-
cret and retired duties thereof? where some other intereft than the observati-
on of men must be an incipient; yea, may you not observe there are such,
who do seriously own the practice of these duties when the view of these
about them, might be a greater lett, and ground of fear, than any per-
fwading motive? And whilst you challenge the light profession of many
within the church, do but also ask your confience if there be not such,
whose way you must justify, even over the belly of your hatred and pre-
judice against them, that it hath a convincing favour of humility? yea, their
growth under the ground, and being serious and real in what they profess may
be clearly discerned from a naked and empty shew.  7. Can these in-
tend by such a testimony to deceive others; who have oft been in so great
fear and difquiet, that they be not themselves deceived? O how convincing
may this be to the world to consider what perplexing queries, and doubts chri-
\ytians have sometime about their own inward cafe, yea after such sharp wrest-
\lings a moft sweet calm and composure of spirit may be discerned; it is strange
this puts not atheifts to a more serious inquiry, what such changes can mean,
which will make men differ so far from themselves, whilst no outward cause
can be discerned; it is true some matters lye much under ground, the heart
knows its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermede with its joy, yea,
the deepest plunge and exercise make little noife without, yet this is sure, there
is so much under these vicellitudes, that is obvious even to the view of on-
lookers as may leave some conviction, their enjoyments must be true and real
when the want thereof is so sensibly felt, and the world is not so stupidly
inadvertent, not to observe this, if they did not shut their eyes for fear of
such a discovery.  8. Should not their testimony be very convincing
whole complaints and accusations you may find more at home upon them-
selves,
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telves, than against others, who are oft bemoaning over these evils which the eyes of man could not reach; may not the world see how some are preft with anguish of soul to the waiting of their body when no cause from without is known, and otherwise rational and most composed; yea, may it not sometimes be discerned there is more smothered within, which gets no vent, than appears without? for grief in earnest wants not some peculiar marks, by which it may be witnessed to others, I think this should put the world to such a reflection, there must be some grief and joy and a cause for it, which goes above the world or the things thereof. 9. This is their testimony, whose confidence and composure of spirit in the greatest exigencies may witness to others that perseverance they have of the truth within their souls; you see also at what labour and work these are in the duties of religion; yea, when they are most serious, how native and unconstrained their motions are; O doth not this shew the grace of God, and a new nature is another thing than words, and that they must surely find satisfaction in these duties which makes it to them a special delight and pleasure, which you would reckon an intolerable and fore-royle. 10. Do you not see how these agree every where and at every time anent this testimony, that the scripture is verified by experience, and the breathings and influences of God on the soul meets them in the way of duty according to the promise, even whilft they remarkably differ amongst themselves in their natural temper and disposition; and is it not known whatever particular and lesser difference, through the prevalence of corruption, are too frequent amongst these, yet no acculation, no reflection on the truth in reality of godliness in it self will be found when their challenges are most bitter one upon another; I must further attest your conscience, whilst you have heard the sad regret of dying christians about the interest of their soul and short coming in the study of godliness, have not these complaints been still to commend religion, and the excellency thereof, and reflect only upon themselves; but none ever was heard to have such a complaint, that they did cheat the world in that matter, by obtruding upon them a falsehood. 11. May you not see this testimony which christians give to the way of godliness, that it is from these who act deliberately in that great interest, and have a rational account to give of the grounds on which they walk, and do you not find they are men as well as christians, that none are more friends to reason and the right exercise thereof, than such who are most serious in the study of religion; it is sure could the world have their sight, and with Moses such a look of an invisible God, it would be easy for them to be of their judgment also. 12. That you are so ready to challenge the christians testimony, may you not find the true cause within your self; not from your judgment, but a rooted prejudice and enmity at the way of the Lord, whereof you can give no reason; yea, have you not oft reproached christians at a distance, whom upon a more near particular acquaintance, you have from some irrefrangible conviction left upon you, been forced to justify? For godliness hath this singular advantage to silence all its adversaries that none will challenge or reproach the same, but these who never knew it, and should such a witness be admitted? O strange with what liberty men can decide this, who yet dare not go alone to have some serious thoughts about it. 13. I know you will not deny there is such a thing as hypocrisy and a false shew of godliness, yet sure you have no ground of challenge, or to question the truth and power of this, which is so convincingly witnessed to, even by hypocrisy; for there should be no use for such a cover, no cause for that imposture, if there were not also a truth, and reality therein; you cannot conceive a counterfeit, but as it stands related to that which is true; if there were not such a thing as serious godliness,
nefs, the world could never have known how to perfonate it; could there be a lye, if there were not a truth? You fee also that it is the most serious discerning christians; such ufually do fear, and have an awful regard of, for which there were no ground, if they were not conscious of the truth of that in others, whereof they only fludy the appearance, yea, here I muft also appeal to the world and ordinary onlookers, if there be not, even to them, some discernible difference betwixt the power of religion, and an empty fhew, (though this make greater noise) betwixt thofe who are ferious and tender in following the Lord, and others who glory in appearance, but not in heart; for the one by a convincing manifeftation of the truth does commend it felf to mens con-

fidence, hath a living air and breath, which by no art or cunning can be drawn to the life, no more than an exquisite painter with the choiceft colours in drawing a man upon a board can therewith draw the vital acts of breathing and moving. 14. May you not fee holinesf must be fome excellent thing, which hath fuch credit, even with it's real adverfaries, and the worft of men, to make them grasp at the appearance and fhadow of that, which others know, they hate the power and practice of; and here I would ask the world, is it not to the scripture and truth thereof, the experience of the faints bears witnefs, that they do indeed feel and prove within their fould, what you fee written before you, in this bleffed record, but is it not alfo sure, that nothing is more direclty cros and opposite to the scripture, than a falle ap-

pearance and fhew of that, which is not real? 15. Can you debare, there are fuch christians in the world, many fuch whose experience does witnefs the truth of religion, of whom it muft be faid (even their enemies being judges) their being ferious in that way, and choice thereof, muft be for it felf, and hath no outward design or intereft, to which it can be fubfervient; whilst in this oft they run the greateft hazard and are rendred a prey to others? O muft it not be a marvelous thing, which hath that dominion over the fouls, to teach men the practice of felf-denial, not only to a quiet, but a cheerfull quitting their intereft, to fmile on the fpoilers, to rejoice in their fuffering and reproaches, to forgive wrongs, and take revenge by good will; this is indeed above nature, and is only peculiar to chrifhianity, which can also turn poifon to an antidote and cure, and gain by its greateft loffes. 16. You may fee what different fizes are amongst the faints, how great a difference also be-
twixt the experiences of one and another; fome made to witnefs much bitter-

ness in departing from God, and others that singular advantage in drawing near to him, yea, how near fometimes will great extremes in their condition, border with other; at a ftrain to exprefs their joy, who not long before would have thought a vent to their grief a fpecial cafe; O muft not this be a matter of earneft, and when you fee how much thefe amongst themselves do thus differ, that yet all thefe differences meet together, and concur in a moft clear testimony to the scripture, and truth of godlinefs; yea, how this wonderful contrivance of the scripture is futed to anfwer all this variety of changes in the chrifhians cafe, and pafteth none over. But oh, what can be faid here where weeping fhould be more fit than words, to fee what contempt the great part of men puts on serious religion, which doth truly raise them above the condition of the beasts; is not the atheifm of the time at that height that we muft fay the afault of the adversary is not fo much at one fingle truth, as at the root and being of all religion? and truly we may fear fome extraordinar-

ary cure to recover this generation of a difeafe, that would feem in an or-
dinary way incurable; I hall but further offer thefe few queries, and plead fo far with the adversary, that they would ere they pass them have but fome thoughts thereon.
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1. If there be a God, or a truth in any religion, is it not with this bless'd record of the scripture you must clofe as the alone rule thereof? Yea, if your judgment and conscience be not both extinct, must you not consent to the law and doctrine therein held forth, that it is good, what ever be your aversion therefrom? 2. Is not an immortal soul, and a being for ever such a venture as is of more value, and should be to you, than the whole world? 3. O can you be thus underdetermined about so great an intereft, you seem to be lietant and unfinite if there be an other world, a heaven, or a hell, but oh, are you sure these are not, and how then can you be secured from such a fear, which of all fears is the greatest? 4. What a horrid and uncomfortable thing is it to be an atheift, which gives men no hope beyond this preftent life? Yea, what a world would this be to dwell in, if there were no true godlines in it, since without this, no comfortable human society, no kindly and right subjection to the magistrate can be expected from thee, who have no eye from above, and knows not what it is to pay homage to a sovereign being. 5. Is not the native tendency of atheiftm to all ungodlines in mens practice, yea, how far doth it debace human nature and levels it, even with the beasts. 6. Whilft you scoff at serious religion, I dare appeal to your felves, if in your retirements, when you have any sober reflections, you are not forced to have other thoughts; and why is it, you fo, much fear to go alone, and be in any maife seriouns with your soul; oh what a desperate security is that? I fhall only add, is it not rare to find a profefled atheift at death, when once the approach of another world does awake the fene of a Deity? but then it is eafe to fee men, who have sported at godlines in their life, weep over that wretched mirth, when it comes to death, and call for fuch minifters, whom once they hated; and oh, what a dreadful cure will hell be of atheiftm, for there they know the truth in earnest, though it be their terror; it is also sure the devil is no atheift, who believes there is a God and trembles.

I muft yer a little further crave liberty e'er I pafs this argument, to speak aword, even to thefe, who know and have experienced the fame; O how great should this be in our eyes, and with what aflonishment may we consider it? which by fo full, fo satisfying a demonstration doth winnefs, not to the eye, or ear, but to the soul, the certainty of divine truth and the power and reality of godlines, should we not think, if but one, in an age, or that every particular chriftan were but once at fome Solemn time of his life thus confirmed, that he could fay, then did he taste and fee the word, and found it fully verified on his soul, as sure as he kneweth that he lives, at what a rate would he value and preferve fo singular a fceil and confirmation of the truth, yea, keep up the remembrance of fuch a special time whilst he lived? but oh, muft it be faid that this grave winnefs this clear demonstration of the scripture, and of the certainty of the words of truth, which we have by experience doth lofe its weight, and the ineffable value thereof let's regarded, that it is the chriftians daily bread? O what a reach hath this argument; what great things are there held forth? I think a serious look of the fame, if it were brought near to us, might put us to queftion, whether we believe the fame or not; are we in a dream or awake; and fees them with our eyes which this doth fo convincingly demonstrate; whilst we can fo eafily pafs them with fo little weight thereof on our fpiritt; now to hold that forth, let us but bring near this argument, and graveiy consider the fame with repect to fome of thefe great truths, which by this unanswerable demonstration of experience are witneffed: I muft fay, fuch truths that we may wonder how men can fo eafily admit their being O true,
true, and in so ordinary a way look thereon, without wondering and astonishment.

I. Doth not this argument of experience by a very clear demonstration witness that great truth of a God-head, whereon the whole superstructure of truth and godliness doth stand? yea, in another manner does enforce on men the persuasion of this by a more near and convincing discovery; than the greatest works of God, or these glorious appearances of his power and wisdom in the heavens, and earth do; it is true, these bring him near to our eye and ear; but O this brings the blest and invisible God nearer, into the heart and soul, that we may both taste and see, that surely he is, and is that which in the scripture he is declared to be; it is not the contemplation of nature in its highest flight can answer such an assault of the devil, which may overtake the most established christian about the being of God; but there is a demonstration within which goes further than the judgment, and paeth natural understanding, whence we feel, we taste, we enjoy, yea, his voice is heard in the soul which we surely know to be his, and this is the reach and import of this argument: there is indeed cause to wonder at the atheism of this world, since men can look no where, without some witness of a Deity to scare them in the face; but oh, there is a more refined atheism that lies in the bottom of a professed assent to divine truth, and is not easily discerned, though not the less dreadful that it goes under a cover not only from the view of others, but even from a man's self: I would here offer some things which do witness a special advantage the godly man is at, thereby to believe, and to be more throughly perfused of the glorious being of God. 1. That he finds the believing of this is a very great thing, and not so easy to reach as the world do suppose, for it is no small matter even to attain this; Oh, what ordinary thoughts have many about it, who think it easy to pass an assent to this marvelous truth, because they never considered the greatness thereof; but it is sure, the more serious and grave a christian is, it will give him the more work, and we may find these usually are more plunged and exercised about this, than others. 2. It is a great advantage, when this is so far mens serious study, as to be upon an inquiry after a further establishment in so great a truth; O what another sight of the invisible God? What a satisfying persuasion of his blest being might we have, if our soul were indeed herein exercised; and knew but how little we know and have reached in this, that there is a nearer approach to God, which should shew us the faith of a Deity is something beyond these former thoughts we have had thereof, we lose many singular confirmations concerning this, because we do not in earnest look after them. 3. They are at a special advantage to whom believing of this truth, (O blest truth, that God is) is their exceeding joy, and amidst their heavinesses can say, the thought and meditation of him is sweet, that when through a variety of temptations they are ready to faint, this reforareth their soul, yea, will cause it leap within for joy, and is their enough when other encouragements are furthest off, that God lives: O what a thing is it in such a world, and in some deep perplexing plunge, to know the Lord is God, whom he hath now for a rock and a shield, and in the close of time for his exceeding great reward; can we have some serious thought of this, and so easily turn our selves to other things without astonishment, yea, is it not strange there should be oft so near and immediate a bordering betwixt our thoughts of the glorious God and the meanest trifles. 4. It is no small advantage where men can open the Bible and retire into it, under the sense and impression of a Godhead, and that near correspondence he hath this way with
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his people, on whose soul these words hath awe and authority; Thus faith the Lord, yea, have that refose upon his testimony and promise, which the solid perfwafion of his being and faithfulnefs should caufe. They have come a great length here, who in their ordinary walk, are under some deep impression of this that God is near, who knows of their sitting down and rising up, from whose fight they cannot shift one thought, yea, that on him they have such an absolute dependance, that without him they can not draw their breath; O where this is believed must it not caufe both fear and wondering?

II. Is not this an argument which by a fure and unanswerable demonstration does witnefs the truth and reality of grace, that there is fuch a thing, and is no empty found, which doth raife man above the natural state of men, as far as reafon puts him above the state of the beaft, it is truly strange this should be believed, and yet is not more marvelous in our eyes, how we can be at fuch reft whilst one of these two lies under debate, the reality of grace or our being really interefled therein; O is there not caufe of aiftonifhment that fuch a product of heaven should be found in the earth, whose defcent and original is so clearly demonstrated by its breathing upwards after God, its native tendency and motion towards him, whence it came? Surely grace is a great fubject to think on, and that it is not fo in our eyes, it muft be either we do not believe it, or do not consider what a change it makes on the fowl, which is no transient difpofition, but the feed of God that remains, is not this fuch a thing as makes spring in the winter, caufeth men grow under their greatefl weights? that lifts the foul up from the clay, yea does by bringing it low in its own eyes, raife it nearer God, this makes a man to have another appearance, on which the world is forced to look with fome aiftonifhment, one christian doth admire this in another, and the more it fhes it felf, it caufeth a more near approach betwixt their fouls; it will caufe fear in them who hate it; and hath a power even over its perfeutors; now it is the truth and reality of this excellent thing, that this argument does witnefs; yea fuch a witnefs that can admit no debate, where experience makes it fure: I confefs a ferial look and perfwafion of this might make the chriftians life a continued wonder, that there is fuch a thing, which by a marvelous surprifal did prevent him when he was not aware, hath entred him into a new world, and tranflated him from a state of darknefs unto a marvelous light, caufeth the foul breath in another air, brings him fo near that state of the angels, fubdues the will without violence, and subjects it with its own confeft; yea, by fo ftrait a tye is link'd with an eternal glory in bleftnefs. Surely this is one of the moft flately pieces of the work of God, that exceeds the whole ftructure of the univerfe; O with what aiftonifhment fhould we look on this marvelous thing, if we could confider the whole frame and ftructure of the grace of God in a christian, and there make as it were a defleclion in its feveral parts and proportions, its decay and languifhing, these different changes and fizes, its vigorous actings and abatements thereof, how it breathes, is nourifhed, how it is kept green and preferved by a continued intercourse with the fountain of its being: and lo, whilst we confider this great wonder, both in the whole and in its parts, we may fee how in thefe it does moft exactly anfwer that model we have thereof in the fcripture of God.

III. This is a great argument, and fhould be fo in our eyes, which does not only witnefs the reality of grace in its acting and exercife, which in this former fection is fpecially pointed at; but does unanswerably demonftrate a

SPIRITUAL
Spiritual life and being, which the christian knows and is persuaded thereof, as he is sure he breaths and hath a natural life: O what a marvelous demonstration is this, wherein sense and feeling doth in as certain a way concur, as in any discovery we have by our outward senses, that there is a new life and another being besides that we have by nature, which answers to a new birth; yea, an other breathing and acting that is also sure thereto; but oh, can it be said, we believe and know it is assuredly true, who have such common and palling thoughts thereof, and does not consider what it is whereof we are sure. 1. That this is so great a thing, it may indeed cause wonder to think we are men, and that we have a rational being, but O a spiritual life is another cause for wondering, which comes not by our birth, hath no natural causes, yet a life that hath it's proper operation, and vital acts put forth, as truly as those natural actions of breathing and moving are put forth by a living man: O life that hath in as sensible a way quickning and refreshing influences, as the earth or bodies of men, knows the influences of the heavens; which hath a pleasure and delight peculiar to its nature, that hath no affinity with things we enjoy by the senses, but is a pleasure does far exceed the fame, and is this a small matter to be perused? 2. What a demonstration is it which doth witness even to our sense and feeling a power on the soul by the word, above the most persuasive words of man, and above all moral influences, by which men are not only reached, but transformed into the same image, whence the christian knows, and knows assuredly, these great truths the sealing, witnessing, teaching, comforting of the spirit, &c. are no matter of words, or some strange devised names, but are undoubted realities acted and verified on the soul. 3. If this demonstration of a spiritual life be sure, have we not this also, an eternal life and being with God put beyond debate, for if we be certain of the one, O, is not this undeniable that this noble being of the new creature, this life that is here begun, must have a more fulguration and be at the furthest stature of the man in Christ, when we now see it with our eyes in it's infancy, and upon a growing advance towards the same, for the one is surely as demonstrative of the other, as a young child which we see in a growing tendency towards a man, doth shew there is a man in his furthest growth. 4. If we assuredly know this spiritual life, must we not also admit the undoubted truth of spiritual beings, and of an invisible world, with which this life hath it's correspondence, yea thus as by a stream be led up to the true fountain to know an invisible God.

IV. How great an argument is this, which gives us such a demonstration that heaven is not altogether deferred until we be there, but that such a thing is sure, as the real presence of the glorious God, and a near familiar approach of him to the soul, which is here as reaily felt and enjoyed, as we can be sure of any thing; O how marvelous should this be to us! I cannot doubt but the report hereof doth sometime daze the world with amazement, and puts the grossest of men to strange thoughts; but oh, may not this cause them question it's reality whether those who bear such a witness, do truly feel and enjoy the same, who by their way and appearance do so little declare any deep impression, that this hath on them; I have sometimes thought strange how men are taken, even in a kind of transport with the discovery of some rare experiment and demonstration in nature, which could make that poor man cry out Iaποπα αs though therewith he had gained the whole earth: but O here is another kind of demonstration, of a more transcendent value and interest! to know and be sure of this near approach and intercourse betwixt God and the soul; that even with men in the earth he will verily dwell, and
and have so real a converse; this does indeed rise above Archimedes's reach, and such who ever follow'd the search of nature in their most exact and subtile inquiry; O blest souls who have found it! for they have found a treasure; the thoughts whereof may make it a new thing every day, and make them consider this with a renewed wondering, to know, there is not only a claim and title to the inheritance above, but that the first fruits and earnest thereof is got here; that as surely as there is a real and immediate converse betwixt men, they have found such a near immediate fellowship with God, that all the words of the world cannot express; such a meeting betwixt him and them, where their soul hath been drawn out with desire, where they have found a breaking up of the day with an astonishing brightness, after a most cloudy and dark night; O is not this a great thing! have they not cause both for joy and wondering who have fallen on such an experiment that they can say, and not from report, I do surely feel, I enjoy, I am persuaded this is the Lord, and thus have come forth from him with such a change on their soul, and composure of mind, that even by-flanders might see where they have been; now this is the christian's witnesses, which all who are serious in the way of the Lord can in some measure bear, that in a way no less sure and demonstrative than any thing here beneath can be known, they have had such a discovery, and now these strange scripture truths, the meaning whereof once they could not know, such as, their soul melting within at the voice of their beloved, to have his name as ointment poured forth, and be brought near to see his face with joy, they know well that they are as truly verified in the as they are written before their eyes in the word; I shall but add, it is a very great thing these know, who know assuredly the real presence of God here, for thus they are made sure that he is, as one may know the sun, because of it's warming heat, and when they see it with it's own light, thus they are confirmed of the truth of the scripture, whilst they see and feel one of the most marvelous things therein verified.

V. This is an argument does clearly witness a truth and reality in prayer, which may be called one of the great wonders of religion, that such a way is, wherein there is so near, so immediate an address to the majesty of God in all our concernments, is not this a very great thing that poor man, now upon the earth, hath such a passage to heaven, and may speak up unto him who inhabits eternity, the glorious object of the adoration of angels, without the interveening of any creature: yea, with so sure a warrant may approach the throne of God, and there pour out his soul, and present his requests unto him who lives and sees: O with what astonishment should we consider this! suppose at some solemn times in our life this only might be attained, yea, that it were but in one part of the earth should we not look on the whole earth besides as accursed, and reckon an abode there, were it a barren desert and wilderness, to be preferable to all other advantages: it may truly be a question whilft we are most in the practice of this duty, if we believe the truth and reality thereof; but it is beyond question what christians have most sensibly found here, that they can say, if they be sure they have a soul, they have been as sure in this blessed way, they have had their soul restored and return'd again, and under some deliquium, that by wrestling they have at last prevail'd, yea have got an answer from heaven, as if they had got it by an audible voice: now is not this a great and marvelous demonstration? but oh what common thoughts have we thereof, and may not those things seem strange, if seriously considered. 1. That we are not more reflexes to be surely persuaded this is a truth when we are so highly concerned therein, that we may have further confirmations as to this, which we should look on as an inestimable treasure, both for our joy and establishment.

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2. It
2. It is strange we can find it so easy a matter to pray and appear before God, that we are not afraid to be halty in uttering a matter before him, whilst we consider God is in heaven, and we are but on the earth; it is sure, if we intend the bringing of our soul with us in such a duty, it should be more our study to watch unto prayer throughout our walk. 3. It may seem strange how easily we can step out from the world, and the noise thereof, in before the Lord, without the least pause or time intervening, which the impression of so great a business should require; yea, so immediately in our return again, step into the world, as if he had wholly forgot where we have been. 4. How strange is formality in such a business as prayer which is an address to the living God, one of the most solemn acts of the soul; yea, we may call it the most natural work of a christian, like the breathing of the child after the breast; also it's fad, that this seems rather a piece of invention many times, than a matter of earnest with the Lord, not so much the breathing of the soul in after him, as the expressing what should be our desires: O to what a clain can such a piece of atheism be reduced, as appears in our nearest approach, to God? 5. Should we look on prayer as a duty and not consider it as a singular enjoyment also, without which this earth would have a near appearance of hell, if we could not thus solace the soul in God, and get a vent under its greatest pressures: O prayer! what thoughts should we have of it, if the truth thereof were more believed! I think that man who is sure of the being and faithfulness of God, and of the reality of prayer needs not be foolish with what face the world look on him; when thus his great interest and encouragement is secure, and a well is at his hand, that can answer all his complaints.

VI. Have we not this demonstration also by that argument of experience, how near the blessed majesty of God does in the way of providence approach to his people, and is surely known by a real correspondence he hath with them in this way, in which he doth so clearly verify his word, holds forth light and counsel, gives the return of prayer, sometimes with such remarkable circumstances, as causeth fear as well as joy, and will force that testimony, this is verily the Lord; it is true, that in the smallest things he is great, and thus declares himself to be God; but there is a more solemn and near approach, by some special steps of his providence, yea, by the rod he doth sometimes speak, as with an audible voice, and with such a convoy of his power opens the ear of men and seizes their instruction, as will force it's passage down to the reins, and in the hidden part cause them to understand wisdom; there is sometimes also so wonderful attract and iterics of providences, and thetc so convincing that men cannot but see something greater than man therein, whilst things have been brought about with such a surprizal, in the very opportune time and season that their mercy, though great in itself, hath not so much taken them up as the way how it is brought about, and their discovery of the immediate hand of God therein, and the truth of his word, and promis.

VII. I must further add, O! is not this a great argument which perwades the soul of these truths by it sure a way as experience, that thus we have an inward, and sensible demonstration of the things of God, that are as certainly witnessed, as their visible heavens and earth are to our eyes, when they are motl fixed thereon: O what is this which the christian knows, yet knows so little what he hath thereby; this is indeed a sight which puts the thing seen beyond question or debate, for the soul hath it's feeling and taste as sure as the body, and hath a favour and relish of things suitable to it's own nature, whereby it can discern a peculiar sweetness and fragrancy in that which may seem bitter, and grievous to the flesh. It is by this sight which experience gives, the christian is a witness himself, is therein personally concern'd, does see these
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

These great things with his own eyes and not with the eyes of others; the confutations of God which are not small, are no matter of report to him; he knows how no mercy hath been more sweet and relishing as that which hath had a bitter cross going before; yea, never more sensibly found his own burden, then he had found it taken off, the laying on whereof was not so grievous as that relief, and ease hath been sweet upon its removal.

Now to that up this argument, I shall but add the testimony of two great and eminent witnesses to the truth, who after they had been helped to serve their generation by the will of God, and were dying, had that large attempt to give from their experience of the truth and faithfulness of God in his word, and leave such a tale to the fame, worthy to be transmitted to posterity; the one is that great servant of Christ Beza, who in his younger years, after the Lord had touched his heart by the word, was one day in the church of Charenton, where he providentially met with that, Psal. xci. which then was expounded, and with such power was followed, that not only he found it marvelously sweet to him at present, but was then helped to believe, yea to a great persuasion of the Lords making out all these promises to him in his persuasion, which as he after found verified, did at his death with much comfort witness the same, that as he had been then helped to close with that great truth in the second verse, in taking the Lord for his God, and got a sure claim thereto, yea that he should be his refuge and fottrest, he had found him that most remarkably in the after changes of his life, had delivered him from the snare of the fowler, and the noisome pestilence, having been in frequent hazard by the lying in wait of many to ensnare him, and sometimes was in great hazard from the pestilence in these places where he was called to reside; yea, amidst the civil wars, which were then most hot in France; had most convincing deliverances from many imminent hazards, when he was called to be present sometimes with the Protestant Princes upon the fields, where thousands did fall about him; and thus whilst near his death, he found that Psalm so observably verified whereon he was caused to hope, that he went through all these promises, declaring the comfortable accomplishment thereof, and how he had found the Lord's giving his angels charge over him, had oft answered him when he had called on him, had been with him in trouble, delivered him; yea had satisfied him with a long life, and now says he, I have no more to wait for but the fulfilling of that last word of the Psalm, to shew him his salvation, for which in confidence he longed. This though not writ by these who have given an account of his life in our language; yet I had the same from these most worthy of credit, who not only from some of the greatest French Protestants had it, when they were in France, as a known and sure passage, but told me they read the same there in a printed relation in that language, of his life and death. The second testimony I shall here offer is from a grave and eminent minister of Christ in our own church within those few years, Mr. George Gillespie; who near his death did declare to these who were by, what a large proof he had, and aspired persuas of the truth of scripture from experience; that he knew so well what adventuring on the word was, and what it was to live on divine assistance, and be thus in all his concernments carried through, that he could not desire, were he to live in the world, a more defirable and satisfying life, than that of a continued reliance and depending on the Lord; and truly among many notable experiments that many have had of divine assistance: this was one very convincing, how in a strange land, whether he was called on the service of the church, and in a grave assembly of many of the greatest divines in that age, when one day he was surprized with an unexpected ren-
counter of a learned man Mr. Selden, who came on design with some others of that party, upon the Eразtian interest to debate for it, by the strongest arguments which they had then meditated for it's defence: whilst none appeared in that great assembly to give a return, though there were many singularly learned and able, he did on an immediate reliance on God adventure, (left the adversary should take advantage thereat) and gave a short account of these arguments adduced, wherein the strength of his discourse did most lie, with so clear and satisfying an answer as astonished all, yea did silence the adversary with a marvelous conviction; now this was the more convincing that having a little paper book in his hand, in which he was before observed to write down something, he was by some after prefixed to let them see his notes, supposing the heads of his following discourse were in it, but found only in some pages these words several times writ down, Light O Lord, and Assistance, his soul being then carried upward for the same; thus did that blest man give in his witness to the truth when he was dying, from the sure experience he had thereof, through his life; and with much assurance of the salvation of God died, which I must say is a remark, that in many instances might be obvious, how great peace and an abundant entrance, these have found in the close of the day, who have been helped to most faithfulness in the publick interests of Christ, and his church, and to the most severe adherence to their light, anent the duties of the time; which I knew in an other worthy minister of Christ, not many years since, who by some of his last words did witness an unexpressible joy he found in this, that the Lord had keep'd him in a time of many trials from giving his ark a wrong touch, which he then declared to byzlanders, when he was on the very threshold betwixt this, and another world.

SECOND ARGUMENT.

SECOND Argument to demonstrate the accomplishment of the scripture is this, that not only christian experience, but the observation of the church and people of God, doth in all ages bear witness thereto, how the Lord's way in these providences both of mercy and judgment, about the church, amidst the various changes of her condition, yea, in the most strange things which fall out in the world, doth convincingly answer the word, and verify the same.

It is indeed undeniable that the scripture of God, as it is written to the personal case of his people, and doth in their experience take place, so is there a part of it in a peculiar way directed to the church, the fulfilling whereof in the providences, and events of the time should be the subject of our observation, and would singly help to confirm our faith of the truth thereof.

For prosecuting this argument I would touch it a little in these three branches. 1. How these general promises which belong to the church universal, and concern her in all ages, have an accomplishment. 2. How these threatenings also of the word which do not only concern the church, but have a respect to her adversaries are certainly fulfilled, and take place in men's observation, who do observe the judgments of their time. 3. How the scripture of God doth clearly shine upon the darkest footsteps of providence, even these which would seem most strange and hard to understand, so that it may be demonstrate nothing falleth out in the world, or befalleth the saints, but what is most consonant to the scripture.

FIRST BRANCH. As to the first branch of this argument, I shall but instance five general promises, which we find held forth in the word concerning the church, and endeavour to shew how very clear and obvious the accomplishment of them is, if men do not willingly shut their own eyes.

FIRST
Part I.

The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

1. That the church doth continue, and is kept alive to this day, it doth certainly prove the truth of his promise, for it can be said of her, and none can say it is a lye, she hath outlived all her opposers, the greatest of whom have found their grave in the quarrel, over whose tomb that laft confession of a great adversary Julian may be written victissi tandem Galileae, hath not this deadly, and irreconcilable seed been perpetuate from fathers to children, but who hath prospered in that enterprise, the archers have oft shot, and wounded her fore, but her bow doth abide in strength, as at this day, this is her motto, perfecuted but not forfaken, cast down, but not discouraged, she who hath brought many children, yet ceafeth not to bear, whose age hath not marred her beauty, her eyes are not dim, nor strength failed, a fight which may cause us no lefs stand, and consider this great wonder, than Moses did at that which was but the shadow and emblem thereof, a bush burning and not consumed, for behold a church kept alive, yet flill in the flames, and when to appearance confumed, it doth arife more glorious out of her own ashes, this is indeed the only Phoenix, and we know no other, of whom that can be said, hath she not born out these universal deluges, which did like an inundation go over her head, idolatry, and paganism in the first times, and antichristianism with arianism in the after ages, yet not swallowed up, which may be no lefs marvelous than when she was kept above the waters in the ark, and though her enemies have oft sung her funeral song, and rejoiced over the dead bodies of her witnesjes, yet, they have rifen again, her dry bones have taken life, and come together, and behold she is alive at this day.

2. Not only the churches preservation, but the continued series and succession thereof unto this time, doth witness the fulfilling of this promise, that in the darkest times of her condition, she hath not altogether disappareed, even, when she was so long hid in the wilderness, but still in every age had some witnesjes, and though the church hath oft cryed out for the want of children, and been heard weeping, bemoaning her selfe because they were not, yet, we may say she never wanted an offspring to this day, she did never dye without an heir, and seed of her own, to raise up her name, even since the covenent was first made with her in Adam's family, and though particular churches have their set times, which like the sun, have the usual periods, their height, and flowing, and afterwards a gradual decay, making way to the departure of light, yet, this made never void the promise of God to the church universal whose lamp was never put out, nay, shall not while the days of heaven do last.

3. We must also say that the continuance, and preseruation of the church is peculiar to her alone, and can be laid of no other interest and party beneath the sun, for it is clear that there was no kingdom, or empire so firmly rooted, no society so well governed by laws, backed with power, which hath had the best title and claim, but time at last did prevail over it, and made the fame a trophée of her conquest; yea, the greatest monarchies, and flourishing cities have at last yielded, so as of them it may be said, nunc fæges est ubi Troia fuit, but time cannot to this day boast of a triumph over the church.
church of God, though no nation, no family in the earth could ever plead antiquity with her: this is that interest, which hath born out all these great revolutions that so oft changed the very face of the world, yea, hath outlived so many kingdoms, and successions thereof. 4. It doth convincingly demonstrate the truth of this promise of the churches preservation, that the world, yea greatest atheists may see, this hath not come to pass at an adventure, nay, not in an ordinary way of providence, but by a divine power, most discernible therein; while it is clear. 1. That no interest, or party had ever such adversaries, as the church, against whom the powers of the world, and the powers of darkness have always been on foot. 2. That outward advantages have usually been on her adversaries side, not only the great men of the earth, but those of greatest parts and abilities. 3. That there will be never wanting on their power and their design no less than to raze her to the foundation. 4. That this enmity hath been rooted, and irreconcilable, which time to this day could never root out. 5. That no interest did ever endure such violent assaults, so many sharp batteries, for it is observable that most of the wars, and commotions of every age, have been some way flared on the churches account, and what ever private quarrels men have had among themselves, yet it hath not hindered the pursuit of their malice against the woman, and her seed. 6. That such who have come out of her bowels, even the men of her own house, have oft been her greatest enemies, and lain in wait to take her at an advantage in the day of her halting. 7. That her real friends have oft fainted in a time of her strait, and stood afar off, yea, almost none of the children, which she had brought forth have been then found to take her by the hand. 8. That the depths of Satan, in her enemies, as an angel of light have sometimes given her a fore assault, so that if it had been possible, and ordinary means could have reached their end, they should have deceived the very elect. 9. I must add this further witness to the marvelous preservation of the church, which in an ordinary way could not come to pass, that we find no other party was ever brought so low and near death, to be yet alive, the knife was once at the church's throat in Isaac, she did seek to adopt a bond-woman's son in stead of a lawful heir, when Abraham agreed to Sara's overture for the fulfilling of the promise; how near expiring do we find her in Egypt, when a sentence to destroy all her male issue was gone forth? Yea, what but a miracle could have preserved her, when she was betwixt Pharaoh and the Red-sea? How low was the church in the wilderness, and after in the days of the captivity, even broken to pieces with small appearance of life, when her face was all blurred with weeping, and her enemies made sport over her ruins at the rivers of Babylon, when the children of Edom cried out let us raze her even to the foundation? Yea, could the church be nearer the grave, than when her bones were scattered at the graves mouth, but above all in that dark night when her head and shepherd was smitten, and her hope seemed to be buried in the grave with a flone put upon it, when she could get no entertainment among the Jews, was wounded in the house of her friends, and the Gentiles in wrath rose up against her, that for some hundred years the great Empire which had trod down all the nations about, put forth the outmost of power and malice for her undoing, O who could have thought the church should outlive this! Yea, after all we find her soft and hurried by Antichrist into the wilderness, an adversary more cruel than any that had gone before, where the dragon watcheth to get her destroyed, but how in all these, and through that long dark night she hath continued and marvelously flourished, as the Palm-tree, under greatest weights; so that we cannot but see that which her enemies being judges will
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

will not deny, that this promise to the church of her preservation is this day fulfilled, yea, that it hath not an ordinary way been brought about; surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, nor divination against Israel, all her enemies have been found liars; happy art thou above other people; for the eternal God is thy refuge, and under thee are everlasting arms, else so long since she should have been swallowed up; may we not still fay with astonishment, O what hath God wrought in her behalf.

Second promise; which I shall here instance, that God had made to his church in the word, Of her increase and enlargement, that the earth should be covered with the knowledge of God, as the sea of water, and her bounds should be from the sea to the utmost rivers, which was promised to Christ in the behalf of his church and that she should possess the gates of her enemies, Psal. lxxxix. 25. Psal. ii. 8. Isa. xiii. iv. Isa. liv. 3. As this promise is express in the scripture, we must say it is no less clear and evident in it's accomplishment, that surely the Lord hath kept his word, wherefore the event doth most exactly answer, and though yet it be not to the full made out, I am sure there is so much at this day manifest, considering the former condition of the church, as undeniably proveth the fulfilling of the foregoing promise, which even to the conviction of greatest atheists may be demonstrated from these grounds.

1. That vast extent which the kingdom of Christ hath had in the world; for this cannot be denied, that the greatest empire, or monarchy could never so far extend their conquest, as the church hath done, since the wall of partition was taken down; short are the limits of the Greekian and Roman empire considered with this, whose bounds have been the ends and uttermost parts of the earth, where neither Greece or Rome did ever set up their trophies; hath not the gospel as the sun made its circuit from the east to the west? yea crossed the seas, to the dark northern nations, thus fulfilling its course, in order to it's turn again to the place of it's first rising, that it may, as we are sure it shall once, visit the Jews again, and the eastern places of the world that now are buried in a night of darkness, which I think will be as sure a preface of the break of day, and second coming of the Lord, as the morning is to the world of the suns accomplishing it's course; and that it is returning again to the east, where it should rise; hath not the gospel now been through Asia where it did not tarry for a night, for many flourishing churches were there, and the going back of the tide from thence was it's flowing to another part of the world, which is indeed observable of the church, as it is of the sea, that what it hath loosed in one part, it hath gained in another; did the vast distance of Africa, it's great barren deserts, or scorching heat hinder the gospel's making a visit thither, so as it was once a fertile soil, and brought forth many famous lights, yea, something yet doth both there, and in the east parts of the world remain, to shew the gospel was truly in these places; and hath Europe though last, been least on this account? Yea, what do mean the late discoveries of unknown parts of the earth, but to make way for a more full performance of this promise, that the gospel might stretch it's conquest over the line, which surely was the gold and treasure Christ's designed from thence that even America might have her day also, and the voice of their turtle be heard in these lands.

2. Not only the large extent of the church as to it's bounds doth witness this, but also the great, and numerous offspring of sons and daughters which in these parts where the gospel hath been were brought forth to Christ, for we may say, what John saw in vision hath been very manifest to after ages, an innumerable company of all tongues, nations and languages, of whom it could be said these are born in Zion, O how great a harvest of the nations, is even already gathered? What a fleece hath every particular church
church cast? What a marvelous increase hath been in some places after special tides of the gospel! May we not say that truth is now beyond debate, that out of one, and him not only as good as dead, but truly dead there hath come forth as the sand of the sea and stars of heaven in number, the church hath inherited Joseph's blessing of the womb, and the breasts of a fruitful offspring, the dew of Christ's youth hath been as the womb of the morning. O what a marvelous and goodly company will this once be when gathered together? then will the performance of these precious promises be fully manifested. 3. This truth may be demonstrated not only from the real conquest of the gospel, and these excellent trophies of her victory over many noted enemies, who have after been vessels of honour, but also from the feigned subjection that so many have been made to render, is it not strange, what a multitude doth in these times profess the truth, and yet hate it, and were never drawn with the cords of love? How very many have courted the name of a christian, and wou'd the shadow of religion, who never knew the truth thereof, which certainly is a convincing evidence of the gospels conquest that so many knees should bow to the name of Jesus, whose hearts were never bowed, or really subdued to him. 4. It is an unanswerable proof of this truth that we see that churches increase, and enlargement hath come to pass most punctually after the manner, yea, with all the circumstances as were foretold and promised, so that the event doth in every thing answer the word, for, first it is there held out, that from a day of small things which men would be ready to despise, it should grow up as a tender plant, and spread forth it's branches over the nations, that the children of the desolate should be more than of the married wife, and the glory of the second temple, exceed that of the first, and O! hath it not accordingly come to pass? 2. This great increase and enlargement of the church, was to fall out in the days of the New Testament, when Christ should be lifted up, that then he should draw all men after him; for these promises we have thereof in the Old Testament do clearly point at the times of the gospel, and doth not the event here accordingly answer? 3. The scripture holdeth forth that the falling away of the Jews should be the riches of the Gentiles, and that their rejection should make way for the fulfilling of this promise even the ingathering of the nations, and do not men see the event with this very circumstance? 5. We find the Isles, and utmost parts of the earth are given to Christ for his inheritance, and foretold as a special part of the churches increase, and do we not clearly see there is no place of the world, where Christ's kingdom is more visible, where more children have been begot to him by the gospel, we may say, than in these northern places, even in these Isles of Britain, and Ireland, which are almost the utmost parts of the earth, there being but little from that corner, and nearer the pole which is inhabited, yea we may judge hath been that Thule whereof the ancients did so much speak. 6. Was it not also foretold that the church should possess the gates of her enemies, at whose great increase the world should wonder, the princes thereof see, and be troubled while God is known in her palaces for a refuge, and doth not the event witness this, that over all the counsels, and stratagems which the world hath had to hinder the churches growth, her rising hath always been upon the ruins of her greatest enemies, yea, these who have been a terror in the land of the living did off fall, and break themelves in that attempt, can men deny the marvelous progress of the church, how from a small beginning the at last possessed the gates of both the east, and western empire her old enemies, and do we not this day see her conquest advancing on the ruins of antichrist, her last and greatest adversary. 7. As the fulfilling of this promise concerning the churches increase is undeniable, since men can-
not contradict their sense therein, we must also say this is a thing great, and
marvelous, which no less than some divine, and extraordinary power could
bring about, if we consider these things, firstly, that quick dispatch which the
churches growth, under the days of the New Testament, hath made. O
might not the pagan world wonder how in the space of two or three hundred
years it was almost become wholly Christian; O strange! a Dioclesian, and
Maximus to grievously persecuting, and trampling on the very name of Chris-
tianity, and yet near that same age, this great Roman Empire, and Emperor
submitting to the gospel which was fulfilled in the days of Con-
fantine. 2.
How astonishing was it for the churches rife and increase to be brought about
upon the ruin, and downfall of the idols of the nations, who had their
Temples, and were worshipped as God, that the world should be made to re-
recognize it's Bible, and that religion which for so many ages was deeply footed
by tradition from their fathers; these altars which were had in such reverence,
demolished, and their temples made a ruinous heap, yea, the very name of
their Gods should be thus obliterate, was not this indeed very wonderful?
but Dagon hath no strength to stand before the ark of the God of Israel. 3.
That it should be thus advanced by such a mean as the preaching of the word,
even of that which to the Jews was a stumbling block, and to the Greeks
foolishness, how this voice should put to perpetual silence these oracles that for
so many ages had given a responfe to the world might be indeed astonishing,
yea, that the churches increase should thus be brought about, at no less rate,
than the overturning of greatest kingdoms, the conversion of so many nations,
should tame, and civilize the most savage and barbarous, cause the lion to lie
down with the lamb, and even make so great and universal a change in the
face of the universe.
4. Doth it not speak forth some divine power the
carrying on of the churches growth, and increase, not only over the violence
of men, but over all these dreadful errors, and inventions, these thick mists
which both in former and late times, have ascended out of the pit to choke
her, that we may say, the church hath not only been helped to tread upon the
lion and dragon, but on theadder and cockatrice also, and doth carry the
crowns of her conquest over all these at this day.
5. I would add, is it not marvelous how the churches increase hath been advanced in a way
most contrary to all the rules of ordinary policy, by which states, and empires
have riven, not by dissimulation, but greatest plainness, and free dealing for
Christ, and his ministers did never flatter the world to embrace the truth; nor
open violence, but a more excellent spirit and power before which men
could not stand, where foolishness was made to confound and outwit humane
wisdom, and weakness to overcome strength, that we may say, O how little
of man and much of God was to be seen therein.

THIRD Promise which the Lord hath given to his church in the
word is, the giving of the spirit and pouring out of the same, which is there
And doth concern all times of the church, though in a more full measure,
to be let out in the days of the gospel. It is true the christians inward expe-
rience can best witness this, for these have an argument from within; they
know, and they are sure they have received the spirit by the word, whereby
they understand these things which are spiritually discerned, but that which
here is intended, it is to shew, that the spirit is truly let forth to the church
according to the promise, that it doth accompany the truth, and doctrine of
Christ, and purity of the ordinances, as a thing which from clear undeniable
evidences may be demonstrated to the conviction of the greatest ascendi:
for
must think even bystanders, such who never knew any saving work of the
R spirit,
spirit, but live in these parts where the ordinances are dispensed with purity and power, if they shut not their eyes, may oft clearly see something going forth with the word, that is beyond words, a divine spirit and power which sendeth forth it's favour in the daily administration of the gospel, yea, by it's effects, and some convincing discovery thereof, doth force this truth in upon men's consciences, who are other ways strangers thereto. Now to hold forth the accomplishment of so great a promise that God is faithful and true therein, I would give in these clear and convincing witness'es of the same.

1. These excellent gifts, and endowments given to the church, are not a visible proof of this truth? For it is undeniable, where once the gospel cometh that instruments are raised with another spirit, reapers sent forth, while there is a harvest to be gathered, and shaped for their work, yea, these who were of mean and ordinary parts, when called forth to the service of the church, will have another lustre, that it may be oft seen with astonishment, how far not only they exceed themselves but these who were of more eminent natural endowments, I would but seriously ask men who never laid this truth to heart whence is that variety of gifts, so suitably dispensed to the various employments, and different pieces of service, the church doth call for? How are they thus suited to the several times, yea, to the very genius and temper of such a time? Whence is it, that every gift, and qualification is so fitted and disposed for it's proper use, some most peculiarly shaped out to awake and threaten, these Boanerges, while others are set forth with a spirit eminently fitted to comfort; some mighty in persuasion, yet not so fit to expound; others most dexterous to instruct, yet, not so powerful to apply; some the gift of tongues, and others the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to the weary; to some the face of a lion is given, when a heroic spirit of courage and resolution is called for, to others the face of a calf for patient enduring in suffering times, surely it were a choice meditation to think how with so great wonder, we may lay of this excellent body of the church, as of the natural body of man, how curious, yea, marvelously is it framed, where every part doth answer another, and to the use of the whole, each hath it's peculiar excellency, and something proper to every one's gift may be then seen, as well as in the face of man, by which in somethings they differ from all other.

2. These more eminent extraordinary breathings of the spirit do also witness this truth, which at some special times when the churches necessity requireth it hath been most discernible, when the Lord sendeth forth his servants about a more than ordinary piece of work, either to do or suffer; when he is to plant the church in some place, where the gospel will meet with much opposition, is it not then manifest how some more than ordinary power, and irrefitible efficacy doth accompany the truth, before which there is no standing? the disputers is then in his reasonings confounded by something above reason; the untoward, and rude are forced to stoop before the word and to confess they have to do with power, and not with words; yea, these whom the Lord maketh use of, who were feeble and weak as others, in that day are made as a brazen wall, and defenced city. 3 Is it not also undeniable that now under the New Testament there are ministers of the spirit, and not of a dead letter and empty sound? that with the word, there goes along a ministration of power and life, whence a majesty, and authority attending the publick ordinances is oft so discernible, that even these who know not what the spirit is, are made to see something therein which doth dazzle them with astonishment; whence is it that at sometimes such a beauty, and power shineth forth with ordinances like a glance of the glory of God, even going before mens eyes, which
which for the present hath made a wonderful change upon some very gross
men and put them in an other temper, yea, forced them with fear to ac-
knowledge that surely God is near in the assemblies of his people, and I would
ask whence it is, the word giveth law to men's consciences? and should speak
with such an authority, as maketh them all to shiver, that even the worst of
men are sometime made to stand before the ministry of the word, like men
standing at the bar upon life and death, before a judge whose authority they
durst not decline.

4. It is very discernible what a great difference
and an other appearance, there is both on ministers, and Christians at one time,
from what they are at an other, in the discharge of duty, as if these were
not the same persons; which appear not only in the enlargement, and
slowing of their gift, but also in power and life; is it not seen, with what
liberty these do sometimes pray, as are they with a full gale before the wind?
that it is then easy to preach, when at other times there is like a flat door;
that even onlookers may perceive a sensible languishing, and them hampered
in their very expressions, yea, as men rowing against a contrary wind, the
word wanting that favour and relish it hath had at other times, and this not
through a natural indisposition, or want of preparation, but that which all
who ever served God in the spirit must confess, hath most sensibly come up-
on them when they have thought themselves at the greatest advantage for
going about duty: O who can deny this evidence of the spirit, a thing in
all ages so sensibly felt, yea, even obvious to the worst of men.

5. It is also clear that wherever the Lord hath had a church at some special turns of her
condition there have usually been some more solemn times of the spirit and
high spring tides of the gospel, there was indeed a marvelous flowing forth of
the spirit of God after Christ's ascension, which like a mighty current did
carry all before it, at which time more success did follow one sermon, than
hath been by the ministry of many others in an age; this made the world
wonder, as if some universal enchantment had fallen on men; what that
could be, which the more they sought to bear down, the more it increased,
that made the rich choose poverty, and those who dwelt in palaces, take them-
selves with cheerfulness to the dens and caves of the earth; but besides this, it is
very manifest that in a large measure the spirit hath been let forth to the church
in after ages, yea, there is no particular church where the light hath shined
but hath had its special times, some solemn day of the pouring out of the
spirit before the sun went down; which may be observed either at the first
breaking up of the gospel, or at some other remarkable time, and change of
her condition; whence a great gathering of souls to Christ hath followed, be-
side the reaching of the conscience, and stirring the affection of many others
under a common work of the spirit, which usually goeth along with solemn
times.

6. The going back of the tide, and visible withdrawing of
the spirit from particular churches, where it hath sometime, in a large mea-
Sure, been let forth, is a very convincing witness to the truth of this pro-
mise; for it is clearly seen at what a stand the Gospel is in these places where
it most eminently shined, that the land which blossomed and was like a wa-
tered garden, hath been made as the heath in the wilderness, and then that
the ministers of Christ, whose lot hath fallen in such a time are put to very
fore work, to work as it were, with oars for want of wind, to cast out the
net all night, and catch nothing; a shut door is upon them in the exercise
of their ministry, duty is made burdensome because the Lord is against them,
there is an evident restraint upon the word, and it's intercourse is more with
the ear, than with the consciences of men, yea, any liberty they find is to
execute a commission of judgment, and to denounce the woe of the gospel.

O, doth
O, doth not so manifest withdrawing of the spirit witness the outlaying thereof, and that it is a certain and real thing. 7. Do not the stirrings, and strange convictions, which even the worst of men have sometimes under the word, witness a divine spirit and power going along therewith, that which forceth an assent from their conscience to the truth, which other ways they hate, yea, maketh them for the time, wonder they should not have been more serious in the ways of God, yea, it doth often put a thorn in the bed of their security, for indeed the word, and the light thereof doth torment those who dwell in the earth: and truly this is a marvelous thing, which winneth in upon men's secret designs and counsels, doth reveal to them the most close thoughts of their heart, which they are sure men's eye could not reach, taketh them down through themselves, and yet, that the world knoweth not whence it is, yea, are they not forced to confess, what a great difference they find between the word from the mouth of some, who are holy, and feri-ous though held out in greatest simplicity, than from others even of greater gifts, and accompanied with more show of eloquence, that surely the one hath an other found and relish, speaketh more feelingly home to their heart, than the most polished discourse of greatest orators.

8. One witness more I shall here give to the truth of this promise, even these eminent examples of the grace of God, which in every age have shined in the firmament of the church, some in love and zeal, some in patience and humility, some in the strong acts of faith, and self denial; which do certainly demonstrate a more excellent spirit than that which is in the world, whence they appear with another luster in their walk and carriage, and have a sweet and fragrant favour of the spirit to the very discerning of bystanders, which truly sheweth that his wind doth blow on his garden, when the spices send forth so pleasant a scent.

FOU RTH. We find an express promise in the word of deliverance to the church in a low, and oppressed condition, that surely the Lord will plead her cause, will deliver his people when heeth their strength is gone, and save them from the hands of their enemies, Psal. xviii. 47, 48, 50. Ps. xxi. 4, 5. If. liv. 17. If. li. 23. It is true, this promise hath its bounds, limits, and provisions which should be taken along in the application there- of, we know the covenant of God with particular churches is conditional only, he promiseth that he will be with them while they are with him, yea, it is oft seen, (and there is no jarr here with this promise) that a people professing the gospel, confederate with God, following duty, have even turned their back before the enemy, and in the holy providence of God, have for a time been given up to their fierce rage and violence; but it is also sure that this promise hath an accomplishment, and in the day of the churches trial the Lord hath oft appeared, by a strong outstretched hand for her help, his own arm brought salvation to his people, when they sought to him: for God is known in her palaces for a refuge, yea, surely the church might oft sing that song on such clear grounds as though with Israel she had been standing at the Red-sea, thy right hand, O Lord, is full of power, thy right hand hath daised in pieces thy enemies; for what nation, or people is like this to whom he hath shewed such marvelous things. Now to shew forth the faithful- nes of God in this promise, I would offer some few things that are a most clear and undeniable witness thereto.

1. There are few ages, but we have some record of the churches condition, which hold forth such signal convincing providences of God, in behalf of his oppressed church and people, as may be a manifest feal to this truth; it is true some times have been more remarkable for suffering, times of judgment and of
of a growing trial wherein this truth hath not so clearly shined forth, yea that long night which the church had under antichrist, might seem to call it in question; but nevertheless, if men take a serious look of the Lord’s way and series of providence in ages past, comparing one time with another, what the traits, and most extreme cafe of the church hath at last resolved in, they will find cause to cry with astonishment, **great deliverances giveth be to his people, yea the Lord hath done great things for them.** I am sure, were there a full record with that true account which might be given, of these more remarkable deliverances, that particular churches have met with, since the first planting of the gospel among them, wherein God’s very immediate hand for their help hath been discernible, it should non-plus the world, and greatest atheists about the real fulfilling of this promise. 2. The confession of the church’s enemies hath oft witnessed this truth, that in pursuing their malice to trouble and undoe her, they have but undone themselves; how tormenting disappointments have caus’d their very flesh to pine away, and close and fixe of their rage forced this conviction from them at last, that the church is a burdenome stone, to be lifted up, a party with whom it is dangerous to meddle; have not such been made to discern something of a divine hand so clearly against them, blaming their counsels, and most promising attempts, as if their eyes with Balaam had been opened to see the angel in their way, yea in all ages it is known how the conscience even of the worst hath oft bewrayed something of a prefaging fear they have had of these whom they pursued with greatest malice, and a dreadful imprefion they had of a praying people, and their prayers. 3. This truth hath had the clearest witnesses in times of the church’s greatest trait and extremity, when difficulties have appeared insuperable and a deliverance in an ordinary way of providence most hopeles, when visible means have been withdrawn, all refuge failed and none to help, that in such a day the Lord hath been seen upon the mount and unexpectedly by very strange means brought deliverance to a broken, almost ruined church, even as it were between the bridge, and the water; so that who would have a clear view of the accomplishment of his punishment of this promise, may but turn back on these more remarkable extreme exigencies of the church’s condition, and there have it, how after a sweet sun shine have followed the most dark and cloudy times, a raging storm hath resolved into a refreshing calm, yea, that with a further growth of the church’s trial, and doubling of her burden, her enlargement, and deliverance hath broken up with these great and obvious remarks therein, that it was a convincing return of prayer and wrestling, with a further addition of some new and singular mercy therewith, yea, some eminent act of judgment upon her adversaries. 4. The greatest advantage, and victories which men have got over the churches, and people of God can also bear witness to this, that when the wicked have sprung up like the grass, and the workers of iniquity seemed to flourish, this very way hath the Lord taken to bring about a more full deliverance: Yea, on the other hand, hath it not been very obvious how the church’s gain hath been brought forth out of the greatest los, that these wounds which seemed most deadly, by the infinitely wise providence of God, have turned to be her most effectual, and through cure; and men’s unreasonable violence, and rage against the church hath oft had an evident tendency to bring about even that whereto it seemed most directly contrary, some further mercy and deliverance, than could have been expected; as the Amorites refusing Israel but passage through their land did prove the very mean to give them more than they sought, the potellation of that land for an inheritance. 5. This witness the observation of the church in all ages can bear to this promise, that deliverance hath oft sprung up, and been brought

brought to her hand from a corner, and by such means, as none would have expected, by such, as none but God could do; a sudden report and rumour; 1 Sam. xxii. 27. means that have been not only small, and improbable, but that looked directly contrary, as in bringing the church out of Egypt, yea, sometime by the wicked's being ensnared in the work of their own hands, is it not obvious, how the Lord hath met men's private interests to put them on, for befriending his church? and hath caused the earth to help the woman and raised up one oppreßor to punish another, yea, often hath prepared carpenters, whence it was left thought, to cut the horns of those who had scattered his people. 6. There is this convincing witness to the truth of such a promise, that sudden remarkable change, which may be oft discerned both on men's inward frame, and the outward face of the church, when a time of mercy, and enlargement is come; instruments raised of the Lord with discernible elevation of their spirits to act, and do exploits, the feeble then made strong, and those who sometime would have fainted at an ordinary piece of service dare with such a gale of divine assistance, run, as it were, through a troop, and overlap a wall; for indeed this may in all ages be obvious, how easily it is to move in the day when the Lord moveth for his people, and strengtheneth the girdle of their loins, that it was not their bow, or sword, which got them the victory, but the very finger of God, something above the counsels of men, ordinary means, which hath sometimes been made clear as the noon-day, so that even, at some distance, these who are wife to discern the times, did see when there was a breaking up of a day of a church's hope, how a previous motion, and far amongst the dry bones, the Lord as in the top of the mulberry trees hath been then discernible, and some promising appearance from the present disposition, and temper of the godly in that time (though we must grant mercy and sovereign grace, hath oft met the church when little of this hath appeared) which, like the breaking up of that cloud in the top of mount Carmel to the prophet, though at first but as an hand-breath hath shewed that deliverance to the church was not far off. 7. I would add this witness also; these convincing providences which in all ages have been shewed against the enemies of the church, such as men could not pass without some remark, what an issue these have had, who have sometimes been a sore rod on the people of God, yea, a terror in the land of the living? how they have become a most abject and contemptible party, like bees who have loft their sting; their countenance hath been changed, and they ceased to be any more a fear, when once their work was done, and the date of their commissi on for the humbling and trying of the church expired; yea a judicial stroke from the Lord, hath been often seen upon their very judgment and resolutions, which could not then serve them to trouble and afflict the church, the day being turned, and the time of her deliverance come.

Fifth, There is this promise also which concerneth the church, as well as christians in their personal case, that all things work together for the good of those who love God, Rom. viii. 28. the accomplishment whereof as it is written out in providence to the observation of men, I would here touch. This is indeed a great comprehensive promise, which in the constant course and tenor of providence about the church we may see, it doth take place; how these turnings and changes of the world, the most strange emergents of the time, the various motions, and interests of men, do cooperate together, and have an undoubted tendency to bring forth the church's good as though they did intentionally act for the same, there will indeed, one day, be a more clear and marvelous discovery of this, when the Lord hath perfected his work, and
and the mystery of God is finished, the church brought safe to the harbour, then shall it be fully manifest, to what end, all these storms, and crofs winds in the counfels and designs of men were, thole things which in the time could not be underftood, but fcemed perplexed and strange, did really work for the church's good, for then men will fee with their eyes a full performance of the word; yet we muft fay, even here, in every age, amidst the various changes of the church's cafe, this is fo clearly manifeft, that there is no feroius ob-
ferver of providence, but may bear witnefs to it.

1. That not only the church's good, but even her greatest good, hath moft clearly had it's rife, and been brought forth out of the greatet mischiefs and hurts intended againft her; that if we Search Scriture, and will turn over thefe after-records of the church's condition, we fhall there find the moft re-
markable attempts, and plots fuch as Pharaoh's laft effay to defroy the Ifrae-
lites, Hamans great design to root out the feed of the Jews, that great matter-
plot Sathan once had on foot, to crush the gospel, and the chrifian church by crucifying her head, yea, in thefe laft times Antichrift's killing the wit-
nefles have all, as if really intended by the inftuments as well as the firft
mover, brought forth the church's greatest good; lo as the after mercy and deliverance hath carried fome visible proportion to her trial, and to the greatness of her adversaries design.

2. It may be also clear, if we but trace back thefe memorable changes, which have been up and down the earth, how di-
rect a tendency they have had to this end, did not the bringing down that great image of the monarchies witnefs this? We find Nebuchadnezzar raiied up as a rod to the church, and Cyrus for a deliverer; we may fee the Persian and Grecian monarchies brought down, to make way for the fettling up of the Messiah his kingdom. Antiochus muft fland a little for a sharp trial, and his downfall give the church a new breathing, and hold forth to after ages a re-
memarkable monument of the judgment of God againft his enemies. Peaceable Augustus muft have his time in whose days fhall be abundance of peace; we find a Titus fet up to execute the judgment of God on the Jews, to make way for the further enlargement to the gentile church, a Nero, and Domi-
tian to help forward the church's fuffering, and a Conftantine to give her fome ref, after fo long and fore an affault, and at laft, the Roman empire moulded down for Antichrift's rife, to accomplifh what did remain of the fufferings of Christ in his church, by that adversary.

3. We may oft see a very strange appointment, and concurrence of things, how inftuments act to bring about the Lord's end and advance his church's intereft, even while each one doth moft vigorously drive their own proper end and design, which fheweth there is furely a living spirit in the wheels, that ordereth thefe mo-
tions, a fupreme and firft mover that can thus determine them, whither they will, or not, to serve his end and the church's good, when they moft direc-
tly intend the contrary.

4. We have feen how in mens plotting the ruin of the church there is of an unseen hand determining their judgment, and in-
cination to fall upon that very way, than which, we would think nothing could have been more direct for her good and their own ruin, how an Hushai hath been fent in, or fome have been firred up amongft themfelves (upon their own intereft) to break the pernicious counfels and designs of others.

5. We have alfo feen the personal quarrels of the church's enemies among themfelves, brought to fuch an height, and to meet fo feafonably, that on-
lookers might clearly perceive that it hath been from the Lord, a judgement for their rage and violence againft his poor oppreffed people.

6. We have feen the church's enemies raised to a strange height, all advantages favour-
ing them, until their plot and mine hath been ripe for fpringing, and fo, at

that
that very choke, something unexpected hath fallen out which did turn their former success to their further ruin, yea, disappoint all; this the world is ready to call some fatal and malevolent conjunction, which cannot be refilled, and what is this in effect, but the witnesses of men's conscience to a divine hand? 7. Have we not seen some sore dash and overthrow of the church bring forth her good and a more full victory, how visible help and means have been taken out of the way, that something above means might be seen in her condition, even in that day, when all hath been given for loss, yea, truths losing the day upon the field, bring forth her triumph on the scaffold and at the stake. 8. We have seen most despicable and ordinary things made subservient for some great piece of the Lord's work, a very small thing made the first rise of strange revolutions, that remarkable changes have been oft lying in the bottom of a common providence; yea, truly we find both scripture, and the observation of after ages witnesses, that the church's deliverance and outgate did almost never come that way, by such a method and means, as she had most expected the same, and that God's time of working may be oft very contrary to our time of expecting. I shall only add, is it not oft seen (which I am sure all ages can witness) how men's endeavours to darken the truth by error hath been an effectual means for it's further clearing? that the growing of a trial, a violent, and forc exailing upon the church, hath kindly wrought towards her delivering and enlargement, her meat hath been oft brought even out of the eater, by means most destructive thereto, and a sword must pierce the church's heart, that thoughts of many may be discovered, a time of persecution must help to cure the divisions amongst the godly, and bring them together in the furnace, which prosperity could not do; yea it is oft seen, which former ages can also witness, that the very undoing of the church hath been God's blessed way, to keep her from being undone.

The SECOND BRANCH.

Oth concern these scripture threatenings which are held forth in the word, with a respect to the visible church, and against a people professing the gospel, that no privileges they have above others shall exempt them from judgment, yea, and from very sad strokes, he hath known them above the rest of the world, he will contend with them most severely because of sin, and such particular evils as we find the word threateneth. I touched a little some scripture threatenings, in the preceding argument as concerned christians in their private experience; what I here intend is, to point at this truth, as it is written in the providences, and judgments of every time to men's observation, how judgments from the Lord, which point, as with the finger, at the abounding sins of that time, do reach a land and particular churches, according to the threatenings of the word; this is indeed manifested, that the greatest promises made to a people, we find backed with faddest threatenings, and accordingly we find the greatest monuments of wrath have usually been set up, where sometimes the largest offers of the gospel were, yea, that the anger of the Lord may draw so deep against a people professing his name, as to make their land defolate, and the high ways thereof mourn; for in this precinct of the church doth both judgment and mercy most eminently shine forth, and the Lord's way there doth differ from that he hath with any other people. Now to clear this grave truth a little, how these threatenings of the word, against a nation, and people because of sin are also verified in their judgments, I shall touch a few instances, that are most known and
and obvious, where we may lay the word and observation of the church together, and see how they answer one the other.

1. We find the threatings of the word do point at the time of a people's judgment, 1 Thes. ii. 16. Rev. xiv. 15, 18. that when they fill up the measure of their sin, and their cup is full, the Lord will not then defer the execution; until the cup of the Amorites was full he did let them alone; and we find answer deferred to the cry of the souls under the altar, for avenging their blood on antichrist, because that accursed party had yet more to do against the church and the saints, more to suffer under their hand. Now to witness the accomplishment of this; let us but consider what in all times may be observed. First, that there is an ordinary growth and height of sin, which a land cometh to before destruction, some national and universal spreading thereof, prodigious outbursts, the utter rejecting of reproof, which shew that a people's case must then be on some turn, yea, that strange, and unusual sinning, useth to go before some strange stroke. 2. Before judgment comes, is it not seen, how the sin of a people hath become so daring, that it hath had a loud cry? Yea, their case hath been such as did justify the Lord's procedure against them, even in the consciences of all on-lookers, that he did it not without much cause. 3. Is it not easy for such as are wise to know the times, to fee night coming on a land, when sin is at some dreadful height, by considering the word and the Lord's usual way with a people in such a case? Yea, hath there not then been some special forewarnings, a more than ordinary impreffion of judgment upon the spirits of the godly? The hiding of many of them in the grave, which as threatening presages, hath shewed the near approach of a stroke. 4. There doth not usually want even some Noah or Jonas, the ministers of God sent forth to threaten, who as watchmen upon the wall are discerning hazard at a distance, yea, with an observable presence then upon their spirit, and a more than ordinary agreement amongst themselves to cry out, and give the people warning, when the time of judgment hath been drawing near.

II. It is clear there are some special evils and sins of a time, which we find the word most dreadfully doth threaten, yea, in a peculiar way it doth put a mark upon them, that though the Lord should pass by many inimities in a church, and people professing his name; yet for such, and such sins as we find, in Amos i. 2. he will not turn away the punishment thereof, but hath solemnly declared, by his truth and faithfulness, that these shall not pass without some visible mark, even before the world, of his anger: now in this the scripture is clear, and lets us see there are some sins more particularly threatened, some land destroying sins that have as it were the mark set on them, which do especially provoke the holy indignation and jealousy of God, such as idolatry, corrupting the worship of God; perjury, and covenant-breaking, shall they break my covenant, and escape, saith the Lord, Ezek. xvii. 15. also departing from God, and his way, for this the land shall be desolate as in Jerem. xii. 12, 13. yea blood guiltiness which the earth shall not cover, and for which the sword shall not depart, even from the house and family of David, 2 Sam. xii. 10. Now to evidence the accomplishment hereof, I shall point at some things most obvious to the observation of every time, how terribly the Lord useth to plead for such things, and by some exemplary stroke and judgment point them out, as we find them particularly set by themselves in the word, and threatings thereof.

1. How in these sins, thus marked, men may see how their judgments use not wholly to be deferred to another world, but though much is oft passed here, and deferred to that last and great judgment, yest upon such sins
the Lord hath put some mark of his displeasure, even in this life. That for these he useth to contend, before the sun; and in the view of men; his judgments are indeed oft secret, and do consume as a moth, but upon such sins we may frequently see, some publick, visible stroke is made to follow, that the world cannot pass without a remark. 3. That the Lord also useth to be a very swift witness against such evils, for as we find the oppression of the church hath a loud cry, and the blood of the saints a bow long? It is also seen these forementioned sins do much hasten judgment, so as seldom that generation passeth away without some witness thereto; it is rarely found that some great revolt of a people from God, and breaking covenant with him, doth lie long by unpunished, nor doth the heavy head of the violent and bloody man go off to the grave in peace. 4. That these sins use to be followed with some very dreadful and eminent stroke, which have made the land desolate, their cities sometime waste, and a ruinous heap, yea, houses great and fair to be without inhabitants; so as men have with aslumishment enquired, why is all this come to pass? and it was easy to answer, even for such, and such evils hath the Lord done this, according to his word. 5. That a divine hand useth to be most discernible in the punishment of such sins because of a very clear resemblance between them and the stroke, which hath forced their own conscience, as well as of onlookers to confess the righteousness of God therein. 6. That the Lord will put some mark of his anger on the choicest of his servants for any accession to such sins, these to whom he hath given their soul for a prey, have yet got a foreward stroke, upon such an account, which hath followed them to the grave; for this the sword shall not depart from David's house; idolatry rent the kingdom from the pottency of Solomon. Jonas shall not escape for his rebellion, yea, God was wroth with Moses, and no in treaty shall hinder his dying in the wilderness. I may add, hath not the Lord's controversy on this ground even reached their pottency, which may shew that these threatenings are Had earnest, and such sins are not more particularly pointed at in the word, than they have been in after ages made exemplary in judgment. III. A people's lukewarmness, their slighting of the gospel, and not receiving the love of the truth, we find sadly threatened in the word, Rev. iii. 15. 16. These i. 10. 11. and truly we must say they have not fallen to the ground in any age without an accomplishment, as frequent observation can witness. First, how a people's entering upon a religious way, their pursuing a form of reformation, and not thorough for God therein, but on carnal grounds, hast thus put them in a worse condition than before, for truly men's hypocrisy, in going about a good work doth threaten more, than the performance thereof doth promise. Jeth got a temporal reward, but his pottency must at length reckon for all the blood of Jesus. 2. That no people use to be further from getting good of the gospel than such who have been under most clear and greatest convictions, so as it is found, there is often more access to gain amongst the savages, than these who have fit their day while the tide did flow, yea, ministers have found most discouragement to labour in these parts where the word hath been long preached with power. 3. It is seen, how light not improved will turn a people more grofs, and is usually followed with some remarkable growth in sin, that the more the word doth put a restraint on men's corruption, the more it rages; so as it may be observed what a very black dye and colour, the powerful preaching of the gospel hath put upon a people, as a visible mark of judgment on such who profit not thereby. 4. Is it not seen how men's formality in the matters of God hath been oft punished even with the taking away of the
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form? Yea, that seldom error and delusion doth want a harvest amongst a people who receive not the truth in love.

5. Hath not flighting of the gospel been at last followed with some visible restraint and inhibition, both upon the ordinances and dispensers thereof, a judicial withdrawing of the spirit, as to the work of conversion and conviction, whereby the Lord doth plainly cease to be a reprover to flesh, yea, even faith, bind up the law, and seal the testimony.

4. The word doth also threaten carnal security (a diæase whereof the church is oft in great hazard) yea, we find it holds forth a certain connection betwixt spiritual judgments upon a people, and some outward strokes to follow thereon, that these who are under that first woe and plague upon their spirits, are then near to some judgment upon their persons, and may expect a sharp wakning; in hearing they shall not understand, &c. but the close is, until their cities be consumed without inhabitants, and there be an utter desolation, yea, we find judgment doth begin as a moath in that of Hos. v. but in the 14. it doth turn at last to be a lion.

We may truly say the fulfilling of this hath in all ages of the church been obvious. 1. That as the first part of the church's deliverance is usually spiritual, so it is found the first step of judgment, and the execution thereof against a people, hath been upon their spirits; that serious discerners of the time might know that the night was fast coming on, and some sad outward stroke on a land, by the abounding of spiritual judgments. 2. It is clear the most dreadful strokes that ever come on a particular church, do usually find it in such a cafe, judicially hardned, and under many warnings plagued with security; thus did the flood find the old world, and before that devastating stroke on Jerusalem by the Romans, were not the Jews in such a case. Salvain can tell how it was with the African churches, before that dreadful inundation of the Goths and Vandals, yea, the church's records in all ages do witnesse that before any sad stroke or persecution came upon a people, a deep sleep and lethargy hath been previous thereto; gray hairs might have been seen upon them, and the word doth even shew that this will be the last diæase whereof the church shall be sick before the great day of the Lord.

3. It is also seen how spiritual judgments when they grow upon a people, make great dispatch, and do quickly ripen for some further stroke, that when men have run down their conscience and are past reproof of the word, going on from evil to worse, the cafe cometh then to be clear, and ready for the final discussion of the process. 5. The word doth denounce woe against the troubles of the church, and these who are her persecutors, that the Lord shall remonce tribulation to such, and plead with her oppressors, the accomplishment whereof hath been truly manifeft, yea to the observation even of the world. Isa. x. 5. 2 Thes. i. 6. 1. That eminent oppressors of the church have seldom gone out of the world without some remark of divine anger upon them; surely if there were a record of such instances that in every age hath been conspicuous, men should be forced to see and say that the most noted enemies and persecutors of the saints have been also the most convincing and noted examples of judgment in the time. 2. That the church's suffering useth to go before a day of vengeance on the instruments thereof; we find Jehu got an outward reward for executing the judgment of God on his enemies; but as for these men who have been the rod of the church it hath been seen they have not long wanted some scourge as sore upon themselves, as they have been to his people, and that at last these have payed dear for their service. 3. We may see how this also doth help to finish the controversy of God with men, and their houses, that for this he hath taken many away in the middle of their days,
days, and made them cease to be, who would not cease to trouble the church, while they had a being; yea, that he had taken them in his own hand, whom men could not reach, and made their down-cafting in the midst of themselves. 6. Doth not the scripture threaten carnal confidence in a people, the putting of their trust in man or in any outward instruments, Jer. xviii. 5, 6, 17. To clear the accomplishment whereof, let us but compare the word, and the church's observation together, and we will find. 1. That outward means have never more miscarried than when most promising, and when there was greatest expectation from the same, yea, that very eminent instruments when much leaned to, have been observably blasted, and made to shrink under such a burden. 2. That these whom the Lord had made much use of, yea, honoured to be great instruments in the service of the church, have oft had some discernible blot, to improve men's overlooking of instruments with their effect; a Tertullian, an Origine in ancient times, yea, even a Luther, in these latter ages must go with some halt to the grave. 3. That many who have been useful in the church for a time, the Lord doth oft lay by, yea, maketh not use of them to the end, but the least may be made first, and truly that excels in men's effect, putting a further weight on some means, than they could bear, hath oft helped to render many useless. 4. Is it not also seen, how one extremity is thus plagued with an other? None more ready to shrink in a day of trouble, than such who at a distance seemd most daring, yea, none more ready to fall in that excess of undervaluing instruments, than these who have most exceeded upon the other hand. 7. Do we not find the word threaten, and in a special way point at corrupt ministers, unfaithful watchmen who give not warning to the church, these shepherds that feed themselves, but not the flock, the leaders of a people that cause them to err, and by their practice to stumble at the law, Mal. ii. 3, 9. The accomplishment whereof hath in all ages been very discernible. First, how such have usually been most noted as the greatest and most violent enemies which the church hath at any time had, yea, that no course hath been so evil and gross that hath wanted some of these to help it on, whose hatred, and perfecution of the godly hath been found to exceed the most openly profane and profligate in that time. 2. That as they are particularly threatened above others in the word, so they get also some remarkable cast above others in their judgment, and having once lost their favour become vile and loathsome even to the worst of men, are contemptible in the eyes of such whom they seek in a sinful way to please, yea have a worse favour, than the prophane wretches, that being verified in them, corruptio optimi, pessimia. 3. That these do seldom make a good retreat from an evil way; so as it is an usual observation, it is rare for church men to repent, or a fallen star to shine again. 4. Are not such oft smitten even in their gifts, which we may see wither and dry up upon them while not faithfully improved, yea, to the very convinion of their hearers to have lost that edge which once they had in their ministry? 5. I must add another remark (though I desire to deal with fear and much tenderness in such an application of the judgment of God) how the Lord doth oft put some note of his wrath on the children and off-spring of unfaithful ministers, that it hath been seen none more wretched and gross; whereof as their evil practice, and example hath been a special help, so likewise are they thus punished of the Lord, who did not seek to beget children to him, by the word, but through their way did rather cause many to err and fall.
THE THIRD BRANCH.

Having spoke something how the scripture both as to the promises and threatenings thereof, is evidently fulfilled in the Lord's ordinary way of procedure with his church, I would a little further follow this argument, how this also hath a manifold accomplishment, even in these most strange and dark passages of providence, whereas men are ready to stumble and accuse the spotted righteousnes of God, and his faithfulness therein; but if we lay them to that measure and line of the word, which is stretched over the whole work of providence, we will see how well these do agree, and answer one to the other, yea that all the paths wherein God walketh towards his church and people, are surely mercy and truth. To clear this I shall point at some footsteps of the providence of God in the world, and about the church which would seem most dark, yea a contradiction to his word and promise, but are plain and manifest, if weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, where we may have a satisfying look and resolution of these things, which otherways would be too hard for us to understand, and may see, how straightforward these paths are which we thought crooked; yea, how easy and passable, the greatest deeps of providence would be, both as to God's way with his church, and in our own particular case, when once they are set over against the word. I shall touch this a little in these following instances.

1. It may seem strange how the church's trouble and strait is oft seen to encrease, with the first stirrings of her deliverance; yea, when some remarkable mercy and deliverance is in the bringing forth, the first step thereof would seem to put her further back, and in a worse condition than before. This is indeed a piece of the Lord's way with his church which in many instances may be witnessed, but let us take the word along therewith, and we will find. 1. How the church is oft at the brink of the grave even when her case is upon a turn, and how it is congruous to his way (whose paths are in the deep waters, whoclotheth himself with darkness, that men should not find any thing after him, or lay down absolute conclusions concerning his dealing) that the motions of providence should be oft so perplexed and various.

2. Did not the case of the church in Egypt seem much worse, their burdens double upon them, even when their deliverance was breaking up? 3. Joseph to be sold as a slave, and in Egypt turned in to a dungeon, would seem steps of providence, very unlike the thing which God was driving at thereby, and yet we see how kindly these did work towards the same. 4. The church in Micab. iv. 10. when she was even at the door next to a deliverance, her trial was even at the greatest height, be in pain, and labour to bring forth, for ye shall go to Babylon and there be delivered: but forefet pangs in the birth do usally promise the best issue. 5. It was the step of the providence of God, which of all seemed most dreadful to the church in Esther, the sealing of the decree, and sending it forth to root out the whole seed of the Jews, while Haman still flourished, but lo this was the very step that wrought most thoroughly for her deliverance, and is not a wet mourning feed-time a scripture-prefage of a good harvest.

II. The sore interruptions which a people's endeavours for reformation, and to promote the kingdom of Christ have met with, even when set about with a clear call, yea, solemn and serious engagements to God, would seem strange, and a shaking piece of providence; and truly this is oft seen, as an usual attendant on reformation, how unsuperable like difficulties, and unexpected lets do grow up in the way thereof; thus when Luther, and other instruments were raised up in Germany, to pursue the church's reformation, what cruel edicts were then set forth to give it a dash? Division among themselves,
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felves, the rising up of the Boors and Anabaptists: what a pure, and through reformation was on foot under Edward the sixth in England, and what a dreadful storm did quickly break it up for that time? And I would add, what the present case of the church in Britain and Ireland may at this day witness, where once the Lord so eminently appeared in a begun reformation, which now is at so great a stand, but let us go in to the scripture with this, and we will find. 1. There is a wise portraiture of providence in the affairs of the church held forth in that vision which Ezekiel had of the wheels at the river Chebar, whose mysterious motions and turnings so cross one to the other, without any discord therein, as to the end, to which they were directed, both witness the rational, and wise conduct of providence: the Lord's work about his church is a most shadowed and elaborate piece, which men cannot see, before their eye, as they see behind upon a review, while ordinary causes do oft vary in their operation, yea, go out of the common road, but scripture will make this very plain. 2. Was not Nehemiah, Ezra and Zerobabel at their work and duty, and had an express call for building of the temple, yet, how great, and frequent interruptions did they find, sometimes environed with difficulties, Zach. iv. 7. Who art thou great mountain before Zerobabel? yea, they were put to hold the sword and build, to watch and work at once, because of their enemies. 3. What a very fore backlet was the church at Hab. iii. Revive thy work O Lord in the midst of the years; this was both a great and long interruption, yea, do we not find her almost at a non-plus with a query which no visible appearance could answer, by whom shall Jacob arise for be is small? 4. We find a special reformation set on foot by Hezekiah with a solemn covenant, by the princes, priests and body of the people, with a setting up of the pure worship and ordinances of God, but lo a sharp storm is soon after by Sennacherib, yea, Hezekiah scarcely is in his grave, when his son doth bring in corruption and perfecution both at once; and when the christian church in the times of the apostles begin to flourish, success following the gospel, did not a sad interruption and scætering follow? 2 Mii. viii. 5. This is promised that Zion's walls shall even in troublesome times be built, and her being brought to a heap of rubbish was but making way for a further advance, that in the building of her again the Lord might appear in his glory; and is it not clear, that Christ coming in the gospel and power thereof to purge his church, and carry on a reformation Mal. iii. 4. proveth a searching and trying time which men cannot endure, for the word and clear discovery of sin, and other shaking dispositions which do usually attend such times and torment them who dwell on the earth, yea, and the devil, and corruption of men aloft, with all rage to oppose the same.

III. That a sad overclouding and darkness should come on a land, after most special manifestations of the power and glory of God therein, and that a time of the gospel with much light should be so near a forerunner of wrath and judgment, would seem a strange piece of providence, and cause a serious enquiry how such eminent appearances of God for a people, such great confirmations, observations, observable successes for a time, with many signal encouragements, should all seem to resolve in a defolating stroke, and ruin? This may be infinced in that protestant war in France where instruments were remarkably raised, fitted of the Lord for the service of that time, had much of his presence and countenance, yet to resolve thus in a bloody maliaet; likewise these confedurate German Princes, Saxony and Landgrave of Hesse, men eminent for piety, carried forth with much zeal for God, for defence of the truth, yea, in the beginning of that war having many
many promising encouragements, yet, remarkably deferted of the Lord with very sad like confquences following the fame. Let us consider also the late Bohemian war, stared upon necessary defence of religion and liberty, and at first attended with some fming providences, should resolve into great defolation and ruin: yea, the church of Ireland, O, what a dreadful massacre of the protestants there did quickly follow one of the most folemn times of the power of God and outpowering of the spirit that we ever heard of since the days of the apoftles. I confess this may have a strange aspecf, and is a part of the marvelous ways of the Lord, but when we take it into the word, we will find there is no jar, or difcord here, for, t. It might seem as strange and astonishing what Baruch got from the Lord in answer to his complaint, Jerem. xlv. that he would pluck up what he had planted, and cast down that which he had built, for a work to be thus thrown down, where the Lord had once fo eminently appeared, and given his people many confirmations, might then occafion great thoughts of heart, yet the unpotted rightousnes of God, and his truth was apparent therein; yea, after that difcourfe, and all these large promises, which Christ gave his disciples in that of John vi. we find all is fht up with that, the hour is coming, and now is, that ye fhall be scattered. 2. What ftrange providences did meet the church in the wilderness, sometime brought back to the Red Sea, tryed with hunger and nakednes, confumed with various frokes, and many years wandering until moft of that generation, who came out of Egypt, filled their graves in the journey, and yet this was after moft eminent confirmations, and as clear signs of God's preffe as ever a people had. 3. We find a publick reformation moft zealously profecute by Josias, which looked like the renewed efpoufals of that land with God, by a folemn covenant, yet, quickly after, night came on that land with a long captivity, and Josias did fall by the sword. 4. Was there not a bright fun-blinc, and flourifhing plantation of the gollpel in Judea a little before the defolation of that land by the Romans, yea, we will find it clear from the word that times of much light and reformation do much sooner ripen for a froke than other times. 5. It is very manifeft that particular churches have their day where the gollpel hath it's appointed work, and their froke at laft may reach the length of removing the candle-flick, I truly think that sad infance of Bohemia's cafe may have this observable in it, that it had longer day, and enjoyment of the light even from the times of John Hus, and Jerome of Prague which was near an hundred years before there was any day-break on other parts, fo that we would confider if their night did come foon on, that their day was also much longer, yea, the froke might meet with the ebb of the tide, when their harveft was much gathered in, under fo long a continuance of the gollpel, though I dare not think, the Lord's work is utterly extinct there, but that Bohemia's dead and withered root hath life yet in it and fhall once again bud forth.

IV. Is it not usually seen when judgement cometh on a land, that the godly get the first froke? But let us alfo confider this in the word, where it is clear.

1. That judgment must begin at the house of God, and the green tree; and that the church's trouble and perfection is a forerunner of vengeance on her adversaries, do we not find, there is a cup of the judgment of God? And O the laft is of a strong composition, for the wine is red and mixed, and the dreg very thick whic his reserved for the troublers of the church, and for such who are at ease in a day of her grief, and truly they have the advantage that drink first, Bleff are they whom thou chaffeft, &c. That they may reft in the day of their adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked, yea, Rev. iii. 10. we find keeping of the word of patience, which doth im-
port suffering to the church, goeth before a more universal stroke; and in that day proveth the safety and protection of the people of God. 2. It is also clear that men may be raised up of the Lord, and followed with successes, when he hath them for a rod to his church, but that at last Asbür the rod of my wrath will I cast in the fire, faith the Lord, it is truly an evidence of great wrath upon a party to be made the rod, and execucrioners of judgment upon the people of God, for they shall pay for it, by some fadder stroke than any trouble or suffering, whereof they have been instru-ments.

V. That prosperity, and successes should follow sometimes the worst of men in an evil course and cause, such a concurrence, and series of providence, as seemeth to smile on them even to the bringing of their sinful devices to pass, while the people of God have been made to fall in a just quarrel before their adversary, would seem an astonishing providence, but let us lay it foregaining the word, and there we will see. 1. That there is a prosperity which tendeth to destruction, Prov. i. 32. The tabernacles of the robbers proper, Job xii. 6. and they that provoke God are secure, into whose hands he bringeth abundantly, but they do not see that wickedness is its own punishment, and how it is a dreadful stroke to thrive in an ill course. Was not the church shaken with such a providence, Mal. iii. 15. Yea, tempted to call the proud happy, but in ver. 18. They were taught from further observation to discern, and to put a difference between the righteous and the wicked.

2. Do we not find that even the signs and predictions of false Prophets in favours of a sinful way may come to pass, Deut. xiii. 1, 2. whereof the church is warned, and God's intent in the same cleared, that it is for the tryal of his people, whither they will love, and fear the Lord, and cleave to his way, when providence would seem to shine on a crooked path.

3. Did not successes for a time attend Absalom? Israel as one man went after him, yea, the friends and counsellors of David; a fair wind did also favour Haman in his effay to ruin the church. Jeremy is almost shaken with this, yea they have taken root, yea, they grew, and bring forth fruit, but is not this at last unhappily found ominous before a storm? though the brutish man knoweth not, nor fools lay it to heart for what the wicked doth oft spring, and flourish; I would add Israel's falling before Benjamin, it was an astonishing like providence; and Habakuck was put to a stand with such a thing, why the Lord lookt on, while the wicked devoured the righteous; yea, Joshua was to cry out in an amazement, O Lord what shall I say, when Israel turneth their back before their enemies? But we have also the Lord's intent therein witnessed by his word, that this is to humble and prove his people, that he may do them good in the latter end, and thus he beateth them off from all carnal grounds of confidence, he woundeth them to a cure, that by bringing them low, he may raise, and fit them for a further mercy.

VI. What great disappointments hath the church met with, when outward grounds of confidence, and ordinary means have been most promising, as it is a thing most true, so it may seem strange at the first look, but let us bring it to the word and the case will be there answered, Deut. xxxii. Why should one chase a thousand, but because their rock hath sold them, and therefore their strength is gone with the Lord's departing from them, for, when a time of judgment is come, even the mighty then find not their hands, counsel faileth to the ancient, ordinary means bring not forth their wonted effects, which Solomon sheweth and after ages have oft seen, the race not ever to the swift nor the battle to the strong, it is also clear from the word, how threatening a condition that is, for the people of God to be much carried out after means, or lifted up therewith, Isaiah xxx. they will ride on horses, and this shall be their
their punishment, but on the other hand the Lord's way, in bringing forth his greatest works hath not been by might and power, but oft by means most improbable, and unexpected.

VII. The long continuance of a heavy afflicting rod on the church, without the appearance of deliverance, or any return to much wrestling and prayer on that account, may seem a strange step in God's way with his people, but the word will answer us in such a case where it is clear. 1. That there are no bounds in the scripture set to the continuance of a trial, it doth not tell how long a sharp storm may lye on, either as to the church, or any particular christian; for it is a part of the Lord's secret counsel, but not of that which is revealed, it is enough that we know from it that man cannot make the church's suffering longer than God's time. 2. It was a long term that of Israel's trial in Egypt and after that under the captivity, three hundred and ninety days must the church lye on her left side. O how many a sad day, and wearisome night was there in that word, lxx. weeks are determined upon thy people, and city Jerusalem. 3. Have not the faints under a long trouble been almost the length of blasphemy in their complaints, 1st iacob xl. 27. My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment past over from my God. Daniel, how presling with the Lord was he that he would hearken, and do, and not defer, and yet the return cometh not until the first year of Cyrus; yea, that cry of the altar, How long, doth it not even get a dilatory answer? For thus the Lord doth oft interpose his long suffering for some time, betwixt his people, and avenging of them. 4. It is also clear that there are many prayers before the throne, the returns whereof are suspended, and an answer to christians, in their particular, until that time when God shall build up Zion, and then the prayer of the defittute shall be remembred even as to christians private enlargement, when the church shall be raifed up. 5. We know the church's enemies must have time to ripen, and it is not a form of a few days that will purge away the filth of the daughter of Zion, too soon letting out of a fore may caufe it undercoat and gather new matter, and truly the word can refove us in this, that one minute sooner than God's time would not be his peoples mercy.

VIII. It is oft seen when there is some remarkable work of God on foot in a land, and some great out pourung of the spirit, how Satan setteh up some usual counterfeit thereof, and bringeth forth something of his work in such a time with a very strange resemblance of the fame; thus, with the preaching of the freedom of grace, and a clear discovery of that truth, did Libertinism under a very specious pretext, spring up. Thus we find the Anabaptist and Antinomian party set up in Germany, to run down a church-reformation under the shew of a more pure and spiritual way; and of late did not Familism in England, under pretext of a more spiritual dispensation caukt off the very letter of the scripture, turning it over in an allegory, and in behalf of the liberty of prophesying, cry down a standing ministrty; but though this may seem strange, yet, the scripture is very clear concerning it. 1. That even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, and in no shape proveth more dangerous to the church. 2. That the most dreadful errors, and a false way will oft come near to the choicest exercitues of the faints, and have such a resemblance to the same, that if it were possible the very elect should be deceived. 3. Was there not a Simon Magus with false miracles set up over against the apostles, and when the time of the Messias drew near, did not then a Theudas, and Judas of Galilee, break forth to amufe the people? We find also an altar from Damascus, set up beside that which was shewed to Moses the servant of the Lord in the mount, yea, when Moses and Aaron were
were giving Pharaoh a sign, and did shew forth the marvelous power of God, then did the Magicians cast down their rod also to counterfeit the same, by which the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.

IX. The abounding of much error and heresy, now in the time of the gospel, with that swift growth thereof, which is oft seen where the light most clearly shineth, would seem strange, yea, is a thing whereat many are ready to stumble, and thus to challenge the way of God: but is not the Scripture in this clearly verified, so that this piece of providence which is so shocking to many, if we take the word along with it, might be a very convincing confirmation to us of the same, for,

1. We find the apostles, yea, Christ himself hath given express warning thereof, that this should be one of the special and greatest trials of the Christian church, whereof the Old Testament, we find, doth little mention, that trial not concerning the church then so much, as these after-times under the Messiah's kingdom, wherein the event may be clearly seen, to answer these predictions, which are so frequent thereof in the New Testament.

2. Doth not the event also answer the word as to that particular way and method, how error should be propagated, which is there clearly foretold, by subtil undermining, under the pretext of liberty with plausible insinuations, so that we must say not only the matter but with all these discernible tokens, even upon the manner, the word is made out, doth not the event likewise thus answer the word, that in the breaking out of heresy in the church, a spirit of error, the depths and mighty working of Satan should be seen, which I am sure is undeniable, how manifest the interposing of these powers of darkness is therein, if we consider, its marvelous dispatch and growth like a plague, and the arrow that fleeth by day.

3. With what a discernible fury and violence men are thus driven, as with an imperious current, yea, oft a change on their very natural temper is seen most evidently. These monstrous and horrid things, which are oft brought forth, may shew whose hand is in such a birth.

4. That the usual tendency of error is to looseness in practice, which as it poisoneth the spring, and corrupteth the leading faculty the judgement, so we see, it moveth towards the vital spirits, and doth influence the conversation; and the leprosy in the head breaketh forth in blains through the whole body.

5. And do we not see how many grofs and profane have been carried with this spate, how few get leave to stand, but are hurch.

6. And do we not see how many grofs and profane have been carried with this spate, how few get leave to stand, but are hurch.

X. These great shakings and commotions that use to attend the gospel, when it cometh in power to a land, may also seem strange, yea, are ready to make many stumble. But is not the word verified herein, what great fits and trouble did afflict the church after great light in pouring out of the Spirit, Joel, ii. 29. we may there likewise see, how thisgiveth the world an alarm, maketh the kings, and great men of the earth run together, to hinder the rising of Christ's kingdom, Psal. ii. 3. let us break his bonds, &c. for truly in all ages Christ's rising in the gospel hath cast a terror to its enemies, that this should be their fall and ruin, when the apostle hath an effectual door opened in his ministry,
ministry he hath also much opposition thereto, but on the other hand all is still and quiet while the strong man doth keep the house, yea, it is clear from the word, that where the gospel cometh there is a red flag hung forth, that if men will not receive the same and subject to him who rideth on the white horse, one shall come after whose work is to take peace from the earth, to put the world in a flame, and to accomplish the judgment of a despised gospel, who shall divide betwixt the husband and wife, the parents and children, wherein our blessed Lord Jesus is very express, Matt. x. 34. I come not to send peace on the earth, but rather a sword, which might seem strange from him; but it is to tell men if they will not embrace the offer of his peace they shall not have peace among themselves, for the message of the gospel must either be the bell, or the worst sight that ever a land had.

XI. This may seem strange how in all ages men of greatest parts, and learning, are such usual opposers of the truth, yea, how the most sober, and calm will even appear violent in their way, the more the gospel is followed with power; but, O! how well doth this answer the scripture, for the wisdom of this world is enmity to God, 1 Cor. iii. 19. not many wise according to the flesh comparatibly, with those who hate the truth; of all the beasts of the field was not the serpent Satan's choice; and if there be an Abichophel in the time, at him he will have a special pull, to such the simplicity of the gospel is foolishness, whereat they stumble; to such Christ is a rock of offence, we find the light doth torment them that dwell in the earth, will cause men blaspheme and discover that, which would not appear, whilst they gotleave to enjoy their sinful peace without disturbance.

XII. These strange judgments which may sometimes befal the saints in their outward lot, yea sometimes attended with some very astonishing circumstances would at the first look put men to a fland and to challenge the holy way of God. But let us weigh it in that balance of the scripture, and we will find.

1. That such hath been the complaint of the saints, the Lord's, wounding them with the wound of a cruel one; what a strange query is that in Lament. ii. 20. Behold and consider, to whom thou hast done this, shall the women eat the fruit of their womb? shall the priest and prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? Yea, did it not even to Solomon seem strange, Eccles. viii. 14. that there are just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked.

2. It looked like some strange stroke which forced David to this complaint, my enemies cast iniquity on me, and lay an evil device, or as the original readeth it, a thing of Belial cleaveth to him; we find Josias fell by the sword; Eli, with one stroke hath his sons killed, his daughter in law dying, and himself falling from his feet, and breaking his neck; yea Aaron hath both his sons killed before his eyes, by an immediate stroke from the Lord.

3. The word doth also shew, there is no jar betwixt this and the tenor of the covenant which God hath made with his people, to punish their transgression with rods, yea, sometimes by a strange rod, while he taketh not his loving kindness from them, and do we not find that a grievous trial may affliet the saints which the world would think a dreadful judgment, for great sufferings may be ordered of the Lord, to give some great examples thereby, we have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord.

XIII. The great falling of these who have sometimes shined with much lustre in the church may be astonishing, but here also we may see the scripture made out, for it is clear. First, that few instances of the most eminent of the saints, we have on scripture record, but there is some particular spot and blemish also noted, a Noah, Lot, Moses and David, yea, under the New Testament.
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Testament that great apostle, whose denial of his master is set forth, to shew how far some may fall whom grace will again restore, and make up. 2. It is there clear, that some of understanding do fall for a judgment to others, that such who will stumble, whose prejudice at the way of God is their choice, may thus further fall and be broken. 3. The blessed meaning and intent hereof we may there also read to alarm men to watchfulness, that such who stand may take heed lest they fall; to warrant also their adventuring on the grace of God; that none should fear to come in after such eminent examples.

XIV. The contingency of events, that we see many things in such a casual way fall out in the world, as by chance only, without the rational conduct of providence (which doth infallibly direct things to a certain end) this might at the first look, put men to a fland, yea, would seem to give atheists some shadow to say, how doth God see, or doth the God of Jacob regard? But upon a more serious enquiry setting the word over against it, O what a sweet exercise should it be to consider. 1. That though the providence of God in things here beneath moveth suitably to the nature of inferior causes, whether necessary, free, or contingent, not violating them, or otherways making use of them, but according to their nature, so that though the event be necessary, and infallible, with a respect to the first cause, the determined counsel of God, it is nevertheless contingent in respect of its nearest cause; yet most casual motions do certainly fall under that comprehensive reach of providence, that even a fparrow falleth not to the ground by chance, Rebecca cometh not with her pitcher to the well nor Ruth to glean in Boaz's field at an adventure, but in these the providence of God must reach its end, and cannot miscarry. 2. That these things which to us would seem most casual, we oft see in their tendency and product, have been intended by the Lord, as a special mean for the promoting of his glory, wherein such a wonderful meeting and uniting of things in themselves most remote for that end may be truly discerned, that if prejudice do not shut mens eyes, they must confess this can be no blind chance but some higher counsel and conduct of the same; what would look more contingent than that Abasfuerus was indisposed to sleep, and could have no rest in the night, or that a reflection of the sun upon the waters should make them appear as blood to the children of Moab? But we see what great things the Lord is thus bringing about.

3. Is it not oft manifest how not the smallest casualty or circumstance providence doth lose without some improvement thereof? Yea, that it guideth the stroke of a man's sword in the battle, and directeth the bullet to its appointed mark, and doth evidently check the stars and control that fatal necessity, which we are ready to fear may or will follow their aspect, and doth even determine these which in themselves are most free and absolute, the heart, and will of man; must not the crowning of the cock, the soldiers dividing Christ's garments fall out for an accomplishment of the scripture, and though it was at a venture that that man drew the bow which sent Abab to his grave, yet, it was no chance did direct the arrow between the very joints of his armour. 4. Amidst the various emergents and hazards of mens life, may not experience tell that surely things contingent are not abandoned to fortune, but there is a providence which doth number our hairs, without which they cannot fall to the ground. O how astonishing may it be to think how surprising hazards have been oft obviated? By what unexpected means men have been delivered from violent affairs, how help unlooked for hath even come at a choke and an extremity, yea, while their foot was slipping even between their falling and fall they have been met with some remarkable cast of mercy. 5. Is it not easy to discern,
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differ, how many accidents which seem most casual, yet by no human prudence or industry can be prevented, but are obtrusively brought about, and guided to fulfill the threatenings of the word on ungodly men, how was Jisera led into the house of Jael, as in other places, how should Hamam's suit, for Mordecai's death meet with that very morning, when the king's thoughts were favourable to him, for it might seem had Hamam been one day sooner, he would have got his will:

(9) This is a grave and serious subject, and in such a day should be much studied, when so many are ready to quarrel at the way of the Lord, and out of every thing fuch poison; when prejudices are now so universally abounding against the truth, that we may see what a witness there is even in the most dark and astonishing steps of providence to the truth and faithfulness of God; yea, how great a confirmation, we may thence have of our faith in fuch shaking times, whilst we see how these are special grounds against atheism, and a moft convincing refutation of the same, which are fo much made use of to strengthen men in that way: I know the holy sovereignty of God should teach us to adore and keep silence, when we cannotathom the depths of providence, and on this great satisfying truth we should lay and fix our felves, when things seem strange to us: He is the Lord and with him there is no unrighteousness: it is sure the condition of the damned in hell takes not off that obligation to declare his faithfulness, and adore his unpotted justice; but O then it would cease to be hell if fuch a bleffed frame could have a being there; however it is a neceffary and concerning duty when a matter seems too hard for us to understand to enquire in the sanctuary; there is a warrantable search after the works of God that we may know them: now besides these infances which have been already mentioned, I would yet further touch some few fteps of the providence of God, with a fpecial refpect to this prefent time, which may seem very strange and be amazing; but when brought to that teft of divine truth, will be found a moft satisfying con- firmation thereof.

1. It may seem strange to fee the church of Christ this day fo universally brought low, and in a fuffering condition, whilst the whole earth besides, is at fuch reft and quiet; that if we now look any where abroad, affliction and contempt from men is feen, in a very great meafure, to attend the profellation of godlinefs, but more especially the power thereof; yea, that almost in every place the church would seem to be upon a decay, and a declining rather than in an advance; I confefs this may caufe great thoughts of heart, when we consider that inefimable value, he whole the church is hath put thereon, what glorious things are fpoken of her in the word, especially with a refpect to the latter days, and we have judged (I humbly think with a fafe warrant) that this fhould be a folemn time of fulfilling these promises, which yet point at a more universal raising and enlargement of the church of Christ, yea, that in fo great a meafure we have seen some begun performance thereof, and therefore fhould conclude the Lord's work herein cannot halt, until it be at the full height and at the perfect day; fhall I bring to the birth, and not caufe to bring forth, fainth the Lord; fhall I caufe to bring forth, and fhot the womb, fainth thy God, Isa. lxvi. 9. But let us go in to the scripture and there enquire concerning this, and we find.

1. How the church and the world in that refpect of their joy and grief as well as other interests, are fpaced in a moft direct opposition, Job. xvi. 20. Verily, faith Christ, Te fhall lament and weep, but the world fhall rejoice. It fhould not be expected thefe can be at reft together, fince the trouble and fuffering of the church, it is a part of the world's cafe and quiet; what a folemn jubilee does that caufe to her adversaries, when they fee before them the dead bodies...
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of the witnesses of Christ. Rev. xi. 10. No sight more rejoicing to such, because there are they who torment them who dwell in the earth; but when once the truth casts off her sackcloth, and the witnesses get up to their feet; O what a terror doth this cause! they are pain'd, yea, their eyes ready to confume in their eye-holes with bitterness and anguish, that they have been at so fore work, and done so much against the church, and yet cannot undoe her. 2. Should this be more strange now than at that time when the city of Shushan and the whole seed of the Jews were in perplexity, whilst the king and Haman sat down to feast, and rejoice over such a threatened ruin; for this seemed to strike at the root of the church universal; and was not that a broad and dark cloud when this was writ in the Lamentation of the church, Zion is a wilderness, and Jerusalem a desolation; yea, could find no rest, no comforter any where, Lam. i. 16, 17. But if such a providence seem strange, that the church now at this day should be with so violent a spate, and universal a storm run down when so great things are promised, let us consider his way who by the greatest down-calling and straits uelth to bring about the most remarkable mercies; and do we not know the Devil appears with greatest wrath, and raifeth the forest storms, when he knows that his time is short. 3. If we consult the scripture, we will find the adversaries of the church have an hour which is their hour and the power of darkness; for their fun-fhine is indeed a black and dark time; and then is there a strange astonishing concurrence of outward advantages on their side; for they are thus established for judgment, and the wind must serve, and the tide make until that work in their hand be fulfilled, they could never have been such a rod on the church, if they were not appointed of the Lord for the same; yea, is it not observable, whilst this their hour continues, there is then a power of darkness; such a time when that hath an unusual force, and would seem to carry all before it, hath then a marvelous quick dispatch in its spreading from one place to another, to make a dark night, where the gospel sometimes hath had a bright day, yet we see how such a strange darkness hath but its hour as to the prevalence thereof, even a set time for the church's trial; and it is such an eclipse, were it never so universal, that must go over at its appointed period, and give place to light, before which the darkness can no longer stand, and then it shall be said to her, who had almost abandoned her self to sorrow; Arise and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen. 4. Why should we be amazed at this, where we may read so clearly something of the Lord's design, even by so fore and universal a froke to appear in his glory, Pfal. cii. 16. and thus raise his church with an unspeakable advantage by such a supposed ruin, the scripture is in this very manifest, that when the Lord is about some great building, and hath some excellent piece of work to raise up, a great deal of rubbish and breaking down uelth to go before; is it not thus also he makes the suffering graces of his spirit in his people shine forth, that here the faith and patience of the saints may be witnessed; yea, should we not know there is in every age a filling up of the sufferings of Christ in his people, and a testimony thus required to his truth, which the great witness himself did once feal and confirm with his blood, even he who before Pontius Pilate gave a good confedion, and through all ages even to the close of time, there must not want some uitenesses to the same. It is known how sometimes of the church are beyond others made remarkable for suffering; but it is no less clear, that in these times also, the truth hath had the greatest victory, and herein a more special clearing up of some truths which the world hath most studied to darken; thus we see some ages of the church may have a larger part of this testimony assigned; yea, this remark may not
only be of some different lot and service assigned to particular ages but to particular churches also.

5. If we enquire about this at the scripture, we will find also some remarkable proportion that the turning again of the church's captivity hath to her former bondage, read Is. xlix. 19, 20. and iv. 7. Jer. xxxi. 39. and you may see what an ample refrauration is there, which as with a measuring line is made to answer in breadth and length to her former down-casting; we find Zien's rejoicing when her time of refreshment comes from the presence of the Lord, must reach all her mourners, and be as universal as once the cause of lamentation was, Is. lxvi. 16. Is it not such an hour sometime with the church that a refreshing report is no where to be heard, but the tidings of the next day adds more grief to the former day's sorrow; yet hath not such a time quickly followed, wherein the church might lay; The Lord hath encreased her greatness, and comforted her on every side; and had a spring and reviving upon the return of the sun as universal, as her decay and withering once was through the dead winter, Is. li. 3. And truly, whilst we consider the time in which we are now fallen, how the church of Christ is everywhere low, and in a most languishing condition, antichristianism now upon a formidable growth, as if there were an universal conspiracy to return again to Babylon, and if we will enquire into it at the scripture as we see this sad decay we may thence conclude a certain delivery; yea, that even by a day of vengeance the Lord can bring about the year of his redeemed: I humbly think we may with a safe scripture warrant judge, that so universal a decay, such a great over spreading of darkness over the reformed churches through the whole world may give us ground to believe such a breaking up alto of the gospel, and of the knowledge of the Lord, that shall be of as large extent, even to the filling of the earth therewith, as the waters cover the sea; it will not be a particular shower and fun-shine of refreshing influences on some church, it will not be the reviving of the work of God in these nations, I must think, will answer so broad a cloud, and so universal a valuation and lamentation through the whole churches of Christ: but we may according to the scripture look on this as a part of the last and most remarkable assaults that the church universal shall have from Antichrist, before that full stroke on the fear of the beast; yea, that this is a very promising forerunner thereof, for when this party seems now to get up, and begins to move war, we have sure ground to believe his further falling thereby, and that every new assault which that grand adversary makes upon the church, shall so far put forward her interest and haven his own ruin: Blessed are they who are helped in this dark hour to watch, and wait until the vision break up, for it will assuredly speak in the appointed time.

II. Thee short breathings of the church, now under the New Testament, may seem also strange, that we see her fun-shine so quickly darkened with clouds and followed with showers, that any lucid interval she enjoys wants not long a new storm, we see this very clear what hath been the usual lot of the church universal through all the times of the gospel, how fore told and overclouded, her rest of short continuance, and as to particular churches, is it not a small period of time which uleth to be betwixt one assault and another? So that they draw their breath but a little for some new trial: I confess this would be puzzling, if such a piece of divine providence we should essay to unriddle without the scripture; but we have the word near us, where we may see the fate and condition of the church under the gospel, the most remarkable steps in her way, these sharp assaults and short breathings she was to expect most clearly foretold and held forth; yea by consulting this blest record, we will find these.

1. That a more continued and fixed rest than
than that which may be seen hitherto in the church's condition could not well be reconciled with the scripture, there was indeed a great breathing, a most remarkable cessation under Constantine's reign after a storm of some ages continuance; but O how short, and it is said, Rev. viii. 1. There was silence in heaven for half an hour; I would here offer some remarks concerning the way of the Lord in this.

1. That the cross and much affliction we find have a more peculiar respect to the dispensation of the gospel than the times of the law; and this is specially suited thereto, to go through many tribulations which is very consequent to a greater manifestation of grace under the New Testament, that greater and more frequent trials for its exercise should also be let forth.

2. We find such sore and usual assaults are not only suited to the most excellent condition of the church in regard of spiritual privileges, but doth often exercize the most excellent of the faints, read, Heb. xi. 32. This remark unfiteth not to fail, how every particular church, besides these ordinary changes and tossings in her lot, hath also some more solemn remarkable trials and some great assaults, beyond others, and accordingly hath some more singular breathings and sun-blukes suited thereto.

4. We cannot find any such calm and breathing, which hath not been very short, if we turn back and trace the history of the church in former times, but the clouds have returned quickly after the rain; yea, we may observe how the most excellent princes and magistrates, under whom the church hath had some sweet repose, have been oft in a very short time taken away, and have but lived a few years.

2. If we wonder at such a piece of the Lord's way, why his church is thus tossed, doth not the scripture shew what need the hath to be emptied from vessel to vessel, a long calm being no less her hazard than a sharp storm, and more cause oft to watch over her outward reef, than weep over her trouble and tossings: Oh how oft hath the church lost more by a few years peace than a long continued war; yea, the necessity of a sharp winter for her recovery hath been so discernible ere it came, that if it were not for the oppressing of truth, and shaking of the faith of the faints, the continuance thereof might be almost wished as her advantage, let be to be quietly submitted unto.

3. Doth not the scripture also witness that continued lasting quarrel, which is betwixt the world and the church, and is perpetueth from generation to generation, that time cannot wear out, so that if she had not so great a party for her, and an immediate support from heaven, we might find more cause to wonder the yet breaths, than to ask why her breathings are so short when there is so great a power against her? O if the church had not this to answer all the messengers of the nations concerning her stability, That the Lord hath founded Zion, sure that long breathing design for so many ages should at last have taken place, even to the razing of her foundation.

4. It is clear the most singular fellowship, and free access thereinto, with Jesus Christ on the earth, is by the cross, and in that way withnessed, that it must be paid, if such afflicting times did not oft return upon his people there would be a shut door betwixt the church, and a large part of the Bible, both as to its meaning, and as to its full breasts of consolation, are there not most sweet refreshing truths there, with which the godly cannot reach so near, feeling a converse within an outward calm as under some sharpest wrestlings: O what an excellent commentary hath a suffering time given upon these, beyond all that ever was written, on such a truth of the scripture, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed, as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, and thus, we see how in our stumbling at such a providence we err not knowing the scripture, and mistake our own mercy.

5. Whilst we see these short intervals which have so usually been
been under the New Testament, betwixt one trial of the church and another, and the cause thereof so clear from the word; let us also consider what warrant there is yet to expect before the end a more solemn and remarkable time of the church's enlargement, that not only shall be very universal in its extent; but a more lasting and continued rest from the violence of the world than hath formerly been, which I humbly judge on clear scripture grounds we are to believe upon the coming of that full stroke on Babylon, and these solemn epistles of the Jew's church to Christ, which seems to be the most remarkable period of that time, appointed for the church's reign; and though this will not want some sharp trials, and a mixture of outward trouble, yet, we find no ground from the scripture, after the discussing of Antichrist, and the throwing down of the Turkish Empire, for any remarkable interruption and overclouding, or that the church shall have any great assault until that final gathering of the world and her forces together to the last battle of the Lamb.

III. Is not this a strange remark likewise, which is so usual a complaint through the church, that with a greater increase of light and knowledge, there is seen a visible wearing out of life and power, and now in these more knowing times, there should be so much ground to say, carefulness and the serious exercise of godliness is more worn out, and in a further decay, than in the times of greater ignorance: let us but look through the reformed churches at this day, and then turn home to our selves, and we will find this remark too sadly verified; how after a great increase of knowledge, the truths of God in such a measure cleared beyond former ages, it may be said, Oh whither is the life and power of godliness gone, and that fervour which once so convincingly appeared in following the Lord? We know there is a sweet agreement betwixt the christian's light and life, which hath a mutual subserviency to each other, and yet to see so sad a jar this day, and so little proportion, the one hath to the other, may put us with astonishment to a serious inquiry thereon; but the scripture is clear and makes it plain, if we will consider.

1. That there is a time of a peoples epistles to the Lord, and then the kindness of their youth, and a remarkable time of love is seen. Jer. xxi. 2. when their affection will be aloft after him; yea, such a solemn period of the church's condition may be seen when it hath not reached that light and knowledge, as after; but do we not also find how rare it is for a people, to hold up at that rate and measure in their life and love, which at such times hath appeared, whatever advance there may be as to light; thense we find the church's keeping up the name and profession of godliness, Rev. iii. 2. when very sere spent in her life; yea, this decay oft upon such an unfeizable growth that it will be hard to get such convinced thereof, and remember whence they are fallen.

2. If we will inquire at the scripture, it will also shew that judicial tendency which light not improved hath to a further hardening; how, under the gospel men may be made deaf with hearing, for judgment am I come in the world, faith Christ, Job. ix. 39. which hath that effect, that those who see should be made blind; light is purely one of the greatest talents of the church, and brings with it either a remarkable gain, or loss; nothing so dreadful as this when it is abused; O at what a rate doth it run down, and stupifie the conscience! that thus men are not only more deadned, but become the more dead and blind that they were once enlightened.

3. May we not thence know how this is one of the Devil's greatest engines he makes use of to turn men's light against their life and holiness, even to incite them from that excellent discovery of the grace of God unto wantonness, Judg. iv. and thus effay an agreement betwixt light and darkness; O what a dreadful poison must that be! which can imbitter so excellent...
a stream, and turn so choice and quickening a mean of spiritual life to be destruotive thereto: that we see knowledge, whose true and native tendency is to humble and abase, being thus impoisoned does work the contrary effect, even to swell men and puff them up; to oppose these gifts against the church which are given of the Lord for its edification, and for defence of the gospel; thus we find it clear, when light hath made a further advance in the church, the Devil is there at work to destroy love, by many bitter contentious debates, where the interest may be oft seen more personal, to wit their repute and credit, than the interest of God and his truth: I am far from any intended reflection on that grave and necessary duty of appearing in defence of the truth, and men stating themselves in opposition to those who are its adversaries, a quarrel wherein they should know neither friend nor brother; for this is to stand in the breach when it is assaulted, to contend for the faith; O blessed contention where such with that excellent man Melanchton can say, Non quero gloriam propriae, sed veritatem. 4. Though this is a very sad and threatening symptom that night is coming on a church where the light shines, but the heat and warming influence thereof is gone; yet here is a riddle, we find the scripture does wonderfully unfold, how the Lord makes things bring forth contrary effects, and cause a remarkable consumption, that seems to reach the church in her inward and vital parts, resolve in an overflowing with righteousness, Isa. x. 22. yea, thus lets us see a people so far spent in life and spirituality, that the things which remain are ready to dye, whilst even there the Lord is pursuing their recovery, it is herein he makes his grace marvelous to raising his people in so low a step of their condition, and cause his church when brought to a small remnant take root downward, and bring forth fruit upward, Isa. xxxvii. 31. It would seem a strange connection, but not strange to the grace of God, Psal. cii. that the time of his favouring Zion, even that fet time should find her in a heap of stones and rubbish; yea, that a reviving and the breaking up of her day begins there with the weeping of her friends over her ruins: I shall further add, with respect to the present time, we may believe on very pure grounds, that godliness and the power thereof, will yet break up in the world, though it were at the lowest ebb, yea, as at its last breathing; that little fire now under ashes must assuredly revive and blow up to a flame, yea, send forth its heat to warm the nations; for on solid grounds we may thus reason, if such a death like decay had a respect only to some particular church, and if this withering abatement and languishing of the exercises of grace were confined but to a corner, it might be a sad preface that their fun, when so far declined and gone down were near to the setting; but since this seems to be a consummation over the whole earth, a matter of lamentation and a spreading complaint, through the whole reformed church, we may look on it as a very promising ground of confidence and hope of a recovery; for if that be sure, the church universal cannot die under such a disease, it is also sure, this sickness is not unto death, yea, so remarkable an opposition to the power of godliness as is this day through the world, we may judge a very refreshing preface of some more universal appearing of the same, wherein God will be seen by some blessed surprizal in a very immediate way; for there is hope of this tree, which in a special way he had himself planted, that it shall grow tho' now cut down, by the scenter of waters, even by the rivers, the streams whereof make glad the city of God; which can in old age cause her to bring forth fruit: O what life is there in the church of Christ, when it seems to be buried! for she is in the root that cannot dry up, and herein must his promise and his people's praise meet, that her dry bones shall flourish as a green herb there; can be now no least appearance of this than at that time when the Lord turned again the captivity of his people,
people, which was so little expected, Psal. cxvi. that they knew not whether it was a dream or real; it may indeed be a very humbling discovery, that we must say, our ruin is of ourselves; yet must it not ruin our hope, since in these great things which the Lord hath done for the church, the greatness of his power hath not been more clearly witnessed, than the freedom and sovereignty of his grace, that men may see, this is the Lord's doing, and should be marvelous in their eyes.

IV. May it not seem strange, and be matter of astonishment, that the great men of the earth, and such who sit in the place of judgment are usually found to be greatest adversaries to the church; yea, it is too well known, that magistracy (to excellent an ordinance of God) hath been so far perverted, that even under the christian magistrate the church of Christ hath suffered more since the first breaking up than from any other corner, this indeed may seem marvelous; I do not deny there have been great men in the world, who have no less out-flined others in favour and zeal for the truth, than in their place and quality, but oh we may say, an age brings forth few such, and that which Sabian says of his time, hath been a true remark in most ages of the world, and too frequently seen, that the contempt upon religion by those who were in greatest power had this effect, Ut mali cognatur effe, ne viles habeantur: I confess this may cause wonder, if we consider for what end the great Law-giver hath designed that ordinance, how men should so far counteract his interest, from whom they derive their power, and for being subervient thereunto have received it: sure the doctrine of the church of Christ can give no ground of quarrel; and it's strange these should expect from others homage and subjection which turn the seat of judgment to be a grievous yoke, and deny their subjection so avowedly to the great judge: O how sad is it that none are oft such a terror to the godly, such a support to evil doers, as magistrates, and the great men of the world so usually found to be the greatest examples of wickedness; this should indeed be matter of lamentation, yea, that there are oft times advanced, who have nothing to commend them but some advance beyond others in a higher measure of impiety; but we must go to the scripture and there enquire how it will appear. 1. That it is not strange though iniquity have a throne, under whose shadow mischief may not only shelter but come that length to be fram'd into a law, Psal. xcv. 20. yea, it must not be thought strange, that the adversaries of the truth beamong the chief of the time; which complaint we find, Lam. i. 5. The world is not yet cured of that madness of which the prophet speaks with amazement, Psal. ii. 1. why the kings and rulers of the earth should attempt a vain thing to ruin the church, and make his decree void, who by his word created the world; we may see it is not only of late that the servants of Christ have been convened before rulers in defence of the truth, and have suffered by the law, where the crime was, their adherence to the express command of the great law-giver, Luk. xxi. 12. it is also clear the kings of the earth for many ages past, have, amid all their private differences, with one consent agreed to make war with the lamb, and give their strength for upholding antichrist, yet is this nothing else, but what the scripture hath foretold. Rev. xviii. It was written of an excellent man in the days of Phocas, that after some humble expostulating with the Lord, why he set up to vie a wretch in the highest place of power, that he had this return, quis non inventi pejorem: herein is the way of the Lord unspotted, how sad so ever it be in it self, that those who should execute judgment for the oppressed, are in his holy displeasure made the executioners of his judgments on men, and shew themselves the greatest oppressors.

2. If this be strange to us, does not the scripture prevent
prevent our stumbling by a most sweet and choice antidote, that when we see the oppression of the poor, and such a wrathful aspect rulers usually have on the church of God, we should not marvel or be much moved therat, even when we see those whom death hath plucked away, and with flame rolled in the grave, still return with the same remembrance in their successors, and piety in all ages run down by power, for it is written, that he who is higher than the highest doth regard the same. Ecclef. v. 8. O how far are they below God, yea, infinitely below him who are highest among men, hath not their violence and oppression of the church him for a witness, whom they must also have for a judge? And the further they seem raised above human reach, they lie more near to some immediate stroke of a divine hand; that when there is no reprover on earth, none there to give their cruelty against the church a check, he fits in heaven who laugheth to them to scorn, which they shall find to be sad carnel, when he speaks to them in his wrath, and vexes them in his fore displeasure.

3. Does not the scripture witness the Lord's blest design in this to make his church thrive another way, when she is defitute of the help and countenance of civil authority, and thus lead her in to him, who hath the key of David, that opens and none can shut, unto him who is a known refuge for the oppressed; it is here he declares himself to be God, and the greatness of his power who can keep her alive, and preserve his interest in a destroying flame, and under a cruel oppressing magistrate, yea, thus cause her flourish in his days, and have peace in his reign, even under the grievous reign of her adversaries: do we not likewise find, Neh. ix. 36. The church's distress there, and oppression from her rulers makes them resolve in a near tie and conjunction with God, which is seen in the last verse, and becaufe of this we make a holy covenant, &c. O blest violence and oppression! that lands here, where the storm drives to such an anchor, as a further cleaving to the Lord, and surrender of themselves to him.

4. As the scripture prevents mens stumbling at this ordinary suffering of the church under magistracy, it does also witness the Lord's contending very remarkably against these on such an account, and clearly sheweth, that no human greatness can secure from him who cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth; consider, Psal. ii. 9. and xciii. 4. it is here we may read the cause of the changes of kingdoms and states that are so frequent in the world, whatever influence personal interests seem to have, there is a holy revenging God, and his arm made bare therein upon the quarrel of his church, that he may recompense tribulation to those who have troubled her; none needs wonder that flourishing states are broken in such a quarrel, to see the supreme head of the church, (that in all things he may have the preheminence) wound the head over many countries, and rule the nations with an iron rod, yea, turn great men out of their grandeur and authority, and throw them down, for the cause is obvious, they keep no bounds and marches with the kingdom of Jesus Christ, but will be over and invade his interest, until he, who must reign, and have all dominion and power subjected to him, carry that war back upon themselves, and stand up against such evil neighbours, for his own right, for which he will strike thorough kings in the day of his wrath, yea, pursue the race and seed of such oppressors, the father and the children, as a standing quarrel from generation to generation.

5. It is sure, corrupt magistracy is one of the great plagues of God on the world; wherein his unpolluted righteousness, and the provoking caufe from men, may be seen in the scripture, that when such will throw off his yoke, and quarrel with his authority in subjection to which their liberty lies, they should have one more grievous and unsufferable wretched on them, and be delivered up
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up to the hands of such cruel executors; I must here say the Lord does visibly contend by such a stroke with that excessive flattery and respect the nations give their rulers, that blind obedience they give contrary to the express will of the Lawgiver; by a willing following of the commandment, and thus write that fin on their judgment, that the hand of men should be heavy and fore on their own interests who can easily comply with their oppression of the church, and invading the interests of God: but here is no intended reflection on that divine ordinance of magistracy, whereon his image is so visibly impressed, though in all ages there hath been sad cause to bewail the abuse of so great a trust and power, and to see it so destructive to the end for which it is designed.

V. This also seems strange, and is a very shaking thing, to see some of greatest repute and eminency in the church, who have been singularly useful to engage others in the way of the Lord, change their principles with the time, and turn at last in opposition thereto, yea, make it their work to cast down what once with great zeal they seemed to build; I confess this may give sad ground of flumbling, and there is nothing that atheism takes more advantage of to question the truth of all religion, if there be any thing further, than a human interest in it, when men light in the matters of God, and the doctrine of ministers are found so crofs to themselves with the changes of the time: blessed are they who are not offended at Christ because of this; but let us consult the scripture, and then instead of being shaken or brangled, we will find this such a special confirmation of the truth, that if it were not thus, men might rather question the same; for, 1. Such a shaking trial is clearly foretold from crosses tides of doctrine, that should be within the church, Eph. iv. 14. yea, a warning given of those who handle the word deceitfully, 2 Cor. iv. 2. by accommodating it to their private interest and design, and a corrupt application thereof; for when men do once establish the conclusion before the premises for compliance with a sinful course, they are then at work to wrest the scripture by misapplying it, 2 Pet. iii. which is indeed to oppose the truth against it itself, and fuse it to their byas; that they may falve such a visible opposition between them and themselves in their way and practice; and thus whatever fair flew they make in the flesh, they expose the word and their parts and abilities in handling of it to sale (O an accursed sale and merchandise) now if this seem strange and be flumbling, that amongst the dispensers of the mysteries of God, and of greatest repute in the church, such should be found, read, 2 Cor. ii. 17. and you will there see the cause why many corrupt the word, because they are not in sincerity and as in the sight of God therein, which is absolutely required to qualify a faithful minister of Christ: Oh! the want of that candor and uprightness of heart is a worm which lies hid at the root of all their other parts, and as a dead corrupting fly in so excellent a box of ointment; thus we may see this is so far from being a caufe of flumbling at the truth, that it does most convincingly fulfill and verify the same.

2. When we have so far a discovery in the church, have we not this antidote likewise from the scripture, not to be shaken or moved thereat, Heb. xiii. 9. but that we study to know and be persuaded of the truth that may quiet and support the soul, though we should be left alone in following duty, the testimony of God is sure and immoveable, and he is true, though all men should be liars, we must have the perfections of none in admiration, which hath so usual a tendency to bribe the judgment and betray the truth; but though an apostle or an angel from heaven should come to oppose the scripture of God, we ought in so far say, let him be accursed.

3. Here also is the holy counsel and design of the Lord made
made known that these who are approved may be made manifest, and such have an opportunity to discover themselves, who turn aside to crooked paths, and tread in the dark to the prejudice of the truth, Psal. cxxv. 5. they may dig very deep to hide their opposition to God, not only from others; but even from themselves; but Providence herein hath a deeper reach, and ennarres them in the work of their own hands; yea, doth thus bring forth with the workers of iniquity, and as his greatest adversaries, who wound and betray his interest under that mask and disguise of a friend; this is indeed a preventing mercy to the church, whose hurt and hazard hath been more from these who walk under a cover than any other party; and here is the counsel of the Lord fowied, that when a piercing trial comes which will go thorough the soul like a sword, the thoughts of many hearts may be then discovered, there is a falling in of many with the church under a calm, who must fall off with a storm, it is strange to think how small the first entry of a further declining will be when once there is a tendency and byafs that way, how hard is it to joy in a familiar correspondence with the adversaries of the truth without joyning in some measure with their way; yea, it is seen therein mainly are more ennarred than the adverse party by any such tampering are bettered; it is a sad truth which is said of Ephraim, strangers devoured his strength, yet he knew it not, Hoft. vii. 8. it is no wonder when men come the length of detaining the truth in unrighteousness, and withstand the giving of a testimony thereto when called, that the next step be, some appearance against it. 4. Is it not clear from the scripture that the righteous God doth thus rain snares on men? Yea, this is one of the woes the world is under because of offences; for the fall and turning aside of such is a sad stroke on others, whilst they ufe not to fall alone, when these become a stumbling block, whose lips should preserve knowledge, whom the people are to consult concerning the law, and thus be the greatest cause of offence themselves whose work is to strengthen and confirm others: O what a fore plague is this on a poor church, when it is low, to break her further, and make her distemper grow; we may truly say it is more threatening than sword, famine or pestilence against a nation; it is a strange ground which is given of the departure of these from the faith who were once in repute of the church, yea, of the breaking up of antichrift in the world, 2 Thes. ii. 12. that it was to punish them who believed not the truth, and would not embrace the same; O it is a sad and dreadful time to live in, where such offences abound! for it clearly shews adjudically plaguing time upon the church, and some great abuse of the gospel which is gone before. VI. When this seems strange to us, should we not learn to adore and justify him, who thus flains the pride of all flesh, and will silence the confidence or boasting of instruments, that the church may know where her strength lies; this is a remark though sad which seldom fails, that the greatest endowments and gifts, where men are swelled and lift up there with have a more easy and native byafs against the truth than for it, and threatens the church's hazard more than any advantage the exercife of these gifts can promise; and the greater repute men walk under, where humility keeps not low, lays them the more near some humbling stroke to bring them low, e'er they go off the stage, that no flesh may glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 26. we must say the greatest heroes in the church of Christ, who have shined, even to their last, most brightly, have been also the most humble. 6. As it is clear there is no jar betwixt the scripture and this, but it is so great a confirmation there of, that should further strengthen and establish us in the way of the Lord, for the falling off of such from the truth is a trial most expressly foretold, and a convincing witness to the truth of the scripture; so this also must be grant-
ed that there are ministers and watchmen in the church of Christ, in all ages found faithful to their master's interest, who have been not only helped to confess the truth, and deliver the counsel of God to the world, but to witness their adherence to and persuasion of it by suffering: O can the world debate this that such in the world of times are found to drive a treaty of reconciliation between Christ and Sinners, who are in earnest, and have a weight of that work on them without respect to outward encouragement: O happy servants of so great a master, who consider that they shine without borrowed light, and derive all from him whether as to grace or gifts, that therein they may return to him again, by a faithful improvement of their talent, who reckons they cannot be low where he is exalted, they cannot lose where the gain is his, but in this doth rejoice to see him increase and his kingdom on an advance, though they decrease and be darkened with the brightness of his rising.

VII. I know this is an astonishing thing, which many pretend a cause for stumbling, to see how some have walked, and at what a rate under a profession of godliness, and for so long a time have had the appearance of being serious and exact, yea, have thus personated the walk of a Christian, whom an after discovery had proved not in some particular only, but in the main interest of religion to be without reality and truth; this may indeed seem strange and be cause of wonder that men having the use of reason should be at so sore a toil, to hold up a form of godliness and the external exercise of Christian duties only for a form, who might with an other kind of facilitie and unpeakable pleasure have reached both the shadow and the substance by being serious, and it is sure, if such get not the impression of a deity razed out of the soul (which is impossible) there must be some time terror in their approach to God, though not in any secret retirements, (for this should be a piece of their torment to come so near their conscience, and be alone with it, left it flee in their face) yet with others, when such a witness they have within, that it is their deliberate work to deceive at once, the great God, their generation, and their own soul, but oh this is not more strange than true, yea, many such pretenders are, and will be within the pale of the visible church, and is there not a divine hand marvelously oft seen in renting that veil and bringing these forth to the light, in such a way as may witness this is from the Lord; now there is no ground of accustion or reflection here on his holy and unspetted way or the reality of godliness, if we will but seriously enquire at the scripture where we have this.

1. Expressly foretold, that men should have a form of godliness and deny the power thereof. 1 Tim. iii. 5. profess to know God, being abominable disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Tit. i. 16. yea, will come in sheeps clothing yet be ravenous wolves, have not some of the church's sharpest trials been in such a way ushered in, even under a false shew, and have not the most cruel persecutors entered the stage as friends? You know how the man of sin did first step in, was he not thus marked? And is not the scripture clear, that to seek a church free of such a mixture out of heaven, is to seek that which we will never find, for it is there only, no unclean thing can enter. 2. Does not this blessed record of the scripture shew with what singular art and advantage such may act that part and with Jeblu enquire, if the man's heart be right whilst his own is most false, what a strange confidence will these have who glory in appearance and not in heart? Will they not cry unto God and make mention of him but not in truth, Ifa. xlviii. yea, should we wonder, though such be found who can mask their private interest with such an appearance, even whilst they seek a rule for their religion out of Matthew, but not out of the Bible.

3. If the length that these may come seem strange,
Strange, will you consult the scripture which goes as great a length in its discovery, and you will know how deep it works, sometimes not at an ordinary rate, but they will invite the world to see their zeal for God, who dare not endure the view of their own conscience, therein you may find an apostle and one of the twelve and yet a Devil, to witness this should be no reflection on the church of Christ, though an eminent minister thereof be found rotten and unfound who hath made a great show in the flesh.

4. Does the scripture allow, or flatter any in such a way? You cannot there have one line for its encouragement; but whilist human law does not reach this, divine law most severely threatens, Job viii. 13 &c. Matth. vii. 15 &c. And there you may see it in its own colour, how horrid a thing it is which the more near it does approach religion, (that is so excellent and lovely in it itself) this false show thereof is the more hateful and leathome; yea, even these who comply with it in themselves are made to loath it in others, which is in the highest measure a fallacy and lie, because a lying to the God of truth.

5. You cannot accuse the church and followers of Jesus Christ, that by them any such thing is owned or justify’d, but it may be seen, what an offence and wound such a discovery will prove to thee; it is indeed a cause of grief, but no cause of reflection on the truth of God, for in so far this is verified, they went out from us, because they were not of us, 1 Job. ii. 29. 6. Is not that horrid and black roll mention’d by the apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 3. clasped as it were betwixt these two, a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: it is not strange when religion is attended with much power in a place, that hypocrisy is found there also; but it is clear what remarkable discoveries have been made thereof, that feldom such who have most industriously studied that accursed art have gone to the grave under this cover, though I deny not but some may. I must further add, that some special incitements and concurrence of the Devil is here oft very manifest, and his power, as remarkably put forth as in any lust of the flesh to put some foreward on such a design; yea, even may be subservient to them in the exercise of common gifts, that may deceive for the time very discerning christians; I cannot question the truth of this, having ground to instance such, who have been in an express covenant with Satan, and have after acknowledged his help and aflistance, for their dexterous managing so dreadful a design; if you think this strange, you should consider that the Devil himself is transform’d to an angel of light, but it is well, the grossest defilement of men can no ways stain religion and the way of the Lord, which is pure and undefiled.

VIII. Thee fad jars and divisions which are so frequent in the church of Christ may seem very strange, and be cause of stumbling and offence to many, that whilist the world is at such an agreement, and of one mind to oppose the truth, there are oft found at war, most bitterly contending amongst themselves, even these who should stand in the breach for the truth, and in defence of the gospel, the fellow servants at strife, and uniting one another when they should be stirring together about their master’s work; I confess this is sad, and is a rock whereon many split, of which they have made that use to a further heightening of their prejudice against the truth; yea, it is strange that this destroying plague doth so observably attend any peace or calm: that the church hath, in her outward condition; but there is no cause for such stumbling if we will allow it some serious thoughts, it may rather help to fix and establish us in the way of the Lord, and instead of being a poison, may be an effectual antidote against the same, I mean the atheism of the time which pretends so great an advantage from this, for the scripture is clear.

1. Though it is a sore stroke on the church, and the most sad departure of God from a people
people which we have upon divine record, we find usually overtakes them in such a torn and divided case, yea, though in all the records of after-times, this may be traced in the breaking up of a judgment as a very immediate forerunner thereof, yet have we no warrant to expect the church militant shall be in that condition, in which there shall be no such discord and breach, no, that is heaven, and it is there only perfect peace and concord will be found; read, 1 Cor. i. 10. Rom. xv. 5. and what an early trial was this to the church which did occasion that grave and solemn meeting of the apostles and elders, Acts xv. to let us see, how the Lord can serve himself of the greatest evil for the advantage of his truth.

2. There is no caufe here of reflecting on the truth; whatever be on those who profess it, since the scripture shews we know but in part, and prophesy in part, and such a prevailing mixture of corruption, that some will preach Christ out of strife and contention, not sincerely, Phil. i. 15. Yea, whilst there are such different lines amongst the saints, that these who eat not, are ready to judge them who eat, and these who eat, are ready to deform him who catch not.

3. If we consult the scripture, we will find that peace and concord within the church, which is so excellent in itself, and desirable must be severely qualified with a respect to holiness. Heb. xii. 14. forelie such an agreement would not be the true peace of the church, but her plague; and is not that wisdom which is from above first pure and then peaceable? It is sure, they are its best friends who have least latitude to take or give in the interest of truth; but it is oft found, how such in direct tamperings for peace, have in the judgment of the Lord caused a further breach; there is no true jar betwixt the zeal of God, and an ardent desire and endeavour for peace, but what our corruption causeth; O this is a blessed peace-maker, who can go the furthest length to yield in his own things, whether credit or private interest, yea, overlook the most sharp personal reflections to promote that excellent design; but hath nothing to yield or quit upon his master's interests, and can resist whoever they be that would prejudice this, even to their face; have we not that heroick practice of the apostle, Gal. ii. 5. upon divine record to this day, to whom we gave place, no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you: Is not that also a special remark, that these who cause division in the church, and were therefore to be noted, Rom. xvi. 17. it was thec, who did oppose the doctrine of the church, for it is mens falling off from the truth, which is indeed the cause of a schism and rent, but not their adherence to it, though for this they should be men of contention, and look'd on as signs and wonders in the time.

4. Whatever advantage some may take to accuse the way of the Lord, from these breaches, I am sure they cannot deny, there is a fellowship and concord in the church of Christ beyond any in the world, there is a communion of the saints, even here, with one heart and mind, yea, in such a measure as may shew the world, this is a bond that exceeds the most near and strict ties of natural relations. Eph. iv. 3. 16. and truly every jar and difference amongst the followers of Christ, makes not a breach.

IX. I know that this will seem strange and astonishing in the way of the Lord, that when the church from her adversaries without, is oppressed and brought low, his hand in a very immediate way also is so heavy, yea, seems more fore upon his people, than the hand of men, and do's even by some sad strokes in their private interests, and upon their persons appear more remarkably against them, than against any others; this may occasion great thoughts of heart. When we consider that tendernefs which the Lord doth witnes towards his people, that he flits not up all his wrath, nor will lay upon them above that they can bear, but stays his rough wind in the day of
the east wind, and hath promised to be a sanctuary, and hiding place when
they are scattered by men: Ezek. xi. 16. and with another party the church
might debate, yea, hold her own, with her greatest adversaries; but oh! it is
time to see and there can be no standing, where the Almighty pursues, there
is then true cause of fear and terror when he becomes his people's party; but
let us confult the scripture that great interpreter of providence, and of every
step of the way and procedure of the Lord with his church; and it will let
us see. 1. That it is no strange case, or untrodden path, but we may find
the prophet, Jer. xviii. 17. at such a grievous cry, be not a terror to me, thou
art my hope in the evil day, and had not the church the same cause of com-
plaint, Jer. xxx. 14. 16. that the Lord seem'd to wound her with the
wound of an enemy and the stroke of a cruel one; it was the appearance of
this, that was a vast addition to her trial beyond any other thing, Isa.
lixiii. 10. that they found the Lord turn'd to be their enemy, and in an imme-
diate way seem to fight against them. 2. Do's not the scripture shew
that the rod may have a dreadful appearance; and the way of the Lord, by
some strange and singular circumstances in dealing with his people, may be
mater of amazement, when he designs a further increase of their grace, yea,
their trial more than their punishment; this is indeed one of the deeps of pro-
vidence, which we have discovered, Job first and second Chapters, how by a
divine permission, Satan may very effectually concours in a stroke on the church,
or some particular chriitian, and thus cause a strange concurrence of imbit-
tering things, that in such a case the hand of the Lord would seem very ter-
rible, whilst he only minds his peoples trial, and it is clear that the fiery trial
mentioned by the apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 12. may have such strange and singular
circumstances, that the godly will be at a question if such did ever befal others,
and yet you see it there held forth more as a ground of joy than of fear; O
how deep in afflicting times of the church may the plot and contrivance of the
Devil be! which in the holy counsel of the Lord is oft forced to run against
its own byafs, and to bring forth the very contrary effect. 3. If we
understand the scripture, we may there know, how the trials of the church
hath its appointed bounds and measure, yea, by some remarkable steps will
grow that length, and have such an advance until it suround them on all
hands. Lam. ii. 22. Thou hast called my terrors round about, as in a fo-
lemn day; yet, when it is so, we find it is not without cause, but may be
needful for the church and particular christians to be in heaviness through ma-
nifold temptations, 1 Pet. i. 6. and truly in such an unusual variety of straits,
the tendency thereof is oft seen for as manifold use and advantage, as the
many afflicting ingredients in that trial have been remarkable. 4. We
may also see from the scripture, what an usual resemblance there is betwixt
the publick lot of the church in suffering times, and the private cafe of the
saints, how under some sad trial and departure of the Lord from his people,
his dispensations are many ways corrective and judicial, that doth then reach
them in all their personal interests; there is a backsliding time, and a day, when
judgment particularly points at the green tree, which useth not to be a com-
forting time, that then Satan is more observably let loose to affect, and few
will miss some touch of his hand, read Lam. i. 2. where you find the fiord
abroad devouring, a time of publick judgment, and then it was at home also
as death, and in the 16. under such sore afflicting strokes there is one further
held forth, that was most imbittering of all to the godly in that time, the
comforter who should relieve their soul was far off; it is clear, nothing does
more endear a mercy and make it sweet than the Lord's immediate appearance
therein;
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

therein: and nothing does more imbitter the rod, which put David to that cry, Psal. xxxix. remove that stroke from me, I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. 5. Upon a serious inquiry concerning this strange thing, may we not understand the meaning thereof by the scripture, why in some trials the Lord does thus shew himself his peoples party, and his hand more heavy on them than on others, that there is some provoking cause whereat these providences clearly point: when the godly are pursuing their ease and satisfaction under the rod, more than to answer its design, when they are ready to take mortification and an humble flopping under trouble, for a couching underneath their burden, it is not then strange, though that sad woe, Amos vi. 6. does so far reach them as their personal ease makes them forget the affliction of Joseph: for thus the righteous God suits their stroke to the fin, and keeps such a proportion, that a light burden of the care of the church should make their care otherways abound, and in their own things press them with much trouble, when these go betwixt them and the interest of Christ; there is a very unseen caufe oft why many of the saints may be sick, and some falling asleep, yea, this truth must be like wife verified, there is a saving of things by which we put them in further hazard, and a securing thereof by a surrender to the Lord, an immoderate fear of a stroke from men to the prejudice of present and necessary duty, may bring with it some sad immediate strokes in the displeasure of the Lord from his hand; yea, that he should thus bereave his church of many choicest instruments by his very immediate hand, to make it appear the anger and jealousie of the most high God, is more to be dreaded, than the wrath and violence of all our adversaries: but yet in the close of these judgments, even when a church may seem quite confounded, and her strength worn out, have we not there some ground of hope that the Lord may prevent his peoples thoughts by as marvelous, as immediate restoring providences, when he leas their power is gone, and that there is none to help; yea, it is not easy with him and like his way, to return and restore what the former years have taken away, by the locust and caterpiller, &c. which he had sent amongst them. Josh. ii. 25.

X. There is a step of the holy providence of God and his unspecked judgment, which would also seem strange and amazing, that which is inflicted upon the soul and conscience by an immediate stroke of judicial induration, and is very evident; Oh how undeniabley evident, and clear at this day! that men under great light, some special discoveries of God, after known convictions and wrestlings of conscience, yea, after solemn engagements and their declared resolution to follow the Lord in his way, have yet come such a length and degree in a deliberate resifting and opposing themselves to him and his truth, without the least appearance of a check or trouble: I confess this is one of the marvelous things of God, and a very visible demonstration of his being, who hath such a dominion over the soul, both in its hardening and softening; but no caufe to stumble hereat, it does truly call us to fear, and is a stroke that may force on atheists the awful conviction of a Deity; or though it is not felt by these who are under the same, because the want of sense and feeling is a part of that disease, yet all who look on (if they did not flatter their own eyes) may learn to know this is the very work of God, and a piece of his judgment which he makes known in the earth; but let us search the scripture, and we shall find instead of any ground for stumbling, what a special confirmation this should be of the truth, since it is clear. 1. How in this the way of the Lord is holy and righteous, who is under no debt, no obligation to the sons of men. Rom. ix. 18, but is absolutely free to let forth grace to, or with hold from whom he pleaseth; his blest will being the alone
alone rule of righteousness, he comprehends the reason of all his counsel and judgments, which are to us incomprehensible, yet does he so far condescend to let men see his unpotted justice as well as his sovereignty in this shines forth, that they who are unjust by a deliberate choice should be unjust still by a further arrest, Rev. xxii, and these who will not hearken, and will have none of him, should be deliver'd up to the lusts of their own heart, Psal. lxxxi. 11. we see in what a measure Pharaoh was harden'd of the Lord, which was a plague worse than the other ten: but we find Exod. vi. 34, that Pharaoh harden'd his own heart, and thus was a stroke suited to such a reful- late resifting of light.

2. Does not the scripture shew the marvelous con- voy of this judgment, Isa. vi. 6, how this fad sentence is immediately passed on the soul; yea, by these most singular means, the word and ordinances for enlivening, is executed thereon, men preached deaf and dead, where others find life; this is a stroke that does not draw a bar between them and external fellowship with the ordinances; but O it draws an invisible bar be- twixt them and the power and efficacy thereof; it is a judgment that walks in the dark, and binds where none can loose, if killeth without a cry; yea, gives men a death stroke, when the pain of that wound is not felt.

3. Do you not see how this strange judgment is in as great an height and measure held forth by the scripture, as you see it in any example before your eyes, that men will be mad in their opposition to God, even when he is most remarkably opposing them, such as Abas, who did trefpass the more, the more he was distrested, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. Yea, such who with those men of So- dom would grope after the door, and persift in that wickedness when God hath immediately smitten them with blindness for the fame: O what may be the next stroke, where men renew their assault against God after he hath once and again smitten them, who instead of repenting under his fore plagues, turn enraged to blasphe me him, who hath power over the fame: is not that a strange degree of judicial induration. Act. vii. 57, that when they saw the face of Stephen shine, and looked steadfastly thereon, they did then run with fury against him; yea, it may be seen in all ages that such a length this judg- ment will come to look on the most convincing extraordinary judgments of God on others, and yet not be moved therewith themselves, that when his hand is lifted up they will not see, but the povertery take up the fame quarrel and pursue it, wherein they have seen their fathers fall under the stroke of an avenging God.

4. We may also know from the scripture how deep this judgment may draw in its dreadful effects, what a judicial arrest is thus served on men by which they are bound over to destruction, and their bands made strong on them, as that they can neither flir nor move, but as malefactors shut up in jail, and under fetters; which is not more evident before the execution than this arrest on their soul is by obduration before some further stroke, thus they lie near sudden destruction and a blow that is irrecoverable, who have harden'd themselves under frequent reproofs. Prov. xxvi. It is known what Pharaoh's last rebuke was after he had rejected many, it stands upon publick record to after ages; I shall add, is there not something of hell here? and of these everlasting fetters in some measure made visible in the earth; for where light and conviction does resolve in rage and malice against the truth, nothing can be more like hell, or have a more near resemblance to the Devil.

XI. I shall add one instance more which may seem also a strange and marvelous part of the providence of God, that the righteous shoulcl fall, and have one event with the wicked in a time of judgment, whilst we see some noted for wickedness, and their horrid actions in opposition to the church go to the grave in peace, as to any remarkable stroke from the Lord upon them, I know.
know men are ready to wonder hereat; yea, thence an atheist will infer things must fall out at an adventure; but O if these would bring this to the scripture and set it before against the frame! they should there see how convincingly it is verified, and that there is nothing here which does not clearly agree with that blessed record; for it shews, 1. That by no external providences or anything dispersed within time, yea, by no affliction obvious to sense, the way of the Lord, and his respects to his people can be judged, even amidst the greatest variety of events, which here fall out; But we are in this obliged to adore God, whose judgments are incomprehensible, we see at the same time, a just man perish in his righteousness, and a wicked man prolong his life in wickedness. Ecclef. viii. 23. 2. The scripture gives us this return also, concerning such a providence, why the sword devours both, and as Saul and Jonathan fall together, that there, the Lord does in a special way differencet betwixt one and another, Josias died in peace, as was promised, 2 Kings xxii. 20. yet he fell upon the high places of the field in the common judgment; but he was then taken from the evil to come, yea, thus was delivered, even by a stroke of the hot displeasure of God on others; it is not strange, that some may be hid in the grave from a further storm, by the same judgment, wherein the Lord is pursuing the land in which they have their abode. 3. It is clear from the scripture, how small an accession to a sinful course, may in the holy displeasure of God bring some of his people under the same stroke with his adversaries, and so far involve them in that judgment; we find Psal. i. 1. there is a standing in the way, and joining in the counsel of the ungodly, held forth as a partaking with them in their sin; and Ezek. ix. tells us, that not mourning for, and witnessing a different against the national sins of the time, puts men far out of that blessed roll of those whom the Lord does difference from others, by a mark of his preservation. Now as to that other, how it is the wicked prolong their days in wickedness, and may go in some external peace to the grave, but do enquire at the scripture, and it will shew. 1. It was no lefs strange to the prophet Jeremiah xii. Then they prosper, and took root, did it not amaze that blessed man, Psal. lxiii. that not only their eyes stand out with fatness, but they have no bands in their death. But 2. Is not the way of the Lord in this manifold, how graciously he prevents some by a sad temporal stroke, and can serve himself of a scaffold or gibbet to bring about their mercy, as he did to the thief on the cross, whilst he plagues others by a long forbearance, and his holding off such strokes, Ecclef. viii. 11. the dreadful effects whereof are held forth, because sentence is not speedily executed against wicked men, their heart is therefore set on mischief. 3. As in every age we are called to adore the overagemty of God in such a thing, he gives men also cause to observe his great judgments, some remarkable strokes on his adversaries, which they cannot pass without such a remark. Behold a man that made not God his strength, Psal. lii. 7. but we must further wait for that full discrimination, which the last sentence of the judge shall put betwixt those who fear the Lord, and those who fear him not. (q)

The THIRD ARGUMENT.

For the scriptures accomplishment is this; that which not only the christians experience, and observation of the church beareth witness thereto, but is also a truth which even to the view, and conviction of the world, may be demonstrate, from whom it doth oft force a testimony, yea, in every age the worst of men have been forced to acknowledge, it must
must be a thing very evident. But the accomplishment of the scripture can be thus witnessed, therefore; &c.

It is true, thofe sweet and fenfible enjoyments, which the saints have of this truth, the world cannot reach; but it is also sure, that in every age, the works of the Lord, and fome more publick convincing providences both of judgment and mercy do folemnly invite men, to obferve the accomplishment of the word therein; yea, no time hath wanted fomething of a publick witnefs from ungodly men, even greatest mockers of religion, who under that con- straining power of confidence at death, or in fome day of their ftrait, have been forced to fay the truth by a very open confeflion of the righteousnefs of God towards them; and this is indeed the Lord's blessed design in making his works fometimes fo confpicuous, that they may not only confirm the faith of his people, but render atheifm inexcufable, that the glory of his faithful- nefs, as well as of his power and wisdom may shine forth before the fons of men. I confefs we may wonder, why the world looketh fo little upon this, and how the conviction of fo great a truth, which they cannot fhun, doth not more prefs them; but the Holy Ghost doth fully resolve this, the brutifh man knoweth not, neither do fools lay to heart, how the scripture taketh place, that flourishing of wicked men, is but in judgment for their further ruin. To profecute this argument a little, there are fome special truths I would instance, wherein the faithfulnefs of God in fulfilling his word may be seen by the world, yea, is obvious to the moft ordinary obfervers, and though they be but a few, which I shall here touch, yet I muft fay, they are fuch concerning truths, and have fo near a reference to the foundation of our faith, that men cannot acknowledge the fame, but muft alfo confefs the scriptures divinity, and that there is a truth and reality in godlinefs and in chriftian religion; I may truly here with fome confidence challenge the greatest atheifts, yea, appeal to their confidence and ferior thoughts, if in these following infances (though but a little of what might be faid on fuch a subjeft) the truth and accomplishment of the scripture be not very manifeft.

I. I fhall firft hold forth this truth, that man is furely fallen from that excellent estate wherein once he was formed, Rom. v. 18, 19. and now is not that which he was at the beginning; a truth fo clear, that we may fay even without the difcovery of the word might be fay for any ferior beholder to difcern the fame, yea, had not even heathens some glance at this? the evidence whereof they could not altogether fhun. It is true, the caufe and original of this dreadful contagion, how fin entred into the world, how it is derived to the whole race of man, imputation, as well as infefion, how that poifon is carried from the fountain to the ciferin, the scripture doth only dif- cover; but this I am fure may be obvious to all, that poor man is thus fick, and difeafe, and now beareth the marks of fuch a fall and ruin, as we read of in the word. I confefs, it is strange, that when this is fo very convincing and manifeft, it fhould not force men to fome more ferior enquiry, whence fuch a thing is, or if there can be a recovery of fo fad and deperate like cafe; but to clear this a little, I would offer thefe three things to be confidered.

1. That there is fome remainder of that excellent fabrick, which may yet appear among its ruins, fome print and appearance (though dark) of that primitive luftre and beauty, fome draughts which fin hath not wholly worn out, that may clearly tell what man once was, and point out his former ex- cellency, that he hath been an other weight, of whom Abfalom's character might be truly faid, without all blemifh from the head to the foot. For we fee the deep impreffions of a deity ftill rooted in men, even among the moft wild and savage, which no invention can utterly raze, we fee fome common principles
principles of reason that are imprinted in the most rude and ignorant, some innate notions and Ideas which the soul hath of good and evil, among all, and in every place of the earth, likewise these natural truths which we may see are no ways imperfect on the soul from any objects of sense, but such whereby men by an unavoidable necessity are forced to attend, and besides, what meaneth the witness of the conscience, and authority thereof in every man, which they cannot possibly decline? O do not these witnesses that from some great height poor man hath fallen.

2. Doth not the present appearance of man's nature, clearly shew he is fallen into some dreadful disease, that it is surely overspread with some horrid leprosy and contagion, the symptoms whereof now are most discernible. O what an exorbitancy doth appear in his desires, with what contrary tides is he hurried? Still jarring with his present lot; his reason and will, once in a sweet league, are now at war, between which he is oft rent in pieces, as one betwixt wild horses; how is he now restless in an unreasonable pursuit, he laboureth in the fire, and for a shadow, yea, what do these tumults, and commotions of the earth mean, men upon the smallest account heathing their swords in others bowels, homo homini lupus, ruptures in families, unsatisfiable in revenge, and the earth so oft in an uproar as a raging sea. O do not these two visibly witnesses what a dreadful disordur and perturbation there must be within, impetuous boiling of man's lusts, so that here we may see a very manifest rupture, and breach of a building, once well knit and framed.

3. I would ask wherein man's true advantage and excellency above others of the creatures can be seen, if not with some respect to that he once was, and that blessed restoration by grace; for his knowledge doth oft serve but to increase his sorrow, to shew the good he wanteth, and the evil he is subject to; is there any of the creatures subject to such outward misery and pain, to so many diseases? Yea, as to a sensual life, may we not say the beasts have even some preference? Or are these so untruly? Do they so much go out of their bounds and station? Which the many laws made for man in the world with the convincing necessity thereof can witness; we see also that forc' travel is appointed to man; at how much toil is for an outward subsistence, how he doth oft sow, and not reap; the beasts withdraw from the yoke, these over whom he had dominion ready to affault him, how women bring forth their children in sorrow, the men are attended with fear, their life oft made bitter with care and labour, yea, as men increase in the world, their care and discontent increasing therewith, but besides all, is he not in the greatest slavery of all the creatures through the violence of his lusts? That make him pursue the bait, though he knoweth it will undo him, whilst his corruption doth oft like a strong man bind him in fetters, and his flesh imperiously drag him at its heels; O may we not say, was poor man thus framed at the beginning? or raised so far above the rest of the creatures only to make him the more miserable, for truly, if a lively portraiture could be drawn of finful depraved nature, there is none so grofs but shold abhor, yea, be affrighted, to see that in the third person, with which alafs, they so friendly comply in themselves.

II. That so great a change is truly wrought upon men in conversion, as the Scripture doth promise, and hold forth, Job. iii. 3, 6. Eph. ii. 1, 5. Colos. iii. 1, 2. wherein some thing above nature, even the marvelous power of the grace of God may be seen, is a truth I am sure known, and undeniable to the world, yea, the greatest mockers at religion must confess, can be no delusion, but is indeed real, and certain; upon these following grounds.

1. That the most grofs, who in their practice have been notoriously profane, in the place wherein they lived, it hath been seen, how grace hath reached
reached them, and thus the leopard hath been made to change his spots, and such who were accustomed to do evil have learned to do well. O! do not many famous instances witness this, in every age? 2. That if men strongly principled in their judgment against the way of God, who were wont to deride holiness as fancy, even on such, so great a change hath been wrought as hath made the world to wonder; but then they were forced to lay down their prejudice, yea, to wonder at themselves, how they could stand before the truth so long, whereof they have got such an impression; sure atheists must grant there have been as profest atheists as themselves, who have been made eminent examples of grace.

3. That such even in the height of their wickedness, like Paul breathing out cruelty, and of late Vergerius while he was writing against the truth, grace hath sometimes reached them, it hath been found that of Christ's greatest enemies, some have thus fallen upon their high places before the power of the word; some such trophies of the gospel's conquest have been conspicuous in every age; yea, it is oft seen that some remarkable height in sin, hath proved an evident crisis and turn in men's condition either to judgment or mercy.

4. That some of eminent adversaries of the truth have through grace, been made eminently useful instruments in the church, the world cannot deny, that there have not been choicer vessels of honour, more zealouz for the Lord in their time, than such, who were once most violent in their opposition.

5. That such whom the world did reckon most wise and discerning, yea, that did want no judgment to know the value of outward things, as well as others, grace hath reached; can the atheists object, do any of the rulers or Rabbies believe in Christ, or follow that way, when it is so clear that not more wise, learned and judicious (even themselves being judges) have been in their time, than some who are most serious in the matter of religion.

6. Hath not this change been made discernible upon the simple, the most stupid and dull, yea, upon some such, as a natural incapacity might have obstructed the work, if something above nature had not carried it on, which may be also manifest by some change even on their understanding, to shew that this can make the simple wise, and in the way of holiness, the way faring man that fool shall not err.

7. That by a very improbable mean, the word, and that sometimes by weakest instruments, we see this great change hath been wrought, and it is remarkable how little of the work of conversion did follow the putting forth of miracles in the primitive times, but by the simplicity of the preached gospel much more, for indeed the conversion of a soul, and such a change is it self some way a miracle.

8. That they are not a few on whom this change hath been wrought is undeniable; and truly besides these ordinary proofs, I think it is a great want there should not be some more special record by the church, of these illustrious, and eminent instances of the grace of God, which have been in such an age, as well as remarkable instances of judgment.

9. Men must see this falleth not out at an adventure which is wrought upon one, and not on other, while both are alike discerning, yea, some who seem furthest from the grace of God, very gross and rude, have been taken, when the more civil and refined, and of a more promising natural disposition have been past by. O! doth not this witness the grace of God, and sovereignty thereof.

10. Is not this change oft discernible upon men in a time while no advantage from without doth appear? Even times of persecution and hazard, from which many have dated their first acquaintance with God, when they could expect nothing but a suffering lot, sure there must be something above nature in it.

11. It is also known how great a cloud of witnesses have sealed this truth, O! can there be such an universal enchantment, that in every age, in several, yea,
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in most remote places of the earth, hath fallen upon so many, who have witnessed the power of the gospel; or can all these be void of understanding? What gain, or outward advantage could they design in that which is so usually attended with outward hazard and loss, or what credit from men, while it maketh them the very butt of the world's hatred and reproach? Yea, can it be thought that all these could have combined to confpire into so great a cheat? I must appeal atheists to their serious thoughts of this matter. 12. The marvelous effect of this change, doth it not witness this is no fancy or delusion, when men are reached with such a stroke, and by one word, as hath made the stout hearted and most daring to tremble, and to shew by their very countenance, that there is an other tribunal than man's, before which they are arraigned? Must it not be found earnest and a marvelous power, that can make so willing a divorce betwixt men and their idols, which were once as their right-eye to them, and beat them off that ground of self-righteousness, which they had been so long establishing to themselves, that should caufe them also choose the reproach of Christ, and his cross before any outward advantage, and abandon that society, without which sometimes they could not live? Must not this speak forth something above natural reason. O! may not the world oft wonder what is become of their old friends, though I confess, this should rather put them with wonder and astonishment, to some serious enquiry, whence so great a change can be.

(5) It is strange the world does not more wonder at Conversion which is so great a miracle, yea, may be said one of the greatest that hath been in the earth, since it is no less marvelous, than to raise out of the grave such who are truly dead; O how convincingly demonstrative is this of the truth and reality of grace, yea, even to the view of the world does witness an irresistible efficacious power with the word, that converteth the soul, enlightens the eye, and maketh wife the simple, Psal. xix. 7. Should we not with astonishment look on a christian if we did seriously consider what a change a the grace of God makes here, from that he once was, and how great a change glory will c'er long make from that he now is; I know there are many things we wonder at from our ignorance; but oh! it is mens ignorance and estrangement from this, makes it so little their wonder, for, if we be astutely persuaded of the truth of conversion which the world cannot deny, without a contradiction both to sense and reason, we have then three great truths unanswerably demonstrate.

1. That the scripture of God is faithful and true, which holds this forth. 2. That there is a divine spirit, and a power above nature, that does certainly accompany the same. 3. It is then clear, there are two contrary states in another world, since they are here so manifest: Now besides these evidences already mentioned, I would here offer some further upon so grave and weighty a subject, to shew how very clear and convincing the demonstration of this truth is, that the world cannot but see the very immediate power of God and something above nature in conversion, if they do not shut their eyes thereat; consider but thee.

1. Is it not a strange and marvelous thing that could change one species of a creature into another, turn a wolf or tyger into a lamb, but this would be astonishing; yet such a change is here, which makes so vast a difference betwixt one and himself, takes him off his former delights and exercizes, his old friends and society, with whom he once thought the time short, yea, caufe the man who was a perfector of the truth, and took pleasure therein, rejoice to suffer persecution on that fame account; I think the world will not debate, where so many known instances are at all times obvious. 2. Is
it not marvellous which can strange men from their worldly interests, and
take their heart off that which was as their right eye, and subdue them
that which once took them captive at its pleasure: O does it not shew they
have got their eyes opened to blessings which were formerly hid! yea, how
strange is it that these whose predominant was love to the world, and have
been in their natural disposition most narrow and griping, that they could
not allow themselves the comfortable use of that they had, even these this
change hath so powerfully reached to cause a willing surrender and quitting of
all for Christ: I could offer known instances concerning this, and these as at
such an advantage then in the exercise of their judgment and reason as ever,
whom the world might fee were most serious and composed therein.

Would you debate the efficacious power of that which should melt and dissolve
the hardest stone, and may you not wonder what a power this must be, which
will make men melt and dissolve in tears and tend trembling before the word,
who through their life were known to be most obtuse and stupid: Yea, is not
this great change sometimes with such terror and grief suffered in, that may
convince onlookers it is a matter of greatest earnest, and no counterfeit; and
surely these must be reached by some power, before which there is no standing,

How great a thing is that which takes men at unawares beyond

themselves, and intention: Matthew and those other disciples did not

know in the morning what should betfall them before night; it was indeed a

happy day, when on their return they had that account to give, we have

found the Messiah, and it is sure, many since have been thus surprised, yea, in

one hour have got such a sight which will never go from their heart, they now

see what report could never have made them believe, they now know what

it is to be taken out of a dreadful gulf of darkness unto a marvelous light; and

truly there is this usually discernible in it, how some one word will force its

passage and take fire within as a word beyond all others fitly spoken and fit-

ted by divine appointment to open the heart.

It is a marvelous change which does even reach young ones, and these sometimes of an age little

above fancy, for it is certainly known how such whose years might have been

no design to cheat the world, yea, sometimes in a family where little ad-

vantage for their education hath appeared, have given evidence of this won-

derfully, above themselves and their age, yea, at death have witnessed some

power of the grace of God, and his Spirit on their soul, their hope and the

grounds of it, with such judgment and seriousness as hath forced on the beholders

this discovery, of an immediate teaching of the Spirit, and of a mighty

power of God, that can witness in these, 'tis they can well speak or exercise

reason, the power of religion. O whence should this be! and truly for the

truth thereof I could offer known instances, if it should be brought on de-

bate.

What a change is it that does also reach men in their old age,

who have been long rooted and inured to the world, who have fit many a

call in their refitting the gospel; yet is it not seen how these in their old

gray hairs, have been made to weep and confess after sixty or seventy years

living under the gospel, that then only they begun to know what it is to be

christians; I confess this is one of the rare trophies of the grace of God,

yet no age wants some such instances to prove, how far grace can prevail

over nature, custom, education and all these disadvantages which use to

follow the time of old age.

What a strange power is it which hath been so evidently witnessed on some horridly flagitious,

who have out-run others in all manner of wickedness; yea, even then whilst

justice was crying for punishment to cut them off, grace hath kept in to save, and
and reached them at a scaffold or gibbet; it is sure the world cannot question this truth, and O should it not be convincing to see two brought to a publick death, for some gross crime who have the same hazard before them, the same means made use of for their conviction, yet the one melting in contrition, the other most obdured; you cannot say that this is from a different nature and constitution, since sometimes those of a more promising nature and better disposition have been seen further off, than such of whom least was expected. 8. Is it not a strange change; which even on those where no ordinary means could be subervient, can be witnessed, where no company, no example, no usual way for instruction can be alleged, so that it may be seen, they have been truly taught of the Lord, that there is such a thing as his immediate teaching; that in a very extraordinary way by means most improbable he can convey himself in to the soul, in a word, this can be no result of one's natural composition, for then it would appear in, and accompany their younger years in some measure, and grow up with them; this change also in those of most different natures, most unlike and cross to others humor and disposition is made discernible; yea, must it not be something above moral fusion, or any pernatives of human eloquence? Since here the foolishness of preaching is found more effectual than any such way; yea, it is seen how the most sublime and polished strains of oratory, and greatest gifts have oft come short of that success, which hath followed more improbable means; I shall add, O is this not something above nature which makes men partake of the divine nature, and does so visibly impress the image of God on them. I shall that this up with three remarkable instances of the power and efficacy of grace in conversion, of which in every age there may be a large record.

First, that excellent man Junius, whose whole life we have in some measure set down by himself, with many notable remarks of providences, and therein shews the Lord's engaging him at first, how being very loose, and carried away with evil company, yea, tempted to atheism, he was one day moved to go and read the scripture; and at the first opening met with that of the first of John; which whilst he read as he says did suddenly astonish him; and leave a marvellous conviction on his soul, of the divinity of the subject, the majesty and authority of the writing; that all day he knew not where, and what he was; but thus turns himself with these words to the Lord, Thou wast mindful of me, O my God, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies; yea, gives this account, that he had then had a light of the scripture, which made him see it did exceed all human eloquence, and this was followed with such power that his body trembled, and his mind became astonisht, with such a surprizing and marvellous light; and from that day begun to be serious in the way of the Lord.

A second instance I shall offer is, the remarkable conversion of worthy Mr. Bolton, a choice minister in the church of England, in whose life this is recorded, that being eminently prophan, an horrid swearer, and much accustomed to mock at holiness, and those who most shined therein, and particularly that excellent man of God Mr. Perkins, then preacher in Cambridge, whom he much undervalued for his plainness in preaching the truths of God, yea, was near the length of Popery; but on the Lord's gracious appearance to him, was put to have other thoughts, with a very remarkable change upon him, though with that terror, that as he said himself, the Lord seemed to run upon him, like a giant, throwing him to the ground, and with such a terrifying discovery of sin, caused him to roar in anguish, and oft rise in the night on that account, which continued for diverse months; yea, these a-
faults in the pangs of the new birth were such, that it might have been said, 
Ut nec color, nec fætus, nec sanguis superficet; but at last a blessed fun-
shine broke up, and shone bright.

Now besides these two great men, I think it not unsuitable, since it is to 
commend the grace of God, and witness the reality thereof, who of all kind 
of sinners, as well as of all kindreds and nations, hath brought some to glory, 
that I set down one very strange instance in this country, of a poor buggerer 
who not many years ago was put to death in the town of Air, for that horrid 
wickedness, he had been a most stupid and brutish person, such an one who 
looked to all who knew him, as if he had been above the reach of ordinary 
means; but in the prison, the Lord did marvelously witness the power of his 
grace, and in such a measure discovered to him his sinfulness, that after much 
serious exercise upon his soul, and fore wrestling, a most kindly work of 
repentance did appear, with great assurance, so that when he came to the lake, 
he could not cease from crying out to the people, under the tenet of pardon, 
and that comforting fun-shine of the presence of God; O he is a great for-
giver, he is a great forgiver; and had therewith these words; now hath 
perfect love cast out all fear, I know God hath nothing to lay against me, 
for Jesus Christ hath paid all, and those are free whom the Son makes free, 
thus a transport of wonder and joy, did he die; the marvelous grace of 
God raising him then above other men, who not long before, seemed in 
some respect, below a beast. 

III. That communion and fellowship with God, whereto the saints are in 
this life admitted, and brought near to him in the spirit, is a most real thing, 
and no delusion, is a truth which may be very convincingly demonstrate, even 
to the view of the world, and to such who are but onlookers on the same, 
1 Job. i. 3. Phil. iii. 20. I know this is a truth that must be spiritually dis-
cerned, and therefore the world cannot know it or reach that unspareable 
joy and delight which is found by the saints in that sweet path; yet must say 
there are some things, and some such convincing evidences, as may witness 
to men, and rationally demonstrate the same; the conviction whereof they 
cannot possibly shun, if they but come near, and in their serious thoughts 
consider.

1. How great and excellent a company do bear this testimony, even as 
many as in every time did ever serve God in the spirit; is not this transmitted 
by the fathers to the children as their experience? And as certainly tried by 
succeeding ages, a truth which is not once, or twice proved in the christian's 
life, for the proofs thereof are innumerable, and past reckoning, which they 
have had, yea, amongst all the saints since the days of Abel, to this present 
time, there was never one contradictory witness could be produced. 2. Are 
not these who do thus testify, what they have oft found in secret retire-
ments to God, such whose testimony in any other matter, the worst of men 
could not refuse to deny to be famous, I am sure the world is convinced, 
that the followers of Christ dare not, yea, use not to deal falsely in other 
things with thosé they have to do with, how ever their malice carry them 
to reproach them, yes, that they are more to be credited than such, who 
make a fcon of religion. 3. Have they not had as great interest and 
share of the world as others, and been of as discerning spirits to know the 
true value of things, who from their experience do not only declare, there is 
an undoubted reality in converse with God, but that the joy and delight 
therein which they have found, is above all the pleasures of the flesh. O! what 
must that be which could make such who wanted not outward allurements, 
who
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who had not loft their talle, and were flesh and blood as well as others to turn their back on all for Christ, and by their walk testify they have found some more satisfying enjoyment in fellowship with God.

4. Must not this be very obvious and convincing, that when men once become serious in the way of God, they have got some new acquaintance, that fure there is another world, and some other society than that of men with which they have intercourse; whence are these frequent retirements, from which they have been seen to oft to come forth with greatest satisfaction, and with some remarkable change in their cafe, doth it not thus appear, They are not alone, when they are alone yea, in such a solitude must find something very desirable?

5. Is not this also testified in times, when men could not well distemper, or be suspected of deceit, in times of great outward affliction, when the world also hath been most tempting, with its offers, yea, at death when they are slipping over that threshold; a time, wherein the words of dying men are of greatest weight and credit, the spirits of such being then more uncovered, and free of those ordinary temptations wherewith others are swayed. How oft have they at such times declared that surely God is familiar with men, which they have found, and though they were going to change their place, yet were not to change their company.

6. Can that be a delusion which is so sensible in the present time, whereof the saints are not more sure that they live, than they are sure of this truth, what near approaches and refreshing views they have got, while God hath come near to their soul, what a discernible elevation of their spirits doth go along with this? Yea, on the other hand, as the withdrawing hereof is very sensible to themselves, is there not something of this even obvious to bystanders, how great a change and difference this will make in their case, from other times, which they cannot get hid.

7. Doth not something of this truth appear on the very countenance and outward carriage of Christians, what a lustre and semblance of heaven, a holy fairness and composition of spirit, when they have been brought near God, in secret converse with him, and taken up to the mountain; in a word, doth not the walk of a serious mortified Christian convincingly witness this, yea, cannot but be some way astonishing to the world, what should make them look so well, and with such satisfaction, when there is no visible cause for it, when that up in prison from converse with friends, and acquaintance? Sure men will not think a rational spirit so demented to quit their former pleasures, and chuse the crofs, that they may only deceive the world, with a counterfeit joy and satisfaction, if they did not really find the same, and while it is too evident, what a dreadful society and commerce many have with the Devil, should any question or debate, whether the saints have truly communion and fellowship with God the Father of spirits, whom they serve and worship.

IV. That the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, Prov. xii.

26. And hath an other spirit which is greater and more choice, than that which is in the world, is a truth which I am sure, men notwithstanding all their prejudice must needs confess, and that therein the Scripture is truly verified, when such clear and convincing evidences, do stare them in the face, I confess the saints are much under a dark cloud here, through the prevalency of corruption, yea, are oft accounted as the filth of the world, but when grace in any greater measure; and its vigorous exercise doth shew it self, then there appeareth so much as will darken all the grandeur of this earth, and force men to see an excellency upon the saints, beyond any others, they cannot altogether shun such a conviction. First, what an evident difference is betwixt their way, who walk with God, and that of the most polished moralit,
moralift, something is in the one which doth witnesr a more excellent spirit, an higher elevation, a sweet harmony and equability in their way, that they move in some higher sphere, act from other principles, with a respect to some greater interest than any thing here, have more of a large heart to serve their generation, than those whose self-interest is seen to be the first and last in all their motions. 2. May it not also appear to onlookers that tender serious christians who live near God, do truly witness their resemblance, and likenefs to him to whom they move, as to their great and last end; yea, do evidence a more true excellency of spirit, what a sweet calm and ferenity they have within, while going through things that are most crofs and vexing; with what difcernible quietnes thefe can look upon most affrighting reolutions in the world, as fuch, whole treasure and great interest is beyond hazard, though the earth were all turned to ashes. 3. Is there not so much in the way and carriage of the saints, yea, fhuch a majesty and authority, that attendeth holines, as doth force repective and fear, even from thefe who moft hate them, yea, and doth force men to justify fuch in their confience, whom they openly reprehend and persecute; whence it is that a serious watchful christian, is oft a fear-crow and terror to the profligate, when there is no outward caufe for it, but that they are ftruck with the conviction of a more excellent spirit in thefe, carrying fhuch a resemblance to the image of God as forreth fear and subjection from that spirit which is in the world. 4. Doth not a christian and holy walk caufe men shine, as a light in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, yea, darken all their neighbours; and in the darkeft night is it not feen how grace fhineth with the greateft luftre, what a sweet and odoriferous fcent, doth this fend through the country where they live, that may flrew to all how great a difference there is betwixt fuch, and fuch who are wallowing in this puddle of the earth. 5. Is it not obvious what a luftre and beauty, yea, something more becoming our immortal foul that is in the self-denial of christians, their bearing injuries, forgiving fuch as injure them, without reviling, than in that proud vindictive spirit that is in the world, that fure fuch walk by a more excellent rule, and move from a higher principle. 6. It may be also evident to the world, what an other spirit is in thefe, who do not bow with the fpeate of every time, nor yield to men becaufe of their outward power, than in that spirit which is in the world, that while the one doth pref men to fave themselves on any terms, the other doth caufe the christian take up his crofs, yea, lay down his life, to fave his confience; and whence is that patience, and resolution by which the godly in times of fuffering have overcome their perfeutors, their bold avowing of the truth before men, when hazards are moft obvious, and that advantage wherewith they appear above others in fuch a time. O! doth it not clearly witnesr, they are of an other metal, who do thus abide the fire, yea, become more bright by that wherewith others are confumr? I would add that which the world cannot deny, how this fpirit which is in the saints, hath prevailed over the greateft enticements of carnal gain and pleafure, which to many may feem a wonder, as the popifh party did once fay of Luther, Befilia haec non curat aurum, that which they did fpeak in contempt, that it did prove him a beast, did in effect flrew him therein to be something above men; for that is a thing before which the spirit of the world could never f tand. V. That the promifed encouragement which is held forth to the people of God under trouble and fuffering for his name is a truth, and the scripture herein verified, I am fure not only christian experience can witnesr, but may even
even to the observation of others, be demonstrate from very convincing grounds, that it is no fancy or delusion, Psal. ix. 9. Isa. li. 12.

1. The very countenance and outward appearance of the godly in a suffering time, doth oft declare the peace and tranquility of their soul, so as surely they must have joy and satisfaction from whence the world doth not know, and have some other correspondence, than with things visible, for it may be oft said, as of Daniel, and his fellows that under greatest presurces, and a very mean condition, they look as well, yes, with as much cheerfulness as thos who live on the king's allowance. 2. It can be no counterfeits, which should thus reconcile the christian with a suffering lot, for it is known how very searching affliction and trouble proveth, which oft doth broach the vessel, and bring forth what hath formerly most closely lurked: and O! Doth not that holy confidence and freedom which the saints have evidenced in confessing the truth, before the princes of this world and their most cruel adversaries, yes, that cheerfulness which in most extreme parts of suffering they oft do witness, even when they are refisting to blood, doth not this speak forth something beyond the gallantry of a natural spirit, that far exceedeth the ordinary way of men, and is a thing the world cannot but wonder, and whether they will or not see God's very immediate help and hand in the same, according to his word?

3. Is it not seen how the cheerful way of the godly under suffering, while there is no outward ground for the same doth not only abonish, but is an exceeding torment to adversaries? When they are forced to see, how all their endeavours (when their wrath and malice hath been to the utmost put forth) have yet been in vain, either to turn them aside, or to ruin their encouragement, but that the most sharp sufferings of the godly, do still give them the foresight, help to strengthen others, justify God's way, and that tender respect he hath to his suffering people, even before all onlookers.

4. Is not also manifest, that such whose natural disposition was known to be very fainting and timorous, yet when called to suffer for the truth have without the least appearance of discouragement, showed an invincible resolution, and not only, their own fears, but the expectation of others hath a marvelous disappointment. O is there not there a visible fulfilling of the scripture, that shaking reeds should be made to stand, where strongest cedars have bowed, yea, some of very mean and ordinary parts have been so discernibly raised above themselves, as they were made to confound the wise and learned.

5. Must it not be confessed that the zeal and resolution of the saints did never more appear than in times of greatest opposition: that at no time they have looked more like christians with more advantage, and with some peculiar beauty and lustre of the grace of God, than under suffering, a thing which as it eminently doth commend the gospel, hath also so far convinced their enemies, as in some measure it hath blunted their edge, and taken off followers thereof.

6. I may appeal the greatest atheists to their conscience, if any moral arguments (whatever influence they may have upon mens patient enduring) could ever produce such effects as rejoicing in tribulation, the choosing affliction before sin, and all its pleasures, to triumph over persecutors, and to go with such a calm, and cheerfulness to a scaffold, to sing amidst a dark prison, yea, and to abound, and have all things under greatest want? O! whence is this? Sure something above nature must be here, that is stronger than moral reasons, by which the saints have thus overcome the world, yea, is it not obvious to all who look on, how great a difference there is between the pretended resolution of a natural spirit in death and suffering, and that joy and confidence of a christian, which hath then shewed itself in the compolure and tranquility of their soul within?
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within? The one being but a dark shadow, and the other drawn to the life.

VI. That there is a conscience within men, whose power both as a judge, and witness, doth answer that clear discovery, the scripture giveth thereof, Rom. ii. 9. Is a thing obvious even to the world which they must needs confess both from its visible effect on others, and the working thereof within themselves; that herein the word is verified these things make it clear, and undeniable.

1. That there is something within which thus maketh men afraid to be alone with themselves, yea, will cause them to go abroad, and frame diversions to be out of its noife, must it not be said earnest, which hath so dreadful a found in their ear, doth haunt the wicked man whether he will or not? wherewith he would gladly be at peace, but amidst his greatest mirth and prosperity, this doth mingle his wine with gall and wormwood.

2. Is it not also sure that men have oft an accuser within their breast, while they seem to brace it out before others, whose judgment, and sentence they can by no means decline, but after the committing of sin, yea, on the back of their sinful pleasures doth follow the same with a bitter sting, and ring this dreadful knell in their ear, that in the end their way will be bitterness! O! is not this an accusing conscience, which doth begin the torment of some before the time?

3. What is it that should make men guilty sometimes legible in their countenance, even when they study most to conceal it, and thus cause them to give their tongue the lie, yea, discover to bystanders whether they will or not, some secret trouble and sore they have within, doth it not clearly shew the power of the conscience, which hath such authority on men, that without violence or constraint from others, doth even force them to confess the truth, and supply the room of witnesses?

4. Whence is it some are so much disquieted for secret sins, which the eyes of others could not reach, yea, that some gross sins, even the most profligate amongst men have an horror at them without respect to outward hazard, doth it not shew the power of a natural conscience, that holdeth forth a greater party than the world with which they have to do, to whom all things are manifest, and some greater witnesses than that of man?

5. How is it that even greatest men whom the world could not reach, and in the midst of all probable advantages have yet been most affrighting thoughts, much terror, and disquieting reflections! must it not be from within which doth cause them fear an other power than that of man?

6. What must it be which doth force men to justify God when his hand doth pursue them, and maketh them so easily find our sin in a time of their strait, why is the sense of guilt so very affrighting at death, is it not the conscience which doth prefsage a future judgment, and extend its power to matters of an everlasting concernment and duration?

7. What should make men tremble at the word and so much hate a searching miniftry, is it not because the light doth torment them, though the word doth particularly name none, but that there is something within, which maketh application of the truth, and doth plainly say, thou art the man!

8. How do the worst of men oft justify these in secret, whom they openly have condemned, that while they are even perpetuating the stains for truth and holiness, yet, for these they give them, and their way a favourable testimony, over the belly of all their prejudices, yea, what is it that doth cause a secret fear, and awful regard of such whom they hate, doth it not shew something within, whole judgment they are not able to resist?

9. I must further ask whence is that horror, and these dreadful cries and groans which wicked men oft have in their sickness, even such who were wont to sport at sin, with a daring countenance; can the world get this past without some remark, how
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intolerable a thing an evil conscience is, when once let loose, when in all ages such terrifying examples of this kind have been set up for all that past by to look on, such as Spira, Latomus, Olivarius, &c and truly, I think it is a great want there should not be a more particular record of such, which would give atheism so great a dash, yea force men to confess the truth of a deity, and of the written word.

(5) This is a great truth, and a great demonstration of God (O blessed for ever) his being, and of the truth of his word, that there is a Conscience, so strange a power, which every man hath within him and over him, that forceth the soul to a reflection on its self even when it trembles at that fight, and with an awful sound tells the atheist there is a God, when he seems to have no fear or conviction thereof; this is that great torment and trouble of the world, from which there is no retreat, though one should flee to the uttermost parts of the earth, this keeps a high court of justice under the authority of the great judge, and there without respect of persons do's fummon great and small, do's arrest bring in witnesses, sentences, yea, in some measure puts that in execution, and can make hell begin there, by an unexpressible anguish and horror: it is strange that such a thing when it is so undeniable do's not fare the world in the face with more amazement, but I shall further offer some few evidences of the truth besides the already mentioned.

1. Could there be such a power in man to difference betwixt that good and evil which is within him, if there were not also some higher power above him, who hath thus form'd him, with such principles? Yea, could there be a judging and witnessing within a man, if there were not a law and rule over him: for it is sure the conscience in all its actions hath respect to a higher judgment, and to a law, which, even nature's light, though very dim, holds forth, but is express and clear in the scripture which is that great rule of the conscience.

2. Is it not very strange to see such a power within a man, and yet against him, that the grossest Atheist is an enemy to it, yet cannot be without it, or get it shaken off, and whilst it is known how strong a byal's and inclination thesee have to evil, more than good, they are yet forced to justify the one more than the other, the drunkard cannot drown this conviction, nor the worldling bury it in the earth, where his treasure lies. 3. Tho' men may come some length to divert the conscience and silence it, that it cannot excite its function, without some special divine excitement, yet is it not manifest how then, when once it is awaked, there is no possible withstanding, then the stout hearted cannot keep his ground to debate with it; yea, when they run it follows with as swift a pace, no skill, no arguments can defend from its force, no violence against such a power, but whilst in the convey of sin, they over-reach the witnes of men, lo, this is continually at hand to tell them, that he who is greater than the conscience, do's regard. 4. Can any thing be more real and certain, than these effects of the conscience, I mean that trouble and fear men have in sinning, and that peace and satisfac-

that attends well doing? Do you know such a place of the earth whither this power hath got some place to overawe men, even without any visible awe or hazard; and can all mankind, through the whole world, in all ages be in so strange a delusion, if there were no real ground for it.

5. How convincingly do's this witnes there is a conscience, and the reality of it, that men are at so much work to bribe it, to frame diversions thereto, yea, to find out false grounds of peace, and some such gloss and commentary, as may reconcile the rule with their grossest actions and exorbitancies, and why is this, but that in out-daring it, they find it stronger than they, and therefore must counter-

work, by darkening that great light and find out some fiew of reason to silence
ience conscience, and promise peace to themselves, though they walk in the wickedness of their heart. 6. Do not these extremes, which oft are obvious in men's condition, witness the reality of this power? O what a marvelous thing to see one stupid this day, and desperate the next, the conscience breaking up, at that rate, that to be rid thereof and its torment, the poor man would seek a shelter in the grave; yea, is it not usual to see some wear out their time as beafts, yet at dying sealed with an inexplicable horror of God? is not this something wakened, which was formerly asleep? 7. Do not men see such desperate acts of wickedness in the world, such furious running over all warnings and convictions, that may even convincingly shew some purfute of the conscience, and that horrid way they take to be rid of it by revenge, to give it a further wound and silence to noise, by some violent deep stroke. 8. Are not these sudden and unexpected flashes of the conscience most remarkable, how it takes some unawares, and grows upon them the more they strive with it; it is known also, what reflections men usually have on themselves and their actions, in some present exigent and hazard; yea, how they are thus affrighted, or in some measure quiet, as they are put to condemn or acquit themselves on that score: Now is not this a convincing witness of the force of a natural conscience, and likewise that usual recourse which the worst of men will in such an extremity have to God by prayer, do's both declare this, and that impression they have upon them of a Deity. 9. How marvelous a confidence and support do's the conscience afford where it is a friend, under the greatest misery and trouble from without, for thus a man's spirit can sustain its infirmities, but when it is an adversary nothing, nothing so unsupported, it will torment and tear one within when there is none without dare provoke him; yea, cause the oppressor tremble, whilst it upholds the oppressed with confidence, it makes the one eat his bread with joy, when it imbibers the pleasanter morsels of others. (5)

Seventh, That there is a reward for the righteous and unquestionable gain in godliness, is a part of the scripture not only well known, and witnessed to the observing christian in his experience, but is also held forth in every age, as in great letters to the view of the world, Psal. lviii. 11. Psal. xvii. 11. Isa. iii. 10. It is true that the christian's lot is oft followed with much trouble, and sometimes with loss of his life, which may seem to have a very dismal aspect, for that great goodness which the man who sareth God hath ensured to him is much laid up in another world; but it is also sure that there are such public convincing proofs of this truth held forth even to the observation of men, by which the Lord hath in every age confirmed the same, that I am sure the greatest atheist cannot answer even thence.

1. That this is the very dictate of a natural conscience not only that God is, but that he is a rewarder of such as serve him, yea, none amongst men are so brutish who are not in some measure principled to difference between good and evil, with some fear of a punishment to the one, and some hope of recompence to the other, and are also forced to notice some more signal and convincing examples, which have been of that kind in their time. 2. Must we not say, yea, doth not the world see in every age that history of Joseph in some part acted over again? Sure there have not been wanting many such remarkable instances, wherein it might be easy to trace an upright and straight walk through a very maze and labyrinth of changes, and to show how that hath been their condition, and at last integrity hath brought them to land in a comfortable harbour, yea how often they have had a marvelous unlooked for deliverance, contrary to all human appearance, this indeed is no romance, but a most true history which through all times, and many examples, might be
be written of the word and providence, which should surpass the richest fan-
cacy that any fiction, or romance did ever contain. 3. Must it not be con-
vincing, even to the worst of men, what a visible blessing doth oft follow the
mean lot of some of the saints which can make their little reach far, and cause
them abound more in their poverty than others amidst their abundance, which I
think the world cannot shun to observe and gather that there is, sure, some-
thing else than men's own care, which doth their business; and how that or-
dinary proverb falleth not to the ground, That it is better to be happy than
wise, when they see a secret judgment blow upon some men declare that no
means can prevent, and a secret blessing which maketh things prosper and
take effect, accompany the christians small portion, so as it may be easy for
such who look abroad to see where real contentment with cheerfulness, and
giving of thanks, ueth to dwell. 4. May not the world see there is a
feast in a good conscience how little soever they partake of the world, that
well doing, and the practice of godliness hath some present reward in its hand;
whereas so remarkable a difference may be discerned betwixt the countenance
and carriage of such, and of them who trust in falsehood, that surely in a
time of strait, these have another kind of security and confidence, when great-
eft natural spirits fail, yea, that these alone can enjoy themselves, have most
calm and composed spirits amidst the several changes of their life, that ac-
cording to outward things, their peace doth not ebb nor flow, but they are
at a seen advantage above others in the day when men are sore outwitted with
their straits, so as it will be most easy then to see the good and advantage of
religion, when the vanity of other advantages is most discernible. 5. Is
it not also seen that true honour doth truly wait on humility, and follow-
eth such, but it fleeth from them who do most pursue it, yea, that faith-
fulness and an upright walk will gain credit even amongst her enemies, and
respect before the world. 6. That these who are faithful in their life,
and diligent improvers of a small talent have usually more added with some
discernible growth following the same, and as the drying up of the parts of
some, as a judgment on unfaithfulness, is oft obvious, so also such a blessing
upon generous diligence, as hath made the last shift, and even outrun such who
were once before them; yea, it is truly seen how grace helpeth mens gifts
doeth raise and sublimate their spirits above that which once they were.
7. Doth not the Lord put some visible difference oft betwixt the righteous,
and the wicked in a time of common calamity? that a strange deliverance
with the concurrence of very marvelous providences, doth sometime meet
such even to the convicion of beholders which may tell the world, such have
had an invisible hedge of preservation about them, and have been under some
better care than their own. 8. What a clear witnes do ungodly men
oft bear to this truth, at their death, or at some other strait, so that their
confidence hath forced them to justify the godly man's choice, and to say that
the lot of such is only most defirable, yea, with much bitterness to lament
their folly that made not religion more their business, the good and advan-
tage whereof is no matter of debate; sure the world will confess how oft the
confeffion, and testimony of such men to this truth, hath reached their ear.
I shall but add that which is so very manifest, how faithfulness and integ-
rety doth transmit mens name with more honour, yea make it have a sweeter
favour in their generations, than either riches or outward preferment; yea,
that there is a great difference betwixt the memorial of the righteous and the
wicked, even to the conviction of the world.

EIGHT, That verily there is a God who judgeth in the earth, Psal. livii.
1. who doth render unto men vengeance, and doth purge the manifestator
because
because of sin, is a truth which the world hath in every age by many convincing instances held forth to them, where they may see the scripture clearly verified.

I have a little touched this in the second argument how the accomplishing of scripture threatenings is witnessed to the observation of the church, and to those who are wise to discern the times wherein they live; I shall here point at this truth, as it is in the providence of God, written in such great letters, as are obvious to the view of the world, so as most common onlookers cannot pass this without a remark; it is true much may be left to that great general affize of the last judgment, that day of retribution; yea, sometimes we see the most wicked and vile go in peace to the grave; the sovereignty of God doth also appear very observably in the different measure and kind of punishment; and it is too evident how prone men are to look more to the interest that second causes have in such a thing, than to a divine hand; but this is also sure that the Lord is known on the earth, by the judgment which he executeth, and in every age doth set up such convincing examples before men, that the greatest atheist may see, yea, oft their conscience must break the goal, restrain it as they will, and force this acknowledgment, that such judgments can be no casual thing; while something of a power higher than man, and a clear verifying of the word is so discernible therein. Now to demonstrate this truth I would offer some things which may show how very near this cometh to the observation of men, so as none can be a stranger thereto, or want conviction of this part of the truth of God, except they willingly shut their eyes while it is clear.

1. That the very Heathens who never knew the scripture, nor a written law, have yet so much of a natural conscience that not only they can put some difference between virtue and vice, but even in some measure can discern God's putting some difference betwixt the same; how flagitious crimes ufc to be punished by a divine hand, we may say time could never yet wear out the observation of this truth through the world, and though many things may be received and credited, which not having a sure ground do quickly evanish, it being truth's privilege still to out-live falsehood, yet it is sure, how in the darkest parts of the earth, this hath been still noticed with a remark, and tranmitted from one age to another, yea the records of the nations even by heathen writers shew what remarkable punishment hath followed cruel oppression, covenant breaking, and such other gross sins against the second table, yea, how these have been the usual forerunners of great strokes on kingdoms and families.

II. Doth not the world see, that in these remarkable judgments which have come on a nation and people, there is something higher than instruments, or second causes, which may be very evident in bringing the same about; so that all who go by must confess, such is no casual thing, nor doth arise out of the dust, but that surely a divine hand is there; and truly though some defolating strokes are very terrible in themselves, and blood and ruins should be no matter of pleasure, yet whereas thereby that lately found is heard, even his voice who maketh the earth to tremble, and God is made known to the sons of men, we should not only with fear, but even some holy congratulation consider his work, now to clear what a convincing witness these are to this truth, I shall point at some very obvious remarks, which I am sure the world cannot contradict of the Lord's own immediate hand in such judgments. 1. That strange concurrence of providence which ufheth to appear when God is against a people, how all things will then conspire as a fatal conjunction to work their woe and ruin, that men may see surely this is from the Lord, who is
wonderful in counsel, and from an hand against which there is no striving.
1. How such remarkable strokes are seen to meet with some great and remarkable
height of sin in such a nation and people, so that it is easy then for all
onlookers to confess the righteousness of God therein.
2. When judgment is coming on a land it may appear how instruments are raised, and in a
more than ordinary way acted with all advantages for such a piece of service.
3. There is a visible blighting then both of counsel and strength, and these
means which otherways looked most probable; how remarkably such are confoundred even in the ufe of their ordinary abilities, their heart and usual courage taken from them while the Lord is on a work of judgment.
4. That astonishing success which is usually seen to follow those whom the Lord sendeth forth to execute his judgment, how then they move swiftly and with vigour; they do not stumble, or weary, it is neither rivers or walled cities can stand in their way; mountains are made valleys to shew it is the Lord whose hand in that day is strong upon them, to strengthen their loins, and make the sword and ax sharp for his service.
5. Amidst these various strokes which come on a land, can men paft that of the Pestilence without some special note, where God's immediate hand, something supernatural above ordinary or natural causes may be clearly seen, both in its strange progress in spreading, which like a lightning doth oft go through cities and countries in a small time; do not these tell aloud to the world that they come not unfent, and without some special commission; and that there is no striving against them, nor are ordinary means effectual in some such extraordinary plagues until he who brought it on, do also by his own hand take it off.

III. It is very obvious even to the world that clear resemblance which is oft betwixt sin and the stroke, how holy justice doth keep a proportion, and doth shape out the judgment so exactly both in measure and kind, that it may be easy to see the stroke pointing, as with an hand, to the cause by its discernible likenefs, and both at the righteous judgment of God which thus measured out to men, as they have dealt with others: We see how the Lord tryfted Agag and Adonibezek, how Sodom's burning lust was punishd with fire from heaven, yea, what even David had measured out for his murder and adultery; the sword shall not depart from his house, and for the other, his wives by his own son abused, and truly every age's observation can witness this truth from many convincing examples, that there is a God who judgeth in the earth, it being oft seen if men would seriously observe.
1. How an universal overspreading of sin in a land, hath usually some national, and universal stroke following.
2. That blood waiteth on bloody men, and suffreth them not oft to live out half their days; one oppressor punished by another, the unmerciful man payed home in his own coin, by such as shall shew as little mercy to him, or his.
3. How the proud and insolent who do most hunt after outward glory, are usually tryfted with some humbling abasing stroke, he poureth contempt on princes, and such who will not honour God shall not enjoy that honour they seek from men.
4. That such who have been most given up to uncleannes are oft seen not to encrase as to their posterity, but their issue observably made to fail, yea, by a divine hand rooted out, sue many such signal examples might be instanced.
5. How such who have chosen sin to shun trouble and suffering, have in their sinful way got as large a measure thereof, as that man who in Q. Mary's time said, he could not burn for the truth, and therefore forlook it, by an unseen hand had both, himself and his house in one night burnt.
6. That the treacherous and deceitful men are thus dealt with by others, yea children who have been undutiful to their parents, have from theirs met with the same recompence.
pence. 7. That whilst men to make a purchase have even denied themselves the necessary use of outward things, are oft seen to leave their estate to such who do quickly waste and scatter the same, and thus the sinful parsimony of parents punished with the prodigality of such who succeed them.
8. That the frequent use of some dreadful imprecations is oft punished by the Lord with a suitable stroke to the conviction both of themselves and others.
9. How such as have joined together, and united themselves against the truth have been visibly broken as to their own private interest, and truly we must say there are oft such very convincing circumstances, in some acts of the judgment of God, with such a resemblance to the sin, yea, judgment sometime pursuing men in the very place, where the sin hath been acted that it may be eafy for all who go by to say, there is indeed a God who judgeth in the earth.
IV. Doth it not appear, how very convincing and obvious this truth is even to the world, from those ordinary remarks, and proverbial sayings which we find in all ages, and in every part of the earth, even the most rude and ignorant have had, of the judgment of God; for truly what else are those but an express witnesses, how universally this truth is known and received by men, how much the world is convinced thereof, through a long tract of observation from the fathers to the children, yea, thence they have had a divinity of their own, drawn out thereof, how such sins do not use to pass without some publick punishment. Now, I would but name some few of those remarks, that have been most usual in all times.
1. How some families have not thriven, but a secret judgment hath been discernible thereon since they had hand in some gross acts of wickedness, such as bloodshed, their former prosperity from such a day visibly declining.
2. How that an evil purchase ufed not to be of long continuance, but their estate oft in a very strange and unsensible way made to evanish, which their children though frugal can by no means keep up, and the caufe hereof, men do easily point at; it was purchased by fraud transmitted with a curse clearing thereto, and so there was no warding off the judgment of God.
3. Such who do not much consider God's controversy, yet are oft forced to remark that since some have medled or marched with such an house, they have sadly sinned thereby, something of a curse even following the race and posterity of some.
4. How sacrilegious medling with that which hath been for a pious and publick ufe hath caused a visible wast and consumption in their own estate.
5. That mens asking counsel from the Devil, and turning to that way for their help, doth usually resolve in a sad and tragical close, and truly this much many in the shutting up of their life have been forced to confess.
6. That childhood doth not ufe to keep its feet, nor a wicked way long prosper, whatever it seem to the first view, yea, I may add as one of the world's remarks which they cannot well shun, that which seemeth was an ordinary saying in the time of Elisher, that it is not safe troubling the church, or for men to flate themselves in opposition to that party, and I dare not question, but this shall be yet as convincing and obvious to the world as it hath been in any former ages.
V. Is not the appearance of a divine hand oft very obvious to the world in the discovery of sin, and bringing to light some gross acts of wickedness, even in an extraordinary way, while it is seen.
1. By what strange unexpected means, these have been brought forth, such an astonishing concurrence of things therein as hath forced not only beholders, to some special remark, but hath even struck the guilty party through the heart with wonder, and conviction of the same.
2. How the hand of justice pursuing men for some publick and known crime, doth oft bring to light some that have been most secret, which they thought the world could never reach, yea, it may be frequent-
frequently seen while men have been in one sin found out, it hath also brought forth the discovery of some other, and forced them to confess, that it was a righteous judgment pursuing them for the same. It is a thing also known, yea, by many undeniable instances witnessed, that marvelous discovery of concealed murder, by the bleeding of the body upon the touch of the murderer. I confess it should be hard to avert the lawful and warrantable practice of such an appeal to so extraordinary and stupendious a sign from the Lord, where scripture goeth not clearly before us, but on the other hand, such a thing so surely tried for such an end, and in the case where all ordinary means of discovery have been wanting, I think calleth us to a serious remark thereof, while it so visibly seemeth to witness his hand, who doth make inquisition for blood.

VI. Is not the dreadful consternation, those tormenting fears which men after some great acts of wickedness do betray, a very obvious witness to this truth, that there is a God who judgeth on the earth, in whose hands it is a terrible thing to fall; and sheweth how great a punishment wickedness is to itself, truly if atheists turn not brutish and stupid, they must notice this, and confess a thing which doth so oft reach their ears, what have been the horrid cries of many dying men who have most sported with sin in their life; that may tell bystanders there is a judge who can stretch forth his hand on the soul and conscience, whereto no rack, or outward tortures are any way comparable.

VII. I would further add these extraordinary signs, and prodigies which do usually go before some stroke and judgment on a land, do they not clearly point at a divine hand in the same? For as these are a solemn forewarning from heaven to give men an alarm, before remarkable changes, the truth whereof the world cannot deny, so we must say they are a convincing testimony, that these judgments are no casual things, which the atheist cannot answer, it being so clear.

1. That such signs and prodigies have been in every age visible to the world's experience, and the graverst histories both of ancient and later times, do fully witness.

2. That such things should also be previous to great revolutions in the world, we know the scripture is most express, Joel ii. 30. Luke xxi. 11. And as we should guard against any superstitious respect, we should also beware of stupid atheistical inadvertency at these strange works of the Lord, which call both for fear and observation. 3. That such have been usually previous to great calamities and judgments on people, is a thing that all ages must witness, even thefe, who have been most cautious and discerning in their time, who could not flun this as remark, Herodotus doth set that down as a thing most sure in his vi. book, Cum Deus punitorus est gentem, urbern, prodigiiis id folet significare, and Lucan could tell, what went before the Romans civil-wars,......Superique minaces, prodigii terras implerunt, yea, it can hardly be infinced any great change, or revolution in the earth, which hath not had some such extraordinary herald going before.

4. Can the world deny how sometimes these prodigious signs have been shap'd out to point at the very nature of the stroke then eminent, by a strange resemblance to the same, such as a flaming sword in their air, the appearance of armies fighting even sometimes upon the earth, to the view of many, most sober and judicious spectators; also showers of blood, the noise of drums and such like, which are known usually to go before war and commotions.

IX. That there are evil spirits. Eph. vi. 12. Rev. xx. 2, 3. and a diabolical power such as the scripture hath held forth, whose constant work is the ruin and undoing of man, is a truth not only witnessed from that experience
perience chrifrians have of their affaults, but is undeniable by the world and greatest atheists, except they deny the discovery of fenfe as well as reafon. I confefs it may caufe fear and affonishment to think on this, that fpirits fo knowing, and once originally excellent, have fallen thus into fuch an height of indignation againft infinite goodnefs, that it is now their only aim and pleafure to difhonneur God, and defroy his image in man. It fhould indeed caufe us to fear him that spared not the angels who finned. But the truth it felf is fure, that fuch a party is at this day encompassing the earth, and trafficking up and down there, to prove which by arguments were to light a candle to let men fee that it is day, while it is known, what ordinarie familiar converfe many have therewith, and alas! too easy to discern that power which the prince of this world hath upon the children of difobedience, how obvi-ous are the marks of his conquest almost every where? Thoufands lying in his chains, how far do we fee many transformed even to the very image of the Devil, which in thofe desperate prodigious acts of wickednefs that are oft in the world may appear, fhould we fhould think human nature, theo- corrupt could not but tremble, yea, look upon horror, how many in all ages have even been in an express covenant with them, and is not there a great part of the earth where the Devil is visibly and audible known where he hath a kind of neighbourhood with men? But there being no need for fuch ade-monftration, I only here aim to hold forth what a concerning truth this is, and of great conquence if feriously considered, yea, how both the scripture and chrifian religion, is hereby evidently confirmed since thefe things must neceffarily follow.

1. That in this the scripture is truly fulfilled which doth witness what thefe fpirits are, advverfaries to man in their nature, and inclination desperately evil, whole actings in the earth have a visible tendency to mens hurt and ruin, yea, their pretended favours, always directed to that end, whence we fee fuch a natural inbred horror which is in man againft them.

2. That it is no common thing which they fo much purfe, something more precious than the body for which fo great and cruel an advverfary is in continual labour, for their actings have no fuch tendency to ruin mens eflate in the world; no, it is moft evident this is the foul, the immortal foul, to undo them in that great intereft, which is the mark whereat they level, that poor man might be fherer of that misery under which they are concluded.

3. Is it not an undeniable confequence of this truth that there muft be an invisible world that hath inhabitants of another kind than fuch as are here, that sure there is fome being above man, yea, a real correpondence betwixt men and fpirits, and fhould not man thus placed in a middle eflate betwixt the angels and the beafts here below partaking in his body with the one, but in his reasonable fowl with the other whence raife himself to thoughts of fo me more excellent condition for which he is framed, than a fenfual life, and that surely the foul hath an intereft in an other world which he fhould moft look after? 4. Muft not this also be fure that there is an invisible guard, and thefe desperate fpirits are under reftraint by a power stronger than they, which can bound their malefic, for this may be certain that thefe who have fo great enmity to man, are fo hear, and have fuch advantages over us could not keep at fuch a distance, but that they are kep in chains by a higher power.

5. How is it that now by the gospel and within this precint of the church, Satan's power is fo much reftrainted in refpeft of formertimes, while it is known what a familiar converfe they had with men, did even haunt their houses, and were fo pub-lick in their appearance under fuch names of Faubries and Brownies, which fince the breaking up of the light of the gospel hath not been, yea, hath not the Devil
Devil to this day an open throne and dominion in these parts of the earth where Christ is not worshipped; it is also known, how the oracles of old did cease, and that publick worship which the world for many ages had given them, with the very time of Christ's appearance, and spreading of the gospel these night bealls getting to their dens, when once the day was broke up. *Plutarch* and other heathen writers are a witnesses to this. 5. Whence is it that within the church where Satan is more restrained, yet there he doth more stir than in all the world besides? Doth it not shew that that is the party with which he is at war, hence doth he more rage, the more clear the light shineth, yea, is there not something, besides mens natural enmity at the truth, even a fury and violence wherewith some are visibly driven in their actions with such an unutterable cruelty against the followers of Christ, without the least shade of provocation as holds forth a lively resemblance of the Devil, and some violent presure, and incitement from that corner. 7. Is it not sure that there is such a party, by this, that he is an adversary to God and holiness, for which he doth so vehemently tempt, and prevails to the outward acts of sin, yea, that there is a spirit of blasphemy which so visibly rages in the world, and acts men to war against heaven with their tongues by cursing, and blasphemous oaths which hath no carnal pleasure or gain, but yet, can not forbear, from a violent incitement which may be seen swaying them to the same. 8. Whence is it which is so very well known and publick that these horrid wretches, who give themselves to the Devil cannot enter in any formal engagement without renouncing Christ and their baptism, doth it not shew that direct opposition he stands in to Christ, yea, to the very name and shade of chrittianity? 9. Whence is it that even the greatest atheists upon any appearance of the Devil, or apprehension from that corner, will not then make scorn of prayer, but turns in earnest to that, which at other times they mocked at. O doth it not shew mens atheism is their judgment, that not only there is a dreadful horror and fear, which by nature men have of these evil spirits, but some inbred senfe also, and impression of a deity, which doth bewray it self whether they will or not, in a pressing strait and extremity.

X. That there is such an enmity betwixt the seed of the woman, and the serpent as the scripture hath held forth is very manifest, a truth wherein the world may see the scripture clearly verified, *Gal. iv.* 29.

It is truly strange that this putteth not men to more serious thoughts, to pursue such a thing to its true rife, what should cause such a violent and unreasonable contrariety against the way, and followers of God; for here upon grave reflections they must needs see that their way in this is a convincing witnesses to the truth of the scripture, which might put them in some other humour, yea, help to turn this poison into an antidote against it felt, but this is sure and undeniable, the discovery whereof cannot but stare the greatest atheist in the face, from these convincing evidences.

1. That it is seen no private quarrel which ever was among men hath been with such vigour and malice purfued as this upon the account of religion, which hath still put the world more into a flame, than any private interest, yea, it is very manifest how men are carried with the spirit of their own natural inclination, to oppose the church and people of God.

2. That this feud and enmity could never be taken away through all the successions of time, a frite which is not lately begun, to be seen only in one age, betwixt the children of the bond woman, and of the free, no, the most fage and wife amongst men the greatest peace-makers, could yet never fall on a way to reconcile these two parties, but the children have still served themselves heirs to the quarrel, and hatred of their fathers against the church.

Is
it not seen that these who are more civil, and can hold a little up with the form of religion, yet, will break forth in greatest rage against the power thereof, when once it begins to appear? It is indeed here, that inbred contrariety which is in men against holines, doth betray itself, even in those who are otherways noted for a calm and peaceable disposition, while once they begin to be scourchit with its heat. 4. What strong natural antipathy is this which causeth men to pursue with much bitterness these from whom they never had any personal injury? Sure their conscience must oft tell that they have no reason, or any other provocation than what is from the appearance of the image of God in such, but this is their nature and disposition, an enmity which they can no more help, than they can change their nature, or the Leopard can change its spots.

5. From what a strong inclination and inward principle doth the world thus act in its opposition to the church and followers of God? whilst it is clear, though these were never so quiet and peaceable, yet their enemies are still refuseth, and cannot flee before them. 6. It is seen how this doth separate between nearest friends and relations, and alienate such who have sometimes been most dear to one another, no bond in nature so strait which it will not break, it doth oft fet the husband against the wife and the parents against the children, yea, when religion once breaks up in a corner of a land or family, doth it then make a visible jar, and put all in a flame?

7. It is clear that when once grace appeareth in men they are as a sign and wonder to a prophane generation, the world doth then visibly change her countenance, and looketh like a step-mother, while on the other hand it is clear that professors turning loose and running to that excess of riot with others, will cause their old adversaries warm towards them, and alafs, proveth the surest way to gain mens friendship while the world thinks, they are their own when once they turn prophane.

XI. That the creature is made subject to vanity because of sin, which not only the wisest of men but the spirit of God doth witness, that things here beneath the sun, are indeed vanity and vexation of spirit, Rom. viii. 20. Eccles. ii. 11. is a piece of the scripture in such great letters written forth to the view of men, that none can be strangers thereto. It is true, the cause and solid remedy of this so general a complaint, is only reached by the godly man, who knoweth how to read the vanity of the creature, as a part of the fulfilling of the word, and doth seriously consider things as they are, and not as they appear, but it is also sure, that in every age through the various changes of man’s life this is so clearly witnessed, that the most gross and brutish, cannot shift the conviction thereof, but in one of these two times have been forced to a publick acknowledging of the fame at death, when they are leaving the world, or in a day of strait when the world is leaving them, now to demonstrate this I shall here offer these few queries.

1. Have not the greatest instances of the glory of the world, been usually the greatest examples of its vanity and change? How few hath ambition raised, but it hath also ruined, yea, given the forestrall to these it had lifted most high? What sudden changes do attend great men, and high places, which those who fit low do escape, true if the tragedies of princes, and such who in their condition have been raised above others were put by themselves in record, it should make a great volume, and shew how their glory and prosperous estate did only make their fall more observable.

2. Is it not obvious what a frail dying disposition is in all worldly things, that even the greatest kingdoms, and politic bodies, to maintain which neither policy nor strength was wanting, yet like natural bodies of men had their inevitable periods,
riotous, their youth and flourishing times, their declining, and old age, and at
least even brought to their grave; hath not the glory of greatest empires and
monarchies sunk in the dust? yea, scarce a heap of stones left this day to tell
us where once famous cities have stood, Nunc fages ess ubi Troja fuit, the
ruins whereof, and such excellent pieces of the world doth clearly shew that
certain dissolution of the whole fabric at last.

3. What a small distance
we may see betwixt extremities in outward things, even greatest plenty, and
poverty, the highest place, and a low condition, so that the morning hath
seen some happy and flourishing in the world, whom the evening hath seen
miserable, and in a most short time, such who have been objects of envy, and
admiration, made the object of mens contempt and pity, yea, have so sud-
denly disappeared, have sunk into so little bounds, that men have been put
narrowly to consider them, and with admiration ask, are these they who were
once a terror in the land of the living, and their place hath not been found,
who a few days before seemed to place themselves alone in the midst of the
carth?
4. What else is it but the very present moment of time that mak-
eth such a difference betwixt the rich and the poor, and as to what is past, and
the by-gone time mens happiness and misery may be reckoned as though it
had never been, Nam quicquid retro est, morst tenet, and who but a fool would
boast of that which is to come, a thing so uncertain? this only is sure that a
few days will make all conditions equal, when the bones of the rich, and
the dust of greatest princes will not be discernible from these of the poor man.
5. Is there any thing so pleasant which hath not a worm at the root thereof,
a moth which naturally breeds in the most satisfying enjoyments that quickly
casts out the heart thereof, and blasts their hope before the harvest? How oft
is greatest longing in the pursuit of things turned to loathing, and weari-
ness when obtained, because it is not the nature of the thing so much as an
honor, and the novelty thereof that maketh them pleasant, hence many fen-
fual men have turned monastic, and greatest monarchs become melancholy,
aya, how usual is it for many to survice their pleasures, and bury their joy
and delights in the world even before themselves, while nothing remains of
all their former enjoyments but some sad sights and groans with a heavy fair
well.
6. Is it not found that riches, and abundance of the earth doth
load more than it fills, and mens wealth only further heighten their wants?
How very poor are some amidst their fulness, more than these who earn their
bread with fore labour, whom the world doth wholly poiffe, while they do
not at all poiffe it, neither is it in their power to make use of that they have,
yea, are they not sick and die in princes courts, as well as in the meanest cot-
tage, and the complaints of the great and rich, usually more than these of
the poor? sure it is known that the great man doth offer want a stomack,
and rest, than the poor want meat and a bed to lyce on.

7. In what an endless
circle do voluptuous men move, from one thing to another, in a perpetual
search after other enjoyments to satisfy their spirits? which shew what a great
want is there, which still calls for variety of things, and some fresh supply,
to take off the wickedness of one pleasure by another, else the delight they
have therein would quickly languish and wear out; yea is it not still found
that the best of outward things are not on a near approach what they seemed
to be at a distance, the eye not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing,
but the more they are prefixed the less they yield, neither do they enjoy such
things with most satisfaction who take a full draught, who wallow and feep
themselves in their enjoyments, being more in expectation than in possession,
so that sometime mens attaining their desire hath caused their delight and
pleasure in these things cease.

8. It is also clear that outward things are
incident to the worst without making them the better, and separable from the
best without making them the worse, and what can silver or gold fute an im-
mortal soul, or anfwer fuch a capacity, more than virtue, and godlinefs could
anfwer to fll an empty cheft, or glafs bottle? 9. How rare is it for
men to get their lot in the world brought up to their defire? but are still at
fome jar with their prefent condition, fo that oft there needs no more to
turn men discontent, but the thought of fome lot, which they apprehend more
fatisfying than their own, the want whereof turns them more difquiet than all
their enjoyments are pleafing, yea, it is also evident many mens labour and
difquiet doth inceafe with their wealth, and turns the flame more violent,
and that even in the condition of the poor there is fomething the great man
is made to envy, while the poor may find caufe oft-times to pity, and com-
passionate fome great men in the midft of their prosperous effate. 10. What
is the enjoying the beft of the earth, but its very paffing away, while it perifh-
eth in the prefent ufe? And what? Are not men going through the world
and leaving it behind them in the midft of their moft fatisfying enjoyments?
is not excellency of moft outward things only according to opinion, or the
infitution of men while they have but fmall intrin fick worth from their own
quality; in fome parts of the earth whiteness is reckoned deformity, and the
blackefr colour the greatest beauty, and therefore they paint the Devil white?
what a poor fince is dwelling titles of honour if rightly weighed? while the
pride man's happiness doth fome way hang upon the poor who go by, which
they muft beg from others with the greatest artifice, and would the choifeft
jewels, or a bag of gold laid upon the heart of a dying man, any way quiet
his fpirit, or cafe his pain? Surely this is vanity. 11. Is it not oft seen
amidst the various changes of the earth, princes and great men walking on foot,
and fervants riding on horfback, the children oft put to ask an alms from
fuch who have ferved their fathers? fools loaded with wealth, and great titles,
while men of the choifeft fpirit, are buried under contempt and poverty,
yea do we not fee how quickly men are exalted and abafed in the world?
That which in one age is razed, is oft razed in another, yea, many at much la-
bour to undo that which others have done with the greatest care, and expenfe,
what a fore vanity is this? 12. Will not the want of a very small thing
oft embitter the pleafanteft lot, and turn it into wormwood and gall? the
smallest touch of pain, the gravel, or tooth-ache, yea, even fome melancholy
thought will make men difcelfi all their prefent enjoyments, what torment
doth a small ruffle and affront oft prove to the proud man even in the
midft of his glory? is it not alfo found, how carnal mirth, and joy, men wall-
owing in the delights of the world, hath fll in the clofe a bitter fling and
harfh relifh, which as the shadow attends the body is the native, and unfe-
parable confequent thereof, and furely that may be eafy to discern, there is no
condition, which can want a crofs or fome mixture of discontent, even
where there is left caufe feen.

I would add which cannot want a remark in every time, that while men
feem to be at the top, and furtheft period of their thoughts and projects,
have things according to their defire brought to fome happy clofe, they are
oft then upon fome turn, and change in their condition, either by death or
fome very fad crofs, and even in that day their thoughts have perifhed, tru-
ly fuch as are wife obfervers of the world, and of the courfe of things there-
in may oft fee, how ufual a tryft this is, that when there is too bright a fun-
blink in outward prosperity, if great fobriety and moderation do not accom-
pany the fame, it is an ominous, and fatal prefage of a fform, and Ad summum
quicquid venit, ad eexitum prope eft.
XII. There is this truth, which hath in all ages been clearly wit-
nessed, even to the conviction of the world, That the end of the upright man is peace, and integrity, whatever rub it may seem to have by the way, yea, hath a sweet and comfortable close, Psalm xxxvii. 37. This is an undeniable truth, not only because the saints are then entering into perfect peace, but it is also clear that however the godly man may have very sharp assaults in the close of his days, and some who have shined very bright do set in a dark cloud, their evening full of sorrow, and bitterness, yea, their reflection on some sad flip which they have made by the way, bearing them company even to the grave, yet this truth is still verified, yea, may be discernible to the conviction of beholders, that integrity, and an upright walk hath much peace in the end, and doth land men upon a comfortable harbour, concerning which I can appeal to the world, and the most ordinary onlookers, if this hath not been oft very convincing, and discernible to them, from many instances of the Lord's usual way with those who have been faithful in their generation at their death, from that testimony which they have then given this, yea, from most visible signs and evidences hereof even upon their countenance and carriage, whilst it is seen.

1. How great an advantage such use to have above others, when death approacheth, so that it hath not been Balaam's with alone to die the death of the righteous and to have his latter end like theirs, but the world of men are still forced to witness their respect to the lot of a dying Christian, and would with a share thereof when it comes to their turn, concerning which I may ask the greatest nookers at religion, and at the life of a godly man, if they can possibly shun this conviction, that surely such are of the best estate, and at the greatest advantage in their end.

2. This I am sure cannot be hid from the world what abundant peace the saints do then testify in their choice, what a present unspakeable complacency they have with this that they valued Christ above all other advantages, did choose affliction rather than sin, and now while they are stepping into eternity, find the witness of a good conscience, and of God's approbation so sweet a feast, that their joy and peace on this account, they cannot smother or keep in, but declare to all who stand by what they find, and truly it hath been oft seen, how the inward joy which some of these have had hath exceeded their outward pain, been more sensible to them than their sickness, yea, have been in leaving the world much more cheerful than those whom they left behind.

3. It is also known, and may be very obvious to by-fanders, how with a sweet composure and recumbency of soul such have laid themselves upon the promise, in that hour, while they were grappling with the king of terrors, their spirit then quiet and calm, having taken the truth, and testimony of God for their shield and buckler, which may tell the world what another kind of security, and confidence these have beyond others, yea, that surely the ground on which this confidence is founded, must be a thing that is able to bear out the greatest storm and assault, and is something above nature.

4. Is it not clear that even an untimely and violent death, could not let or frustrate that peace which integrity, .caused in the close? For innumerable instances can witness what marvelous joy and satisfaction the saints have shewed at a flake, and upon a scaffold, and thence have had a more cheerful going out of time, than the rich man stretched upon his soft bed, or the greatest monarch, amidst all outward advantages; sure we must say that sweet refreshing close of the upright man, hath never been more visible, and writ in greater letters, than in such a case.

5. What very sad conflicts have some of the saints had in their life, yea, even upon the setting of the sun have been put to cry out through sore perplexing fears, and
doubts wherewith they have been assailed, who have at last had this turned into a long, and such a marvelous change in their case, as hath not been more sensible to themselves, than discernible to all on-lookers, like a sudden calm, and sun-shine, after some dark storm. I must here ask the atheist, and such as reckon godliness but a fancy whence should so strange, so sudden, and great alteration proceed, that these who a little before were under such horror, could have no rest, no arguments could do their turn, do thus witness the abundant peace of their souls, yea, which is oft seen that fervent desire wherewith some of the saints are taken away, the very luster of heaven being upon their countenance, how marvelous and piercing are their words, which may clearly tell that now they feel, they see, and have got some glance of that, which on-lookers cannot reach, though they cannot deny an acknowledgment of this.

6. Must not the world grant, yea, the greatest enemies to godliness allow this charity, that sure this peace and joy which such have witnessed at death can be no counterfeit, that there is no temptation could thus by as them to deceive others and themselves in a matter of such high concernment, and at a time when it is expected the greatest of men would speak truth, yea, that this doth appear, while men cannot in the least charge the dying christian with any distemper in his judgment, but while they have been most composed, stayed, and present in mind, and as to other things of their concernment, most deliberate and sober; even then they have born this witness.

(5) Since that peace and joy, which integrity hath in the close of the day, when the Saints are dying is undeniable, even to the conviction of the world, I would add something concerning that great truth, The immortality of the soul, and its subsisting after death, to which this joy, when the christian is finishing his course hath a special respect; and is a truth, wherein the scriptures accomplish, and the certainty of that blessed record, may be convincingly witnessed, and demonstrated to the world, for it is thus, (I mean by the light of the scripture) that life and immortality is brought to light, and made known to the sons of men. I know this seems to common and uncontrovertied a thing. An after-being of the soul, and its eternal subsistence, that to say more, than the naming of it may be looked on as impertinent; but oh, how unknown a truth is it! of which there needs no more to shew the little solid persuasion men have, but that it is so usually past with so few, and these very common thoughts; it is not indeed much questioned, not because it is believed, and men are sure thereof, but because they are not in earnest about such a thing; it concerns the world to keep at a distance from a thorough knowing of that, which would be their torment to know; and there is causé for this lad regrate within the church, that the most great and fundamental truths wherein our comfort is most concerned, are usually least studied; but O should it not put us to other thoughts if we could have a serious view of this; it may truly be said the better part is so buried in the word part, that until men are dying, few lay this to heart, that their souls must live for ever, yea, must once part fellowship with the body, and enter into another world, and an unknown state until the resurrection; what I intend here, is only a short touch at this great truth as it is a convincing witness to the scripture and the accomplishment thereof; concerning which I would offer these three things to be considered. 1. How express and clear a testimony the scripture gives to this. 2. On what plain and undeniable grounds of reason this truth is demonstrable to the world. 3. How great a thing it is to believe and be assuredly persuaded thereof; for it seems men rather dream than have their judgments seriously exercised, or are in earnest about such a thing.

As to the first, It is undeniable that not only the scripture holds this forth,
but that there only men have a clear and right discovery of it, it is indeed known, what glances the world hath had of this, yea, what hath been writ thereon, by some whose sole guide was the light of nature in this search; but it is no less evident, how very dark and uncertain these have been; they could not shift some conviction thereof, but it was through a dark cloud, and as some pleasant dream, they looked thereon; because they did not know its rise and original; and what the end was to which in its actions, it ought to be directed; they knew not what its after-condition could truly mean, thence with such wavering and uncertainty do they express their thoughts, I do not here mean the schools of Epicurus only, to whom the soul was but a completion of atoms, but ye see how perplexed and uncertain both Aristotle and others of these famous ancients have thewed themselves in this, which speaks out some more perplexed and disordered notion, which they could not ward off, than any clear and certain discovery which they had on solid grounds thereof, for they knew not the Scripture, where its original, whence it is; and whether it must return, are so clearly held forth, Eccles. xii. 7. And you may further see, Heb. xii. 9. Gen. ii. 7. Luk. xvi. 22, 23. 1 Pet. iii. 9.

II. This grave testimony which the Scripture of God does bear to such a truth, may be also held forth to the world from such a clear and rational demonstration, that the most brutish of men can hardly sink so far into the condition of a beast, as to deny they have a never-dying soul, which will not go to the dust or inherit corruption with the body; I should be loath to bore so much of your time, by any discourse, for which there are many, many arguments, unanswerably demonstrative of this truth, both physical and moral; yet having mentioned it I cannot altogether pass the same without a touch at some few things that may be most convincing and obvious. 1. If you should question the being and subsistence of the soul after death, you must also deny its frame, that it is a simple immaterial and active substance, which hath neither quantity or parts, and is not compounded of any principles, and therefore can be resolv'd to none. 2. Do but consider, if the soul have no cause of corruption, and from no contraries can suffer opposition, as the body does, through the prevalency of heat or cold, how should it then admit of a dissolution with the body; for you know generation and corruption they are by contraries, and if you argue from any natural cause it must surely be one of two, which makes the soul partake with the body, in its decay and mouldering down; either a dependency on matter, as the soul of the beast hath, which is but a material form, or a conflict from contrary qualities, which you know helps the bodies wasting and its fall; but I think you in so far contradict reason to allege any of these in the soul of man. 3. Consider if by these diseases, to which the body is subject, the soul is not reached, must it not also have a distinct existence from it, and I am sure you must grant the soul doth not directly suffer from any outward diseaseth, but the body may be under unexpressible pain and anguish when there is a sweet calm and serenity within. 4. Does not this witness that the soul lies not a dying with the body, nor falls with it since it suffers no decrease, but is found strong and vigorous in its actions when the flesh is brought low, and on a visible decay, yea, is it not at the greatest advantage in its exercise and discerning, the more separate from the body, and sensible things, now it is sure that cannot be destructive to the soul in its being, which is so subservient to it in its operation, I think those who ever observed the joy and peace of a dying Christian and the excellent frame and composure of their soul, under a pained and languishing body, through many diseases, may clearly see this truth, and there read a testimony of the immortal
immortality of the soul. 5. Will you consider, can the soul of man have a dependence on the body in its being, when it does no way depend thereon in its acting and exercise; for it is sure it does truly act, yea, hath a clear rational existence even when the body sleeps, and O does it not prove that this soul, that is found waking when the other is asleep, must have a distinct subsistence, and live when it dies. 6. If you admit that there are spirits and incorporeal beings, which do act without a body, and yet have a true and real subsistence can you doubt or question, the existence of the soul, or its existing the faculties thereof without the body, though you do not reach how this should be; and if there be indeed a converse and intercourse betwixt us and spiritual beings, yea, a truth in fellowship with God the Father of spirits, O may not this satisfyingly demonstrate that existence and acting of the soul, even when the body is at a distance and in the grave. 7. Consider, that which you must grant hath a dominion and preeminence over the body, by its making a rational choice of good, when it is most cross to the define and delight of the flesh, yea, cannot only determine it to endure most grievous torments, but does oft witness a special dejection therein, must it not be something truly distinct from the body which can have a subsistence without it? Now this I am sure you will not deny, that there is such a dominion over the flesh, and a captivating of it to the law of the mind, which the most sensual and brutish will not deny in many instances how little acquaintance ever they have with it themselves. 8. Since there is a discovery and knowledge of things, not only above the reach and impressions of sense, but even contrary thereto, that men do rationally judge and attend to truths which truly contradict their sensibles, as the roundness of the earth, which seems to us a plain, &c. O does it not thiev this soul in man, which can so far foar above the earth, and does so far exceed the body, must be of a more excellent mould, and something truly different from it? I shall but add what means that war and struggling, which to every christian is known, betwixt him and his natural conscience, what means these reflected acts of the soul on its self, these marvelous products of the understanding, and new discoveries? why are men so anxious and concern'd about their surviving name, which is a most poor airy accident not worth the regarding, if there were a destruction of the whole? what means that marvelous deportment of so many martyrs for the truth that they shouldiew this joy and satisfaction amidst their tortures, as tho' they had no bodies, the pleasure of the soul so far overcoming the pain of the flesh? what means so universal a consent to this truth, that these who hate and fear it, yet cannot be rid thereof? and I must alio ask, how are the choice and the excellent of the earth so oft cruel'd, under the feet of their oppressors, whilst these wretches do oft wallow in all satisfying outward delights, yea, sometimes go hence without bands in their death, in a word, O what is it that makes so vast a difference betwixt men and beasts, since these you see have a sensual life, want not some natural sagacity, and have their enjoyments by the sensibles as well as man.

III. Let us consider how great and astonishing a truth this is; O immortality do men believe it? The souls surviving the body, and that condition wherein it will enter, and yet have so few thoughts thereof, for this is a matter of such concernment, that may turn much of our life to a continued wondering; I must say can this be believed, our having an immortal soul, which is of a more excellent nature, and ineffable value than these visible heavens, sun moon and stars, for which so few less than the blood of him who was truly God could ransom from everlasting wrath, and yet we put so small a price thereon; is it indeed believed by men whilst they are so hot in their pursuit
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pursuit after the world, since here is a question may silence all flesh, what should it avail a man to gain, were it the whole world, when it is purchased with the losing of the soul; it is sure there is no imaginable proportion betwixt that and a piece of red earth, or betwixt a few years of time and long eternity; I remember a passage of worthy Mr. Blair our own country-man, who, the first time he heard Mr. Bruce preach, said, *The fame of so great a man caused him to expect something very extraordinary from him; but his whole sermon did press this truth of the soul's being immortal, and that it was a great thing to believe it; he confessed it did at first someway amuse him, why he dwelt so much upon so known and common a subject; but after he found it was some other thing than appears at the first look, for which men may dispute and toss it as a notion in the schools, who never knew what it was to believe the truth thereof; and that a serious impression of it on the heart is something else than a swimming in the head, by some ordinary speculation of this; O what a truth, and what astonishment should it cause if men would but sometimes go alone and consider.

1. What it is they have thus held out to them, and how great a change is before them, which are many days must be in their condition, when once that strange step is paide, betwixt time and another world which they can step but once.

2. That this marvelous change is truly near; time making long laps, the vessel under full sail, which carries forward men whether they sleep or wake to that port; for it is sure this cannot be long deferred, and it is very unsure, but this night thy soul may be required.

3. That this change must be in a moment, in the very twinkling of an eye, and no interval, but a present entering of the soul into that after-state, which shall then put the christian in the fullness of an inconceivable joy, in the immediate presence of God, in the embracements of the Mediator, amongst the angels, and spirits of the just made perfect; but one moment also must put others out of their sensual pleasures and delights, the prince off his throne, and these who have been wallowing in the world down to these dark and horrid prisons, where, with the ceasing of this world's melody, they are forthwith met with that horrid noise and howling of the Devils and of all the company of the damned.

4. Oh! if men would consider, what thoughts they shall then have in another world of that other world, and what other thoughts of their former state and condition; how far they will find this beyond all they ever thought or conceived at a distance.

5. Should it not cause astonishment to think seriously on this great change, which admits no after change, but that there long eternity is the true measure of the souls duration after death; O what a long breathing word to be ever ever blessed or miserable, where the one hath no fear and can go no more out, and the other no hope, or possibility thereof; the hope of the hireling is not there, that he may change his matter at the next term, for these gates are everlastingly shut, by the decree of him who alters not.

Now to shut up this argument, I shall offer one instance more, wherein the world may see the truth of the scripture; and therewith of a divine providence convincingly demonstrative, if prejudice did not draw a veil and obstruct so excellently a discovery, it is this, That the way of God is perfect, Psal. xlviii. 30. and that his works are perfect, and his ways, judgment, Deut. xxxii.

4. yea, that he does all things well. Mark vii. 37. which testimony then the multitude was forced to bear to this great truth, and O how great a truth is it! which can be said neither of angels nor men, but to him hath a peculiar respect, even to him alone, in whose way there is nothing crooked, no mistake no inequality, nothing too much or superfluous, nothing out of due time that is either too soon, or too late, nothing incongruous, nothing misplaced,
yea, in all he does nothing which is not best done, which any could rectify or make better, but in every piece of his work leaves matter of wonder behind, and thus declares himself to be God; I know this is a truth the world cannot well bear, but pretends a visible contradiction from the great disorder that things here seem to be in, for men will oppose to this, what a miscarrying there is of instruments, what a strange emergency there is of most grievous and crost accidents, the most promising means frequently blasted, yea, how good and evil is so strangely interwove, and is not the present day oft undoing the work and labour of the former; yet whatever the world can say to darken this great truth, That the way of the Lord is absolutely perfect, it must shine; yea, it does not want clearness when by a thick interpolation betwixt us and the fame, there may be need of clearing it, the sun ceases not to shine when the clouds obstruct its brightness as to us, O that these who will debate so great a truth, would but come near, and seriously consider the work of the Lord, then should they see so much in the daily tract and administration of providence, yea, even in most ordinary passages thereof, that might arrest their spirit with astonishment, the discovery whereof they shun by keeping at a distance from it.

I shall touch a little this demonstration, how this piece of divine truth is verified and writ out in the event, to the observation of the world, that they who cannot spiritually discern the fame, yet have so much witnessed to dazzle their eyes, and force this acknowledgement, that the way of the Lord is perfect, and he hath done all things well; and for clearing thereof, I would offer some particulars, though few, yet so very comprehensive that in a large measure they reach not only the great works of God, wherein he most eminently declares himself about the church, but takes in also the most ordinary things of providence, here under the sun, and therein demonstrates the certainty of this truth.

First, you see this clearly verified, that the way of the Lord is perfect, in the whole frame and structure of the church of Christ here, which is made a great wonder, and an astonishing piece of the work of God, beyond the most exquisite human contrivance, that ever was; it is her true glory, that does most affect the eye, and ravish the heart, it is within, and lies not in the common rod of men observation, yea, some parts of this excellent body oftimes are in such a disorder, as darkens the beauty of the whole, there is such an intermixture of the hay and flubble of human inventions, with this choice building, that helps to mar its order and beauty, the carved work also may be spoiled and broken down, as with axes and hammers; yet with all these disadvantages, there is a glory on the church of Christ, an awful majesty, such convincing marks of its grandeur, even under its ruins, as have forced the world, and the great men thereof, to consider that fight with wonder and amazement, which you see, Psal. xlviii. they saw, they marveled, and hastily away, and the preceding words gives clear reason, for God was known in her palaces for a refuge they saw something both in the grandeur and frame of the church, and in her preservation, that forced them to see that it was something more than human. Now to clear this a little, do but consider these few instances, wherein you may see the great and stupendous fabric of the church, and how all things are well ordered by him who hath framed it.

1. You may see on what a sure foundation it is built, even that of the prophets and apostles, which is the scripture of God, whereon as it is manifestly founded, it is no less marvelously united and joyned together in Jesus Christ, who is the chief corner stone; will you seriously consider the same form of the house, and the foundations thereof, its goings out and comings in, with all its ordinances, and there you may see how
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how marvelously exact and uniform this building is.

2. Is it not like- wise obvious that the church thus fitly joined together and knit by all that the
joints do supply in its whole complex frame growth up as a building to the
Lord? Yea, is there not a very strict union and correspondence betwixt all the
parts thereof in the same faith and worship, that though divided into many
parcels through the world, yet is still one entire body, the union whereof,
the variety of members and these of such various sizes, that great inequality
amongst them in their growth, the remoteness of place, different languages,
exile or change of countries, yet cannot break off that near tie, that joins the
church of Christ together.

3. What a wonderful contrivance is it which
is in the world, yet not of it, that spreads it itself among the nations, yet
loath not of its own distinct being, is mixed with human societies, yet an in-
closure and incorporation by her self, a fountain of sweet waters sealed, the
surrounded with this great salt ocean of the world, is made up of many par-
ticular churches yet every part homogeneous and of the same nature with the
whole, and though it seems to be open to sore afflicts, yet is a defended city,
which is impaled, hath both her walls and watchmen, her bulwarks and strong
towers.

4. This is of such a frame, that is both visible and invisible, yet
not two distinct churches, though under diverse considerations it com-
prehends both without any jar, and hath communion with Jesus Christ as her
head, for life, standing related to him as his mystical body, and yet as a visible
politic body, is related also to him, as its supreme head, by a political gov-
ernment and guidance, and hath an express charter granted for its extents
and rights.

5. This must be said of it, though black, yet comely; though it does not want some spots they do not to far mar her beauty, but
that in all its several administrations there appears a singular grace; it hath in-
deed its blemishes and failings, yet every measure and degree thereof does not
forfeiture her relation rights and privileges.

6. Is it not a marvelous
frame, which does not want a corrupt mixture, yet in its rule and constitution
does allow no corruption; and though many are found gross within, yet
does it difference betwixt the precious and the vile, yea, shuts its gates as well
as it opens, and is no more tender and easy in her admittance, than awful and
authoritative in her rejection.

7. Is so well constituted, that her officers
have their appointment, and each their work and charge designed, yet no grea-
ter variety of service and employments than there is of gifts, which from her
head are dispensed and suited to the same.

8. She is of such a mould and frame, that though she can boast of an intrinsic power, within her self,
yet must derive it from another fountain, yea, must have a directory and rule
from her supreme head and lawgiver for exercising the acts of that power,
which also hath its proper object even the inward man, and its peculiar end,
the edification of the body, to which this power and the exercise thereof is
directed.

9. This is such a body, the members whereof are indeed
subject to the magistrate, and denies no due obedience to that power, yet without
any subordination or subjecting of the church as such to an human power,
and though it hath not its authority or jurisdiction from men, it denies no
just respect to those; it does bind and loose upon the earth which no human
power can make void; and though cast in among the nations, yet by peculiar
bounds is kept from all other societies distinct; she hath her judicators, and
there a subordination of the lesser to the greater, yet no allowed pre-eminence
and inequality amongst her officers; yea, though her government is truly
monarchick with respect to her head, for there is but one supreme Lord; yet
with respect to the servants and officers it is a most excellent well tempered
anarchocracy, which holds off these gradual differences of power and great

amongst
amongst them, which is so much in use amongst the nations: In a word, O will you consider this choice and exquisite frame, and you will see how both tenderness and severity doth here concur, what a healing there is here in her sharpest rebukes and censures: whilst a private efly, for gainings, is to go before a publick and judicial procedure, yea, her authoritative determinations without prejudice to the judgment of chri-

II. Is not this great truth clearly demonstrate, not only in the frame, but in the whole conduct, and administration of providence about the church, which is indeed one of the most marvelous discoveries we have of God here; yea, even to the world, is oft convincingly obvious, through what a variety of difpenations, he uteth to bring forth his work, and makes his way oft break out of the bosom of a dark cloud; yea, so unexpectedly can make these perplexed changes, with which the church militant is tossed, resolve in such a satisfying close, that it may be seen they were all directed for his interest and advantage: I know this is a great deep, and we cannot have such a discovery of the providence of God about the church, nor reach the meaning of things in their first mould, as in their after-tendency and product, O that marvelous light which shall once be, when that great work of providence, that now is put over in the hand of the Mediator, hath its perfect close, and the whole frame and contexture set up together as one entire piece to look upon, that is now by several pieces, and through a various succession of ages carried on: yet we must say, the Lord herein comes so near, even in the darkest times, and makes the glory of this truth in such a measure shine forth, that may convincingly witness to any ordinary observers that the way of the Lord is per-

1. Must it not be laid of his way, that he does nothing in vain, but makes all things congruous to his end, even things that amongst themselves do most cross one another, does he not carry on his de-

2. Is it not also obvious how the Lord doth ensnare men in the work of their own hands? and turns their wrath unto his praise, how he takes the wise and outwits them by their counsels, makes events fall out contrary to the second causes, frustrates the most promising means, and by things unknown and unthought upon, does oft bring forth the deliverance of the church; yea, how out of shame and reproach
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reproach he do's even bring about his glory; sure these are not so far in the
dark that in any age the world can altogether pretend ignorance thereof, and
is not his way perfect, of which such things can be said? 3. Have we
not this discovery how the church is oft fed by the rod, yea, under that ap-
pears with such advantage, that it may be said her meat hath been brought forth
out of the eater, how usuall is her mercy and enlargement prepared for her,
by the rod, and is humbled in order to a deliverance, yea oft is one step of
the way of the Lord made clear to her by another; O is not here so excel-
 lent and marvelus a method, that all the wit and invention of the world
cannot follow.

III. His way is indeed perfect, and by an infinite wisdom managed, which
do's at once, and by the very same providence reach so many severall de-
yse bring forth such various and contraray effects, that no human reason could
ever judge the resuit and conclusion by the premises, how severity, and mer-
cy should at once be brought forth, a mere fulstroke should come on the ad-
verary, by a long forbearance thereof; how he should also make use of the
same means, both for humbling and proving, and to do his people good in the
latter end: O how perfect must this way be, where all the steps thereof, and
after product would seem repugnant yet no real jar; for the church sinking
yet do's not perish in a flame, yet not consumed, but is thereby kept alive,
brught under the yoke of the oppresfor to make her grow and flourisht,
is wounded and smitten for her further healing, and a witness of his tenderne-
s to her thereby; hath a greater weight and burden put on, to give her thus
cafe and enlargement, yea, is chaffed and meets with suffering, that she
may rest in the day of trouble; sure these are part of the ways of God, and
may be visibly demonstrate in the conduct of his providence about the church e-
even to the conviction of the world; but oh! it is hard to fee where men will
shut their eyes.

5. Is it not obvious, what strange things do sometimes fall
in, betwixt the beginning and close of some special piece of providence a-
bout the church, that do pas human reach to give a present reason for the
same; yet in all these may there not be discerned a remarkable dependence
and concatenation of things, how in such a variety of crofs events, and in a
long continued tract of providence, every thing falls in aright, in its own
place, yea every step, every circumstance so proportioned by a marvelous di-
posal, and conduct thereof, to fute another, for making the whole complex
providenee beautiful, that on a serious review the world must confess, this is a
concatenation so strange, that must be his work and that alone, who sees things
from the beginning to the end.

6. How perfect is his way who can ha-
ften, and dispatch his work by delays, and when he seemes to take a long cir-
cuit in bringing about his design, yet looses no time, but in such a visible go-
ing back, do's most effectually move forward, yea, is it not seen how he
makes things fall in, that are very unexpected crofs, and remote (that would
never have entered into our thoughts) to answer his blessed end? and even dif-
pose that, which above all might seem most directly destructive to the church,
to be of all other things most effectual, and subservient to her advance, brings
her more quickly forward to the harbour, by a storm than a calm, O have we
not so great things to observe in the way of the Lord, that may fiew it is per-
fec.

7. It is also very clear though not on the first view, yet in the close
and issue, what a certain steady motion providence hath and keeps in its course,
whilst the world is reeling to and fro, how the church's mercy hath by greatest
disappointments been more fully answered, than in the most probable way,
yea when her deliverance seem'd further off, and had been much followed
with many a weary look from some other corner with what a strange surpri-

  

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fal, do's providence oft appear at her hand, as it were from under the ground with an unexpected mercy. 8. You may see his way is perfect who puts a peculiar beauty upon every occurrent of providence, and brings it forth in the very fit opportune time, that it could not fall out more reasonably and with more advantage to the church; is there not a seen cause for her sharp trials and the necessity thereof no less discernible, than there is of the winter, for the profit and advantage of the earth; and is it not also manifest her reviving came never too late, but in the very fittest time; I know the world may object, they can see this in the revolutions of the year, but not in any such changes of the church, yet I am sure this is manifest that the church of Christ hath her sad and more comforting times here, with as discernible a succession of the one to the other as there is of the summer to the winter, yea that under these vicissitudes of her condition she is still seen to look forth with a peculiar advantage; I shall add, what a marvelous composition and temperament of contraries is discernible in this excellent frame of providence; there is nothing here incongruous, nothing here too small which doth not fall under its reach, and nothing so great that can over-reach it, here is no jar or disagreeing with the diligent use of means, yet do's this rife so far above the same, that no human care can bend it to their will, nor is there any running crofs to such a current: here is indeed an unsearchable deep! Yet so much is there broken up, and made clear, that may convincingly witness and verify this truth, even to ordinary observers, the way of the Lord is perfect, and what we now cannot attain in its discovery we should learn to admire and solidly believe a more clear manifestation thereof.

IV. I shall yet further pursue this demonstration with respect to that great and marvelous work of God, in the redemption of the church; a contrivance we may say more wonderful than this whole structure of the universe of the heavens and earth, which are so exquisitely fram'd: For here the thing it self is not more astonishing, than the way and conduct of infinite wisdom is, in the whole frame, and all the steps thereof: O this great thing, that mens distance therefrom do's only keep them from being dazzled, yea there ignorance is the great let why they do not more wonder at it; this is indeed far above nature, that without a divine illumination, it cannot be known, or understood, yet we may say, so much is brought forth and discovered, that those who have only report, and thence give some ordinary affent thereto, cannot have their reason and judgment in exercise without some such conviction upon their souls, that surely this is a contrivance above human reach, and worthy of the great God; yea that herein his way is most absolutely perfect; and no sight can be like this where we may see so excellent a correspondence between the foundation and superstructure, that the whole tract of the gospel is but one intent and complete mean for glorifying God, and do's in this, as the ultimate end resolve: Here men may see the greatness of his power, that unexpressible freedom of his grace, the holy severity of justice, all meet and joyn together in a sweet agreement; where both justice is salved, and fully answered, and yet sinners saved, where mercy do's rejoice over condemnation, vengeance is taken on our inventions, and the inventors escape: O strange! a redemption without price and absolutely free, as to sinners; yet all that a just God could exact fully satisfied and told down; it is here we may rise and pursue this great thing up to the fountain head, which is the sovereign pleasure of God, and is the internal impulsive cause, and thence follow it down to that satisfaction of the mediator, which is the great meritorious cause, and here we may see, how marvelously well ordered all the steps of this way are, all the parts of this contrivance; how the elect are made meet for the
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Inheritance through sanctification of the spirit, how faith hath its special concurrence and instrumentality, without prejudice to the absolute freedom of grace, since it is freely given to believe; how these excellent means are by a most Strait connection linked with the eternal counsel of God, and in a most beautiful order joined one with another. Here do's sanctification flow from an eternal decree, and like an excellent stream doth run down through time, until it lose it self, to say so, in that great deep of everlasting blessedness, yea thus the purpose of the Lord runs under ground, concerning his people, until it break up at last in their heart, by their answering to the call of the gospel; O how flately a piece of work this is, and is not his way perfect therein, wherein you may see that grand plot of the devil to undo man, break upon himself, and by the seed of the woman his head crushed; where so glorious a fabric is raised out of so great a ruin, and poor man establishd by his fall, where the glory of the sovereign God, the freedom of grace, and mans blessedness do at once meet together, where the cure is broad and large as the wound, and the restauration made to answer to every part of that ruin, I mean not only in man's being ransomed from eternal wrath, but that the eminent should be killed and taken away, and such a marvelous change of his nature by the renewing of the spirit, which even here restores him in part to that which he lost; it is on this blessed contrivance we may see men brought under a constraint by irrefistible grace, yet without violence, their reason further raised and refined, yet not broken, and its true liberty not taken away, but restored; yea a notable consciency betwixt moral persuasive arguments and the efficacious power of grace, betwixt mens planting and watering in the use of means, and the alone encreas thereof from the Lord, betwixt a physical and moral concurrence in producing one and the same effect, betwixt those two desires in prayer, Da Domine, quod jubes, & jube quad vis; Is there not likewise here a most excellent futableness and congruity, betwixt repentance and remission of sins, without prejudice to the freedom of grace, since he gives repentance as well as requires it, and makes his people what he would have them to be; O how marvelous a contrivance is there where the blessed majesty of God finds an argument in himself when man had none wherewith to plead, was found in the form of a servant, and became our near kinsman, to redeem the inheritance; where his peoples standing is ensured by another surety and strength, than their own, not on their apprehending, but their being apprehended; where the Lord do's oblige himself by bond to make that good, which is only of grace, and is most freely given; where he both frames the desire within the soul, and satisfies it; I shall only add, it is here the redeem'd have nothing in themselves to boast of, and the roprobate none but themselves to accuse, for on whomsoever that door is shut, they have therein actively concurred, to draw a bar for shutting themselves out.

V. I shall offer one instance more wherein this great truth may be demonstrated to the world that the way of the Lord is perfect that his works are done in judgment, yea do's all things well with respect to that marvelous order of nature and disposal of the works of God under the sun, how unexpressibly well all are fitted for some use, and directed to their proper end: This is indeed a truth, wherein the greatest atheists may see this part of scripture convincingly verified, wherein God comes so near, that men may feel after him, Acts xvii. 27. that it may be said, there is no way to shift this discovery, but to flop their ears, and shut their eyes: O what a wonderful disposal may be seen, even in the commonest things, with a mutual subserviency to each other; and in this great variety and throng of the creatures, is it not obvious how each hath its voice and speech, to give us something of instruction, and every thing
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hath some matter of wonder in it, that we may say, it is hard to be an-athrift, there must be a strange violating of their light, where the invis-
ible God comes so near to make himself known by things visible, and by its marvelous a conduct and ordering thereof, shew's unto the ions of men he do's all things well: Oh, may it not be said, we cease to wonder, because every
day we live and converse amongst wonders: now it is here the world hath a demonstration of the scripture, that they dare not debate, left they should deny sense as well as reason, and if any will question the glorious former of all things, why they are thus ordered and disposed, let him but retire within him-
self and he'll find the want and defect is truly within, which he would challenge
in the way of the Lord; may we not fee with astonishment, this frame and
composition of the universe, how each thing doth answer its part, and to the
confirmation of the whole, how amidst a great contrariety an excellent con-
cord is manifest, in all its different parts, natures and dispositions: I must
truly say not only duty but delight and pleasure may call men to this study;
yea, even to loose themselves as it were in so sweet a labyrinth, where it is
more easy to enter than to find an outgate, and all things do witness even to
mens senses the truth of the scripture; it is sad we have so choice and true a
history every day to read on of the works of God, which are not in themselves
greater than that wisdom is, by which they are ordered, and it should be for
the most part as a sealed book: but it is not here in a general this truth can
be reached, O will you come and see, consider the work of the Lord, and
you must also see it is perfect, and his ways are judgment, yea, that he hath
done all things well, do but consider this stupendous frame of the Universe,
a fabric that in all its parts is most exactly joined, and nothing in it defective
or out of order; here you may see that great minister of nature the Sun,
with what advantage it is placed and fitted to dispence its light and refreshing
influences to the earth, is it not with such wisdom, that to move in a higher
or lower orb would not thus answer the advantage of things below, with
what a constant motion does it travel betwixt the tropicks to fulfill its annual
course, and in diverse parts does successively arise, that by turns it may give
the several parts of the earth a visit; should we cease to wonder at the rising
and setting thereof, because it is so frequently seen, O may not this arrest
our thoughts with astonishment with what wisdom it is made subervient all
along its course to cause summer and winter, spring and harvest; yea, how
its approaches and withdrawals are gradual, that by its ascent in the spring
it may dispose our bodies for the summer, and by its descent in such a degree
in the harvest may prepare and fit us for the winter, that there should not
be an immediate bordering betwixt these extremes; is not its correspondence
also manifest, that it hath with things here below, which does not only reach
the surface of the earth, but the most inward bowels and secret caverns there-
of, for its power is known in minerals as well as plants: Is it not also evident
that this glorious body of the Moon though of a lesser glory than the other, is
for an other use than for men to gaze on, how it keeps them from groap-
ing in utter darkness through the night, and lights a candle to the world
when the sun is gone down, which by its withdrawing does so far discover
the glory of the Moon and stars, that its brightness did vail and darken; its
influence is known also upon the sea, upon seeds and plants, yea, upon the
humours and complection of mens bodies: O what innumerable employments
are these by which it is made continually subervient to the world! And do
you not see, how the night hath its special use, and is well ordered as well as
the day, yea, that it hath its peculiar beauty, and by its darknes doth com-
mand the light, and makes its approach more sweet and desirable; this gives
the
the labouring world sometime for repose, and most observably answers man's weariness and necessity of such a rest with so fit a season, that we may say it but draws a curtain about us for that end, and do thus retire the earth, and puts it in a sweet and silent composure from the noise and hurrying of the day; yea, does not every evening solemnly warn men of their approaching death, and swift palling away of time, that they may have no excuse of being surprized in this great change, who have so grave, so frequent a monitor, to speak it to them; but let us a little further follow this choice enquiry and search of nature which is so clear a witness to the scripture, and you may see how marvelous these various motions of the heavens are, the position of the stars and constellation, where each hath its own proper course, yet all carried about to one general and common end, to shew there must be a first mover who is not subject to motion or change, but does manifestly determine all these: O strange! How does this great body of the earth hang upon nothing, that a thing so vast and ponderous should lean upon the air as on a foundation, must there not be here a piece of art above human reach, how thus it does keep its center, and rests there upon, and is it not clear how steadily the axis of the earth is, and perpetually parallel with it self, that it cannot tumble this or that way: What a marvelous order is also seen in these higher motions of the celestial bodies, of which some are slow, others rapid, some tend to the East, others towards the West, and yet from these though thus crossed to other, there results a singular harmony, in which the conservation of the world and production of things here below are concern'd, which could not so well have answered this, without such a variety in their courses; it is true, the Lord might have made every day a year's length, and caus'd the sun keep its course, from East to West so long, but O how well are all these things ordered, and that thus he doth divide our life in such short stages, to make us more frequently mind our change, we see likewise how marvelously the earth is framed in its various parts and proportions, and the singular advantage it hath both in its posture and figure; the mountains and high places do not mar its beauty, nor want their use, where the beasts have a shelter provided; and is not nature likewise more displayed and laid open to men by the plains and valleys, which are to the earth a special ornament? How manifold is the use of the air which fills up that vast space between the higher and lower world; it is here the birds find use for their wings, thorough this the rains find an easy passage, this does intervene between the sun and the earth, yet is no let to the communication, either of light or heat, but its scorching is thus qualified, by that sweet cool breathing of the air; is not the singular use and advantage of the winds also known? And how these are both directed and bounded, so that men can neither cause a storm nor a calm at their pleasure; and O can you look on the Sea, and not wonder, what marvelous things are there, how it is shut up with gates and bars, and hath its appointed bounds, without which there could be no reason, how a bank of sand should restrain the great ocean from breaking forth, its manifold use and advantage is also known; would any wish that the whole earth were dry land? And O strange that this not only is made passable, but by that art of navigation becomes a more easy way for transport and commerce, by which cities and countries are made to flourish, do you not see that regular course it keeps in its ebbings and flowings, the singular use and subservience of the tides, so that when men are troubled in an inquiry about the natural cause of these, they cannot but observe the special end and advantage thereof, may we not with wonder also see, how these parts of the world, which have the most scorishing day, and greatest heat, have usually the longest night to qualify it with such a cool-
ing moisture, how these countries which have no rain, as Egypt, have some supply thereof by an overflowing of the rivers, do you see any members either of men, or beasts superfluous, and want an use, or is there any poison but hath some peculiar antidote provided, yea, the most hurtful creatures as Serpents and Vipers are found of singular use in medicine against their own hurt, as the oil of Scorpions is against the sting thereof; you see the poor people have medicinal waters provided without money, and it is a notable remark which is certainly known of one who inclosed some such well in his ground that he might put an impoft thereon, had it taken away and run dry on his hand; what a marvelous use is there of natural antipathies and sympathies whereon the operation of medicine, the special improvement of navigation, by making use of the load-stone doth so much depend, you see how the harvest gives a large compensation for the toil of the spring, and do not the poor man's labours through the day make his bed soft in the evening, and his rest sweet unto him? You see what correspondence the heavens keep with the earth in these sweet refreshing showers, by which its seminal vertue is drawn forth, and thus the rain doth moisten what the heat would scorch, you may see how it is defilled and drop'd down, not in violent floods, but as it were through a small siefe, or otherwise it would hurt more than help; you would not desire to want rain, nor yet to have it perpetual, and thus it is ordered; or not the vapours exhaled from the earth, that by refreshing showers they may return thither again? O how manifold are the works of the Lord! And in what wisdom hath he done them all; Is not the pain and travel of the beasts in bringing forth their young, proportioned to their condition, and to that lodging they have, Job xxxix. 3. They bow themselves, and bring forth their young, and cast forth their sorrows, and as their time and duration is for most part shorter than man's, is not their growth also suited thereto; you see men have their lodging finished ere they come in the world, the beasts are provided, and by a wonderful instinct, they are taught to seek after the same; it is known how the want of hearing or sight useth some other way to be recompens'd, with some special natural sagacity; Yea, a want and defect in some parts of the body is oft supplied with a greater agility in some other members thereof, which is known in many remarkable instances, such as that woman in this country, not long since who had no arms from her birth, but could with no less dexterity make use of her right-foot for all the uses of her hand; You see how the beasts have some natural defence and are taught self preservation, and what the hare and hind want of the lion's paw and strength is made up oft by a more swift foot; what an advantageous antipathy there is amongst the beasts, lest the earth should be over-run with these which are hurtful; the dog fitted by a strange tendency of its kind, to pursue the wolf and the fox, and the cat for destroying of rats; You see how the oxen are tamed to endure the yoke, and brought under discipline, whose strength is above many of the wild beasts; are not these things that are most absolutely necessary most easie likewise to be had? and whilst there is such a variety of labour and toil does attend the lot of man here, doth not the earth also afford a variety of delights? [You see the birds need no instructor to build their nests, and choose a fit place, nor do they mistake their feeders, yea, do not these sweet musicians by their natural melody call men to praise, whose debt is much above theirs? Is there not a marvelous coalition betwixt the graft and the tree, which exceeds human art, if nature did not so wonderfully co-operate therein, and in the inoculating a small bud into a flock; and O that wonderful encrease that follows the feed thrown into the ground how it dies and rots there that it may rise with the greater luftre and advan-
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rage, and by such a significant emblem teach men the certainty of the raising of their bodies, for it's sure the ordinary things of nature are great and convincing hieroglyphicks to hold forth more divine things if we could but read them: do you not see what veins of coals and other minerals go through the earth? whence it is furnish'd and hath fit materials for daily use, and for an improvement of mens faculties: is not the earth watered by an intercourse which springs and rivers have with the sea? and what some parts of the world want, is it not in other things supplied; that every country hath almost some peculiar advantages; it is known how the coldest places of the earth, do most abound with the warmest furres: you see the beasts want not their table; and is not the little well clothed? Doth the grass of the ground want its use? Yea is not the very colour thereof notably futed for mens eyes? What cause of wonder is there of the different forms, the virtues and variety of plants? You see the little ants have their magazine and flowerhouse, the bees want not some order and government; yea no human skill can frame such work as theirs is: But O man what a curious and exquisite fabrick is that which did come in amongst the laft of the creation? but as the greatest wonder thereof, a most rare piece of work of a strange various and subtile composition, in which there is no fotable an harmony made up of many contraries; I think these who would learn atheinm are not only concerned to flife their reafon but to flut their eyes from looking on themselves and the frame of their bodies, which is so curiously wrought with nerves fineews and veins, with such a variety of parts, and yet not one bone or muscle superfìuous. (5)

THE FOURTH ARGUMENT.

I shall here offer to prove the scriptures accomplishment is this, That where- of the most part, as to these special predictions, and promises that concern the church, is fulfilled, and hath now taken place in their appointed times, which we may at this day clearly read in the event, and but a little part thereof now remaineth to be made out, must be a sure truth. But the scripture is thus fulfilled, and the prophecies thereof now made legible in the history of providence, and in the works of God about his church. Therefore, &c. I would permit here some few things e'er I speak particularly to this argument.

1. Though the scripture is thus wonderfully suited by the Lord, and taketh place in every generation as if it were alone directed to that time, yet, it is also clear that a special part thereof hath its proper accomplishment in these ages, and periods of time, to which it doth in a peculiar way relate, some part of it, which did concern the times of the Old Testament, some that doth also answer to the times of the gospel, and a part of it which hath a peculiar respect to these latter days, which the Lord is now bringing forth, and we wait for a more full accomplishment, that it is on a near approach. 2. It is also sure that the whole work of God, and his providence about his church here in the world, which was perfect from the beginning, and before him from eternity, is comprehended under the written word, where the Lord hath fully revealed his mind and counsel anent every event, and concurrence of the church; though we oft be in the dark in finding out the fame, but the event will in due time speake for it self, which should cause us until then, with much sobriety, pass our judgment on some of these truths that are not yet fulfilled. 3. It is clear that the prophets of old did not only foretel such great changes, and revolutions, as we are to go over the church's head, and declare the certainty thereof, but we find these prophecies oft point at the times, and pe-
riods of time, whereo they did relate, and though sometimes in dark terms, yet did clearly shew that there was a certain prefixed time, and not at every time they could have their performance. 4. We would consider how the full accomplishing of the scripture, and the perfecting the Lord’s work about his church will be at once, and doth keep foot together, and then shall a full, and satisfying discovery of God’s way, and providence, and all that he hath been doing in the world clearly appear, when the great mystery of God in his written word is finished, and the church so near to land.

That I may speak a little to so grave a subject: I would lay down these two things to be considered. 1. How much of the scripture, and predictions thereof may be now clearly verified in the event. 2. What doth yet remain to have an accomplishment in these last times, by which we may certainly judge how near the Lord’s work about his church is to a close; concerning the first I shall point at some of these most concerning events and changes which the church hath met with, wherein we may see what of the scripture may at this day be read in the history of providence, and is certainly fulfilled.

I. WHAT IS ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED.

1. Let us go back to these first times after the fall; and see that dreadful stroke which came upon the old world by the flood after an universal defection from God, and we shall there find the fulfilling of that which Noab that great preacher of righteousness had oft foretold; and of these threatenings which by Moses were there recorded, wherein it may be very manifest. 1. That this truth, besides divine authority, no records of ancient times, no antiquity could ever contradict: yea, some of the oldest writers do clearly witness something of an universal deluge over the earth, with the strange preservation of some from it, however they were in the dark as to many circumstances about it; Josephus doth cite Berosus the Caldean about this, who without doubt had then some of these oldest records true, and uncorrupt. Eusebius also doth mention some fragments of Abidens and Appolodorus, which in his time were extant, clearly pointing at the flood, and at Noab under the name of Zifubrus with his sending out birds to see if the waters affwaged. 2. There is nothing here doth contradict reason, how this might be brought about, even in the way of ordinary natural causes, which the Lord did make use of for that end; for we find the windows of heaven were opened, the air being condensed into clouds, and their retentive power loosed, these great floodgates were thus set a loose; which falling not in drops, but all in a full body, like the spouts and cataracts of the West-Indies might soon overwhelm the earth with abundance of water, while these fountains also of the great deep beneath were broken up, which was not only the ocean let forth to go over its banks, but an universal vent to all the veins of the earth, and that great mass of waters which is in the bowels thereof, which from beneath meeting these that were from above, may give men a clear and rational account how such a thing might be. 3. This part of the scripture is most agreeable to the great scope and drift of the same, for it points out an universal defection, and an universal stroke meeting together, it leads us forward to Christ, to whom the ark was an excellent shadow, and of that salvation which in and by him, the church hath from eternal wrath, and is a very manifest pledge, and sign of that last destruction of the world, which though not in that manner, yet shall once surely be, and find men in such a condition, as this flood found them in the days of Noab.
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(5) II. What we find expressly threatened by the Lord, Gen. xi. 7. as a stroke and judgment upon men for their ambition and pride, The confounding of their language, is it not also most clearly verified and writ forth to the view of the world in the event? that whilst men cannot deny or debate a thing which is so conspicuous and undeniable, they must also see a fulfilling of the scripture, and that there was a divine hand in this strange stroke which may be a convincing refutation of atheism, if such do not willingly shut their eyes at these clear evidences.

1. That it is sure, there is such a confusion and variety of languages in the earth at this day, whence it is divided, one part thereof so much rent from another, commerce and correspondence thus made difficult, and a bar drawn betwixt nations, by a different speech, and do not the most ancient records of the world witness the same to have been in former ages. 2. It is also sure that no tradition or human history, but the scripture only gives us an account of this strange thing; how it should be, or whence its true rise is; yea these who have writ most of other things, yet can give no reason why they write in one language more than in another, but that it is proper to their country where they had their education, but how the race of men who have such a community in other things should be thus divided; is indeed a mystery which divine truth can only unveil and shew its meaning.

3. It is sure there is no language by another that is natural to men, but what ex instincto is acquired, whether by long continued use as children do their mother tongue, or by set rules, it is true Adam who was the first man had his by some extraordinary infusion, but it is found a pitiful fancy allledged by some, that young children who have never heard speech and have been thus kept at a distance would speak the first language of the world and consequently Hebrew, for the contrary of this is certainly proven. 4. Is not this confusion and diversity of languages which is in the world a most strange and marvelous thing, which in no ordinary way, yea without something of a miracle, could be brought about, and to no continuance of time, or invention of men can be attribute, if we consider these things.

1. It is clear that if man can be traced back to some original and beginning, there must then have been some one language, whilst the world was but in a family, so that if you will admit the truth of the creation, you may see it was not so at the beginning. 2. Is it not undeniable that men could not choose to great a plague, and judgment on themselves, if they had any use of reason, which would divide betwixt them, and the great part of mankind, hinder trade and mutual interchange with other countries, either in exporting, or importing most necessary commodities; that which also would obstruct human knowledge, and the discovery of these excellent inventions and experiments of other places, yea give man, whose days are so few, such a fore toil and labour to acquire but a few of these many different languages which are in the world.

3. Is it not also clear that this is above human reach which men cannot judge, how in an ordinary way such different languages could have been found out and afterwards acquired by the body of nations, yea how there should be such an agreement in this amongst a vast multitude of different tempers and capacities, for it is obvious there should have then been an inventing of these first radical languages? I mean these that are not dependent upon, or interwoven one with another, but are wholly different as Greek, Latin, &c. and therewith such a vast Dictionary of words with their signification and rules to conjoin them in sentences, must have necessarily been framed, and abandoning also and turning off of some former language, so far as to the bringing of it in oblivion; yea should the universal consent and concurrence of the multitude in such
such places be required? I confess this were not so strange if such a difference betwixt languages were but in some peculiar mode or propriety of phraes, and alteration of words according to the various tempers and climates of the earth; but we may see what different languages there are, wholly independent on other, not only in original words, but in the very whole frame and bulk, which can be no compound of other languages, as many of our modern tongues are, which do’s truly flate the case in such a manner, that the scripture only can resolve how this should be, yea it is known besides many branches, commixtures and variations of languages which through continuance of time, through conquest and mingling of nations together, are in the world, there is besides a vast number of these that may be on clearst ground judged original and mother tongues, of which (whatever lesser variation there hath been by the adding of some new words, or the quitting of old, yet the whole bulk do’s remain entire. 4. What a strange and marvelous thing muft this be, if we confider that most of ancient material languages were previous to the use of letters, whence rules or a method could be conveyed from one to another, if it had been only some human invention; for we may know from sureft antiquity how long it was e’re several nations reached a further way to communicate knowledge and repreffe their conceptions than by speech and a vocal tradition, or some signifiant symbols or hieroglyphicks which were then much in use to supply the want of letters, is it not known how little either by pen or printing hath been discovered to the world, but of such late time, as is from clearest histories written to us, thence we find very little of the Greek language upon record before Homer’s time; now may not this clearly demonstrate that in an ordinary way these languages could not then have been acquired. 5. It may be very convincing what the scripture anent this holds forth that, by these different languages, nations and families were at first divided, Gen. xi. yea, that this was the first rise of bounding one of them from another, for which the world could never give another caufe; thus did the Lord inclofe his church in Israel, and by this diversity of languages did outlaw the rest of the earth, for there was that venerable first language of the Hebrew kept up, by which these sacred oracles of the Old Testament were made known. I shall further add, is not a divine hand eminently seen in this? that so great a bar, which for so long a time was betwixt the world, should not only at last be taken off, but such a curse turn’d into a blessing, that the power of God and his very immediate work in spreading the light amongst so many people of a strange language might now under the gospel be more conspicuous, that such an interdiction had been served on the world thereby, to shut the nations out from the church; for we may say there hath been as single a miracle in the gift of tongues under the New Testament as there was formerly in the confusion thereof.

III. What we have expressly promised in the word of the Church’s delivery from Egypt, and was for told by Joseph at his death, that God should surely bring back his people out of that land, for which he left his bones to lie unburied as a pledge thereof, hath now many ages past been fulfilled. It is long since that remarkable day when God made a way for his people through the Red-sea, and his power known upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians, since Moses with the church did sing that triumphant song, The horse and his rider he hath cast in the sea; wherein these things are most clear.

1. That this was a deed known, and publick in the time, which was not done in a corner, but in the view of the world, and before all the children of Israel, and by them attested, and with greatest carefulness transmitted to their children, and by these to the following generations, as a thing never to be
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be forgotten.  2. Was testified by Moses so great a person, an eye witness thereof, one whom even the most ancient of heathen writers do mention with much respect, and in this did never challenge his testimony, though a matter of fact, and of that moment, which all the nations about could not but know, and both in the present and after ages have the remembrance thereof kept up; so that they might easily refute such a thing if false, and we may judge the Egyptians, and many others, could want no good will to put disgrace on a people they so much hated, nor be ignorant of that which Moses published in his own time, to whose works some of the ancientest heathen writers, do show they have been no strangers.  3. A truth which by Moses was put in record, and delivered to the Jews to be kept by them, and their children in in all succeeding ages, a record which they did so narrowly look to, and had in that reverence and esteem, that all the syllogisms and letters thereof were by them numbered, left in the smallest point it should be wronged, yea, were more careful to preserve it than any nation can be of their most concerning rights and charters.  4. A thing whereof the remembrance was yearly from that time celebrated be the Jewish Church, whence the institution of the passover had its rise, that deliverance being as a sign, and sacramental pledge of that great salvation by him who is our true passover.

IV. What is held forth in the scripture concerning the more full growth of the Jewish Church that Jacob should enjoy a scepter, which was foretold by dying Jacob, and promised once and again to Abraham by the Lord, that his seed should be as the sand of the sea, and enjoy Canaan for an inheritance, hath it not long since been fulfilled? wherein these things are clear.  1. That for many ages Israel did enjoy that land in a most flourishing condition which doth in part appear from these very ruins and desolation, over which they have so long lamented, the glory of Jerusalem, and the Temple once so famous, which causeth such reverence amongst them to the very rubbish thereof at this day.  2. That they were once a people by themselves, who were not mingled with the nations, but kept at a distance by their religion and laws, from the rest of the world, as a peculiar people to the Lord, is a thing undeniable.  3. That whilst they enjoyed it, there was a singular blessing of fruitfulness thereon above other places, so as that small piece of ground was enough for an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, but is now at this day a barren sand, an extraordinary curse no less seen thereon than the blessing was in former times.  4. It is also evident that something in the way and carriage of this people, even in their low wandering condition, doth discover they have not forgot what once they were, nor their former grandeur and flourishing, but still keep by themselves with some respect to their own land which their fathers did enjoy.

V. That piece of the scripture which did concern the declining times of the church under the Old Testament, what Jeremy foretold of the babylonish captivity hath now many ages since been fulfilled, a truth which we have attested by sacred history, an history which doth clearly justify it self, and its authority by such convincing marks thereof, that we may say, these who do seriously converse with the word, cannot take up atheism without the laying down of reason, and putting a force upon their own light. Now as to this particular prophecy we would but seriously consider.  1. That which Jeremy did foretell asent the captivity, was not its accomplishment put on record in a book of the church's lamentations? where this truth may be read in her tears, and truly such as ever knew grief in a high measure, may easily know what is there expressed to be sad earnest, and read the lively motions of an afflicted cafe therein, and besides, hath not this been
been witnessed to after ages by a visible monument, even the destruction of the Temple, that great and excellent work, which though after rebuilt, did never attain to its former splendour.

2. This was a matter of fact of great note, and famous in the time, done in the view of all the nations, a considerable piece of the babylonish conquest, yea, that testimony the scripture beareth to the fame, was it not a few ages after made publick to other parts of the world by the Septuaginta translation, so that it had been easy for Ptolomy, or any in that time, to have discovered the falsehood of a thing so lately done, yet, these times nor the most professed enemies to the church therein, could not in the least contradict the fame.

3. Though much of human history, and these records of ancient times that we now have, are both corrupt and defective, yet there wants not some consent, from the first of these, to many of the most observable things that we have of the history of the Old Testament, and as to the certainty of this truth besides its own authority, we will find some of these oldest writers Berosus, Herodotus and Xenophon, give some light to the fame, whose witnesses the atheist cannot challenge; yea, is it not clear that Josephus, not only from sacred history, but from these old records, and fragments of former times, which were then extant (though since have been much lost) did compose his jewis antiques, which give so particular a relation of this truth.

VI. What was foretold by Daniel concerning the rise and fall of the Monarchies, and change of these great empires, which had been so fore a rod upon the church, hath it not many ages past had a most punctual performance? It is now long since that great image shewed to the prophet in a vision, hath been brought down and broken, so that scarce the toes thereof do now remain, which besides the scripture, may be clearly demonstrate upon other rational grounds.

1. It being granted that the prophecy of Daniel was translated into Greek, and laid up in that great library of Alexandria, long before much of it was fulfilled, before Antiochus Epiphanes, and the rising of the Roman Empire, of which Porphyrius could not be ignorant, though all he could answer to that evident agreement between this prophecy and the event, was that it must have been writ after these things were accomplished, whilst it is clear, that a part of the prophecy of Daniel which concerned the fourth Monarchy, was not even in his times fully made out, yea, we must say something thereof doth reach to the last end of time.

2. It is also undeniable that in these great revolutions of the monarchies there is a discernible consent and harmony between this prophecy and these ancient records which we have of these times, so that not only the things themselves, but some of the most observable circumstances thereof which are particularly mentioned by Daniel, we may read in Xenophon, Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus.

3. It must also be granted that something which in Daniel's prophecy would seem most strange and improbable, such as Belshazzar's death in that very night the hand writing was shewed to him, may be particularly understood in Xenophon's history, how Cyrus took the advantage of the Babylonian security whilst they were in the midst of a solemn feast, and by diverting the channel of Euphrates did enter the city without opposition; also how that great horn of the high goat was so suddenly broken, and the coming up of four in his room, which by Daniel are expounded of the Grecian Monarchy, and the dividing of that Empire after Alexander's death, is it not punctually held forth by all the histories of that time.

4. Was there not a very convincing appearance of a divine hand, both in the rise and fall of these Monarchies, and an extraordinary providence which we cannot but see when we read these histories.
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flories, that surely something above ordinary means, and second caufes was
both in Cyrus's conquest againſt the Babylonians, and the marvelous swift
progres, and successes of Alexander againſt the Persians.

VII. That which was the great scope of all prophesies under the Old Tefta-
ment. The coming of the Messiah is surely verified, and now many ages paft
hath an accomplifhment, the Lord is come unto his Temple even he whole day
Abraham, and the fants under the law did long after; this was the moft happy,
and notable Cirifs that ever the church was under, the great Epocha, and pe-
riod of time from which he doth now reckon, which we know is no fable or
cunning device of man, that God was manifeft in the flefh, did make his abode
for some time in the earth, fuffered at Jerusalem in the view of the world,
before many witnefses, did arife from death on the third day, as was feen and
known by his disciples thereafter, and having finifhed the work for which
he came was received up again into glory. This is indeed a great truth which
concerneth us no lefs to know and be sure of, than our fouls is worth, and
interest through eternity, the fulfilling whereof, besides the authority of sacred
writ, the witnefs and records of the Evangelifts and Apoftles of Jesus Chrift
who teftify what they certainly knew, is a truth which from fuch convincing
rational grounds may be demonstrated, that the greateft height of atheifm
knoweth not how to fiate it felf in a direct opposition to the fame; and truly
in this we may fay the Lord hath fo rendered the strengthning of his peoples
faith and their encouragement, that as it is the moft concerning promife of the
scripture, on which our whole hope and bleflednefs depends, fo is it alfo
moft clear and conspicuous in the event: I fhall but only touch this, where-
of fo much hath been faid by others.

1. It is undeniable the Messiah was to come, to whom all the sacrifices un-
der the law these ancient types and shadows did clearly point, to whom the
prophets bear witneff, and was the faith of the ancient Jewifh church, of which
promise they were prevailed, even whilft they faw it but a far yea, did embrace
and repole themfelves therein, and is there not a moft clear, and exact pro-
trayiture drawn forth under the Old Testament of the Messiah, what an one
he fhould be, and by what peculiar charaeter he fhould be known, who
was to be revealed to Israel.

2. The special feafon and period of time wherein Chrift fhould come, we find prefixed, and fowed to the ancient
church, which though under some figurative eftreamions feemed then dark,
yet, was fo far revealed that upon a diligent fearch and enquiry, and particu-
lar collation of the times, it might be easy to discern the Messiah coming
and near approach, of which anticipation the prophets did enquire, 1 Pet. i. 10.
and truly the fall of the monarchies, and right uptaking of Daniel's weeks,
were fure and folid grounds, for a clear computation there anent; thence
was it that fo general an expectation of the Messiah was among the Jews, at
that very time when he came, fo as diverf impoftors did arife whom the peo-
ple were ready to follow, and we fee with what amazement the Pharifees did
enquire at John the Baptist if he were the Chrift or not; yea, Josephus
fheweth how the perfuation of this did moft excite that people to war with
the Romans from the prophecies they had in holy writ, that from Judea
fhould about that time come one who was to be emperor of the world. 3. It
is alfo fure there was fuch an one, who in the days of Tiberius, and under
the reign of Herod was made manifest to Israel, and came with no outward
fhew and obfervation, but did great and marvelous things before all the peo-
ple; was crucified at Jerusalem, under Pontius Pilate, and notwithstanding
the ignominy of his death, was afterwards adored and followed, both
by many of the Jews and the Gentiles, whose doctrine did alfo in short time
time spread through the world, a truth which the greatest adversaries of the gospel have ever confessed, and do attest the history thereof de facto, to be a faithful relation, not only Jesus, but the heathen writers, Suetonius, Tacitus and Pliny the younger that lived near, and some of them contemporary with the times of the apostles, do witness that this Jesus whom the christians worship, did truly suffer in the time of Pilate's jurisdiction over the Jews. 4. Is it not clear how this appearance of Christ to the world; did exactly tryest with the very time, foretold by the prophets thence? Was not Jacob's prophecy thus accomplished? For until that time it is clear the royal line of David's house did not cease, until Herod a stranger came to reign, by whom it was utterly cut off, and it is manifest these lxx. weeks mentioned by Daniel, must be understood of years, else they could admit no other sense, which reckoning from the decree given out by Cyrus, to rebuild the temple, are 490 years, and doth answer to the very time of Christ's being in the world, and his death, which necessarily falls in the last of these weeks, a thing so manifest, that Porphyrus an avowed enemy to the christian religion could have no answer to, but that this prophecy had been devised after the event, which I am sure the Jews, though as direct adversaries would be loth to admit. 5. It is most clear that in him who at that time was revealed to Israel, whom the christian church doth this day worship, was exactly accomplished whatever was by the prophets told concerning the Messiah, and it is no small advantage for the christian cause, that it needs but appeal to these records, which have been kept in the hands of her adversaries, where there is so clear a portrait of him held forth as to his person, his way of coming, the place whence, the entertainment he should get, and his death, that I must think it a contradiction to reason, how men should acknowledge the Old Testament, and not grant the New; since it is clear the Jews look for no other Messiah, than such an one as is held out by the prophets, and they acknowledge also the divine authority of Esay, Daniel, Micah, Malachi, &c. who doby such clear marks point him forth, and shew the church how they should know him when he should come; for truly it may thence appear, that it is not more certain the Messiah should come, than that Jesus Christ is he: I would but seriously ask what do the Jews this day mischief our blessed Lord Jesus, which the Old Testament alloweth them to expect in the Messiah, is it that he came not with outward shew and glory, sure according to the scripture, such an one we ought not to acknowledge, no, should he not be of the seed of the woman, Gen ii. who should be born of a virgin as Esay sheweth, his voice not heard in the streets, despised and rejected of men, a man of forrows; such an one, as was shadowed out under the law, who should be made a sacrifice for sin, yea, come with no outward pompe, but meek and lowly, and riding upon an ass, was to be betrayed and sold, and his price shewed by Zacharias for thirty pieces; a crucified dying Christ, that should be wounded in the house of his friends, and cut off from amongst the children of his people, O! can men possibly deny so clear an accomplishment of these in our blessed Lord? 6. Is it not undeniable that the Jews now in their present case, cannot possibly expect the accomplishment of this promise; that the Messiah cannot this day come, according to the scripture, except they could be put in such a condition, as they were then at Christ's coming; certainly it is impossible that the Old Testament be ever fulfilled anent this, if it be not already, can he come forth out of Bethlehem whilst now no such place is known by that name? Can he come into his temple that is utterly destroyed, is there not now a subversion of the tribes and the family of David not known at this day? Yea, are not the Gentiles brought
brought in, whom Isaiah saith should be gathered under the standard of the Messiah? Doth not the daily sacrifice cease? which the Jews will confess hath been for many ages, and this was to be after his coming, and I would ask how was that ever fulfilled, that the glory of the second temple should exceed the glory of the first? for this cannot be on the account of its structure or outward magnificence; sure there is nothing wherein this glory could appear, but as it points at Christ, and the breaking up of that glorious light, which was before its destruction.

7. There is an innumerable company who have embraced the gospel, and received the spirit by the ministry thereof since the times of the apostles who have put this seal thereto in all ages, that it is the power, and wisdom of God, and truly without partial respect (which the conscience of the worst of men have been forced to justify) it may be said, these were the excellent of the earth in their time, many of the greatest outward parts and abilities, whose moral integrity and candour was beyond question even with their adversaries, and these both of Jews and Gentiles of all ranks of men, of all nations and languages, who not only by a naked profession, but by their walk and sufferings, did they forth the power, and virtue of a crucified Christ, yea, shine as lights whilst they were in the world to the conviction of onlookers, and is not this a convincing witness to the truth of the gospel, which its enemies cannot possibly deny.

8. That excellent doctrine delivered to the church in the New Testament by Christ and his apostles, doth it not clearly shew whence it is, and witness its own authority? For here we may see a manifest agreement betwixt this and the doctrine of the ancient Jewish church, that as the five books of Moses hold forth the sum of the gospel, the covenant of grace, and that mystery of salvation by Christ, so the prophets do carry it on with further clearness, and the Evangelists bring forward like an excellent edifice that is founded and advanced in the one, but perfected in the other, all breathing the same spirit with a convincing tendency to the same end, so that we may say the old Jews under the law, were in effect Chrisrians; and the followers of Christ now under the gospel in some respect are Jews, being one in the fundamentals of their religion; for it is clear that poor apostate people, now in the Jewish nation, hath wholly departed from their own doctrine, and will not come to the light that they may be judged according to the Old Testament; now in this I would seriously attent the adversaries of the gospel if paganism, the Turks Alcoran, or Jewish Talmud hold forth any such doctrine or rule, as that which the Christian religion doth, such pure and excellent precepts to restrain the inordinance of corrupt affection backed with arguments becoming an immortal soul, a doctrine so sincere, solid and rational, so consistent with itself, and agreeable to the true scope and drift thereof, which holds forth, the most exquisite rule of perfection, for men to press after, yea, where every page and line breatheth forth holiness towards God, and righteousness and humanity towards man.

9. I shall add, these clear convincing evidences of the truth of the gospel, which did attend the first publishing thereof were so evident and undeniable a seal from the Lord as may force the greatest atheist to silence, for. 1. They were Jews as much concerned in the religion of their fathers as any, who did first publish the gospel, none more zealous according to the law than Paul was before his conversion, none also could challenge their driving an outward interest hereby, since persecution and bonds, yea, greatest hazard was that which they could expect. 2. It is clear they walked by no rule of human policy, nor these ordinary ways of infinuation, which the world doth use to engage men, and make a party to themselves, but did deliver the truth, truth most repugnant to the flesh, and that interest, with greatest
3. What is published concerning Christ by the Evangelists, the great works he did, his dying at Jerusalem with all the stupendous circumstances thereof, and signs from heaven, was not a thing done in a corner, but in the public view of men, which in these days was most notable and famous, but yet there cannot be produced one contradictory testimony to the truth of these relations, by an adversary of the gospel, either at that time, or since; sure the world wanted no malice, and these great things were early published by the Evangelists and apostles, whilst many of that generation were alive, yet, it is clear, though in a matter of that concernment, which made then so great a noise, and was at that time putting the earth all in a flame, none was found, either among Jews or Gentiles, who could or durst put forth a manifest to discover the least cheat or falsehood, in these things attested in the history of the gospel.

4. Whatever different parties and sects did break up with the first time of the church, to oppose the truth in other things, yet, in this they had all one consent, that he who was crucified at Jerusalem, was the Messiah and Christ, which truly did witness the clear irresistible manifestation of this truth in those times, since, if there could have been the least ground to challenge any imposture or deceit, in this great foundation of the Christian faith, it is more than probable, these bitter contentions followed with such animosity and heat, and irritation of these whom the apostles and church in that time did with much zeal, and sharper cenfures pursue, would have engaged them to put all the disgrace upon the truth which they could, if they might have had where to fasten their teeth, I would further add, that even the arguments and objections, which the adversaries of the gospel could ever bring to oppose the same, are indeed a convincing witness and confirmation, and shew how little they could any way lay, in giving their malice a vent, we find that absurd allegiance of the Jews that the great works Christ did in the days of his flesh, were by fleeting the name Jehovah out of the temple, which they allege he sewed up in his thigh, which truly needeth no further refutation than the reciting thereof, and here they are even forced to witness the truth of these relations held forth by the Evangelists as to the matter of fact, which we find also these later atheists such as Vaniniss, Cardan, &c. dare not challenge or debate, only they would ascribe these great works which Christ then wrought, to the influence of the stars, a challenge so absurd, that needs no other answer but to relate it.

VIII. We have that remarkable prophecy of The incoming of the Gentiles, a truth indeed great and marvelous, which as it is expressly held forth in the Old Testament, yea, is there mentioned, Isa. liv. 1, 2. Isa. lx. 3. 9. is a thing so clearly now written forth in the event, that I am sure, the greatest atheists can have no shift here, that in this strange work of God about his church; the scripture hath an undeniable accomplishment. Now to clear this let us but consider.

1. That for many ages this truth anent the incalling of the Gentiles was sealed up in a prophecy, a thing so great, and astonishing to the ancient Jewish church that they could not well comprehend the same, until once the event brought it forth, for this was indeed a mystery hid from ages, how the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ, when the bounds and extent of the church did not exceed Judea that small inclosure, whilst the whole world beside, did lie buried like an outfield
in dark paganism for it is well known that the most pleasant places of Africa, Asia and Europa, where afterwards many famous churches were, within these 1600 years was but a savage wilderness, Britain, Germany, and France, did then worship the sun and stars, they sacrificed to the Gods of the heathens, yea, these eastern parts, on which the sun did first rise, did not then know the God of Israel, a truth which not only the Roman and Grecian histories, but the records of particular nations, can clearly attest. 2. It is clear that this prophecy was not held forth in a general; but we find the time also prefixed (with other special circumstances) when it should have its accomplishment at the appearing of the Messiah, he should be revealed to Israel, before which time a bar was drawn in the way of the nations, and a wall of partition betwixt them and the church, until he stand up who should hold forth an ensign to the people, and gather the Gentiles under his standard, which Esay doth clearly shew, Es. xi. to. xxxiv. 1, 2. lx. 1, &c. and then must the mountains flow down at his presence, nations be born at once; yea, the light break forth to the East and the West, then should the children of the desolate be more than of the married wife, when this time, even the first time for the Gentiles is once come; and it may be very convincing, which is most observable, that notwithstanding of a more flourishing condition of the Jewish church in former ages, when her grandeur and prosperity was not tempting, and the neighbourhood and commerce which the nations about had with that people, yea, though by the captivity they were scattered among the Persians and Babylonians, yet was there no such stir, or change of the world, until the appointed time once came. 3. It may be easy to prove the event of this prophecy, and its manifest accomplishment, even at the time thereof, for this men cannot deny, that the Lord did visit the Gentiles with the knowledge of his truth, which then caused such a change in the earth, as a great part of it hath been brought from heathen idolatry to worship the God of Israel, and such who once were strangers and aliens, now made to profess the same faith (as to the substance thereof) of the ancient Jewish church; sure this truth needs not want a witness, whilst nations and much of the known world have been for so long a time, and yet to this day are a visible proof thereof, a truth of such concernment that in former ages made a great and stupendous change upon the face of the earth, so that not only an innumerous company out of all nations and languages, but the generality, the very complex body of kingdoms and nations can bear witnesses thereto, and now the gospel hath been preached through much of the world, yea, we may say, a few parts thereof, where there hath not been some face of a church, though the promise hath not yet had its full accomplishment, but we wait for (according to the scripture) a more flourishing time, and great harvest among the nations, when Israel shall be gathered, how ever it is sure the Lord hath in a great part fulfilled this his promise, so that the church might then with astonishment cry out, who hath begotten all these children, who are these that flee as a cloud, like the doves to their windows? O blessed day, in which the light did first break upon the poor off-spring of Japhet who then dwelt in the shadow and region of death. O blest day that brought salvation with it to the Gentiles, wherein the Lord did visit the dark places of the earth, which were full of the habitations of cruelty, I think the scene of so great a mercy, should never let us want an errand for giving thanks, yea, put much to silence our other complaints. 4. It is not only at the time, but these very places of the earth which Esay and other of the prophets did particularly point at, this promise had an exact accomplishment? For it is this day manifest the Isles which we find so frequently mentioned,
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that these should wait for his law, and the uttermost parts of the earth, whence he should bring the daughter of his dispersed, may give a clear commentary upon the fame, from what the Lord hath done to Britain and Ireland, with other remote parts of the earth, yea, have not the Ethiopians been made to stretch out their hands, even in these fan-burnt places of Africk, hath not Christ also had a conquest, where many a black-a-more was through grace made as the fnow of Salmon, and the feathers of a dove, so that it is clear how thefe particular places, which were so oft pointed at by the prophets have been visited by the gospel, and fallen to the share of the church.

This change which by the incoming of the Gentiles to the church was wrought upon the earth, is a thing so great and astonishing, that were it still in the promise, and this not yet fulfilled, it would truly stagger our faith, how such a thing should ever come to pass, and is there not here a miracle, that the world cannot possibly deny? Even this great work of God in bringing in of the Gentiles, which without an extraordinary power, could not be effectuated, if men will consider. First, That swift progress which then the gospel had, how it did run, and was glorified through the furthest parts of the earth, and like a lightning break forth from one place to another, of that in the apostle's time, the scripture doth shew, how most of the conspicuous provinces of Asia, had received the gospel, and Tertullian who lived in the second century, in his book contra judaeos doth there witness how many nations, and these most remote from other, Parthians, Medes, Armenia, Phrygia, Cappadocia, Pontus and Pamphilia, with much of Egypt, and diveric parts of Africk, besides Rome, Spain, and other places of Europe, were in his time almost wholly christian, so it is indeed clear that the bounds of the church was then of a larger extent than it is now at this day.

II. It is also undeniable that in this solemn day of the gospel's spreading among the nations, suffering and perfection did all that time attend the church, yea, in such a measure that as the writers of these times do witness neither famine, pestilence, nor the sword, did destroy so many of the world, as then were of christians in the two first centuries, put to death for adhering to the truth, and it is clear, that this great work of God in such a swift spreading of the church, was most discernible in these times of hottest persecution, yea, then was her most effectual growth and increase, which upon her getting some rest, and beginning to flourish with external peace, was at a visible stand.

How marvelous a thing was this, to be brought about, if we consider the many different languages, that did then flow correspondence between the church and the rest of the earth, for how could the truth thus spread among the nations, yea, in such remote places of the world churches be planted by the apostles, and have the scripture translated, and made legible to them without that extraordinary gift of tongues, which for that end was then given from the Lord? Sure beside sacred authority anent this, reason may convincingly witness to the world the truth of such a miracle.

4. How strange and wonderful a change was this, that in so short a time the gospel should thus enlighten, and put such a lustre on the most rude and savage places of the earth, where scarce humanity had been, and bring them from the condition of beasts to men, should thus tame and civilize the greatest Barbarians, and cause the lion to lie down with the lamb, yea, by the preaching of that gospel, and of a crucified Christ, which as it was to the Jews a stumbling block, so to the Greeks foolishness. And in a word, was not this indeed a miracle how in a matter of such high concernment as that wherein mens soul and everlasting interest lay, they should be turned off their old way and religion, in which they and their fathers had been
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so long rooted, and that a little spark, which did break up in Judea, should bring down the idols of the nations, and burn up their temples.

Alas that there is so little of a large heart, of that primitive zeal and fervour this day among christians for the enlargement of the church, that such merchants are now rare who would venture out to trade with other parts, for this excellent ware, the merchandize whereof is better than of gold; O that in thes parts where the truth is known and professed, the Lord would raise up men of such a spirit, and such a magistrate, who would make it their work, and lay down solid grounds how to advance the kingdom of Christ in the dark places of the earth, and reckon their interest in a foreign plantation upon the account of the gospel, no less than one on the account of trade; we would pray, and yet hope for this.

IX. What we find foretold by Daniel, yea, by Christ himself anent the destruction of Jerusalem, and ceasing of the Jewis daily sacrifice with the rejection of that people, Dan. xii. 11. Matt. xxiv. 2. hath many ages past come to pass, wherein the world may see how clearly the event doth answer this prophecy, for it is manifest.

1. That this is a truth which doth need no other witness, than the scattered remnant, and desolate ruins of that once flourishing church and nation of the Jews, which we see with our eyes at this day, whose present state is so great a monument of divine judgment, so clear a wittes to the scripture, that I think men cannot look thereon, if they be in any measure serious, but must have such a conviction. 2. What hath befallen this people may it not be an astonishment to the world in all succeeding ages? a stroke that hath put them in a more sad condition than any nation, or people we ever yet heard of, that cast them out of their own land, scattered them as vagabonds through the earth, so that these many ages they have had no scepter nor lawgiver, no piece of the earth they can call their own, but at the mercy, and arbitrary disposal of every place they reside in, no priviledge or liberties but a naked permission to brook their lives and estates during the pleasure of these under whom they get shelter, a people put by themselves with a visible mark of divine wrath upon them, like a beacon set up for all the nations to look on, even these who were once eminently owned of the Lord, who was known in their palaces for a refuge, yea, it is very manifest that no finer or effay that ever they made for their relief, but was still to their further ruin, and found God's hand visibly crost to them therein; sure Ammiannus Marcellinus, a heathen writer did intend no testimony to the christian cause in relating that strange passage which near his time fell out; how the Jews by Julian's warrant and permission, did attempt to build the Temple again, but a fire breaking up from the foundation thereof, which destroyed many of the workmen, forced them with terror to desist. 3. Muft it not be some strange and dreadful provocation, beyond the sin of their forefathers, whereat so strange and unusual a stroke doth point? Whilft it is clear that notwithstanding frequent Idolatry, and departing from God when they were at that height in wickedness to offer up their children to Molech, and set up altars in the groves, to reject the meffage of the prophets, and thrust some of them in a dungeon, yet, were only punished with lxx years captivity, and after by God's very immediate hand brought again, these who had taken them captive concerning with them to rebuild the temple: But now how long and dark hath their night been since this judgment came on them, and though they could not these many ages charge themselves with Idolatry, yet no favour or deliverer hath been raised up, no prophet sent forth, no sign or appearance at this day of relief, now for these 1600 years, yea amidst these frequent changes and ref-
resolutions that have been in the world no change in their condition, sure it
that people were in speaking terms with their confciences, this might put
them to a strange demur, what should be the cause if they be not guilty of kil-
ling the Messiah, and that blood pursuing them; what atrocious provocation
beyond others they can condescend on, for which the Lord doth so long and
so force by such an unusual, and unheard of stroke thus contend. 4. What
a marvelous concurrence of providence, and convincing appearance of a divine
hand was in this judgment, the besieging of Jerusalem by the Romans, tried
with the very time of the passover, whistit so great a confluence of the people
from all parts of the land were there on that account, that both sword, and
famine might contribute their help to destroy; what unreasonable and astonish-
ing obliinacy against all offers of peace, and the most pressing insinuations
thereof which Titus Vespasian made, even whilst their ruin was otherwise un-
evitable, an unheard of strife where the enemy did contend to save, but they
to undoe themselves, now judicially hardened, under most remarkable pro-
digies, and warnings which they had of that approaching desolation, divided
wholly amongst themselves, yea, so cruel one upon another within, that their
adversary without could not but look thereon with compassion. O what a
stroke was this wherein greatest atheists would grant a fatality, for indeed men
cannot consider the same without acknowledging a divine hand and something
above ordinary means and causes, where all did thus meet together in a so-
lemn try’d to accomplish that peoples ruin. 5. But it is here we may
see a singular providence of God for his church, that these who of all the world
are most violent enemies to the christian truth, are also a most convincing wit-
ness to the same, whilst, first, these do clearly attest the scripture (which is
our alone charter) the divine authority of Moses and the prophets, the true
copys whereof, they did most tenderly preferve whatever absurd glosses some
of their Rabbies have thereon; yea, durst never offer in the leaf to vitiate
the original, but have had the same tranmitted, fill from one age to another,
to which records that are this day in their hand, the christian church can with
much confidence appeal, and demonstrate from the Old Testament the un-
doubted truth of the New. Yea, in this we may appeal the atheist to his con-
science that the scripture is no imposture, or any cunning device of christian,
which is so far witnested even by the greatest adversary, and maligners of the
christian religion.

2. That strange induration of the Jews, their unrea-
sonable rejecting of the truth, who after so long a time cannot see the caufe
which is most discernible in their stroke. O is not this also a most convinc-
ing seal to the scripture, and clear fulfilling thereof, there is a vail over their
mind as the Apostle sheweth, whilst they read the law, judicially smitten by
the Lord with blindness, that they cannot fee until once this vail be taken off,
and truly we may say there is nothing in their judgment more strange and
astonishing than such a continued obliinacy against the truth, how they should
be thus dark in the noon-day, but that herein the scripture is fulfilled; so that
we may even turn a poion unto an antidote.

X. That which is so expressly foretold in the New Testament, yea, is the great
drift of the Prophecies thereof, The coming of Antichrist, and revealing of
the man of sin to the world, 2 Thess. iii. 3. 4. 7. 8. 9. hath long since been
accomplished, wherein we may say the wonderful correponding of the event
with the prophecy is so clear, that this truth is now as plain, and obvious as once
it was dark to the church, these things being undeniable.

1. How the spirit of God in the scripture hath been in a more
than ordinary way particular, to point antichrist forth by such notouor marks,
and characters, that after ages may know him, if they will not shut their eyes,
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

I confess it is not strange the popish party should seal up the scripture, and forbid the ordinary reading of it, since the breaking forth of that light would soon make their kingdom dark, for if men would but set the history of the church since the times of the apostles, over-against the scripture, and make use of that notable key for opening up the prophecies of the New Testament, it should be then easy to know, the antichrift is fully come, and who this is, and herein doth the Lord's tender respect to his church appear, that he doth not only in a very solemn manner forewarn men, anent this great trial, and as it were by the sound of a trumpet give an alarum, that such an adversary was coming, yea of the time thereof, but doth also make so clear a discovery of the whole fabric, rise, and progress of that party, with such particular circumstances and differing characters from any other enemy of the church, as may render the world most inexcusable, if they will needs dafh on that rock, whereon the scripture hath set so conspicuous a beacon. 2. That this prophecy should now want an accomplishment or antichrift be yet to come, is a thing is most repugnant to sacred truth, since it is sure, that mystery of iniquity in the times of the apostles did begin to work, and who then for a time withheld his coming, the heathen empire of Rome hath long since been taken out of the way, which caufed some christians in these days with the standing, and continuance of that empire, from the terror they had of that adversary, who according to the word, they knew was to fill his room, yea, do we not find the church's trial from antichrift should be the most fore, and lafting trial of the church under the New Testament, which after her begun breathing from heathenish perfecution, was to continue for many ages where-in the word is most express, and clear, that the rise and fall of this enemy should be gradual, and not at once, whose beginning and first appearance might be traced to the first times of the church, and his close, and final ruin near the second coming of Christ, by the brightness whereof he shall be destroy-ed, and therefore, this is so much the subject of the prophecies of the New Testament, the great intent, and scope of the revelation of John, in which, the true state of the christian church, with the various changes of her condition, even from the opening up of the first seal to the blowing of the last trumpet, is particularly held forth, and there may we almost trace the steps of the rise and fall of that man of sin. 3. That such an one as the scripture points forth, doth most fully answer to all these marks which are there given of antichrift, hath come and been revealed to the world, is a thing so very manifest that except they will needs force their light, and confience, it cannot but be beyond question, and debate, even such an one whose coming should be after the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders, forbidding to marry, and to abstain from meats which God had appointed, who sitth in the temple of God, having a name full of blasphemy, and doth exalt himself above all that is called God, who bewitcheth the kings, and great men of the earth with his enchantments, yea, even by his livery may he be known that he most usually hath scarlet, and purple, which I think truly marvelous how particularly these are mentioned in the scripture; and in a word, such an one whose traffick, and merchandize, is not only gold, and silver, but the souls of men who should be drunk with the blood of the saints, and Martyrs of Jesus Christ, under whose reign the church must flee to the wilderness, and there be latent for a long time, and his seat, that city is situate upon seven hills, even that great city doth rule over the kings of the earth. O strange how men can acknowledge this for the scripture of God, and yet not see it fulfilled before their eyes, and that there is so vive an image, and portraiture of antichrift there held forth, such peculiar characters which do
convincingly point at the pope, and popish hierarchy, yea could answer to no other adversary which Christ ever had under the New Testament either Pagan or Mohometan, and yet so much of the world doth not know him when he is before their eyes. 4. It is clear that no age since antichrist was revealed, did altogether want some witnesses, to point him forth, even in the darkest times, many of whom loved not their lives unto the death, that they might seal this truth, and it may be a question if more of the blood of the saints was shed under heathens than in after times under antichrist, yea though we had not such express marks to discover him from the word, it may be easy for men to judge, who that is, who is this day so directly opposite to Jesus Christ, and the great design of the gospel, that aitumes to himself what is alone due to God, to forgive sin, and be worshipped with religious adoration, doth challenge a magisterial power, and supremacy, over the whole church as its head, a title too great for any of the angels, who maketh void the merit of Christ, and layeth down a way of life, and salvation, on the same terms that it stood in the covenant of works, doth destroy the great intent of the gospel, and in effect denyeth Jesus Christ to have come in the flesh, who setteth heaven upon sale for money, and permitteth none to perish and go to hell but the poor; doth dispense with grossest acts of sin and the express commands of the Law-giver, moral prohibitions void by his authority, yea, halloweth the very fleshes, and most horrid acts of uncleanness, taketh on him to change the condition of the dead, and ensure to their friends the happy state of their souls, if they will make large offerings on that account, O! who is this, is not that antichrist, whose way doth seal him in such direct terms of opposition to Christ? 5. Have we not cause to wonder no less at the strange indulgence and blindness of the popish party, than of the Jews, that whilst the one doth confess the Old Testament, and yet knoweth not Christ, the other should grant the truth of the New Testament, and not know antichrist, that he is come, even he after whom a great piece of the world, for these many ages, hath been wondering? sure so clear an agreement betwixt this prophecy and the event may not only put this beyond debate, but leave a conviction upon the greatest atheists, of the truth, and divinity of the scripture? For whatever former times might pretend ignorance whilst this mystery was but working, now when the man of sin hath come to his full height, and stature, and so clearly revealed by the light of the gospel, it taketh away all excuse, and I profess in these latter times, I cannot see how one can be a knowing papist, and not an atheist also.

(6) I know it is a fore judgment on men, who will not receive the truth, that the discovery thereof should be their pain and torment, and I am sure whatever advantages or outward peace, followers of antichrist have this day, they can have no found sleep, whilst the light with that clearness doth shine, that they can neither flind before it, nor yet flee and escape, where their confidence will not follow; but O here is the scripture evidently fulfilled, and their judgment so far begun, as it is held forth, Rev. xvi. that the greater discovery the light makes, the more they should rage, and in fury rise against it; for the heat of this cannot but sear where it doth not warm, there is no help where God doth judicially harden men, no blindness like that where they shut their eyes, and the righteous God makes it their plague by putting his seal to it: however wisdom must be justified of her children, the truth cannot lose its ear and even when its effects are sad and judicial, for it is a sweet favour to God in them who perish: It is truly a sad sight, and there seems no access to convince, where malice at the way of the Lord turns men mad, yea cruel against themselves; but since the popish church do's not avowed-
avowedly deny the scriptures' divinity of the *New Testament* and *prophecies* thereof (which is the great advantage we require to have its authority admitted), and their religion brought to this test, which is the sole rule of all true religion, and since they must grant that to be joined with Antichrist, or partaker in such a way, is most dreadful, and involves them under the greatest judgments, for it is a matter of no less weight than an eternal salvation or damnation; yea, since this concerns ministers of the gospel, as one special piece of their work now in the last times to bear witness against Antichrist (that great, we must say the greatest adversary which Christ ever had in the earth) to warn and pursue, without ceasing, this call, whatever successes it have, that men would come out of Babylon, and haste from under an approaching wrath and vengeance, which on some other ground than appearance we are sure now makes haste; I would here in behalf of the truth offer some queries on this subject (besides any thing hath been already mentioned) and herein appeal the adversary to the scripture of God, that great and uncontroverted judge to their conscience, yea, to the sober and retired thoughts of such, who are under any awe or impression of a Deity, when they are alone with themselves, if this so remarkable a prophecy anent the Antichrist, and his coming be now not clearly verified, that men may see him with their eyes, or else must that them at such a fight.

1. Is there not a very full and particular discovery which the scripture gives of this great adversary both in his rise, growth, his reign and fall, and not by a passing word, whom the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. points out by such peculiar marks, whom John does describe and difference from all other Antichrists, that were only to be his fore-runners and shews him a more noted and principal adversary of Christ above others, yea, we have through the whole revelation most clearly discovered under different titles, what he should be, and what a fore and long trial the christian church was to have under his reign, I profess when I read the scripture, and there see so express and clear a forewarning which many ages before we have anent the coming of this adversary, with such peculiar distinguishing circumstances and marks, as are at this day most exactly verified in the event, I am constrain'd to admire at so convincing and unanswerable a witness to the scriptures divinity, and must think it strange how men at such a rate can wrestle against the truth, except by getting a victory over their conscience and putting the light in fetters, whilst they own these prophecies of the *New Testament* to be of divine verity, which they so evidently distort against the clear sense and meaning thereof; yea, do adventure such a commentary on the same, that manifestly destroys the text. 2. Can you possibly expect Antichrist's coming to the world now according to the scripture, if he be not already revealed, when his forerunners were so many ages before, even in the times of the apostles, to shew he was then coming, I must ask, if this adversary should this day begin to appear, could you judge this is he, or reconcile such a contradiction; how he is now breaking up who was beginning to discover himself 1500 years ago, for it is so long since the apostle shewed this mystery of iniquity was working, 2 Thess. ii. 7. which clearly points at Antichrist, who then was hatching, though not on such a growth and ascendant as after; and could he be yet latent, yet in the bud, hath there been no further advance after so many ages, hath this mystery yet not wrought it self above ground? O where hath he been? that such a working thing, so dreadful a spark could keep so many ages under ashes, and to flame, no fire perceived; for it is sure if he was then at work, he hath not yet ceased; yea, if you admit the scripture, is not the rising of the Turkish Empire, in the order of the trumpets clearly after the revealing of the
Antichrist, and this horrid scourge held forth, Rev. ix. 20. as a remarkable judgment from the Lord, on the christian world then turn'd Antichristian for their idolatry, worshipping of images, &c. which was not brought into the church till the man of sin was towards his height. 3. Is not this unanswerably manifest that he who did withhold, and as a bar restrained Antichrist's coming for a time, cannot now be standing in the way? You see the scripture shews expressly there is a bar must be removed, and then should this man of sin be revealed, and this cannot be doubted but that some temporal power was hereby meant which did then forcerly withstand as the original word xarfcxw imports, for it is very clear whilst the Roman Empire was heathen, he could not brook Rome, or as a Monarch have his seat in that city with seven hills, he could not then both fit in the temple of God, and have the kings of the earth to give their power with content to him: Now let me but appeal men to their reason and judgment, if any such bar could be yet standing after so great, yea, such innumerable mutations and changes of the world? when many ages since, there have been such various successions of states and kingdoms, and a wearing out of greatest families, how any temporal power could be since the days of the apostles a continued let in the way of the adversary. 4. This query I would seriously offer, if such a party can be found at this day, to whom all the marks of Antichrist held forth by the scripture, do truly agree, could you then deny he is come, if so be you look for such an Antichrist, and under that cognizance, as the Holy Ghost points him forth in the word? O will you be so much in earnest with your conscience as to suffer the truth come this near, that you may impartially judge what is there of the prophecies that concern Antichrist coming in the world, which is not now verified in the event, before your eyes, and admit the scripture but judge therein, whether there is any such particular distinguishing badge and mark, held forth in that blessed record for his discovery, which does not convincingly quadrate with the Pope and his followers. 5. I shall in this also appeal to your conscience, if there be now, or hath been under the New Testament any other party, or such an adversary to the church of Christ, to whom these distinguishing characters of Antichrist could agree, such an one who should be no open adversary, but fit in the temple of God under the veil of a friend with a show of great wonders and miracles, and yet under that shew exalt himself against God: I know you will deny that this hath a clear respect to the popish party, or is justly applicable to them, but I am sure if without a prejudice by as, you would seriously judge, and abstract from application, in this you could not deny an affair that such a party, whosoever he be, bears that great badge of Antichrist, in exalting himself against God; who as a friend doth assume these titles, only due and competent to the glorious God, and to the Mediator, to be head and chief doctor of the catholick church, and alledges her for his spouse, who challenges an infinite power by making use of that, Matt. xxviii. 18, All power is given unto me, &c. which that book intituled Pontifical ceremonies does assert, Lib. i. fol. 16. who assumes an authority to bind men's conscience by his law, and to free their conscience from these laws which are divine and unchangeable, who appoints divine worship and adoration to creatures, by directing prayers to them, does subject the faith of the church to the determination of a man, in which as infallible, all must reft, is not that a dethroning of him, who is the great prophet and teacher of his church, yea, a making his authority void; now beside these distinguishing characters, which the scripture so expressly gives of Antichrist; are not these also so notour and plain that I think it strange how men can have their reason and judgment in exerci...
cife, and not know to whom they belong: I mean the forbidding of marriage, and the use of meats which the apostle holds forth, 1 Tim. iv. 3. and Rev. xviii. 13. you have there a merchandise with the souls of men, and O can any be in the dark who these are, who have such a peculiar traffic with this war, by redeeming souls for money, and making a sale of pardons and indulgences which concern mens souls; I shall add that likewise, Rev. ix. 20. the worshipping of idols of gold and silver, and herein crave the world to be judge, yea, can appeal some of their own greatest writers, if this be not both the doctrine and the practice of the Romish church, which one of the most learned among them does expressly assert, that the images of the Trinity are not set up for a shew, but for religious adoration, and is not this a most direct making void of the moral law, which so expressly forbids any worshipping of the invisible God under the similitude of a corruptible man, or under any visible representation.

6. Is not this foretold of Antichrist, what a dominion he should have over the kings of the earth, Rev. xviii. 18. unto whom they should agree and give their power and kingdoms to support his interest; now if this be not convincingly verified, and hath been for many ages in the Pope, it is easy to judge; and I am sure his followers would be loath to deny a thing, in which they so much boast: I confess were it not thus foretold by the scripture, we could not think it credible, how the kings and great men of the earth should be in such a measure bewitched to enslave themselves, and their interest to that party, and yield to so strange a subjection under their yoke, it seems to be very irrational, yea, like an infatuation, since they cannot but see under what a terror he keeps them by his interdictions, by assuming a power to loose subjects from any tie to their princes, and thus binding and loosing their conscience at his pleasure, what interest he hath in their councils, by that subtile device of auricular confession, what intolerable homage and service he requires from princes, what vast treasure he draws for support of his hierarchy from these places where he hath power; yea, what a visible tendency his acts have to promote a worldly interest, and make the great men of the earth dependent on him; how easily he can dispense with the greatest breaches of the moral law, whilst most cruel and inexorable in any thing that copes with his power and supremacy: O how astonishing might this blind devoring of great men both themselves and their power, to the support of such an interest be, if we had not a clear resolution from the scripture, that this is from the Lord, who hath put it in his heart, and so far gives them up in his secret judgment.

7. I must ask, is not that a convincing witness to the scripture, and a clear argument for the protestant reformed church, which you so much object against her, that her condition for so many ages hath been low and abject, and did so little appear, whilst the popish interest was resplendent and flourishing; for it is sure such a long continued suffering, and latent condition of the church under Antichrist is expressly foretold, wherein the witnesses should be put to prophesy in sackcloth, and the poor woman (which is meant of the church) put to flee to the wilderness and be there hid, so that you cannot say the church, and followers of Christ have been more low in these worst and darkest times, than the word holds her out to be; yet, hath there been still a succession and some witnesses for the truth, and the church thus continued in all these times, which as one excellently says, was like a fresh river that made her way through that horrid lake of Antichristianism without mixing therewith, and at last did break up gloriously.

8. Is not the Antichrist in a special way pointed out in the scripture by some proper mark, some visible sign and cognizance, which his followers should receive, from differenting them from any other party,
Rev. xiii. 16. now in this I desire the world, and commonest observers, to judge if these many strange ceremonies and rites of the romish church, their distinguishing signs and badges, which they so much own, and indispensible require as visible characters of their profession, yea, are so peculiar to that party beyond others, do not convincingly quadrate with the scripture herein, and most clearly verify the same in the event, the world knows, and the ordinary way and practice of these can witnes that frequent use (oh a most horrid idolatrous abuse) of the sign of the cross, which not only in a special manner they take as a differenting badge of their party from others, by so frequent a crouffling of their forehead and breast, and putting this as their mark on all they baptize, or receive by confirmation, but do ascribe also to it an effective and operative power, and as a charm or magical sign, makes use of it to effect things supernatural, to refrain sin, drive away the Devil; for thus they conjure spirits, thus they wear it in their rings and pendants; yea, is it not by them adored and worshiped, and made use of for the blessing and consecration of all other things; sure this can be no matter of debate, since it is so known and obvious, and that it is easy thus to discern a Roman catholic, if he but avow his profession, by such a visible sign, and find him but by his mark; which that party does pursue with greatest fervour, and thereby correspond and discover themselves one to another.

I shall further add, is not this the Antichrift, whose name must be understood, and reckoned by the number thereof, which is the number of a man, Rev. xiii. 18. It is true this seems very dark and mysterious, and instead of a more clear discovery, might rather be judged adrawing a vail over this adversary, but since we have the scriptur's express call and warrant, to make a serious inquiry and search about its meaning, yea, does not only hold it forth as duty, but shews such a thing is attainable and may be understood, I shall desire in humble sobriety, without peremptory afsering, to offer some few thoughts on this scripture, both as to its meaning, and how clearly the man of fin is thus pointed out, and his name made known by the number thereof, anent which I humbly judge (and must therein crave liberty to differ from others, and thefle whose judgment I most highly respect) that this number as it is here set down is explicatory, and giving as the very key to the church, for opening up the mystery of this name, and of that man of whom also it is the number, and thus shews it is not to be reckoned as the name of a single person, nor is it to be found by Arithmetical computation in the numeral letters of a man, but is the name of a political body, a name which comprehends a plurality, such as these numerous orders and degrees of the pontifical hierarchy are, and by such a scale, his number does remarkably ascend in to many degrees, until it terminate in a man even in one absolute Monarch and universal head, as the very summa totalis in whom that whole number resolves, and therefore it is the number of a man; yea, by this reckoning we may thus clearly know what a man that is, that as he cannot be known, if we take him alone, without respect to a politic body, and the whole complex hierarchy, of which number he is made up, as the constituent parts, we must also understand by this computation, the Antichrift, with respect to a long continued feries and sucession, which here the scripture shews to the church, that he is not a single individual person only, or such a politic body of many numerous degrees, resolving in one head, which should be but for an age, or of a short duration; but that he is an adversary who is to be continued in a numerous sucession through a feries of many ages; and thus may the man of fin and his name be understood, by this number of which he is made up; now in this, I humbly judge, the scope of the scripture is clear,
clear, in setting down such a rule to count Antichrist by his number, and thus does prophetically obviate that great mistake after ages would fall in, and is to this day entertained, that this adversary is but one individual person, who should get up, and cause a remarkable apology in the church; therefore it is that the world will not know this is he, when they see him before their eyes, not considering that such a numerous body, and succession is contained in his name, from which he cannot be separate.

But for further clearing, I shall offer some few things to be seriously considered in his reckoning.

1. Here is a number and plurality, by the Holy Ghost particularly set down, by which Antichrist must be known and counted, and the yea is to clofs between him and his number, that both the man, and his name is formally made up thereof.

2. Here is a number, which is not to be sought after by the subtle computations of Arithmetick, or any curious inquiry in the numerical letters of a man's name, since thus we cannot know the true use of Christian wisdom and prudence which the scripture requires; yea, it is clear, this way might answer several other names as well as Latinos, which could not in an ordinary way be determined, without a pretending to some extraordinary revelation, and discovery; but here may be judged work for spiritual wisdom, to count this number of Antichrist, and his name, with respect to his nature, frame and composition.

3. Here is such a number which is all summed up in one man, and cannot otherwise be counted or underflood, but as it hath a respect to a single person, in a continued succession wherein it resolves; now is there not such a number to which the Pope stands as nearly related, as the total sum is to these degrees, and lesser numbers of which it is made up? And here is wisdom, to join aright that man of sin and his number, and there see how exactly they quadrature in the event, and each gives light to an other.

4. We find here a large number, wherein there is a plurality of many different degrees, rising above others, and is therefore definitely expressed by so great a number as 666.

5. This is also a number (and herein there seems clear ground for such a remark) which is most unit and compact, with a clofs concatenation, a remarkable order and rising from a lower to a higher degree, with a special subordination and dependence on other; yea, is thus knit, that one part comprehends the other; such as is most clear and obvious, in that subtle politick constitution of the Romish state, and that numerous hierarchy, with which this definite number of 666 seems marvelously to quadrature, whereas by a scale of so many steps and degrees, you may follow up this number, as it were from 6 to 60, &c. by Deans, Provincials, Generals of Orders, to Bishops, thence Archbishops, Primates, Patriarchs, Cardinals, until you find all resolve in one man; who is as strictly related to it as a name can be to so many syllables whereof it is made up. I know this may seem too curious an inquiry, and not so suitting the gravity and weight of the scripture, but since the spirit of God hath chosen such a definite number by an other, wherein there is so strange an order and quadrature, to discover that adversary, and gives us such ground that his number points at his frame and composition, I think without any challenge of obscurity such a remark very fittable.

6. Whilft the scripture shews, this is the number of a man, and of his name, does it not also shew it is such a number that lies nearest Antichrist, and is most strictly related to him, and as the formal cause does most specially concur in his constitution, yea, gives as it were life to that image; now let it be seriously considered what this is, yea, whether that mystery of Antichristianism does not in a peculiar way lie in his supremacy, and being infallible, and the ultimate judge
judge of controversy, which he claims as absolute head of the church universal, and that fountain whence all these degrees of power in the *Romish hierarchy* do flow, and in whom they fully terminate; for it is clear thence are all these gross tenets, and corruption in doctrine; thus he most directly exalts himself against God, and puts the Mediator off his throne; thus he does exercise authority over men's conscience; thus *antichrarianism*, and that avowed opposition to Jesus Christ takes life, is nourished and hath its strength, even under these wings of his absolute supremacy; now if it be clear, this is the number which lyes nearest to antichrift, from which he can no ways be separated, and does most formally make up that man of sin, than by the exercise of Christian wisdom may that number, and its true meaning be thence understood.

7. Is not this such a number that is peculiarly restricted, in a class by itself, which the 18th verse does shew, wherein that great bulk of the *Romish church* is not to be sought; for though it is there clear, that such who receive the mark, and by some visible profession own the doctrine of the *Romish church*, are of the largest extent, and therefore it is said, great and small, rich and poor, must come that length, yet as to the number of the beast, and of his name, it is expressed by its self, and as a higher class in which all of the common rank who must receive the mark does not fall; but as lying more close and near to antichrift, is in a peculiar manner restricted by a distinguishing note: which a serious study of that scripture will help to clear.

XI. What was prophesied anent the killing of the witnesses under antichrift, Rev. xi. 3, 7, 8. we say hath clearly come to pass, and at this day may read the same in the event, for it is manifest.

1. That during antichrist's reign even in the darkest times, there was not some to feel the truth, and bear witness thereof, both by open confession, and suffering on that account, which the church histories can abundantly make out.

2. That during that dark night these who did give a testimony, and any way appeared against the grievous encroachments of antichrist's in behalf of down born truth, were put to prophecy in sackcloth, when there was nothing left, but to weep over the church's ruins, and witness their defecation, and grieve for the growing apocally of such times.

3. It is clear, that as the prophecy doth point at some more remarkable suffering, and persecution, which the church was to meet with from antichrist, beyond all it had endured from that adversary in former ages, yea, a special permission from the Lord to that party, to vent that party, to vent their rage and cruelty against the faints, which should fall out after the witnesses finishing their testimony, who had been so long in an abject low condition, as in sackcloth prophesied, when antichrist should be at his height, and his kingdom upon the turn, that then must this remarkable killing of the witnesses be accomplished; so, likewise did the event convincingly verify the same, for it is known that upon the close of antichrist's reign, whilst the truth began to break up, this foretold form of persecution beyond all that had been before, did then break upon the church, even in its budding forth, that we may say, that adversary did not only put forth the utmost of his power and rage against the faints, but seemed in some measure to bring his cruel designs to pass, which the dreadful massacres in France, Province, and the valleys of Piemont, the force and violent persecution of the church, through the Netherlands, under the Duke of Alva, and in England by Queen Mary, in Germany after the defeat of the Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse can clearly witness. 4. Is it not also clear, how this remarkable form, and cutting down of the faints, over whose dead bodies their adversaries did rejoice, was according to this prophecy to be previous to some
some eminent enlargements, and reviving of the church, which did accordingly fall out in the event like a resurrection of the witnesses from the dead, to the astonishment of the world, that immediately followed upon the back thereof, so that when their enemies thought they had gained their end, as they did conclude by such perfections, particularly that French massacre that the Protestant interest should be quite ruined, they were forced to see their labour in vain, and the church more eminently flourishing after the same.

I shall further add, that antichrist hath not only been revealed, and his kingdom come to its height, but it is clear this day that it is on the falling hand, and his ruin is now begun, upon which account we may say, yea, have cause to sing that the winter is past the fig-tree putteth forth her leaves, that sheweth the summer’s approach, yea, the singing of birds is heard in our land, let us go forth, and meet him who is now gone out as a mighty man, for the salvation of his church, and takes the fields against this great adversary of his truth and people, on whose side victory doth surely wait.

II. WHAT IS YET TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.

Having touched a little some of the most concerning prophecies of the scripture, both under the New and Old Testament, which are already fulfilled and the truth thereof so clearly written forth in the history of providence, that we may say the most ordinary observers, if they will not shut their eyes, cannot want a conviction thereof. I shall now in the next place point at that which yet remaineth of the prophetical part of the scripture, to be accomplished; these prophecies which concern the church in these last times, whereby we may have a sure demonstration, how far the night is spent, and of the near approach of that blessed day of the liberty of the sons of God, for this doth finish the mystery of God, and fully perfeceth his work, if once that which remaineth of the prophecies of the word were fulfilled.

There are these truths the accomplishment whereof we have a sure warrant, to expect before the end;

1. The full ruin and downfall of Babylon.
2. The conversion and incalling of the Jews to Jesus Christ.
3. A solemn day of the church’s flourishing, both Jews and Gentiles, which shall follow the outmaking of the former promise.
4. The fall and destruction of the Turkish Empire, that cruel party who have been raised up, and established for judgment, with whom the Lord shall yet reckon, for all that Christian blood by them, so unjustly shed, seemeth clearly held forth, Rev. xvi. 12. 5. We are also to expect after these, that full and last stroke upon Gog and Magog, and then the Lord is at hand, and that great mystery of the prophecies and promises of the scripture, shall then be finished, and at a blessed close.

I. We have the full ruin and destruction of antichrist, and his kingdom clearly prophecied, and in very express terms promised to the church, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Rev. xvi. 10, 17. the accomplished whereof we do yet according to the scripture wait for, that the God of truth who cannot lie or repent, shall in due time aurally bring about, and that approacheth when that solemn cry shall be heard, Babylon is fallen, anent which we would consider.

1. That this judgment is already begun and the first step thereof visible is now clear, wherein men may see the event most exactly answer the prophecy, for the Lord hath begun to consume antichrist by the breath of his mouth and since the first breaking up of the light, his kingdom hath been mouldering down before the word, have not nations fallen off at the voice of the preached gospel? It is true the church wanteth not sore conflicts,
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even under the vials, and it is the Lords way to try his people with such various uncertainties, that when things have been most promising, another providence cometh like a crofs wave, which feemeth to drive them as far back as once they seemed to be forward, yet it is sure, and fhould be beyond debate, that antichrift’s overthrow is upon a present advance, and that work of the Lord for his church’s deliverance is going forward, for if we believe salvation by Christ upon the warrant of the word, fhould we not also with much allowance believe that antichrift’s wound is deadly, and incurable, which he hath got by the preaching of the gospel, which all the physicians of the earth fhall never help. 2. This is one of the greateft and signal acts of the judgment of God in his church’s enemies, one of the most eminent manifeftations of his glory which he hath referred for the laft times, wherein the appearance of his hand and great power fhall be very manifeft, and we are to expect by this remarkable stroke that way fhall be made for that glorious housé, which Christ is to have for himself in the later days, which fhall be built upon antichrift's ruins, when that new bride both Jezs of and Gentiles, fhall be prepared for the marriage supper of the Lamb. 3. Though we are to expect on clear ground from the word, the Lord’s eminent appearing by his immediate hand in this great work which fhall be fo convincing in that day, and witness an extraordinary providence, that all on-lookers muft with fear and aftonishment confefs that this is God’s own work, yet, it is also clear, that he will therein make ufe of instruments fitted, and chosen for that end, who fhall be raised, and acted forth with a more than ordinary spirit, to execute the vengeance of the Lord, even the judgment written, amongst whom the feeble fhall then be strong, yea, we have ground to expect, that of the Kings of the earth, and the race and successors of thofe, who in former times had given their power to the beaft, fhall the Lord raise up to hate the whore, and make her defolate; O bleffed are they who fhall have a hand in fo noble a work to fack, and deftroy that accufed city, built up with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ. 4. We are not to bound the Lord, as to any particular time for accomplifhing this piece of his word, yet we have clear ground to believe that Babylon’s ruin maketh haft, and the day of the Lord upon her is near, whose fword is bathed in heaven, and that the instruments of his vengeance are making ready, one stroke upon that party is already past, antichrift hath begun to fall before the word, and must fall further until that great stroke, which fhall deftroy his fear, and lay waft that land, be accomplifhed; fome promising evidences of its near approach I would here point at. 1. The many prayers of the fants, which are now before the throne, and cannot want a return, many who wrestled with the Lord on this ac-
compli, though they are away, yet are their prayers to the fore, and waits for this solemn manifeftation of the judgment of God, and the blood of the fants doth not eafe to cry, yea, hath as loud a cry as ever. 2. It is clear that the preached gospel now since the light began to break forth doth ripen, and help to make the harvest more white than many ages formerly, and truly if we consider how long the word hath been something a retreat to that party, to come out of Babylon, and that for their 150 years they have been still acting in opposition to fo clear a light, to fuch a solemn call, to fo many warnings, yea, to fuch convincing a discovery of the Lord’s being againft them in very remarkable providences, doth it not fhew, at what an height their fin this day is, and an obfinate rejecting of cure? 3. We cannot but fee, how that judgment which fhould be poured forth on antichrift under the vials, is in a great meafure now verified in the event. 4. It is clear, and con-
sonant to the scripture, that the Lord’s work is now happening in the latter days
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days, providence in a swift motion and maketh great advance, more quick changes in the case of the church both as to forms and calms, and her trials now must not be so long as in former times, Rom. ix. 28. he will cut short his work in righteousness, for a short work will the Lord make in the earth.

That antichrist and his followers, do this day seem to be at such an advantage, the Lord's work, as it were at a stand, yea, rather going back, this late reviving of Antichristian Prelacy in Britain and Ireland, with visible growth of Popery there, and so dark an hour upon the reformed churches abroad, I think on very solid grounds is a promising evidence of the near approach of a further stroke on that party; for it is clear both from the word, and God's ordinary way of procedure how a sharp storm is usually previous to some remarkable enlargement of the church, a very low ebb, before the turning of the tide, yea, that every step of her advance, whereby the hath gained ground on antichrist, hath fill'd had some conflict and wrestling going before, and thus the Lord by suffering doth ripen his people for such times of mercy; for which time, O let us pray and wait, when the smoke of that accursed city shall ascend up to heaven, and his people be made to triumph in his praise, and sing that long, Hallelujah, salvation, glory, and honour to the Lord God, who hath judged the great whore, rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you upon her.

II. We have a clear prophecy anent the incalling of the Jews, and their conversion to Christ in the latter days, held forth by the prophets, and in the New Testament very expressly mentioned, for the fulfilling whereof, the church must yet wait, and long after, when God shall bring again the captivity of his ancient people, and lay to that valley of dry bones live, anent which we would consider, Isa. xi. 15. Rom. xi. 24. Rev. xvi. 12.

1. That this promise doth not only concern particular persons, or a few, but the body and generality of that people, is most clear from the scripture, if men would compare, Isa. xi. 11. Zach. xii. 10. with Rom. xi. 25. where it is undeniable that their gathering must be as full and remarkable as their scattering; and as there is no nation so remote whether some of them are not at this day, that shall not hinder the fulfilling of the promise, but as Esaiab mentioneth, the Lord shall then assemble the dispersed and outcasts, and bring them back from the four corners of the earth, and furthest places thereof, yea, doth not the apostle expressly shew that it is all Israel, whereat this promise pointeth, for though they are enemies concerning the gospel, yet are they beloved for their father's sakes, because of the Covenant which was made with Abraham and his seed, and truly we have in this, ground also to expect something further than their conversion, that in this day, the Lord shall raise the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and plant them upon their own land, Amos xi. 11, 15. not only bring them to a visible church flare, but even therewith some temporal restitution, and recollection of them as a nation, yea, may expect a return of the old blessing of that lands fruitfulness, which I think is clearly held forth in that of Amos ix. 14. that the very hills drop down sweet wine, and melt as it were in outward blessings on them.

2. That this promise hath not yet had an accomplishment, is also clear from the word, for it must follow the rejection of that people, and should not take place until the fulness of the Gentiles be brought in; which harvest for many ages after was not to be reaped, yea, did not the apostle hold this forth as a mystery, a piece of the scripture, which the ancient Jewish church could not well comprehend, when it was pointed at by the prophets, and even at that time was not underflood, which surely could have been no mystery if their conversion had reached no further than the
the apostles time; and it is known, how small a number since of that people hath yet been brought in to Christ. 3. We have much ground from the scripture, that this day, this great day of Jezreel shall be a very remarkable and solemn time, which will cause aforment to the nations about, and make a wonderful change on the face of the earth, a time of God's eminent appearance for that people, when his singular respect shall be as manifest as formerly his great displeasure and anger was, a time on which many of the choicest mercies of the church do certainly wait, the return of many prayers, a large pouring forth of the spirit, even on the body of that people and all ranks, not only the families of David, Nathan and Levi, but also the families of Shimei, with a large outletting of gifts, yea, such a time, wherein the converted of Israel shall then see and understand, how far the glory of the second temple doth exceed that of the first, and be a very conspicuous part of Christ's universal kingdom, eminent for the power and purity of the ordinances, to which others shall look as a most choice and excellent pattern of a purely reformed and glorious church. 4. Besides the promise of him who is not like man to lie, or the son of man to repent, there wants not some very convincing providences to confirm our faith anent this, if we consider how this people are still kept by themselves, amidst all their scatterings, not mixt or incorporate with other nations, which is most usual through long converse, that people of several parts of the earth will unite and join in one, is not their great increase also remarkable? What great multitudes of them are in the eastern parts, yea, through most of Asia, Africa, and in these places of Europe where the christian church is, and all this time their land not possessed but by a rabble of the Turks, under whole yoke they groan, and though the genealogies of particular families are at this day much lost, yet there is still so much sure and evident, as to the series and genealogy of the nation that doth difference them from any other people. 5. It is true, the authority of the word should silence all our thoughts, how so great a thing shall be brought about, yet, we may judge, that as a means this shall eminently contribute to the same, such a convincing stroke upon Antichrist which must go before their conversion, wherein so manifest an appearance of God, and the fulfilling of one of the greatest promises of the New Testament, cannot but stare them in the face, and with this the taking away of that stumbling block of idolatry which hath so long helped to harden them against the profession of the gospel. I must shut up this with a sad regrete, that whilst we have so clear a promise, there is no more tender respect, and further effort to promote the good of that people, who knoweth what a bleeding might attend the use of ordinary means? since this is an unquestionable duty, and men know not when they sow the seed, whether this or that shall prosper, alafs, that the usual deportment of christians with whom they converse, doth oft further help to heighten their prejudice against christianity, let us long and pray more for this day, a day which shall bring so great a blessing with it to the Gentiles.

III. There are many prophecies both in the Old and New Testament which do clearly point at a great flourishing and prosperity in the days of the gospel, which I humbly conceive are not yet fully made out, but shall have a more remarkable accomplishment before the close of time, Isa. lxv. 25. lxvi. 12, Mic. iv. 1, 2.

I confess the event will be the surest commentary, and until this appears men should be sober and cautious, that they darken not the counsel of God and his truth, with any wild fancy, and to aim to be wise above that which is written, yet, I must think that there are great things laid up in these promises
mifes for the church, that we cannot now well reach, yea, would scarce get believed until the appointed time unveil their meaning, I shall here but only touch how it may appear these promises are not yet fully accomplished, and what with a safe warrant we may expect in their accomplishment, as to the first we would consider these things.

1. That these great promises which hold forth so eminent an enlargement, and flourishing of the church, do also point at some particular limited time, some period, and revolution of the church's condition, which is not agreeable and common to other times, until which these promises do not take place. 2. This promised flourishing concerneth both Jews and Gentiles, and the word doth clearly point at some further increase of the Gentile church, by the calling of the Jews, which must have a peculiar respect to that solemn time of Israel's restauration, and Antichrist's ruin, a time on which the return of many prayers, and the fulfilling of so many promises in the behalf of the church doth surely wait; so that as Esay and other of the prophets do put over this great flourishing of the church to the days of the gospel, the apostle Rom. xi. doth point at a more precise time, wherein this in a larger measure shall be made out. 3. We cannot find the christian church did ever enjoy so great an enlargement, and flourishing state as these promises seem to import, for perfection and suffering hath most been her lot, first from the Jews, next from her heathen adversaries, and last from Antichrist, whose fall, and ruin we have ground to expect shall make room for so great an increase of the church, for how much power Antichrist hath, in so far is the church kept at under, yea, it is clear how very short all her breathings have been. 4. It would appear so solemn a time of the church's flourishing, wherein the prophets did so oft point, as it hath an undoubted respect to the days of the gospel, so in its full accomplishment must answer to that remarkable day of Satan's binding, and the saints reign with Christ, when the kingdoms of the earth become the Lord's, which we find doth immediately precede Satan's last loosing, and his going forth to gather his broken forces, for that great battle which is to be very near the end.

I shall but add, we have ground to judge the Lord will usher in that glorious everlasting state of the church, even by some preparative degrees here, the latter times are therefore to be reckoned the more blessed, the more near they approach to the dawning of glory. Now in the second place, I shall but point at some things which with a safe warrant we may understand, and look after, in the accomplishment of these promises. It is very clear they hold forth a great enlargement to the universal church both of Jews and Gentiles, particular churches may be in a sad withering condition whilst other parts do flourish, but these promises seem to point at a day, which will concern the saints in all corners of the earth, who shall not want their share with the rest of that blessed time, it may be also clear, some more bright and hot sun-shine of the gospel is held forth, some such remarkable spring-tide of the spirit that shall be as discernible as the church's low ebb sometimes was, a day of the great people of God, his presence very manifest among his people, and with the ordinances beyond former times, so that Ezek. xlviii. 35. the name of that place shall be called Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there. Tea, that in this day Christ's visible kingdom in a settled church state shall more eminently flourish, and the flowing in of people and nations with much favour, who shall join themselves to the Lord, pure ordinances, a more universal one's among the worshippers of God, the walk of christians with a discernible lustre of holiness; made to commend the gospel, Christ's going full of majesty, and the shout of a king which then shall be heard among his people,
people, the noise of such sad complaints, and bitter exercises from the spirit of bondage; not so much among the saints as in former times, and though we fee no sure ground from the word to expect such a favourable time wherein the church militant shall not have trouble and persecution from the world; yet, there seemeth so much clearly import in some of these great promises, as point at a great calm, and more favourable gale of outward prosperity, which the church shall then have, yea, this is in some longer continuance than in former ages, a day wherein the haters of the Lord shall even be made to reign subjection, with much of the countenance and concurrence of magistrates, and the civil authority in behalf of the church; yea, a time of much holy fear amongst the people of God, and of much terror and awe upon his enemies, to which the great works of the Lord in that time shall then effectually contribute, and cause them fear the Lord, and his goodnes in the latter days.

v (5): IV. There is a special prediction of Satan's binding up and restraint, and of some remarkable reign of the church with Jesus Christ held forth, Rev. xxii. 27. The full accomplishment of which we on clear ground may judge is not yet come, yet is so far now verified in the event as may clearly witness its meaning, and let us see how at this day it is taking place; I confess this seems one of the most dark and abstruse prophecies we have in the scripture, on which there hath been many strange thoughts and glosses held forth; but to let down these various judgments of men on the truths of God, I humbly think may tend to a further darkening of the same, more than to any solid edification, I shall only offer some things to be considered, which by undeniable consequence from the scripture seem most clear and obvious, and may not only help to the understanding of this prophecy, but that manifest correspondence which is between it and the event at this day.

1. There can be no debate this solemn time of the saints reign with Christ concerns the militant condition of the church, and must be expected here in the earth not in heaven, and therefore we find immediately after, there is a very fore aflault of the Devil held forth, who should occasion a new trial to the church, and be for a time let loose to deceive the nations.

2. Since the scripture is the best interpreter of itself, we must here understand with comparing one place with another this raising of the saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ to reign with him figuratively, and in such a sense as that in Rev. ix. 11. must be underfoot to wit, a raising of the witnesses in the same spirit and power, and of such a party who should bear the same testimony, to which all that is, Mal. iv. 5. and Mat. xi. 14. anent John's coming in the same spirit of Elijah, with which he did appear to the world, gives light, so that we see how confirmant and agreeable scripture is with it itself.

3. Is not the meaning of the spirit in this prophecy clear, that the greatest enlargement of the church, yea, of the longest duration and continuance that it should have under the New Testament unto the second coming of Christ is held forth in the reign of the saints, so that it manifestly points at a more solemn time a more sweet refreshing interval, which shall be remarkable both in measure and duration beyond all the formerly had, and shews that there is no such a happy time else, to go over the churches head till the be triumphant in heaven, therefore it is called xατ' ἐξ ἐγγύτητος the church's reign, considered comparatively with any other such change.

4. Is it not very clear that this so remarkable time cannot be judged previous to Antichrist's coming, nor under his advance and growth, since first this points expressely at these who were beheaded for the witness of Christ, and had not worshipped the beast and his image, nor received his mark, who should thus be raised to reign with Christ.

2. We find that it doth very immediately precede.
ceed that last assault the church shall have upon Satan's loosing to gather the nations to that great battle, and so must concern these last times, when the Lord is pouring out his vials upon the throne and kingdom of the beast; it is strange, when the scripture is so plain that some choice and excellent men writing on this prophecy will have it contemporary with the church's condition before Antichrist's appearance, for it is sure if by the beast and his image and mark, Antichrist must be underfoot, and if there be but one great assault mentioned after this, which the church militant shall have before the close of time, this prophecy must now be fulfilling, and with no other time before this could quadrat agree according to the scripture. 5. Is it not clear that this great restraint of Satan is no such absolute binding, that will put the church wholly beyond trouble and reach of his assaults, no, this belongs to heaven, and is there only to be expected; but the scripture very evidently shews this shall be such a binding up of Satan, that he should not deceive the nations, nor have that wondert power to darken the face of the church by any great or universal apostacy during this time; and I am sure it is undeniable, that since the church's raising from under Antichrist, Satan hath been thus restrained, and by all his violent assaults, he hath not reached the full withdrawing of any one nation which was brought under the yoke of the gospel, whatever may be said of poor Bohemia by a violent spate of persecuting to born down, that this once famous church is now scattered in other places, where there are yet considerable numbers, yea, it is not altogether without hope, that the great avenger of blood will yet visit her captivity again, when it seems now further off and hopeless. 6. Must we not see that this great sun-shine as it takes in Antichrist's fall, hath a special respect also to Israel's return and conversion, which according to the scripture is one of the most solemn and flourishing times that the christian church shall have, and therefore shall be to the Gentiles as life from the dead, now do but seriously judge what the church's condition hath been through all the times of the New Testament, first under Heathens, and after under the tyranny of Antichrist, and now how far providence does unfold the meaning of this prophecy in the event, since the man of sin began to decline, and I humbly judge, it may be easy, to see that at this day it is clearly taking place place, though this solemn reign be not yet advanced to its greatest pitch, but will have a more remarkable period ere this prophecy be fully made out. I shall but add, this resurrection mentioned in the prophecy must be in a spiritual sense understood, and can be no bodily raising of the saints, since it is so expressly there called the first resurrection to difference it from the second, and is held forth in an opposition to the first death. (9)

VI. We have a prophecy held forth, Rev. xvi. 12. which comparing with Rev. vi. 13, seemeth clearly to point at the fall and destruction of the Turkish Empire, who have been these many ages so great a scourge to the christian world, for its manifest that this drying up of the river Euphrates must relate to that very party which we find in that chap. ix. raised up from about that river, where the Turk hath so considerable a part of his dominions; it is true, the event will more clearly make this known, yet these are undeniable.

1. That such a party was foretold by John in chap. ix. and a solemn warning given to the church of so dreadful an storm, the time also there pointed forth when Antichrist should be at a great height, yea, the portraiture of such an adversary most evidently held forth, such as indeed they were found to be, a terrible cruel destroying party, and therefore are said to have breast-plates of fire, their number also there held out to be a very great multitude, which these huge armies usually brought by the Turk to the field can witness.

2. The
2. The cause why the Lord should raise up so dreadful an enemy, and thus let them loose, is also expressly declared in chap. ix. 20. that it was in judgment, and for a plague on men for Antichristian idolatry, which then had so much overspread the earth, and it was no wonder, that when so much of the visible church was turned almost brutish in their religion, and from the pure worship of God, was carried after idols of gold and silver, the work of men's hands, that so brutish and barbarous an adversary should be let out for a scourge; I truly think that as Antichrist, and the abominations of that party have been hitherto the lot of success against the Turk; so we are not to expect the prospering of any such design, and his fall and ruin, until the cause be removed; for which the Lord did make use of this dreadful rod. 3. That such a party was raised up according to the prophecy, yea, at the appointed time thereof, is very clear, who like a mighty deluge did overflow a great piece of the earth, and with strange prodigious successes, did over-turn much of Asia, some parts of Africk, and break in on Europe to give work to these kings and great men, and be a scourge to them who had given their power to uphold the throne of the beast. 4. There is also clear ground from the scripture that the Lord shall eminently appear in the fall, and destruction of this adversary as in the raising of them up, and that by their fall, he is to make way for the accomplishing of his promise, anent the church's further encreafe, his ancient people, whereto this prophecy seems to have a particular respect: this we are to look after as one of the great works of the Lord's that is reserved for the latter days which shall no less shew forth his power and glory, even the drying up of that great Euphrates, than in the day that he divided the sea, and made Jordan a dry channel for his people to go through; we are not to be further positive anent means and instruments, how such a thing shall be brought about, it is enough what the Lord hath spoken, and the word that is gone out of his mouth shall not return in vain. VII. Now to clofe this, there is yet one great affair which we find the church shall have before the end, and then her warfare will be near finished, anent which the scripture is clear, that Satan for a little must be let loose, and that solemn and perfect victory, which the church in the close of time will get over all adversaries, shall be ushered in with a very sharp trial, and once again this ungodly world will shew its rage, rally its broken scattered forces, in a general muffer, Rev. xx. 8. with as much fury as ever, and there shall the Lord eminently appear, that by one full stroke he may for ever decide that long continued war and feud betwixt the church and her enemies, a deliverance which as it will be the last, so one of the greatest, that ever the church had, the Lord thus finifhing his work of providence by so lately and magnificent a clofe; and truely after this we know no more of canonick scripture to be fulfilled but the coming of the Lord, when the poor, toft afflicted church, shall enter unto a triumphant state above all the violence and oppression of men. O bleffed and long looked for day of Christ's return to judgment, when the dust of the fants, that for some thousand years past, hath been refting in hope, shall awake, and this earth and all the glory thereof like a poor vain fheep disappear? O bleffed, and comfortable time in which the fants shall then fully know what heaven is, which they have fo oft admired at a distance, to behold his face in whole presence is fulness of joy, and shall need no further confirmations of the the truth of the word, when once this great promise of the Lord's return is verified, a promife wherein all these precious truths which concerned the church in her journey, as fo many streams shall empty themselves in this great deep, then there is no more to do: The work of the gospel is finished, the redeemed all brought in, and the bride made ready to go.
go forth and meet him, who shall fully satisfy, and comfort his people, according to the days of their former affliction, and be for ever their exceeding great reward.

THE FIRST ARGUMENT.

THAT which not only is for the most part already accomplished, but is a thing whereof we have so sure confirmations, yea, so great a pledge in our hand from the Lord, that what yet remaineth shall be certainly fulfilled, must it not be an undoubted truth? But the scripture as to the special predictions, that are not yet made out, is such, anent which the Lord hath given his people a very large pledge, and strong confirmations now in these latter times, to believe their certain accomplishment. Therefore, &c.

It is sure that a part of the scripture, some special prophecies, which do concern the state of the church in these last times, hath not yet had an accomplishment, which are already touched in the former argument, and are indeed to great concerning truths that may cause us sit down, and wonder, when we think these shall shortly come to pass; yet such, whereof we may be fully persuaded, if we consider that they are held forth, and promised by him who is the God of truth, and the begun performance hereof, now to manifest, yea what hath been the Lord's way, and the eminent providences of last times which may fully satisfy our spirits, that God's work is near to a close, and the accomplishing of the whole scripture now at hand. I shall here point at some special grounds whence the godly in these times may be thoroughly convinced anent the truth, and certain outmaking of the scripture, and these prophecies thereof, that yet are not fulfilled, which we should look on, as a very convincing pledge in our hand of the same.

First, is not the being of the world, yea the heavens and the earth which we see, and the continued course of nature given from the Lord, and held forth to his people, as a witness to his truth, and a sure pledge to confirm their faith anent its accomplishment? That when we look upon the heavens or the earth we may there read a visible seal of the certain performance of the whole scripture of God, which for that very end are set before our eyes; we have this clear, Jer. xxxiii. 20. that the covenant with the day and the night is there given to the church to confirm that covenant betwixt the Lord and his people, this also is held forth, Jer. xxxi. 33. Thus faith the Lord, who gives the sun a light by day, and the moon and stars by night, if these ordinances fail depart, then may the seed of Israel cease and fail from being a nation. It is also clear, Psal. lxxxix. 2. That the faithfulness of God is established in the very heavens, and thereof given as a special convincing pledge to confirm the faith of his people in the matter of his truth, and of the performance of his word, for which we will find in the 37 verse of that Psalm, the sun and the moon given to the church as a witness: is not the rainbow also, Gen. ix. (though not natural, but an instituted sign, because there is no correspondence betwixt the sign and the thing signified) given as a visible sign of the covenant of God to seal unto men the assurance of his word and promise? I must think it strange that we do not consider this world and look on the frame thereof with more astonishment, yea, that it is not a greater and more marvellous thing in our eyes if we would but think seriously, whence it is and it came to have a being; let us suppose one were brought forth into the light, from a dark place where he had never seen it before, and there let his eyes wander a little upon the heavens and the earth, O what a dazzling and amazing sight would that be! But it must be said we look on these every day.
yet know not how to read or understand, what is written thereon; oh this
great universe is for the most part as a sealed book.

But for clearing of this truth there are two things we would gravely con-
sider.

1. Something which must be previously known, and believed,
that those visible heavens and earth are the very work and product of this God,
whose word and promise we have in the scripture, and have their being
and original from him; for otherwise there could be no reasoning from these anent
the truth of his word.

2. We would also consider, what a convincing
pledge is here, for confirming our faith of the scripture, and of the sure per-
formance of all that is yet remaining thereof to be accomplished.

As to the first, it might seem unnecessary so much as once to mention it,
since it is so little questioned, or under debate; but oh it is too clear, that
many truths are easily admitted, which are not really believed: I know
the world would find it hard to shift so manifest a demonstration, that this un-
iverse is the work and product of the great God, when there is in it so bright
a discovery of infinite power and wisdom, truly it is strange how men could
admit its being who have denied its beginning, which not only by faith we
understand, but it is most evident from solid grounds of reason, and though
men are undone with implicit faith and a common assent to the greatest
fundamental truths without any solid pervasion thereof, yet the greatest a-
theists cannot keep off the discovery of this, but by keeping at a distance from
it; which truly Aristotle and others of these ancients, did not so much deny
the fame, but not knowing the scripture they could not know how it should
be: thence Epicurus and others of his followers finding that they could not
solve the Phennomena of nature and thus unanswerable absurdities if they ad-
mitted an eternity of the world, did fall on such an irrational fancy, to a-
void this, of the fortuitous concourse of atoms, yea some hold an eternal preex-
istence of the first matter, which pitiful notions may shew what sad cafe men
are in, who grope after the truth by the twilight of nature, and are strangers
to the scripture: but I leave this, and shall only touch a little some clear and
satisfying evidences of this truth, that the beginning and original of the world
is not more clear from the scripture, than it is also demonstrable from solid
convincing grounds of reason; and truly a clear discovery of this hath a
further reach than may be apprehended, to give the atheism of men a dead
stroke, and shake all its grounds: now let these few things be seriously con-
considered.

1. If you conceive there is a deity, that God blessed for ever
is, must you not necessarily admit a creation and beginning, since eternity is a
thing that is only communicable to the first cause, and yet cannot conceive
that the earth could produce it itself, for to exist and put to exist at the same
time is a contradiction; and I am sure they must shut their eyes who do not
every where discern some witness of the glorious being of God.

2. You
cannot deny that there is such a thing as time, since there is no judging of
days, years and ages to be infinite, or how one thing in a continued order
should go before another without coming to some first and beginning.

3. Do's not this gradual advance of human knowledge in the earth, and that
further discovery which arts and sciences have made by a continued improve-
ment of the same, witness very clearly a beginning and original of the world,
for ye could not conceive a perpetual succession of mankind with a constant
stay after further knowledge, with such a continued progress in experience,
as an eternity supposed before this would produce, and yet the most concern-
ing arts and sciences, yea, the choicest experiments and inventions we have
in the world to be of so late a rise and date, such as the use of printing, and
of the mariners compass by the load stone, the use of guns, the improvement of
of minerals in medicine; yea the very motion and convey of the blood in
man's body which are but of late discovery. 4. May not so short a his-
tory which to this day we have of the world, witness its late original, and
that it is of no eternal duration, since the ancientest records of time, or of
things past do not exceed some thousands of years; and could this be possibly
conceived, that infinite ages preceding, if such had been, should give no
account nor leave a remembrance to posterity, when the late ages hold so
much forth; yea, how could it be that it is but of late one part or the world
is known and discovered to another part thereof? 5. It is very manifest
from the known records we have of by-past times, what hath been the rise
and encrease of nations, yea, how a great part of men have from a rude and
savage estate been brought into society, and under laws and government,
which shews this world must be of a short duration, which none could con-
ceive by admitting such a supposal of its eternal being. 6. It is sure man
is born and dies, and in that ordinary way of generation mankind is still pro-
pagate; and is not here the world's beginning very obvious? for you cannot
judge that men should beget other eternally without going back at last to some
first man, who could not beget himself. 7. If eternity be preferable
to time, can you judge the excellentest things of the earth, such as man, and
next unto him the beasts, are perishing, and only these things which are in-
imate and the mafs of the earth whereon they tread is of a perpetual dura-
tion. 8. It is manifest what an increase a few men (not to speak of o-
ther living creatures) may in an ordinary way have, to people a vast country
even in some ages, now is it not thus clear the world can be of no eternal
duration, for if you should this way, turn back on an infinite number of ages, and
suppose that every age should but add and multiply to the race of man two
or three, it would come at last to this, the earth could not bear them; since
we must thus oppose some infinite encrease from an infinite continuance of
the world, which no wars or confusing strokes could in such a measure di-
minish. 9. Can you conceive that should be eternal which is wholly
made up of corruptible and perishing things; since the things of the world have
all their set times and seasons wherein they appear, and are quickly gone: in
a word must not these deny a dissolution of this world or an after judgment
and life to come, yea the whole truth of religion, if this great truth be not re-
ceived and believed.

But having premitt some few evidences that may witness the original of
the world, yea that this marvelous frame with the whole continued course of
nature is the product of a divine power and wisdom, I shall here in the second
place point at some few things, which may shew how great a pledge this is,
and what a quieting ground it should be to the faith of the godly, that the
scripture is certainly true, and must have an accomplishment, since from the
very being and beginning of the world, we may clearly reason to these which
by undeniable consequence follows.

1. That the world now is, is a sure and confirming witness to its last close,
and of the accomplishment of that promise, of its dissolution in the end of
time, we know it is not long since there was no earth, no sun, moon or stars,
now upon no less security than that word, by which it was formed we must
believe it shall e'er long cease to be, what now it is, and thus when we look
upon the world, and see such a thing before us, ought we not to read that pro-
mise of its after dissolution clearly written thereon before our eyes? 2. It
is a very clear consequence, that this God can bring his word unto perform-
ance, and his power therein cannot fail or fall short, yea that his counsell and
purpose have no dependence on means or instruments who did once bring
this
this world out of nothing, and said let there be heaven and an earth when there was none: O when we open the Bible and read the great promises thereof, should we not have that impression on our souls, these are the true and faithful sayings of God, and his word with whom the doing thereof is as easy as to say it; who without the concurrence of instruments, or any co-workers could bring this great creation forth; we truly so far mistake the meaning of the heavens, and these great celestial bodies, with the marvelous order that is there, when we cannot read the truth and faithfulness of God in all his promises write thereupon, for they are held forth to men as a confirming pledge of the same, and this were indeed an excellent study and improvement of Astrology. 3. Since it is sure and undeniable that this earth doth hang in the empty place, though men see not whereon it leans and rests: O what a strange thing is it! Could the air bear up so vast and ponderous a body, but herein is a marvelous divine power convincingly witnessed, which hath so established it that it cannot be moved; now is not this very word that bears up such a weight, and thence with as clear ground we may reason, for adventuring of the church with its weight, and every christian's burden, whatever it may be, on the promise of this God, on whose word the great bulk of the earth doth this day lean: I must say no mathematical demonstration doth follow, by a clearer evidence, than this consequence from such premises is undeniable.

4. We see the Lord keeps covenant with the day and the night, yea that summer and winter do not fail before him according to his promise, and are not these a visible witness for God that his truth and covenant with his church shall not fail, for it is sure the continued course of nature hath such an audible voice if we could but listen thereto. 5. Do's not the Lord clearly witnesses by such a strange contrariety that is amongst the elements, and these different qualities whereof he serves himself in this great frame, and compound of the world, that this promise shall not fail, but it is easy for him to verify the same, in making all things work together, were they never so crofs and disagreeing among themselves, for an accomplishment of his design.

6. When we see the rage and violence of the great ocean bounded by a bank of sand, for which there could be no true reason given, how such an impetuous and furious motion could be restrain'd, and the sand be a bridle to the sea, if it were not to make out the faithfulness of God, who by a perpetual decree hath thus bounded it; O is there not thence a visible confirmation of his truth! that he can also restrain the rage of men, and turn it unto his pleasure, and for attaining this end serve himself of most improbable middles; it was a notable saying of a grave minister of Christ, when he was upon the sea in a storm. O shall I fear, says he, the face of a tyrant, that serve him who can restrain and tame the rage of this swelling Sea. 7. If we consider the earth and its original, and look aright on that so oft repeated discovery we have of the feed time and harvest, and of the earth bringing forth such innumerable kinds of vegetables in the spring after a dead winter, as out of their graves, may we not thence have a very clear confirming seal of that great truth of the resurrection, and of the rising of the dust of men's bodies that are buried under the earth; I shall but say, do's not God thus give a continued wonder, and set the same before our eyes in the continued course of nature, to allure us of his truth and promise, that it shall not fail though there were no appearance how in an ordinary way it could be accomplished.

II. Ground whence we may be thus confirmed in our faith is this; That not only the most part of the scripture is already proved and verified in the event, but also, These truths of the whole scripture are most strange, and marvelous, yea, should have much staggered our faith, if they were yet still
in a promise are this day certainly accomplished, I shall but only instance The coming of the Messiah, which the prophets of old foretold, that God should be manifest in the flesh, and a virgin bring forth a son, whole name should be Emmanuel, that was to die, and be cut off out of the land of the living, not for himself, but for the transgression of his people, is not this now fully accomplished? which we may say the greatest wonder, the most astonishing thing that ever was, or shall be, and should fully silence our thoughts upon any other scripture truth, that is yet to be made out, for we know that the great business of redemption is put to a close, the ransom and price thereof fully told down, now is the doctrine of the gospel sealed, and attested by blood, even the blood of the Tefiator, it is now sure the promised Messiah hath come, and this is he, who in the days of Pilate suffered at Jerusalem, in whom all things which were written by the prophets, were truly accomplished. And is not this a great pledge, to allure us of the real outmaking of every other promise? It is sure he did die, his blessed side was pierced with a spear, and upon the cross he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. O here lieth the greatest cause of wonder, not what doth yet remain of the scripture, but that which is already fulfilled, not that Christ should come again to judge the world, but that once he did come to the world, and become man; for God to be found in the form of a servant and die, that is beyond expression wonderful, for the other must necessarily as a consequent follow, that he who hath redeemed the church, and did pay her ransom should see the travel of his soul, and be satisfied, that having made such a purchase he should also have possession and finish the building, the foundation whereof was his own blood. I confess what we do yet expect according to the promise, are great and astonishing truths, the full overthrow of Antichrist and his kingdom, that the dead bones of the Jewish church should again live, but specially Christ's return to judgment, who shall be revealed from heaven with flaming fire, the sound of the trumpet and voice of the archangel, yet, how great soever they are and may seem hard for us to believe, O how small comparatively are they, with that which is already done and accomplished, the incarnation of the Son of God, a mystery hid from ages, wherein the angels with wonder do look, which we may say, is unspeakably more great, than to create this world, and turn it again to nothing; it may be truly strange, whilst we read those prophecies anent Christ, and his kingdom in so plain an history, and profess that we believe he did die, and rise again, we should have such hesitation, anent the performance of any other scripture promise, is it not this day much more easy to believe the scripture and fulfilling thereof, than it was of old for the Jewish church before Christ's coming? And now may we not with as much assurance wait for the second coming of the Lord, and a full perfecting of his word even from that which is already verified thereof, as we are sure of the return of the sun after it is gone down, and of the breaking of the day when once the night is past.

III. Ground whence the godly in these times should be confirmed anent the full performance of that which is yet remaining of the scripture, that it is sure, yea, now near at hand, is this, that Jesus Christ is come to action against the enemies of his church, and hath taken the fields, that surely he is now gone forth in the greatness of his strength conquering, and to conquer. This is a grave truth which might give us very sweet refreshing thoughts in so shattering a time, that whilst we have seen the Lord's appearing by a great, and outstretched hand for his people, these terrible fits, and concussions of the nations, have seen him strike through kings in the day of wrath, and fill the places with the dead bodies of his adversaries, we may also on clear scripture
The Fulfilling of the Scripture. Part I.

Scripture grounds conclude, that the Lord is now awaked as a mighty man, and upon the fields, yea, that the war is fully begun against antichrist, and all the adversaries of his church, which shall not cease until the full victory be obtained; for indeed these providences which in these last times should be very affrighting and terrible, when we go in to the word, we shall find they have a comfortable aspect on the church, and do prepare her greater enlargement, which as the tender buds, and leaves of the fig-tree, are put forth to shew the summer’s approach, *Luk. xxii. 28.* It is true, the church is now low, and the work of God meets with very sad interruptions which are needful both for trial and rebuke, but this also is sure which none can deny, that the Lord hath eminently appeared, and done great things for his church, yea, we must say, he hath, by a confluence of very remarkable providences thus condescended to strengthen his people’s hands, to confirm such who are ready to stagger, even as it were by crutches, anent the greatness of these things which are yet promised. Now to clear this truth a little, we shall consider, first: How it is very consonant to the scripture, and expressly held forth in the same, that in the last times, and turn of the church’s case from antichrist, the Lord will thus appear in his great strength, and set up his standard against his adversaries, yea, will then in a special way call forth his people, to glorify him by an active testimony. 2. That Lord hath thus begun to appear according to his word is a truth that is also undeniable, and should much help to confirm our faith, anent the performance of that which further remains of the scripture. 1. That this is manifest from the word may be thus clear. First, Though the church militant must not want an adversary, and some persecution from the world, even in her best estate, yet, we have a safe warrant to expect that the Lord will glorify himself in a peculiar way, in his people now in these latter days, by doing and acting for the truth, as in former ages his glory did most appear, during Antichrist’s reign, in his churches suffering; for then the faith and patience of his saints was to be witnessed in its season, *Rev. xiii. 10.* and thus he would serve himself of his people, and bring forth his glory, until that time of retribution, when those who had killed the word, should be killed by the word, and these who led unto captivity be so dealt with, which doth also clearly promise some special outlaying of the spirit for acting with these gifts of courage and resolution suitable to the service of the church in these latter days; and truly I think it is great want we fludy not more the accomplishing of the promises, and how to improve the same for gifts, as well as grace, in order to the several times and necessities of the church. 2. It is very clear from the scripture that in these last days, when Christ is to raise his church from under the power and tyranny of Antichrist he shall then appear in a warlike posture, which John had shewed to him, *Rev. xix. 13, 14.* as one upon the head of his forces, with his vesture dipped in blood, to shew that when once the war is begun against his adversary, and this lion of the tribe of Juda begins to rouse himself up, what a terrible appearance he will have in that undertaking; and it is clear, that the Lord hath declared in this his counsel and will, that his son Christ should in the latter times, take unto himself his great power and reign, *Rev. xi. 17.* yea, cause the world know him to be head of principalities and powers, as well as of the church, for his glory in this truth as a king, which former ages feemed in so great a measure to darken, must then clearly shine forth. I truly think men appearing with such violence, and rage against it concerning a truth, now in these days doth promise some eminent appearance of the Lord therein, and that he shall yet more solemnly attest the same before the world. 3. Doth not the scripture point at the last times, as that
that special time of recompence for the controversy of Sion to which the Lord hath referred a solemn triumph of his justice, over all his church's enemies, when he shall enquire for the blood of his saints, feed upon the earth since the days of Abel, at Babylon's hand, Rev. xvi. 24. that great adversary, who stands in law guilty, and hath certified herself heir to all the violence and cruelty done in former ages, for in her hand must that cup be found full, which the enemies of the church from the beginning have been filling up, and as so many rivers, and fountains hath run unto this great sea.

4. It is also clear, that in the last times, when the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and heal the stroke of their wound, who for so long a time, had been trampled under by Antichrist, he shall by some signal providences roll away this reproach, and scandal of means, contempt and persecution, shall put some glory on his church proportionable to its former abasement, yea, thus comfort her, and cause his peoples uprising, in measure, and kind to answer their low and suffering state from Antichrist, even in the last times, when the Lord shall make them appear with the face of a Lion, when the feeble shall be as David, and as the angel of the Lord, Zech. xii. 8. which promise doth clearly point at the church's raising and delivery from Antichrist; upon the back whereof we find the prophet doth foretell the last conversion and incoming of Israel.

5. I shall only add what the Scripture doth most expressly shew, that the Lord shall so gloriously appear in bringing his church out of Babylon, and executing his judgment on that adversary, as in the day when he brought his people out of Egypt, and therefore shall they sing the song of Moses, and the lamb, Rev. xvi. 3. his great power and outstretched hand, being no less discernible therein, than if they had been standing with Israel at the Red-sea, when they saw their enemies lying dead upon the shore; yea, have we not ground to believe, that the Lord shall make himself very evidently known in raising instruments, and actin them forth, which hath been already seen, and I am sure the world must confess what great things have been done by thee of whom little was expected.

6. That the Lord hath thus begun to appear, and make himself known to the world in these last ages according to his word, is a thing very easy to demonstrate, for Is it not clear how in these last times, he hath met his enemies upon their high places, and in their greatest strength, that by a strong hand he did make room for his truth, when both law, and force did withstand the same, and put the marks of his wrath on such who would oppose the spreading of his kingdom, that they have been as visible, as sometimes their rage, and violence against the church was; yea, since the Lord began to lift up a standard for the truth, and call forth his people to act, hath it not been seen they have loosed their ground more by under-hand treaties, and turning aside to carnal politic shifts than by open force and violence, which the French massacre, with other sad instances can witness; for indeed the church hath still left least, by greatest opposition. Have we not seen by what dreadful shakings and alterations of the earth, this late glorious reformation of the church from Antichristianism hath been ushered in, which hath been more strange and frequent, than in many ages before; hath not the Lord caused the nations to shake, and the earth to reel like a drunken man, to shew men that though he suffered long in former times of the world's ignorance, he will not now bear with opprobrious his truth. Have we not also seen the Lord's raising up men fit for action, in these last times, men of a great heroic spirit, with some more than ordinary elevation of the same, to appear for his interest, such we may say, that many former ages could not instance, in which the Lord's helping his people to do
to do great things, his suitings them with endowments for the service, and work of the time, hath been most discernible? Was not that excellent man the Admiral of France, with many others in that place, eminently raised up, for the necessity of that time, and do we not find thee Princes of Orange, William and Maurice, and Mauritius of Saxony, whom the Lord raised against Charles V. and caused him to flee over the Alps, yea, what marvelous resolution and courage did attend the actions of the confederates of the Low Countries, and in latter times do we not find Gustavus King of Sweden, Bernard Duke of Weymier, Landgrave of Hesse, with many others eminently raised to avenge the Lord's quarrel against that bloody house of Austria; have we not also seen very great instruments raised up in Britain and Ireland, (who were followed with wonderful successe) to act for the truth against Antichristian Prelacy; and truly we must say the withdrawing in such a measure of that spirit of courage and resolution, which once was so visibly let forth in the first dawning of the Reformation, may sadly point at a great decay of zeal, self-confidence, unfaithfulness as to the improving of opportunities; for the Lord was with his people whilst they were with him, and did singly follow him in his way, but alas, with their departing, it may be said their strength hath departed from them, however, the quarrel is clear for an oppressed peoples acting, upon so just, so necessary an account as the interest of religion against the cruelty and violent encroachments of Antichrist, wherein as the Lord hath eminently owned his people, so, I dare not question he will yet appear, and silence the adversaries of this truth, by such an argument, against which they shall not debate. 8. That universal deluge of blood which for these 100 years hath overflowed much of Europe can be a witness to this, that the Lord hath taken peace from men who would not embrace the peace of the gospel offered in these last times, and given his enemies who had shed the blood of the saints, blood to drink in great measure. I am sure poor Germany can prove this, which for twenty years together was a field of dead men, and France from the days of Hen. II. to the establishment of Hen. IV. how long were the Low Countries made a stage of war, where many a cruel Spaniard did fall under the sword of an avenging God, besides the late bloody wars in Britain and Ireland, and what doth this declare, but that Jesus Christ hath taken the fields, and it will not be now with the Kings of the earth, to oppress his church, and withstand the truth as in former times.

I shall but add, how wonderfully hath the Lord appeared in delivering his church at the greatest extremity, hath turned his enemies counsels and designs upon themselves, brought about the great works of the last times by means so unexpected and improbable, that we may say, as to what of his judgment is already executed against Antichrist, hath been no les marvels than that Jericho's walls should fall at the sound of a trumpet of rams-horn; or a cake of barley bread tumbling into the hoft of Midian should finite and overthrow the fame; surely when we consider, what the Lord hath done, and how exactly that doth answer the scripture, we may have much to confirm us, anent the further accomplishment of his word, and be assured that the term of his long suffering towards Babylon is at an end, war is denounced, and the execution already begun, which must not have a close until judgment be accomplished into victory.

IV. Ground which may confirm the faith of the saints, and be as a pledge in their hand of the full accomplishing of the scripture, yea, that this is near, is this, that the day is now turned, and that prophesi'd victory which the church should have over Antichrist before the end, is not only begun, but in a great measure advanced.
Part I. *The Fulfilling of the Scripture.*

This is indeed a great confirmation when we see so marvelous a crisis in the church's case, her recovery from so desperate and hopeless a dilafts already begun, that it shall be further perfected; we are made to wonder at the greatness of these things yet promised, but why should we not also wonder at that which God hath already done for his church, in our days; the scripture doth shew that Antichrist's ruin must begin by the word, that this stroke shall be gradual, and however that great work of God meet with much opposition, yet, it shall no more go back in the whole, and must we not say in all this the word is fulfilled, it hath not hitherto failed the church, but the event in every circumstance made to answer to the fame. Now to clear this we would consider these two. First, that the church's victory over Antichrist is this day so far advanced. 2. How the Lord's very immediate hand hath been most discernible therein.

1. The first I need but name whilst it is so manifest, what the Lord hath wrought for his church, for we have seen kingdoms and nations, subject themselves to the truth, the kingdom of Antichrist grow dark, with the breaking up of the light, and many of his followers made to gnash their teeth, being scorched with the heat and power of the gospel; in how great a measure is that interest now shaken, if we consider what the Lord hath wrought, what a great reformation hath been in Britain and Ireland, through much of France, Germany, Sweden, the Low Countries, Poland, Denmark, yea, even in Hungary and Transylvania, sure this was a great work, which should be marvelous in our eyes, how that Antichristian Empire contrived with such wisdom, underpropt with so great strength, whose commands not long since were received as oracles, with an awe and respect only due to God, hath in such a measure begun to fall before the power of the word. O the righteous judgment of the Lord, which he hath showed forth upon that adversary, and should be a pledge to us of the further manifestation thereof, an adversary we may say the greatest that ever the church had, whose little finger hath been furer than the loins of all who went before, if we consider his cruelty over mens bodies, tyranny over their conscience, with so long a continuance of that trial; in respect of whom it may be said Pharaoh was an easy taskmaster, Antiochus and the Roman Emperors mild, who for near 1200 years did carry on a desperate and bloody war against the church.

II. The second which I would at some more length follow is this, how the Lord's hand and something of an extraordinary providence hath been no less discernible in this late raising of the church, and her begun victory over Antichrist than in the first planting of christianity by the apostles, this is a truth which to many may seem strange, but when seriously considered, if prejudice do not darken mens judgment, will appear from sure and solid grounds; now to demonstrate this I would here offer some very convincing witnesses, which may help to strengthen the faith of the godly, and give atheism some death.

First, Witness to this truth is, that wonderful success which the gospel in these last times hath had, wherein men must see the great power of God, and efficacy of the spirit in some measure as manifest, as in the first rise of the christian church, if we consider.

1. From what a small spark so great a fire did break up which in a short time put Europe in a flame, and made so great a change therein, even Luther's appearing against Textius, upon the account of his indulgencies, O but God's time of working may be oft contrary to our time of expecting. 2. What a swift progress did the gospel have? may we not say with wonder, can a nation be born at once, yet, this we have seen how many nations and cities in one
and the same age, yea, in less than forty years, was brought in subjection to the truth, and those instruments whom scarce any durst own at first, made to see great princes with armies on the fields for the interests of Christ. 3. Have we not seen religion propagated by martyrdom, no less than in the primitive times, and mens eyes to ruin the church helped it further to grow. O what but a divine power could thus bring gold out of iron and clay, bring a flourishing church out of their ashes, and turn her poison to a preservative, but alas, it is sad, that whilst men were burned for the truth, and reading the scripture, their affection did also burn in reading the same, but now with our liberty there is so great a decay.

4. Must not the wise and politicians of the world confess this late encrease of the church, is a thing above their reach, most crofs to all their rules, which they cannot see how in an ordinary way it could be brought about.

5. Were not instruments most unlikely for so great a work if we would judge as men, that such a poor handful as Luther, Zuinglius, Melanchton, Bucere, &c. should go forth to confront that power which then made the earth to tremble, might it not seem as improbable as the sending forth of some fitter men to subdue the nations?

6. It is known they were none of the Rabbies of the time, whose repute and fame might have purchased easy access to their message, nay, they were loaded with all the reproach which their adversaries could devise, with novelty of doctrine, deceit and falshood in their dealing, represented to the world as monsters, Luther was forced to answer himself a printed relation of his death, how he was carried away soul and body by the Devil.

7. Was not the message they carried most opposit to mens carnal inclinations, to these principles they had sucked in from their infancy, to the religion of their fathers, yea, in a word, had no outward encouragements, the whole world seemed to combine against them; Luther at his first appearance excommunicated by the Pope, prescribed by the Emperor, and good Melanchton was oft made to faint, when he thought on so great a spectre of opposition, so that without the convoy of an extraordinary power, nothing could have looked more improbable.

Second Witness that may let the world see a wonderful providence in this late raising of the church is this, these sharp assaults which the church met with from a party no less cruel and powerfull than any adversary which the church had in the primitive times, for I am sure the world must confess that no ordinary means had wanted for an eyal to crush the gospel in its first budding forth, that both counsel and force, the authority of law, backed with greatest rage and violence in its execution, yea, the power of the princes of the earth was put forth to the utmost, to withstand this great work of God in these last ages; to clear this I shall only point at some remarkable assaults which did try the dawning of the gospel, that may shew something above nature going along with it.

1. We find a Spanis Emperor devoted to the popish interest, more powerful than any who went before, brought in on Germany with the very first breaking up of the light, which might seem a dreadful let to the gospel's spreading.

2. The rise of the Boors and Anabastifs party, whose being so gros, destructive to civil order, to the interests and proprieties of men, did look like a fatal trial, and a probable means to beget much prejudice against the truth.

3. That sad overthrow of the Duke of Saxony, and Landgrave of Hesse, who were such great patriarchs to the church, did then threaten the very ruin of the Protestant interest in Germany.

4. The Council of Trent where the popish party had all their politics on foot in a strong combination, how to ruin the church.

5. The interim
terim of Germany a most subtil contrivance to divide, and thus break the strength of the Protestants, was also a fore affault, a snare to lome, and cause of persecution to others. 6. That Spanish Inquisition established through Spain, Italy, and the Low Countries, a horrid cruel engine which did reach to prevent the smallest glancings of the truth. 7. The French Massacre where not only the Admiral, but most of the considerable Protestants were through all France in a few days cut off, O would not this seem an irrecoverable stroke, together with that Catholic League, which did quickly follow upon the back thereof, a very strong and formidable combination to root out the Protestant interest. 8. The taking away of Edward V. of England, and establishing of a cruel persecuter Queen Mary, did indeed look like a stroke that should root out the church in that part, and destroy that famous plantation of the gospel, in its tender growth. 9. I must add that which was as fore an affault to the church as any, so grievous a difference which with the first breaking up of the work of reformation did begin between Luther and Zuinglius, about Christ's presence in the sacrament, yea, came to such an height, and with so great heat and animosity was followed, as in appearance would have wholly frustrate the work they were about.

THIRD witness to this truth is that wonderful patience, and resolution of the saints, yea, with much cheerfulness in their greatest sufferings, which in these late times did appear, wherein the world must confess that fame immediate support from heaven, yea, the Lord's owning his people in a very extraordinary way, was no lefs manifest, than in their primitive sufferings of the church from heathens. Sure no by-paft times, even in these bloody days of Nero, Domitian, &c. can shew more horrid, more strange engines of torment and cruelty, than what in these last ages the church did endure from the popish party, whose savage, and barbarous usage of the poor flock of Christ, wherever they had access, may witness a cruelty more than human, and as to the number, are they not almost without reckoning, who in France, Germany, Britain, and the Low countries beside other parts, were slain within this 150 years, for the word of God, and the testimony of his truth. Now as this is most manifest, it is also known what a divine, and an invincible spirit with an astonishing courage, and resolution, did appear in the carriage of the people of God, under this fore persecution, how they triumphed over their oppressors, and did cheerfully meet death in its most terrible shape; a thing which the schools of Socrates and Plato, with all their rules could never reach, yea, should be reckoned, amongst the miracles of these latter days; anent which we would consider these things.

1. That something more than nature, a spirit and resolution above the ordinary rate of men, yea some thing much above themselves, their natural temper and disposition did in their most extreme sufferings oft appear, and this without the least shadow of affectation, and deceit: I am sure the world in these last ages, yea, the confidence of their persecutors, and of the greatest atheists must witnessthis. 2. That many of the most soft, tender disposition, many women, whose completion would declare more weakness than others, yet in this late antichristian persecution, did endure greatest torments, and by suffering triumphed over the fury, and rage of their adversaries, whereof we have many instances upon record. 3. The world hath been also witnes how serious, and deliberate the saints were in this, that they made suffering their choice, which they could easily have flunned, at the rate of yielding something in the truth, but e'er they would do this, or give the adversary such a bribe, they choofed to embrace death, and go to a stake for Christ, even when they wanted not most perswading offers to turn them aside: for instance,
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infiance, I would here mention that excellent man in Queen Mary's time Julius Palmer who not only had life, but preferment offered if he would recant, to which his answer was, "That he had quit his living in two places " for Christ, and now was ready to yield his life on that account:" likewise one William Hunter, whom Bishop Bonar did urge with many offers to recant, told him it must be scripture, and not perjuries of that kind, for he reckoned all earthly things but dross, and dung in respect of Christ, and at the flake when a pardon by the sheriff was offered upon such an accump, did peremptorily reject the same. Antonius Riceto a Venetian, ' who con- ' denned for the truth, had a large offer to have his patrimony restored, which is much mortaged with debt, and make free, besides his life, if he would ' but a little yield, and likewise had his son weeping on him for that cause, gave this answer, he resolved to lose both children; and estate for Christ. I shall add what we have related of one Herzon, who suffered in the Low- countries, to whom the magistrates made great intreaties with large promises to recant, which he wholly flighted, many more instances of this kind here might be let down. 4. It is known, that such who were of great repute in the world, and had a large share of outward things to tempt them, did in these last times most cheerfully part with the same, and choice rather suffering for the truth; we may infance these two great witnesses, John Frederick of Saxon, and the Landgrave of Hesse, who under that long imprisonment by Charles V. bare out many sharp assaults both by threatnings and offers, without yielding in the least to the prejudice of the truth, yet, on this accump did the Duke of Saxon forgoe with his estate, and dignity. Anna Du Burg counsellor of the parliament at Paris of great parts, and repute, who before Henry II. had an excellent speech in parliament, for the protestant party, for which by him being imprisoned, did forgoe all his honours, and interests in the world, which otherways he might have brooked, and embraced death for Christ. The Prince of Condée at the massacre of Paris, when the king expresslie shewed him he should within three days dye, if he did not renounce his religion, told him, his estate, and life were in his hand, but 'er he renounced the truth he would quit both. Charles de Zeronon a Moravian Barron of great intereff and authority in the late Bohemian persecution did quit all his estate, and possesion for the gospel, notwithstanding of many large offers, and perjuries. We find also in England the Dutchess of Suffolk, a lady who lived in the fulnes of the world, and pleasures thereof, yet in Queen Mary's time, did quit both estate, and country for the truth, and on that accump did choice a very hard lot in other parts. 5. Is it not also known how these who had been ready to faint, and be overcharged with discouragement, yet, at death in the extremity of their suffering, did shew a marvelous resolution, and chearfulness, a thing which no atheist can possibly answer, and sheweth God's very immediate support. Mr. Glover, how sore was he cast down, and could feel no joy, or comfort after much wrestiling, but no sooner did come in fight of the flake, but his soul was filled with the joy of the Lord, and with his strength, which forced him to clap his hands, and cry forth to a friend who knew his former damp, and discouragement. Oh Austin be is come, he is come, and thus cheerfully went to death. Thomas Hinfhon a choice christian who suffered in Queen Mary's time, when at the flake, did slip suddenly from under the chain, to the astonishment of the people, but not for fear of death, but from the want of feeling of Christ, which made him full of heaviness, but after his turning aside, that he had got his soul poured out to God, he returned as one raised from death to life, crying out, Now I am strong, and do not care what man can do, and thus with much
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much joy, did yield up his spirit. Likewife Annas du Burgh whom we before mentioned being through fear, and discouragement drawn to recant, had no rest in his spirit, until he retracted the same, and after did cheerfully undergo death; with what marvelous resolution did that excellent man Doctor Cranmer put his right hand to the fire when he came to the stake, and suffered it to burn without shrinking, which as he said he would punish, for subscribing a recantation which was so much thereafter his grief.

Lat I must add, that marvelous joy, and resolution which the saints in these late times, did in their greatest sufferings shew, is very notour, and known to the world, for their suffering was not in a corner, and we may say, hath not come short of the primitive martyrs, but did witness the same spirit, and power accompanying them. I cannot pass this in a general without giving some touch, amidst such a multitude of convincing influences; let us hear blessed Bradford at the stake, thus speak to his fellow sufferer, be of good comfort, for we shall have this night a merry supper with the Lord. Latimer to Ridley we shall this day light such a candle in England, as I trust shall never be put out. Mr. Sanders, I was in prison until I get into prison; and at the stake embracing cries, welcome the cross of Christ, welcome everlasting life. Doctor Farrer to a gentleman who bemoaned his death, and the painfulness of it if you see me once stir in the fire, believe not my doctrine, as did after appear, for he stood without moving in the midst of the flame. John Adley, if every hair of my head were a man, it should suffer in the faith I now stand in, Elisabeth Folks embracing the stake cried farewell world, farewell faith, and hope, and welcome love. Robert Aiguire's son when at Lile in the low countries, he suffered with his father for the truth, in the year 1556, did cry forth at the stake, behold millions of angels about us, and the heaven opened to receive us after he had sometime fixed his eyes on heaven, and when the fire was kindled, says to his father yet a very little while and we shall enter into the heavenly mansion. Mr. Tins an English minister in Queen Mary's days thus writes to his friends, "I am going to the Bishop's Coal-house but shall not be long there before I be carried up to my brethren, who are gone to heaven before me in a fiery chariot; follow you after me, where, "you shall find me singing merrily at my journey's end," boyl, boyl, boyl Lord God of saboath. Algerius an Italian martyr, thus writes from his prison a little before his death, Who would believe that in this dungeon I should find a paradise so pleasant, in a place of sorrow and death, tranquility, and hope of life, where othersweep I rejoice. O, how easy and sweet is his yoke! and this he subscribes from that delectable orchard of the Leoline prison. Guy de Bres the ringing of my chain bath been sweet music in my ears, all my former discourfes were but as a blind man's colours, in respect of my present feeling. O what a precious comforter is a good conience. The Lord Henry Otto a Bohemian, who suffered in the late persecution, said to the minister, I was troubled, but now I feel a wonderful refreshment, O now I fear death no longer, I will die with joy, and on the scaffold cried out, behold I see the heavens opened, pointing with his hands at the place where others observed a certain brightness that did dazzel their eyes, and thus dyed with great cheerfulness. I shall but add the last words of that holy, and great Mr. Wishart, who thus spake amidst the fire, the flame doth torment my body, but no abate my spirits.

Fourth Witness is these great, and remarkable judgements of God, which in these late times have befallen the adversaries, and persecutors of the church, who have been most notour for their opposition to the truth;
wherein we must say a divine hand hath been so discernible that ordinary observers could not pass the same without a remark, but must acknowledge the righteous judgment of God, that it cometh not by guess and at an adventure, but doth convincingly seal the word. This is indeed a grave subject wherein we should be very serious, and sober, for the judgments of God are a great depth, nor can we determine from events but in so far as they answer to the words; it may sometime happen to wicked men according to the work of the righteous, but on the other hand it is a sure truth that God is known by the judgment he executes, and in every age doth point out sin to the world by remarkable strokes, some great examples of judgment, which as a beacon are set forth for men to observe; and truly we may say these remarkable instances of the judgment of God, since he began to found a retreat to his church from Babylon are far beyond other preceding ages. I would be sparing to repeat what of this kind is published by others, but that in speaking to this truth, I cannot pass it in a general, whilst there are too many instances wherein the Lord hath made himself known, and these such a convincing seal, and confirmation of the truth, and the following relations, I dare with confidence say there is not any passage or matter of fact, here set down without some clear, and satisfying grounds as to the certainty thereof.

I shall first instance Charles V. whose undertakings for many years were followed with success, until once he set himself to persecute and oppress the church, and bathed his sword in the blood of the Protestants, with his cruel, and unjust usage of the Duke of Saxony, from which time his affairs began visibly to decline, he is forced to fly before Mauritius, and seek a retreat in the furthest confines of the empire, and after broken with melancholy, and discontent, like another Dioclesian, doth resign his empire, and turn to a private life.

Philip II. of Spain, one of the greatest persecutors of the church in these last ages, whose work was to root out the Protestant Religion in his dominions, and therefore set on foot that horrid engine of the Inquisition, yet, at last finds all his efforts frustrate, and after the loss of many millions of treasures, and of some 10000 lives by war, yea, of a considerable part of the Netherlands, and after the breaking his great Armada at sea against the English, by a very remarkable stroke from heaven, is at last smitten of the Lord in his body by a strange disease, or rather a confluence of diseases, which his physicians could neither understand, nor cure, his body falling out in grievous boils, whence (besides putrid matter) there did issue such abundance of vermin that by-flies could hardly clean, or endure the horrid smell thereof, that so he who had put so many of the saints to cruel torments by the Inquisition, was himself tormented, for years together with unexpressible pain and anguish.

Henry II. of France a most violent enemy to the church, whilst he had caused sentence Annas de Burgh to death, having solemnly protested in such words, these eyes of mine shall see the burnt; ' A little before the appointed time of his execution, running in the lifts with a spear against Count Montgomery, is pierced through the eye, with such a wound, that in a short time sent him to his grave, and frustrate his expectation of seeing the death of that persecutor,' I shall mention elsewhere how remarkably the judgment of God did pursue him.

Henry III. who (whilst he was Duke of Anjou) did affinit at that horrid counsel kept at St. Cloud, near Paris, where the Massacre was concluded, is some years after robbed to death by a Jacobin frier in that very chamber, a thing which Du Serres doth twice mention with a remark, as a marvelous instance of the judgment of God.
The Duke of Guise, the great executioner of that massacre, with his brother the Cardinal, a special contriver of the same, are not long after killed by Henry III. at Blois, with whom they had oft joined in counsel to root out the Protestants, and which is very observable, by a specious fwo of friendship were circumvented, and with solemn oaths and promises as treacherously reached as the Admiral, and Protestants by Charles IX. were at Paris, and these two who were his great counsellors, thus are dealt with, having blood measured out to them for blood, and treachery as they had dealt treacherously with the saints.

We find also the Duke of Anmale who was a joynt actor with the Duke of Guise in that massacre doth a little after fall by a shot off the walls at the siege of Rochel, which not only Du Serres, but also Davilla, who was very popish doth particularly relate, where we may see what a bloody end the great contrivers and actors of that horrid massacre had.

Henry IV. a prince of excellent parts and great natural accomplishments, was followed with marvelous success, whilst he owned the truth, yet, after many victories, and the breaking of the catholic league, turns popish and abjures the protestant religion, but lo within a little, he is flobbed in the mouth by a Jesuit, on which a protestant gentleman used this freedom with him, Sir, you have denied God and his truth with your mouth, and be hath given you there a stroke, take heed you deny him not also with your heart, left the next stroke be there, which as the French history sheweth, did according fall out, when he was flobbed by Ravelick, Du Serres's own Historiographer, doth shew it was through the very heart, and it was too evident, that sometime before his death, he had turned cordial and zealous for the popish interest.

Ferdinand II., a great persecutor of the church in Germany, who after his victory over Frederick and the Bohemian States, made it his work to root out the church and Protestant religion there, and turned that country unto bloody shambles, not sparing any rank, who would not abjure the truth, but a short time after we find the avenger of blood (in whose sight that of his saints is precious) pursueth him, raileth up the Swedes for an adversary, under whose sword most of those cruel wretches, that were the Bohemian scourge do fall, turneth Germany and the Emperor's countries into a field of blood, breaketh that great army which for many years had given law to Germany, so that as some historians mention, an army of 24,000 captains, because all old expert soldiers was broken in the plain fields with a huge slaughter, yea, the violence and cruelty of the popish party, thus measured out to them, as they had measured to the poor church of Bohemia and the Palatinate, and Ferdinand the Emperor broken with breach upon breach, that men may see the judgment of God purgung a bloody persecutor.

These barbarous cruel Irish, who of late carried on that horrid Massacre there, sparing no protestants whatever was their age, or rank, without compassiun to women or children, O how visibly did the judgment of the Lord reach them, and for that savage blood shed, give them blood to drink in great measure, their chief leader Macguier, Machune, and after Philomy Oneale taken, publickly executed, most of them confummed by the sword, their spirits so debased, that a few English or Scots soldiers would have chafed multitudes of them, so that the world might see divine vengeance eminently purging them, which in a few years did root out most of that cruel generation.

We have an observable instance also recorded of Sir James Hamilton, natural brother to the Earl of Aran, who in King James the Vth's time, was by the popish clergy promised against such as were then suspected of favour-
favouring the protestant religion, in which place he was most terrible and cruel against all he could reach, yea, so violent that some of his near kinmen were by him brought under the lash of his power, but lo, when at his greatest height, whilst he is making it is work to crush the gospel in its budding forth, this is made the means of his ruin, and by one of his friends whom he pursued on the account of religion, he is accused of treason, and notwithstanding of the solicitation of the popish clergy for him, as their great patriot, he is presently arraigned, beheaded, and quartered in the publick street of Edinburgh.

It is also known what violent persecutors Cardinal Beaton, and his successor bishop Hamilton were, who were no less conspicuous instances of the judgments of the Lord in that time, also what befel one frier Campbel, who did bitterly rail on that excellent man Mr. Patrick Hamilton, when he was burnt at St. Andrews, to whom Mr. Hamilton at the stake in great vehemency said, 'wicked man thou knowest the contrary, and hast sometime professed the same, I appeal thee to answer before the judgment seat of Christ, and within a few days after, (which in that time was very notout) this frier fell sick, and in great horror of conscience, as one mad, died. There are indeed many such remarkable instances, it is known how the judgment of God did pursue these three great apostates from the truth, Olivier Chancellor of France, Latomus, and Francis Spira, who after they had quitted their profession, and over their light denied the truth, died with great horror of conscience, crying out to by-standers, what a hell they found within them, Du Serres doth shew, how that Chancellor of France through the torment and anguish of his mind, caused the very bed to shake under him; but since there are many examples of this kind already upon record, I do the more briefly touch it; and shall only add some few which are worthy of a remark in our own land, how visibly the Lord did pursue by his judgment some who had defected the truth, and turned opposers and persecutors thereof in their promoting antichristian prelacy contrary to their former profession and engagements.

1. I shall instance Mr. Patrick Adamson, a preacher, once of great repute in this land, but one whom ambition and private interest swayed more than the interest of Christ, who insinuating himself in the king's favour, made it his work to overturn the established government and discipline of the church, until he got himself settled Archbishop of St. Andrews, and Prelacy by his means advanced, which the church from her first reformation from popery had disclaimed, yea, in this height of his power and grandeur, turned an avowed persecutor of his brethren; at which time he used to boast of three things that he said could not fail him, his riches, learning, and the king's favour, but a little after, as was then most known, he was by the righteous judgment of God brought to this pass, that his parts did so far wither and dry up, that in seeking a blessing on his meat, he could scarce speak a few words of sense, though once admired for his eloquence; as for his riches, he was forced to get charity from those ministers whom he before persecuted; and for the King's favour, he was so abhorred by him, that as he himself professed when the stroke of God brought him to some sense of his condition, he was sure the King did care more for the worst of his dogs, than for him, and thus in great misery died, cast off by the world, whole favour he had only sought, his publick acknowledgment of his guilt and apostacy, and of the Lord's hand pursuing the same, was by himself subscribed before divers eminent and worthy ministers of the church, who did also by their subscription attest the same, and was afterwards printed.
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It is also manifest how the Lord in his judgment did pursue that wretched man his successor Bishop Spotswood, who in a more subtle way did endeavour the overturning the discipline, and liberties of the church, for setting up of Prelacy, and by underhand dealing got himself first thrust into Glasgow, and after to be Archbishop of St. Andrews, yea, at last, was Chancellor of Scotland, his eldest son a Baron in Fife, and his second son President of the Session, his daughter also married to Roslin, then a considerable Baron, but let us see whether this ends, what an eminent example in all these respects of the judgment of God he was, and therein the prophecy of that great man Mr. Niel accomphished, who did foretell in a letter whilst he was prisoner at Blackness, 'that he should be as a stone cast out of a sling by the hand of God, his name should rot, and a malaction on his posterity,' and truly this is known what became of him in the year 1638. how he was excommunicated by the church, did flee into England, where in great misery he died, his eldest son Sir John Spotswood was sometime brought to beg his bread, which is known to many yet alive, his second son was President of the Session, being taken at the battle of Philip-haunch, was beheaded at St. Andrews, and his grandchild young Darzie beheaded at Edinburgh, and for his estate who was married to Roslin, it is known how quickly after that estate was rooted out, and turned from that race.

Mr. James Nicholson, one very eminent in his time for parts, and judgment in the affairs of the church; yea, once very zealous for the truth, and a great oppofer of Prelacy, when it first began to assault the church, but at last was turned aside by court insinuations, gets the Bishoprick of Dunkel, yea, turns mole forward to promote that interest, but lo in a short time he is stricken by the Lord with ficknefs, and great horror of conscience within, can get no reft, his friends in vain endeavouring to comfort him, and when they would have brought physicians, he told them, 'his diseafe was of another kind, for which they could give no physick, which pressed him more than his ficknefs, that against so much light, and over the belly of his conscience he had oppofed the truth, and yielded up the liberties of the kingdom of Christ to please an earthly king, and he charged his children that nothing which he had acquired since he was Prelate, should go amongst the rest of his estate, and thus in great bitternefs and grief died,' whereupon his brother in law Mr. David Lindsay, then a witnefs, made some verses in Latin.

Solatur frustra conjux, solantur amici,
Et medicum accers, fedulo quisque jubes.
Sed dare solamen nemo, dare nemo salutem,
Te prater poterit, Rex Jacob, mibi,
Que corpus gravat, atque animam, tantum exime mitra
Huic caput, bujus onus me premit, & perimit.

Mr. William Cooper, sometime minister of Perth, one who witnessed much zeal against Prelacy, both by preaching and writing, in a letter to Mr. George Graham, who had writ to him, entreating his charity towards his own conforming, he hath these words. 'Sir, for your self I never hated you, but the course you are in I never loved, how dangerous is their estate who cannot rise but with the fall of many, who in Christ have entered the right way to the ministry, closing these fountains which God hath opened; doing in a matter of conscience with doubting, turns mens light to darkness, whence follows induration, therefore I cannot stand with you except to witnefs to God in my heart against you, and thus shuts up his letter, consider
A very convincing instance of the judgment of God in that time, was one Mr. Andrew Fosser, minister at Dunfermling, who being sent Commissioner to the Assembly at Glasgow, 1610, and solemnly adjured, as he should answer to Jesus Christ by his brethren, not to content to any alteration of the government of the church, yet notwithstanding voted for Prelacy, having got fifty marks from the Earl of Dumbart, who made use of that argument to break some of these wretches, a small sum indeed to sell the cause of Christ, and by him very dear bought, for after his return, he falled in sickness, and upon his recovery from that was feized with horror of confidence, so that he run out of the pulpit whilst he was going to preach, confessing he had sold Christ at that Assembly for money, that being poor, and having a numerous family, he chafed rather to make haste than believe, and thus laid aside his ministry, requesting Mr. John Murray, who then was silenced by the Bishop, that for Christ's sake he would take the charge of that place, after which he fell in a great distraction and became in some measure mad and though he did something recover, yet, died in great infamy, poor, and drowned in debt, a very convincing example of the judgment of God. This old Mr. Row of Carnock, being then a minister in the same presbytery sets down under his hand which he most certainly knew. I shall only add two remarkable instances of the Lord's judgment within these few years that should not be past without a remark.

The first relates to a considerable family in this country, who made it their work to trouble and persecute the minister of that parish, an eminently holy and faithful man, yea, upon the account of his faithfulness; the old Laird of that house, out of malice doth pursue him with a false libel before the Synod, using all means he could to reproach his name, having it as his design either to get him broken, and put out of the parish, or at least to crush his spirit, and weaken him in the exercise of the ministry, but doth there meet with a disappointment, the Lord clearing the innocence of his servant, and the malice of the other, so that even such who otherways wanted not a prejudice at him, were forced to acknowledge this, at which time that Gentleman, whilst he went to the stable where his horses were, being then at the Synod upon that account, is in the place stricken with sickness, forced to haste home and take bed, and there seized with horror of conscience, which made him oft cry, intreating most earnestly for his minister whom
Part I. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

he had thus persecuted, and oft had these words, O to see his face, yea, told his friends that if he would not come to him, they would carry him to his house, but his Lady out of malice did in a most rude and violent way hinder the minister's access to him, and thus that poor gentleman in great horror and anguish dyed: after his death his Lady doth still pursue the quarrel with no less malice until she also falleth sick, and therewith had much terror upon her conscience, yea, did no less cry out for the minister, who then was providentially absent, so that she was put to cry, and in that denied, which she did hinder to her poor husband, though at first, he came to her before her death, to whom she with much bitterness confess'd her wrong.

After this a young man their chaplain, who had been engaged by them to appear as a witness against that godly man was so terrified in his conscience that he could not rest until he went to the next Synod, to acknowledge that horrid sin, in bearing false witness against his minister, but being there kept by some from a publick appearance, he went to another part of the country, where it is certainly reported he died distracted. Now last of all the young Laird who did suceed in that estate, would needs pursue the quarrel, and finding more access through the change of the time, did so endeavour with some who were in power, that an order was past for banishing him out of that parish, and though he was then otherways flagged, upon the account of the publick cause, yet, it was known the violent pursuit of that gentleman was the main cause of this sentence, which those who had a hand in passing it did themselves confess, for he had solemnly sworn, that if he lived in that place, that man should not be minister there, but lo a few days after, having returned to his house, and boasting how he had kept his word, and now get his minister cast out of the parish, he was suddenly struck by the Lord with an high fever, which plucked him away in the very strength of his years. This I had related as it is here set down, from a grave chri{sian}, the party himself being present, which he did humbly decline to relate, though he could not but assent thereto.

Second is one David Macbryar, who was a member of the late Parliament, being one of the commissioners of the Boroughs, a man most notable in the country where he lived for a lewd and gross practice, but most remarkable and known beyond others for his violence and rage against the godly, as he shewed by his carriage, both in the Parliament, and afterwards where he could have access did set himself to trouble, and persecute such under that reproachful name of Fanaticks, but within sometime thereafter whilst he was forced to retire by reason of debt, for fear of caption, he was found one day walking alone by one who was then come out of the North to that country, and had ridden forth, to see if he could catch any of that party whom he judged was then lurking, and supposing upon his ressort to that he was sorely one of thee, would needs apprehend him, but he upon his resistance, and strugling against him was by him run through with a sword, and immediately killed on the place upon that very account and persuasion, that he was a Fanatik, and rebel as he then term-ed him, thus he who had declared himself an enemy to the people of God whom he was wont in reproach to call Fanaticks, was himself under that very notion, and upon that ground cut down by one of his own stamp and principles. O was not this the finger of God, and a convincing proof of his righteous judgment.

Fifth Witness which holds forth the Lord's eminent appearing, and something of an extraordinary power, in the late raising and reformation of the church from Antichristiansism, is this, that large measure of the spirit, and
outletting thereof which did convincingly follow the gospel and ministry of the word in these last times, a truth which we must say hath been manifest, and by many solemn proofs thereof demonstrate, no less than in the first planting of the christian church. It is undeniable how great a witness to the truth, the spirit and down-pouring thereof is, for this is God's own seal, which is not put to a lie or falsehood, thus he bears witness to his work in the hearts of his people, and by this also the Lord doth seal, and attests the doctrine of the church, and commissio of his servants who published the fame, yea, at some special seasons, when the truth hath least countenance or encouragement from without, times of contradiction, when men will not receive its testimony, and a great state of opposition is to the gospel, then hath this in a more full and large measure been discernible; thus did the Lord eminently own, and confirm the christian religion in the days of the apostles, and for some following ages, by to great a down-pouring of the spirit, such visible and extraordinary effects thereof as did then astonish the world, and force men to confess something above nature, that this was surely the great work and power of God; and have we not also cause to say, that thus the Lord hath born a very solemn testimony to his truth, the work of reformation, and doctrine of the reformed churches in these late times; anent which I dare appeal by strangers, yea, the adversaries to their conscience, if without shutting their eyes, they could shift the conviction of a convincing appearance of God in the power and efficacy of the spirit, even in a more than ordinary way accompanying the word and ordinances, a power which carried kingdoms and cities before it, yea, in a very short time over the belly of greatest violence and opposition; to clear this a little, I shall point at some few remarkable evidences, which might scare the grossest of men in the face, and in some measure convince them of this truth.

I. It is evident that marvelous conquest which the gospel had in Germany, by the ministry of Luther, Melanchton, Bucer, Martyr, Musculus, and a few others of these excellent instruments whom the Lord then sent forth, was not this a day of the spirit, and pouring forth thereof in a large measure, a day of the gospel's triumph, not by might or by power, yet such as before it the world could not stand, cities and countries might then be said to be born at once, the arm of the Lord revealed with the fame, that men were either scorched or truly warmed and gained thereby. Did not that marvelous power and efficacy of the spirit also attend the ministry of Zwinglius and Oecolampadius, in Zurich and Brail, when fo through a reformation followed, to the throwing down of images, abolishing of the Mass by publick authority notwithstanding of its long continuance, and this in a short time; the spirit and power of God did very eminently appear also, in these famous plantations of the gospel by the ministry of Calvin, Farel, and Viret in Geneva, Lausania, and other adjacent provinces. It is written in the life of Viret, that at Lyons which was a great populous city, he preached in an open place, where divers thousands were converted to the truth, yea, some who came by with no purpose to hear, only out of curiosity stepped in, were so wrought on and overcome with the power of the word, as for that time made them neglect their other business.

II. That great success which did attend the ministry of Mr. Wishart in Scotland, can also witness this truth, whence so marvelous a change did quickly follow in these places through Angus, Lothian, and the western parts, yea, how much the spirits of the people were then raised and affected with the word, but this being a thing so known from the histories of that time, I only name.

III. Besides
III. Besides these which are more known, and upon publick record, 'tis must here instance a very solemn and extraordinary outling of the spirit, which about the year 1625, and thereafter was in the West of Scotland, whilst the perfection of the church there was hot from the Prelatic party; this by the prophane rabble of that time was called the Steewarton Sickness; for in that parish first, but after through much of that country particularly at Irvine under the ministry of famous Mr. Dickson it was remarkable, where it can be said (which divers ministers and Christians yet alive can witness) that for a considerable time, few Sabbaths did pass without some evidently converted, and some convincing proofs of the power of God accompanying his word, yea, that many were so choaked and taken by the heart, that through terror, the spirit in such a measure convincing them of sin, in hearing of the word, they have been made to fall over, and thus carried out of the church, who after proved most solid and lively Christians, and as it was known some of the most gross who used to mock at religion being engaged, upon the same that went abroad of such things, to go to some of these parts where the gospel was then most lively, have been effectually reached before their return, with a visible change following the fame, and truly this great spring-tide which I may so call of the gospel, was not of a short time, but for some years continuance, yea, thus like a spreading moor-burn, the power of godliness did advance from one place to another, which put a marvelous lustre on these parts of the country, the favour whereof brought many from other parts of the land to see the truth of the fame.

IV. I must also mention that solemn communion at the Kirk of Shot on June 20, 1630. 'tis at which time there was so convincing an appearance of God, and down-pouring of the spirit, even in an extraordinary way, that did follow the ordinances especially that sermon on the Monday June 22, with a strange unusual motion on the hearers, who in a great multitude were there convened of divers ranks, that it was known, which I can speak on sure ground, near 500 had at that time a discernible change wrought on them, of whom most proved lively Christians afterward, it was the fowing of a seed through Clid's deal to as many of most eminent Christians in that country, could date either their conversion, or some remarkable confirmation in their case from that day; and truly this was the more remarkable that one after much reluctance by a special and unexpected providence was called to preach that sermon on the Monday, which then was not usually practiced, and that night before by most of the Christians there was spent in prayer, so that the Mondays work, as a convincing return of prayer might be discern'd.

V. 'tis here that instance that solemn and great work of God, which was in the church of Ireland some years before the fall of Prelacy about the year 1628. and some years thereafter, which as many grave and solid Christians yet alive can witness, who were there present, was a bright and hot sun-blinc of the gospel, yea, may with sobriety be said to have been one of the largest manifestations of the spirit, and of the most solemn times of the down-pouring thereof, that almost since the days of the apostles hath been seen, where the power of God did sensibly accompany the word with an unusual motion upon the hearers, and a very great task as to the conversion of souls to Christ, the goings of the Lord then full of majesty, and the shout of a King was heard in the solemn meetings of his people, that as a judicious old Christian, who was there present, did express it, he thought it was like a dazzling beam and ray of God, with such an unusual brightness, as even forced by-standers to an astonishment, a very effectual door opened, with more than ordinary enlargement, which the ministers
of Christ there did find in the preaching the word, whilst the people might
be seen hearing the fame in a melting frame with much tenderness of spirit;
surely this was the very power of God, a convincing seal to the truth and
ministry of his servants, who were then perfected by the Prelates, yea, a
thing which as it was known had an awful impression, and was a terror to
their adversaries. I remember amongst other passages what a worthy chri-
tian told me, how sometimes in hearing the word, such a power and evi-
dence of the Lord's presence was with it, that he hath been forced to rise,
and look through the church, and see what the people were doing, thinking
from what he felt on his own spirit, it was a wonder how any could go
away without some change upon them. And then it was sweet and easy
for christians to come thirty or forty miles to these solemn communions
which they had, and there continue from the time they came, until they
returned without wearying, or making use of sleep, yea, but little either
meat or drink, and as some of them professed did not feel the need there-
of, but went away most fresh and vigorous, their souls so filled with sense
of God.

VI. That was also a remarkable time wherein the Lord did let forth much of
the spirit on his people in the year 1638. When this nation did solemnly
enter in covenant, which many yet alive at this day do know, how the spi-
rits of men were raised and wrought on by the word, the ordinances lively
and longed after, for then did the nation own the Lord, and was visibly
owned by him, much zeal, and an enlarged heart did appear for the publick
cause, personal reformation seriously set about, and then also was there a
remarkable gale of providence that did attend the actions of his people,
which did astonish their adversaries, and forced many of them to feign
submission. Alas, how is our night come on, for the Lord hath in anger
covered the face of the daughter of Zion with a dark cloud.

VII. Must not we also say, since the land was engaged by covenant to the
Lord in these late times, what a solemn outletting of the spirit hath been
seen, a large harvest with much of the fruit of the gospel discernible, which
we may say with a warrant, hath been proved in the bringing of thousands
to Christ, a part whereof now are in glory, and many yet live who are a vi-
sible seal to this truth, of whom I am sure some will not lose the remembrance
of these sweet refreshing times, which the land for several years did enjoy of the
gospel and of many solemn communions, where a large blessing with much of the
spirit, and power of God was felt accompanying the ordinances; if it
were expedient to set down circumstances, I could here point at many such
remarkable times and places, which should clearly demonstrate this. Now
besides these more publick and obvious proofs, it is known what a great tes-
timony, the experience of the godly in these late times could give to this truth,
what they have in a large measure felt of the power, and refreshing outlet-
tings of the spirit within their soul, yea, how oft after foreset down calling
have been wonderfully raised above themselves, and filled with the conola-
tion of God and joy unspreakable; this would indeed make a great volume, to
reckon over all these whose experience in these last ages could in a large mea-
sure witness this truth, only to shut this up, I shall name these two.

1. Mr. Welsb and Mr. Forbes, great witnesses of Christ in this land, when
they were prisoners, give this account of their case in a letter to Mr. James
Melvin, and his uncle then at London, which under the said Mr. Melvon's
hand is set down in a manuscript of his, their words are these. Dear Brethren,
we dare say by experience, and our God is a witness we lie not, that un-
spreakable is the joy, that is in a free and full testimony of Christ's royal
authority,
authority, unspeakable is the joy of suffering for his kingdom (for on that truth was their suffering stated,) we had never such joy and peace in preaching of it, as we have found in suffering for the same, we spake before in knowledge, we now speak by experience that the kingdom of God consists in peace and joy, and in another letter, thus they say, our joy hath greatly abounded since the last day (which was after calling sentence of death on them by allize at Linlithgow) so that we cannot enough wonder at the riches of his free grace, that should have vouchsafed such a gift upon us to suffer for his kingdom in which there is joy unspeakable, and glorious, and we are rather in fear, that they (to wit the sufferings) be not continued, and so we be robbed of further consolation than that they should ennecase, unsurely there is great consolation in suffering for Christ, we do not express unto you the joy which our God had caused abound in us.

II. I shall also mention that servant of Christ Mr. Rutherford whose letters now published can witness what solemn days of the spirit and sensible utterlings thereof, he oft had in his experience. Though books can tell but little what he really felt and enjoyed. I shall only set down some of his last and dying expressions, which I had from those who were then present, and caused write down the same from his mouth, that may shew how lovely he was in his death, and how well that did correspond with his former life, some of his words are these, I shall hence, I shall see him as he is, and all the fair company with him, and shall have my large share, it is no easy thing to be a christian, but as for me I have got the victory, and Christ is holding forth his arms to embrace me. I have had my fears and faintings as another sinful man, to be carried through creditably, but as sure as ever I spake to me in his word, his spirit witnessed to my heart, saying fear not, he had accepted my suffering, and the outgate should not be matter of prayer, but of praise, he said also, thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart, and a little before his death, after some fainting, he sayeth, now I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice; and turning to Mr. Blair, then present, he said, I feed on manna, I have angels food, my eyes shall see my Redeemer, I know that he shall stand at the latter day on the earth, and I shall be caught up in the clouds to meet him in the air, and afterwards hath these words, I sleep in Christ, and when I awake I shall be satisfied with his likeness. O for arms to embrace him! and to one speaking anent his painfulness in the ministry; he cryeth out, I disclaim all, the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveness of sins through his blood. And thus full of the spirit, yea, as it were overcome with sensible enjoyment, he breaths out his soul. His last words being Glory, Glory dwelleth in Emanuel's land.

Sixth witness is, that convincing appearance of an extraordinary and apostolic spirit on some of these instruments whom the Lord hath raised up in these last times, and these great endowments whereby they were sent forth for the service of the Church, and the overthrow of the kingdom of Antichrist: a truth which we must say, if not in such measure, yet hath been no less evident than in these primitive times, when the Christian Church was planted.

It is clear that extraordinary gifts and endowments have been let forth to the Church under the New Testament, for with the first dawning of the gospel there were both Apostles and Prophets raised up. It cannot be also denied that since the cannon of the scripture was closed, yea in these late ages, there hath been very extraordinary men given to the Church,
who had special revelations from the Lord of his mind anent things to come, which though we should not now look after, yet herein did the Lord remarkably condescend, when some great piece of service and necessity of the church did more call for it; and truly these were led in no other path than that of the word, though they had a more special discovery, and immediate inbreathing of God's mind as to the application thereof in particular cases, neither did they press upon men's confidence to credit the same, but were most cautious, witnessing much humble sobriety on that account.

It is known what extraordinary instruments, how wonderfully called, and qualified, Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Mr. Wishart, and Mr. Knox were, whom God sent in these later days to grapple with antichrist, and found a retreat to his church from Babylon, likewise Melancthon, Beza, Bucere, and Martyr, with divers in England such as Latimer, Ridley, Bradford, &c. who indeed were burning and shining lights in their time, mighty in the scripture, fervent in spirit, were clothed with the power and authority of God, before which the world could not stand. But besides these famous witnesses, of whose life we have something this day on publick record, I must here crave liberty to set down a few more, more late instances of our own church in Scotland to confirm this truth, such as are but little known to the world, nor any thing of their lives published, which I think a great loss to after generations, whom we may say (and this with a warrant, and in sobriety) were men truly extraordinary, eminently serviceable in the work of the Lord, yea, of a prophetick, and apostolick spirit, and such who through grace, did not even come short of the first three; I mean not only these before mentioned, but also some of these great lights who were in the first age of the church after the ascension of Christ.

1. I shall instance Mr. John Welsh whom the Lord called forth to the ministry at Kirkeubright in Galloway, and afterwards was transported to the church of Air, whom Mr. Rutherfoord in one of his books calleth that heavenly prophetical and apostolick man of God, and sheweth that from the witnesses of his life, he had this accomplishment that of every 24 hours, he gave usually 8 to prayer, if other necessary and urgent duties did not hinder, yea, spent many days and nights which he set a-part in fasting, and prayer, for the condition of the church, and the sufferings of the reformed churches abroad, I can also add this, from very sure information (and truly anent any of these particulars, I seriously study to have satisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof) that it was his use even in the coldest winter nights, to rise for prayer, and oftimes his wife, who was an excellent woman, hath risen to seek after him, where he had been found lying on the ground weeping, and wrestling with the Lord, yea, sometimes would have been much of the night alone, in the church of Air on that accomplishment. One time especially his wife finding him overcharged with grief, he told her he had that to press upon him which he had not, the souls of 3000 to answer for, whilst he knew not how it was with many of them. And another time whilst she found him alone, his spirit almost overcharged with anguish and grief, upon her serious enquiry, said, that the times which were to come on Scotland, were heavy and sad, though she should not see them, and this for the contempt of the gospel. Whist he was prisoner in the Blackness in a letter to a Christian lady, he giveth this accomplishment what large joy he had to suffer for such a truth, that Jesus Christ was a king, and had a visible kingdom in the world, even his church, which was as free to keep his courts, and execute discipline by virtue of an intrinsic power from Christ, as any kingdom on the earth, for which he was ready to lay down his life, yea, would rejoice to be offered up a sacrifice on
so glorious a truth, in the close of that letter, he doth also forewarn that judgment was coming to Scotland which should be blood, first by an intestine sword, and then by the sword of a stranger, and that a great sacrifice should be there, both of great men, and mean, the fulfilling whereof hath since been very visible and is known by many alive, who had that letter long before the late troubles begun; whilst he was thus prisoner, two remarkable passages I have had confirmed by divers worthy of credit, some of whom shewed me they had from these who were most familiar with the perions themselves, they are indeed strange, but we must also consider he was an extraordinary man. The first was this, that one night whilst he did expound the scripture after his supper, in the prison (as his custom was,) whilst he, with much power, and authority was pressing home the truth, one of the company who had some charge in the castle, fell a jeering, which Mr. Welsh observing, and looking earnestly to him, did presently close the Bible, and ceafe, and a little after having a drink in his hand, he sayeth to a friend at the table before all that were present, there is one so profane and gross as to contemn and mock at the word of the Lord, but e'er a little God shall smite him, with a remarkable stroke of his judgment, which accordingly fell out to the atonishment of the company, for that man did presently drop down to the ground, and dyed. A lady that was then popis being present by reason of a friend of hers that was prisoner in the castle, was so moved there-with that it proved an help to her after conversion. The other passage is this, one John Steward, an eminent christian who lived at Aire having come to visit Mr. Welsh in prison, found him in a more than ordinary way, troubled, and sad, and upon his enquiry there-antient, he sayeth, John, ye should not be here, go home to Aire, for the plague of God is broken up in that place, and cause Hew Kennedy provost of that town (who was also a very singular christian) convene the people to the streets, and pray together, and the Lord shall hear Hew Kennedy, and remove that stroke; this at the first did something atonish the said John, and put him to question its truth, having so lately come out of that place, but at his return found it so: and accordingly in every thing it fell out as the man of God had shewed. After his banishment to which the king did change the sentence of death past upon him at Linlithgo, he in a very short time acquired the French tongue, with such a facility therein, as was thought strange by these who knew it; Trochbrig in his commentary on the Ephesians, sets down this passage, how being called to preach at Salmar a famous University, yea, one of the most learned auditories in France, he did with such boldness and authority preach, as though he had been before the meanest congregation, whereas Trochbrig being atonished, could not but on his acquaintance with him question him there-antient, whence he had such confidence, and was so little moved, whilst he preached before strangers, so grave, and judicious an auditor, and in a strange tongue, to whom in a humble way as one more dejected, then lifted up, he gave that answer, when be considered his being before the Lord, and that he was delivering his message, he could not regard, either great or small, but all flesh did then go out of his mind. Whilst he was minister at St. Jane de Angeli a protestant town in France, where his ministry was much blessed with success, the civil wars did break up, where that city was twice besieged on the protestant interest, during which time these passages fell out most remarkable, one was, the town being fore friaited, and ready to be taken, the enemies having raised a battery, and by a colis approach had made a great breach in the wall, Mr Welsh, hearing thereof (who had much encouraged the people, that their adversities should not then prevail) went himself with the
canonier up the walls, and desired he would charge such a piece of cannon, and foot, for God should direct that shot, and cause it prosper, which accordingly did to the astonishment of onlookers dismount that battery, and the Lord so ordered things after, that the king did parley on favourable terms with the city, and did only himself with his court come in without doing any violence. Another marvellous passage was this, the following Sabbath some of the godly in that place, fearing Mr. Welsb his hazard, did seriously deal with him that he would forbear to go forth and preach, the court being there, from which he by no intreaty would be hindered, but showed them, he would adventure to preach the word to his people, and trust the Lord with what concerned himself, being more grieved at their fear, and despondence, and that day had a very great auditory both of friends, and others, who came upon the name of such a man, but in time of sermon, a great man of the court, with some of the king's own guard was sent to bring him forthwith before the king, and whilst he was entering the church which had some difficulty by reason of the multitude, Mr. Welsb did turn himself toward that entry, and desired the people to give way to one of the great Piers of France that was coming in, but after whilst he was coming near the pulpit, to execute his commission, by putting force on the servant of Christ, for his defiling, he did with great authority speak to him, before all the people, and in the name of his master Jesus Christ charged him that he would not disturb the worship of God; whereas, that man was so affrighted that he fell a shaking, yea, was forced to crutch down, and make no further trouble. A third passage no less remarkable was upon the close of sermon, whilst Mr. Welsb with much submission, went to the king who was then greatly incensed, and with a threatening countenance asked, what he was, and how he durst preach hereby so near his person, and with such contumacy carry himself, to which with due reverence bowing himself he did answer, I am Sir, the servant, and minister of Jesus Christ, whose truth I preached this day, which if your majesty rightly knew, ye would have judged it your duty to have come you self, and heard, and for my doctrine I did this day preach these three truths to your people: 1. That man is fallen, and by nature in a lost condition, yea, by his own power, and abilities is not able to help himself from that estate. 2. That there is no salvation, or deliverance from wrath by our own merits, but by Jesus Christ and his merit alone. 3. I did also preach this day the just liberties of the kingdom of France, that your majesty oweth obedience to Christ only, who is head of the Church, and that the Pope, as he is an enemy to Christ, and his truth, so also to the kings of the earth, whom he keepeth under flaveroy to his usurped power. Whereat the king for a time keeping silence with great astonishment turned to some about him, and said, surely this is a man of God. Yea, after did commune with him, and with great respect dismissed him. The year following whilst the differences betwixt the king and Protestant party did grow, that city was besieged, taken and in part sacked as Mr. Welsb did publicly forget, at which time, it is known, how the king past a solemn order, that none should in the least wrong Mr. Welsb, or any thing that belonged to him under highest pains, and did after give a safe conduct to him, for transporting himself to England where he died, King James refusing his return to his own country, though earnestly petitioned by his wife for her husband's health. During his sickness he was so filled, and overcome with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometime overheard in prayer, to have these words, Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel and can hold no more.
II. I shall also here instance Mr. Robert Bruce who in a very extraordinary way was called to the ministry, having for a long time followed the study of the law, both in this country, and in France, yea, had some ground to expect a place amongst the lords of the session, his father being then a considerable barron, who had many friends, but a more prelating, and irresistible call from God did otherwise determine. Whilest he was in the ministry at Edinburgh he shined as a great light though the whole land, the power and efficacy of the spirit most sensibly accompanying the word he preached, he was a terror to evil doers, and the authority of God did so appear upon him, and his carriage, with such a majesty in his countenance, as forced fear, and respect from the greatest in the land, even these who were most avowed haters of godliness, yea, it was known what an awful impression King James had of him, and hid once give him that testimony before many, that he judged Mr. Bruce was worthy of the half of his kingdom. He was a man that had much inward exercise about his own personal ease, had been oft assailed anent that great foundation of truth, if there was a God, which cost him many days, and nights wrestling, and when he came up to the pulpit, after being sometime silent, which was his usual way, he would have said I think it is a great matter to believe that there is a God, telling the people, it was another thing to believe that, than they judged. But it was also known, by his friends with whom he was familiar, what extraordinary confirmations he had from the Lord therein, what near familiarity he did attain in his secret converse with God, yea, truly some things I have had from persons worthy of credit there anent, would seem so strange, and marvelous, that I forbear to set them down. The great success of his ministry at Edinburgh, Innerness, and other places whether providence called him, is abundantly known, whilest he was confined at Innerness that poor dark country was marvelously enlightened, many brought into Christ by his ministry, and a seed sown in these places, which even to this day is not wholly worn out. I shall here set down one passage of famous Mr. Henderson who at his first entry to the ministry at Leuchars, was very prelatick, and by the Bishop of St. Andrews brought in against the parishes consent, so that the day of his admission, the church doors being shut by the people, they were forced to break in by a window to get him entrance, but a little after this, upon the report of a communion where Mr. Bruce was to help, he would needs from a longing he had to hear and see such a man, go secretly there; and placed himself in a dark part of the church where he might not be known, when Mr. Bruce was come to the pulpit he did for a considerable time keep silence as his manner was, which did some way astonish Mr. Henderson, but much more when he heard the first words wherewith he begun, which were these, He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up another way, the same is a thief and a robber; which did by the Lord's blessing at the very present take him by the heart, and had so great an impression on him, that it was the first mean of his conversion. He was one that had the spirit of discerning in a great measure, did prophetically speak of many things which afterwards came to pass, yea, which I had attested by sober, and grave christians, who were familiar with him, that divers persons distraeted, and of these who were passed all hope of recovery in the falling sicknesses, were brought to Mr. Bruce and after prayer by him in their behalf were fully recovered: this indeed may seem strange, but it is also true, Mr. Bruce was a great wrestler who had more than ordinary familiarity with his master. A little before his death when he was at Edinburgh and through weakness kept his chamber, there was a meeting of divers godly ministers at that time there,
there, on some special ground of the church's concernment, who hearing he was in the town came together, and gave him an account of the actions of these times, the prelates then designing the service book, after which Mr. Bruce prayed, and did therein tell over again to the Lord the very substance of their discourse, which was a sad representation of the case of the church, at which time there was such an extraordinary motion on all present, so sensible a down-pouring of the spirit, that they could hardly contain themselves, yea, which was most strange, even some unusual motion on those who were in other parts of the house, not knowing the cause at that very instant, one Mr. Weemes of Lothbaker being then occasionally present, when he went away, said, O how strange a man is this, for he knocked down the spirit of God on us all, this he said because Mr. Bruce, did divers times knock with his fingers on the table; I had this from a worthy christian gentleman in whose mother's house this was. He was deeply affected with the naughtiness and profanity of many ministers then in the church, and the unsuitable carriage of others to so great a calling, and did express much his fear that the ministry of Scotland would prove the greatest persecutors of the gospel that it had. If there were a full collection of these remarkable passages, which have been known to others in his life, it would further witness what an extraordinary man that was. I shall only shut this up with learned Didoclaeus's testimony in his preface to his Altare Domaeceum, Robertus Brufius, Vir genere & virtute nobilis, majestate cultus venerabilis, qui plura animarum millia Christo lucrificet, eujus anima, si ullus mortalium, abhùr verbo inviędita, sedet in caelestibus, anima mea, cum anima tua, Brusii, si ex aliena fide effet pendendum.

III. Mr. Davidson, minister of the gospel at Salt-Presboun, may be truly here insinuated as one of an extraordinary prophetick spirit, who was likewise wife eminently zealous and faithful for his master in a time of the church's defection, as Didoclaeus in that forementioned preface terms him; Cato & consilari. He did then foresee prelacies breaking in upon the church, when King James was prefilling the setting up of superintendents under a very specious pretext, and was for that end himself at the Assembly in Dundee, having engaged many, alas! too many to content thereto, but Mr. Davidson with great boldness rose up, and warned the Assembly of the hazard, and told them he saw the know Bishop, with his miter coming in under that mask, yea, did solemnly in his own name, and in the name of the church of Scotland, enter a protestation against that step of defection, and their yielding up in so far the liberties of the church to pleace men. Whilst he was minister at Salt-Presboun, the building of a church was by him much endeavoured, which he did advance much out of his own private interest, my Lord Newbattle who then had a great interest in the parish, engaging to help it forward; from which he after relented, and thereby frustrated the work. Whereupon Mr. Davidson told him, these walls that were then begun to be built, should stand as a witness against him, and that ere long God would root out him, and his estate out of that parish, and he should not have a piece of land in the same, which shortly after had a visible accomplishment. It was very clear from many passages of his life, that the secret of the Lord was in an extraordinary way with him. Some of these which have been transmitted from them who particularly knew the same are indeed most worthy of a remark. At a certain assembly of the church Mr. John Spotsood, and Mr. James Law, who were then entred into the ministry, were proceeded for some great acts of prophanity, where Mr. Davidson finding the assembly too easy
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to pass the fame in regard of their parts and gifts, only with a rebuke, he
did with much vehemency press their deposition, and after being crost'd
therein, said, you will needs spare these two men, whereas I am grieved,
bout the time is coming when they shall trample upon your necks, and upon
the church of Scotland. And it is well known what an accomplishment
this prediction had.

Being with Mr. Bruce one time at dinner, who was then in great favour
with the King, he had these words in giving thanks after meat. Lord,
thy servant here is now a great favourite of the Court, and in much respect,
but he shall be within a little as much persecuted as he is now in favour,
and go down the streets when many who have him this day in esteem will
not give him a salutation, which was very manifest afterwards. And at an
other time whilst Mr. Robert Bruce, and he were dining together in the house
of one of the magistrates of the town, who was then a cordial friend to godly
ministers, he did also in his plain and free way break forth with these words,
whilst he was giving thanks, Lord, this good man hath respect for thy sake
to thy servants, but he little knoweth that in a short time he must carry us
both who are here to prison, which words did much trouble that honest man,
though afterwards it came most exactly to pass. There is one more remarkable
passage which I should fear to set down, it is so strange, but that I had the
fame confirmed by some worthy of credit, who shewed me that from these
that were present and familiar with Mr. Davidson they had it related. A
Gentleman nearly related to a great family of that parish, but a most violent
hatred of piety, did upon that account beat a poor honest man who lived there,
having not the least shadow of provocation, and amongst other sore strokes
gave one upon the back with these words, take this for Mr. David's sake,
after which the honest man was for a time forced to keep his bed, and com-
plained most of that stroke which he gave him on the back, as that which he
felt more than all the rest; but the sabbath following, Davidson speaking in
the close of his sermon concerning the oppression of the godly, and enmity
which wicked men had to such, did very particularly touch that late ins-
ance, saying, It was a sad time, a profane man would thus openly adven-
ture to vent his rage against those who were seekers of God in the place,
whilst he could have no cause but the very appearance of his image, and with
great authority said, He who hath done this, were he the Laird, or the Laird's
brother, were a few days past, God shall give him a stroke that all the mo-
narches of the earth dare not challenge, which was then publicly known
how in the close of that very week, standing before his door, he was struck
death with a thunder bolt and all his bones crushed. A little before
the death of this great servant of Christ, having an occasional encounter with
Mr. John Ker, a young gentleman who was lately come from France, and
had then no thoughts of the ministry, but was in a very courtly dress,
Mr. Davidson did in a solemn way charge him to cast off his scarlet cloak,
and lay aside his gilded rapper, and take him to his book, for you are the
man, fans he, who is to succeed me in the ministry at this place, which was
very astonishing to that gentleman for the present, yet accordingly fell out,
he did immediately succeed him there, where he was for many years an holy
and faithful minister of the gospel. This last passage many yet alive who had
the same from the said Mr. John Ker can witness.

IV. 'Mr. Patrick Simpson, who was once a minister of Cramond, and
after transported to Stirling, may be here also in snarced, as a very extraor-
dinary man in the church, in his youth he attained to great knowledge in the
languages, did much study Greek and Latin Authors, and gave this reason

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to such who wondered he should spend so much time in reading these who were but Pagans, that he purposed to dedicate all these jewels which he borrowed from the Egyptians, to the building of the house of the Lord; it is known with what zeal he did oppose himself to the corruptions of that time, in the year 1584, whilst there was an express charge from the King, for acknowledging Mr. Patrick Adamson Archibishop of St. Andrews, or else lose their maintenance; he did with great vehemency appear against the same, though that man was his uncle upon the mother's side, and some who seemed willing to subscribe thereto with such a condition according to the word of God, he did gravely rebuke, shewing them it could be no safe so to their conscience, since it was repugnantia in adjetio, to subscribe to any human institution according to the word, when the word did expressly condemn the same. It was also known, he refused the offer of a bishoprick, and afterwards of a yearly pension from the King, which he looked on as a design only to bribe his conscience, which was more dear to him than all the world; and when that Assembly at Aberdeen was condemned by the state, he did openly own and avow the same, and in a very solemn manner denounced the wrath and judgment of God against these accusers, and con-victers of these excellent men, at Linlithgo, who stood for the liberty of that assembly; that notable paper and protestation given in to the Parliament 1606 (where prelacy was further established) was by him pen'd and out of his own hand given to the Earl of Dunbar, subscribed by many ministers of the church who were then there that account. His life was most exemplary for piety and faithfulness in serving his master, which did preach no less to that part of the country wherein he lived than his doctrine, one very remarkable passage of his life I do here adventure to set down, having very satisfying grounds as to the certainty of it, from these who knew the same, and had a particular relation of all its circumstances from a grave christian who had it out of his own mouth, and likewise hath it written under old Mr. Row of Carnock's hand, who was his familiar intimate friend; it is this. His wife Martha Barron a gracious woman, the wife of his youth with whom he had lived in great love, fell sick, which proved her last sickness, where she was stiff fore assaulted by the Devil, who pressed in upon her that she should be given over to his hand, and after it did resolve in a visible distraction which for a time grew upon her, so that most like to her former way, she would have broke forth with dreadful and horrid expressions, it did most appear on a sabbath morning whilst Mr. Simpson was going to preach, and whilst for a time he was forced with a heavy countenance to stand silent, he at last kneeled down, and prayed, which she did no ways regard, but a little after he turning to the company that were present, told them he was sure that these who now were witnesses of that sad hour, should yet see a gracious work of God on this his servant, and that the Devil's malice against that poor woman, should have a shameful foil; her distraction did still continue until the Tuesday which was the ninth of August, which morning at the very dawning of it, he goeth to his garden and shut the door behind him where for many hours he was alone, but a godly woman who that night was with his wife, Helen Garner, wife to one of the Bailies of Stirling, being apprehensive of his hazard, through his grief and fasting, could have no rest till she knew his case, and by some help climbed up, and got into the garden, but on a near approach to that place, where Mr. Simpson then was, she was terrified with an extraordinary noise, which through fear made her fall to the ground, it seemed as she related after to others
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others, it was like the noise of a great rushing of multitudes together, and therewith such a melodious sound, as did make her know it was something more than human, and turned to prayer entreating the Lord would pardon her rashness, which affection to his servant who had been the instrument of her good, carried her to; and after going forward finds him lying upon the ground, it was with much entreaty that he did then reveal himself in that particular, until she promised clofeness, not to speak it to others so long as he lived, but had his allowance if she should forgive him, which promise she kept, but after his death, did relate it to these from whom I have had this, he said, O what am I being dust and ashes that the holy ministering spirits should be sent by the Lord to deliver a message to me, and shewed he had a vision of angels, who did with an audible voice give him an answer from the Lord of his wife's condition, and coming over to his house, he said to all who were present, be of good comfort, for ere ten hours of this day I am sure that brand shall be plucked out of the fire, after which he went to prayer at his wives bedside, where for a time she lay quiet, but whilst he mentioned Jacob's wrestling in prayer, she fits straight up in the bed, casting aside the curtain, and saith, thou art this day Jacob, who hast wrestled and also prevailed, and now God hath made good his words, which he spake this morning to you, for I am plucked out of the bands of Satan, and he shall have no power over me. Which interruption made him for a space silent, but after with great melting of heart proceeded in prayer, and magnified the riches of God's love towards him; and after prayer there was sweet and christian embraces betwixt them, yea, from that hour she did speak most christianly and comfortably even to her death, which was on the Friday following, August 13. 1601. whose last words in the moment of her departure were with a loud voice, Come Lord, in thy hands I commend my spirit. After this, Mr. Simpson lived several years fervent, and faithful in the work of the Lord, and one who in private walk witnessed such mortification, that all who knew him might clearly see, his converse was little in the world, in March 1618. he said now shall this month put an end to all these things, and accordingly towards the close of it was removed by death, at which time he expressed much joy, blessing the Lord for his kindness, that he had not been perverted by the sinful courses of these times, and might say as the Lord fed Elijah, in the wilderness, so in some respect he had dealt with him all his life-time, and having these words upon some of his books written, Remember O my soul, and never forget the 9th of August, what consolation the Lord gave thee, and how he performed what he spake, according to Zach. iii. 2. is not this a brand plucked out of the fire, upon which some of his friends speaking to him anent the fame, his answer was, Absit mihi gloriari in aliquo, nisi in Domino Deo meo.

Now besides these great men, many others who at that time did shine as lights in the church may be here also mentioned, who were indeed stars of the first magnitude, eminently zealous and faithful, and their ministry followed with much of thepower and authority of God, such as Mr. Andrew Melvin, of whom it might be said, he had the face of a lion in his matter's cause, and feared not to speak before princes and great men, when the truth called for it; likewise his nevy Mr. James Melvin, that holy grave and prudent servant of Christ, Andrew Dunkan, Mr. John Scrimger, Mr. Charles Fereme, Mr. James Balfour, &c. One passage I shall here set down worthy of a remark of Mr. Andrew Melvin, who being a prisoner in the Tower, a gentleman of his acquaintance got access to visit him, but found him in a sad deep mule,
mune, anent the defection of many ministers in Scotland, and did deplore the state of the church there, having lately got an account of their way at that Assembly at Glasgow 1610. where the Earl of Dunbar had been active to corrupt divers with money: this gentleman desiring to know what word he had for his own country got no answer, but upon a second enquiry he said, I have no word to fend, but am heavily grieved, that the glorious government of the church of Scotland should be so defaced, and a popish tyrannical government set up, and thou Manderston (for out of that house Dunbar was come, and he thus filled him) Hast thou no other thing to do but carry down to Scotland such commissions whereby the poor church there is wrinkled; the Lord shall be avenged upon thee, and thou shalt never again go down for all thy grandeur; which words took such impression on that gentleman, that when he went forth he desired some friends, who then waited to get a busines at court expended by Dunbar's moyen, that they would in time put their affairs to a close, for he was persuaded the words of that servant of Christ should not fall to the ground, and truly this did very quickly take place, that Earl being suddenly struck by death within a few months after, and thus thrown down from the top of his grandeur, whilst he was buxy, perfecing that great houfe of his at Berwick, and had appointed a fumptuous feast for his daughters marriage, even then did his thoughts perih.

I fhall here but add one infallance more of one whom we before named, though not a minifter, yet a great inftrument for promoting the work of the gospel in the place he lived, and one we may say, of an extraordinary spirit, 

Heu Kennedy provost of Aire, of whom I would mention these two paffages from fure knowledge, One was whilft the merchant fhips of that town were at sea, amongst whom his fon John, who was also a choice chriftian, was at that time he did one night rise before the breaking of day, and came to the houfe of his familiar friend John Steward, defiring he would rife, and go along with him to some room; whereat the faid John being exceedingly afbomifhed, he fath to him; it is no time to linger, let us go pray, for my fon with the reft of our friends now at sea are at this hour on the very nick of perifhing, and after they had spent some time in prayer, he arose chearfully and faid now they are safe. Within a little after John Steward who had writ this down, with the day and hour, at the return of the fhips, did moft particularly enquire and found how it did anfwer in all the circumstances, and in that very hour of that night, they were to appearance paft hope of safety upon a very dangerous place, and by an extraordinary unexpecte provifion then delivered.

The other is this, one day being for many hours alone in prayer, whilft some of his chriftian friends did wait long for him, at laft, with an unusual chearfulness he came forth, and upon their enquiry anent his fay, he told them, it was no wonder, for he had that day got mercy to him, and all his, and truly it was very evident, that not one of his children, but there was large ground of charity that they were truly godly.

Whilft he was dying, Mr. Ferguson a godly minifter, fayeth to him, you have caufe, Sir, to be attried that the angels of God are now waiting at the floops of this bed to convey your fouls into Abraham's bosome, to whom his anfwer was, I am sure thereof, and if the walls of this houfe could speak, they could tell how many sweet days I have had in fecret fellowship with God, and bow familiar he hath been with my fouf. I fhall only add Mr. Welbses testimony in a letter from France to this great man, his words were these, Happy is that city, yea, happy is that nation that hath a Hew Kennedy in it, I have my felf certainly found the eftwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf.

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(f) I. Reader, besides these more remarkable passages which in the perusal of this treatise thou wilt find dropped apart, concerning the way of God with some of his more eminently faithful servants, I have in this place cast together some few instances which in the former impression were not hinted.

In the first place thou mayest take notice of these two, concerning that walker with God, great master Bruce, of whom some things have been spoken elsewhere, and first, beise that blessed frame of spirit which appeared in the whole of his converse, he endeavoured especially, whenever he was to appear in publick as an ambassador of Jesus Christ, to have his spirit deeply impressed with the majesty of that God of whom he was to speak, and of the high import it was to the souls of men to have the mysteries of salvation unfolded unto them, not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and power, without which this preached gospel tho’ in it self the word of life will never prove the power of God to salvation: And therefore though he was known to take much pains in searching the scripture, that he might know the mind of the spirit of God, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and in preparing apposite matter for the edification of his hearers, which he durst not neglect, and wherein he durst not be overly as knowing he was to speak of God, and afraid of the curse threatened for doing his work negligently; yet this was the least part of his preparation-work, the main of his business lay in having his soul wrought up to some suitableness of frame for preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and making manifest the mystery of the gospel as he ought, that so his master by his service might see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. And knowing the success of preaching depended wholly upon the presence of God accompanying the dispensing of ordinances, his manner was to be much in prayer and supplication in private before his publick appearances, pouring forth his heart before God, and wrestling with him not so much for assistance to the messenger as the message. One instance whereof take as followeth: Being to preach at a solemn occasion he was long in coming to the congregation, some of the people beginning to weary, and others wondering at his stay, the bells being long rung, and the time far spent, the Beddal was desired to go see what the matter meant, who coming to his house, and finding his chamber door shut, and hearing a sound, drew near, and listening, overheard Mr. Bruce often with much seriousness say, I protest I will not go, except thou go with me. Whereupon the man supposing that some person had been with him, withdrew without knocking at the door, who being asked at his return by a gentleman the cause of his delay answered, he could not tell, but I suppose said he there are some with Mr. Bruce who are unwilling to come to church, and he is so pressing and peremptory to have them come along, that I overheard him protest most seriously he would not go if they went not with him. However a little after Mr. Bruce came accompanied with no man, but he came in the utmost of the blessing of the gospel of Christ, and his speech and his preaching was in such evidence and demonstration of the spirit, that by the shining of his face and that shower of divine influence, wherewith the word spoken was accompanied, it was easy for the hearer to perceive that he had been in the mount with God, and that he had indeed brought that God whom he had met with private into his mother’s house, and into the chambers of her that conceived him. Nay, he preached ordinarily with so much life and power, and the word spoken by him was accompanied with such a manifest presence, that it was evident to the hearers he was not alone at the work, but that in his strivings to persuade the things which did belong to the kingdom of God, and to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus he laboured

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thereunto, striving according to his working which wrought in him mightily: For though he was no boanerges as to his voice, being of a low and grave delivery, yet he spake with so much authority and weight (as becomes the Oracles of God) that some of the most flour-hearted of his hearers were ordinarily made to tremble; and by having these doors which formerly had been bolted against Jesus Christ as by an irresistible power broke open, and the secrets of their heart made manifest, they went away under convictions, and carrying with them undeniable proofs of Christ speaking in him, and that God was with him of a truth.

The other passage which I prefix thee with is concerning his death. Being now aged and through infirmity of body confined to his chamber where he was frequently visited by his friends (to whom a conversation in heaven and the abundant grace of God in him had inured) and being asked by one of them how matters now stood between God and his soul, he (with that severity of soul which is the effect of the love of God shed abroad in the heart and that plerophory under which such walkers with God and workers of righteousness as he was, are frequently taken off the stage) made this return, When I was a young man, said he, I was diligent and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old and am not able to do so much, yet he condescends to feed me with lumps of sense.

And that morning before the Lord removed him (his sickness then being mortally a weakness through age) he came to break-fast at his table; and having as he used eaten one fingle egg, he said to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry ye may bring me another egg, but instantly thereafter falling into a deep meditation and after having mufed a while; he said, Hold daughter hold, my master calls me; with these words his sight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible; but finding his sight gone he said, cast up to me the eighth chapter to the Romans, and let my finger on these words, I am persuaded that neither death nor life, &c. shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord. Now, said he, is my finger upon them, when they told him it was, without any more he said, Now God be with you my children, I have breakfasted with you and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night: and so gave up the ghost, death shutting his eyes that he might see God. Thus that valiant champion for the truth, who in his appearing to plead for the crown and interest of Jesus Christ knew not what it was to be daunted by the face and frowns of the highest and most incensed adversaries, was by his master taken off the field as more than a conqueror, and as the reward of much faithul diligence about the souls of others, and much pains and seriousness about making his own calling and election sure, had an entranerence minified unto him abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

II. In the next place, Reader, I shall, in prosecution of my design which is thy edification, hint to thee some things concerning that burning and shining light, Mr. John Welsh, whose name is so famous and favor it for the great things which God did by him and for him, that I should much dis- point thy expectation if in making mention of him, I should not acquaint thee with something rare and extraordinary; and therefore though it be beside my design to give thee the full history of his or the rest of these great men's lives, yet, that I may not altogether frustrate thy expectation take these few remarkable passages which follow. As first, an eminently holy minister yet a live and defferedly of esteem in the church of Christ told me from certain knowledge, that two men coming with packs of cloath to the town of
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From a neighbouring place, &c. where there was yet no suspicion that the Lord's hand had smitten it with the plague, which was then sore in the land, the sentry at the bridge held them out, notwithstanding they had a pass, till the magistrate came; who thought he could not disprove their pass, yet would not permit them to enter the town, till he sent for Mr. Welsb: to the bailey bids them disburden their beastls, till he considered what to be done; a little after Mr. Welsb coming, the magistrate says to him, Sir, Here are men come from such a place, we have heard of no plague there; besides, they have a pass from known men, what shall we do? Mr. Welsb made no answer but uncovering his head, stood in the midst of the company which then followed him, and having his eyes directed to heaven (yet speaking nothing) near half a quarter of an hour, at last saith, Bayly, cause these men put on their packs again and be gone, for if God be in heaven, the plague of God is in these packs. These men returned and opened their packs in Cumnack, and it was observed that such contagion was therein; that all in that village died, there was not a man left to bury the dead.

He was famous in his generation for the power he had in prevailing with God by prayer and supplication, whereof take these following instances among the many which might be given.

One is, that being on a certain night under an extraordinary pressure of spirit to go and pour forth his heart to God, he left his wife in bed, and going out to a garden spent most of the night in that exercise; (a thing to ordinary to him that he used to say, he wondered how a Christian could lie a bed all night without rising to spend some of the night in prayer and praise,) but his wife weary, at last went to seek for him, but missing him in his ordinary place, went into other gardens, by such passages as the knew, at last she heard a voice, and drawing near to it, could hear him speak a few words, but with great force and fervency, mixed and accompanied with floods of tears, which were these, O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland! O God, wilt thou not give me Scotland! She being weary and afraid to interrupt him, went home, and heard not the close. At last he came home, and re-entering his bed, his wife began to reprove his unmercifulness to his own body, and then asked him, what it was he was saying; for she told he heard him. Well, saith he, you had better have been in your bed, but since ye heard, I tell you, I have indured a great fight for Scotland this night, and hardly could I get a remnant referred, yet he will be gracious.

After this he arose another night, but went not out of doors, but in a chamber he travelled and groaned, as his wife impatient did rise several times, calling him to bed; but he waited his time, and when he came the began a modest expostulation with him for carrying: Hold thy peace; said he, it will be well with us, but I shall never preach another preaching in Air: and having fallen asleep, before he awaked the messenger was come who by command carried him prisoner to the castle of Edinburg.

When he was prisoner in the castle of Edinburg, the Lord Chibitors was captain, whose filler was Mr. Welsb his mother-in-law, being John Knox's wife: yet being much taken up in king James his court, he took not time to be so comfortable to his couzen Welsb as he shou'd: but being convinced of his own unkindness he caused Mr. Welsb sup with him one night in the castle, where were also several other gentlemen, and amongst them a papist youth, far toward the lower end of the table, Mr. Welsb being by the captain, set at the upper end entertained the company with grave and edifying discourse which all delighted to hear, save this young papist who with laughter and derision laboured to silence him, which was little regarded by Mr.
Welfo. But after supper while the guests sat a little, this youth stood up at
the lower end of the table, and while Mr. Welfo proceeded from grave to
gracious entertainment of his company, the youth came to that height of
insolence as with the finger to point at him and with the face to make flout-
ing grimaces, whereby he grieved the holy man, so as on a sudden he was
forced to a silence.'

The whole company who had heard him with delight were silent with him: within a little Mr. Welfo was moved by the spirit of God, broke forth into
these words: Gentlemen, the spirit of God is provoked against us, and I shall
intreat you not to be afraid to see what God shall do among you before you
rise from the table, for he will smite some one of you with death before you
go hence. All were silently astonishe, waiting to see the issue with fear.

And while every man feared himself, except the insolent youth, he fell
down dead suddenly at the foot of the table to shew the power of God's jea-
lously against the mockers of his spirit and the offers of his grace. This his-
story, with variation of some circumstances, is set down before Page 425.'

One day while Mr. Welfo looked out at his chamber window in the castle,
him happened to see the captain, and called unto him, saying, God save you
my Lord: the captain acknowledging his neglect and asking for Mr. Welfo his
welfare, desired to know how he might serve him. In nothing, said Mr. Welfo,
if you be well, except you would carry my petition to his Majesty tending
for liberty to preach the gospel. I willingly will, said the captain, therefore
fend it to me. 'Nay, said Mr. Welfo, I am your kinman, I love you so
well as to warn you not to take it in charge, except you resolve to deal truly in
delivering it and in getting me an answer. I shall bear the blame, said
the captain, if I do not, I beseech you, my Lord, said the other, under-
take not unless you mind to do it, for the hazard is great. Well, Uchiltry
takes it, but not coming in an opportune season (for he came when the
king was passionately moved on another occasion) he thought not fit then
to give it, and as at that time he deferred, so thereafter he neglected, and
at last quite forgot to deliver it at all. For which his heart limiting
him he durst hardly be seen of Mr. Welfo for three months. Yet con-
fidence forgetting as well as he, he came to the same place where Mr. Welfo
at first called him: And now Mr. Welfo asked how he did and what was be-
come of his petition? The captain surprisèd answered, I delivered it to his
Majesty, but he was in a passion, and it seems it hath fallen by, for I have
not gotten an answer. Nay my Lord, said Mr. Welfo, you should not lye
to God and to me, I know you delivered it not, I am sorry my Lord for
your lot, I warned you not to be false to God, and now I tell you, God
shall take your estate and honours in Scotland, and shall give them to your
neighbour, and this in your own time. This troubled the Lord Uchiltry,
and came truly to pass, for he being the eldest son of the good Lord Uchiltry
a reformer, was forced in his own time to quit all and give both estate and ho-
nours to James, the son of captain James, the second brother who was the
laft of that house.

III. Concerning Mr. John Scrimger, minister at Kinghorn. There was
a godly woman under his charge called--------who fell sick of a very lingering
sicknes, and was all the while assaulled with strong temptations apprehending
she was a cast away (yet had she not only given ground for charity, but her
Christian conversation for a long time had put the reality of the grace of God
in her beyond debate with the more discerning who knew her) Mr. Scrimger
often visited her, while in this deep exercise, conferred with her, prayed o-
ver her, but her trouble remained notwithstanding and the terrors of God
still
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In his younger years it was known how much he out-run others in his studies, and gave those who knew him ground to hope what after was seen; the Lord was pleased to call him by the ministr\(\underline{y}\)y of famous Trochrig in whose hand (these were his own words) did the Lord put the key that first opened his heart, upon his first coming forth to preach, he by remarkable providence had master Bruce whom you have formerly mentioned to be his hearer; and as I heard himself declare it was his desire to have the judgment of to great a man upon his discourse, whose censure he said he would never forget, it had been so much ble\(\underline{f}\)fed. Which was this, I found, faith he, your sermon very polished and digested (which was indeed easy to one of his parts) but there is one thing I did miss in it, to wit the spirit of God I found not that. This grave Mr. Blair did often speak to others, which then took a deep impression upon himself, and helped him to fee it was someth\(\underline{g}\) else to be a min\(\underline{t}\)er of Jesus Christ than to be a knowing and eloquent preacher. He was for divers years Regent in the college of Glasgow, where he made it his work to train up these under his charge in the study of godliness as well as of human learning: but by reason of the prejudice of some who had power in that place he could not long stay. One passage whilst he was there, I did hear him relate: upon the report of some sinful oath to be prested upon the masters of the college, he inquired at a fellow Regent of his, Mr. Gau\(\underline{\underline{\text{w}}}\)in fores\(\underline{\underline{\text{t}}}\)th what he would do in that matter, whose answer was, by my faith I must live, to whom Mr. Blair said, Sir, I will not swear by faith as you do, but truly I intend to live by my faith, you may choose your own way; but I will adventure on
The Lord. 'That wretched man did continue, to whom the matter of an oath was a small thing, after he was gone: but, which is worthy of a remark, many years after Mr. Forth fell in such poverty as forced his supplementing of the general assembly for some relief, where worthy Mr. Blair was then mad choice of to preside as moderator, and upon his appearance in that deplorable case could not than the observing of that former passage, and upon his address to him in private put him in mind thereof, though with great tenderness, as he said, not in the least to upbraid him in his low condition, but to let him fee he had been truly carried through by his faith at which he formerly had scoffed.' After his being put from the Colledge, he went to visit his brother then minifter at Dumbarton, and confessed that by the way he could not forbear singing from joy in the remembrance of God's being with him, and helping him to be instrumental in the good of the youth who had been under his inspection; he went after to Ireland being tried with a call from Bangor, and upon the sight of land his heart was so immediately made to exult within him for joy, that as he said, he could scarce bear the fame. Whilfe he came near Bangor he had a strong impression born in upon him that the Dean of Bangor was sick unto death and should rise no more, which at first he rejected as an unpertinent suggestion, but going further on his way, it was with such power impressed upon his spirit, as forced him to take notice of it; when he came to the place, he found the Dean was indeed lying sick, and though a most naughty man, made him not only welcome upon his visit, but encouraged him to hold on in his way, and told him he was to succeed him in that charge, yea he spoke so unlike himself, and in a strain so different from what was usual unto him, that a gentlewoman standing by said to some others, an angel is speaking out of the Dean's bed to Mr. Blair, thinking it could not be such a man. He had been once troubled with an appearance of the Devil whilfe he was a Regent in the Colledge, who like a crooked boy that waited on him stood up and laughed him in the face, whilfe he was serious in his chamber, and immediately disappeared: 'But after whilfe he was at Bangor there was one in that parifh who went to Scotland with horses to fell, and at a fair was tried with a man who at once was willing to buy them all; but pretending he had not all that money at prefent gave him bond until M'eritiness; the poor man having no ifpiration, returns; and near that time, going home-ward from Bangor one night, his merchant meets him, who was the Devil, now said he, you know my bargain, how I bought you at such a place, and I am come as I promised to pay you the price. Bought me, said the other trembling, you bought but my horses, nay fays the Devil I will let you know I bought your felf, and to the poor man confounded with fear said, he must either kill some body, and the more excellent the person were the better it would be for him, else he would not free him, and particularly charged him to kill Mr. Blair. The man overcome with terror, and through the violence of that temptation, determined the thing, and went to Mr. Blair's house with a dagger in his right-hand hid beneath his clack, and though much confounded was moving to get it out: but after Mr. Blair's speaking to him the poor man fell a trembling fo extremely, that upon a further inquiry he freely declared what end he was come, and told he had laboured to draw out his dagger, but it would not come from the scabbard, though he knew not what hindered it; for then when he effayed to draw it forth again it came out with much cafe. Master Blair bleffing the Lord exhorted him to choose him for his refuge, he was after threatened and much terrified by the Devil but nothing more followed.
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After some time in the ministry at Bangor, he with others of his worthy brethren was silenced by the Bishop, and as he told himself, was in the church when the Bishop (one Ecklin) did himself intimate the sentence. Upon which Mr. Blair arose up publicly in the congregation and with great authority did cite the Bishop to appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to answer for what he was doing contrary to his own light and conscience, against these whom he knew to be faithful ministers of the gospel: whereupon the man was so astonished, that he immediately cried out, I appeal from the tribunal of the justice of God to the throne of his mercy, to whom Mr. Blair replies. Sir, your appeal is rejected, for you know what you are doing is directly against your conscience, which hath made you bear witness to us as the servants of Jesus Christ. A few months after the Bishop fell sick, and the physicians inquiring about his cafe, he only could say my conscience, and so died. Whilst under restraint he was by his brethren lent to England, to deal with the King for their liberty, when he was on the road he was taken with a mighty fit of the stone which made him lie upon his horse's neck, not being able to hold up his back, which much disquieted him as being a probable let upon such an important business. And in this posture turned to the Lord in prayer, but immediately after essaying if he could possibly lift up his back, he found to his astonishment, his tormenting pain quite gone, and perfect ease, nor did it recur to him for two years after. A few days after in the same journey his horse fell very lame, which did in some measure trouble him, having no convenient access to provide himself of an other, and even upon this, did address to the Lord by prayer that in such a straight he might be helped, which he graciously condescended to do, so that the horse was to his amazement healed, and without the least halt did carry him to London. Whilst he was there he did essay what he could to accomplish his business, but could have no access to the King, yea, some who were his friends at court after trial assured him he had no ground to hope in that matter; yet he resolved to continue and roll the business over on the Lord, for whose service he was only importuning an open door; and one day having gone to Greenwich, where the Court then was, being wearied with on-waiting without access he retired into the park to pray, where after much wrestling with the Lord, he was in a more than ordinary way brought near, and had to clear a return, that he could not withstand the assurance he got that his way should be successful, but the appearance thereof in an ordinary way being so small, pressed him to adventure humbly the asking of a sign from the Lord, and immediately after there being a considerable wind that blew hard, and made a noise among the bushes that grew there, so great a calm did presently follow that not the least plant of the ground did any ways move or stir, he went thence to London, and within a few days in a most strange way had his petition presented to the King and accepted; yea, in St. James's Park was particularly called for, where the King with his own hand did not only sign it, but wrote these words in the margin which he directed to the depute indulge the education of these ministers for they are Scotsmen. When he was in England, he had a strange discovery of his wife (an excellent gentlewoman) her dying, and that she was lying in such a bed, and a Christian friend of his particular acquaintance beside her, when he came home, he found his wife in health; but a little after fell sick and died in that same bed with that friend sitting by her, and with all these particular circumstances. These are but a few of many great and remarkable passages in that excellent man's life who was himself as great an observer of providence as any in the age he lived in, and this
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this he had notably verified in himself which was an usual saying of histo
others' observable things do follow them who are given to observation.

V. This seems an eminent instance of the providence of God, and worthy
to be on record, that concerns the Laird of Raith, of a known and ancient
family in this country, who in the beginning of the reformation was a pro-
fessed papit; but the Lord directing that great servant of his Mr. Wilhurt
one night very late to his house, who after some repulse from a servant, got
access to this gentleman, and told him he was come with the offer of the
gospel of Christ to him and his family, if he would receive it, which was
in that manner backed with the authority of God, and his power on that
gentleman's conscience, that he most kindly received Mr. Wilhurt, and told
him, his offer was welcome; and a little after this visit was made so suc-
cessful upon Mr. Wilhurt's instructing him and his family in the truth, that
they publicly professed the same, and this worthy gentleman evidenced his
being truly taken by the heart; but sometime after, upon a spate laid for
him by cardinal Beaton, he was seized upon in the Laird of Grange's
house, and thence carried prisoner to the castle of Edinburgh, and so hotly
pursued by this wretched man's rage, who then was in his greatest power,
that in a short time he was sentenced to die; his Lady being overwhelmed
with grief, upon her husband's suffering and the forfeiture of that estate,
having five sons besides some daughters, to provide, did move him; but as
one then much with God he with much confidence told her having gotten
this assurance from that God for whom he suffred, concerning his house and
poverty that she had no cause to be troubled: for as to her outward case she
would yet live to see the youngest of her sons in a better condition than he
had been himself; which most clearly fell out, and is well known to many
in this time: his second son went to France, was there raised to great ho-
nour, and upon his returning home, purchased a considerable estate, and was
made Lord Melvin, and which calls for a remark, bought a part of the car-
dinal's estate, the then great instrument of the present ruin of his house,
which continues to this day. His third son was Lord Tongland as one of
the judges of the Session, and an other of them Laird of Halhill, but,
which was most strange, that the French King, (it seems moved from the
great respect he had, to that worthy gentleman, Sir Robert Melvin, the se-
cond son formerly mentioned) did, upon some treaty with Scotland, press
and procure the taking off the forfeiture of that estate of Raith, whereby
the eldest son was also restored, and it is known to this day, in what a
measure the Lord kath graciously witnessed his respect to that house and
family which now is enjoyed by my Lord Melvin, who as he is by a continued
succession the descendent of that worthy gentleman, who thus suffered for the
truth, so it is hoped he shall be found walking in the steps of his truly re-
nowned ancestors, who walked with God and adhered to his truth while
soraken and persecuted.

VI. I shall mention amongst these late instances a notable paliage of an ex-
cellent man, and deservedly of great repute in his time amongst the first re-
flores of the gospel, and of learning in France, after the reformation, which
grave and famous Rivet sets down in a letter of his to his brother, and is
since his death printed in the french tongue; which relation I shall give to
these who have not access to that book. It is this. James Faber, native
of a fleepie in Picardie, a most faithful and eminient minister of the go-
pel there, did in the persecution of that time, flee with others, and for
security retired to the Queen of Navarre, then in Albret in Gascoine,
who had him in high esteem: on a certain day the Queen did advertise him,
The purpose being to come and dine at his house, and for that end did invite some learned men, in whose conference he took much delight: at dinner, Faber became exceeding sad, and now and then fell out in bitter weeping, at which the Queen complained, and inquiring the cause, why he wept whilst he had come to be merry with him, he in the end said, most serene Queen, how can I be glad, or make others glad, who am as wicked a man as the earth bears. And what is that wickedness, saith she, you have committed, who are known from your youth to have lived so holy? He answered I am now the age of an hundred years, free from the touch of any woman, and remember not that I have committed what would burthen my conscience, or make me afraid to leave the world, except one sin, for which I am affur'd propitiation is possible, and as she pressed him to tell it, whilst he could scarce speak for abundance of tears, He said, how can I stand before the throne of God, who having taught others in purity and sincerity, the holy Evangel of the Son of God, many of whom having followed my doctrine, have constantly suffered a thousand torments and death it self, in the mean time I an unconstant Doctor did live; and though I had lived long enough, and should not have feared death, but rather desired it, yet did withdraw, and thus cowardly transgressed the command of my God. Whereupon the Queen, as she was most eloquent, did by reason and example shew him this had befallen others of the holy servants of God, and others there also, did add such considerations as he became more cheerful, and said there remains nothing, but that I go from hence to God, and after I have now made my testament, I have that impression, I must delay no longer, knowing the Lord calls for me. After he fixed his eyes on the Queen, and says, Madam, I make you my heir and to your preacher Gerard I leave my Books; and my clothes and all other things I have I leave to the poor; whereupon the Queen smiling, asked, what then Mr. Faber shall I have? The care, said he, Madam, to distribute this to the poor; it is well, said she I solemnly profess, this legacy is more acceptable to me, than if the King my brother, had named me his heir: thenceafter they shew him more joyful, then he said, I have need of some rest, be you merry and joyful, and in the mean time adieu: and having spoke this, he turned him over on a bed that was near: where as they judged he lay sleeping, but was indeed fallen asleep in the Lord, without the least sign of a previous indisposition, and when they were about to awake him, found him to their admiration dead; such was the end of this personage undoubtedly holy, which the Queen of Navarre did her self relate to the Elector Frederick the second of Palatine, when he was sick at Paris, in his return from Spain, from the Emperor Charles V. and it was commun- icated by a worthy gentleman Hubertus Thomas, a counsellor of the said Frederick, who was present at this relation of the Queens, from whom River had it written by himself.

VII. I shall subjoin two passages worthy of observation, which concern a grave and eminently good minister in the church of Ireland, Mr. Andrew Steward, minister at Dunagor, which together with some of these other remarkable instances here mention'd were transmitted unto me from his worthy son Mr. Andrew Steward, minister of Donachadee, who both knew the certainty of them, and was himself also a great observer of such confirmations of the truth; whom I cannot mention without sorrow at the remembrance of the late removal of so eminent and useful a minister of Jesus Christ. The first is an instance and evidence of the power and prevalency of prayer with God, on a Monday after a communion where a great multitude being ga-

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thered and these of the choicest of that country, whilst as a shepherd he was feeding his flock in a large place (for the enormousness of the hearers imposed a necessity upon him to preach in the field) an horrid black cloud and fearful to look on hang'd directly over their head, which to all present threatened a strange pouring down of rain, whereby the exercise would have been interrupted; yea, some drops were begun to fall, but Mr. Stewart then at great advantage in his own spirit as to nearness with God begg'd their leave to retire a little from the place, and went to an other part for prayer, and while he prayed it was observably seen, that the cloud did remove half a mile off on the south hand, and there fell down in such a mighty rain, that albeit it was the heat of summer the brooks so swelled that some coming too late to sermon could not have passage over, but where they were gathered there was not one drop more, so that he went on with a full gait to the close of the work, to the no small advantage and conviction of his hearers.

The next concerns his death, being called to the burial of that excellent man of God Mr. Josiah Wells, son of that great man formerly mentioned who was his neighbour minister, he stood some time at the grave as a sad observer of such a thing, and to some who were by said, Who knows who will be next? But none answering, he said to them, I know, and thus turned away, and went home to Dunagor on his foot, and entering into the church did bolt the doors, where he tarried some two hours, and after going to his house he fell a sleep on his bed with an excess of grief, whence he never in health rose again, but was buried that day month. When his wife returned whom he had left with Mr. Wells's widow, she inquired what he had been doing, to whom he said I have been taking my leave of the church of Dunagor, and I was there taking timber and stones to witness that in my short time I had laboured to be faithful, and that according to my light, I have revealed the whole counsel of God to the people, (how great a testimony of the conscience was this) after fourteen nights lying, Mr. Ridge a choice English minister there came to visit him, and said, I hope, Sir, you do not now rew that ye have been faithful, he answered, I rew nothing but that I was too long in beginning (he mean'd his refitting, for several years a call to the ministry, to which he had been much pressed) and I will tell you a strange thing which hath helped me to be faithful, these last seven years there hath not one day passed me, without thoughts of death, and renewed submission to it, yea, this made me neglect my body which should have served the Lord, as if it had been mere in the street, which now troubleth me. That night when he died several godly and grave christians were with him, where for a long time he fell in a deep silence, which ended with heavy groanings often reiterated, at last a chrietian there desired to know what troubled him, but he refused to tell, at last being urged he said, I shall tell you my hair stands to behold, what I see coming on these Lands (this was in the year 1634,) and being further pressed he said, the bloody wars of Germany shall never be ballanced with the wars of these three Kingdoms; what do you speak, Sir, said one of the company, to whom he answered, The dead bodies of many thousands who this day despise the glorious gospel shall lie upon the earth as dung unburied, and whilst asked what then shall become of us and of our posterity? He lifted up his voice, and said, He that is for the sword to the sword, he that is for captivity to captivity, and he that is for famine to famine, and God shall be avenged on these lands, and whilst one said, is there no remedy? He cried thrice, No remedy, no remedy, no remedy; then he held his peace a little and said, I tell you what must be, the broken covenant of Scotland must be renewed, the formality of Ireland must be purged, the prodigality of England removed,
removed, and the sons of Saul must be hung up before the sun. By which
left word none knew what he meant. Some of his own parth being pre-
fent asked what he would say to them, to whom he replied, Wo to thee
Dunagon for the netles, and the long grass shall be in greater plenty in the
than ever were people to hear the word of God, this the forementioned re-
later said, he was a witness to three years together after the late rebellion, they
asked if he would have his children, he said no, he had done with them, and
whilst they mentioned one of his daughters he defined to be foreborn, and
said, he should see glorious days after all this, and then takes his wife by the
hand, (who having but four night lien in of child, crept out of the bed to
get and give a long farewell) to whom he said, Thou haft in faithfulness suf-
fered many things with me in my pilgrimage, and now wherewith shall I com-
fort thee my love (think that he left her with four children, much debt con-
tinued whilst he refiled a call to the miniftery, and but thirty shilling ster-
ing then to do all with) a father to the fatherless, a judge to the widow is
God in his holy habitation, as God is God, thou shalt never want nor none
of thine, but in all the fad days that are coming you shall be a wonder of mercy
in every place, whither you are carried, and not a hair of your head shall fall,
which was, to the conviction and edification of many, fully accomplished,
which the forementioned relator does himself also attest, though with much
humble modestly, because of his near relation.

VIII. This paflage also I must instance of a remarkable providence to a grave,
and to this day famous christian in our country John Stewart, provolt of Air,
who from his very young years did witnes a respect to godliness, he had a con-
siderable estate left him by his father, but having to great a weight and impre-
sion on his spirit of the diftrefs and strained condition of many good people
whom he knew in the country, and love to Jesus Christ and his truth, having
got the command over him, and all his interef, he did deliberately call them,
as he had access, together in Edinburgh; and having spent some time in prayer,
took their solemn promife, not to reveal while he lived what he was to do;
he said, he knew in what ftraits many of them were, to hold up the credit of
the profeflion, and therefore he had brought a little money to lend each of
them; yet so as they should never offer to repay it till he required the fame,
this was not known until his death, that some of thefe found themselves oblig'd
to make it known. Sometime after he had bestowed this money, the plague
having been fore in Air; and trade much decayed, he himself fell under
some ftraints, and some of the profhane in that place begin to make it their up-
call, that religion had made him poor, and his giving much to others like a
fool, made him now want himself; the profeflion and the credit of it was
always this godly man's darling, which made him quite the country at that
time, and borrowing a little money went over to France, that he might the
better conceal his ftrait; when he came to Rochel, the falt and other
commodities were become exceeding cheap, becaufe there had been no tra-
ding of a long time, on which he ventured to fraught a ship, and loaded
her upon credit; he himself came over the nearest to England, and thence
to Air; with expectation of the ships return, but after long on-waiting, he
was informed for certain, that his ship was taken with the Turks, which be-
came matter of great exercise to him, not becaufe he knew not how to be
abased, as well as how to abound; but, fearing left the mouths of wicked
men, might fo much the more on this occasion be opened to reproach the
profeflion, that for many days he kept his chamber; at laft a maid who had
heard amongst the people that John Stewart's ship was arrived in the rode
came running and cried at the door that his ship was come; but he being at
prayer,
prayer, could not be moved from his master's company, till he was satisfied,
and then went forth and saw it was a truth, but as a further ground of pre-
cent exercise to him a worthy christian and great intimate of his John Ken-
dy, who for joy had gone forth in a small boat to the ship, by the sud-
len falling down of a storm was carried by the ship, and in the judgment of
all that looked on, he and the boat were swallowed up, yea, the storm in-
creased at that rate, that they feared the loss of the ship, also, which did so
deeply affect this gracious man, that for three days he could be seen by
none, under the weight of such a trial; but at last, having gone forth to
visit the widow (as then supposed) whilst with that family they were mu-
tually witnessing grief, John Kennedy immediately comes in, who had not
been cast away, but by a strange providence the boat had been driven a far
way to another place of the coast: here at once many mercies did meet,
he vended the commodities of the ship, which having paid all his debt,
returned him twenty thousand marks more to himself: thus was that bread
cast upon the waters, and to appearance lost, after many days returned, and
that witnessed that by liberal devices the liberal man doth stand. I must
add a word upon the death of this worthy man, whilst his friends came
to see him, he oft used this word, be humble, and anent his own cafe, he
said, I go the way of all flesh, and it may be some of you doubt nothing
of my well being; yea, I testify that except when I slept or was upon busines,
I was not these ten years without thoughts of God, so long as I could be
in going from my house to the croft, and yet I doubt my self, and am in
great agony, yea, at the brink of despair; but a day or two before he died
he turned his face to the wall, from company, who asked what he was doing,
upon which he turned himself with these words, I have been fighting and
working out my salvation, with fear and trembling, and now I bless God
it is perfected, sealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone.

It is a memorable instance known yet to many in the north of Ireland, of
a choice and godly gentlewoman when the rebellion brake up there, who fled
with some other persons with her and three children one of them upon the
breast, they had not gone far, till they were stript naked by the Irish, who
to admiration spared their lives (it is like thinking the cold and hunger
would kill them) afterwards going on, at the foot of a river which runs
in to Lochach, others met them, and will have them cast in to the river;
but this godly woman not disnayed, asked a little liberty to pray, and she
lay naked on the frozen ground, got resolution not to go on her own feet to
such an unjust death, upon which having called her and she refusing, was
dragged by the heels along that rugged way to be cast in, with the rest of
her company; but she then turned and on her knees says, you should, I am
sure, be christians, and men I see you are; in taking away our miserable
lives you do us a pleasure; but know, that as we never wronged you nor
yours, you must remember to die also your selves, and one day give an account
of this cruelty to the judge of heaven and earth, on which an irish priest
then present said; let us not take their lives, but we will put them into this
island of the lake, a boat being at the river all the eight naked and without
meat are turned into that island, where after four days staying, some of the
company died for hunger and cold, but not this woman or any of her children;
for the lived by faith, upon the word of God and not by bread only: a day
after, the two boys having crept aside, found the hide of a beast, which had
been killed, at the root of a tree, which the mother and they endeavoured
to get cast over them then lying upon the snow: the next day a little boat
goes by, unto whom she calls for God's sake to take her out; but they being
Irish
Irish would not, she desired a little bread, they said they had none, then she begs a coal of fire, which she obtained, for she had seen smoke in the boat, and thus with some fallen chips made a little fire, and the boys taking a piece of the hide laid it on the coals, and began to gnaw the leather, but without an extraordinary divine support what could this do? Thus they lived ten days without any visible mean of help, and that good woman professed it was by faith and joy in God, that she did live; nor had she any bread but ice and snow, nor drink except water; but she thought God put more substance into it, and found it as it were clammy, the next day a boat carried her out, to the side of the band-water, where she had yet been lost, but that she could not suffer to see her children die in her sight, and though the two boys were young and so starved that they had no strength, she pressed them to go out of her sight, under pretence of seeking some fire, and bids them hold their face to such an airt, where in that desert country she knew they could have no fire, yet in such an extreme left room for God to work their safety: the poor children were not able, and had not gone far till they saw two or three great dogs eating a man, who had been killed, the children were afraid at the sight of the dogs (who needed not fear any thing but to live in such a condition) and one of them came running and leaped upon one of the children without doing him the least hurt, but fawned on them, and would run a little before, and then tarry till the children came up, and so led them on to a house where smoke appeared, which was an Irish man's, protected by the English in Antrum, by whose means they were marvelously preserved, and the mother sent for and succour'd by a party of Antrum. I would shut this passage up with something truly observable anent this gentlewoman's husband, who was a sweet humoured gentleman, and godly, and one who used to frequent that famous Fridays meeting at Antrum before that rebellion broke up, but being infrared by some Arminians then in the bounds, the worthy ministers in that place, after some pains taken on him, could not prevail, Mr. Blair being there, had this word to a friend, who told it to a godly minister in that place from whom I had this passage, I am of opinion that this gentleman, shall either turn penitent or mad before many days. Which fell out, for he fell so furiously mad that they were driven to the necessity of binding him, and thus for a year continued, though with some more sober intervals, and then would bewail his case at the end of the year, being very furious, he was taught of the devil, but by an over-reaching providence of God, to feign himself sober, and intend his wife to be rid of the manacles, which was done; but at the break of day rising took the coverlet of the bed about him, and went with resolution to drown himself in the river; but when he was at the brink thereof, had this suggested to him, he was a fool to drown the covering, for it might be useful, which made him go a little back, and lay it down at the root of a tree, and then with full resolution went to throw himself in; but this was suggested to him again at the very brink, were it not best to pray, before I die: On which he turned a little and falls down to prayer; but ere he had done, his wit and judgment was returned, with peace of conscience and assurance of pardon, in as large measure as ever he enjoyed these in his life, and thus returned in a sober frame to the astonishment of his wife.

IX. There is a strange passage of judgment that amongst the memorable things of the providence of God I think worthy of inserting, it concerns a Nobleman in our own country, whose name with respect to his house, I forbear to mention, who for many years by blood, cruelty and oppression, made himself a terror in that place of the country where he lived. One day his second
second son, who after succeeded to that house, by the death of his brother, found a letter sealed and directed to his father, bearing the title of his house, and without any suspicion whence it came carried it up to his chamber, which that Lord breaking up, found of a strange file, for it had these words, I summons you—— to appear before the tribunal of God, and there answer for your murders, oppressions, &c. Subscription Diabolus; upon which he being enraged, drew his sword to have run his son thorough, supposing it a contrived business by him, but he escaped and was forced for many months to withdraw from the house; but upon the intercession of friends his father did condescend to admit him again, but that very day whilst they were met on this account, that nobleman wailing his hands in his bed-chamber, and one of his servants by, a letter from the roof of that chamber drops down upon his hands, sealed and directed as before, which being opened, had the very same words of the former letter with that dreadful subscription Diabolus: After which by immediate stroke of the Lord's hand, he was struck with a remarkable infatuation, and such an horror and fear upon his conscience, that upon the appearance of the least boy, he would have fled, and with beating sought to have sheltered himself under a bed, and in this case shortly died, having been made a terror to himself, and the meanest person in case to quash him, who made it his work to be terrible to others in his life, this (far from reflecting upon the house or family) with respect to the holding forth the holy and righteous judgment of the Lord, I could not omit to insert the same, after some safe warrant as to the certainty thereof from these I had ground to believe.

Seventh witness to this truth, that the Lord hath in so solemn and extraordinary a way appeared for his church in their last times, is this, These great and marvelous providences (which we may call Magnalia Dei) by which he hath witnessed his truth, and confirmed the same since the breaking up of the gospel in this late raising of the church from Antichrist; For we may truly say there hath not wanted a visible attestation from heaven, and a convincing testimony, by some great works of the Lord, to his truth, as well as in the primitive times of the church.

We do here understand by such providences, those wherein man cannot but see something above nature and natural causes, yea, above the ordinary way of the Lord's working, which doth evidently witness his great and immediate hand, some whereof have been so wonderful, which can be interfaced in their late times, as might truly be called miracles; it is true this is not the Lord's usual way, neither maketh he use of such a solemn testimony, but on special and weighty grounds, when the necessity of the church calleth for it, whilst he is about some extraordinary piece of work, or when the gospel cometh first to a land that hath been long over-spread with darknes, when ordinary means of conviction are wanting, or in times of great opposition, when the commission of his servants needeth some extraordinary seal; in such a time as that of Ahab, when the people are made to halt belwixt truth and a false way, and thus we find the Lord did confirm the first breaking up of the gospel, and make use of such a mean to spread the christian church through the world, and should this seem strange, that in so great a change of the church's case now, in the latter days, when he was to raise her up, after so long a ruin and desolation, whilst Antichristianism so many ages had over-spread the face of the world, that he should thus appear, and give some signal demonstration of his power in behalf of his people, such as we have seen with our eyes, and our fathers did tell us.
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It is not miracles, or any extraordinary providence on which men should resolve their faith, nor do we here mention these, for laying stress thereon in believing the truth, no, the protestant doctrine, and hence doth lean on a stronger ground, it can with confidence appeal the adversary to the scripture, these divine records which they do not pretend to deny, this, even this is the reason of our hope, which we offer to all that ask for the same; and there let the God of truth who hath revealed his will, and answers men by the written word be judge, and we shall demand no greater advantage, nor justice at the hand of our enemies, we know miracles cannot authorize a lye, or be a seal to any thing repugnant to the scripture, and truly these lying wonders which have been so frequent in the world, which the apostle doth foretell that such an engine the devil will make use of, to turn men aside from the truth, besides other marks of their falsehood, they have this one most discernible, that they are the support and warrant of that which cannot stand alone by the word; and thence are the popish miracles made use of to confirm such tenets which of all their doctrine do most directly contradict the scripture, as the merit of works, purgatory, praying for the dead, &c. But as we will not boast of such, as the authority, or proof of our doctrine, so we judge it a grave, and a conceiving duty to observe the wondrous works of the Lord in our times, yea, to make a diligent search there-anent, that we may tell posterity some of the great acts of our God, for his church, in bringing her again from Babel.

I would desire to be very tender, and cautious upon such a subject, for I judge it horrid divinity to make a lye for God; it is not the truth, but a false way which requireth such an help, and truly anent these following instances, which are but a few of many that might be brought if there were more serious enquiry, I dare attest the Lord, the great witness, that I have not knowingly let down here any thing false, yea, not without some diligent search, and satisfying grounds anent the certainty thereof. I judge it not necessary to repeat these which are so known already to the world from publick records, and therefore shall but briefly point at some of these, and add a few more particular instances of this kind, which I may with some confidence bring to the light, from clear evidences of the truth thereof.

I shall first mention that solemn testimony of Mr. Baynham in Queen Mary's time, who in the midst of the fire, whilst his body was all in a flame, his arms and legs half burnt, cried out to by-standing, O popists, ye look after miracles, lo here is one. I am now burning in this fire, but feel no more pain than if I were in a bed of roses. O mult not this be called a miracle, and an extraordinary seal from the Lord, to his truth, wherein the world would consider, this was the testimony of one, who was upon the borders of eternity, which he did declare before a great multitude, attestcd by Mr. Fox that holy servant of Christ, who in things of that kind so extraordinary was most cautious, and did much search out the truth, and certainty of what he sets down, and by him was publithed whilst many of that time, who might have been present were alive, yea, it is the more remarkable, the sharp combat that this martyr had through the terror of fire a little before his death, fearing he should never be able to endure the fame.

What a remarkable providence was that at a town in the low countries, whilst some of the faints were put to death, by the popish party, and among these one Michael Bomboutus a deacon of the reformed church, whilst they were going to suffer about mid-day the heavens being most clear, there came suddenly so great a darkness, and so horrible, and unusual a tempest which was only in that place and above that city discerned, that men were generally shaken

shaken with fear, thinking there should be a present dissolution of the world; this famous Voetius in that piece de signis, doth witness that from divers thence present even some of them popish he had this related to himself, and as he faith, such a thing papists would have with greatest observation published, as the very finger of God, if they had the same occasion.

At a town Alfa in Westflanders whilst a godly man whom the Inquisition there had pursu'd, was leading to the stake, and was by the way singing Psalms, the captain of these who guarded him was so enraged, that he caused presently his tongue to be plucked out by the roots, but lo a few months after, this wretched man hath a child born with his tongue hanging out a great way, which by no means could be kept within his mouth, this doctor Hall being himself afterwards in that town had shewed him from some who were most considerable there, as he fets down in his epistles.

Charles IX. of France who was author of that horrid massacre where the blood of many thousands of Protestants at Paris, and other parts was shed, did a very little after dye in the strength of his years, by an extraordinary effusion of blood from all passagges of his body, that as Du Serres, and other French writers of that time do shew, he was made to wallow in his own blood before his death. O was not this the very finger of God, a most convincing stupendous piece of his judgment.

What an extraordinary providence was that which is attested by divers witnesses thereunto, in the late bloody massacre of Ireland; A young woman who by the Irish was stripped almost naked, and after by one of them threatened that except she would give him her money, he would with for her through, to which she gravely answered; I know you cannot kill me except God give you leave, whereupon he did thrice three times with his sword run at her nak'd body but could not once pierce her skin, which did so confound this wretched man, that with a kind of horror he went away and ceased to trouble her further.

Did not God wonderfully appear in the raising of the late King of Sweden, with that astonishing successe, which did attend him in breaking the power of the house of Austria, whilst they were at so great an height, and had their hands hot recking in the blood of the Protestants through Bohemia, and other places of Germany, O but the Lord's hand might be clearly seen in acting forth, and fitting that party of the Swedes, for such a piece of his service, even in a more than ordinary way, who like that he-goat mentioned in Daniel did come so swiftly that they touched not the ground, as it were; but like a mighty speat bore down all before them.

The breaking of that great Spanish Armado in the year 88 which had been 3 years in contriving, did convincingly witness a divine hand opposing the same, and how remarkable was that if use of all the counsels, expense, and cruelty, which Philip II. had made use of to bear down the rising of the gospel in the Netherlands; for it is notour that after many eflays, the los of an 100 millions of gold, with near 400000 lives, the reckoning of all his gain, and purchase was only the los of a considerable part of these countries, and helping forward the establishment of the united provinces; and truly we must say the Lord did by his great, and outstretched hand wonderfully appear in raising that common wealth, so that they may date their flourishing in outward interest, from their owning of the interest of God. Religion did raise them and no people this day hath more cause and are under greater engagements to be zealous for the truth, and defence of the protestant cause.

The breaking of that formidable league of the Catholicks in France for rooting out the Protestant Religion there, was very wonderful, how all their counsels, and designs should resolve in their own ruin, so that the most ordinary
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nary onlookers, could not but see a divine hand counteracting the same: Da-
vil though an adversary, in setting down that history, giveth a large account
of this.

What a great appearance of the Lord's hand, yea, of an extraordinary pro-
vidence, was there in the throwing down of the popish images and altars, al-
most in one night throw much of the Netherlands, which for so many hun-
dred years had been made use of for idolatry. O did not Satan thus fall as
lightning from heaven, it being very evident how strange an impulse did car-
ry out the people in this, over all difficulties, or fear of hazard, what a won-
derful consent and agreement amongst places so remote about one thing, and
almost at one time; how quickly also it was executed through these provinces
almost in an instant, the authors did never appear, nor any noise of their boas-
ting there-anent; and which was strange the magistrates of the cities, having
both power and will to hinder, yet were so over-ruled and struck with affo-
nishment, that they could not resist; and as Faminus Strads a great enemy
to the truth doth shew what fell out in Antwerp, and other places, con-
dering the greatness of the work, the multitude, and height of these ido-
latrous monuments it might have been enough for many days, what was
done in one night, and not any in the least prejudged or hurt thereby, which
made him cry out, that sure this was the work of the Devil, and his help
eminent therein: but I do not wonder, to hear these in such a manner
blaspheme, whilst they are tormented with so clear a discovery of God's
hand against them.

Must we not here mention that great deliverance of the town of Leyden
from the Spaniards, with a special remark, whilst it was then manifest, if
the enemy had made use of cannon in battering the walls, they could not
have come short of their design: in what an extraordinary way also were
the winds tryed to raise the waters in order to the town's relief, when they
were at the utmost extremity, yea for driving the waters back again, when
the town was once delivered, and which was very marvelous, that the fame
night, wherein the Spaniards were forced to retire, a part of the walls fell
down, which if it had fallen out a little before, that city had been utterly
loft. O was not this a divine hand, which even the greatest atheists, and
such who judge things to fall out by chance, must confess?

What wonderful providences did attend the actions of that poor handful of
protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, for their necessary self-defence; Fox
with other writers give a clear account in setting down that horrid persecuti-
on which they endured in the year 1555. I shall here only touch some pas-
sages mentioned by Mr. Morland in his history, who upon the account of that
bloody massacre, which was there within these few years, was then near that
place, and from sure knowledge, and information doth very gravely hold forth
the same: and truly they are providences so marvelous, and astonishing, that
men cannot but see the Lord in an extraordinary way helping that poor peo-
ple, his acting forth a few to do such exploits, beyond any thing that can be
mentioned of these great Heroes, whom the world in former years did ad-
mire; so that we must say, as this was a convincing proof of the great power
of God, put forth for his people, when help in an ordinary way failed, it was
also a solemn testimony to their cause, and of the Lord's approbation of his
peoples standing for their own defence against the cruelty, and violence of a
persecuting magistrate. We have there held forth, how after that bloody
persecution by an order from the Duke of Savoy, a small number was in a
remarkable way railed up, and upon their first essay seven or eight under the
conduct of that worthy gentleman Fosta Gianavel, whom God made use
of

I i
The Henry to his party by boldness the other pleasant and queruing adversaries, handful, writing of killing Church. lous Martyr, Verger of peace, « produce, much fear, the nation of truth, to give the world, to give his place, and great inheritance, but to go over the belly of the most prefling intrigues, and infinuations of his friends, the weeping cries of his Lady, and children, and go to a strange place quitting all, that he might preserve his conscience, and enjoy fellowship with the Church. O what a solemn witness was this to the truth, and of the conquering power of Christ!

And in a word what a marvelous thing was it that poor Luther, against whom so much of the world was aloft, with greatest rage and violence, should yet
yet live to an old age, and go to the grave in peace. And truly the spirit and appearance of this great and first witness to the truth might be a convincing evidence, that the Lord was then to raise up a people to himself in whom he would be glorified, by an active testimony, as well as by suffering. Besides these instances, I would here mention some remarkable providences worthy indeed to be observed, though they are little known to the world, which we may say do not only witness the power of God, but are a convincing seal to his truth, and the church's reformation in these last times.

It is a remarkable passage which worthy Mr. Forbes sets down under his hand, with which he was banished for the truth; whose words are these. In the year 1607, being at Ruan in France, and meeting with Monsieur Figureus that ancient and famous divine, and then paffor of the reformed church in that city, he had from him this following relation: After the close of the Council of Trent in the time of Pius V. there was a consultation in Italy by the Pope and Cardinals, for an utter extirpation of the reformed churches in Europe; and to this end every Prince of the Roman religion had a certain part assigned where this great project should be put in practice: The death of Pius V. hindered a present acquainting of this design. And his successor Gregory XIII. did suffer it to lie dead having no heart that way, and so until that time of Clement VIII. it was not revived, but then this bloody resolution was of new ratified by him, and his cardinals under their bands and feals; the only difficulty was in this, to find a fit and trusty person whom they should make use of to the Princes of the Roman religion, for engaging them to subscribe the said ordinance, and set about the execution thereof: At length a gentleman of good parts, near in blood to the cardinal Baronius is chosen, which to him was a matter of much grief and sorrow, for unknown to them he was of the reformed religion, but this grief in his countenance and carriage, put his friends who observed the same to strange thoughts, and so much the more, that he did expressly declare to some of those who asked there anent, that what to them seemed a cause of rejoicing, was to him a just occasion of grief, yet at last finding his hazard upon a bitter challenge from the said cardinal who had heard thereof, he judged it his wisdom to dissemble, shewing him his unfitness concerning an employment could not but be ground of trouble and fear; and so was some way forced to engage his commissions, the decree of the Conclave, with letters to the forefaid princes, sealed and subscrib'd. But lo! whilst this poor gentleman is on his journey, having found ways to free himself of his servants and other company, his spirit was in great perplexity between these two grievous temptations, either to be instrument of utter ruin to the truth, and churches of Christ, or to forsake his country, inheritance and all he had in the world, upon which he resolved to retire himself out of the high way to an obscure village, where for three days he gave himself to fasting and prayer for direction and resolution from the Lord, and after this had his heart so strengthened against the care of his worldly estate, that he resolved to forsake all, and to reveal this bloody conspiracy to the churches of Christ, and cast himself on God's hand for his future estate, so that he turned his face from Spain, and took journey to France and to Paris, where at that time remained the sister of Henry IV. a religious Princess, afterwards Duchess of Lorrain, to whom the forefaid Monsieur Figureus was her preacher, and unto him made his address (though after divers refusals of admission upon suspicion) shewing him the whole business, and delivered the sealed decree with his letters of commission for that effect, and did likewise shew him (who was then astonished at such a wonderful providence of God, in fol-
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ing some of his own children in the midst of Babylon, and that to so comfortable an use for his churches safety) that there were many others in Italy, yea, in Rome it self of the reformed religion, who had their secret meetings, and even Gregory XIII. before his advancement to the papacy was thoroughly clear there anent in his judgment, whereof he gave him divers evidences: This foresaid relation did so affect Mr. Forbes, that he showed his marvelous desire to see that man who had done so worthy and gracious a work for the glory of God and good of his church, and by a recommendation from Monsieur Figueres, he did afterwards go of set purpose to that place, taking the first opportunity for Heidelberg, where this gentleman was then retired for his further security, and honourably entertained, by that Prince, where he saw that he saw him, and from his own mouth received the assurance of this former narration to his great satisfaction and comfort: This is the very sum which I have here set down and truly transcribed off the principle, which I had before me, both written and subscribed by Mr. Forbes's own hand.

A remarkable providence I shall also here set down, which did try with some very convincing circumstances at the Parliament 1621. at their bringing in of popish ceremonies upon the church, which was then a sad step of the lands defection from the truth, contrary to their engagements; whilst the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ at that time did with greatest seriousness and freedom object, and warn those who were in power (alas, that now there is little of such a spirit appearing) that they would not, to please men, corrupt the worship of God, but the speech being violent, it did at last resolve in a law; at which very time, whilst the King's commissioner did rise from the throne to ratify this woful act, by the touch of the scepter, was even in this moment of that ratification tryed by the God of Heaven, with an extraordinary lightning, and very unusual great claps of thunder, and these followed with a most strange and extraordinary darkness, which both for the tuddainess and greatness of the same did astonish and affright all who were present, and after all, so violent a down-pouring of rain, as made the streets to run like a river, imprisoning the Lords within that house for an hour and an half: and truly as we are not hereon to lay a fires, or be pertitory in the application of particular providences, yet this was so very convincing as should not be past without a special remark, considering first how at that time many of the choice ministers of the land, were together near the town at fasting and prayer, bewailing before the Lord such an avowed defection from the truth.

2. That likewise this horrid tempest and darkness appeared to those who were at some distance to be most directly above the town, the darkness overshadowing that part only, and was not so in other places. 3. That they had by the instigation of the Prelates, guarded the entry to the Parliament that day, lest any ministers should have entered a protestation in behalf of the church against these articles, and thus thought themselves secure from any opposition of that kind; but whilst they left suspected, they are met with a more publick and visible witness from Heaven against the same. 4. Which was also most strange upon the Monday following, whilst these acts were proclaimed, the heavens did in the same manner put on darkness with a most fearful tempest of thunder, lightning and rain, which continued all the time of their reading at the crosses. And truly when the Lord thus doubled his warnings, it might cry aloud for men's observation thereof.

The breaking of that journey to New England, which about the year 1636, was seriously intended by some of the choice ministers in Ireland, who
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who were then much persecuted by the Prelates, though not from any fear of their own sufferings, but with a respect to a further liberty to serve the Lord in the work of the gospel, when that door was shut upon them in their own country: This was a strange and remarkable providence, and their preservation in some kind miraculous, anent which their circumstances are worthy to be observed.

1. That whilst their vessel amidst a tempestuous sea, and far from any land, was like a riddle with so many lakes; yea, the rudder of the ship breaking, so that the pilots were turned wholly hopeles, and could not see any ground of safety in an ordinary way, a poor seaman by a remarkable providence, whose company they had much shunned was made the instrument of preferring the whole vessel with a marvelous dexterity fastening the rudder, which others had given over, as one visibly sent by the Lord for that end.

2. The strong per wondered that some of these worthy ministers had of their safety, which with great confidence they declared before the passengers, whilst the master and others were giving it over as a hopeles business, and seeing a convincing necessity for a return, though it was very astonishing and bitter at the first look, yet was afterwards followed with a clear discovery from the Lord, as one of them with much freedom did express his assurance to the rest of his brethren, that since the Lord would not accept their service in America, they should not want work and service, whether he was sending them back by so remarkable a providence, as within a short time was evident, the downfall of the Prelates in Scotland and after in Ireland, trylling shortly upon the back thereof, so that it may be said this was a convincing preface thereof, the Lord by a strong hand bringing back such choice and useful instruments for that great harvest which did after follow, so that they could not but say, the Lord did in a marvelous and immediate way appear in that cross wind and storm, and thereby as if with an audible voice did witness his mind in such a disappointment.

3. It was also most observable that none of these who on the account of their consciences, that they might enjoy the purity of the ordinances, went in that journey were the worse, but had a safe return, only some persons who upon another account expecting a fair soil, and outward advantage in that place, and had unexpectedly flipp into the vessel, did all die upon the sea, save one being five in number, and it was also wonderful upon their return, how the Lord as he had stayed the rage of the sea, did also still the tumults of people, which they found by experience, so that it did evidently give a daith, and became a terror to their adversaries.

I must here also set down a very singular and strange instance, we may say both of judgment and mercy which was in this land, not many years ago, a gentleman whose name was Wastraw a most bloody man, and otherways notorious for profanitie, but most in this, that it was his great work, and pleasure to put difference between men, and as it was at that time very easy to engage them in blood, whilst he had thus stirred up a neighbour gentleman to kill an other in that place, finding him after sore trouble in mind there anent, he told him more of that practice would be the best cure, for he himself had killed six, and that the first time he was much disquieted, but the longer he did continue, it became the more easy. But one day whilst he was on such an account riding to a place where two had tryled to decide a private quarrel by fighting, his horse stumble on the side of a steep rock, and he falls a great way down, his sword falling out before him, yet without any hurt; and here by such a strange piece of providence did the Lord try and break in upon his conscience, so that he quits his journey, turns home with great trouble and remorse, a most kindly change following thereon, K, k, k and
and for some years after witnessed much tenderness and repentance by his 
after walk, spent much time alone mourning before his death, and that day 
he died, having no visible appearance thereof to these who looked on, he 
was heard in his chamber at much wrestling in prayer, and after long con-
tinuance, thefe of the house were forced to break up the door, getting no 
anwer after long knocking, they find him dead in the room, but upon his 
knees in a praying posture; and the whole blood of his body, which from 
every paflage thereof had issued out, seething about him in the floor; it 
being visible how all these passages were opened for that effect, a moft 
astonifhing infurance, declaring this to the world, though he pardon the 
iniquity of his people, yet some sins he will not let pafs without a visible 
mark of his anger, but will take vengeance on their inventions.

What an observable passage is that also, known to many yet alive, anent 
a notorious robber in the fourth parts of this land, called John of the Score, 
who for many years having driven that woful trade, did one day rencon-
ter a poor man travelling with two horses, which he according to his cu-
form takes away, the poor country man falling on his knees, did earnestly 
beg, that for Jesus Christ's sake, he would give the one again, for he had no 
more to maintain his poor family, but what he could gain by them, but it 
was in vain, he carrieft them home with him, leaving the poor man in that 
desolate condition, but a little after he turns dumpifh and melancholy, could 
get no rest or quiet, not knowing the caufe, but as he profefled, that thofe 
words the poor man had spoke to him, (though he was fo great an atheift, 
that he underflood not what he meant when he fpoke of Christ:) were lying 
like a heavy weight upon his spirit, and whilst he was fought after for his 
robberies, he defired his fons to shift for themselves, for he could not go out 
of the way, there being a refraint upon him, and something within him 
that in a kind bound him from going out of the way, and thus stayed at his 
houfe until he was apprehended, brought in to Edinburgh, and there put 
in prison; upon which a godly minifter Mr. Henry Blyth with a christian 
gentleman William Cunningham, tutor of Boniview, who had oftem 
known him makes a vifit, holding forth to him his miferable eflate, and 
the hazard of his foul, (for he was judged by the law to die) and amongst 
other words fhewing him the neceffity to flee to Jesus Christ, he doth sud-
denly break out with a cry, 'O what word is that, for it hath been my 
death, that is the word that hath lain upon my heart fince the poor man 
spake it to me; fo that I had no power from that time to go out of the way, 
and after being told what an one Christ was, without whom he could not be 
saved, he cryeth: 'O will he ever look to me, and fhew mercy that for his fake 
could not fhew mercy to that poor man, and give him back his horfe, but 
after further inftruction, a moft real and gracious change did appear upon 
him, he gave moft convincing evidences of the reality thereof, attained to 
great afurance before his death, and upon the scaffold in the publick streets 
where he was executed, did fpake fo wonderfully of the Lord's dealing with 
him, and with fuch knowledge and judgment, as left a conviction on all 
present, and forced them to fee a truth and reality in the grace of God.

An other notable infurance of grace, with a very remarkable paffage in his 
condition, I fhall here mention, one Patrick Mackelwraith, who lived in the 
well parts of Scotland, whose heart the Lord in a remarkable way touched, 
and after his converfion, as he fpoke to many of his chrifitan friends, was 
in fuch a frame, fo affected with a new world wherein he was entered, the 
discoveries of God, and of a life to come, that for fome months together 
he did scarce ever fleep, but was ftilf taken up in wondering, his life was 
very remarkable for tendernes, and near converfe with God in his walk,
and which was worthy to be noticed, one day after a sharp trial, having his
only son suddenly taken away by death, he retired alone for several hours,
and when he came forth did look so cheerfully that to those who asked him
the reason thereof, and wondered at the same in such a time, he told them
he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that to have it afterwards
renewed he would be content to lose a son every day. This one remark-
able passage I would set down, it had been long his burden the want of
memory that he could retain almost nothing of what he heard from the
word, and bitterly complaining thereof to worthy Mr. James English,
minifter of Daly, his counfell to him was, when he heard any truth which
he desired to remember to hold it up to the Lord, and desire him to keep
it for him, and give him it back according to his need, which accordingly
this blessed man did with much seriouness pradisc, and on his death bed,
to his minifter and divers Christians that were present, he did solemnly de-
clare how wonderfully the Lord had answered, and condescended to him in
that particular, for as they knew how much formerly it had been his bur-
den the want of memory, now the Lord had given him back all these truths
that he had put in his keeping, so that what for many years before he had
heard, was now most clearly brought to his remembrance, which he wit-
nessed by repeating many particular truths, and notes of sermons which
at such times he had heard.

Now to shut up this, we have truly cause to say even from late experience,
since this dark night came upon the church in these nations, with so sharp a
storm of persecution, there hath not wanted some very signal and convincing
providences witnessing the Lord’s appearance for his people, and against their
enemies, which are worthy of a remark, and may let men see that there is
one higher than the highest, who ruleth in the kingdoms of the children of
men, for it is manifest.

1. How eminently the Lord did appear in breaking that party who had
been the great instruments both in counsel and action, to break the govern-
ment of the church of Christ in this land, and lay so much of his vineyard
waste and defolate, and this in the height of their power and greatness, whilست
they seemed most firmly rooted. O how evident was a divine hand there,
that this cabal who made it their great work to raise up prelacy and oppress
the poor church, and like a violent tempest did carry all before them in a
moment, when they could have least expected, should be made to fall, yea,
in so short a time be turned out of their places and offices, who but a little
before had turned out so many of the faithful ministers of Christ; and that
great man, who put forth his power and authority, so much to turn many
of the godly of the Land both ministers and others, out of their houses and
families, tossing them from place to place, should thus be dealt with from
the Lord, and recomposed with that measure, being forced to quit his lodg-
ing once and again, yea, even to banish himself out of the country, who had
been the chief instrument to banish some of the most choice servants of Christ,
and this stroke also made to try them from that hand whence they could have
least expected, whose interest they studied to promote in opposition to Gods;
I should desire to study sobriety, and fear in application of the judgments of
God, but when the Lord doth so clearly reveal himself and shew forth such
an evident resemblance, between men and their stroke, I think it cries aloud
for a serious observing thereof.

2. Should we pass without a remark, so solemn a witness from the
Lord of his respect to his peoples sufferings in this late time? for it is known,
with what marvelous resolution and chearfulness, these have been carried
through, who were called forth to restit unto the blood in their adherence to
the
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the truth; witnessing to the conviction of on-lookers even their greatest en-
emies, something above Roman gallantry, yea, something above nature in that
slavedness and elevation of their spirits, and as some of all ranks in the land
the Lord would have brought forth to seal and witness his truth, and the
work of reformation, so it hath been also clear, that none wanted a large
measure of support and strength for the trial, their suffering still giving a
further dath to their adversaries.

3. It is also manifest, and may be truly matter of wonder, by what a mar-
vellous providence so many suffering and defolate families have been carried
through without any obvious noise of their traits, now for these divers years,
with such convincing cheerfulness, yea, the experience of many made to wit-
ness that they never less knew a trait, than since they were put from the or-
dinary means of their support, and others who have been more sharply tried,
could not reckon any such plunging trait and difficulty, but have also found
out-gate by some remarkable providence tried, I am very sure amongst other
advantages yet of these times, this shall be one, a large registre of experience,
and remarkable confirmations of the truth of the word and promise, which
the godly have had under this sharp trial, that will be sweet matter for an after
reckoning, and a greater gain than any loses their former sufferings did occa-
Sion, yea, have we not seen, what in an ordinary way looked as irrecover-
able, a stroke which a generation could not have made up, hath been a means
the Lord hath chose to promote his glory, and thereby declare himself to
be God, hath he not made us see, how ealy it is for him to turn the sharpest
storm to the great advantage of his church, that he can act in desperate cafes,
above the skill both of angels and men, and truly though we should be
brought yet more low even to the place of dragons, this may uphold the flak-
ing hearts of his people, and be solid ground of confidence, that Christ's
power and faithfulnes is this day engaged for his church and truth, he must en-
creafe his kingdom is upon the rising hand, and shall yet have a more glo-
rious appearance in the world, what ever become of instrumets, the reviving
of his work is not in the reverence of men; and since we know the Lord
hath solemnly declared war against Antichrift, and all who will oppose the
spreading of the gospel in these last times, yea, hath past his word to the
church, for the fall and ruin of that adversary, fall he must, though the dust
of the church should arise for that end, and it is sure prelacy must also wither,
that hath its life and sap from that accursed root; they have this day a desperate
caufe in hand, who do engage their power to support the throne of the batst,
for they run in the way of the wrath and vengeance of the Lord, and shall sure-
ly involve themselves in that ruin; tho' they were the greatest princes of the
court. I shall only add, we have much ground in these times to believe that the
Lord shall yet appear, and make himself known in the earth, by so great and
convincing providences both of judgment and mercy, as in any former ages,
and thus vindicate his glory, and refute the atheism of this generation, by such
an argument as shall force iniquity to flop its mouth.

Now since this is sure, which none can get denied if they will but allow some
terious thoughts there anent, that the scripture fallest not to the ground, for God's
way is perfect and his word is tried, Ps. xcviii. 3. O is it not also sure, and a con-
clusion well grounded that he is a buckler to those who trust in him, none need
care to venture his interests through time on the word, yea, if there could be any
thing greater than a heaven, or eternal salvation, the testimony of the God of
truth might be sufficient security for the same; it is a small matter how this
world doth reel and stagger, or what be the changes of outward things, that is
enough, the promises of the word shall certainly take place, and the expectation
of the saints shall not make them ashamed.
APPENDIX.

It is sure the demonstration of divine truth, held forth in the scripture, is the greatest discovery, that ever came to the sons of men; which with a more excellent light, and greater lustr, doth enlighten these parts of the earth, on which it shines, than the sun, in its noontide brightness; this is the word of life, even the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, which most of the world do not understand; but flee from the same, as their plague and torment; but hereby the followers of God, know they are of the truth, and do allure their heart before him; it should be matter of astonishment, if thus the scripture were not confirmed, to see what rage the breaking up of this light caueth amongst men, which now in the present time does in a strange manner appear, not against some particular truth only, and the uppermost boughs, but by a remarkable auffaut, seems to strike at the root, the very being of truth and godliness: it may be said, whilst superstition in times of greater ignorance, did overcloud and darken the visible church, atheism hath taken up its room, to wear this generation out, from under the awe of God, and weaken their allent to the truth; for we see men every where making it their work, to load his way with reproach, and put discredit on his faithfulness who is the God of truth; as a witness thereto is this small essay directed, and now again comes forth to the world, with an enlargement; which I may say, was not intended, if there had not been a pressing motive, from the uncorrectness of the first impression, and for this, I shall make no further apology: but if a subject of so great an import, suffer no prejudice from such an unfit pen, the favourable testimony of men, or their cenfures, I should desire to look on (as they are indeed) at a distance and far below that solid peace of the soul, which in the acception of God, is alone to be found: what access it may have to many of this generation, I know not, who are taking all advantage to strengthen their prejudice at the truth, and unfettle others therein; it is like such may pass their judgment thereon at the first look, and throw it aside. But as a minister of Jesus Christ, who believes an appearing before the judge, and would desire mercy to be found faithful in that day, being prefixed in some measure upon the horrid appearance of the atheism and blasphemy of the time, with that avowed indifferency, now within the visible church, in these great interests of religion, and godliness, I lay this witness to the truth at their door; and shall here offer a few thoughts further on this subject, in some clear Inferences, from that great truth of the verification of the scripture.

Inference I. Which we may see clear, is this, The great advantage a Christian hath for his establishment; that his security is indeed greater than his interest, or any thing he hath to adventure thereon; and sure, that is not small; since the matter is of no less earnest, besides his concernments through time, than an eternity, a heaven, or the hazard of hell for ever. This must...
require a solid, and sure foundation, yea we may judge the furthest degree of certainty, where the superstructure is so great; for it is not opinion, or a probable conjecture, can be a suitable basis, to bear up that weight; but here, to answer such an interest, and give through quiet and repose to the soul, we have the truth, and testimony of God, with this great witness thereto, that it assuredly takes place, and not one syllable falls to the ground, without an evident performance. There are two things which, I am sure, men could not, with such ordinary thoughts consider, yea think thereon, without amazement, if they made it not their choice, to keep at a distance: One is, *That such a thing is in the world this day as the very word of God, that is more sure, than an audible voice from heaven, to declare his whole counsel, and hold forth unto men the true way up towards that country; and does thus marvelously discover it self.* 1. To come so low down, even his word and testimony which speaks from heaven, that therewith it hath a solemn appeal to mens sense and feeling anent its certainty. 2. Which commends it self upon the nearest approach, and found the more valuable and of the greater price, the more it is searched into by an inquiry. 3. That though clear and plain in it self, yet by a supernatural light and evidence can only be known, which no human sagacity nor reason in its highest elevation, without this can reach; but riseth far above the greatest capacity, and enduements, of which by nature, the most excellent spirits of men can boast. In a word, when once it shines in upon the soul, does then discernibly stamp the very same image thereon, and begets such a marvelous likeness betwixt them, as may show the world this is a living thing. But there is a second, we may also consider with astonishment how great it is, *To be a christian, and of what marvelous import that is.* I suppose there were but one or two such, to be found in the World, who were certainly known to be partakers of the divine nature, to have a real converse with God, and by experience with the word; might not the report thereof give men a strange alarm? yea put them upon an impatient search and inquiry, to know if this be sure, and what such a discovery means: O is it small to be the son of a king! but the hope and claim of a christian riseth higher, and hath another reach, that such within a short time, whilst now in so mean a garb, shall be aurally entered into glory, in the immediate enjoyment of God, and of the fulness of joy among that triumphant society of the angels, the prophets, and apostles, and all these who are before the throne, washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb, and thus continue through the ages of eternity; yea in that very instant of the souls quitting the body, must admit so great a change, and enter there, where heaven only can make us know what heaven is; it is such a strange steep men are in, who in such concernment, are not awakened to a further inquiry: It were well if some would but allow reason its true use, whilst they travel betwixt the Poles, and can adventure to the furthest parts of the earth to pursue that, which they must so shortly forego: to judge seriously and bring the thoughts of this near, what a greater interest and at a more easy rate, and of an unexpreffibly greater value, than that gold and treasure which ever came from the Indies, does offer it self, I say the profefl atheifin of some gives not more cause of wonder, than the strange stupidity of others, and that common and easy way men have in giving an allent to divine truth: I do not mean from the want of evidence and perfpicuity, but because of the greatness of the things here held forth; this was not so strange, that we find two of the disciples of Christ at a stand, from joy and wondering, to credit his resurrection, even whilst they saw it verified; so great was this in their eyes. Now as to this I must further point at two or three things, which seriously consider-
ed, may seem a strange contradiction to reason. 1. How men can find a pillow to rest on, who certainly know their breath, for these few hours in the night, is not made sure; but if by a sudden arrest of death it should be short, which is no strange thing in the world, they know not what is next; but every night, sleeps at an adventure of being, or the next day, in an irrecoverable loft estate, yea is not here cause of wonder, that whilst we see time make such swift dispatch, dying men can be in that meaure estranged from the thoughts of death, who so oft may hear it found, and the bell ringing for others, yea by previous assaults discern its approach on themselves, which once come, then man goes off the stage, to return no more, nor shall he for all the ages of eternity ever act that scene of life, here over again. 2. How strange it is that the supposal of the truth and certainty of the scripture, that such a thing may be, does not more alarm men, and mar their quiet; or that they can so much as think of an eternal estate without trembling, whilst they are at no solid determination in such a matter; yea when the scripture of God does not only witness a heaven and immortality, but shews the world, there is such a thing as the first fruits, and earnest of it, whereof men here may be fully assured. I would know, if such an atheift is to be found, that puts the atheift beyond fear and doubting, even in his most professed confidence, and scoffing at the truth, or can sufficiently save that heart aking, and continued hesitation he is under, that such a thing may be true. 3. I shall add it is matter of wonder men should admit the report and attestation of others, anent the truth and reality of godliness, who yet live strangers to it in themselves, yea should be at some toil and pains, and come a length to be almost christians, without pursuif this in greater earnest.

Inference II. Which from the scriptures accomplishment is clear, is this, That there is a special debt on each christian, on whose soul the truth and faithfulness of God is sealed, to give in his seal thereto, and bear witness, that God is true. Thus is there a mutual sealing, which is undeniably clear, you see 2 Cor. i. 22. the Lord's putting his seal, which by all his people is well known; and have you not also, John iii. 33. the christian's seal and witness most expressly held out and call'd for. This is indeed a duty, in which, we may say, the meanest of the saints wants not his part, who hath that witness within himself, whereby he knows the certainty of the words of truth, which is a great thing, that such, on solid ground, can say he does not more clearly see the truth written in the Bible before him, than he knows and can read, but by another character, and engraving, this within him, though none else can read the same, but he who hath it. I know there is a debt to the leaf scripture truth, which these who profess the same do owe, when a witness and confession is call'd for, and hath thus pecifical access, in a sufferings time, to set his seal by a clofs adherence thereto. But we must say, this is something else, that concerns the confirmed christian, a peculiar debt he owes to the truth and faithfulness of his God (which his soul knows well, and hath had oft confirmed) to give unto him the glory of his faithfulness. We find David, Psalm lxxxix. 1. thus speak, as one prefixed upon such a duty; and though some have a more special call and greater advantage to this than others, yet we may say, the confirming, and sealing of the truth, is like a great and publick treasure, wherein the meanest christian wants not access to cast in his mite. Now for further clearing this, what the christian's seal and attestation of the truth means, and what access or advantage he hath for acquiring himself of such a debt, I would point a little at, in these few particulars.

First, It is clear, that he who believes and receives the testimony of Jesus Christ, does thus set to his seal, that he is true, and subscribes as it were the truth
truth and doctrine of the gospel, *John* iii. 33. 2. it is also clear, the shewing forth of the power of godliness, and the virtues of him who hath called him, is through the tract of a christian's life, a living and visible witness thereto. 3. We may judge the converted man upon that new and marvelous discovery, he hath got of the truth upon his first entering into a christian state, when he hath paft that great step, and as one come into an other world, hath then a special call and advantage for such a duty, that if it were asked, what is the first service such owes to the truth? Is it not even this to commend by seal and testimony to others, what God hath so marvelously commended to his soul? And thus needs not want accesso to let the world know, who may wonder at such a change, that though once he was blind, he does now see, and assuredly knows the truth is the power of God to salvation, which he no more believes upon the report and testimony of others, since now he sees it with his own eyes. He then is to answer that call, *Luke* xxii. *When you are converted strengthen your brethren*. 4. When a christian is confirmed, upon some remarkable faint and staggering, and hath got a new seal of the faithfulnes of God, is he not under some new debts, to restore with advantage what he had taken from the credit of the truth, and give that good report and witness thereunto, which may obviate any reflection he might have caufed by his faint? Sure it is the christian's testimony hath then this special advantage, to confirm others in the way of the Lord, that his former fears and shakings have been so discernible; thus we see Hezekiah after such a remarkable plague and fainting, comes in with his witnesses, *Isa.* xxxviii. 15. *What shall I say, he hath both spoken, and himself also hath done it,* &c. And *David, Psal.* xxi. 22. How concerned was he in such a duty, *I said I am cast out of thy sight, yet thou heardst the voice of my supplication*. 5. When we see Athem much abound, and hath a publick appearance, when it is not a particular truth, but the truth and faithfulnes of God is challenged, we may judge, it then calls, and calls aloud, to the godly man for his appearance, even by some more obvious testimony, than at other times to fo great an interest; sure it is, when the lot of a christian is in such a time cast, and amongst a generation of mockers, he will not want accesso, and a special call, by a christianly grave and prudent witnesses, to own the truth, as that which he is obliged to seal, though there were none else; yea, we may think, this should be a call and incitemment, where zeal for Jesus Christ hath got a command over his soul, as might burst his tongue string, which before were tyed, when the faithfulnes of his God, which he so oft hath proven, is by men brought in question, which to *David*, was like a sword that thrust him through, and an upcast he could not bear, when they said unto him, *where is your God?* 6. Upon the close of some sharp and remarkable trial, when the christian after a storm comes safe to land, such a new discovery he hath of the truth and faithfulnes of God, lays then a new debt on him, to bear witness thereto. Is he not thus concerned not to leave the cross of Jesus Christ at a lost, which hath left him at so great an advantage, or part therewith, without such a testimony, that may endear the way of the Lord to others: Thus afflicted *Job*, after a long continued storm, comes in the close to pay the truth's rent by his seal and testimony thereto, *Job* xlii. *I have heard of thee,* &c. I hope this debt in a large measure, shall be yet found on many of this generation, when this storm is over to press their spirits for bearing such a testimony, that they thrust not when he led them through the defects, but have oft there been surprized with his immediate help to astonishment, *Isaiah* xviii. 21. 7. Is not the experience of a christian, and these grave remarks he hath of the faithfulnes of God, a special truth put in his hand, and a piece of his talent, that calls
calls for his seal, as a rent—which such owe to the truth, and should have
some further reach, than his own personal establishment. I must say as to this,
none of the saints want their peculiar engagements, which they may judge are
upon them even beyond others; yet, such singular confirmation they have
had of the way of the Lord, and oft with these astonishing circumstances,
that to sinther without some gain and advantage thence paid in to the
truth, might be reckoned a sleight from the generation. We may judge
such a thing pres'd David's soul for a vent, Psal. lxvi. 16. and truly some-
thing of this practice, managed with humble prudence, in a grave intercourse
and communication of some special confirmations of the truth, were a choice
improvement of christian society and fellowship, I confess to manage this well,
seems one of the most difficult pieces of duty a christian owes to others, and
I humbly judge may be mistaken in its chief end, by too much dwelling
sometimes on the cares of a christian, and debating these, to which their
light and judgment may give more arise than a present pressure and weight
of the same; the multiplying of which I have oft looked on as a darkning
the solid and plain way of godliness, and making it perplex and thorny,
which lies in little bounds, when well understood: but we see, what a special
improvement of christian fellowship is held forth, Mal. iii. 16. for their mu-
tual joy and establishment in the truth, in a time when it was in question, what
advantage there is to serve the Lord? I should wish so excellent a mean were
more directed to this end: Nor should this mar such a duty that there may be
an empty show and counterfeit of that also, and the shallowest brooks some-
time make the greatest noise.

8. Here is a special call for the christian's
seal and witneps to the truth, under some remarkable exigence and strait,
whilst through'd with manifold temptations, then is he concerned by his ap-
ppearance, to shew forth the faithfulness of God, and his testimony thereto,
that may let others know, who in such times will be great observers of his
way, that he is satisfied with God, and with the security of his word to
rest on, when he hath no resting place elsewhere; that he thinks not his
burden too great to roll over on the promise; but hath this to say in behalf
of the truth, perfected but not forsaken; cast down, yet not destroyed.
You may see the apostle paying such a debt on this account, having nothing
I possess all things, 2 Cor. vi. 10. lastly, I must say, a call to this duty,
waits the christian, in a special manner, at the close of his day, then, O then,
is he concerned to acquit himself of that debt, by commending the way of the
Lord, and confirming others therein. Would it not be a choice appendix to
the Testament, and latter will of a dying christian, to seal with his breath
the faithfulness of God, and then when his words are of more weight than at
other times, bear this witness, that through the various steps of his life, he
knows God is true, and hitherto hath helped. It is sure the present day hath
its duty, and each remarkable time of ones life, hath some proper work:
But this I must say seems to fall in, as the last service of a dying christian to
this generation, to deliver the truth off his hand which he had received and
off proved, with his seal and testimony thereto: this were to bequeath a
choice legacy to others.

It is not here understood, that particular rules can be given for the practice
of this duty, but christian wisdom is profitable to direct, as occasion offers, and
the present cafe circumstantiates; but sure it is, each christian is thus a witness,
and as it were judicially fitted in behalf of that attribute of the faithfulness of
God, to attest by his seal as a confirmatory sign thereof, that God is true; and
as there is an implicit seal by believing, there is something more explicit than
called for, in times which seem to evacuate the promise, when the reality of

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God:
godliness is so expressly impugned by the adversary as fanaticism; and these things I shall further add; 1. That through the whole scripture, we see in frequent instances, how much the saints have been thus taken up, and in these times of the church, when there was not such access an other way, to keep up a remembrance of the faithfulness of God, and transmit a testimony there-to, we find a pillar and stone of witness erected, as 1 Sam. vii. 12. 2. Thus hath the christian access, in the returns of thankfulness to God, no mercy being so small, on which his faithfulness is not engraven, as we find David often, and Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10, and sure it is, the discovery of this to an observing christian, hath sometimes a greater joy and satisfaction therewith, than the mercy in which it appears; I must say, it is a great want in that excellent duty when some testimony to the faithfulness of God is not carried on therewith. 3. Hath not the christian an occasional call thereto, when ever this lies in his way to speak to its credit, and bear his witness? We may see the truth and faithfulness of God came never David's way, but we find him speak honourably thereof, from the sense of his peculiar engagements. 4. There is no piece of a christian's sufferings stated on a particular truth, but a confession is therewith called for, of the faithfulness of God; thus to bear witness before the world, that he does not offend nor is ashamed of the cross of Christ, because he knows whom he hath believed; whilst others by choosing sin, rather than affliction, do what in them lieth to make God a liar.

Inference III. From the scriptures accomplishment is, That as there is a personal debt on the christian, there is a publick debt also on the church, and a special trust reposed on every age thereof to seal the truth, and deliver that great interest off its hand, to the ages to come, with a witness to the faithfulness of God. The scripture herein is clear, yea, we have it in an express prophesy held forth, Psal. cxlv. 4, 5, 6. that one generation in a continued series, should seal the truth to another, and thus carry forward a witness to the same. For each time hath some peculiar rent, which it should pay to the posterity, from a new addition of the great and remarkable works of the Lord; and it is sure, the greater things he hath witnessed, by his more eminent appearance for the church, in one age beyond another, does add to this debt, and puts some further engagements upon it, to record and transmit the works of the Lord, and the memory of his goodness to after times. Now with respect to this grave truth, I would offer a few particulars (which, this day we may sadly regrate, are so much wanting) wherein something of this debt, that one age of the church owes to another, in behalf to the truth, may appear.

1. It may be judged a debt on the church to the posterity, to pursue that great interest of the truth by an adding further, or confirming of the faith of the saints therein from that discovery, and peculiar advantages the present time affords; and thus effectually endeavour to advance the repute and credit of the truth, on solid demonstrative grounds of its certainty. This hath the greater call, when it is so much the work of the time, and of not a few labouring therein to shake and unsettle men, as to this great foundation, yea, so much written that hath a visible tendency to this end. One thing particularly should be wished, that the publick records of every age as they concern the church did carry therewith more clearly, some history of the verification of the truth, by transmitting these great and conspicuous remarks of the way of God with the church to the posterity, by which the scripture then hath been signally confirmed: thus should one age declare its faithfulness to the next, which were a choice piece of service, being gravely, and with caution managed. 2. This debt doth the church owe to the posterity, with re-
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spect to the truth, to endeavour its transmitting purely, and without hurt and prejudice; for it is to the church the oracles of God are committed, and for that great truth, must she in every time be responsible: but as to this, I must say, that piece of truth of God, which is more sharply assaulted, and hath endured greatest opposition from the adverse party, makes this debt the greater, to deliver that off her hand, with all care and circumspection, yea, it is a duty lies at each christian's door, when called to give a confession of the same; but as no private appearance can answer to a publick record and monument, it is thence clear in a time of great incoachment on the truth, when a remarkable breach is like to be made, and the assault not from a private adversary, but a publick formidable combination of a party, some more solemn authoritative, and unire concurrence is then called for, in the church's testimony, for her exoneration, that with such an advantage, may witness to the ages to come, whereat their fathers left, how they held out and wrestled to keep their ground in defence of the gospel; this we may say, is like the casting up of a bank, to guard against a further breach, when the enemy comes in like a flood: and it is known the confessions of the church in every age, with such a publick testimony to the truth, whilst followed with visible hazard and suffering, have been more effectually subservient to the truth's conservacion, than all the disputes of men; this did they overcome, Rev. xii. 7. by the blood of the lamb, and the word of their testimony. 3. This special debt also is upon the church, with a respect to the posterity, to contend for the truth once delivered to the saints, and but once, since it can admit no change or alteration to the second coming of the Lord. O how blessed a debate and strife this is, though in such an interest refitting to the blood should be called for. But whilst I mention this duty, it cannot be underlood, with respect to that great interest of religion only, or the weightier matters of the law, that are more fundamental, whilst under a professed zeal to thefe, a latitude and indifference in other concerns of the truth is sheltered. It is indeed strange, though no strange thing in this time. But let me ask, can a piece of truth held forth in the scripture, be of that low value, to warrant the quitting or yielding up of it when brought in debate, when one line of this is of more ineffimable worth, than the crowns and scepters of all the monarchs of the earth? Sure it is, the God of truth hath prized it at another rate, who declares heaven and earth should rather fall, than one title of his word perish; and can these in greater things be faithful, who are not thus in a little? It is too clearly seen, how small an yielding makes a great breach. Truths comparatively small, may be great in their season, when they are the word of his patience; yea, we may say the leffer it seems, and of mean value with many, it makes the christian's adherence thereto a greater testimony. It is clear, what a clogs concatenation there is amongst the truths of God, held forth in the scripture that one part thereof cannot be reached, without a special prejudice to the whole; yea, it may be said, every corruption of the truth hath an aim at the very soul of religion, by a direct tendency thereto. 4. It is a great duty the church owes the posterity, for which this day, there seems a more than ordinary call to study the transmitting of truth and godliness, not in a naked form only, but in the life and power thereof. Sure it is now too obvious, which gives ground both for grief and astonished, that through a large part of the reformed church, and in these places, where sometime the truth hath brightly shined with much light and warmth; yea, where religion in its purity, is yet professedly countenanced, and the worship of God owned, even there we may see the power and spirituality of this, is a strange and unknown thing, that by many within the church, and of some repute therein,
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therein, it might be questioned, is there indeed a Holy Ghost, and an inward teaching of the spirit, which by its working and efficacious influences, is known upon the soul? Or, is there such a thing as real fellowship and converse with God, in the secret, and more publick duties of a christian, that is assuredly found? Oh what cause is there to fear the shadow and form be quickly gone, when the power thereof, is so great a mystery. I know it is a fore challenge, and may seem strange to some. I do here profess it is not to reflect on any place, or particular church by another. But we may say this want and decay is too great and universal to be hid; and now the tide seems so far spent and gone back, yea, small appearance of its return, and the church of Christ at that pass, that if the faithfulness of God were not surety, which stands good for all, we might upon ordinary appearance judge nothing else is left, but now to your tents every man, that each one should shift for himself, and give over the church: but sure I am (I bless the Lord without debate in this matter) upon a better warrant than appearance, our safety is this day to keep by the vessel, and not part interest with an afflicted and almost sinking church; a publick spirit may yet be found the choicest way to secure a private interest. Oh! what do we see? is not almost everywhere men hands upon their loyns, and so little inquiry, in that extreme exigence, what piece of duty can yet be essayed, to get religion up again, which now is at so fore a backfeet: we might hope a great out-coming should be where little is expected, even upon a small tilting of duty. Some things, I am sure, are to be wished, that would be of singular use to promote this interest, which I shall very briefly point at.

First, It should be wished this great mean of prayer, yet left to the church, were with more singleness and fervency improved, both by the christian alone, and in converse with others. This is well known in the most dark and dismal times of her condition, what marvelous help it hath brought at a choke, when it hath seem'd in some manner ultimus conatus Ecclesiae, and all other things gone. O a spirit of prayer, what advantage hath remarkably followed upon this, to fetch the wind, yea to get the vessel as it were afloat when it hath been a low ebb with the church, to hasten her delivery; and in the mean time keep her wounds bleeding, before the Lord; we may say, thus hath the meanest of the saints access to do a great piece of service, even to the church universal, and the recovery again of the power of godliness, that is now so far gone.

2. With respect to this, it is to be wished, that a greater correspondence through the reformed churches were more effectually pursued, to know others case, what eminent hazard appears to the truth, or fore trial and assault some particular church may have beyond others, for witnessing mutual sympathy, for communication of counsels, the obviating prejudices and mistakes, a grave incitement and upifting of others, to the duty of the time, and thus a further concurrence endeavoured, in promoting the great interest of the gospel. Oh sad, that since the Reformation brake up, how little of this hath been practised, but now much more gone, that except by ordinary travellers, or sometime publick Gazets the great concerns of the neighbouring churches, and the more remarkable occurrences of providence therein are but little known. I should account it a token for good, if something of a publick spirit, with respect to such a mean, did more appear. We know not what advantage might follow this essay.

3. This should be wished, and might be a notable and useful help, yea of no great difficulty, now whilst there is such plodding in religion, by airy notions, as if that great interest were the essay of men's wit and invention, to study the turning over of some of our choice English pieces, in other languages, which do most nervously hold forth the truth of godliness, both in its simplicity, and in the life and
and power thereof. Such as are most fit to put men on another scent, for bringing the naked speculation of truth down to that more near feeling, and absolutely necessary soul-conversion therewith; yea such as with greatest clearness, might dew the world something of the ineflimable advantage of that excellent study, how well godliness suits, and is a singular help in every calling and condition of men, to make their way easy and pleasant, amidst the plunges of their life: but especially, that may hold forth the indispensible necessity thereof. It is sad to think in what a measure excellent holiness is wounded, and darkened by so great a cloud of prejudice, almost through the reformed church, which is much pretended, upon the extravagance and unsuitable practice of many professing the same, and yet so little care to obviate and prevent this.

4. I must further add what, I am sure, is to be wished, when so small ground seems of hope therein, and calls now for much prayer, to see a spiritual and faithful ministry, given to the church, of whom it might be said, these are the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, with their master's authority impressed on them; who in earnest do travel in birth, to have Christ formed in their hearts, and preach with a feeling of that they speak, to themselves, as well as to others, such who truly watch for men's souls, with an awful impression of that, left their blood be required at their hands. How great a blessing should this be to a decayed church, and what a ground of hope were it of a recovery, for it's seen and clearly witnessed, that connection which is between the church's cafe, and ministry thereof. Was it not seen at the breaking up of the gospel, and the marvelous success it had in the beginning of the reformation after that long darkness under antichrist, his reign, how choice and excellent a ministry was then sent forth; yea what a remarkable confederation of great lights did appear, who did both burn and shine in their time. Oh! these are gone, and but a few comparatively with that time of such a spirit to be found: but this sad remark we cannot shun, that the greatest plague the christian world and much of the reformed church, this day, is under, is from the watchmen, by whom the truth, in its power hath been more wounded, than by its most professed adversaries. I know there wants not such a horrid party in this time, who take advantage to reflect on and decry that excellent office and appointment of Jesus Christ for his church, because of the abuse thereof, whom I dare not from the awe of God, answer in their dialect which is only razing, and is all their strength; but the Lord rebuke that evil spirit now abroad in the world. Whilst I speak to that great advantage the church and the power of religion hath by a faithful ministry; I must further add this, as a debt the present generation owes to the posterity, to witness a particular care and respect to such who are looking forth with some aim to this great calling, that in so fadning a day these might be encouraged and stirred up (I mean where there is some promising appearance) to follow their look and not faint when difficulties seem to grow in their way, and the fickle now taken out of the hand of many faithful labourers, but especially for their taking alongs, with other studies that more excellent study, sanctification, which is so indispensably necessary to make able ministers of the New Testament. Sure these have now a special advantage to witness their love and respect to Jesus Christ, who keeps their face that way forward, when there seems no other incitement but the service of such a matter, they may have mean appearance and at this day conflict with many difficulties, on whom great service may yet wait for the church of Christ.

Inference IV. It is a duty of special use with respect to a right understanding and diflinct uptaking of the fulfilling of the scripture, To discern the times and enquire seriously there-anent; since it is clear, that in particular ages and pe-
riods of time, the scripture must take place, and the prophecies thereof which relate to each period of time have their particular and exact accomplishment therein. It is sure this can be no matter of debate that such a duty is called for, in so dark an hour upon the church, yea the greater the darkness grows, it seems to have a more profiling call; when we see the clouds gathering, that they are like to cover the face of the skies; the church universal so sore be-nighted, that she hath almost lost her way amidst these mists and among the multitude of these by-paths, for then it is not only incumbent on the publick watchmen, but we may say, concerns the godly where to be on this account seers, to know the time, and what Israel ought to do: sure it is, no chriitian wants his watch tower, where he may get up, by a near converse with God in the scripture, and thence as from a great height to consider the present time, yea have a clear view of the most strange, perplexing occurrences thereof, how amidst these, his work about the church, keeps its way, and moves still forward, without losing of ground; and his truth does convincingly take place. Now with respect to this, I shall here offer some thoughts, what in so necessary a duty, concerns the godly; and calls for their serious enquiry, for a right discovery and understanding of the time, and shall shortly touch it in a few particulars.

First, It is of great import to know from the scripture, what of the night it is, how far it seems to be spent, and now in what watch thereof the church is fallen, as to her present state; for thus we might know to what period of her condition, these great and remarkable things which fall out in the world do relate; this, I conceive, should be a perplex business, if the appearance of things were our guide, and wanted that blessed conduct of the written word, when the church's way seems involved in so strange a labyrinth; one thing is sure, that the Lord hath founded Zion, and is now building her up: which marvelous work cannot halt, but in all ages is in a continued progress, wherein the great builder doth lose no time; and from the scripture these things seem clear and manifest.

1. That as the whole election must obtain, so now are there a great many of that elect church already entered into a triumphant condition and are now got safe on shore, there is this day a great and innumerable company of all Nations, Tongues and Languages, who were of old committed to the Mediator's trust, and to be brought forth under the times of the New Testament, perfected and before the throne, after whom the gospel did follow, and made many a long step to bring in from the furthest corners of the earth. 2. This also is clear, that the church militant hath now paft, and is gone through, that long continued, and most dismal trial, which under the times of the gospel, until the close of time was to go over her head, even that fore bondage from antichrist and under his reign, it is true this adversary does not cease, nor give over the quarrel, for he wants not wrath, when his power is abated; and this day we see him in a great stir, to have up that accrued interest and set it in its own place, that hath so remarkably been brought down and begun to fall before the gospel: but a step further of that judgment (which astutely is not sleeping) will end the business; however this is now manifest, that the winter is past, and the church's spring begun, yea in a large measure advanced, whose growth and tender blossome, the cold, nor storm, cannot blast, but must be subservient thereto, and hasten the summer's approach.

3. Upon this enquiry, where the church now is, and in what, or what manner of time, her present state seems to fall, I think there are clear and convincing symptoms by which some notable crisis, in her condition may be discerned, that after many conflicts, and fore wrestling since her victory begun

over
over Antichrift, this time of the church seems to fall under that more remarkable assault, which may be looked for from this adversary, before the pouring out of the fifth vial on his throne and seat; which as the preludium of so great a victory, may in some proportion thereto, be more dreadful and sharp for a time than any we have seen: Thimbly judge the scripture points clearly at this, which shews the wrestling condition of the church, and a war continued betwixt Antichrift and the Lamb, even in his falling state, Rev. xvii. 14. until that last decision (which is made sure in the church's favour) put him off the field, For the Lamb shall overcome, and they who are on his side, who are called chosen and faithful, and since it is thus, that the church's interest is advanced, by the renewed assaults of that adversary, should it be strange that the several steps of her rising, have some conflict and opposition proportioned thereto? must she not be in pain and labour, as a woman in travel for her bringing forth, yea, do not the sharpest showers both before, and after the delivery? for this doth the scripture witness, which is written for the ages to come, Micah. iv. 13. Be in pain, O daughter of Zion, and go forth unto Babylon, for there shalt thou be delivered: I must judge so formidable an approach of Antichrift this day, and the advantage he seems to have, with these foretranglings of the church of Christ, as in an extreme betwixt life and death, do more promise than threaten; and are a hopeful preface of a further enlargement, and the bringing forth some great and important truth in its season to a performance, yea, have a direct tendency under the wonderful conduct of the blessed disposers of these things, to help forward such a mercy.

4. This we may know from the scripture, though now it seem a contradiction both to sense and reason, that the church's interest is on a present advance, and at this day on the prevailing hand: It is true under all the changes of her condition, and through the whole time of the New Testament, this truth must be made out, Job. iii. 30. that Jesus Christ in his kingdom must increase, even when choicecft instruments wear out, and to appearance in a most languishing decay; that interest doth then flourish as the palm-tree, the more it is defjualied, nor hath the church bounds set to its continued increase, until it once come to the perfect day when the kingdom shall be delivered up to the father, and all powers subdued, and brought under the Mediator's feet; but this rise and increase of the church, which is here understood on the falling of antichrift, I must say, hath a further reach, and is in a more eminent conspicuous way pointed at in the scripture, as that which waits on a more solemn and remarkable period of the church's state: it is true such hours may fall in, with some sad intervals, in which success and all advantage appears on the adversaries side; for thus we find the scripture point forth Antichrist's ruin, and the progress of his judgment and downfall calling in the various steps thereof, with a special resemblance to the Lord's way with Pharaoh, of whom he appears to have been a type, such judicial strokes of induration on both, a gradual procedure by one plague after another, with the same effect and product, to give the church a new assault, on any favourable interval; until the great God make his power known as once he did at the Red Sea. For there we may say, did the Lord first found a national church, with a special type of the great works and deliverances he would do for her in after times, and by this represent that marvelous stroke he is to bring on Antichrist. It is not strange to see the truth brought down to the grave, yea, as if it were buried, when even this thing by the over-ruuling providence of him, who maketh all things work together for her good, is turned to her advantage, and tends to her rising with a greater lustre and brightness; who could in an ordinary way judge, the reformed church, then upon an advance
in the French massacre, the catholick league there, and the Low Country persecution by Alva, yet these were an antecedent preparation to her further rise, which a little time made appear. 5. This further I shall add, as to the present time of the church, which from the scripture seems clear; that, that blessed much longed for, and glorious day of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (which as the last period of the full accomplishment of all that is written will once for all and for ever put a glorious close to the church's warfare, the soldier's sword and helmet shall then be laid aside, and give place to the victor's harp and crown, never to be laid down again) hasteth apace, O let him who writeth and him who readeth say, even so come Lord Jesus quickly. It is sure that God who hath appointed man his time, and with whom the number of his months and years are, hath set time its glass also, and bounded the duration of this world, that it cannot continue one minute more, and though the particular time falls not under our inquiry, which the majesty of God hath concealed from the angels; yet is this clear, there are things given of its near approach, which in their season will be discernible, though little noticed by the world, it being in such a lethargy, and men then so thronged with the cares of this life that these grave forewarnings will not roufe them up; but it is evident such signs are not given in vain, for there with the church hath a call to discern wisely what appearance there is of the approach of that day, yea, on such an account to lift up their head with a solemn congratulation; O what a marvelous truth is this, the serious thoughts of which, might give men a new subject for wonder each day, that the time is hastening, when the redeemer of the church shall appear in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire with an innumerable company of the angels, and now the dust of the faints hath not long to sleep, until they be awaked with that unspeakable sweet and ravishing sound of the last trumpet: faithful is he who hath promised, yea, for further assurance, we have a solemn oath there to, by him who lives for ever and ever; it is long since John gave this warning to the church, behold he cometh with clouds; and then did these primitive christians solace themselves on that ground; some few evidences of this day's approach, with a safe warrant from the scripture we may discern, which, as the blossoming of the spring doth witness the summer, is now near. 1. If the whole days of the gospel since that glorious triumph of the mediator in his suffering for the church, and his resurrection be upon the scriptures reckoning, the last times, we must then judge the night is far spent, and the day at hand. 2. If in the days of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God shall be finished, is not this clear that two ages are almost past since it begun to blow, under which the interest of the gospel hath a most remarkable advance. 3. If the last stroke and utter abolishing of Antichrist, shall be by the brightness of Christ's second coming, 2 Thes. ii. 8. is there not solid ground thence to judge this blessed day hasteth when his falling is so far advanced, it is sure we have seen his kingdom in a great measure darkened, his confounding and moul dring down by the breath of Christ's mouth in the preached gospel; and now wait in hope, for that more remarkable step of his judgment, which the scripture, I think, gives as a near sign of the coming of the Lord even such as the white skie, and morning brightness, is to the watchman of the days being near; and thus as we see the ruin and downfall of the man of sin advance, there seems to be a proportional ground of certainty, thence to conclude the near approach of the day of Christ's second coming.

Second particular, which in our discerning the time calls for a serious enquiry is this, What the present appearance and signs of the time seem to point at, for these as the body, are of special use to give a clear discovery of its temple.
temper and disposition, but this is a prognostication that goeth above the stars and all the rules of astrology, which the scripture only can make us know: I confess this day they seem sad, and every where look with a threatening aspect on the church, we see not now our signs, and these tokens for good, which sometimes have appeared: but there are prelages, if we could gravely look thereon, that might cause us with astonishment enquire, what can such things portend, and when will be the end of these wonders? Some few I shall briefly point at, which concern this time, that if we be not much asleep might be very routling, and make us regard the same with an awful and humbling impression, for they truly threaten; yet I must say with a reference to the scripture, and upon an inquiry into that unerring record anent their meaning, first that we have a safe warrant from them to conclude that whatever may befal a particular church, yet nothing thence can be concluded as demonstrative of a mortal prejudice to the church universal; for though this or that particular church may be cut off and 'trew'd out of his mouth (as many have and most of the particular churches may this day meditate terror if he spared not the natural branches take heed, lest he also spare not thee should found an alarm to each church, these very things with highly aggravating circumstances being too obvious and easy to be found with them for which he called others off) yet he must enclosure his kingdom, yea, when he seems to lose ground in one place of the world it is made up with advantage by the enlargement of the same in another place, and often out of the very ruins and dilipation of that church which he calls off, carries materials to build him an house elsewhere: in which case we are instead of a querulous saying, why is it thus? to adore and bless the glory of the Lord from his place, to justify his procedure and be glad that they to whom he was not spoked of shall see, and they who had not heard shall understand, secondly we may also say with the same warrant, that even a particular church which hath very death prefiguring symptoms, and scarce a token for good, can by him who healeth backslidings and loveth freely, be recovered, he can make dry bones to flourish as a green herb, for the illues from spiritual death belong to him, he can make them who had fallen from their first love repent and do the first works, whereby the departing of the glory and the removing of the candlestick out of his place shall be prevented. I am so much the more pricked to touch this a little, because the very few soriogs who are yet left or delivered from that spiritual topor and stupidity which hath feized on others, while they lay to heart the things which concern the kingdom of Jesus Christ, are upon the frightful aspect of affairs and on the consideration of what they observe in the temper of men and tendency of things, ready to call away all confidence, and abandon themselves to a simple defpondency, they almost question, whether they ought to entertain any hope that we shall any more be called by that blessed name Jehovah Shammah The Lord is there, seeing nothing appears at present in the disposition of men, or dispensation of God which doth not seem to portend a final departure. Notwithstanding whereof I would desire such to beware left in their heartlesnes they limit the holy one of Israel, and circumscribe the sovereignty of grace within its just latitude and limits, so for their establishment against such a despondency, and for their excitement to a serious wrestling with him in order to his above with us to consider these particulars.

First, We may call this one of the signs and prelages of the time, That the devil is now so much aloft, and in a strange way besirring himself against the church, to beget every where a prejudice at the truth, which this day by
very remarkable effects of his power, may be seen: 1. It is sure he is a bad neighbour, yet we must say he endangers the church most, when, because he makes no great noise, he his leaf discerned; his being apparently quiet and still hath been found in experience more fatal to the flourishing and real success of the gospel than his rage, and in his simulat flight more prevalent than in his more furious assaults, but we have the scripture to ask concerning this, which makes the clear.

1. That his appearing with great wrath shews his time to be short, and that it will be no continued or lying storm, Rev. xii.

2. We thence know, his being let loose with a more than usual liberty to trouble the church, is previous to some great and remarkable restraint; which you may read, Rev. xx. 7, 8. where he is in a more special way let loose, but we find, v. 10. his being chained up for ever follows. 3. We may clearly see from the scripture the devil much aloft, with a more remarkable flir and noise, when some great thing from the Lord is to be brought forth for the church. When the set time, that solemn and blessed time was now come of compleating by that one sacrifice for ever the work of redemption, so that this hour and power of darkness did introduce an everlasting sunshine upon the church, and Satan by pursuing the prince of life unto the death had a most fatal overthrow, for by death he overcame him who had the power of death that is the devil, and by being lifted up upon the crofs he spoiled principalities and powers triumphing openly over them, and thus dying sung the victory and laid, it is finishead, whereby a victory over all enemies is eternally assured to the saints: yea, is it not clear, what an hor alarm the church may expect from him, upon the approach of that great victory and the decision of the last battle betwixt Michael and the Dragon, see Rev. xx. 9. 10. what an appearance he will then have, and in what a manner will he befit himselt.

2. Is not this a present sign of the time, about which we may with some astonishment enquire what it doth mean, and if it hath any favourable aspect on the churches, that we see almost every where the most unite and formidable assailt of the adversaries of the truth, and its special aim at the kingy power and supremacy of the Mediator, as head over his church; at which great truth the opposition of this time seems most directly to be levelled, yea, we may say, the crown of Christ which becomes him alone to wear, and this piece of his glory is now betwixt antichrist, and the princes of the earth divided, each contending for his share: Sure this is too discernable, and at present the adversary seems to prevail, even to a bearing down and bringing under of that great intereft of our bleffed matter; but it is as sure there is no ground to fear this, being well understood, which is a most hopeful and promising sign to the church; for we must thus reason from the scripture, if Christ must reign until all his enemies be brought in subjection, it is then sure the greater the opposition and assayt be, the victory must be the greater; and if that be not only prayed for, but a clear prophecy, That Jesus Christ will take unto himself his great power and reign. Must we not then expect he will take it, yea, in a more eminent and conspicuous manner, when men are seeking in the height of their rebellion and rage against the Lord and his anointed to seize on his scepter and snatch it from him, and if this also be sure, and in the volume of that record of the scripture written concerning him, that his crown must flourish on his own head, shall not then his enemies be clothed with shame? Yea, hath not this truth a dreadful aspect on the crown and scepters of many princes who would rob the Mediator of his?

3. Is it not a strange preface and sign of the time, that we now see most hopeful and promising appearances for the church's good, remarkably blasted, things which in an ordinary way look to be grounds of
of encouragement made to fail, we see human props almost every where removed or broken, the truth deserted by great men, yea, the families of such falling off this day from the Lord, whose ancestors for a long time had been zealous for his interest: I confess this is a threatening appearance, by which many now seem to be shaken, but I would humbly reason on scripture grounds, that it is no bad sign, but hath therewith some comfortable aspect on the church; it being clear. 1. That such a connexion is no strange thing in the Bible, betwixt an extreme exigence of the church's case, and the Lord's eminent appearing for her out-gate, see Isaiah xxx. 18. and lxiii. 5. li. 20. 21. 22. Yea, I must say, it is hard to find any great mercy, and remarkable deliverance of the church, but hath at some such back-seat tried her, 2. Is not such a disadvantage and forsaken case expressly held forth as one of graces opportunities of doing good to his people; read Jer. xxx. 14. 15. &c. and you will see it; that when none is to plead her cause, no healer, and Zion called an outcast which no man seeketh after; thence does the Lord allow his people to be encouraged, and to take it as a ground of hope, he will by his own immediate hand appear. 3. Is it not from the word clear, that a people at such a disadvantage, and under most visible weaknesses when in God's way, may be then made use of, for greatest service; they were in as sore distress of whom Hab. xi. 3. It is written, out of weakness were made strong, &c. I shall further add, can there be cause from the withdrawing of human help, and probable means of safety to fear the church's ruin, when it falls under his hand, who by things most destructive can serve his interest, and bring salvation at such a time: when none but God could save, and why are these wonderful providences, that so oft have met the church in a forsaken case, written before us in the scriptures, is it not for after times to witness to the pith of how the church may be cast down, but not destroyed, and though the fall she cannot lie still, but must arise Hosea, v. 1. 2. 3. nor have her adversaries any cause of triumph thence, Mic. vii. 8. 9. 10. 4. As to the present appearance of the time, is not this a threatening sign, which hath a very dreadful aspect on the church; even that discernible loss and disadvantage, the butt now seem to be at in their frame, and that under a growing trial of the church, and the great differแเม่ many of these appear to be in, whilst we may see much of that holy fear and tenderness, that did formerly shew it itself amongst the godly gone, corruption aliof, prejudice easily taken, a spirit of jealousy poured out, yea, very strange and unusual out breakings in offence and scandal, and oh, is there not here cause of fear, that the righteous God be on a further departure from his people, and that his judgment shall yet more hotly pursue such, until he have confounded this generation? On which account if he should make us a generation of his wrath, we are called, to adore and justify the unpitted way of the Lord; yet even as to this, I must adventure with respect to sovereignty of grace (which is only like it self, and infinitely above our thoughts) to offer some discovery from the scripture of what he hath done in like cases: how marvelously hath the gracious and long suffering God interposed, and at such a fore back-seat helped his church? For it is clear, 1. That when the church hath had no argument to make use of, no confidence to plead, but broken and confounded, under the scence of horrid guilt, he finds one in himself, Isaiah xiviii. 9. For my names sake will I defer my anger, &c. 2. We find the covenant made use of by the Lord, to assist a judicial procedure against his people, Psal. cvi. 44. Nevertheless he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry and remembered for them his covenant. 3. We find the rage and violence of the adversary, and their taking advantage to blaspheme, made use of as an argument
An APPENDIX. Part I.

1. Consider what a remarkable consummation did almost wear out the church in the wilderness, whilst even then there was a boding of her after enlargement; and though a fore judgment, yea, the church's mercy in a greater upmaking of that lofs was helped forward; yea, we find Moses and Aaron with many of these, who had been most eminent instruments in Israel's coming forth out of Egypt, taken away on a near approach of their entry into Canaan. 2. It is sure some of the greatest promises of the scripture wait on the church when brought to a very small remnant, Ezek. vi. 8, 9. Isa. xxxvii. 31, 3. Hath not the Lord said in such a case, The consumption determined shall overflow with righteousness? Isa. x. 20. That the next tide can bring in as many with a marvelous increase, as these former consuming strokes had taken away; yea, is it not seen with a wearing out of the godly, and a declining of religion, in one part of the world or of a country where many have been called, that it doth break up remarkably in another, and thus the gospel recovers that interest, which it seemed to have left. 6. Does not the present appearance of the time, threaten by very unusual signs and preages, some sharp storm to come now upon the world, which in many instances we may discern, that there is some remarkable work of judgment to be brought forth, and a great break amongst the nations near, (though the earth seens this day in a strange manner quiet, yea, to extraordinary a calm now through the world, may it not be a preage of some great storm which as too clear and hot a blink, foretels a break of the weather) sure it is there is a sound of great wrath and judgment in the ears of many who know what it is to discern the times, it is well the scripture is near, a prognostication that can answer all the ages of the church, and it is there we should enquire, what such a sign does portend, we may not with the evil day, but on such an appearance of the time, that awful impression Hab. iii. 16. is called for, to be in a trembling frame, when God threatens and does thus utter his voice; yet is it clear that from these threatening signs, there is a comfortable found of much good to the church, for, 1. We find days of vengeance on the world, held forth as necessary for the accomplishing of the scripture, Luk xxi. 22. and made subfervient to the bringing forth some special truth thereof unto a performance. 2. We find in times of greatest judgment, the church's interest

gument by him, to own his people, who had otherwise forfaught all the former grounds of confidence, Deut. xxxii. 26, 4. We may read how sovereign grace, hath thus marvelously steeped in, when the rod did not humble, and smiting would not do the turn: I note them, and they went on forwardly in the way of their heart, Isa. livii. 17. Yet, says the Lord, I will not thus quit them, there is one cure for all, I have seen their ways, and will heal them; such a discovery also have we thereof, when a peoples run is of themselves, and iniquity hath brought them low, Hos. xiii. 9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thy self; but in me is thy help: yea, hath not grace rescued these on whom their mercy must be forced, and while on a hot chase in departing from God, Hos. ii. 7, 9. have we not this choice discovery of the Lord's way with his people held forth in the scripture, that whilst he works for them, He will work these in them also, Isa. xxvi. 12. I shall add, thus hath the freedom of grace, O marvelous grace! thinned forth in former ages of the church, but they falsely mistake its meaning, who are thus made secure and not thereby led unto repentance. 5. This looks like one of the signs of our time, that there is a great wearing out of the godly, yea, the choice thereof, even by a more than usual dispatch; and is not this a fit scripture preage of evil coming, when such are (as it were) hastened away that they may be hid in the grave, from a further storm? Yet these things seem clear also.
interests then set a-part, and secured, with a large warrant to the godly, not to fear; even whilst his garments are dyed with blood; Isa. lxiii. 1. Ezek. ix. 4. Rev. iii. 10. 3. may we not sec the church’s enlargement, and some of her greatest mercies thus ushered in, which is clear, Isa. lxiii. 4. Zeph. xxxviii. and O what a strange connection is there? That the putting the earth in a flame, and over-turning the nations, when the Lord, as a lion does roufe himself up to the prey, should be the very rife to an accomplifhing of some great promises for the church’s advantage, yea, and as a preludium to the fame: yet nothing more evident to such who understand the scripture, and by such a sign does the Lord speak comfortably to his people, we find a dreadful winter form on the world, pointed out as a spring time to the church, and the trees putting forth their blossoms, as Luke xxii. 25. it is clear her deliverance may be begun, and the form then breaking, which may for a time put the church under greater difficulties than before, yea cause the godly mistake, and tremble at the fight of their mercy, becaufe of these things by which it is ushered in even when it is before their eyes. I shall add no more but this, it is our great concernment, to fear him who guides all these things, to whom alone the determination of events doth belong; and this is the wisdom of his people, not to faint at the strange appearance of the time or the figns thereof, but to know what is called for, and thence read personal duties, from the sad prefages of publick judgment, and to pursue more nearnes with God, and efure a retreat under his shadow until the indignation pafs over, for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to visit the inhabitants of the earth, and the earth fhall disclose her blood, and no more cover her flam, Isa. xxvi. 21.

A third particular which concerns the godly with much circumfpeclion to notice and understand, in their diferencing the time is, The peculiar fnares and hazards thereof; this is the scripture character of the wise man, to diference time and judgment, it being fo oft verified, Ecclef. ix. 12. that in an evil time, the children of men are enfiared, when it falls suddenly upon them; sure it is there are fearching times, when the Christian’s way is more difficult, and narrow (though each day hath its fnares, which in a special way waits thereon) and then is it the wisdom of the prudent to understand his way, and know his ground, which the adversary by fubtil and indifcernible approaches, will feek to draw him off; then is a quick, fagacious diferencing in the fear of the Lord called for, to have their eyes in their head, and be in a watching poflure, when the net is clofely spread under their feet: it is a sad remark, too clearly verified oft-times on a people profefling the truth, which is faid of Ephraim, strangers have devoured their strength, and they knew it not, yea their not diferencing of the fame, proves a special caufe of their further ruin; and is it not written for the ages to come, in what a fecurc and fleeping pofture Samfon had his hair cut, he first loft his diferencing of fuch a fnares, e’er he loft his eyes: we find David through many of the Psalms in his wriflings with God, more folicitous for the preventing the fnares of wicked men, and a delivery thence, than from their rage and violence: there is a grooping the pulse of the times by which the preient diftemper and hazard of the church may be known, as well as of the body of man; and I muft fay, this day in a special manner calls us to this grave fudy. I intend no further application, but a very short touch at fome things in general, which rightly purfued in the godly man’s feriorf fudy may help to diferenc something of the publick fnares of the time, and how they get advantage in their approach, for these closely wait their season, for in vain is the net spread in the fight of the bird.

1. It is clear each time hath its peculiar diftemper and evils, that have then a special power and prevalency therewith, the obferving of which concerns
the godly for their more watchful adverting to the snare of that time, for then the temptation of the time goes therewith, as the present dilemper discovers it self, whether in a hot boiling fever, or in a dead lethargy, and follows these evils, which are in that time most contagious, where the current of the multitude runs, which is giving the godly the greatest assault, and seem to be warmed under the favourable aspect, and countenance of great men; yea these evils, which promise some outward advantage, and security from trouble, when the question is flared betwixt sin and suffering, it is there the present snare does haunt, and there lies a special piece of the godly man's work, to hold off and keep a distance from the least accession thereto; yea I may say next to the salvation of their soul, to be solicitous all along their way, to have their garments kept from the smallest stain and spot thereof; a touch a small defilement from a publick prevailing evil, being found to draw more deep on the conscience, and with more difficulty do men recover, and escape thence, than from many other personal infirmities. 2. It is also clear there is some piece of the truth of God in each time of the church that is more questioned and brought in debate, by which with greater advantage and clearness we may know where a publick snare doth lie; for here is its aim directed, to entangle and assault the godly man, where in a special way he is called to his post, to contend for such an interest; and thus it may be said, if one keep right well of present duty, he will with more facility find out the scent on which the snare of the time is, how it directs its motion to darken or cast an obstruction in the way of that duty. 3. We may thus discern a prevailing snare, and its getting ground, by that tendency there is in a day of trial, to question and make inquiry anent duties which were once clear and unquestionable, when their judgment was not byassed from any outward incitements, for this speaks mens finding a bad invention, to be rid of their conscience, by extenuating present controversies, a design which (in the righteous judgment of the Lord) is seldom set on foot by any, but they too visibly thrive therein, for their further ruin, and get an answer according to the idol of their heart, thus Balaam we have in divine record, as a dreadful instance, who tried that way, and therein was successful, and it is now a known remark, that an hesitation, and faint upon the heart from want of resolution to suffer for the truth, will not long want a snare in the head to caufe a debate there-anent and then is it easy for a snare to enter, O with what fear and tenderness should light be regarded, which as the apple of the eye, may by the least thing be hurt, but is not easily healed: thus is it, men do inestimably wear out from under these former impressions they had upon them of duty, and e'er they are aware have their judgment by a judicial stroke, determined in that, which was before their desire; they know little, that depth of a man's heart, who are not jealous over a change on their judgment in an hour of trial when its tendency is, to spare themselves. 4. We may discern a publick snare in its approach, by that advantage the adversary gets thereby to divide the godly and these who appear for the truth amongst themselves, for then it is easy to enter by such a breach, and throw in the bait in so muddy a water, it being too obvious what an advantage a snare hath, where jealously with these bitter effects of private strife and quarreling turns mens eyes off the publick hazard, and blunts that edge of contending for the truth, in limiting one upon another, I do not mean but there may be a necessity oft on the godly to withstand their friends to their face, yea the eminentest in the church, were it a Peter, Gal. ii. 11. when the truth is concerned, but this shou'd be with the greatest caution and tenderness to obviate a breach, which is like the breaking in of waters, whilst the watching adversary waits his advantage in such
such a day of their halting, and it is too sadly known, how small a wedge,
that is driven with a tendency to that end, makes way for the entry of a fur-
ther snare, see 1 Cor. xi. 16. what a sad connection there is betwixt a divi-
ding time of the church, and a further departing from the truth, but we must
always take heed that we so pursue union amongst our selves as that Christ and
his cause be not left alone. 5. A present snare may be seen by the sud-
den change of known adversaries, and the friendly infinations of these who
were wont to threaten, that in such an appearance there lies an ambush, and
is but a change of weapons for a seen advantage, sure this should be ground
of fear, and a cautious advertence to be much alone with God, that men may
know the voice of the shepherd, left they follow after a stranger, it being
more usual, to be stolen off their feet in a calm, than blown down by a storm;
it is hard to stand before the blandishments of men, where that more endur-
ing, and sweet relish of peace with God is not kept on the soul, which is
a choice mean to make the ear deaf to the most charming voice of the en-
chanter: oft hath it been that adder's poison is under their lips, whilst wrath
is broiling in their heart, Psal. cxxi. yea that the cruel man can change his coun-
tenance, when it is fit to lay a snare, and with Jacob embrace them in their
arms whom they intend to imitate under the fifth rib. 6. May not thus
a snare be seen in its approach; by that prevalence the fear of man hath over
the time, and that unusual command, it seems to have sometimes over the
spirits of men, over these whole former zeal and resolution for the truth, hath
in other trials with much advantage appeared; here is indeed cause to watch,
for in the fear of man there is a snare, Prov. xxix. 25. which then will take
advantage to pursue, when it finds men in a flying posture, and shrunk so far
below their former appearance: we find the godly man hath his breast plate,
but he hath no piece of armour for his back, when he turns his face from re-
fitting: it's sad when the adversary is taught to follow, by our fainting, and
that spirit which is in the world seems to be upon the ascendent, with a preva-
ience even over the spirits of the godly; yea these debaafed, and made con-
temptible in their eyes, in whom the appearance of God, and his authority
upon them, at another time, would have made the hearts of their enemies to
have trembled; this is too obvious in an humbling and judicial time of the
church, until once that hour of her trial go over. 7. A publick snare
is then to be feared, and calls for a watching eye, by that successes which waits
on a sinfull course, especially when such a shine is of any continuance, for
then new queries will be stirred, strange reports spread, with much subtle
reflection on way the way of the Lord, to make the godly question the fame:
David found it not easy to stand before this, which put him to bring under
debate his principles, and the advantage of his cause, Psal. lxxiii. 13, and
in such a trial doth the adversary by some continued observation, know how
to assult the followers of the truth, and attack them at their weakest, then is
it the scandal of the crofs caueth many offend, for it is fore for such to suffer,
who know not the fellowship of the crofs of Christ, which is a piece of the
greater and most near fellowship with him upon the earth; yea then the
church may run more hazard from some of her friends, than the professed ad-
versary, for thus oft is a prevailing snare helped forward; it cannot but be a
searching and hazardous time, when many are turning aside, and some of un-
derstanding suffered to fall, who are ready to pres their sin as duty on others,
for seldom do such fall off, but are found more stirring and active in such a
way to engage others, then they were, while holding their former integrity
to pursue the truth's interest; thus we have seen it, so it is, let us hear it and
know it for our good. 8. Thus a snare of the time may be discern-
ed,
ed, by the tendency thereof to corruption in the church, and a producing still
the same effects, whatever be pretended, when by the hands of Esau, it dis-
covers it self, though it have the voice of Jacob: And doth not the ruin of
many who have dashed on such a rock, and have been thus taken, put a sad
mark thereon; for it may be said no snare or subtle contrivance of the adver-
sary, waits the godly in the present time, but if men do not content to shut
their eyes, they may from the scripture, and observation of the church, see at
others cost, some discernable beacon set thereon, what a tendency such a thing
hath still had, to a making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, how
hard it is to dance about the fire and not be burned, or stand in the way and
counsel of ungodly men, and not be ensnared. 9. It seems to threaten
a snare, when enquiry about the duty of the time is purfued without respect
to the present cafe, and circumstances thereof; for thus a snare may wait in a
thing at other times indifferent, the neglected whereof upon some special cir-
cumstances, may be a quitting their duty; and the doing also, or yielding to
something in another cafe warrantable, at some times may fall under a moral
prohibition; as this, when a thing in it self indifferent, Circa saecula et cul-
tum Dei, is prefled by the magistrate, as necessary by virtue of his folc com-
mand and to be the subjecting the godly in things, wherein they are not sub-
ject, and to the prejudice of another jurisdiction: can there be an enquiry
anent this in the general, without a particular application to the complex
cafe, it may be said a snare is then on the entry, when that consideration
of the prophet is not much regarded in the present question, is this a time
for such a thing; for the disciples to refresh themselves with sleep, was a piece
of innocent duty; but that they could not watch this one hour with their
mater in his sufferings, must needs vary the cafe, for it was in so far a de-
ferting him. 10. I shall further add, is not this a sad appearance of some
publick snare getting advantage which is witnessed by a previous disposition,
and that prevalence private engagements to an outward interest hath upon mens
spirits, for a snare enters not without a call, and finds within, its greatest
strength and advantage; with an insensible wearing out of soul tendernes, is
too oft known, to have a tendency for conforming to an evil course, for the
motion is then down the hill, and there is cause to fear the snare will follow
in there, and lye about that interest, which otherwife hath got the mastery over
them: how many in embracing the world, have at the next step fallen off from
the truth? No weapon hath been more made ufe of against the church, and
hath ruined moe, so that it may be said, where other snares have killed their
thousands this its ten thousands; I must say, such an appearance in a time of
the church's trial, is like the breaking forth of her gray hairs, nor is it easy
for these to fland, or resist, who are so far gone backward, or keep their
feet before a snare, where the truth ceaeth to get a command over their
heart.

A fourth particular, which calls for a serious inquiry, from these who
know time, and are wise to discern the same, is this, What can the righte-
ous do, when there is a growing darkness on the church, and the very foun-
dations like to be shaken, yea the hearts of many so far down that they are
like to lose their hand therewith, in the matter of duty, and give over, as
men astonifh'd, seeing this evil is from the Lord: It is no small thing, to ma-
nage well such a time of the church's trial, and in so sharp a storm, there is
need of much balast: but we know the scripture of God is near, which stands
good for his peoples conduct, to let them know how to fer their course in
the darkest night, and from that bleffed record, there is one thing clearly held
forth to answer such a time, which is a great duty; let the righteous hold on
his
Part I. An APPENDIX.

his way, and he who hath clean hands wax stronger, and stronger; Job xvii. 9. For it is sure they have cause and solid ground for this, though the earth should in a more strange manner reel, and the pillars thereof seem to be dissolved, since it is certain and true.

1. That all is well, and nothing can fall wrong, whilst the foundation of God, which is his eternal council held forth in the scripture, abides sure; though other foundations be shaken, the godly man does then lye at a safe anchor, which will not drive in a stormy day, his great interest is beyond hazard, though more than an immortal soul were in that adventure, his heaven is sure, whereof he cannot be beguiled, whilst things upon the earth seem most uncertain; and must it not then be well with the church, were it even sinking into the grave, since the Mediator will bring it up again; men's evil eye cannot hurt, not their cursing blast that interest which God hath blessed, for it is then sure, there is no enchantment against Jacob, or divination against Israel. 2. Is not the truth, and that great interest of godliness, that, to a christian, and in such a manner known to him, that it needs no testimony from men or incitement from the example of others, for to thefe it commendst itself, and does witness its reality, though by all the generation amongst whom they live it should be cayed down; it's sure to be a christian indeed, requires this, to know the truth and be founded on such a ground that can support and quiet the soul, in the greatest falling off of others, though none else were to walk in that way, that if it were supposed, one serious christian in such an age, were in the whole world, and thus left alone, there is so great a discovery and certainty of the truth to be known upon the soul, as should oblige him; to such a declaration with Jesus, But as for me I will serve the Lord. O to see a generation of men of such metal, who with a resolute peremptoriness would forsake all men and follow the Lord, and serve him without company, if better might not be, we might by the hand of such expect to be led through Jordan, after our Moses is dead by whom we were led thorough the Red Sea, but alas where are they! 3. Have not these ground in the darkest time, to be confirmed, who may see cause to improve the most shaking things, which fall out in their day, for their further establishment, and strengthen their hand in the way of the Lord, by these dispensations at which many stumble: It is strange to observe what a challenge and upcast some have in their reflecting on the truth, on their grounds which in their confidence, they must admit to be a convincing witness thereto; but having at some length elsewhere touched this, I shall but add these few things more, which as evident grounds of establishment, in the way of the Lord, and for our further strengthening therein should be improved; which yet are an usual challenge by many against the same.

FIRST, That the number seems so small who follow the truth, and are found serious in the study of godliness, can be no ground to question this, without a strange mistake; since men must either quit the scripture, or admit, the way to life is strait, and few enter therein: yea that the small convey the truth hath in the world is an express verification of it: Is there the least warrant to make the suffrage of the multitude a test of the way of the Lord, but it is sure we can fiew them the contrary, that his followers are a select number chosen out of the world, the great bulk whereof is outlawed, and put out of the intercession of the Mediator, else the scripture could not be fulfilled, and is not the falling of many from the truth a great seaf thereto, no less than the coming of others, and that excellent way of holiness, the more discernibly known by such a character, that it is every where spoken against. 2. That so great contempt and reproach does this day attend the truth and practice of godli-
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godliness, should prejudice none thereat, but be a further ground of strengthening, to help the christian to hold on his way; since it is nothing else but what is foretold, and what the most excellent of the earth in their time have met with to be accomplished the filth and of-scouring of the world; in no age hath the truth wanted such an assault, and in no age hath it wanted a triumph over the fame: Yea hath not the greatest reproacher sometime been forced to give in his retractation, and make earneft of that, which before he scoffed at? when God comes near by a stroke of his judgment, then do the proud change their file and speak in another language upon the awful appearance of death, but this also doth witness, what a marvelous thing religion is, which with thec who know it, looth no weight, when under the greatest cloud of detraction, and contempt: for then is Christ still precious and his way desirable, unto these who believe. 3. That sentence is not speedily execute against an evil course, we see what improvement the world makes thereof, to be more desperately wicked; but is not this also a seal and confirmation of the truth, and a ground for establishment in the way of the Lord, which verifies the scripture, Eccles. viii. 11. And it is there men may see a short reprieve from punishment is no pardon, or acquittance, whilst sin runs on to an after account; that judgment deferred when therewith a further hardening appears, doth threaten more than a quick and present dispatch, and showes the stroke will be the greater when it comes, surely if this fell not out, whereof the world takes such advantage, it might in so far put us to question the truth, of which one syllable must not fall to the ground. 4. So great an abounding of prophaneity and ungodliness within the church, is it not an undeniable seal to the verity of the scripture, which thus takes place, and should help the godly man to hold on his way, it being unanswerably clear, there could be no darkness if there were not such a thing as light, or folly if there were no wisdom, and is not excellent holines thus evidently made known in its opposite, to which there could be no contrariety, if itself were not most real. 5. That the truth seems so much entangled in a confusion of contrary doctrines, and we see without ceasing, pursed by error, and the assail of these adversaries who in every age are seeking to darken the fame, can be no ground of prejudice and shaking, without a strange mistake, but should strengthen the godly in their way, and help them to wax stronger, who have the scripture thus so expressly fulfilled before their eyes; it is sure the Lord hath made his way plain, nor does that blessed record give any ground to turn aside unto crooked paths; for these are clouds of mens own creating, which have such tendency to darken the fame; but we see truth in all ages waited on by error, which with any brighter discovery thereof, breaks up like a thick fog; though these can never unite, no more than gold and clay can join together; and it is clear, the notion of error were unconceivable, if the truth had not a certainty and real being, not doth it conflict with such an adversary, but for its further triumph; oh if the solid perfwasion of the scripture, were in earneft pursued, and mens soul once brought under the power and authority of the truth, as that, which is the word and testimony of the living God, it would prove a more effectual cure to so dreadful a distemper of the church than all the disputes of the time, (which are of special use also) may not atheifm be found upon a serious inquiry, the great rise of error, and of mens bold adventuring to make the scripture of God a sport of their invention, to make it subservient to their interest, and run after such a byafs, and should it not be for a lamentation, that a humble serious inquiry after the truth, under an awful impression of that God whose word it is, is this day so rare a thing in the world: now this being so sharp a trial of the church, and one of these things whereat many pretend to be most shaken, though
though I have in another part touched it a little, I would add further some few remarks, how clear and express a confirmation of the word even this is, which should more fix and establish these who love the truth, 1. It is manifest, that no error, or corrupt doctrine assails the church, but in such a manner pointed forth, yea by to express an opposition thereto, in the scripture, that we may see a prophetical fore-warning thereof, and of means endeavour to corrupt and darken such a piece of the truth; it is sure the word is written and in a special way directed to every time of the church, and to all her after trials, and assaults, is peculiarly suited, by him who knew and did foresee what opposition his truth in after ages should meet with, and in his marvelous record, men may clearly see (if there were such a serious inquiry) that there is no poison or corruption in doctrine which infects the church, but hath its proper antidote there provided. I must here, as to one particular instance, say, if I were not persuaded of a determined species of government for the church under the *New Testament* (which is clear in the scripture, holding forth its constitution to be aristocratick, with a parity amongst the officers of Jesus Christ in the administration of their power, and a subordination of the lesser parts to the greater) I could not shun to clear a remark, of that express prohibition, of any disparity and lordly prelacy in his house, yea how manifestly the all seeing God, when he was about to found the christian church doth point in such plain terms at this, that we may there read a very direct prediction of that ruin and prejudice it would on this account sustain in after-times: I speak this of no particular interest, or from bitternefs and prejudice at the perfons of any, but have confidence to say, it is from the awe and persuafion of the truth: sure on politicke grounds, and with respect to an outward interest, it is easy to judge, that way wants not a persuading bait, if something greater were not to preponderate, and a destroying hook did not wait thereon, which should make the purchase too dear, at the rate of denying Jesus Christ in a piece of his truth, when a confession thereof is called for before men. 2. Do we not see even in these things, which in that marvelous depth of error and delusion on mens soul seem most strange, the scripture thence most exactly confirmed, and in that power and energy which attends it, and is to many matter of astonishment, may discern how the clouds are carried about with a tempest, 2 Pet. ii. 17. and driven on by a judicial stroke, and though it is amazing to see at what a rate many are this way turned mad, with a discernible bewitching of their judgment, and a beheading into most strange and absurd extravagancies, yea how tenacious and violent in their way, when silenced with the clearest discoveries of the truth, yet is not this also witnessed, there is a righteous God giving up to strong delusion, in which Satan is let loose with a remarkable power to deceive, 2 Thes. ii. 12. O how dreadful is that stroke which is inflicted on the judgment and reason, which in some respect we may say is greater than that which is on the affections. 3. Find we not the scripture by a prophetical discovery, point at that influence human authority, and the patrocin of such, who have a name and repute in the church, should have on the corrupting the doctrine thereof; and therefore does the Holy Ghost to particularly guard against the same, and oppose the authority of the written word to the pretences of any party; that here an apostle must not be admitted or have credit to the truth's prejudice, not an angel, yea not a voice from heaven, may oppose it self to this more sure testimony of his word. 4. Is it not here even in that great depth of error we see this truth take place, deceiving and being deceived, how strangely these meet, and by a marvelous stroke, mens judgment made captive to their will, and their deliberate acting to deceive others have the same effect on themselves. 5. Thus also is the scripture made
out, where we see how hard it is for men to fix in such a way, or find land when they are once carried off the truth, and do lanch out in that horrid gulf of error, but seducers wax worse and worse.

Inference V. The truth of God revealed in the scripture is in its import not more marvelous and great, than we may say is clear and obvious in the evidence of its verification, which hath every where such a witness, that there can be no escape from this discovery, but if men will not receive its testimony, they must have it forced on them as their torment; for it is here invention doth fail, and politics are found too weak to ward off some impreflion of that, which with an awful appearance and authority, does justify it itself to the conscience without their consent, nor can this secure them from that lafh of inward terror, which will make theu tremble alone, when they seem to have confidence before others, but this advantage hath the truth of her adversaries, that even atheism must bear a witness thereto, and against it self, which if men would but weigh in the ballance of sober reason, it should appear a sufficient antidote against its own poison, and a great seal to the scripture, which would want a special confirmation, if it wanted such an adversary, now to clear it a little more, and thus shut up what hath been on this subject held forth, I must in behalf of the glorious truth of God (which in all ages of the church did never want some discovery of its accomplishment) attest the reproachers of this time who are so much at work to challenge his unpoffted way, and call in question his faithfulness, to the weakening of the affent of many thereto, and do appeal them to that tribunal which the great God hath placed in the conscience, if they without doing violence thereto, and putting forth the eye of reason, withftand the clear evidences of divine truth, and the certainty of its performance, anent which, these few I shall here add.

I. If it be the great prerogative of God, and to him alone belongs to declare things from the beginning to the end, and hold forth the various and most remarkable events, which should fall out within time, with their proper circumstances, yea to discover the great revolutions of the world thro' all the ages thereof, when second causes in their remotest tendency thereto could not be discerned, is not this then clear and undeniable true of the scripture? 2. As to the sure and exact performance of the same, I must make that challenge and attestation, which that great servant of the Lord, Jofua, did in such a caufe, Jof. xxiii. 14. if any thing hath hitherto failed, of all which the Lord hath spoken in the scripture; or if men can instance, what special prediction, or promise, (which to this day should have taken place in the season thereof) hath miscarried, or turned abortive, what truth wants its feal and confirmation, yea what ftep of providence, can you point at which does not quadruple, and marvelously accord with the word, I challenge an instance, but this I am sure men must fee, there are fuch things fall out in the event, that are particularly foretold in the scripture, fo strange and marvelous, that in an ordinary way none could have believed, which they now fee with their own eyes. 3. Do you not fee the written word as a bright lanthorn attend the church, from the very porch and entry of time, in all her journey, and evidently point at the remarkable times, and revolutions of her cafe, which have have now in a great part gone over her head: yea is it not demonstratively clear, that the fun doth not more truly shine on this terrestrial globe, than the scripture shineth, and doth illuminate the whole frame and structure of providence, and in all these strange parts which are acted in the world, most certainly takes place, that there is none can walk at random, or by his own counsel direct and steer his course, but though it is marvelous it is sure also, that the innumerable millions of men who are this day upon earth, in all their various motions, are at present fulfilling the determined counsel of God; and their
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their actings, whatever they design therein must be concentrick with his great
end, nor out of that bounds can they possibly move.  4. I must attest the
world, if they do not see, this way of godliness, which seems to day to be ev
ey where spoken against, to be that good and old way, in which are the foot-
steps of the saints to be found since the beginning, and that it is no new light
now broke up in the world; but it is clear, through all ages past, there hath
not wanted a continued succession of these, who in this reproached way
did serve the God of their fathers; and have sealed the truth, which now
from one time, to another, we find still delivered off their hands, to the
present generation; and I here challenge the greatest atheists, to which of
the saints can they turn, or whom can they insinuate of that blest
company, since there was a church in the earth, who could ever contradict this,
or bear another witness.  5. Must you not confess there is no such deep, in
the heart of man, or so close and subtil a convoy of wickednes there, which
is not found out in the scripture, and there pointed at; and that none can get
themselves hid, or get beyond the reach of this, in these things which they are
sure the observing world could never know, but the most secret haunts of their
soul are unveiled, which from their dearest friend they have concealed.
6. Can this demonstration of the scripture, and so manifest a witness thereto be denied,
that whilst man is a free agent in his actions, and doth therein act sponta
neously, he hath notwithstanding of this in his own breast both a judge, and
accuser, which though within him, doth without his consent, exercise a power
over him, and such an authority which he would, yet cannot decline.  7. I
dare attest the conscience of men, who are themselves strangers to the way of
God, if they can so far shut their eyes, but they must see serious godliness is
a marvelous thing and that there is something here above nature, which by its
effects on others, may shew a divine spirit and power, that where-ever it comes
makes so great a change, and one to exceed another most discernibly, though
of the same parts, that suits and does accommodate it felt to the various con
ditions and employments of men, it puts a special honour on the greatest prince,
and does instruct the wise and prudent, yet will it lodge with the poorart
tificer in his shop, or labouring man in the field; and does it not also appear,
that here must be a native motion, and unconstrained from inward principl
es, when on outward grounds there is not the least incitement, which shews it
is a living thing, that hath its discernible languishing, and wearing out, and its
more vigorous actings, as well as any living man; it is strange the report of
this, is not matter of astonishment, to bring men once to question, if such an
accompt as others give of this marvelous thing, Religion, can be true, how it
is here the christian's joy is found by weeping, and his tears the seed whereby
the gladness of heart breaks up; how sweet that rest is which is found in his work
and labour; and with his fowing to the spirit, the harvest then begins, in a
present reaping, and his laying forth himself, with a giving of the heart unto
God, does enrich the giver by such a gift; yea that here men should differ so
much when alone with God and brought near him from what they are at oth
er times, and in these retirements of their soul, have that discovery and concep
tion of this truth, which is not to be found in turning over the voluminous
tractates of the greatest writers.  8. If men have any serious reflection, and
do not shut up the Bible, can they shun this remark thereof; how well it an
swers the various successions of time, and so marvelous a variety of things
that are to many ages distant from other, yea that all along there is a gra
dual discovery and breaking up of the gospel in the several times of the church,
where it is easy to discern the antiquity of this excellent record, and so great
a distance of time betwixt the penmen thereof, yet in its compofure is one

R r r entire
entire piece, so connect and closely knit together, that men may see the same spirit in the whole, and in each part thereof, moving and carrying forward one great design.

9. I shall but further add, if religion hath a being and reality, which men cannot lose the sense of, and deny, without falling so far below reason, into the condition of the beasts, must there not be a rule also? for it is easy to judge in what strange and monstrous shape this would appear, were it left to the choice and arbitrement of men; now let the most professed atheists turn their eyes through the whole earth, and in a calm and sober composure of spirit but judge, if there be any thing more absurd, and to astonishment irrational, than that face and appearance religion hath amongst these where this excellent rule of the scripture is not owned, yea could these subjects themselves to such extravagancies and therein turn so mad, without a divine stroke on their judgment and reason, which the righteous God in verification of his word inflicts on such who do even shut their ears, from the report of the truth, the found whereof goes forth through the earth, and here I challenge men though strangers themselves to serious religion, if at a distance it doth not appear, how great a difference there is betwixt these parts of the world, where the gospel shines in its power, and the rest of the nations.

The End of the First Part.
THE PREFACE.

It seems a sad conjunction in this day of a strange security most are fallen into, when such unusual awakening prefaces of judgment are a crying voice from the Lord, but yet a deaf ear; how the awe and dread of light, which used to appear on men's conscience, though otherwise haters thereof, is now so far gone, as if the present age had found a new way to escape the most clear discoveries of the truth, which was not formerly known; which too falsely prefaces some strange and astonishing strokes of judgment must speak that, which with greatest contempt hath been rejected from the word: Oh that there might be an awakening to duty yet before the decree bring forth, Zeph. ii. 2. For thro' repentance can never be in vain, where it is in truth, yet it is clear, this may come too late to prevent a temporal stroke; and is there not cause to expect the Lord will take some strange way to plead for making himself known to be God, and enforce the certainty and truth of his word, since men have got so far beyond the reach of an ordinary cure, that the unheard of wickedness of this time is come to seek its patroncy from Atheism; and the alone relief most seem to have against the tormenting fears of future things, and an eternal state, is by weakening their affent to the truth; but they cannot weaken the truth, which stands unshaken and brings such an assurance therewith to those who know it, as can fully quiet and support the soul, though they were left alone to walk in this way. Yes, though the power and life of godliness lie deep and hid, and to the experienced christian alone is such a demonstration of the certainty of supernatural truths, and their verification to the soul, that none else can know at a distance what they feel and affuredly enjoy; yet are the Indicia so obvious, I mean such clear, rational, and convincing evidences of the same, that how men possibly should get these put by, and rejected in this age, is not easy to comprehend; but that a real irritation and torment upon their spirits, from such clearness of evidence now accompanying the truth, is the great influencing cause of so prodigious an Atheism this day within the church, beyond what hath been in times of greater darknes. For clearing this, and to bear some witness to the unspotted Faithfulness of God, which as the Sun in its strength keeps its course whatever clouds intervene, amidst the darknes and confusions of this time, is this following discourse intended.

For the subject, it is great, yes, that wherein the whole superstructure of truth and godliness stands; so as it calls for some awful distance, in our nearest converse therewith; but such where with an unspakeable delight we may see its ancient standing, the fulness of evidence it brings therewith; these near and sensible approaches this hath to a christian's soul; that surprizing brightness with which it is still found to break up, when at the darkest, and as mid-night with the church; the certainty and fixedness of its course amidst all the revolutions of the earth; its suitableness to answer all that can most disquiet any of the saints, and let them
fee how clear and straight the way of the Lord is, amidst the greatest confusions of the time, yea, how visibly his Faithfulness is commensurate to the whole work of providence in the earth.

For the intent and design of this short treatise, the reader can most fitly judge in his perusal; but this, with some serious aim hath been proposed, to appear in behalf of the glorious Faithfulnes of God in his word, by witnessing thereto, in an age when this was never more directly impugned, and all possible artifice on foot to cast reproach thereon; and for being an help to the christian's joy, to shew what this day is under his reach, and near even at his hand, for attaining more clear and solid impressions of the truth, and certainty of the scripture, than most seem to look after; since it is too obvious, that hesitation and dark apprehensions most have about spiritual truths, in not knowing the great reality which is there, and how no science can have such firm and clear demonstrations; in pursuance of this scope some few things peculiarly intended here, I shall premise:

1. To witness how great and marvelous things are in our fight, and have a real being before us; that none can deny to be an undoubted product of the scripture, and there only could have been made known; in which divine power eminently exerted and above all possible reach of natural causes, may be as clearly seen, as in the most extraordinary miracles that ever the church knew; and how confirming a seal that is greater than these to the truth is still continued before us.

2. It is not to assure, or give some naked discovery of these great supernatural truths in the word, but to lead into the Things themselves, in their real being and existence that this is intended, as truths to which there is a more near approach by seeing, tasting, and as it were by some touch, than seems by most to be understood, how near and feeling a converse is to be reached betwixt the intellect and the object; yea, thus what great improvements might be made of sense in its subserviency to faith, and a more full repose and quiet of the soul for adventuring on the word; so as the way of believing, which to many is so dark and strange a thing, should be in that manner comfortable and clear, with as quieting security as we could have in the way of sense and feeling; the clearing of which in this following essay, in nothing will be found to jumble with that great duty of walking by faith, and to believe against hope and visible appearances of the event, but as a singular help thereto.

3. Its intent is to shew, how by no chance or possible casualty, the truth of such great events of the word, and certainty of its verification in these can be called in question; but as to the church in the great providences of the time, so to a christian in his private case, it is most demonstrable, how every step in experience, and in the way of sense is by line and rule with as sure and infallible a connexion betwixt this and the written word, as there can be in nature betwixt the cause and the effect, the head-sprung and the stream.

4. To clear also the way of the Lord, and certainty of his truth in this very dark hour, when his work about the reformed church so remarkably appears to be a work of judgment; for considering of which, some astonishing providences of his time did give a serious rise.

5. Here is some aim to hold forth clear and solid grounds from the Scripture, with respect to the sad appearances now of future things, and too anxiously disquieting presages many have thereof; which (whilst the earth seems to be at rest, and as buried for the most part in a deep sleep) are ready to faint and over-whelm the spirits of some; not considering what great assurances from the Lord are in the word given, for a more comfortable prospect of future events, than it seems we allow our selves, and how well it is suited to answer such very lading queries; what will become of the Churches? Of the Truth, of the Purity, when the enemy is growing riper; the form grows; a dead palli we are fallen into, yea, whilst every man seems to be with his hand on his loins, alas! for that day is great, it is the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be delivered out of the same. Jer. xxx. 7.

6. I shall add no more, but that with some special tendency this following discourse may be seen to widness, how it is not grasping at a shadow to be a christian, and no such realities as these they find, in a time when the professed principles and work of some is to make void the very being and truth of serious practical Religion.

For what reflections I may be obnoxious to, in adventuring yet more on to great a subject, I shall lay little; but if any fruit and solid advantage be found in its perusal, I might then hope there should need few words of apology; some essays at duty may have these discouragements and difficulties to wrestle with, that if there be not a doing for the Lord, it were a sad part to act. These few things I have here confidence to premise, for which I stand at a higher bar than the judgment of men; I. That in this following discourse, I have fought Truth, and not to follow the chuse of airy and naked notions, as having some pressure on my own spirit, that these could not answer to: It
is a great thing to believe the being of God, and that nothing fails of his word; I must say, were these truly believed, it might be strange a christian's life were not more in a continued wonder, and with some greater transports of joy. 2. I have ground to say, That no fear from these times hath oft pressed me with more anxiety, than of these sad consequences, such shocking things as have of late occurred, with the abounding of offences, were like to have, by a too visible tendency to turn many off all persuasion of the truth; which was one special incitement to some further prosecution of what I had begun on this subject; though I must confess with such wrestlings on my own spirit, to trouble the world more by any such appearance, that if something from the Lord very immediately had not been to determine and clear, it was some service he would not reject. I should have needed no apology for such a thing, but laid it aside. I hope the reader may not find cause to quarrel with an unnecessary multiplying of words, or that his time is encroached upon that way, so far as the expressing the matter with some plainness could admit; nor from any coincidence of purposes, with what was held forth in the first part, though the subject and scope be much one; I confess, in handling of both, the frequent changes of my health, the untroddenness of this path, the weight and concernment of the truths, with some study (if I may say without mistake) to believe what I wrote, and not easily to admit things, or take on truth, without a clear and quieting persuasion thereof, was not without some peculiar difficulty, beyond what might have been in greater enlargements on another subject. This favour I crave from the reader, in his perusal either of this or the former part, to take a serious look of the whole, before he pass his judgment on a part, things being so connected together in their tendency to answer the scope.

No time did ever more prelilingly call for establishment in the truth than this our lot is fallen in, and to be solidly founded on such a ground, that can bear up though all other props should be shaken. The faith and patience of the saints hath had a sore conflict, and the darkest part may be yet to go over; but 'tis well it cannot be such as to out-go that light and comfort which is in the scripture; Deists thy law had been my delight, I had perished in my affliction, Pfal. cxix. 32. Were it known what it is to have thes so near, how easy should it be to reason with what seems most peculiarly to influence the heavens and trouble of many this day. 1. From the preciury of affliction and multiplied temptations, which with some now may be so fore, as the waters are ready to enter into their fault, and put them to question their principles; but thus is the Lord's way with his people known, when he brings them into straits, to give them a greater light than before; as Luther after fore wrestlings said, statim apparuit mihi nova facies scripturæ; the afflicted have their peculiar comforts, much beyond others; and know what it is to bear up the heart, that it is stronger than it fell.

2. Such is the tribulation of these times as may seem more imbittering to some, from the same lot they see of others; how many stretch themselves on their couches, that charge to the found of the Vol. and drink wine in bowls, but they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph, Amos vi. 4, 5, 6. Few seem to know the heart of the afflicted, or are found to act the Samaritan's part; and how rare are these who search out the cause of the poor, whom men regard not; and oft have no witnesses to their griefs but one, and is indeed one for all, Toos God selst me, Gen. xvi. 13. It is in the Bible the caufe of the oppressed will find patrocinio, when no where else; nor can that assurance fail, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, Joh. xvi. 30. Every day hath this work, to put some part of the christian's griefs, and the most desirable enjoyments of others by, which can never possibly be re-acted, nor return any more again. 3. Are not prejudices at holiness now such as might put christians more on their guard for a solid founding on the scripture, yes, when it is so clear truth suffers not at that rate, nor is the shaking of many, in such hazard, from what visible opposition is thereto, as by these more subtle conveyances of reproach; whilst a serious care to prevent this, or to advance the repute and credit of that excellent profession of holiness, seems to have but little weight upon us. Truth this day is as a broken and shipwreck'd interest in the eyes of many, offers have come in as a flood upon the church, whereas a spirit of atheism hath in a strange manner got up, and been upon the ascendant, but a recovery must be of all that is lost; that when creating-word from the Lord on the dry bones comes to bring them together, and put flesh and sinews thereon. There are three things seem this day to be a difficult part of a christians work; though duties which had never a more peculiar season and call thereto, than now.

Fifth. By a manifestation of the truth, to commend our selves to every man's conscience, in the fight of God, 2 Cor. iv. 2. So as in the worst of times holiness may appear, which with the greatest lustre and most advantage doth then commend its truth and certainty to others; nor can the time be such as this can want some dread and awe therewith, to draw forth a S f f testimony
testimony from its greatest haters, when to enforce it the more, the world may see how well a
true and fervent adherence to the truth, with a convincing prudence can evidently meet, so as
to shew none are more men than such who are most Christians; yea, how these upon higher
inducements and principles than any outward interest, must be swayed in pursuance of their
duty.

2. It may appear a very difficult service this day to stand in the gap when a breach is made;
or how to come in the room of an intercessor betwixt a highly provoked God, and a people
in whose case so much causeth to dread the near approach of that sentence, Zach. xi. 9. The
duty is undeniable, to pursue a national reconciliation as well as personal, though but one
were found to adventure thereon, to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left; and put so
far a ruin under the great priest's hand; yea, such doth the Lord look after, when judg-
ment is ready to go forth; And I sought for a man that should make up the hedge and stand
in the gap before me, that I should not destroy the land, but I found none, Ezek. xxii. 30. This
seems but little believed; how far he does subject even the interests of a nation to the prayers
of his people; Isa. xliv. 1. yea, what upon a peradventure hath been reached in the most
hop left essays, Jon. iii. 9. but oh how sad when these who are most concerned to keep a
land from sinking, it cannot bear.

3. It may be too obvious, how difficult a part of a Christian's work this is, to walk a
right towards others in a distempered time, when a spirit of jealousy seems to be poured our;
so little oneness of heart oft found, where there wants not oneness of principles; and
too visible an abounding of these evils the apostle speaks of, as some part of
the church's ruin in that time, envy, strife, railings, and evil surmising, 1 Tim. vi. 4. Two
things may be instanced, which seem to give a peculiar rife thereto: one is, little per-
fonal freedom both Christians and ministers have amongst themselves, whilst so sad a liberty
is oft taken to speak at a distance to the prejudice of others; yea, when it cannot be hid,
how many such things that have begot distance, jealousy and bitterness of spirit, upon more
clear and convincing trial are oft found a grasping with their own shadow; thence gets Satan
such advantage, and the prayers of the church are obstructed more than is laid to heart. Some
sins seem not once to come near, distress our conscience as a transgression of the rule. I con-
sels, one of the difficult works of a Christian this is, that needs some special touch of the
great healer's hand, on the spirits of his people, to make easy, how to walk with that tender-
ness, prudence, and yet freedom of spirit, in duties we owe to others. But a second I must
name, that gives too visible a rise to our ruin this day from our selves more than from all our
adversaries, the want of an humble spirit, in so remarkably humbling a time; what rare excel-
lencies hath this oft spoiled! and whether in a nation or a man, it is that the holy God will
contend with; I am sure, if our sad discontents were followed more to the true rife, here it
might be found. But I fear to have transgressed by so long a preface.
T H E
Faithfulness of God,
CONSIDERED and CLEARED, &c.

P A R T II.

Lam. iii. 23.
Great is thy Faithfulness.

C H A P. I.

H E prophet being taught of God, to endite a lamentation for the church under her captivity, and to incite this almost crushed people to a duty suitting their present case, which was not to faint, or have their hands falling down on their loins, but that their eye might affect their heart with some feeling impression of such a stroke; hath a remarkable pause here, and sweetly draws his breath, in reflecting on the way of the Lord, what a mixture there was of mercy as well as of judgment in so deplorable a state, as is clear, v. 21. This I recall to mind, therefore have I hope, &c. and thus having once got under his sight some appearances (though small) of light and comfort, in so thick a darkness, he quits not that scent, until he have the faithfulness of God made as convincing to this people, in his compassion and tenderness, as in his severity.

Some things are observable here for clearing the text, which in a few words I shall touch.

1. The time and condition of the Jewish church, when so great a witness is thus given; it was under the Babylonish captivity, even whilst the devastation of
of their land, the sad ruins of the city and temple were before them; when vision did fail the prophets, the ways of Zion mourned, her people fell into the enemies hand, and there was none to help; to shew what may be laid in their way for strengthening, who are in earnest to employ it; and how a crushed and dead hope may have its very first quickning in the grave.

2. It is here we see a most rare contexture betwixt the first and latter part of the verse; and how indissoluble a tie there is betwixt truth and mercy, which to divide were no more possible, than to have a conception of day-light without the sun; truth being the fountain-caufe that brings mercy forth, and therefore are they now every morning, because great is his faithfulness.

3. We may see the peculiar intent of this scripture, to hold forth the unspotted faithfulness of God in so sad a time; which is that attribute amongst his glorious excellencies, he hath chosen in a special manner for revealing himself to men, as eminently expressive of his being, veracity and power; the rectitude and immutability of his nature; a truth, though we cannot comprehend (for the nearest approaches of reason here, will still leave us at an infinite distance), yet are we called to an humble enquiry, for our further joy and establishment in the faith thereof.

4. The making out of this great attribute must be underfoot with respect to the written word, and these expressive engagements exhibited there to the church, where the holy God by a marvelous condescension hath set bounds to himself, with a liberty for all flesh, to challenge if his truth there does in any thing fail; and thus is it clear, how his works are done in faithfulness and truth; not only in an exact conformity to that eternal idea thereof in the divine understanding, but to his revealed counsels in the scripture, which is the adequate sign of his ancient purpose and decrees in all that concern the church, and the conduct of providence within time.

5. The present advantage of to clear a testimony to the truth for that time, is observable to acquit the way of the Lord under these dark and shaking providences; and let men fee with what an uninterrupted course his faithfulness doth still shine, whatever clouds interpose between them and it; yea, how great a flability is in the worst of times for the church's interest, and for all that a christian can adventure on this blessed securitv, whilst every day gives so sad an account of human props. Now from the text thus cleared, I shall premise some few doctrinal truths.

Doc. t. 1. They run not that errand in vain, whose work is to commend the way of the Lord in a dark time; for it shall commend it itself to them; nor will they want strengthening remarks of his truth and tendernefs, who have a serious observing eye for them. Thus we find the church was taken up in a fainting hour of trial, and what success it had. It is true, a christian's ecstasys for this end, may sometimes be like that of Elijab's servant, to go once and again, yea, to seven times and see nothing; and the first breaking up of their hope, have so small an appearance as the hand-breath of that cloud had to him, though at last it made the heavens black therewith, and the return as large as its delay seemed long; but whatever thus from the Lord is for trial, it is sure the faithful improving of a little this way, must still lead into a growing strength, and a serious aim to keep up the credit of the truth both on their own heart and with others, can leave none behind. Oh what rare mercies lie oft hid under some dark and afflicting providences, even whilst they are at our hand, and are not seen, from the frowardness of an imibittered spirit, that will not let its own eyes see the advantage of such a case; but as if they did well to be angry against God, will quarrel more his croullng the humour, than observe his tendernefs for promoting their real good, and cry against him, because he will not undoe them.

Doct.
Part II. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

DOCT. 2. They are on a choice fcent, for their solid strengthening in the truth, let the times be never fo shaking, whose work is to keep sight and follow with their eye the faithfulness of God in the providences of their life; yea, does so follow this in their mercies, as that which is to them the better part of such a mercy, when it brings something confirming with it to the truth, and for their establishment that way. Thus was the church here at work in a fad time, and through the whole scripture is remarkable; did Jacob divide these in his observing, Gen. xxxii. 10. I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies, and of the faithfulness thou hast shewed to thy servant; or in his pleading with God, 12. And thou saidst, I will surely do the good. And how concerned was David, to have them still kept together in his view, mercy and truth, as in Psal. xxv. 10. lii. 8. lxxxix. 1. 2. But oh it seems such in these times have had some other sight and conception of this duty than is now understood; and thus have fought a more near intercourse with the truth and certainty of the Lord’s being God, with which in the very notion thereof, our converse this day seems to be rare.

DOCT. 3. Whatever essays men have to darken the faithfulness of God in his word, yet is it such as must be shewed forth, and every time pay in some tribute therto; therefore is so remarkable a cry here, to awake mens spirits for observing this, great is his faithfulness. It is his praise and declarative glory in the earth, the ultimate end of his works, that point where all the lines of providence at last do meet, and therefore cannot want an herald, though the tones of the ground should arise to speak it forth; for a greater necessity is here, than for the fire to burn, or the sparks to flee upward, that the glory of the only true God, in the verification of his word be from one generation to another witnessed. So excellent an use is this, that a christian should think he lives, and hath a desirable being, that in his day he may put to this seal, that God is true; nor needs any fear whatever time or capacity they are in, that it’s in earnest they level at such a mark and miss it. O what pleasure is thus found, which the voluptuous man never knew; and how far is it above all he can have, or so much as apprehend in his wallowing in inanitiy.

I suppose a christian at such a strait, that he could but speak four words to the world, and be struck dumb through the rest of his time; and that upon this account he were pained, how to speak them to most advantage, could he ease his soul more, or have a choice beyond this for giving glory to God, when he might say so little then here, Great is his faithfulness.

DOCT. 4. That it is not a flourishing state of the church only, and her rising, but her ruin also does convincingly shew forth this. From this scripture may be clear; yea, is the voice of the rod as well as of the word, where both mercy and judgment meet in the same witness; and though the bitterness of sin, and that sad eclips it causeth betwixt God and the soul, is sad indeed, yet is it such as may be no les for a christian’s confirming in the truth than the joy of his presence. If dark and afflictive times were not, how much of the Bible were as lost, and its use wholly frustrate? We stand amazed at some terrible acts of the Lord in the earth, but consider not whose errand they go, and for what end, that it is to let men see, when he turns a defended city into a ruinous heap, his counsels of old are faithfulness and truth, Is. xxv. 1. 2. which if they will not see in the word, read it they must, though it should be in characters of blood.

DOCT. 5. It is a begun cure to the church, and so far a day-break under the darkest trial, as there is a clearing of the way of the Lord, that in faithfulness and truth he hath done it. Thus in to dismal a time, when Judah was
The Fulfilling of the Scripture. Part II.

was a wilderness, and Jerusalem a desolation, and their ruins such, as if destruction needed not to arise the second time; we may see how this was as the turning the light side of their trouble towards them; when once they knew where they were, and how all that was gone over their head did confirm his unsotted faithfulness; for thus they may be further persuaded of the Lord's being God, and how he gives his word a being in the most amazing acts of judgment; they see his glory shine forth here, and that great end secured, wherein they are to rejoice whatever mistaking be of other inferior ends; thus however the storm blow, and though the earth should all be in a commotion, this greatest interest is sure, which is the faithfulness of God, they know it stands immovable, and no loss or shipwreck there, on which more than all that is within time they have in dependence; yea, here the credit of the truth is cleared, the darknes of the trial is so far gone, and the church brought to the light, to see both the cause and cure of her stroke, and needs not grope to find the door for an outlet.

Doc. 6. There is a season and advantage duty hath, that gives a peculiar beauty thereto; which the prophet does here notice, and thus is pressed to own the faithfulness of God, when the faith of many was ready to be shaken with the strange providences of that time. They are indeed blessed, who bow besides all waters, and find their work wherever it is laid to their hand; and it is sure, where love gets the command over the heart, those cannot want an advantage for their master's service; nor can they lose such a talent, but by laying its use aside; yet sad experience can also shew, how difficult the work of the present day does oft prove to the next, and that the season of duty, and for some service to the truth, may be such a tide, as will not flow twice in one life.

Doc. 7. It is not a truth only, what these words do assert; but there is an infinite greatness applicable to it above all created things; the discovery whereof did cause so astonifhing a transport here, Great is his faithfulness; a truth which none can over-speak, yea, where no possible hyperbole could ever be; and as no age of the church hath wanted cause for such a witness, I must lay, none ﬂands more debtor to this than the present time. This is the theme and subject to be followed forth here, which under the sense of peculiar engagements thereto, and some impression of the majesty of God, whose declarative glory in the earth is so much concerned therein, and to visibly impugned this day by many of the generation, I desire to adventure on, and to offer humbly some further light to what I have else where eftay'd on to great a subject; and in the first place some clear demonstrative grounds of that inﬁnite greatness, to which no angels nor men may or can lay claim; I shall but in a few words instance.

1. How great is it, where such assurances are given to the church, that the Lord must cease to be God, and those visible heavens and earth cease to have a being, before his faithfulness in one jot of the written word fall. This is that ground the christian's faith hath in the darkest day to cast anchor on, and it is sure, is no bottoming on a dream, when it is such wherein it is impossible for God to lie, Heb. vi. 18. Et cui non potest subesse falsum. Contingency hath no dominion here, nor man's free will, whose rife and working is within time; but his word is that before which all flesh must keep silent, my counsel shall stand, faith the Lord, and I will do all my pleasure; to which all second caufes, both in their operation and purpo are indiffolubly linked.

2. Is it not great whereon such a weight does this day feat, which is no less than that burden of the visible heavens and earth, with their continued order
order and course, the whole militant church, the everlasting flame and blessedness of the elect, and all their interests within time, which are on this great foundation rolled over and sure; yea, it is here the personal weights and burthen of every one of the saints, the up-rising of the afflicted and bowed down, the credit and support of many, whose alone security for their daily bread is the promise of God; and their venture whose believing in hope is such oft, that it is against hope, and all visible appearances, which on this alone ground are ensured; the least part whereof were enough to sink us, if that were not to bear all up, Great is his faithfulness.

3. How infinitely great is this, in the import thereof; which (I am sure) if understood, we could not in so ordinary a way look upon the scripture, when it is no less than an infallible assurance given from heaven to the church, and here upon earth put on record for things of highest concernment; wherein before angels and men it is ensured by him who lives for ever and ever.

1. That whilst time is, the ordinances of heaven, shall continue as they are, there shall be summer and winter, feed-time and harvest; and therefore even he who found the ground should sow it in hope.

2. That the world shall be no more deluged by rain, for which the written word is our alone security.

3. That as the Lord is God, his church shall be continued in the earth, and a seed to serve him whilst the Sun and Moon endure.

4. That none of the saints shall be utterly cast down, or by any temptation ruined, as to final apostacy, being kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, 1 Pet. i. 5.

5. That he on whom help is laid, shall be satisfied with the travail of his soul; shall see his feet, and prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, Isa. liii. 10. Yea, no nullity or revocation shall for ever be of that blessed indenture he hath made with his church.

6. That he will make them what he hath required them to be; and his own promis shall be the spring of these qualifications annexed thereto.

7. That none can condemn, whom Jesus Christ hath justified, and to his alone righteousness have fled for their refuge.

8. That they shall be for ever with God, and received into glory, whom he guides by his counsel here. Thus for all these great interests does his faithfulness stand good; and what yet remains to perfect the whole work of providence in the earth, the christian's conduct and support in his journey, their safe passage through death, yea, the keeping of their dust in the grave, and a raising of the same body at the last day.

4. His faithfulness is great, in that continued course it hath had with the church since the beginning of time to this day, and never left ground, but is still the same, and with the same strength hath shined under all these assaults which have been for its darkening. It was at the first being of the creation, that so great a light begun to dawn, when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. What a transport must this have been when these blessed triumphant spirits the angels, could in one moment see themselves brought out of pure nothing, into that ineffable light of seeing God, with so clear a discovery of his name and attributes. It is true, there is a gradual light and opening up of the truth, and some more signal periods of time, to which a brighter shining forth of the faithfulness of God hath its respect. There was a veil over the times of the Old Testament, and scripture-truths then much sealed up, nor was the Lord so remarkably known by his name Jehovah, Exod. iii. 8. in giving a being to his promises. But now are come these blessed times of the New Testament, whose work is to open up what then
then was sealed, and bring forth such long desired truths to a visible performance; though this also hath a more peculiar respect to these last ages in which we now are fallen; and it is sure, were this once finished, and that the written word had done its work, for what concerns the church within time, there should be no more to do, but the glorious faithfulness of God, which never yet ceased to shine (though with a gradual accession) had gone its course, and were at the full and perfect day.

5. This also is great in the extent and these large bounds, where this day it shines forth, which is not in the visible church only, or where the fame of the gospel isspread (though there alone it is believed and known) but goeth as far as the whole work and conduct of providence through the earth; for in no corner so remote or dark does this want a witness; it being clear, 1 That as far as the power of a natural conscience is, and where men are constrained to observe a power higher than man, to difference betwixt good and evil, even there is its taking place displayed. 2 Where the sun doth rise and go down, and the raging sea hath its appointed bounds; for these do witnesses through the whole earth, that God, whose promise and appointment they are, and which no human power could possibly effectuate, is faithful and true. 3 This must shine forth, and have the extent of its discovery as large a bounds, as there is men; who cannot exert reason, and not see that marvelous order and dependence of things which is through the creation: so that though they know not the word, yet is this truth of it in such great letters written out, as all may read, upon the heavens and the earth, His work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment, Deut xxxii. 4. 4. What a visible witness hath this, in the greatest darkness and barbarity of the earth? yea upon such an account, that so great a part thereof lyeth as an out-field, without that pale and inclosure the gospel hath made? for it is sure, here is an obvious seal to the scripture, as well as the being and flourishing of the church. 5. Which is more marvelous, it is not in the dark places of the earth only, but in that place of horror and utter darkness, where this doth eminently shine forth; for it is thofe unsppeable torments, with the continued cries of the damned in hell do never cease, nor never will, to bear such a witness, God is faithful and true; no possible atheism can be there, whose felt experience doth force them to know, that God is what his word declared him to be, in that unspotted attribute of his justice. Yea, if a full history could be writ of this world, what in all times hath occurred both to nations and particular persons, (if this were possible) what else would it be found to be, but as a great and exact history of the Bible, where the greatest atheism might see these truths they read, there writ in most visible realities before them, Et quod mundus nihil alius est, quam Deus explicatus secundum Scripturam?

6. What cause hath the church to witness, great is the faithfulness of God, from its product. I mean those great and wonderful events of the scripture, in which this day it hath a visible performance before us; such events, which all may see a power above nature, and the energy of natural causes could only bring forth; yea, that these are not at a distance, but so-near, as if our eyes be not shut, a seal to the truth, greater than miracles or any extraordinary signs that ever were given to the church, might be found at our hand. This is a subject of great import, to confirm and most solidly fix the fainths in the faith of the word, in so shaking a time, which were it underground, no discovery within time could more help to make our joy full. Which before I touch in some particular instances, where its truth and certainty may be demonstrated, I shall first offer these few things to be previously considered for giving light thereto.

1. It
1. It is undeniable, and we are eye witnesses thereof, that such events of the scripture are, yea before the world brought forth, which can be clearly evinced to fall under no possibility of second causes; and are not some rare contingencies apt to beget admiration amongst men, by reason of their ignorance, but such that do as evidently witness a divine and supernatural power, excited therein, for bringing them forth, as there is in raising the dead, dividing the sea, or causing the sun to stand still in its ordinary course.

2. It may be clearly evinced, these are such events, that no human knowledge could have possibly foreseen, or from principles of reason have found the least ground to conjecture their falling out; and are not natural verities, which from any imbred notions thereof in the soul, could have ever had a rise in our thoughts, if by the written word so great a discovery had not come.

3. As a further witness to their truth, and that here can be no possible imposure or deceit, we see a most perfect idea and comprehension of all these marvelous events in the scripture, that are thus brought forth in our view, which as we read them there, so are they certainly found to take place, and the one not more visibly clear than the other.

4. Since the nearest objects do most excite and affect men, if they be of no less weight than these that are transmitted at a distance; this advantage hath the church here, in these great and wonderful events of the scripture, that it is not on others credit and testimony they are to admit such things, but may come near and see with their eyes the truth thereof, yea how it is known as it were by sensible touch and feeling; there is I confess an unanswerable attestation of the truth by extraordinary miracles, which with the first dawning of the gospel were given to the church; yet we see (though such want not, beside divine authority, most clear demonstrative grounds of their certainty to reason) how little weight these are found to have to affect or convince the world, looking thereon at so great a distance of time; so hard it is for men to be suitably stirred up with any thing that is not in our present sight.

5. Such are these wonderful events of the scripture (here in some instances after touched) that all may see they are not a transient glance, which at some rare time only have been found to fall out; but it can be demonstrated, the greatest miracles the church ever knew, are yet in her sight, and have been continued under the New Testament, by that marvelous verification of the word unto men; though some of these which have respect to some special periods of time, are now more conspicuous, and evidently brought forth in these last ages of the church. O what a stroke is it on our reason, that the most immediate and visible appearances of God do not affect, or have that deep impression on the mind, if they be not extraordinary and new! Thus in the greatest things of nature, how much is the world taken with a monfier, that doth little regard the bringing forth of a perfect man, which is indeed more wonderful; we look with amazement on a Meteor, who with small respect can pass by those glorious bodies of the sun, moon, and stars, (I confess, these rare glances of a divine extraordinary power call aloud for men grave and serious observing, and some other improvement, than by most, use to be made thereof.) But it is sure, the church this day wants not miracles, which is not considered, that in no strange and extraordinary path these now are to be sought, but in that high and beaten road of the scripture, and its accomplishment. And therefore is it, that these unusual appearances of God, which in the church’s infancy were suited to awake men to an adherence to the truth, and confirm the same, do this day cease, because the unsealing of the scripture in the times of the New Testament, was to bring greater things forth before
before us for confirming the truth, which are to be found by our taking heed to this more sure word of prophesie that countervails all these. But thus he goes by on our right and left hand, yet men perceive not, and do not truly see or understand what they see.

6. Since it is sure, the event of things here in the world is that about which mens minds are most taken up; and we see what presling defire there is to know the transactions of the time, and what is falling out in the earth, though it be nothing of their personal concernments. Oh! how strange is this, that the great events of the scripture that are of such high import for a more full assurance of the Lord's being God, the certainty of his truth, and of that unconceivable glory in heaven with him for ever; these go by us almost no inquiry or regard. Here is indeed a matter of astonishment, how men read the Bible, do professedly own it, yet nothing presled in their spirit to know if such marvelous things as are there, do really fall out in the event, whilst such are of nearest concernment, and offer themselves to every ones trial by experience, so that none need take them on trust.

Having premised these things for giving some light to the present subject, I shall here sum up what in this following discourse is further intended in these four particulars: 1. These clear and undeniable instances we now have before us of such events of the written word, where the immediate appearance of God, and a power above natural caues in bringing them forth is so clearly witnessed, that we may see things no less great and wonderful at this day wait the church to confirm the truth, than any extraordinary miracles that in former times were known. 2. The import of this demonstration, with that marvelous light which thence breaks up would be seriously considered, that lets us see, there are higher degrees of assurance and establishment about the certainty of the scripture to be reached, than seems by most christians to be understood; for which beside the clearest evidences of reason, such a demonstration is given to our sense of the truth, and these great advantages laid to our hand for believing, that might make our adventuring thereon as clear and comfortable a way, yea with that full security to satisfy the soul, as the way of sense and feeling could do. 3. Whence it is, that christians assurance and solid confirmation about the truth is so little proportioned to the greatness of the seal and attestation thereof that is before us. Its objective evidence so large and marvelous a thing, while that subjective certainty within the soul, which this calls for, is so little understood. 4. How excellent an use and improvement of this subject might be made, I intend here also to touch.

C H A P. II.

For the first, it seems a strange inadvertence, how such events of the scripture are brought forth to the world, and this day visible in our sight, yet in such an ordinary way looked on, yea as if we were more asleep than waking; when if men quit not the use of reason, they cannot but see these both in the discovery and bringing forth thereof are above human reach; about which that great appeal Elijah made, 1 Kings xxi. 22. to an extraordinary answer from the Lord, when the people were halting betwixt two opinions, and he said, The God that answers by fire, let him be God, may be here made use of. I may say, to a greater decision, and witness for the certainty of his word, that men would come and see, if he be not assuredly God, and this his undoubted truth and testimony, which hath so marvelous a birth and verification this day in our sight, that all the Magicians in the earth could never counterfeit; yea, more fully demonstrative of a divine supernatural power, than
Part II. *The Fulfilling of the Scripture.*

than if we had so extraordinary a sign, as that which was then given *Elijah* from heaven before all the people.

**Sect. 1.** First, There is this rare *frame* and *contrivance* of the scripture, and what a fulness and perfection it hath, as it is the record it bears to it self, *Psalm* xix. 7. and cxix. 129. in which its truth so discernible in the event, that if men's eyes be not flut, here may be a continued cause for wondering afar before them; such, that amongst the greatest works of God under the sun, and all created excellencies, there is none like this, nor can be until the written word give place to immediate vision. O what a real miracle is the Bible, for such is it in it self; in its whole frame and contexture; that though it had no attestation else by the works of God, it might be an unanswerable seal to its own truth. It is indeed strange, so great a light shines, and surrounds men with its brightness and yet they are so little affected therewith; that such a demonstration of the glorious God, and a work which all may see is above human perfection, helps not more to cure the atheism of the world; who if they would but come near and consider this great wonder, might clearly see:

1. That here is nothing wanting which the church now in the world hath need of, or could in an extraordinary way seek from heaven; and yet is there nothing redundant or superfluous; the whole race of the saints, from the beginning to this day, could not have wished it another thing than it is, though a latitude had been given them, which so answers all times and ages of the church, as if only framed for the present time. No Christian but this takes by the hand, and to all that is in their.ca is so suited, as if for them alone it were an immediate gift and message from heaven.

2. This doth enlighten the whole work of God, and keeps exactly foot with each foot-step of providence in the earth, which comprehends in its lap and bosom every event, small and great, that in due season is disclosed within time; no deep of Satan such, that it doth not discover, nor is there a work of darkness hid from its light. The church never knew her hazard, but might find it was there seen and foretold; yea, the eternal counsels and decrees of heaven, and what is concluded there, which neither angels nor men could search into, are here set open in our view; and that greatest depth of election thus far unvailed, and brought down before our eyes, that men can be no more sure such shall be saved, who are predestinate to life, were there access to read their names in that secret roll of the decree, than from the scripture it is sure such are elect, and shall undoubtedly be saved, who have come to Jesus Christ in the acceptance of the offer of the gospel.

3. Let us come near, to look to this great wonder, that with such a light discovers the whole creation, and lets us know, what such a sight and these marvelous things therein mean, which else should be unintelligible, and as a dark mass before us; this that draws by the vail, and shews that rare image of spiritual truth in these things that are obvious to our senses; and how the invisible things of God, his external power and godhead, are by things seen shewed forth; for thus is the great fabric of nature disclosed in its original, its continued course, that indissoluble chain of second causes, and how high a rise it hath in their dependences, until they touch heaven, where all these links are fast tied to his unchangeable purpose; yea, thus is it by the written word, that the heavens and earth as two great volumes are spread forth, and made easy for men to read, so as without this blest conduct, it is clear, no possible communion a Christian could have with himself, with the works of creation, with the daily occurrences of providence, or one Christian with another.

4. Here men may see that marvelous contexture and series of truths, how none stands alone, but so linked with a mutual correspondence to give light one to another,
ther, that each has its peculiar room and use for answering the whole frame, and not one pin there wrong placed, but all every-where uniform, and like it self, amidst so great a variety of matter, and distance of times, most wonderfully joined and knit by one corner stone Jesus Christ, who is that blessed point in whom all its lines do meet, and as the soul which enlivens the whole body of the scripture. And it is sure, on whatsoever part of scripture a minister preach, he does mis the greatest scope of that text, if it lead not into the gospel, and his doctrine thence be not thus pointing with some clear tendency towards Jesus Christ. O what a light is here, could it be truly understood what is before our eyes! 5. Thus we see, it is framed (which the Former of all things could only do) to correspond with the inward man, and exercise an authority over the conscience, and our most retired thoughts as well as our actions, and how this and this alone hath brought to light that marvelous and unknown passage betwixt the soul and invisible world, to have in one moment so immediate a converse with heaven, and from it, and thus to make its continual resort there; yea, lets us see the way for so near a converse with God, which we know by surest experience to be such as it is there revealed. 6. I must further add, what a peculiar weight and significance are the words of this great record found to have (I mean the original) by which the Holy Ghost hath chosen to convey the truth unto men, which no language, no human skill can express to the full, or is able to give the sense of that marvelous παθίας and life in expression, and of these idioms there, but once age must still leave it to another for further enquiry and search.

SECT. 2. That great scripture-truth we see in the event, and the certainty of its taking place, which could never have entered in mens thoughts, if thus it had not been made known, that there is a spiritual and new creation, such a rare structure and workmanship, wherein the glory of God in his attributes doth more eminently shine forth, than in the being and frame of these visible heavens and earth; here is indeed a great discovery, though these ordinary thoughts must have of it, may bring it in question, that either this is but a romance, and not really believed, or our reason must be in a strange sleep, who know so little the weight and import of such a truth. But question this who will, it is sure, such as ever knew the reality of religion, can be of nothing more persuaded than they are here: 1. That such a truth they read in the Bible, and is expressly there shewed forth, which nature never taught the world, but to this day should have been a terra incognita without scripture-light; see Eph. i. 19. ii. 10. Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23. Nor is it a dark view there given of such a thing, but a most perfect idea and model of this workmanship to the leafth pin thereof, which is thus let forth before us. 2. That as it is written and brought to light, so is it certainly found to be a truth. Here is no world in the moon, or the visions of mens heads, but such a creation do the saints know, and hath been their witness'd, since such a seed was in the earth, upon as clear demonstrative grounds as men can have of this visible world they now are in: that the being and reality of grace and a spiritual life, these felt enjoyments of God, and his workings in the soul, are truths by experience found, and do exactly answer the pattern thereof which was sent down from heaven, and exhibited to us in the Bible. These know there is a living holiness, which even to others may be as discernible as that there is a living man upon the earth; and a second impression which the law hath on the heart, as we see it with ink before us in the scripture. I know, to such who have their soul sunk in the earth, this may be as a night-dream. But do men debate there is a truth in these discoveries of America, when now for some ages, by so many thousands who have been
been there, and have a continued trade with these parts; it is attested: Yet a greater witness to this truth, and its undoubted certainty is here, from the whole race of the saints, since the beginning of time to this day, whose record we know to be true, except we should deny there is a sun when we see it with its own light. 3. It is sure, here is an immediate influence from heaven, and its continued necessity to conserve this blest creation, as discernible as that of the influence of the heavens on the earth; nor can the parched ground more need the falling down of rain, than this is found to have of a new watering to cause it to spring. 4. Thus it is known, there is another air to breathe in, than what is suited to our natural life; and another sun than that in the firmament, to convey both light and heat to the soul; yea, a being brought near, and laid under these warming beams; and indeed such a blest aplication, as men can know in the most hot reflex of the summersun; and that here also are over-cloudings and dark hours, as discernible as it is sure that the earth hath her night and cloudy times. 5. This is such a creation, where as obvious a contexture and content there is in all its parts, as we may see in this great fabric of nature, yea, such where no vacuum or empty discontinuity can possibly be found.

Section 3. We see it verified, and before us in the event, which natural understanding could never know or comprehend, if it were not revealed in the scripture, that there is a creating of the fruit of the lips, Isa. livi. 19, such a product and fruit of the gospel by the ministry of men to be found, that is no less wonderful and demonstrative of an immediate divine power, than to create and give things a being by the word out of nothing. Here is indeed an astonishing thing, which if a truth, it is then sure we see with our eyes a zeal to the scripture that is beyond these miracles which in a more extraordinary way have been given to the church. Is it a human work? Or could it possibly be the fruit of mens lips, that brings forth such realities and wonderful effects in the earth? Could moral perwasion, or a found of air and words (yea, where no previous matter to work on can be alleged) have that effect, which so visibly is above the reach of second causes? Now that this is a truth there is no demonstration in nature more evident; that the fruit of mens lips by the minitry of the gospel, is a creation indeed, I offer these undeniable instances: 1. What a power muft it be, that can turn the word preached into a real act, and resolve what is as a transient found into such an undoubted reality of life and feeling; yea, turns the word fown by the minitry of men, into vital principles within the foul, what a fight were it, to see fome of the flosses of the ground rise up at the speaking of fome words in the visible appearance of men. Yet here certainly is something no less marvelous, were it underflood. 2. To turn the Pagan world to be chriflian, and there-with a throwing-down of their temples, and abandoning that worship and profound veneration, which for fo vait a space of time, the nations once had to their gods; yea, this by the word of the gospel, without might or power; Is it not truly such a thing as to bring a new world forth in our fight, and a creation indeed; It is true, many ages are past since this was; yet is it of fuch import, a revoluion fo famous and publich through the earth, and of that unanswerable evidence, that this day, as a new and continued wonder, it might be as full preffent in our fight. And can this possibly be forgot, what the known records of these times, which we have in our hands, continue to tell us; how strange a face fome ages ago there was upon the world, and what a change (for which human reafon could never find a caufe) hath followed; that fo long a rooted religion shoule be forced to diappear, and this by an unften power with the gospel, that did not strive,
not cry out. So as now, for many ages Jupiter is no more known, nor hath Diana her temple, or Apollo his oracles; but these found to be such gods as in Elijah's time who could neither help nor plead their own cause, whilst their friends contended for them, nor could they be once awakened to appear for their interests. O what a continued miracle is this, that no distance of time can bring in debate, or alledge a possible deceit or imposition therein! 3. Is it not more than human, and the visible product of an immediate power from heaven, that awe and authority with the preached gospel, which is found on these who hate it, not only to beget a feigned subjection, but in truth and effect some subjection of their conscience? for it is seen where no visible motive is, no hazard from without to influence such a thing, how many millions have such a force put on them by apower which themselves do not understand, to fear and regard that name, and thus pay homage to the gospel, in whose soul there is a real and inbred enmity thereto? this is a marvelous thing, what an awe and dread is put on most of the christian world, even upon their conscience, that would make them stand with an horror and trembling to abandon christianity, in whom a real hatred to the truth and power thereof is so discernible. 4. It is an unanswerable evidence, this can be no human work, but an immediate creation of God, which is in bringing forth the fruit of the lips by the ministry of men; that the greatest effects of the gospel in the world, hath in all ages had this known remark therewith, to be more found by the doctrine of the cross, and the plainness and simplicity of the truth, than by the wisdom of words, or the furthest persuasives of human eloquence; to witness, that it is not art, or the excitement of men's words, but there is an evidence and demonstration of the spirit, an elivening air and sound, that is most discernible from the words of these who are puffed up. And thus is it evident, that the kingdom of God is not in word, but power; and how the truth hath a self-evidencing light therewith, and that native lustre which no human invention ever could reach a painter may represent the lively colours of a flower to admiration, but no art can give forth its fragrancy and vital scent.

S e c t. 4. How great a discovery of the truth of the scripture is this, which hath in all times been known by the saints in the event, as certainly as they know they live and breathe in the air, That it is God who worketh all their works in them, Isa. xxvi. 12. I confess, one of the depths of religion is here, the world cannot reach, and these who pretend that freedom and command within their soul, which hath no dependance on a supernatural influence and power, will not know; but sure and known it is, that I must say, if the evidence and certainty such have, who are christians indeed, could be witnessed to others, and their experience resolved in words, as they know it in truth, the world would be then forced to see a debate about this is as strange as theirs who would question, if there be a truth in motion, or if day-light be a dream and delusion, or not. The soul is one of the rarest pieces of the whole creation of God; and it is here as a stage and theater, the greatest of his works are wrought, yea, such that a christian cannot but know to be his immediate working; which 1. He finds is so far above his own reach to bring forth, if he be not a great stranger to himself. 2. Such he finds by no moral arguments or the influence of outward means could possibly be effectuate; and how little, with the greatest abundance of these is oft to be found, of a power or effectual working thereby on the soul? 3. These he can clearly see whose work they are, by bringing them to that test of the written word for their trial. 4. They are such works as are not seen at a distance, but lie so near, that a christian can retire within himself, and there have
have so clear and unanswerable an evidence of a God-head and the truth of his
word, that I must say, were this great demonstration more pursed, of the
Lord's coming near to men in his immediate working on their soul, with a
deeper reflection thereon, such a degree of assurance about the truth, might
this way be reached, that even by most of serious christians seems not to be
supposed or sought after; this is a price for wisdom in our hand, that few
know how to improve.

Having premised these, I shall here offer in some instances, how great a
discovery the saints thus have of the Lord's being God, and the certainty of his
truth, by that they know and see of his immediate work within their soul.
1. How oft he caueth a day-break of light and life, by a marvelous sur-
prise to arise within, when nothing but darkness can be seen without, like a
sun-shine at midnight, is a truth not more truly promised to the uprighth than
it is found, Psal. cxii. 4.
2. His causing their peace to abound, when surrounded every-where with
trouble and distress; for whence could such a thing possibly be, if it were not
from heaven, to rejoice in tribulation, and find that which caueth them to
take pleasure in perfection, in necessities, and reproach for Christ's sake?
Job. xvi. 2. 2 Cor. ii. 9. yet this is known and experienced.
3. The restoring their soul by a present and sensible relief, when it hath
been ready to fail, and give over, as under a Deliquium; which was David's
witness, Psal. xxiii. 3. Is it not found that if not immediately from above,
no other way it could have come?
4. How there is a sensible impowering of a christian in the inward man to
wrestle and follow hard after God, under severe pressures from without, so
that he knows the call to this in the word, is not more discernible than his
being caueth to approach by a felt influence, and power on the soul, Psal.lxxv.
how great a witness is thus to be had of the truth, and that surely the
Lord is God?
5. Nothing can be more known than this is to the saints, that surprising
influence which is oft on their faith to cause them hope on the word, and
have a satisfied resting thereon, without anxiety, which all their former eflays
could not do; yea, this, when no outward appearance hath given the least
advantage, but their difficulties on that hand seemed more to increafe; must
not this be immediately from heaven, and above all natural causes? see
Psal. cxix. 49. and Psal. cxliii. 3. what an account is there given.
6. It is sure none of the saints but may know whose work it is, that in
one moment can enlarge their soul, and put it a going with an easy and uncon-
strained motion after their duty, who were before so sensibly clogged and
fettered therein; and how marvelous a change the blowing of such a gale hath
caueth; where nothing from any outward cause could be found for it; ere
ever I was aware my soul made me like the chariots of a willing people,
Cant. vi. 12.
7. It is no less discernible how the weight and pressure of their burden is
oft remarkably taken off, which was before like to sink them, even when the
burden lieth as fore upon them from outward caufes as ever, yea, nothing to
lighten it that way, but finds there is a flaying the rough wind, in the day of
the east-wind, Isa. xxvii. 8. and how in their near approach to him, such a
persuasion he can beget in their soul of a delivery which seemed most hope-
less from any present appearance, that all anxiety, and disquiet is then gone,
and taken off their spirit.
8. Thus is he known to be God on the souls of his people, who can sub-
ject the will with its own consent, to follow the dictate of an enlightened
under-

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understanding, and effectually determine it, which once no moral arguments or reason could do, so that the heart is as it were filled and caught away, yet with a constraint, but such as hath a most discernible congruity betwixt that drawing power, and their greatest liberty, Cont. i. 4.

Sect. 5. Here is a wonderful thing, and a most convincing seal to the truth, this day in our sight, if our eyes were but awake to regard it, that the natural man cannot see, or perceive the things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 14. How such a darkness should be: That the most searching spirits, who in the depths and subtilties of nature exceed the ordinary reach of men, yet here are blind, though they know it not, and whilst they exercise their reason and judgment, about the truths of the gospel, where to great a light shines forth, yet are these hid from their eyes, and they verily shut out from the Bible, even while they read it, so as they cannot see that which makes the simple wise. Oh what a thing should this be were it understood! and how clear and demonstrative an evidence is it of the truth, a darkness which doth no less confirm the Scripture of God, than that marvelous light which shines therein to others. It is strange how far men would go to see some extraordinary miracle wrought, or such a place of the earth, in which the light did brightly shine, when at that present time, nothing but darkness were to be seen round about; but is not here something no less marvelous, and undoubtedly sure, which now is before us, if we could come near to see.

1. Though it were not shewed us in the written word, it is sure and undeniable such must be in the dark, let them pretend what they will, and do not really see nor understand, what in the Scripture is most plain, who can on these rocks and precipices so confidently run, which would cause an inexplicable fear and horror, if they had that light thereof, which others have from the same truths, they seem to converse with.

2. That there is a reality in this strange darkness (though it is a dream to the world) is sure, and known by christian experience, not only at their first entry into a spiritual state, what a marvelous light then breaks up, which they never understood before, or had the least conception of; but in their after-walk what a sight and discovery is to be had sometimes of a scripture-truth, that if they would give all the world for it they cannot have at other times.

3. And is not this such a darkness, whence it is demonstratively clear, there must be a supernatural evidence and discovery of the Scripture, which from the light of reason and nature do not in degree, but in kind differ, as truly as the light of the sun is from that of a candle.

4. Thus it is not the revealing of truths to us with the greatest objective perspicuity can enlighten, until once it be revealed in us. But though men have a natural faculty of understanding, and no want of light in the object, and medium; yet doth it shine in on such a darkness which comprehends it not, nor can receive and discern spiritual things spiritually.

5. Here needs not only a faculty and habitual illumination, but a present actual irradiation of the mind therewith, and immediate disposing of the soul to go forth and receive the truth, as it is represented in its true lustre and beauty.

6. Thus we may clearly see there is such a thing as a real evidence and perception of divine truth, and a seeing it with our eyes, that others only see in a map; with which there is also a transforming the Soul into the very things there contained, and a changing it into the spirituality of the Word, which as it is there written forth unto us, we know and are sure of its record. Is it true; and so is it found.
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Sect. 6. It is an undoubted event of the scripture where men may see a witness to the truth, no less convincing, than of the most extraordinary miracles, that a spiritual seed should be kept up in the earth, which doth not fail or wear out, under all efforts to ruin the fame: but such an excellent species of christians in its kind as visibly transmitted through all ages by a continued succession as that of mankind. It is sure this was promis'd to the church, 1 Pa. liii. 10. Psal. lxxxix. 4. 29. and to this present time is it not seen how marvelously it hath taken place; yea, what an extraordinary appearance of God is there if these were rightly understood? 1. That human race can boast of no longer continuance in the earth, than this blessed seed can do; for for with Adam's fall did christianity first break up that to this day lives, yea, without interruption hath been perpetuated, not in a shadow, but in truth and reality; and since that time did the sun never shine in so dismal a day, when it could be laid, there were men in the earth, but no christians, or that the church did die without an heir and off-spring. 2. How could this possibly be without an immediate power from heaven, where a continued war hath been on foot these five thousand years and more to wear such a seed out, whilst we see what length of time can do in the world; and that a war without cessation, were it but for one age, could not fail in an ordinary way to depopulate, and wear out the most flourishing countries. 3. Such a war and enmity is this which thus hath been kept up, that as it is not against the godly so much, as that divine image they bear, and not christians, but the truth of christianity. 4. Which makes this wonder the greater, we see the party stated in the quarrel against such a seed, is not spiritual wickedness only, or the united concurrence of men, but the very nature of man now depraved, and not an enmity, that is transient or taken up, but doth as naturally descend from one race to another, with in-bred principles, as it is for men to eat or sleep; so that it may be said human race doth not more naturally move to the preferring its own kind, than to destroy this. 5. How far is this above nature, or the possibility of second causes, when it is so clear, not one of that continued race of the saints, but must have a new life and being from heaven, else not at all; hath no human progenitors, but is the immediate offspring of God, and no womb to bring forth such a birth, but his eternal counsel and decree. One christian cannot beger another, but it is as great and marvelous a work the bringing forth of the meanest of the saints to have such a new state and being, as to make a piece of red clay a living person. 6. Thus is there not a visible discovery of the being of God, and certainty of the word, when it is so evident, the continued flux of time, and its changes cannot abate the power and efficacy of divine truth; but with each following age is so convincingly shew'd forth, as can witness the gospel does not spend its strength through length of time, but is still where-ever it comes, as a new gift to the world, which hath the fulness of a blessing therewith, even when from places, it wants not some fatal periods and judicial departure. 7. How great a wonder is here, if we could consider what dismal times have gone so oft over the church, and that impetuous torrent of error and atheism which hath threatened no less than at once to swallow up all serious religion amongst men; so that the continuing of such an interest this day in the earth, and that christianity still lives, yea, not in a shadow, but in truth, is truly no less marvelous than the preserving mankind in the Ark when all flesh perished, which by an immediate power from heaven was so visibly then secured; and such that we may fear a self-oblivion, and wearing out of human race will sooner take place, than the failing of this excellent species.
Sect. 7. It is sure, we see in the event, what the scripture only could reveal, and all may know to be no natural verity. That such an union there is in one spiritual nature, and an oneness in kind among the saints, as we know there is a certainty of the being of mankind, and that agreement which in the same nature men have with other; a truth clearly held forth to us, 1 Cor. xii. 11. Eph. iv. 3. 2 Pet. i. 14. and its taking place so great a witness and demonstration of the word, that I must say, were this underflow might be more convincing, than if every day were to bring forth some extraordinary miracles before us. But for further clearing, let us consider these two. 1. How it is sure, there is a reality in this, and that it may be as evidently seen as we read it in the Bible. 2. Of what great import this is, for a more full persuasion upon our soul of the truth.

As to the first, they must shut their eyes (I mean such as know any thing of the power of religion) if they know not these undeniable evidences of its certainty: 1. That there is one spiritual taste and favour of the things of God, which every where and in all times is known by the saints, though it be not in the same vigour at every time, but from the prevalence of the flesh hath oft a sensible abatement and wearing out; yet is a truth, by experience to witnised, that to such who are christians indeed, and partakers of a new nature, this may be called proprium quarto modo. 2. When in any vigour that nature excerts itself, is not such a sympathy also found with it, that all may see no outward interets or human ties have had weight to influence the same; but where grace doth remarkably shine in one, it will help to excite and draw it forth in another, with as real a sympathy as can be found on the nearest ties and union in nature. 3. Is there not a particular suiting of the same means every where to such a nature, as praying, meditation, hearing of the word, &c. so as no change of climate, and no place in the earth to remote, where there is a real christian, but these do as naturally answer there to, as our daily bread can do to this body? yea, here also are the same opposites (which to this blessed nature are destructive) no less discernible. 4. And are not the same effects and charactristical operations of such a nature through all ages known among the saints? that as it is easy to discern a man by signs and marks peculiar to his kind from a beast, it is clear, there are also breathing after God, and soul converse with him, that are as inseparably annexed to a real christian; yea, but one center here where all the stirrings and bearing of this spiritual life do as nately tend as the sparks fly upward.

5. It is clear, what ever difference is in the way and manner of the conveyance of grace to a christian's soul, yet there is but one spring and original of such a new nature; and how this is no moral persuasion or any external cause, but is found to be an immediate power from heaven, by the revealed gospel, which in all of that kind doth beget the same image and resemblance of the second Adam, as truly as that of the first is to be found in his off-spring. 6. Here also is a marvelous oneness in experience of the truth, to which none of the saints through the earth can be a stranger; how quickening, strengthening, and refreshing influences are certainly let forth by the word in their serious following duty.

Now, as these are demonstratively clear, let us consider of how great weight and import such a truth is, if our thoughts could be more flayed thereon: 1. To wit, the reality of godliness, and that the being of a christian is no more a shadow, than the being of a living man. 2. That this can be no transient disposition, which the times, the temperament of the body, or outward causes might influence; but the reality of a new creature, which riseth further above the nature of man, than it in its highest elevation is above the nature of beasts. 3. Thus we may see, whatever differences are amongst the
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the truly godly, to which their corruption, darkness of mind, and contrariety of natural dispositions is oft found to give a tawrife, yet these can no way reach serious godliness a blow; it being clear such a new nature is, where they all meet with a marvelous oneness and correspond in the specific properties of a christian. 4. Thus they can know and discern their own kind, are mutually disclosed to other, by so near an intercourse of their souls, that if such a suprise were, for one christian to find another in some remote part of the world, to whom the Lord in some extraordinary way had revealed himself, and had never known what converse with any such was; O what a natural warming one to another, and feeling intercourse should there be found upon this mutual discovery, even as the meeting of two men in a land inhabited only by bears would cause to see their own kind.

Sect. 8. How wonderful an event of the scripture, which yet in all times is so certainly known, are these contrary effects the gospel hath on men, when to some it is a favour of death, that is a favour of life unto others, 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15. Ael. xxviii. 24. for it is sure no natural cause, nor the influence of outward instruments can in this strange thing be alleged, that men exercising reason, who have the same inbred fears and hopes of things eternal, and by nature alike passions with others, yea, have souls in the same capacity to be wrought on by moral inducements, should by the very same means be so differently influenced to such contrary effects, that whereas one stumbles, others are saved and strengthened; one made further dead, and become as a stone, by that means which begets tenderness and weeping in others; yea, one made to tremble, and his joints to shake at the word, while they who are below them in a natural courage are not at all moved, but wonders what should affright them by such a found; Thus also is it, that some are made to hear a voice beyond words, & fine scriptu silliabarum, which is truly known upon his soul to be his beloved's voice, while these who sit by, can discern no such thing. O what is this? which if it were known a-right, I must say is as visible and immediate an appearance of God, as the working of any miracle that ever was, when here men may convincingly see, 1. How it is not of him that willeth or runneth, but there is a divine breath and air that is from heaven immediately, while at the same time it goes by others unperceived. 2. That here none are matters of their own motion, nor can any previous disposition from nature be alleged to give the word of the gospel an advantage upon some more than others; and it is sure no human reason can find a cause for it from without, why such a mean at the very same time should beget love in some and hatred in others, that when to the world the opening up of divine truth is foolishness, others should be then struck with amazement at so great a discovery of the wisdom of God there.

3. Is it not seen also, how surprising and unexpected this oft is found to be, that the more rude and stubborn in their nature are so remarkably oft influenced by the word, while on those who are more polished and refined, there is no such stirring. 4. And may it not be easy to see the truth of an innate quality; whence some feed and suck honey from the same mean out of which others draw forth poison; and though no persuasions of men can take off that inbred aversion to spiritual things, or change such an im poisoned nature, yet is there a divine power found to do this.

Sect. 9. It is a great event of the scripture, where we may see the truth near, and a visible demonstration of God before our eyes in these spiritual gifts given under the New Testament to the church, and for her use; which as it is expressly held forth to us, Psal. lxviii. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 14. so is its taking place clear and undeniable even before the world this day, when so
immediate a witness from heaven to the truth and Ordinances of the gospel, as might force a conviction on the greatest atheists of the being of God, and certainty of his word. These are fo manifest, 1. How such spiritual gifts are not simply acquired, but they are given; which by no skill or means could be attained, if there were not an immediate convey from above, though this doth not jufle with that commanded use of means for their further improvement. 2. That these are such as men may see have no dependence or necessary connexion with gifts meerly natural; but the most excellent endowments of nature, if alone, are found to be a poor shadow to serve the church, and that they are not suited for such an end, though of singular use in their own place. 3. These are gifts that we see do not cease or wear out, where there is a divine mission, and where-ever the church is a building; but when once there is a judicial time, upon some particular church, it may be then easy to discern how both gifts and grace are a going, and a gradual departure both of light and heat. 4. And are they not such with which the world is forced to see a marvelous energy and power for their enlivening, yea, something of a spiritual air and breath, and another favour and evidence, to witness these gifts are not only given, but the use and exercise thereof must have an immediate intercourse with heaven, and that surely there is something beyond words or the reach of all human invention in bringing forth the truth, even a supernatural influence, that the most eminently spiritual minister hath not to dispose of at his pleasure; but I must say, the with-drawing of this sometimes may be as strengthening a remark, and of no less use to edifie the church, than the most discernible enlargements at other times. 5. As a more vivid accession of these gifts now to the church in the times of the New Testament, is clear; yea, how these are then suited for the use and service of such a time, that it is sure, no remarkable exigence of the church did need a spiritual gift, but it was found, and some called forth, the hand of the Lord being strong upon them for such an end. It is indeed strange among other great evidences of the truth, that this should not be more convincing, and how most passes it with such ordinary thoughts, that 1. Is so clear and demonstrative an evidence, that the church’s head does assuredly live, whom though we see not, yet cannot but see a real and effectual communication he hath with his body upon earth, as we are sure there is a sun that shines in the firmament, when there is so sensible a diffusion of light and heat from it. 2. Thus is there a visible witness from heaven to that marvelous erection of the church here, with its peculiar offices and service, as it is a politick body, and that the authority and extract of a standing ministry under the gospel is not only from above, but thence also are its continued furniture and endowments, by a very immediate intercourse. 3. Thus we may have a great discovery of the Lord’s being God. I have oft thought, a serious and faithful minister of Christ, who knows in following his work, what near converse with his matter, and a close immediate dependence on him is in the exercise of these gifts; hath a peculiar advantage, for some rare and singular confirmations of the truth upon his soul, which are much hid from others; and though these who look on at a distance, cannot know such immediate approaches of the Lord, and marvelous impressions as these left on their soul, when brought near to him, or what may be betwixt a serious humble minister of Jesus Christ and his matter; yet is there not some glance of such a thing, and a waffe as it were of the glorious God doth go by to the discerning of others, as will force this conviction; here must be something more than human; and that a near and real intercourse betwixt heaven and men upon earth is no empty shew.
Sect. io. Is it not an undeniable event of the scripture, when the immediate appearance of God, and of a power above nature can only be seen to bring it forth: These more solemn times, and high spring-tides of the power and efficacy of the word, which are found to accompany the preached gospel, as the breaking in of a flood, that hath a force therewith which nothing then can resist; we know such a thing is clear from the scripture, that so great and effectual a door is sometimes opened to the church, 2 Cor. ii. 12, 19. 1. Muft be an immediate divine power, that can shut the church’s womb, and open it, yea bring forth such a wonder before our eyes, as is, Isaiah lxvi. 7, 8. that a nation should be born at once, and for the earth to bring forth in one day. 2. Such times as clearly shew this is the very finger of God, by that swift dispatch, the work of the gospel then hath when a few days or years are seen to bring in more to the church, than sometimes hath been the product of an age; what stupendious, and full draughts are in this day of the power of the gospel, yea how instruments are then visibly acted forth above their ordinary reach.

3. Whole work this is, all may know, which is so clear to have no dependence on men, on their painfulness, or that advantage of the most excellent natural endowments, but such a marvelous encrease is thus found to the church, when it is so discernible at other times, how the most choice and eminent instruments are oft put to cast out the net with force toil and labour, and catch nothing, the tyde being once spent and gone, and it is clear from no appearances of nature or reason could this be inferred, to shew it is above the reach of all the diviners in the world, where the stars and their conjunction can have no influence.

2. Beside the real effects then of the gospel may it not be easy to see an unusual brightness and heat go forth with such times, these glances of a divine power and majesty with the ordinances, as caufeth amazement; and how then the truth gets such acception, that ministers will be in more hazard from the over-stretching of their hearers love and respect, than from contempt.

5. To witnies here is a work visibly above nature, and the power of second causes, is not the opening of such an effectual door, and greatest opposition from men, most usually found to meet; and how such a marvelous income by the gospel, when leaf of outward incitements are to be a bate. But a time of many falling off and stumbling at the trouble and reproach which attend the truth, is oft seen to be the time of bringing others forward, yea with that strong affection and desire, which nothing but the sight of an invisible God, and an immediate power on the soul could do; this is no romance or fiction, but is a seal, and witnies from heaven to the truth, such as the world cannot deny, that it muft be his work, and his alone, who is able to subdue all things to himself, when he thus doth rent the heavens and come down, to make the mountains flow down at his presence.

Sect. ii. Could we see or regard, what is before us, here is a visible discovery of God, and of the certainty of his truth in his making out that promise; Matt. xii. 12. and 25. 29. that unto every one who hath it shall be given; how a remuneration and increase doth indeed follow the christians work, and a vigorous activity to improve his little, as is there written forth, yea such that may be clearly seen, is above all that men’s endeavour and diligence in an ordinary way could have promised, but muft be immediately from heaven, and as the undoubted effect of the promise. Now some few convincing
convincing remarks of this truth, which hath been clearly witnessed through all times of the church, I shall here offer. 1. How surprising an issue most hopeless efforts at duty with fo great wrestlings oft have had to the christians advantage, yea even to admiration, when they cannot but see, how difficulties were made the way to lead into their greatest mercies, and that better is the end of a thing than the beginning. 2. That marvelous out-come the improvement of a little strength for the church and service of their generation is oft found to have, which though it doth not appear for many days, yet such is it seem to be in the close, that in no ordinary way, or from visible appearances could have been expected. 3. How the seed was never lost, which was sown to the spirit, but in due time hath returned bringing the sheaves with it, and that these do not lose their work, but it is found still to abide with an inexpressible comfort and joy thence where there is a doing for God, and a single intending him in it. 4. That to abound in the work of the Lord, was never in vain, but in all times hath such an increase as makes the difference betwixt them in the reaping, and those who sowed sparingly most discernible. 5. That no lot or trial of a christian was ever so sad, but such an improvement is to be made thereof, to make it a help to their joy, and let them see no providence can come in their way, but brings their mercy and up-making with it, if the work and duty, whereat it points, yea not behind. 6. Thus is it found also how the unseen work of the saints in secret prayer, and doing for the Lord without the witness of men, wants not an open reward, and that a hid growth to the root, and under the ground shall be to be seen, that their profiting may appear to all men. 7. There is a giving which visibly tends to enrich the giver; and such liberal devices, by which men are found to stand with a greater income even to the disclosing of the world, than all the excessive care and griping of others hath reaped. 8. Is it not clearly seen, how the drawing forth of the soul to feed the church, by such as are called thereto, is the way to make themselves fat; and in watering others, these also are watered. 9. How such as have chosen affliction rather than sin, in that day have found it given them to suffer with so present an income of strength, as hath made it not to their own astonishment only, but of others also, eafe and sweet; the appearance whereof at a distance was ready to make them faint; yea thus it may be truly said, that something in the faith of the Martyrs for the truth hath been oft no less wonderful than in the faith of Miracles. 10. It is known, how strengthening remarks and confirmations from the Lord of the truth, waits such that seek them, and a serious reaching at leffer things for this end hath greater added; and that mercies then want nor something confirming to their faith therewith, where it is looked after as the better part of their mercy. But to what a volume should known instances of this truth amount; these few things are here only touched, to witness how great a discovery of God, and of his immediate appearance in bringing forth so marvelous a promise is before our eyes, that we may see no connexion in nature is more sure and indissoluble, than that which is betwixt the christian's work and his encrease; and amidst these strange uncertainties and disappointments which are this day, how this doth not fail, that the fruit of righteousness is still peace, and he who soweth may low in hope; yea, such a seen blessing is there on the lowest site and measure of the labouring christian, according to the promise, as to make their little grow, and bring up the last to be first.

SECTION 12. What the scripture only could shew, is it not a truth may be convincingly seen in the event, that even here there is an immediate falling into the hand of the living God; Heb. x, 31. And such strokes shewed forth
on men, which are evident to be above man's strength to inflict, or his capacity to comprehend, if they were not foretold in the word. It is sure, such a seal the truth hath this day, and that these acts of divine judgment are seen to occur; for which no human knowledge by second causes could find either the cause or the cure, but do with the very first view present the awful appearance of God, and constrains the conscience to acknowledge his immediate hand, and how these can be no casual adventure, but are a visible out-making of the Scripture. Some particular instances I shall here offer, which the world cannot bring under debate, they are so known and clear a witness to this truth.

1. As there is a great diversity of influence and operation the Lord hath on the spirits of men; this may be a marvelous evidence thereof; a stroke of infatuation from his hand on mens counsel and judgment, where no visible cause or previous defect of this could be alleged, but is such that all may see is immediately from the Lord in verifying of this truth. Thus how strange a faint and amazement at ordinary difficulties, a fatal precipitance in their motion without regard to circumstances, the season and opportunity of things is witnessed, so as in the noon-day they cannot understand their way, but made to grope as in the darkest night. I am sure the world can be no stranger to such a fight, nor to these remarks of an immediate divine hand therein, if they would but open their eyes. 1. That here cannot be some strange accident in nature, when it is so clear an out-making of the Scripture, and the very same wonder repeated which Ezek speaks of ch. xxiv. 14. when the wisdom of the wise should fail, and the counsel of the prudent be hid. 2. Is such a stroke, where a remarkable taking away that aff, on which they seemed most to lean may be then seen, that no flesh should glory in his presence. 3. A stroke that all must confess is above the influence or conjunction of the stars, and no product of natural causes, when not a person only, but a people this is seen to reach, and not the vile, but the honourable and ancient, to shew it is from the Lord of hosts, that the Princes of Zoa are fools, and her wise counsellors bruitifs, faith Isaiab, ch. xxiii. And there also is the reason given, why such can neither see nor prevent what is so evidently before them, because he hath purposed it, and it must come to pass. 4. This remark also may be clear, of such a stroke, how convincingly it falls in with the time of a people or nations judgment, and when some great change is drawing nigh. 5. And must not the world see a power here above them, who thus by an invisible hand can give a stroke which none is able to cure, and make a people work their own ruin more than their adversaries; to shew, that judgment hath many arrows in its quiver, and no counsel or wisdom can be against the Lord.

2. Thus there is an immediate falling into the hands of the living God may be witnessed, when the scourge slays suddenly, and in a moment makes dispatch, Job ix. such as an extraordinary plague and contagion, that brings quick defolation therewith; some amazing fires, which as a lightening turns a city into a ruins heap; such also are these immediate strokes of a divine hand on particular persons, that admit no parley, but are done before e'er they be once apprehended; these are indeed prodigies of judgment, though from no age they are hid, which without a brutish stupidity may be clearly seen to be no common or casual occurrences, but a supernatural causality is there, and the immediate appearance of that God, in whose hand, as an adversary, it is a terrible thing to fall, whose power can reach a city or nation, as well as a particular person.
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3. To witnes this truth, there is nothing more obvious than an immediate delivery of some unto Satan, and under his power for judgment, yea how visible so strange and amazing a stroke is to be from the Lord; when such are then seen, 1. To blaspheme and rage against him, when his hand is upon them, Rev. xvi. 11. 2. That a mans eyes should see his own destruction, when yet he will not cease to oppose himself to such a divine power, even whilst he finds it pursuing him, Isaiah xxvi. 11. 3. This may be clearly known in that immediate power of the Devil over some to enforce their own affliation; for it is sure, such afflombing instances there are, where no delirium or want of reason could be alleged, and something more than a violent inticement within made here obvious, like an immediate delivering of such up to Satan as an executioner; and where, not only a violent hurrying and incitemet thereto is then discernible, but so much may be seen from the strange way it is brought about, as shews an actual concurrence of the Devil, and his hand is visible at such a work. This is indeed one of the strange depths of the judgment of God, where men may see a malefactor is not more evidently delivered over to the stroke of justice, and put in the executioners hand, than some thus are given over to Satan to act such a part upon them. Abitophel and Judas whose judgments were immediately from heaven, wanted not a barrier from hell to execute that sentence; I know the choicest of the saints may be thus assaulted, for whom preventing grace hath oft marvelously appeared; yea, that some have been actually carried the length of such horrid self-affliation under a natural diitemper, of whom otherwise we should be very tender to judge. This only in such stupendous instances is to shew how near and vifible approach of God oft is in some strokes of his hand, and that there is a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity, Job xxxi. 3.

4. Thus there is an immediate appearance of God, and his hand convincingly witnessed in the delivering up even some of the saints unto Satan for trial; which not only may be seen in their outward state by a strange unusual appointment of imbittering things, that then are at once found to meet to make a cross sharp, like a reading of Job's case in some degree, and of that method the Devil used in that assault; but which is more strange and most discernible, what is found on the soul by these horrid injections, and impetuous incitements within to blaspheme, and to have thoughts here that are horribilia de Deo, & terribilia de fide; where it may be judged some of these motions, that the damned in hell continually have do there offer to infect the chriftians foul; what an assault this might have been in that messenger of Satan Paul had to buffet him, the scripture does not particularly witnes: but it is clear, Job was no stranger to these invenoned arrows, and some approach that way no less to his soul and the inward man, than his body was sore and pained. Now in setting down this instance, I only intend to shew how such a strange trial by an extraordinary power and influence of the Devil there is, and certainly known to the saints, that may witnes, how caule it is for the Lord to raise a torment within, amidst the greatest peace and calm without, such as all the world cannot make still; and how fore an immediate touch of his hand on the soul and conscience is as well as the body, yea how then it may be clearly seen to be something above natural causes. 1. In that horror and confusion is therewith, to which no pain or torment in the flesh can be compared. 2. That it is not a singular and rare instance, but in all times such an assault have many of the saints had, though I know its supposed singularity makes it the more terrible to some. 3. That in the same way and method it is still remarkably shaped. 4. Yea, where no defect
defect of natural judgment and parts to influence such a thing can in the least be seen. 5. How visible a force this is from without, injecting that which can have no correspondent with their corruption within, but is such, that even corrupt nature is affrighted at. 6. Such that discernibly takes advantage and gains ground by fear, and flying before it. 7. I shall add but this, as these have their lucid intervals, in this case it is known also, how prayer and serious wrestling with God by the Mediator hath been fill its best cure, and found more effectual here than all physicians, as being a wound from that hand which goes above all human reach and skill.

Sect. 13. One instance more I shall add, to what hath been held forth on this subject, how near an approach of that great truth is even here; and a begun discovery of the state and condition of men beyond time, that there is a heaven and a hell after this life, and death is not the last point to put a final period to a rational being. I confess this is one of the greatest objects of our faith, and whatever present thoughts we can now have thereof, yet such is that glorious estate above, and the horror of hell, as will be an unspreakable surprise to all who come there, and find that they never had a conception of before; but it is sure also that even here more may be witnessed to mens senses, with that demonstrative evidence of the truth, both of the one and the other, yea in some degree begun upon the earth, than most are aware of, or will let themselves know. It is strange how little this seems to be understood, and what distance we have in our thoughts, with the being, and reality of these great things, as if heaven and hell, were some abstract notions only, which lie hid in the scripture, and consider not what near and sensible approaches of both are here.

As to the first, that glorious state of the saints above, how marvelous a discovery is of this, and begin enjoyment thereof even here, when a christian so assuredly knows 1. in how large a measure the joy of his presence is let forth, the fulness whereof is this day in heaven, with these sensible embraces betwixt Jesus Christ and the soul, which are above all expression; and that this must certainly be some part of the pleasure above, which having no affinity with the flesh, brings in such serenity and calmness to the heart, and doth afford that solace and true delight which the whole earth could not do. 2. As it is sure, there is a clear and sensible perception of spiritual objects the saints have in this life, which to men by nature are as far above their reach, as the things of another world; is not something also here to be known of that glorified eye the redeemed have above, by that near capacity the pure in heart are put in to see God, which is more than seems to be believed. 3. It is known and sure, how marvelous transforming that is by grace of the soul, and in so far a removing its earthly quality, so as to make it even in this present state transparent, and pure in part, that the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ may shine in them. Yea thus what a discernible ripening there is and making such meet for that state above, by all these degrees of a christian's growth here, whereby they are changed from glory to glory, which really is some kind of a begun translation of the saints to heaven, as there is a coming further up to that full stature of the man in Christ. 4. We know there is a near and immediate converse with God here sensibly enjoyed, which no words can make others know what the saints thus see and feel, as these near approaches to heaven this way; but such a certainty is found thereof, that no dying christian but with some confidence can say, though he change his place, yet will it not be a change of his company. 5. And is not something of this also discernible to others, how such oft have come forth with their face as it were shining, and a visible appearance upon them.
of some near approach they have then had to the invisible God, and another world, that may shew where they have been, and that the cause must be certain, when the effects thereof are so real. 6. It is known what high degrees of a triumphant joy even here are reached by the saints in following the Lord, and upon some special venture for him in doing or suffering, which is as it is then found upon their soul to be a joy unspeakable, it may clearly show there is more of heaven in real possession than most do believe, though these get no leave to dwell and have settled abode in this hight, but must come down to swatter in the depths, and have their weeping hours over sins, and the prevalence of their own corruption. 7. Is it not both seen and felt in the ordinances what a brightness some-times is therewith on the soul, and how piercing a sound may be audibly heard there beyond words, with that ineffably sweet and fragrant favour of his name, as ointment poured forth, which to a spiritual eye can bring such an evidence of the truth of a heaven, as men can have of the being of the Sun, though under a cloud, by some rays and beams breaking out thence, or by the first breakings up of the morning that it is sure there must be a greater light to follow. 8. Are not these times oft here with a christiain, when no cloud is betwixt heaven and their soul; but such a clear sky and brightness of God's face, with the sensible intimation of pardon, than which no audible voice from without could be more certainly heard, and then is the conscience found to acquit when men were ready to condemn. 9. What does the strong actions of desire in the soul of a christiain witness? is it not to shew that native tendency these have to their original, and how they have not forgot the way home, for it is sure that nothing which is come from above, can take up its bent rest here. 10. This cannot be possibly hid what marvelous transports of joy and delight have been oft witnessed by some of the saints, in their most extreme sufferings for the truth, who had life and sense, and were flesh and blood as well as others; that except men shut their eyes it might be easy to discern, these had got a sight which could look them out of trouble and pain, and cause them rejoice when there body was burning, and that it is sure more of an actual possession of heaven, and some fore-taste of the glory there, is thus found under the faddest lot of a christiain, than was ever known, or conceived by such as are at a distance. 11. How discernible may this be, even to the astonishment of by-standers, that some of the saints dying on their bed have got up then to the sight hill of heaven, so as all might perceive their soul raised when their body was most remarkably pulled down, and so far drawn by, that it might be clear such with the opening of their prison-door, had a light beyond it, and saw that which no words could express. Oh if on-lookers knew or could conceive what by the eyes of some of the dying saints is then seen, it would make them long more to follow on. But this I must say it is a loss to the church, that some of such great and extraordinary glances given from the Lord at these times, and convincingly then witnessed have not been more seriously regarded; now as a further witness to this I must add what the world cannot but know, how usual it is for sore wrestlings, and bitter complaints to go before such a bright Sun-shine to shew here can be no counterfeit.

I am the more pressed to touch this subject, it is so strange, the deep impressions of a heaven, and being for ever with God, are so rare on mens souls, when even upon the earth so sensible and near a correspondence might be had therewith. Oh is our life in such a continued throng, that there is no room, no time to be found with the hurry of other things, for christians thus alone with themselves to be at work, and press on their own heart, not only
only these great and marvelous discoveries of that glory to come, which are
so clear and express in the word, but what near and demonstrative evidences
even to our senses may be found here of the certainty thereof; if some deep
reflections were on these things. 1. What can be more as a seal in our
hand to quiet the soul about these great assurances of heaven we have in the
scripture, than that continued wisdoms before us of the certainty, and taking
place of this blessed record, in all that concerns the church or any of the saints
within time? yea, how clear it is, nothing hath failed hitherto of its truth,
in the strangest things thereof, which seemed most contradicting to sense and
reason. 2. It is sure, none knows the truth of holiness, whose alone wit-
ness to this is from without, and such they can only read in the Bible; but
there is a knowing without themselves, and such an hid demonstration of the
being and certainty of heaven to be found upon their soul; that though no-
thing is more clear and really felt, yet none can possibly impart what it is
to others; nor could it be believed at a distance, or once enter into mens
thoughts, what a sight some have here with these discoveries of the new name
and white stone, even in the way of the word and promise, of that glorious
state which is above. 3. What a sensible converse may these have with
the truth and certainty of heaven, who know the real being of spiritual
things? And as sure it is, the soul hath its senses as well as the body, not only
to discern, but really partake of these enjoyments and delights, that can
have no rise, nor in the least be influenced from any outward things; so thus
a peculiar sweetness and delight, and most sensible pleasure is there oft found
in things most bitter and grievous to the flesh, as clearly shews that undoubt-
ed correspondence which is here with a higher state and invisible world, and
how marvelous a suiting there is of these objects to spiritual life and being;
since it is sure the fountain-caufe and spring-head must be real, whence an
unspeakable joy is oft in so immediate a way let forth on the soul, when most
separate and abstract from the body; and nothing of an outward cause for it;
is not this demonstrative of such a joy to be here found, and its being no
dream, which the scripture calls full of glory. 4. Hath not each christian
to witnesses even to his senses, the truth of another world, and that blessed state
above; a known and real tendency of grace in the soul to be still upward,
after more near approaches to Jesus Christ, and a higher state than is here,
which with as native a motion is found as the fire can move up to its proper
place; yea, how sensible an interposition the flesh still caueth betwixt him
and such glorious objects. So that heaven and this earth he cannot but see
to be as two opposite points, like the North and South Pole, as the one goes
up, so far is the other out of sight and account; so far is the other out of sight
and estimation; and thus an higher ascent of the soul in more spirituality
and abstraction from things seen, is as one leaving the shore, who the further
he goes into the deep the island is left discerned. 5. It is sure such as know
the truth of holiness cannot but see, what an advance each step of its further
growth hath in a real assimilation in likenes to some higher state than is here;
and that it is no shadow, but a drawing interest, and power, must be there,
which can cause such strong emotions of love and desire to an unseen world;
yea, that the body is as a priion to the soul, by its longings, and looking out
to another place, whist love hath taken so much of it already away, as can
go, in this present condition; because mortality cannot enter immortality.
And is it not sure, and obvious to our senses, how real an intercourse and
particle is here betwixt the soul of a christian and an invisible world, whether
the continued haunts and report of such do so much lye, where they drive
so blessed a trade, and have most certain returns? it was not strange, that
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cob's heart should fail, the thing was so far above his faith, of Joseph's being truly alive; but when so visible a confirmation by the sight of the chariots and wagons was further given, though his wondering ceased not, yet did it cause his spirit revive.

Sect. 14. It is sure also, the world cannot but see there is an Hell, which lyeth not so hid in the threatenings of the word, but is in some degree both felt and visibly witnessed here, and so far a begun possession of its horror and torment, that the greatest atheists may know it is a matter of earnest, and no night-dream, if they did not hide themselves from such a sight; now for this some undeniable evidences, even to mens sense, of its reality, I offer, in a time when by most of this generation it seems to be looked on as a disputable thing, and in so ordinary a way pasted; yea amongst the best these are so rare, who are found to work out their salvation with fear and trembling. 1. Is not this visible, and in some degree begun here in these overlafling flings and scorching flames which are there, by that horror of conscience and inufferable torment known in the cafe of many, as that of Spira, Latomus, yea with most remarkable instances of this kind in every age, where the world might see the truth of an Hell drawn as in a picture before their eyes, and how certainly this is begun not only in the pain of lofs, but in the very pain of sense; so as even here some of the shrieches of the damned there, can be no hid or unknown thing to the world. 2. Is not hell and the truth of that horrid estate brought near men eyes by these strange effects which some begun degrees thereof could only cause, such as to blaspheme and rage against God, because of his plagues, a fury and violence against the truth beyond the ordinary rate of mens natural enmy thereat, with that impetuous presflure and incitement, which may be seen thereto; yea, hath not Cain's cry been heard from many, my punishment is heavier than I can bear; such a sudden breaking up of the conscience, where nothing but stupidity was before, that hath made some seek to be rid of themselves; as a desperate eflay to be rid of this, and others plunge themselves in sensuality to deaden the sense of their pain and torment, by getting more near to the condition of beasts. 3. Can it be hid from the world, or the most ordinary observers, what is so frequently obvious, how there is a coming within sight of hell, by some here upon the near approach of death, that like the hand-writing on the wall to Belshazzar caudeth a terror and trembling sense on them, beyond what they could have from a present diffusion of nature. 4. Is there not something of that faith the fallen angels have in hell, whose torment is to believe, and yet are constrained with terror thereto, visibly witnessed here? whereby many thus are haunted, whether they will or no, with the dread of God, who hate him, and their torment is from too great an evidence of the truth. 5. Can it be hid, how—many of this generation, are so visibly transformed into the image of the Devil, and turned as it were into the same kind, with these desperate spirits, that human nature, though corrupt, would even dread at some acts of wickedness, and opposition to God, these are found to take pleasure in. 6. And is not that association which is in hell with the Devil and his angels actually begun here, in so immediate a converse with them, and explicite engaging in their service, by many who for this end, renounce the very name and profession of being christians, which the world cannot possibly deny? yea for this cause I may say even these horrid wretches serve, and are a most confirming sight before us, to the truth, to let men know hell is no fable, when such are found in the earth, and dwell among us, whose continued trade and intercourse is with these powers of darknes. 7. It is known to be no dream or Shadow, what frequent apparitions there are of the inhabi-
inhabitants of that place, these wicked spirits, and how much they haunt the world whose continued work is to incite men to wickedness, and oppose the kingdom of Christ, that it is strange how little we are affected therewith, and should not thence have some deeper reflection on the being and certainty of a hell. 8. So far is it that after-flate made visible here, by a delivering many up to such astonishing obduration of mind, that to the conviction of all, they may be seen bound over in the prison, and kept under chains, as they cannot stir until death come to bring them to the rack; this is no rare sight in the world, yet such a preludeum of hell, and so near a step to it, that it may be clearly seen, such a sentence from the great judge, depart from me, is even here past, and made effectual, how they are put in the executioner's hand, shut out from means of their help, the scripture bound up and sealed, from having any more access to their soul; and thus no more to do, but to be carried from the goal to the final stroke. 9. There is a map and shadow of that eternal punishment the world may also see in some terrible acts of divine judgment within time, such as have been publicly known, and a visible hand from heaven therein on persecutors of the truth, apostates, blasphemers.

C H A P. III.

Some great events of the holy scripture, are held forth in the preceding chapter, to witness, what a feat this day is in our sight, to the truth and faithfulness of God there; and hath in the darkest times of the church been remarkably continued before her, which I am sure were they rightly looked on and brought near our thoughts, might be more demonstrative of God, and the exceeding greatness of his power, than any extraordinary signs or miracles could be. I shall but touch three instances further, with some peculiar respect to these last times; which as they are clear and undeniable before us; they convincingly witness also of what singular ufe some of the most dark and astonishing depths of providence about the church in this present day are to confirm, and seal the scripture.

Sect. 1. First we see a stroke of judicial induration, and blindness of mind upon the Jews to this day continued, after to great a light, and brightness of the gospel; and when all possible grounds and props, they formerly leaned on are to their own conviction now made void, which is indeed one of the strange wonders under the New Testament we have before us; but was not this foretold? and by the Holy Ghost shewed to the church, what we see, with the very first dawning of the gospel, Rom. xi. 8. 12. 25. 2 Cor. iii. 14. And how such a mystery should be understood, yea, the long continuance of that stroke made so clear, as to make it a further confirmation of the truth, since it is sure that blindness upon Israel is concluded there, under a judicial arrest, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; now if this were not before us in the Bible, could we possibly know or comprehend such a thing, what so visible a with-holding the very exercise of mens reason can mean, that they see not the light in the noon-day: But here is a darkness, for our further enlightning, and a stroke on them which might be of greatest ufe to strengthen us more in the truth, when that so strange a vail is fiill over their mind that they cannot see.

1. How the Old Testament is the very foundation of christianity, and that there the gospel, the greatest secret, which from the bosom of the Father was ever revealed to men doth conspicuously shine forth; whose brightness now under the New Testament, though it hath a greater light, yet is it no new light: for to him do Moses and the prophets bear witness, so that you can-
not cite a more clear testimony from any of the Evangelists to the Messiah’s sufferings, and the churches being redeemed that way than you may have, Isa. hiii. Dan. iv. Jer. xxiii. 5. 6. Psal. xxii. 18.

2. Can men have their eyes open, and not see that the whole scheme and economy of the Jewish service, is a most clear shadow and idea of the gospel, and how that dark body of their ceremonies and types, have thence only their light; for who could look on the ark, the mercy-seat, their passover, scape-goat, &c. and not discern some divine mystery thus shadowed forth? That surely the blood of atonement, their sin-offerings and sacrifices, were not the true victim offered to God, but had a figurative relation to some other propitiatory sacrifice on whom the sins of men were actually laid.

3. What possibly can be more clear than this? That in the gospel as the center all these shadows did meet, which do now cease, their full end and accomplishment being come; and if men look on that pattern, and frame of the Jewish service, can they see it, and not know the building itself by it? And how exact a correspondence is thus betwixt them, that in so strange a multiplication of these figures and types, which were then of divine appointment; nothing is there inept, or ufeless, but had a peculiar use, and relation to something in the gospel; that as face answereth to face in the glass, one may see there is the shadow, and lo here the substance, where all is found, and that their light is now gone and extinguished, because the sun it self is risen.

4. Men could hardly believe, if they did not see this with their eyes, with what veneration the Jews can admit the Old Testament, and yet deny the Messiah to be come. They know it is many ages past, since their fathers looked for him, and with greater expectations were awoke to such an hope, near these times of the gospel than they now are. They know Daniel’s seventy weeks is a piece of canonical scripture, which clearly takes in his coming, and though it were taken either for weeks or days, or of years, it must be long since expired, but if they should mean weeks of ages, then for many thousand years his coming could not be yet expected. How strange a vail must this be on their mind? which may be no less obvious, than that they cover themselves with, at the reading of the law.

But what a witness is here also to the truth, to silence atheism about the divinity of the scripture, if it were brought near our thoughts, that such a nation, and race there is, and kept up to this day as a living witneff to let the world see. 1. How unanswerable an evidence this is to their fentences of the truth of that renowned kingdom, and church of Israel, to whom the oracles of God were committed, and once by a special mark of his favour separat from the nations, (though now it is turned into a curfe) which to the conviction of all, even of the greatest atheists, may fhow it is no impollure, or romance, which by the scripture is held forth; but such a visible witneff there yet is of its truth, as men have of a flourishing city, when fuch ruins are feen, as bear the evident marks of its former grandeur. 2. We cannot but fee such a people kept by themselves, and not mixed with the nations, whose fathers from one generation to another did own and imbace the Old Testament as the word of God; and which is demonstratively clear, could not therein be infructed by the christian church, whom with the greatest opposition and malice they have still pursued, to witneffes there is no possible collusion, can be here. 3. Thus the world may fee a people that are known enemies to the christian faith; who yet confefs, and own that doctrine, in which the truth and substance of christianity is clearly fhewed forth; and do fully acknowledge that truth of the Messiah, to redeem, and deliver the
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church, is the undisputed promise of God. 4. And is it not sure such are this day in our fight, that once were an united and flourishing state in their own land, whose stroke and judgment in its manner and continuance being now for 1500 years, is such as no instance, present or past through the world, could ever be found to resemble; but as a beacon on a high hill calls aloud to every age and time of the church, to inquire what means such a strange and amazing sight as this of the Jews.

Sect. 2. The second instance I here offer, to shew how great a witness to the truth, and the glorious being of God is in these last times before us; is, that amazing stroke of Induration on the Romish Church; so strange a thing this is, after such clear breaking up of the truth, how men can at once exercise reason and be popish; yea, in the matters of an eternal interest, that should lie so near, to wrestle with a light that so clearly shews, if the scripture be true they are undone, and for ever ruined. Here is one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God in the earth; but expressly foretold, 2 Thes. ii. 11. That such a delusion must be, and Rev. xvi. 8, 9, 10. what entertainment the light was to meet with from this party, in a blushing and further rage, instead of repenting; and that the darkening of their kingdom, should make them gnaw their tongue with pain; but not cease to oppose themselves to the clearest evidence of the truth. We should have thought it almost not possible for the popish interest to gain more ground by seduction, now after such a shining forth of the gospel, whatever advantage in former times it had, and in many parts yet hath, by fear and constraint; but this needs not be strange, when atheism and ignorance are found to effectual to utter it in, and hath a baffle therewith so well suited to a licentious time: it is easy to quit the truth for them who never knew it, or the receiving of it in love: and the world may see, that such who fall off to that way, are ingaged this day, not on debate, and from arguments to the judgment. Some particulars I shall here instance, which are known, and owned by the Romish Church, and amongst the most concerning articles of their faith, that all may see and consider, how these possibly can suit with the serious exercise of reason and judgment, and their professed owning the divinity of the scripture: if such a judicial stroke as is there expressly foretold, were not thus convincingly verified.

First, That men must quit that judgment of discrediting given them of God, and not trust their own eyes, but others, in the great interest of salvation; yea, thus with their consent be shut out from all proper knowledge of the scripture, and so far take the church-guides for the Bible, as on their testimony they must resolve their faith, even whilst they cannot but see the greatest of these more swayed with the concerns of the earth than of heaven, and none more involved in its affairs than such are; yea, when nothing is more expressly contrary to the command of God both under the law, Deut. vi. 7, 8, 9. and under the gospel, Job. v. 39. what an astonishing thing is this?

2. Is it not like a stroke of madness, to own a blind obedience to men amongst the heights and excellencies of their faith, and account ignorance a part of religion in such a world where deceit and snares are so much in fashion; and thus in their souls concernsments trust these whose credit and testimony without some further scrutiny they would fear to take for a sum of money? Oh! what is this for men to adventure with their eyes shut in the great things of heaven and eternity, and yet not be struck with some fear and jealously, yea, when so many thousands, who are known to be rational and serious in their way, do solemnly declare what a contradiction the doctrine of their church is to the express letter of the scripture, and therein offers an appeal to their own inquiry and trial if they will credit that blessed record, if there
there it be not clearly found, they are deceived and ruined by their spiritual guides. Sure it is, that much less ground of suspicion would cause such to open their eyes to try the best securities they have about any outward interest.

3. Is it not clear, that no such slavery is exercised on the bodies of the greatest drudges under the Turks, as is here on mens souls, who fee, and yet may not admit their own sight of the plainness and per fincity of this scripture, nor this record it bears of it felt, that it is fitted to make the simple wife, were it never to clear and plain before them, but must take it from others on trust, that the christian faith held forth in the scripture, is not there held forth in intelligible words by the Holy Ghost, but a mass of dead characters, without sense, until their church-guides put a meaning on it; on which they must resolve their faith, though they should see it most cross to its plain and genuine sense, yea, while they are forced to confess, if they pretend no extraordinary revelation, that the special illumination of the spirit, by which the word isavingly understood, can from no private christian be shut up, more than the greatest doctors of the church.

4. How amazing a thing is it, to see how far men dare venture, where scarce a shadow or school-problem can be found to take hold on, as to the great foundation of the Romish church, and of all that structure of the primacy and infallibility of her head, which is an alleged precedence of Peter amongst the apostles, and some human traditions thereabout; for it is undeniable, this is the whole on which without further enquiry no less weight is laid over, than the interest and eternal saving or perishing of many millions of souls, they and their children which are concerned therein; and it is sure, if this precedence of Peter fall, and have no solid ground in scripture, so that it be evinced, the rock on which the christian church is built is Jesus Christ, and not Peter; then rufteth all the building down, with that high power and infallibility of the Pope, which must fall therewith; and if this fall be found a cheat, then all his pardons and abolutions founded on that plenary power on which so innumerable a multitude build their peace, and takes as their acquittance into eternity, are gone, and can do no good, yea, such ruined and undone who have trusted their souls thereto; now who is there who would adventure the smallest outward interest on such a ground, where if men would but come to be in carnal, nothing can be more clear than this from the scripture, that the power of the keys was given to the rest of the apostles as well as to Peter, Mat. xviii. 18, 19. And that he did exercise no such precedence amongst them, see All. xv. Nor can the least solid ground be to judge, he was ever at Rome, or had the least peculiar tie thereto, beyond the rest of the apostles.

5. As it is an horrid blasphemy, and expressly contrary to the scripture to join human tradition with it, and give the same authority thereto, to decide and ground the church's faith about the truth. It is a strange contradiction to reason for men to supposc or lay weight on the infallibility of tradition, and clear uninterrupted delivery of the church's sense on the written word this way, when they cannot but know, what opposition general Councils have had to others in the greatest truths, the frequent jujplings of the Fathers together; yea, is it possible tradition could be a sure conveyance of the doctrine of the church, and its sense on the scripture, when the whole christian world was almost turned Arians, that there seemed to be but one Athanasius left, and after that falling off to Mahometanism, when such times were that stars seemed to fall from heaven, and so many churches once famous, swallowed up under this
black darkness; and it is sure men cannot but see, how far a relation will vary and become unlike it self, in a very short time. Oh! what a strange thing must delusion be, and a judicial blindness of the mind?

6. Is not here a thing so grossly absurd, that may tempt men to atheism, and question the certainty of all truth? to hazard an eternal interest and satisfaction of divine justice on some plenary indulgence given out of the church's treasure, and this from a suppos'd over-plus of merit in some of the saints, who had more than enough for themselves, though such whom they must confess were sinners when they were upon the earth, nor can deny that the scripture sheweth, by one sacrifice is the redemption of the elect church for ever made perfect. I confess, if it were a matter of small moment, and some outward hazard only, men might sport at so notable an imposition; but oh! in a business of eternal salvation and condemnation, how sad and deplorable a sight is this?

7. But admitting such strange principles they own, can they possibly shun such a discovery, at what an uncertainty their souls are thus ventured, or how any can be secure, 1. If such merits they lean on were indeed more than their own need, whose they are, did require. 2. Though such an over-plus were a truth, can they be sure, in whose hand these were intrusted to dispence, or what is their proper right or warrant to apply them, when for this, from the scripture, there is no shadow, and from them the world cannot possibly know. 2. How are they sure, but by a long continued application, in so many thousand plenary indulgences founded thereon, they may be already exhausted, and lost their wanted strength; but oh! an answer to all these astonishing things is too evident, that a judicial stroke from the Lord is such that no reason is able to cure.

8. This may be the more wonderful, when it is so clear, except men will shut their own eyes, that here is a lucrative interest, money for merit, as the procuring cause, for want of which the poor and friendless must perish; and thus the high-way-robber, if he can save his neck, is sure to have his soul's fate, by giving some part of the purse he hath taken to the priest. Thus no absolute necessity for one to be religious and rich at once, who hath enough whereby to purchase the merit of others, and how to expiate all guilt, and secure his after-hazard by present money, and a liberal hand to the church.

9. How sad and amazing a sight is it, to see men so infatuate in the veneration of the relics of the saints, and ascribe such efficacy thereto, both for spiritual and outward diseases; when if they would open their eyes, there is such manifest appearance of deceit, that they know they must pay for their toil and respect to such things to them who visibly pursue their own gain that way, and can have no assurance, but such may be bones of some malefactors, and that it be an imposition rather than a miracle, how the milk of the Virgin Mary 1500 years, and the bones of the apostles should be kept uncorrupted, when the attestors thereof all may see, have that politicke interest of money for it, which in every time drives many thousands not to deceive others only, but to ruin their own souls.

10. How strange a contradiction is here for men to admit the morality of the first and second command, as the law of their God, and its being peremptorily binding, which so expressly says, Thou shalt not bow down, nor worship the likeness of any thing, &c. and yet both authoritatively determine and practice the contrary. It is sure there, all adoration of the invisible God, under a visible representation is most plainly forbidden; and that Aaron's calf, and these at Dan and Bethel, though the worship thereof was intended for the true God, yet by him was found idolatry. But what subtility of distinctions,
or of that respect pretended therein to the prototype, can make ones pillow soft on their death-bed, when they must instantly pass in before his tribunal, whose law they have thus used.

11. As it is clearly repugnant to the scripture, how strange a contradiction to reason is here? That there should be a transsubstantiating of the bread and wine in the sacrament into the real body and blood of Jesus Christ; when 1. It can be no more a sacrament, when turned into the thing signified. 2. Can the accidents, such as colour, taste, smell, possibly remain and exist without the subject. 3. Can one and the same numerical body, which is finite, be in the same moment of time in many thousand places through the earth, remotely distant from other; yea, thus can there be a penetration of bodies, when all must confess, the nature of bodily substances is to be impenetrable. How far a sight is it, for so many to reign the liberty of their souls so far to others, that they must quit both sense and reason at once, and may not search the scripture to know what is held forth there.

12. Can it be supposed, such are in earnest, if there be not a judicial stroke on their judgment, to pray to one dead man, in the behalf of another? to these who cannot hear, for them who are past help? yea, that men should be so far without fear and feeling, as to reckon a liberty to destroy themselves some special advantage, and that a dispensation from the Pope for violating the express law and command of God, will be enough to fland betwixt them and his avenging justice.

I shall further add but this one instance here (having some occasion to give a more full account of their doctrine in the close of this treatise) how strange and amazing a thing is it, for men to plead, yea, ground their faith so much on an uninterrupted succession in their church; when yet they expressly hold a nullity both of baptism and ordination, if the intention of the priest fland not right thereto; and that this is essentially necessary for it; for thus how shall the world know, but most of their Popes and clergy be both without baptism, and still laicks without ordination; and so no possible access for the church to know either the certainty of succession, or infallibility of a judge.

These few particulars I have only instanced of the doctrine, and known tenets of the Romish church, to witness how convincing a fact this is to the scripture, in so strong a delusion, these are visibly given up to, for which I do appeal their conscience, and that confession themselves make to the world, if any thing contrary to these principles they publiquely own and admit be here charged upon them. It is a sight I confess should be sad, to see so great a darkning of the truth, and so much of the christian world perish, and will not once open their eyes; but it is well, such a clear discovery is here also, which on another account calls to rejoice, and be more strengthened in the way of the Lord, that we know such a party is this day in the earth, and before us, whose being, appearance, and these advantages they now boast of are so undeniable a witness to the truth, if we consider these things. 1. There is such a piece of the scripture, that fore-tells the man of sin, the manner of his approach, with the whole destiny of his reign and fall, which must needs take place, and have an application to some particular party, except we quit all certainty of divine truth, for if one line, or one syllable of this should fall, we were undone, and our security in the greatest interest broken, since the faithfulness of God flands good for every part of his word as well as the whole.

2. It is clear, this picture was drawn by the Holy Ghost, of such an adversary, now a thousand five hundred years past, what should be his form and shape, the way of his appearance, with his true proportion and lineaments.

3. Except we deny our senses, it is certain, that such we see with our eyes,
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as are there shewed forth, so as none ever knew more clearly the face of a man, by seeing his picture exquisitely done, and to the life, in a frame, than the church this day may know the Antichrift, and find him out. I suppose one in some remote part of the earth were brought to understand the scriptures, and in his enquiry there, were astonished with these discoveries he finds of so strange an adversary, with an earnest desire to know if he hath been yet made known to the world, let him have a true and particular account of the Romish church in its complex frame and state, in its duration, the way of their rule, and in how different a mould it is cast from all the kingdoms of the world, his own eyes and reason, though nothing from others were told, might shew how clear and exact a resemblance is to be found there to that map, and discovery, which with amazement he had before seen, and read in the Bible. 4. Is it not to admiration now obvious, how many ages past, there were foretold about this adversary, as they are this day before us in the event, when not the least shadow or appearance of such future emergencies was to be seen, or could have entred into mens thoughts, to shew this, only from the Holy Ghost could have been revealed to the church, to whom all his works are known from the beginning. 5. Where were we if such a fight were not this day, as the Romish church, what now it is, and in former ages hath been, and how fore a dark and cruelling shoulbe to the faith of the saints, to cause a questioning of the whole scripture, when such concerning prophecies that respect most of the times of the New Testament have no being in the event, nor now possibly could have; for according to the word it is clear, this great adversary in his rise must begin with the very first times of the church under the New Testament, and his continuance such, that the last stroke, and his being utterly abolished is to be one of the nearest prefaces of the second coming of the Lord.

Sect. 3. There is one great event of the scripture I shall further add, which in so dark a day might presage a more serious enquiry and observation thereof, to see how this answers the promise, when so obvious and sensible a contradiction seems none to it; that a more flourishing state of the church should be in these last times on the ruins and down-fall of Antichrists kingdom, which cannot go back under all these assaults and oppositions of men, but is such that the one interest must advance, and the other further decline. This is a truth we know the Lord hath ensured by his faithfulness, 2 Thes. i. 8. Rev. xvii. 13. 16. compared with xx. 1, 2, 3, 4. which does so evidently co-temporate therewith; to which also many prophecies that concern the state of the church in the latter days bear a most clear witness that the most eminent appearances of God, the greatest enlargement, and of the longest continuance, that his church should have under the New Testament to meet such a period of time, and then should her spring begin, after a long and sharp winter, that went before; it is clear also, that the time of the promise is certainly come, which causeth great thoughts of heart unto many, whilst so much present sense seems to speak a visible contradiction thereto; for it cannot be denied, that the Lord's work about the Reformed church looks now everywhere to be a work of judgment, we see searching trials, some amazing depths and intricacies of providence, how strange a meeting there is this day of contrary tides that seem to drive most back, and on every hand to bring in difficulties, yea, such a present darkness and faint almost on all, as former times of the church did not know, but to witness the certainty of the promise, that the world may see the God of the Reformed church doth still own that interest, and this his word, who is faithful and true, yea, that nothing is here; but what may strengthen more than shatter; these things I offer to be seriously considered.
First, when such a present darkness is, is it not known also? how bright a day did go before this, and what an immediate appearance of God by most stupendious providences then was to rescue his truth and people from the power of Antichrist, so that though our night should be more dark, none can question such a zeal, which before the sun, to the amazement, and conviction of the world, with so full a witness and assurance on the spirits of his people, yea, I must say with extraordinary signs and confirmations from himself, he hath put to the cause of the Reformed church.

2. It is known in every step of the church’s rising, that whatever instruments in an ordinary way could promise, yet something far above this both in their calling forth and excitement, and actions hath been clearly witnessed, to shew that immediate holding from heaven, and by an extraordinary divine power, for verifying of the promise the Reformed church hath of her poli- sion and interest?

3. Is it not easy this day to see so sad and dismal an hour now upon the church is not more obvious than the provoking cause, and the righteousness of God no less clear therein than the cloud is dark, for I must say, these many years past who could have their eyes about them, and not fear upon so visible a departure from the truth, and falling off from love, tenderness, and the power of religion, through all the Reformed churches, but that either the scripture should fail, and want its accomplishment, or some remarkable stroke was near; yea, that a sharp cure the church must have, or else be undone, and the judgment of God be an help, when all other means have proved so ineffectual; and should it not be a strengthening remark in such a day, that the church’s zeal and straightness, and her sun-shine have been to rise and set together.

4. Amidst these strange disappointments of the times, and visible breaking of human props, it is known also, how carnally the weapons of our warfare have been managed? how fond upon the grandeur of a civil state, and the shadow and friendship of great men, as though the spirit of the Lord had not done more than all human might or power to put the churches on their feet? Thus have we gone out of the way of our strength, and founded our confidence on grounds of sense, and forgot these great appearances of God in times of greatest wickedness, where there was much trusting and little sense; and it may be too clearly seen, how few amongst the throng of pros- fessed Protestants know what it is to have the Bible for the security of the protestant interest, and thus quiet their soul, though all the foundations seem to shake, because they know the cause is certainly God’s, and he is faithful who hath promised.

5. It is most discernible, that as no outward advantage put in the church’s hand, but hath still some further weight laid thereon than it could bear; so have we seen such a dependance make the most promising means to miscarry. Oh! for many years have not our eyes been shut, to discern how far our strength hath departed, by so large a reckoning upon visible props, the support and countenance of princes, while we forgot the guide of our youth, and the covenant of our God, that for this hath the church’s hair been cut, and exposed to their contempt, who sometimes were forced to look upon her with fear and wondering, when God was known in her palaces for a refuge. It is sure carnal confidence hath a curse waiting on it in the Bible, Jer. xvii. 8. and where the Lord hath cursed, none can make it thrive.

6. Yet under so sad a discovery, and whatever as to publick appearances may be seen of the Lord’s departure, it is sure there hath been no such time that a man can say, his uprightness and love to the truth fails him, or ceaseth
to have inward joy and peace following it, and that in any secret corner, where integrity and straightforwardness is found, there wants a witness of God's taking pleasure therein. No, e'er this fail, the shadow must cease to follow the body. It is indeed an hour of desolation; but such as lets us see our sin, but gives no dast to our duty. It is a witness for God against men's indifferency, remissness, and carnal boasting in following the truth, but in it self a visible confirmation thereof, and thus doth the church more help than hurt.

7. We see this clear, that under the New Testament, the whole militant church as well as particular churches, hath her remarkable periods, as of tranquility so of trouble, and demolishing, when sackcloth is every where shaped out for her; yea I must say it is not crofs to the word, but may be further confirming thereto; that in so far as there is no through Reformation, and some antichristian mixture found amongst the reformed churches; in so far these also should get some touch of the judgment (though to heal, and not to ruin) that comes along with the pouring out of the vials of the throne of the Beast.

8. So fore a desolation is found not only to suit the times of the gospel, but the best times thereof, and to a rising day of the church, for this in the way and method of providence is most clear, that no great piece of the Lords work for his truth and people hath been ever brought forth, but with fore wrestlings, and is seen to stay long in the birth, the most remarkable mercies have been first lost, and made hopeles before they were found, yea no observable brightness but by some dark hour hath been ushered in, for which there needs no particular instances as in Egypt, as in Mordecai's time, since the whole scripture doth witness this.

9. We have this day seen nothing but what might have been looked for, that the trials of the church should be suited to her light, and keep some proportion therewith and where so great a trust and talent hath been given, such searching times must come about, to seek in its return, and improvement, for this answer to the way of the Lord and his word; nor is it strange to see a people stroke and trouble suited to that degree of their former exaltation. See Luke xii. 48. What sharp and perplexing times are there after so large a measure of light held forth, nor is it strange, these things fall in with our day, which did not meet the Reformed churches at their breaking up, who had not our discoveries of the truth with so long, and bright shining forth of the light.

10. This should not be strange, when the faith of the saints hath got great confirmations, that searching times then follow, for where nothing is to shake and offend, there can be no tried establishment. See John xvi. Do you now believe, faith our blessed Lord to his disciples, the hour is coming, and now is when you shall be scattered. This we find after such pains he had taken to confirm them, yea thus is it seen how trials are suited to the greatness of that work the Lord hath on foot. See Jer. xxix. 10. there is a time when all things cry, be in pain and unusual wrestlings before some remarkable birth.

11. However present appearances look, we know a sad desolation, and the church's real growth, with her gaining ground, can at once suit together, whose true interest without taking a false measure; none can judge. 1. From outward grandeur, since oppression and greatest weights have been still found to make way for her growth, and for that end was Pharaoh raised of the Lord, to make the church's rising more conspicuous. 2. Not from the nearest, and immediate events, until the vision speak, and bring the whole complex providence before us. 3. Nor can a true measure be taken from the
the present reaping since a hid growth is oft found, where the seed lies long under ground, which the children may reap, that seemed lost to those who went before. 4. Not from a great falling off, since the church’s interest is oft no lefs promoted this way, and the truth sealed, than by the bringing in of others. 5. Not from sad afflicting times, since out of the greatest depths, hath the most near and sensible approach to God been known, which in the issue hath helped more to raise than all her troubles could ruin. 6. It is clear also, not from the indigation of the Lord gone forth against the church, can we take such a measure since her bearing thereof is found a begun step in her relief, and to an open pleading of her cause, and bringing her forth to the light, Mic. vii. 9. where we see though the church is thus laid in the dust, yet is her interest kept alive in her cause, to bring her up with it, when the Lord shall declare his being a pleader thereof. 7. Though it now look like the going down of the sun on most of the Reformed churches, and that therewith we have so affrighting a fight before us, what hath befallen many famous churches in former times; yet is there fold ground, I humbly judge without flattering our selves, or any over-stretching our hope, to see here these different periods of time, how such a sun-set, and the utter dissipation of these churches, did then with a remarkable and sad crisis meet with the entry of that long and dismal night of antichrist’s reign, his begun resign, and that breaking in also of such a deluge of Mahometism, which did after follow, yea thus in a time, when having finned away their light, the scripture was to have an accomplishment in the Lord’s departure, and that great work of his Judgment then coming on the christian world: But now we see, and certainly know, how this strange and unusual darkness over the church, in a blessed conjunction and crisis, does meet with antichrist’s begun fall, and a growing light; and upon the church’s rise, when the interest of the gospel now is upon the ascendant, and when it is so clear, what now is under the Mediator’s hand to be brought forth, which is a farther extent of his visible kingdom to build, and not to cast down, to plant and not to cut off these churches, in the planting of which, as gained from antichrist, yea in pursuance of a full conquest, he did so eminently appear. I must further add this, though it seem to beget a fear and hesitation with some; the ceasing of such great signs and appearances of the Lord, in the behalf of the truth, that were once seen, and how to answer that question, Where is the Lord God of our Elizabets, and his great power, and outstretched arm, by which he shewed terrible things for his people, as a return of their prayer. Let us consider, 1. It is the same reproached and darkened caufe of the Protestant church, which God once visibly owned, and did bear witnesses to by great and extraordinary signs of his power, so that all may see it is not the truth, but falling off from it, with which he now quarrels. 2. Such extraordinary evidences we now are not to wait for, when so great a breaking up of light, beyond former times, hath been to clear the truth; for this were to tempt the most high, who at the first dawning of his work, when difficulties seemed in an ordinary way insurmountable, did thus appear. 3. Even under such a cloud there want not some great and immediate confirmations from the Lord, and a visible witnesses from him to the cause of the Reformed church, if we had eyes to see. 1. That with the faded hour, and exigence of the church, some step of providence hath still been made to appear, and therewith so remarkable a breaking forth of light, as it were out of the bowels of such a darkness, that the things which threatened most have more fully answered the churches mercy, than any way we could have chosen. No such black cloud hath been, but some enlighten-
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ing providence, and marvelous witnesses of the Lord's condescendence we have seen as it were set over against it, yea still some new ground of hope made to break up, so as to balance with a day of greatest fears. 2. We cannot but see since the Lord hath made it so clear, that there is some hewing of stones, and preparing of materials under all this ruin, such as point at some great and excellent building, which yet is bringing forward.

3. And hath there not been a discernible growth of light, and more clear discoveries of the truth, that have gone forth with these ruining times. 4. How convincing a restraint from the Lord upon men's wrath, to pursue their advantage and power against the truth, and its followers, I must say hath to admiration been witnessed in this low estate of the Reformed church, and such diverting providences as have constrained their violence to run in another channel. 5. This all may see, for their confirming more in the truth, that these who in such a day have fallen off to Popery, have had their way visibly ushered in by atheism and ignorance, or the byas of some outward interest, and thus found it easy to change their religion, who never yet in earnest embraced any, yea to turn popish, 'tis they knew what it was to be christians: Now for this I dare appeal to the conscience of the most ordinary observers. 6. Hath there not been oft cause to observe how the greatest essays of the adversary, which seemed to speak a present ruin, have brought forth the very contrary effects. No such form on the church but some rent thereby hath been paid to the truth: no present loss, but another way there was found some visible advantage, nor have such signs been wanting of the Lord's immediate appearance in the dark-est hour, that may witness his peoples gleanings are yet this day better than the full vintage of his adversaries; and with much solid assurance it may be further said, whatever former ages have seen of the Lord's marvelous doings to confirm his truth, and the cause of the Reformed church, in the sight of the nations, and there are yet greater things to be brought forth; and a rare history of providence shall be writ, and transmitted to the posterity where these two must be recorded together, and meet in one witness, which is foretold, Rev. xv. 1. Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord; and just and true are thy ways.

CHAP. IV.

In prosecution of this subject, a second particular proposed, I shall here endeavour to clear, which is the great import of the preceding demonstration, how marvelous a light doth thence result to the church, and what a witness is this day of the near approach and condescendence of the Lord, to the faith of his people, and a price for wisdom thus put in their hand, by bringing forth his word, and the certainty of its taking place so convincingly before us in the event; which I must say, were it understood, might be of that use to make our believing and adventuring on the truth as plain and comfortable a way, and as fully quieting to the soul, as the way of sense and feeling; but oh how strange is it that whilst such a thing cannot be hid, yet is so little laid to heart, that it seems most of christians do not really know what is the estate they possess, but in their converse with supernatural truths, are like men half waking, who see things before them, yet is it to far a dream, that there wants a serious reflecting on the great reality of such things they see. Now to clear what a light breaks thus up to the church, from these discoveries of the faithfulnes of God in his word, and such wonderful events, wherein it takes place; I offer these twelve inferences.

Sect.
Sect. 1. First we see here the eminent verification of this truth, that unto the church are committed the Oracles of God, Rom. iii. 2. How so valuable, and sacred a treasure that by no private conveyance, but by a public delivery was once put in her hand, is still under trust deposited there to be kept; and made use of unto the second coming of the Lord. I know this is a truth by few under debate or question, yet how few are there found to believe it, or so much in earnest as to bring it near their thoughts, how such a record is, and should this day be in the world, where as real an intercourse with heaven and the glorious God whose throne is there, is certainly to be had, as if with our eyes we should see some every hour come thence with their face shining, and written tables in their hand of the counsels of God to his people; now as here is a matter of the greatest concernment that ever was made known to men; in what a transport of joy should it put our soul to know we have no less clear and demonstrative evidence of its certainty by the verification of the scripture, that such are the very Oracles of God, which came down from himself; and do, 1. Stand open day and night for giving answers to the church, so as none needs fear to come at a wrong hour, or mis their errand, when they come, if they indeed seek counsel there, that they may follow it. 2. Which shew forth things to come, and the great revolutions of the world, with their proper circumstances, when not the smallest appearance thereof from outward things could be judged. 3. Which have at all times a certain found, and leaves none in the dark, with a double response; but let the world be what it will unto the righteous, it faith, Surely it shall be well with them, Isa. iii. 10, 11. While it hath this audible voice to others, There is no peace, faith my God, to the wicked, nor shall it be well with them, though their days should be prolonged in the earth, Eccles. viii. 12. 4. These all may see, are the very Oracles of God, which regard not the persons of men, but with an awful voice do speak to cities and kingdoms, and to the greatest monarchs there, to the judge on the bench, and the man of violence, when his oppression is backed with power, what none else dare tell. 5. Which gives answers contrary to human reason, and visible appearances, yet to this day did its sentence never fail, nor deceive the man who trusted thereto. But when the suffrage of the scripture, and of the world are in most direct opposition to other, it doth not long want a visible decision, whose word shall stand. 6. These who enquire here, will find the way of the Lord so far laid open in the darkest times, that they may as evidently see the sign and demonstrative causes of the strange judgments that are falling out in the earth as the certainty of their accomplishment. 7. And are they not found to be living Oracles, as Acts vii. 38, which do not convey light only, but heat and power to the soul. 8. It is no report but of undoubted experience, how clear a discovery is thence to a christian, when nowhere else he could know his way, or understand these great depths: 1. The depths of Satan, which thus are found out, and made discernible for keeping at a distance therewith. 2. These depths of providence which are so marvelously unvailed, and opened up there when once a christian gets near these oracles. 3. How thus also is there a further enlightening of the church, and in every time some opening up of the deep things of God in his word, which lay hid there from former ages.

Sect. 2. This clear discovery is here from our more full perswasion of the truth, what marvelous things have a preulent being and exisitence now before our eyes in the event, which many ages before they were brought forth, we know had a visible being in the scripture, and there were revealed and looked after by the church. This is a truth I must say, so great and convincing, and
and of that use to confirm the faith of the saints, and be an helper to their joy, that the ordinary impression most have thereof, shews how little it is either known or seriously considered. 1. That nothing is here conjectural, where a misstep can be from the events being afar off, and remote from our senses, but as we know they are written in the Bible, and there only have been revealed; it is as sure, they are visible realities in our sight this day, and for what thereof is not accomplished, it may be a further seal to the truth, when this is so clear, the time for their taking place is not yet come. 2. Can men open their eyes and not see the greatest Prophecies of the Old Testament are at this day fulfilled, except they contradict their senses as well as reason; even such as the whole race of the Jews attain to be a part of the oracles of God committed to their forefathers, and by them owned, and delivered with a most severe circumcision to the least letter or title thereof from one age to another? 3. It is undeniable also, these events are such, that all the diviners of the world, by the stars, or any probable conjunction of natural causes, could never reach, or have the least discovery of their rise, to bring them under their predictions; but any glance they had was by a light borrowed from the Bible; so that the certainty thereof being clear, men cannot but see these are depths not only above the furthest reach of human understanding, but above the reach of fallen angels, or any depths of the bottomless pit to find out such things as the scripture hath shewed; yea let a search be made amongst the wise and learned of this world, (for which 1 attest the greatest atheists) if either Aristotle or Plato, or any since, who came to the greatest height of natural knowledge, in all their discoveries had ever the least thought or notion of such things as a new creation, of the power and efficacy of the gospel, or that there is a Holy Ghost, and what his witnessing, comforting, and teaching imports, which yet to the meanest of the saints, are as clear and certain, as that there is day and night.

Sect. 3. This may be clearly seen from the preceding demonstration, how the most wonderful works of God, and his greatest appearances in the earth are peculiarly directed to confirm and seal the truth of his word, which be not magnified above all his name; and for this end, to give a being and visible performance to the scripture, the most glorious actions of the Mediator under the New Testament are shewed forth, for which cause when he is going forth to war, in the greatness of his strength, with his vesture dipped in blood, he is known by that name, The word of God, Rev. xix. 13. These also are in every time obvious evictions of this truth; 1. How the most extraordinary steps in the way of the Lord, which are visibly above nature, and out of the road of second causes; yet go not without the bounds and limits of the Bible, but are such as to the conviction of all, may be safe to bring within sight of that blessed record, and a convincing seal and verification thereof. 2. It is clear also, how these providences that are of the greatest extent and have a further reach than any private use, or the personal experience of the saints, yea are such whereby the whole church hath her publick remarks, and experimenta lucifera, are for that end evidently direct, to shew the destiny and fate of flourishing cities and states, and of the greatest Monarchs is no casual thing, but the visible product of the scripture, which there have been foretold. 4. This also may be clearly seen, how neither Greece nor Rome, whose conquests once were spread through most of the known world, did ever know such triumphs as the truth and faithfulness of God hath had over the thrones of kingdoms, as well as the meanest cottages, which as it makes the sea keep her bounds, so doth it restrain the rage of man, yea brings down from their feat to an untimely grave such as have made the earth to tremble,
and the nations shake in their day; while it may be no less marvelous in raising the poor from the dust, to witness, there is nothing wherein the Lord doth more conspicuously appear, and shew the greatnes of his power, than in bringing his word to a performance.

**Sect. 4.** Is it not an undeniable and clear inference, from what hath been held forth of these great events of the scripture, that it is sure this day there is more at our hand, to be convincing and demonstrative of the truth, if we could advert thereto, than if an immediate audible voice from heaven were given. I know if once such an extraordinary sign from the Lord might be had, men would be ready to think, there needed no more to put them beyond all hesitation and debate; such is the ignorance of many, who know not what they poofefs and is already at their hand, when more is really given than men heart could in this ask, as the Holy Ghost does expressly shew, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. If the sense of that scripture were seriously pondered, _And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount_; but to shew, that here is more than any fuch voice now given of the church for her assurance of truth, 2. 19. **We have a more sure word prophesie, unto which you do well to take heed, &c. wherein is clearly held forth:**

1. That something else than an ordinary regard to the scripture is in this required, for a through perfwation of its truth; there is a _taking heed, προσκαλεσ_, which imports a singular attention where the soul followeth the eye as in an intense motion.

2. That thus is there another sight to be had of the written word, and of these wonderful things there, which, through not _taking heed_, most pafs by, and do not discern.

3. It is most clear, how fuch an adiverce and _taking heed_ to the scripture is underflood here, with some peculiar respect thereto, as it is a _more sure word of prophesie_; how it takes place, and hath demonstrative evidences of the certainty of its truth in the event; for thus doth the apostle oppose it to _so extraordinary a sign from heaven_.

4. It cannot be possibly supposed, that the word as it is written should be _more sure_, as to an objective certainty, than his speaking to men by audible voice, since both are his own word. But such a preference as is here held forth, there is clearly witnessed, that in the way of the written word more is really given to the church, if it were rightly underflood, and that we could but advert thereto, for begetting a further subjective certainty within the soult than either miracles or any extraordinary sign from heaven could do. Now to evince this, how great a light thus may be had, and should break up by _taking heed_ to the word, as it is a _more sure word of prophesie_, I offer thefe,

1. If it is not clear, from _so wonderful a product of the scripture_, above nature or natural caufes, and these great appearances of God there which are _so near_, even to our touch in feeling; how convincingly they bring a greater demonftration of the truth to mens eyes, than _so extraordinary a voice_ could bring to their ears.

2. It isSure, such a discovery is in this day to be had of the written word, that in a more discernible way than by any outward voice or found may be known by power and life, yea by that ineffable evidence and light, with _so near_ and feeling a converse with the invisible God, as there is found and experienced by every one of the fants, that can make it no less discernible from the word of man, than _if we heard it by some audible and articulare voice spoken out of heaven_.

3. What Jacob saw but in a vision, may we not here fee with our eyes, by _such a taking heed_; a _Ladder set between heaven and earth_, by which the glorious God his coming down to converse with the church and the souls of his people, is by as near an approach witnessed in the written word, as _if he should come with such a stupendious extraordinary voice_: so that as the top of this ladder,

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in its descent and original is seen to reach to heaven; it is sure nothing can be more visible, than how its foot also toucheth the earth, and thus its other end is on the ground, to the sense and feeling of the weakest christian, in their experience of the truth. 4. By taking heed to the scripture is not such an evidence and attest to be had of its truth, from a continued series of events, and the known certainty thereof; that for our being sure and thoroughly confirmed, doth far exceed any transient irradiation of the mind, which so strange a voice and found from heaven could cause? 5. To shew the preference of the word to all extraordinary means, we fee it is the very last way and means now for revealing the counsel of God to the church; yea, how it is suited to these times, when the greatest light and most clear opening up of the truth is expressly promised, and to be looked after as that which hath the advantage every way of more extraordinary signs, whereby in former times the counsels of God were revealed. O if men knew, or would but let themselves know, what here might be reached by such a serious enquiry, and taking heed to the scripture, how easy were it to fee that something much greater than an audible voice from heaven is this day at their hand, to assure them of its truth.

Sect. 5. Here we may clearly see such a reality and subsistence in the supernatural truths of the word, that whoever will they may come and feel after God there, and with the greatest certainty of sense be conducted to the things themselves, which must within the church know but in the theory and notion. This is indeed a convincing evidence, and such as nothing possibly can be beyond it; if we consider, 1. How the object here is not at a distance, but in its approach so near, as anything can be, which is found and touched in mens hands, where they know it is no mistake, but in the greatest compofure of spirit, have a present and rational reflection on their own experience. 2. Such as they are sure it can be no casual thing, nor is it a groping in the dark; but thus every step in the road of sense and feeling is by rule and method, which hath scripture-light shining before it, so that they know by experience, this is nothing else but what they were called to believe, and could have read in the Bible before they knew any such thing; for thus are the written word and the experience of the saints, found such relatives, and the eye betwixt them so discernible, as in the most obvious connexion that possibly could be in nature, betwixt the cause and the effect, or the fountain and the stream.

3. What here is felt, and proved to be in the way of the word, we see also is the repeated experience of others, even of the whole race of the saints, who in that good and old way of converse with God and following him, did in ages bear the same witness. 4. That this feeling is an undoubted reality, is so clear, that they now know it who could nor believe the truth of such a thing, and did no less look thercon as a dream, than most of this generation do, until the truth once touched them at the heart. 5. And is it not such a feeling that there can be no more sure converse by the senses with this visible world, than that the saints have with these great things revealed in the Bible, when they cannot but witness what they have both seen and known?

Sect. 6. Thus it is clear from the foregoing demonstration, how great an assistance sense offers to the christian’s faith, and what solid improvements might be made this way, for a more through reliance on the security of the word and promise, when so much is given, that men may see as well as believe. For which some things would be previously considered, how this is to be understood, and what a certainty is here, that we are not grasping at a shadow, in a manner of such weight and near concernment to us. 1. It is sure, there are spiritual things, and great supernatural truths of the written word to be known by sight as well as by faith, whilst we are here; nor is there any
any of the saints but can as firmly abide by their spiritual sense, and the reality thereof, as by that which is natural; that the one is no less undoubtedly certain than the other. 2. We clearly see, how the Lord himself makes an appeal to the sense and experience of his people, *Isa. xi. 28.* *Hast thou not heard? hast thou not known?* and that such a trial is called for, to taste and see if he be not what his word declares him to be, *Psal. liv. 8.* where he hath so far condescended, that none need take his word on trust from men, but their own eyes may see it. 3. Though it is clear, that no natural science, no proposition in *Euclide* can have such firm and sure demonstrations as the truth of the written word; yet is it not too obvious, what hesitation and dark apprehensions are about this, if some other sight and feeling than what by nature or natural reason can be had, be not in earnest sought after. 4. I confess it is one of the excellencies of faith to believe and not see; yea, there are most blessed, for here we must *walk by faith, not by sight,* which is the very first and last work of a christian. But I fear a sad mistake, many are in of the right sense of this, as if to believe were some dark and uncomfortable thing, and that the less men see before them, it were so far an higher act of their faith, since this only can be underfoot, *quod evidentiam rei, sed non quod evidentiam testimonii,* that when no appearances are of the things promis’d, or how such should be, then to credit the word for all, is a giving glory to God, and one of the choicest acts of faith within time. But for what concerns the evidence and certainty of the word, and our security therein, I must say, it is some higher degree christians are called to seek and look after, that their walking this way may be by sight, than seems to be either thought of, or believed by most within the church; yea, such an evidence thereof, that might be truly *physical,* and as infallibly sure, as men can have of the being of the sun, when they see it with their own eyes. 5. Is it not undeniable, that according to the degree of evidence, so doth it embrace it as good, yea, thus only can it have a sweet repose and comfort by a fiducial recumbence thereon? And on this account is it now clear, how it is the want of sense that makes so great a want of faith amongst the saints?

Having premis’d these things forgiving some light to this truth, and to prevent mistake, I shall but in a few words more touch it, since what hath been held forth in the preceeding chapters, bear the same witness, how great a discovery is thus of the truth, and certainty of the written word, and what marvelous advantage is at our hand to believe, if we could see it aright. But for a further clearing I offer here these solid improvements of sense, that may be convincingly obvious to every discerning christian. 1. How such hath his experience of the word which he knows well, and hath been so oft repeated, that as a lighted torch does go before him in every new act of his faith, for what is to come, and lets him see it is no dark or un trodden path nor is it a fixing on some doubtful and abstrad notion; but that assuredly he is on safe and known ground here, yea, such as that he knows whom here he hath believed, and is sure it is the same word, and the very same sealed truth and security which he hath often trusted, and had it made good. Of what might be found here, to make a christian’s way pleasant and easy, if the solid improvement of this were but understood. 2. Is there not such an allusion sense affords for believing, that it can shew how great a part of the Bible is already put in the christian’s hand by present possession; yea, thus points him to the very particular truths, where the day-star hath been made to arise within his heart, with so sensible a breaking up of light and comfort, and strength, amidst his faddest hours, as hath oft put him to set a mark thereon, like *Jacob’s* creating his pillar, how there the comforter and his soul did meet, when no meeting could have been more seasonable. 3. It is not the object of our faith
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faith only, but we know by sight how visible an impress of the written word is on the serious and tender walk of the saints, that as the one is so convincingly, so is the other also; yea, thus how many impressions thereof are in every age seen to be cast off I am sure to the conviction of the world. 4. And is it not by sense we know the undoubted certainty of these truths, which are the greatest contradiction to our outward senses, how there is a rejoicing in tribulation, a real abounding under wants, a being strong when we are weak; yea, that an unspeakable comfort can be really had out of the greatest depths of a Christian's trouble. 5. We know also by sense, that as every living thing hath food suited to its kind, such a substance is in the Scripture, and a natural fulfilling of the truths there to feed, nourish, and strengthen a spiritual life, with as great a fitness, as our daily bread can be to that which is natural. 6. It is the undoubted witness of sense, that there is a power in godliness, as well as the form, and such an evidence, and demonstration of the Spirit, with the word, that its found can be no more sure and discernible to the ear, than it is to the soul of a Christian. 7. Except we quit our sight, as well as reason, we must see such a vital sense and air there is with serious godliness, as no falsfiew could ever counterfeit, no more than air can make a dead picture breath and fire; yea, that the product of the gospel, and these great effects it hath in the world are indeed above nature, and such as no human power, or moral influence could possibly reach. 8. It is not only from the Bible, but with the greatest certainty of sense, that the saints know, there is an immediate presence of the Comforter, acceptance and access in prayer, the Spirit's making intercession in prayer, the Spirit's making intercession in them with sighs and groans which cannot be uttered, yea, such an immediate relief and comfort to the soul so sensibly found there, that makes their very bones to bless him, and say, who is like unto thee, O Lord. 9. Is it not made obvious to our sense, that when once men are engaged in the way of the Lord, they have got some new acquaintance, and some other society than men to converse with; yea, what a marvelous change grace then makes on them, from what they were, to affure us of that change glory will ere long make on them from what they now are? 10. Can there any thing be more evident, than this to our sense, that where grace is in a vigorous exercise in any, it gives another appearance than once they had, yea, then it doth shine with such a lustre, as will darken all about them? I shall but further add, what may be as evident to sense as that there is light and darkness, that inbred contrariety which is in most of men against holiness, and how thus there are two contrary states here, to witnese the certainty of these contrary states of heaven and hell in another world.

Sect. 7. Thus we may see, that to these who believe is the exceeding greatness of the power of God, and his mighty working, most eminently shewed forth; yea, in the way of the word, and its continued verification, more than in any extraordinary path. This is the testimony of the Holy Ghost, Eph. i. 19; which though strange and amazing, yet nothing more sure, that there is none of the saints who is exercised unto godliness, but may know the truth of undeniable miracles, and a real converse therewith, within his soul, if a more serious reflection were on his own experience, how immediately from heaven these are wrought. I confess it may seem to bring it under debate, if this can be a truth, or if it be really believed, when it doth not cause a more frequent transport of joy, and wondering among Christians, thus to know such near and sensible communications betwixt God and their soul, by the scripture; and that it is found from him, which under their faddest oppressures makes their work easy, both in them and about them; yea,
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how the greatest effects of a supernatural and divine power that ever was shewed to men, such as to raise the dead, open the eyes of the blind, and to bring forth a creation out of nothing, are surely acted over in the heart of each of the saints, though spiritually, yet in as great a reality there, and with no less demonstrative evidence of God's immediate power, as there can be of these extraordinary miracles which were once shewed forth to the view and conviction of the world.

Sect. 8. We see this truth, and how clearly it is witnessed from what hath been held forth, That the confirmations of the last times are greater than those of the first, and 'tis more caiy now to believe, and be persuaded of the certainty of the scripture, than in the days when such extraordinary signs and appearances of God were held forth to his church. I know this will seem strange, and by some be questioned how it can be a truth, that there should be now more advantage to believe the word, and we accountable for the improvement of a larger seal and witness thereto, than in the days of the apostles and primitive church, before whom such undeniable miracles were wrought. But let us also consider, 1. What great things of the scripture have this day taken place, and are disclosed in the event, which then were hid from their eyes; and as we have that advantage of all which from the Lord was brought to confirm his truth in these times, and may recur thereunto, with the same certainty as if we had seen them: O what a marvelous seal hath been since added, which former times did not know. 2. As it is sure none can deny a greater light hath now broken up to the church; than what was in former ages, and since the first times of the gospel, that there hath been a continued finishing of the mystery of God in the scripture, the performance whereof is the great intent of providence; so is it also clear what a further revealing and bringing to light hath been therewith of his deep counsels there, which is the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost. 3. Is it not now manifest, the time of that promise Dan. xii. 4. is come, for some greater discoveries of these truths which then were sealed up, when they shall not run in vain who are on this blessed scent, to know what the word is bringing forth for the church; yea, that it is such a day when some great scripture-truths are near the height and full period of their accomplishment, and therewith a more remarkable piece of the work of God than former ages have known; for which, whatever present darkness, now we have sure ground to believe that the brightness of the second coming of the Lord, 2 Thes. ii. 8. by which the man of sin shall be utterly abolished, is in some measure begun, and so much thereof seen as may be an earnest in our hand of what we believe and wait for before the end. 4. Such an advantage is this day beyond the best of former ages, that we may see what length the course of the gospel, and of the church militant, is now come; and how far the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, which if it were not thus verified in the event, how hard should it be to believe a truth so contrary to all human appearances.

Sect. 9. Thus it doth manifestly appear from the fore-going demonstration, that these are not more wonderful truths we are now called to believe, which seem at a distance so strange and astonishing; than such we certainly know, and have seen with our eyes accomplished; nor are the objects of our faith, that the scripture is yet to bring forth more great, and above nature's understanding, than these which are the objects of sense, and thus before us in the event; if we could seriously consider, 1. What concerns the Jewish restoration; a truth that seems so hard for many to believe how this should take place, for that dead womb yet to bear, and these dry bones live, which for so many days have lain at the graves mouth, is indeed a marvelous thing!
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thing! But what do we see? and is accomplished about that people? Is it not also demonstrative of God, and of his marvelous power in the way of judgment, as this is of the sovereignty of his grace? I mean, that continued stroke of judicial blindness and obduracy they are now under, amidst such clear evidences of the truth, which none possibly could refit, if that veil were not over their mind, the apostle speaks of, and their reason and understanding under a visible restraint; so that if these be considered what now hath taken place, and we are yet called to believe, is it not most clear, the one is not more strange and astonishing than the other. 2. We believe a pouring out of the last plague upon Antichrist, which shall overturn his seat and kingdom; for this is expressly foretold: But is it not evident, that nothing here is more strange, and above human appearances, than what this day is certainly seen of the truth of the scripture, in his revealing the manner of his appearance, that height of his power and prevalence over the saints, yea, what is already begun and fulfilled of his down-fall; which are truths that I may say once seemed no less amazing to the church at a distance, than the utter abolishing of that adversary, looks to us this day. 3. It is a special part of our faith for things yet to come, that ere long there will be a parting with time, and then shall we enter into an estate of everlasting blessedness, which is a great truth; yea, so great, that it may be strange how easy some can find the believing of such a thing from joy and wondering thereat; but what do we see, and have brought near our senses to confirm the scripture? Is it not something no less wonderful, that by the power of the gospel so many are entered out of darkness into a marvelous light, which is really another world; yea, such an estate that rieth higher above the condition of men by nature, than that glorious condition of the saints in heaven is now above theirs, who are yet journeying towards it; for the difference of the one is but in degree, but the other in kind. 4. We believe this day the resurrection of the dead, and an undoubted accomplishment of that great truth, which to natural reason would seem a strange contradiction; but should we consider, that the same truth, though in a spiritual way, yet most visibly and upon an higher account is verified before our eyes; how it is sure, such are quickened and brought to life, who were dead in their sins, were past feeling, yea, for so many years have lain as in a cold grave, without sense of God or their own case, who in one moment, at the voice of the word, have been made to stir and arise; and is not this something as discernible above nature, or the influences of second causes, yea, as marvelous an act of divine power, as the resurrection of the body in the last day, which seems so dark and strange a thing for many to believe. 5. We wait also according to the promise for the second coming of the Lord, that this last piece of Canonick scripture shall assuredly be disclosed in the event, when the Lord himself will descend from heaven with the voice of the Arch-angel, and the trump of God, before whom these visible heavens shall pass away with a noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth be burnt up; for these are things which must shortly come to pass: but it is sure, nothing in all this is so marvelous or great, as what hath come to pass, when we now know, that God was manifested in the flesh, which is so marvelous a performance of the scripture, that after this mens hearts can have no shadow for fear, or distrust of the bringing forth of all that remains, there being this day so much in our hand, that we know the greatest truth in all the Bible hath already taken place.

Sect. 10. Thus is that marvelous discovery made clear before us, how great a thing the scripture is, whose words are seen to be works, and not the notion or Idea of things only, but such as have a real being and substance; yea

yea
yecfuch that their speaking and doing is truly one and the same: if we could consider, 1. How these are words to be felt by the soul, and as truly plant ed there, as for our eyes to read them; which have not only a found to the ear, but are sweet to the taste, yecfuch as each of the fants from experience can fay, they words were found, and I did eat them, and they were the rejoicing of my heart, Jer. xv. 16. 2. We muft lay, no words like these were ever written since the beginning of time, which can take life and root in the soul, yecfuch as do it as really as the feed doth in the ground, and are fitted to be ingrafted and innaturalized there, fo as no coalition in nature, between the graft and the tree, can be more real than this. Jam. i. 21. 3. There are words where the things promised, though hoped for, and to come, have even then a prefent being and subsifience in the promise, Heb. xi. 1. yecfuch are they, that it can be truly faid, if a christian have the promise, he hath the mercy. 4. We Know they are such that can once both fpeak the chrifians peace, comfort, and strength to them, and convey it, yecfuch in that very moment efectuate what they fay. 5. It is not clear afo, they are not more visibly written in the Bible, than they are sealed upon the foul of a christian, and what may seem moft wonderful there of the workings, breathings, ftrengthenings, teachings, and witneifling of the fpirit, are found to be fo many undoubted realities turned over again in a practical hilory. Oh! what a book is this; which men, if they fliut not their eyes, might fee the living God only could frame; where two impreffions are oft made difcernible at once, the one of words and syllables by the printer's types upon paper, but the other of life and power by the Holy Goal, by whom there are made living words, fo that the truth of grace, the breathings of God on his people, his felt preference, and that near fellowship they are admitted to with him, may be feen to be nothing else but some part of this second impression of the Bible.

Sec. II. Such are the wondrous works of God, wherein the scripture is verified before us, as clearly fhews, his name is near, and how fenfible an approach there is this day of it to the church, Psal. lxv. 1. How this is to be underflood, fome things would be previously confidered, 1. That it is a truth verified to all, fince there can be no poiffible distance from him who fills heaven and earth with his prefence, fuch is the immenfity of his effence. 2. He is near in a more fpecial way oft to his people, when they are not aware, and can difcern no evidences thereof, Job ix. 11. he goeth by me, and I fee him not. 3. It is known afo, fuch solemn and fenfible approaches of God there are, which no words can express; yecfuch hath been in that manner witneffed to fome, that it might be judged not fit to communicate to others, it fhould seem fo strange what they have certainly known of this. 4. It is clear, the moft demontrative evidence of fuch a truth, is in thefe great events of the scripture, and that there is it the holy God caufeth his name and attributes pafs by before mens eyes, with fo visible a discovery of himself as is suited to awake the fleeping world, and call them up to an awful regard of his being fo near. But oh how little fervious advertence is to this, and to thefe immediate appearances of the Lord, in verifying his truth, a fight from which moft of this generation do flee; yecfuch how much is loft, even by the fants, of these choice confirimations they might have thereof, through their not being more in an habitual frame to observe; but to evince the certainty of this bleffed truth, and how near this his name is by a moft fenfible demonftration to the experience of the fants in all ages; these fure and known remarks I fhall instance, 1. How it hath not been more difcernible his speaking to them in the promise, than that himself afo hath done it, and hath given the performance
formance in their hand of that very word whereupon he had caused them to hope, Psal. cxix. 49. yea thus so near an approach of his name, that as they knew a sensible and strengthening influence on their hope to hold by the word, when no appearances were of its taking place; now they see and are sure of the return with that convincing discovery, This is our God, we have waited for him, Isa. xxxvi. 8. 2. It is clear, there is none of the saints but in some measure know what it is to have their Bethel, where with Jacob they could say, sure God was there; and have found that upon so near an approach as hath made both the time and place remarkable through all their life, Hosea xii. 4. 3. It is known also these providences do occur where an extraordinary appearance of God, and of some visible appointments from heaven, like to Hagar's well in the wildernefs, hath been so clearly witnessed, as hath caused a present fear as well as joy to some of the saints; and with Abraham's servant to bow down and worship with wondering at so near an approach of his Name, Gen. xxvi. 26. 4. It is sure, there are palpable answers to prayer, the saints have from heaven, to witness his name is near, which then brings a certainty and evidence there with, of their being accepted, their suit taken in, a loosing of their bonds; yea, thus a communication of some divine thing to quiet the soul, which no words can possibly tell, what they have both seen and felt of so near an approach; but surely God hath heard me, faith David, Psal. v. Is not his being near, then witnessed, when he openeth mens ears to discipline, and sealeth their instruction, that such a power and authority is found with their light, as forceth its' Pallage down to the reins, and the hidden parts, to make them go bound in the spirit about their duty, and to hear that voice behind them, which faith, This is the way, walk in it, Job xxxiii. Isa. xxx. 21. I shall but add, that nothing can be more known, than that sensible retreat the saints do find into his name, when from outward preturies their soul hath been ready to sink, when thus it is yet open to take thee in, on whom all pallages of relief from without have been remarkably fluent; yea, thence such a light found to break up with that immediate conveyance of strength and support, that can only be understood by these that feel it; Psal. ix.

S E C T. 12. We have solid warrant for this, that so great a light doth result from the accomplishment of the Scripture, and these events wherein it takes place, as puts the Angels in heaven this day to the same study with us, to know by the church the manifold wisdom of God, and what marvelous providences are thus witnessed to his people; so that upon this account we know these excellent spirits who in that state of perfection behold the face of God; even these are at school with the saints here; to see and admire his works and various dispensations about the church, where his faithfulness and truth do so brightly shine forth, Eph. iii. 10. For it is clear, 1. Such are the depths of providence, and the unscaling of the written word, which is the alone work of the Mediator, and under his hand, as goeth beyond the wisdom of angels; which they see and regard with wondering, but cannot comprehend, 1 Pet. i. 12. 2. It is sure these have a more clear light, and with another kind of joy and delight look in on such events of the scripture that concern the church, than can be by any here reached in the state of mortality: and thus have they a knowledge by experience and observation of the great works of God in the world. 3. Though such are in a glorified state, yet are they called to learn and have some new accession to their joy and knowledge, and which may be truly said, some further proficience by this marvelous study of the continued verification of the world, how the counsel of the Lord takes place; yea, what a rare choice of means is to be seen for that end, how the contri-
vances of Satan, and all the churches enemies are so directed, as to bring forth the contrary effects; and the temptations, snares, and down-fallings of the saints, made the very way and method for their further raising: thus also they see how marvelous a content there is betwixt that infallible certainty of events from the determination of the Lord, and the liberty of second causes; and how small and contemptible means are made most sublervient for some of his greatest works. 4. It may be clear from the word what special access these great ministers of providence, the angels, have for this blessed study, to and observe the wisdom, power, and faithfulness of God, in their continued executing his commands, and doing of his will upon the earth; when 1. with a further light than can be known to us here, they do look in upon the whole conduct of human affairs, and event of things in the world (in which their service is more than we are aware of) and there see how all is ordered in subserviency to the scripture, and its taking place. 2. These do in a special manner regard the assemblies of the church, and the great appearance of God there, as is clear, 1 Cor. xi. 10. but how little is this known or believed, that to near approaches thus are of the angels, and their being present at the meetings of the saints, in their care and oversight of them, that it may be truly dispensed. 3. Such a continued converse have these glorious spirits with the saints, in their care and oversight of them, that it may be truly said, they are not only helpers, but joint-observers with such, of the truth and tenderness of God, in the whole tract and conduct of providence about them. It is sure the ministry of the angels does in no times cease: and though it be not so clear from the scripture, a proper deputation of some of these for particular christian; yet what joy and alhoning thoughts should it cause to consider that it is so evident; these have a distinct charge and commission for every one of the heirs of salvation, to prevent such imminent hazards, when they are not aware thereof themselves, and fee to their bodies as well their souls; to go before them in such undertakings as are in the way of the promise, for making them successful; to rescue where ordinary means fail; yea, to hold them up as in their hands, that they daft not their feet against a stone? Now in all these as it is clear how marvelously they concur and are at work with delight; so have they some further knowledge this way, by observing the unspotted faithfulness of God towards his people, yea thus are made partakers of their joy.

Sect. 13. This one inference more I must add from the preceding demonstration, how convincing and clear a witness there is to this great truth, of a real energy and efficacious working of the spirit with the word, beyond any moral influence, or objective teaching thereof; and of principles of grace immediately infused in the soul of a christian, whence such are put forth to these acts and duties, that no improvement of natural abilities could ever reach. This is a truth of greatest weight, which we see here so clearly evinced and proved, that I may say, nothing possibly can be more to enforce the being and certainty of a thing than this; The scripture of God, and experience of the saints, that in all ages they have had of its verification, do in one witness most convincingly meet; for such evidence from the scripture there is, as all may see an elay to expunge these blessed truths out of it, must have the same reach to bring the whole in question, they lyse so close with its most substantial parts, and run as it were through all the veins and arteries of that blessed record. And for the certainty of experience, with these discoveries on the soul of a christian thereof, in that manner they are known, as may make it no less strange to hear these brought in debate, than for a living man to be questioned about the truth of vital principles, without which he could neither
neither act nor move. I am prefled to touch this, not only as it falls in on the road with the present subject of this discourse, and that from so necessary a rise I could not now pass it; but in a time also, when such essays are as have gone a further length than to oppose the power and spirituality of religion in the practice, to attack it in its principles, and run down the notion thereof, as some impoffure or fanatick dream, with which they would perfwade us, the world hath been until this day cheated; yea with a confidence as may shew what an hour it is on the Reformed church, when fuch come publickly forth, as dare offer to affront the God of truth, in the most clear discoveries of his word, by giving them the lye, and the spirit of grace in his eminent workings on the soul; yea to scoff at all fensible intercourse between Jesus Christ and his church here upon the earth, in his manifefiations and withdrawals, as the fumes of religious madness, or fome ebbs and tides of the humours of the body. I confefs, when at this rate they fpeak, none needs wonder at personal reflections, as with a strange height of infolence they flew in reviling fome, whose repute and honour in the church for the truth's fake is above their power to darken. But what a time are we in, when atheifm fo far outgoes its usual bounds, that it is not enough to get from the heart to the tongue, but it must be down at the pen, to deride the truth of godliness before others; serious thoughts of which, could not be without a terror and awful impreflion on their hearts when alone with themselves; and now must it not only be the song of the drunkards, but a matter of publick scoffing and sport by fuch who have the name of doctors within the church? It hath put me to stand with atoniffment, to think what they possibly can intend in their venting fuch doctrines, which all may fee is not to difpute, but to droll the world out of any settled perfwafion of the truth, and to perfwade men to trust their own eyes no more for what they read in the Bible, nor their experience for what is moft certainly felt and proved on their foul; but conform, in the matter of religion, to the mode and fashion of the times, as well as in their clothes: and to enforce this, fome new and more effectual way must be taken, which I confefs is fuch as former ages have but little known, to dictate atheifm and blafphemy by rule, and bring them within the road of divinity, and the doctrine of the church. One thing in this looks to me with the greatest terror, that fad account which this gives of the temper and complewife of the time; when it feems to be confulted as the way to gain repute for parts, and being masters of reafon, to decry the power and life of religion; yea in that manner, as if their alone inerest in owning the name of Christians, were to have some more advantage for casting reproach on christianity, and to weaken its awe on mens fouls: but it is well their design lies not in the dark, nor is the bait fuch as can cover the hook from the moft ordinary observers; and tho' they bring another gospel than what is delivered to us in the Scripture, which too manifestly may be evinced, yet is it under no fuch appearance as angels from heaven. What I fpeak here is far from the leaf intended irritatation or prejudice at the perflons of any, againft whom I know no interefl or quarrel but one, which is for the truth's fake, and that bleffed name by the which we are called; having fo enforcing a call to this, in purfbutance of the preffent subjeft I now treat on from a doctrine stated in fuch direct oppofition thetere, and at this day thus publickly owned; which is this, "That religion is nothing else but what lies in moral virtue, and a living up to the dictates of natures light; yea no truth in the influences and efficacy of the spirit on mens soul beyond the objective teaching of the word, nor no inward-principles of grace, a new birth, or any reality of a spiritual life, but what are the illusions of mens fancy;" a doctrine were it now
now owned, and put in the church's creed, we might truly say with the apostle, then is the christian faith in vain, and hath been so in the most fundamental articles thereof, since there was a church in the world; yea, then have all the saints since the beginning of time been false witnesses against God. I shall touch this, but in a few words, since others more largely and with much advantage to the truth, have appeared therein; these particulars I only offer to be considered: How express and undeniable an opposition is here, 1. To the written word. 2. To the experience of the saints in all ages of the church. 3. To such clear demonstrative grounds of reason, as might enforce a conviction on the greatest atheists, though the scripture were laid aside. 4. How visible the tendency of this doctrine is, to strike at the root and vital parts of christianity, which all may see by undeniable consequnces from it. 5. How obvious is it also that such must oppose their own light and conscience, in that reproach they cast on the truth, and these whom at so high a rate they challenge of enthusiasm and impolitute, when the contrary is so known, that they can have no possible advantage for it, but by making lies their refuge.

For the first: Since it is clear, no other scheme or mould of religion we can own, but from the scriptures of God, let us but go in there and see what this is, and how express an opposition it stands in to such doctrine as is now publickly vented; which, as the scales of the balance, are such, that the one cannot possibly rise, but with the going down of the other; when so plain and full the scriptures witness is herein. 1. That it is an evangelick holiness and not legal that is now required under the dispensation of the gospel; and not a conformity only to the image of God in his Son; a holiness that from him as the principle must be derived, and unto him as the pattern can only be conformed, Rom. viii. 24. Having predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son; nor is the writing of the law in our heart to be understood, but as it is a conformity to that law of the spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus. This is the alone text, and no other we can know of christian morality, which if men shew not that stam and superscription thereon, let their pretences be never so high, it is a counterfeit, and cast in a false mould, when brought to the scripture, and before its light to be tried. And what a strange shape should these put upon holiness, to divide it from its alone fountain Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of the gospel, without which it cannot possibly stand. The corruption of the excellent things is found to be most noisom; and I am sure no contrivance could be beyond this, to turn so rare an antidote into poison; yea, for what use should the gospel be more, if religion must all be summed up in a practice of moral virtue, and living up to the dictates of reason, according to the light of nature, as we see now openly professed. 2. The scripture expressly shews, that the Lord looks to mens actions in their principles whence they flow; and does accordingly judge thereof; and the tree must be good, else the fruit will be as the apples of Sodom for a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, Mat. vii. 18. nor can those who are in the flesh please God, Rom. viii. 8. And what is more clear than the scripture is here, that there are principles of grace formed in the soul of a christian; an ingrafting of the word into the soul; fam. i. 21. and a real transforming into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18. a being made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. Yea, is there not a writing of the law in the inward man, whence there is a spiritual enlightning of the understanding, and effectual determining of the will unto objects spiritual, and supernaturally good? and if men will deny the truth of regeneration, and a new life formed in the soul; yet can they deny, that these are words of our great
great matter himself, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven, and that it is written Job. iii. 3. Nor debate such a scripture there is, 1 Job. iii. 9. that shews a being born of God, and how these have his seed remaining in him; in which a change no less marvelous is thus wrought than if a transmutation should be of one nature and kind into another. Why do not some prefix to their books, what they so visibly import, a refutation of the written word, when their peculiar aim is to impugn its truth, and turn the great institutions of the gospel into a cheat and imposture of fanaticks. 3. Is not this the doctrine of the scripture, that there is an evidence and demonstration of the spirit with the preached gospel, 1 Cor. ii. 4. by which the same truths that are taught by men, are impressed and made effectual on the soul; and that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power? Yea, it is not a most dreadful account given of such by the Holy Ghost, and expressly foretold, 2 Tim. iii. 4. who having the form of godliness, should deny the power thereof; whatever length such a form may come in the material part of duties, and how plain a verification is of this, the world may see this day. 4. If men but read the scripture, can they debate what of this truth is so clear there, that there is an in-being and union with Jesus Christ, Job. xvi. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 1. as the hid spring of all a christian's supplies, the principle of their spiritual enjoyments, without which mens furthest endeavours after holiness cannot possibly reach that end; since from him must our fruit be found. Hof. xiv. 8. and how he is unto his people, not their righteousness only, but sanctification, 1 Cor. xi. 4. yea, how straitly are these co-joined, a meritorious cleansing from sin by the blood of Christ, and that effectual cleansing from it by the spirit, Tit. iii. 5. 5. This does the scripture also clearly witness, that there is another key to open mens heart, than moral persuasion, nor can mens planting and watering in the use of means do further, than there is a divine concurrence therewith to give the encrease, 1 Cor. iii. 6. and how a physical and moral influence do both answer to produce one and the same effect, Philippians ii. 8. a revealing of Christ in us by the spirit, as well as an objective revelation of him is to us the gospel; yea, how no constraint is put on the saints, but what takes the true liberty of the soul in its consent with it, it being a constraint of love, 2 Cor. v. 14. Cant. i. 4. 6. Is it not thus clear, that the fame authority which hath given a rule for all moral duties in the decalogue, hath commanded also the manner of their performance; and that no right worshipping of God can be, but in spirit and truth; yea, that such a reduplication should be in the act and doing of duty, to do it for the Lord, to give to a disciple as a disciple; and so labour, That whether absent or present we may be accepted of him; this also is shewed, Psal. li. 6. that it is truth in the inward parts he especially regards; and was it not something else than the moral rectitude of an act, or its conformity on the matter to the rule which gave the widow's mite such a preference, made that difference between Cain and Abel's offering? I shall but add this; if the quality of the principle were not morally essential to an action, then Judas's sorrow might have been true repentance, which was so intense and real a grieve.

2. As the express opposition of such doctrine to the scripture is undeniable; how manifest a contradiction is here also to the experience of the saints in all ages of the church, who in these great truths have put to their seal, That God is true; wherein such fear not to make him a liar. I need use but few words in speaking to this which at such length is held forth elsewhere: and where, I must say, none can seriously exercise reason, but sees no possible fallacy
fallacy or imposture can be here; but if men must try their wit to undeceive the world from such a cheat as some pretend this to be, and deny its truth because they are strangers to it themselves; they will not think it strange that we cannot quit the scripture, nor at once deliver up our reason and judgment; yea, cannot so far contradict both sense and feeling, as to come over to their way: nor need such wonder, it is not easy to unteach the doctrine and substantial of christianity, to those who know its truth upon their soul; or persuade a living man that life and motion is but an illusion of his fancy: for with no less certainty do the saints know these truths, which now are so publickly disowned. 1. That a real intercourse betwixt Jesus Christ and the soul is no imaginary thing, but such as they know to surpass all the delights men seek or can suppose in a wallowing in sensuality; and, That then they are in no dream but awake, and in the greatest composure of mind, when under his shadow they have fat, and his fruit was sweet to their taste, when his name as ointment was poured forth, and their heart made to melt within at their beloved's voice; yea, when with the church he hath taken them in unto more special retirements with himself, and there hath given them his love, Cant. vii. 9. when his sensitive embraces under some bitter afflicting crofs, hath been such as hath made them forget the smart and pain thereof. Oh where do we live? Is it in a christian church? thus to hear that inestimable love of Jesus Christ, and those blessed communications thereof to his people, brought by some to the pulpit, and others to the pref, as a matter of publick scoffing and derision? Can it be said in the house of his friends, such indignity is offered unto him? But tho' these sport at such an appeal as they pretend some have made unto the tribunal of God, it is like their confidence may fail to hold up at this rate, when it comes but near the drawing of their last breath; or to put religion in their Testament, which they fear not to put in their books. 2. This assurance have all who know the truth, (oppose it who will) to own as a matter of experience, yea, with that certainty, as they know the truth of any thing; That there is a real and sensible intercourse here betwixt the word and the soul, by communications of life, strength, joy and light; and how this is no product of enthusiastick fumes, but as they are a manifest seal and verification of the scripture, so is the reality thereof as sure; yea, how marvelous an up breaking of light is oft found this way, to discover the wondrous things of the word, which at other times are hid, and no more within their power, than to cause the Sun to shine when it is under a dark cloud. 3. It is the witness of the saints, which from sure experience they know and give in to the truth; and being of a spiritual life, as that which no less sensibly is demonstrat, than that men have life and being by nature; which though it is not by birth, nor hath a rife from natural causes, yet hath its vital acts and proper operations as really put forth, as the acts of breathing and moving are by a living man; a life that hath peculiar delights and enjoyments suited to its own nature, such as have not the least affinity with the flesh; yea, a life with as real communications and influences both of light and strength from above, as it is sure our bodies are influenced with the warmings of the sun. Some may take the confidence to deride this (as now this way seems an advantage in such an age), when a profane drollery gains more than the most solid demonstrations of truth; and no such effectual means consulted, as that to gain repute, but I may with some more confidence say, if these knew what is the christian's evidence of the reality of such a truth, and what they live and feed on, and truly enjoy, where the world can be no witnesses; this mirth should cease, and debate about the solidity of religion, or scoff at those who are most in earnest about
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about it. 4. It will be too hard a work for men, to dispute a christian out of these sensible tastes of acceptation and peace with God, the joy of his presence, and their being empowered to approach unto him, with the liberty of the spirit of adoption, who at other times know the sad restraints and bondage their backslidings hath put them in; nor will it be easy to shake such about the certainty of God's being the hearer of prayer, and his giving answers thereto upon their soul, before they have got them in their hand; who ever knew the truth of serving him in the spirit. I confess such a feared controversy may seem above ordinary reach, for some thus to come forth and persuade these who see with their eyes, that their sight is but an illusion of the fancy; and what they really hear, is but in a dream; there being no such thing as a visible object or audible found: and yet this must pass for fanaticism, that we cannot be forced or hectored out of it, which the christian church hath known, and all the faints experienced since the time of Abel the righteous; but we fear not to own such a challenge. 5. I must say, they are far from respect to enthusiasm, or any impulse not according to the rule, whole experience can witness that truth of their being instructed of the Lord by a strong hand, and his following light on the soul with most discernible power and authority, for some piece of work and service he hath called unto; for this they own, and only know in the way of the word, even when in some more than ordinary way, they are forced to see he teacheth as no man can do; and how easy he can make their work to follow, when he goes before to lead, with so sensible an up-breaking of strength as is found therewith.

5. What a visible repugnancy to Reason is here, though men should reject scripture and the experience of the faints, when so much is to inforce by a rational demonstration on all, who never knew the power and efficacy of grace and energy of the spirit on their own soul. That here is no false flew or deceit; these being so clear, as they can be hid from none. 1. How the cause must be certain, and no counterfeit, where its peculiar and proper effects are so real and known to be such, as from no other cause could be produced; such as to make a divorce visible betwixt men's soul and what once was as their right eye, and move with a native unconstrained motion, to that, from which they had before the greatest natural aversion; yea, to cause a satisfied choice of the Cross and reproach of Christ, before all the pleasures of the earth; so that they are found to rejoice in tribulation, and when they are weak, to know the greatest income of strength: and must it not be a divine supernatural power that can dispose the heart into a most discernible tenderness and melting at the word, where no natural softness of spirit could beallledged for this, and cause them to tremble with a surpirsing terror upon their spirit at the hearing of these truths which they formerly made sport at? It is sure, such an effect also cannot be hid from the world, how real a transforming of the soul of a christian there is by the power of the word into the same image and likeness, which is an effect could no more be the product of moral persuasion, than he who paints a man's face could put life in such a dead image. 2. If there be no truth and certainty of infused principles of grace, and real efficacy of the spirit; it is then clear, the most observable fruit and progress of the gospel should follow the greatest advantage of gifts and objective helps; when nothing is more obvious, even to reason, than the contrary of this, how the kingdom of God is not in word but in power; and that the simplicity of the gospel, and foolishness of preaching, as the apostle calls it, is seen to exceed all human eloquence; yea, how the most polished discourse, and greatest strength of reason, does often make but weak preaching with the least real efficacy: And here none can deny, what in all times hath been so obvious a remark.
remark of a change by grace wrought on some, where the world might see no ordinary means, no company, no example, nor any usual way for instruction could be subservient for it, to witness there is an immediate reaching of the Lord. 3. It is convincingly obvious to reason and sense, how there is an unseen power put forth upon the conscience, in giving it a wound, for which the furthest improvement of natural helps or moral persuasion can find no cure; yea, such a wound is this sometimes seen to be, as no rack or outward torment is comparable thereto, which no reason then can allay, or the most convincing arguments and proposals of the greatest comfort in the world, but grows upon them the more they strive with it; when in one moment its relief from another cause is found to come, and oft such a cure as is no less marvelous and demonstrative of some higher power above reason to work this, than the wound itself, which all may see is something men cannot speak, nor human arguments influence; but whatever word may then be made use of, it is an immediate communication from heaven of light and joy therewith on the soul, that makes it effectual. This is too far a truth for men to sport at, who have no security from his hand, that in all ages have let the world know what the power of the conscience is. 4. I am sure none can be in the dark with such a discovery, that something there is above morality, or any external helps, as to the truth of a judicial induction on the soul, when thus, as the word shews, it is so visibly seen, how many have got beyond the reach of means, yea, discernibly preached worse, more deaf and dead under the greatest advantages this way, whereby others are enlivened; men cannot but know no outward cause is here, nor is it so rare a sight this day within the church, to bring it in question how light and conviction (yea, when all that moral helps can possibly do, is put forth to the full) are yet seen to resolve in a further rage and malice against the truth, to shew it is an immediate stroke from God for men abuse of light; and whence the wound is, there only can the cure be expected. 5. Though no access should be to convince from scripture, yet if such great pretenders to morality will admit, that in some case the moral certainty of a thing can be so far evinced, as to the fullest satisfying of the mind, then it is sure, nothing possibly can be more than is here; to shew it's no dream or imposture for which so great a witness is given, from those whose truth and moral integrity their adversaries must confess, and fear not to credit in any personal interest; nor will they debate their judgment and capacity to discern of things as well as others (left they should bring their own in question), and that from outward gain or incitements this way, such have no cause to be acted; nor is this a witness from some few, and in one age, or in a corner of the earth, but is the known record of the church since the beginning of time, and of such who have been ready at all times to render a reason of this hope within them; yea, appeal to the trial of others, even of their greatest adversaries, to come and see if the efficacy of grace, the inward workings of the Holy Ghost upon the soul, and that truth of a spiritual life, be an false shew; and is not the world forced to observe with what composure of spirit, and with their dying breath, when on the nearest approaches to another life, these fear not to attest this, and go in bearing that testimony before the tribunal of God?

4. I offer here to be considered, what this doctrine as is now spread evidently implies, and whether it tends by undeniable consequence, should it be received in the church; when thus, 1. We must look after some other Bible, than the written word, nor can its authority have any weight, as that which is Regula regulans, when in so express terms the christian faith and the truth of all supernatural revelation is here called to the bar of natures light and
and the dictates of mens reason, to be owned or call, as it answers thereto, which thus to expressly is owned as the alone standard to regulate the whole both of faith and obedience. 2. May not all see, its not at the uppermost boughs, but at the root that such doctrine strikes, to subvert mens souls in that greatest truth of the use and efficacy of grace? yea, what a length they run beyond Pelagius, or the Arminian doctrine, who do not professedly deny all efficacious working of the grace of God, or its being a partial caufe, though this they admit not antecedaneously and independent on the will, but eventually, because of its concurrence therewith; but here is the very being and operation of grace, and of all real influences from God on the soul at once cut off, except what some would restrict as miraculous to the first times of the church. 3. Then should there be no other operation ascribed to God, if this be admitted, for the begetting an increafe of faith, than what is given to the ministry of men, by moral persuasion, and in effect the fame kind of efficiency to such as plant and water, with him who giveth the increafe. We deny not, this honour have instruments, to co operate with him in their own sphere: but what horrid blasphemy should it be, to put such in the fame sphere of working and efficiency with the glorious God? 4. Is it not clear, how thus that great relation of the Mediator, as the influential head of his body, which is the church, and his governing by the scepter of his spirit, is here wholly made void; yea, thus no use of prayer for spiritual influences, or to look up to heaven for our being strengthened in the inward man; and why do not these falten their reproach also on the church's Liturgy, for so grofs a cheat in the publick worship of God, which in effect they declare this to be that men should pray for the gracious assistance of the spirit, and to be illuminate from above, when this only is the effect of an enthuafiatick spirit. 5. And does not the admitting such doctrine most expressly infer, that Enoch's walking with God, Jacob's wrestling by prayer, and these sensible returns he had thereof, Abraham's believing against hope, and all appearances of reason, with these frequent changes of David's inward case, which we read in the Psalms, were but the illusions of fancy, and no use for such a record in the word this day to the church. I shall but further add, how strange a doctrine is here, that makes void the whole intent of the gospel, and scorns to take heaven at so low a rate as upon the account of grace, but must carry it by triumph, and for this will leave the scripture, to find some new passage, since they cannot go in the same road, for being saved with such they so much hate and despife.

5. Let it be considered, what possible advantage these can pretend to gain such reproach on the Protestant doctrine, and these who adhere to it, (against whom they thus appear), of enthuafiam, or its detracting from respect to morality, when they know, and upon their confidence cannot deny this witness, that such, 1. Own no impulse or internal motions which are not according to the rule, but that it is before this light they offer to come, and to his decision who speaks to men by the written word; if these discoveries, influences and efficacious workings of God on the soul, which their experience do witness, be not such as they ought to seek and look after, by express scripture-warrant. 2. How these also are in greatest earnest both to discover and guard against the appearance of enthuafiam, and to keep others off from splitting upon any such rock; nor can it be hid, what is their standing witness against it. 3. It is strange, with what confidence they can own this challenge of their decreeing the vigorous improvement of our natural faculties, and want of respect to morality, who own the doctrine of the gospel; when they know none prefers more a practical conformity to the law,
law; with these engagements that the freedom of the grace of God puts upon men thereto; but this we confess, and must witness with grief, that the morality of some heathens puts to shame the professed piety of many christians in this age, whose walk gives too visible an advantage to question if there be a truth in religion, when so much impiety is found under this cover.

4. It is sure, this can be from no want of light, to publish a decrying of the doctrine of grace, which is turned this day in fashion; when it is so clear, nothing is thence to make the law less strict, or sin less odious; but that here are the strongest inforcements to holiness, and its peculiar intent known to teach us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts; yea, how thence are the clearest inferences for this, that such who have these precious promises should cleanse themselves, &c.

I must shut up this with an answer to two queries, that sometime have looked to me with a strange astonishment; the one is, that no error in the judgment so gross or monstrous is found to break up, but does still prove in some measure contagious, and wants not followers within the church. The other is, what can influence so strange a prejudice and opposition at the doctrine of grace and righteousness of the gospel, as is at this day, that men should be found to take so sad a revenge upon themselves, from pure malignity at so excellent a truth; when it is sure, these do not think to inforce their doctrine by a convincing witness of such heights of morality in their practice, as they contend for by their pen; but is too obvious, how far in this they comply with the temper of a loose time, to subvert in so far the Christian religion, that they may have none at all. For the first of these, it needs not be strange if we consider, 1. That there is no error in the judgment, but what is a work of the flesh, and a most natural suit thus betwixt a false way and a corrupt heart. 2. Since the greatest contempt of God, which men can witness, is their not receiving the truth when it is clearly offered; it is not strange that a delivering up of their reason and judgment unto strong delusions, should be made to answer thereto, which is certainly one of the greatest strokes from God inflicted here. And is it not clear how these strong incitements from the Devil, with the power and energy thereof, are more observably witnessed upon the mind, than upon the affections; yea, such monstrous productions are this way, as may be more demonstrative of his immediate and mighty working on the soul, than the most horrid acts of prophane acts: Thus also the world may see, 'tis the acting over the same scheme, though new actors are brought forth; and in what a round and circle delusion moves, and how old antiquated errors are seen to rise and spread, which former times seem to have buried. For the other query, how so strange an opposition is this day found against the gospel, and the righteousness thereof, none needs to wonder, when it is so clear, first, that the law suits more naturally to men than the doctrine of the gospel. Secondly, That there are degrees of opposition to some points of truth as they are more for the glory of God and promoting of his interest; and therefore it is not strange, so great an assault is here to poison this fountain. 3. What can be more clear, than that account the apostle gives to resolve this, Rom. ix. 32. in their case who withstood then the righteousness of faith; for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone; and therefore does the Holy Ghost call it, a submitting to the righteousness of God, which to nature is as a bowing down below that grandeur and glorying in it self, which it cannot endure to give.
A third particular upon this subject, is some serious enquiry into these grounds, why among these who profess godliness in this age, a through and solid confirmation in the truth is now so rare, and their persuasion of it, so little proportioned to the greatness of that seal and attestation, which is this day before them; for it is too manifest, which the way of most within the church doth witness, how doubtful and fluctuating that reliance they have on scripture-truths is, as a thing that lies in opinion, and probable conjectures, more than in any degree of certitude. I confess it is the peculiar work of the spirit to open the eyes, and enlighten the soul by an effective illumination, and discover to us the evidences of divine truths; nor can the proposal of the object with the greatest certainty of evidence, or by moral reason, cause men discern spiritual things spiritually; since there must be a supernatural light, and suitting of the visible faculty to the object; but is it not clear also, how much the obstruction and culpable cause is on our part, and we can only blame our selves why such a price for wisdom is put in mens hands, and no heart to improve it: some few of these causes I shall here instance, the ignorance whereof keeps us from a cure, because the disease is so little known.

Sect. 1. Christians do but little reflect upon their own experience, to know what it means, nor have their conceptions any proportion to the greatness of these truths that are before them, which is one special cause why so much is given to establish and strengthen, and yet so unanswerable an improvement for this end; but what is to be understood here by serious reflection, I must say, seems a rare exercise to most who profess godliness in this time: 1. To bring near their thoughts to the truth, for getting another light thereof than they formerly had, and their spirits more deeply impressed with so great an import of these things which are freely given them of God; how they are no shadow nor appearances of things, but most visible realties, 2. To have such a returning of the soul upon itself, as to question over again the certainty of these truths which are thus made out by experience, yea, as at a stand how to credit their own eyes therewith, they are so marvelous and great; thus was it with Solomon, 2 Chron. vi. 18. But will God in very deed dwell with men upon the earth? And such was the exercise of that poor woman after so strange a surprising of providence, Gen. xvi. 13. Have I also looked after him who setteth me? Is this the Lord? And do my eyes truly see what I see in so great a mercy? O what a choice and confirming exercise should this be, when a christian can thus sit alone, and reflect on their experience; It is sure I exercise reason, I am not asleep but awaking; and herein know I am not deceived, that there is a spiritual life and immediate fellowship with God here, and that I know whom I have believed; yea, except I contradict my senses as well as reason, I am sure, with that God on whose words I lean for eternal life, I have been oft sensibly refreshed, and found that in his company which no words can express.

Sect. 2. There is this cause may be seen, the very aims and proposals of christians are so low, and their enquiry not suited to such a warrant as they have, John xvi. 24. To ask that their joy may be full: But these great confirmations of the truth which the saints have oft had, and yet are communicable in the way of the word, seem by most of this generation to be laid by as some extraordinary things; which doth clearly witness, 1. An unacquaintedness with the scripture, and the extent of many promises there, with which christians
Christians thus are allowed to trade, for getting up to more high degrees of peace, comfort, and assurance of the truth, than most have either a heart to feel, or faith to credit: O what a depth this is, that will never be fully opened up, until we be in heaven, what it is to have the written word so near, and what this might be to a Christian here by the way. 2. This shows how little a further growth in the faith of assent is known, and that giving all diligence to the full assurance of hope, as that with which our growth in love patience, humility, is indissolubly linked, and keeps a proportion. 3. There is little coming up to that practice, where such great things from the Lord have been shewed to his people in former times, Our fathers trusted in thee, and were helped, Psal. xxii. 3. These had indeed a marvelous seal, and rare confirmations of the truth, which seem strange to us; not that they were out of the way of the promise, but because the ancient holiness of these times is so little known. How rare a practice is it to believe, to follow the Lord fully, and have a large venture in his hand, and what such a wrestling, and supplication with weeping, that is Hos. xii. 4. by which they had power with God, and did prevail; and therefore are many rare mercies withheld from us, which lyce hid in the word.

Sect. 3. It may be seen, how easy an assent most find to the scripture; and the church is no less ruined this day by credulity, than professed atheism; which is too evident a cause why so many know not what it is to believe, or be concerned about such a thing, for thus they take all on trust, are carried in the crowd, not disquieted with these assaults a serious Christian is oft pressed with; yea, come not that length to quell the certainty of the ground whereon they build, if it be not to unsettle themselves more than to confirm. Oh! what a sad sight may this be, when it is no less than the venture of an immortal soul for eternity, about which if men be deceived, they are deceived indeed; and it is not seen, what a fatal conjunction oft is betwixt credulity and impudence, where the deceiver and such as find it easy to believe, meet together in the same road.

Sect. 4. Though from reason there is a sufficiency of evidence to convince, yet is it clear, that something farther is indispensably required for a firm assent to the truth; which is to know the truth and reality of the gospel by experience on the soul; for without this there can be no cure for atheism, nor can it be known there is a truth in that religion they profess, when within themselves there is such a contradiction to it; it is indeed strange, what assent these can give to the supernatural truths of the word, which though nothing is more sure in it self, yet from them is a false witness, in so far as it is against their own knowledge, whilst their confidence must stay, the scripture was never that to them, that it declares it self to be, and that witness which it bears of the life of the spirit, the earnest of heaven, an immediate fellowship with God, and that the preached gospel is the power and wisdom of God, was yet never to them a reality, but as herein they confess God to be true, they make themselves liars, and contradict their own light.

Sect. 5. Is not this visible before us? How atheism is now turned contagious beyond the rate of former times; and seems to be the great assault peculiarly suited to this age, where the power of darkness most appears; a time when that design was never more on foot to have the truth kept doubtful, that it be more a problem, and matter of opinion, than of certainty, and so much endeavour to cast reproach on the way of the Lord; yea, a time when there is a sore shaking by contrary doctrine, the growth of scandal, and obvious blots on the profession of godliness, so that many are in hazard to resolve their faith in an uncertainty of all principles, and clearly lose any assured persuasion.
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fion of the truth of religion; but as this is witnessed, and one of the fad appearances of the time, it gives solid ground also to hope. 1. For a further establishment christians shall be led up to, before this generation passes. 2. This some great discoveries and confirmations of the truth are yet to break up, and such a brightness, that will be as marvelous as the strange darkness over the church hath been; and that the atheism of this age shall have a cure, though we may fear in some sharp and extraordinary way, when ordinary means for this end have been so ineffectual.

Sect. 6. Is not here too evident a cause, whence so much dark and fluctuating affent is to the truth, when such confirmations of its certainty are in our sight; they are few find it a great business to be eternally saved, and have their soul kept under such a weight, to whom the thoughts of a heaven or hell are brought near, as undoubted realities, betwixt which there is no middle state after death, but knows they must shortly be the inhabitants either of the one or the other; for if such a deep impression of this were on mens souls, could they possibly be so unconcerned in their being sure of the foundation whereon they have so great a venture. Such are indeed a rare sight in this age, whose working out their salvation is, with fear and trembling; and most so far seem to be lost in a throng of other things, that this greatest question which can occur in all their life, If they be born again? is laid aside until they be ready to die. Oh! hath our light thus put us out of seriousness, and giving all diligence, which is so indispensibly required of these who mind heaven; will gifts, and an high repute in the church, or a fair show in the flesh, be a sure evidence to cause rejoicing, when once it comes to die? This is a sad subject, and I must say, if the characters of godliness the scripture hath given were seriously pondered, there was never an age wherein more professors are like to come short of heaven, and be found in a fundamental delusion about their state than this is; for which some sad evidences I shall here offer.

1. Those loose conception many have got of religion, which they have framed in their own mould, so as to find an easie cure for all their doubts, and shift off the necessity of fear, tendernefs and diligence in making sure of eternal life, and thus are at work to have such a latitude in their principles, as may suit the strait and narrow gate which leadeth to life unto that liberty they take in their practice. 2. May we not see how far it is become a matter of wit and invention to be christians, and with what fingular advantage many have learned to act handsomely such a part; as if divinity were rather a science to be learned by rules of art, than a matter of sense and feeling, or some exquisite image to please their eye, but such as can put forth no vital acts. 3. Are not these times such, wherein light hath in a strange manner out-gone conscience and tendernefs, and that which the apostle calls the form of knowledge, and of truth is like to ruin many, Rom. iii. So that it is rare to find a warming heat with a large profession, such as can make it convincing to others, and commends it to their conscience. 4. It is now a time wherein religion is remarkably enlarged in the notion, but oh how much abridged in the practice, even from what it hath been in times of greater ignorance. I must say, that length many in this age have come in the Theory of practical godliness, is like to be a sad snare to help some to perifh with the more confidence and quiet. 5. It may be too obvious, there hath not been an age of the church wherein professors seemed further off from getting good of the gospel, and less access to reprove, or for a faithful freedom with most, than is now; but such is the sore and disease of many, as cannot endure to be touched, and therefore it is no wonder that God should make fo

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sharp an application by the rod, of that which men will not apply to themselves from the word, or bear from others. 6. How far an evidence of this time is it, when the religion of so many may be seen to have begun at their practice, before it once begun at the heart, and thence is so easy to be christians in company, and in publick duties with others, who know little what it is to be such alone, and be serious in these more retired exercises of religion, which keeps the closest communication with the vital parts of christianity; but it is sure, the greatest part of christians work is that which is least seen, and hid from the eyes of others. 7. It may be said, there hath not been a time wherein more were like to perish at an almost in christianity, and with hid reserves in their heart in a professed following of the Lord, than is now; and that there is a right hand and right eye, which e'er men who profess the truth adventure to quit, they will rather hazard all, whence is there such a darkening of light, and extenuating controversies in a suffering time, when it may be seen, it is not so much a matter of dark difference as the scruple lies at the crofs in general, that for such a step in the narrow gate they must have an exception. 8. I shall but add this very far evidence of the hazard of professors in this age, that many are like to please themselves with such a mould of piety as cometh short of moral righteousness; and lay aside that observance of the second table, which is so indispensably required of all the followers of God. O! what an amazing thing is this! as if this were not an essential part of holiness, without which none shall see the Lord; and a part of those weightier things of the Law, which is to do justice, love mercy, as well as walk humbly with God; there is not under the New Testament a more dreadful threatening than against this, 1 Tim. iv. 6. That no man over-reach his brother, for God is the avenger of all such, and hath that mark put upon it when it is found among such who profess themselves his people, that it overpaaseth the deeds of the wicked, Jer. v. 28. yea, I must say, in nothing could the height of malice against Jesus Christ act more to bring the truth under reproach; and cause the prophane world blaspheme, than for any to personate religion for a cover to such a practice.

CHAP. VI.

In the last place, this great truth of the verification of the scripture would be considered as it leads into practice, and that singular advantage this way might be found, if we know how to improve it; since this is a talent for trade, not for contemplation; yea, it may be said with a sure warrant, this is the greatest in order to a christians comfort and establishment which he can trade with within time; which in some following Uses I shall briefly touch.

 Sect. I. Thus should every one of the saints pursue a certainty of his own about the truth, that the written word is the testimony of the living God, which is indispensably necessary for him to have, else he can have none at all; since this is a personal business, where all must prove their own work; for clearing of which, we have to consider. 1. How rare and ineliminable a thing this certainty which I call a christian’s own, is to difference from what most of ordinary professors in these times satisfy themselves with. 2. How this way it is to be reached. As to the first, It is fuch, 1. That causeth one to rejoice within himself, and have a feast there whereof none else can partake, which hath no dependance on others, but is alone betwixt God and the soul. 2. It is such as should oblige him to seal the truth, though there were none else, and is sufficient to put his soul to rest in a satisfied reliance on the word, though he have no incitement from the example of others, and be cast in a time wherein religion is
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is every where spoken against. 3. Such a certainty is this of the truth as hath been tried by temptation, and hath not wanted a previous conflict e'er they came by it; yea, lies so near them, as to be a serious exercise on their soul to know the solidity of that ground whereon so great an interest must be built; and thus the greater assaults there are, it is found the way to a further length in establishment. 4. It is such wherewith these are not easily satisfied who have once got it; but it is some part of their continued work to know the Lord, by following on to know him in his faithfulness in the word, that he is surely that to them which he hath declared himself to be; and what a visible impress there is of his truth in his providences towards others. 5. This is such as brings unpeable support in a dark case, and helps the christian to rejoice in the promise, when no appearances are how the performance should come, yea to a satisfied rowling over on God to reconcile his word and works when they seem to jumble, and thus oppose what he hath said, to what he hath done; knowing these can be in no real contradiction to one another. 6. So excellent a thing is this certainty of a christians own, as leads into an unpeable rest and quiet of the soul in that last venture for eternity, when on the faithfulness of God in his word he must lay the dead grip (which we see how dark a business it is to many) when thus so great an earnest he finds in his hands of these truths, the accomplishment whereof goes beyond death, which are the resurrection of the dead, and a being for ever with God; whose sensible presence, and familiar approaches to the soul, a near converse with him, yea his very immediate help from heaven in a day of strait, he knows so well here by the way, to be a sure performance of the word, and by marvelous confirmations thereof hath oft proved.

2. Let us consider, of what singular use these near approaches of a christian to know the word, to know and be further confirmed of the faithfulness of God there in the providence of his life, should be, for such a certainty: 1. That this is something not reached by any transient glances of light, or some present flash of affection; but here must be a solid and rational arguing from the evidence of the premises to the truth of the conclusion; that since he is sure, The way of the Lord is perfect, and his word tried, Psal. xviii. 30. which so oft he hath put to an essay; and in his experience had so many personal returns of its truth, he can of nothing be more certain, than he is of its being a safe ground for adventuring on. 2. Thus is the Lord's seal to his truth made discernible, and such a secret token and mark given thereof, which none can counterfeit. 3. Thus is so enriching a trade to be followed, as might every day lay some new strengthening marks in our way of the Lord's being God, and his unportayed faithfulness in the word wherein we have so great a venture.

Sect. 2. There is this use which necessarily follows from the former, and a singular advantage christians should make of the present subject, with these clear discoveries before them of the scriptures verification, for a through and solid determining their state in Christ; and that thus they may get up to some higher degrees of assurance thereof, than what most satisfy themselves with. When to ease the christians work in this trial, and in multiplying marks, here is a short abridgment of all he may have at his hand, to know the certainty of the word, and thes great supernatural truths there; by experience on his own soul; so as not in the dark, and with a doubtful assent, but from what he hath both seen and felt, he can put to this seal, That God is true therein. We know, until the saints be fully possessed of heaven, nothing can bring a joy beyond this, to be throughly assured of their being for ever there, and in his presence where there is fulness of joy, they shall pass the long ages of eternity;
nity; nor can any be too serious and concerned for making this sure; yet it cannot be denied, but some excel even here is this day in the road of practical divinity, and these voluminous enlargements about signs and evidences of grace (in which much cautious respect needs to be taken about the various sizes and degrees of growth amongst christians and vicissitudes of their inward cafe) yea, by extending these in so different a mould and shape, as hath tended to darken and render perplex the way to some, more than for solid quiet of their spirits. The portraiture of a christian is such, as none can draw to one model, but with respect to the infancy of some, as well as the further age and establishment of others. What I intend here, is but a short touch only for clearing this, how the christians way and method of a trial necessarily lies, in a serious purfiance to know the truth, and have more near converse with its verification on the soul, as the best way to know their fate, and clearing up of evidences for heaven; and how these are so closely linked, as the one must bring forward the other; for which some few things I shall first premife, that by most of professed christians, I must say, seem to be little underflow.

1. That there is none but in some measure must know a practical converse with the word and its accomplishment, if they be not strangers to the very essentials of christiannity; nor can there possibly be a true idea and image of godliness impressed on the soul of any, but as it answers to the scripture, and presents its lively imprefs thereon.

2. That these hid marks, whence the saints know the scripture to be the word of God, are such as with the same evidence answer to determine their fate and being in Christ; yea such, that by looking in on inherent qualifications, none can solidly argue to the certainty of grace from them, further than they know the certainty of the word, and its accomplishment on them. Now what singular advantage should a christian thus find, when by this thread, as it were, in his hand, and so fare a rule and line of trial, he can follow his interest in Christ, and have the sight thereof kept clear by that undoubted interest and propriety he hath in the word, from its sure accomplishment to him; the want whereof, is it not too obvious a caufe of such darknes and confusion as attends many in these enquiries they have about their fate.

3. Though it is undeniable that the world fees at a distance, and cannot get by some convincing witnesses of the scriptures taking place, both in providences of mercy, and these clear instances in which the Lord is known by the Judgment he executes; yet do they not know, nor can possibly reach the christians trade here, which lies hid and deep in the soul, in that sensible converse they have with the word, and its continued verification to them.

4. Doth not the word shew, what the saints must know by experience, how close these keep together in one yea; as we see them conjoined, John iii. 33. That such who truly believe, know also what a putting their seal to the truth is; since they are not only convertible terms, in so far as the one cannot be wanting, where the other really is, but such that the certainty of the one must be cleared up by the other. I deny not, a dogmatical faith is in some measure reached, when not saving; but it may be clearly evinced, that no true solid affair is to supernatural truths, without experience and a knowing the power and efficacy thereof on the soul; nor can there be a fiducial application and recumbency on the truth, where this is wanting.

5. Though it is too sadly known, as one caufe of such dark evidence most have of their fate, that the spirit of sanctification runs so low, and untenderness in their walk; I must say, this also may be no less clear, which is so little solid persuasion of the certainty of the truth; and a sad mistake in the method most take, by seeking to secure a right and interest there, without a serious
serious pusilliance to be solidly founded thereon. And is not here the rise of such hesitation, and a trembling grip so many have in parting with time, and that great venture of the soul on the promise; their work hath been so little by the way to have their adherence to the truth strengthened by knowing in whom they believed, which made it so easy to the apostle to put over himself and interests on that security.

6. This seems to be little considered, in such enquiries some have about their inward state, and whether they believe or not; how it is much greater to believe the truth in general, than any personal application thereof can be in their case; for which the apostle clearly reasons, Rom. viii. 32. He that spared not his own Son, how will he not with him give us all things? for if we be assured of that in which the greatest difficulty of faith lies, must it not by clear consequence follow, that what concerns our interest is but as a straining at a gnat, when such a thing is once swallowed; and where a christian hath got this length, to believe the testimony of God is such whereon with greatest security he can repose his soul; personal evidences cannot then stay behind, if there be a serious endeavour in their essays after holiness. For the greatest wonder is here to believe the truth of the gospel, that he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him, more than his saving of me, and it may be too obvious as the cause whence the last is obstructed, from so small an establishment in the first.

Having premised these, for clearing a truth of such weight, I shall offer some things to evince the necessity of a near and practical converse with the word in its accomplishment on the soul, as that without which no effectual access can be to clearing up of evidences, and certainty of our state in Christ; it is so manifest, where this is wanting none can discern, 1. The truth and solidity of grace, how it is no casual thing, but such as most convincingly answers the word, and is its native product; which if it be not discerned, the one half of a christian's evidence, from the truth of holiness and fruits of the spirit is then kept out of sight; for whatever is seen of the being of grace in its effects, yet does he not see it in the cause, and how in that alone channel of the word and promise its conveyance is to the soul; yea, without this could none comfortably reflect on the things freely given him of God, as knowing them to be such; and on his own experience of the work and efficacy of the spirit, if he cannot discern the clear making out of the scripture there.

2. Without this could none know, what so rare and divine an art means, (than which I may say, in a mediæval way, nothing can be of more use for trial of a christian state), to compare spiritual things with spiritual, such as the adlings and influences of the spirit with the word, inherent evidences with the written promise; nor according to this can he discern a divine efficacious concurrence meet him in the way of duty; and how the original which is without in the word, and its transcript within on the soul, are one and the same, for what are the rarest inward qualifications upon the matter, and how little should they amount to a clear distinguishing evidence, if this comparing work of a christian be not known, how to set things one against another, so as each be under its proper aspect.

3. It may be clear, without this no other converse with the Bible could let a christian know, what the truth's dwelling within him is, or how much thereof hath been turned into a practical history, and in such a character writ over upon his heart, that he is sure angels nor men could never have done; nor can he see how the fame ingrafted and living truth (by as sure a demonstration as ever was of the motion of the blood) makes its way through
the veins and conduits of a christian's walk, for putting forth of vital acts there; in a right discerning of which, should that great demonstration be convincingly clear, that seems as a strange and dark thing to many, what it is to be the declared epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but the spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but in flesibly tables of the heart, 2 Cor. iii. 3.

4. Without this could none of the saints see their right and claim to the promise cloathed with the actual possession thereof; which is the earnest here of that inheritance above; but where this is clear, what a marvellous evidence comes therewith, to the furthest quieting of the soul, when thus a christian reflects, and can reason with himself, what of the scripture and these great supernatural truths there, which the world knows not, he hath now made his own, and not in the offer and promise only, but in real performances.

5. Is it not clear, without some near and serious converse with the scripture, in the certainty of its verification, none could know the seal of the spirit; which though sometimes it is so immediate and over-powering a testimony as silenceth all doubts and fears, when it hath no respect to any work of grace, or inherent evidences; yet even then it is the seal of the spirit of the promise, Eph. i. 13. and such that cannot be understood, but as a sure accomplishment of the word.

6. Let us but consider, what christian assurance is (I mean such as in a mediate way can be reached), and is it not a practical Syllogism, where the first proposition must still be a scripture-truth, and concludes from these sure and undoubted experiments they have thereof on their soul? for thus a christian solidly reasons; Can I debate more my being for ever in heaven with God, who do fo certainly experience what the scripture has given as an infallible sign of the truth of another world, and a being entred into it here; so as to breath another air, and from a state of darkness to be taken into a marvelous light, which once it is sure I knew not, nor could credit its reality on report; yea, a light by which I discern the truth of spiritual objects to be as real as I see these heavens and earth by the light of the sun, and am taught the way of sensible converse therewith. Now when thus he reflects, does not there meet in one demonstration, the two greatest things can be defined until he be in heaven, which are, the certainty of the written word, and of his state and being in Christ; and thus see, how they answer other, and each so indissolubly tied, that no clear satisfying evidence can be of the last, but in a serious pursuit of the first.

Sect. 3. Such is this subject, and the serious improvement thereof, as might lead us in to know that notable art of religion more in its practice, which may be truly called Scientia architectonica, an art for extracting out of all occurrences of the time, and the strangest providences, what should tend to our further fixing in the truth, and make it easy and clear, how to reduce the works of God unto the written word; yea, to resolve his judgments through the earth in their true caufe and original, which I must say from trial, is one of the rarest of slays men could pursue against Atheism, and for affuring our heart more of the being and faithfulnes of God, when thus it's Seen, how all the lines of providence lead from the scripture, and return hither again, and do most visibly begin and end there; so that whither a discerning christian looks, yet cannot he look off this, though he go from one creature to another, and from one piece of the work of God to another; but all still meets with a most obvious tendency to make this demonstration clear, That God is true, For my self, I seriously profess, when such dark clouds are now casting up, and amazing occurrences, so many things to imbitter the world, this is the most
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most strengthening discovery I find within time, that such clear glances of the faithfulness of God there are, and the/ce so convincingly fhewed forth amidst the greatest darkness and confusions, as leaves no access to debate the certainty thereof; for nothing else I fee but what might help to cru/h and make faint, if this were not so sure, God hath spoken in his holiness, and nothing hither-to hath failed thereof; what was the word of Luther, Perfe desperaffen niif Christifus effet caput Eccel/e me might we not now fay, if the fame truth flow not good to us, and that the faddened of events brings so much in them, to strengthen, and be a further seal to the word: But now is the church fore-told, we can also fee the need thereof, and when fuch rage and hatred there is again/f Godliness, that it gets no worse entertainment than was foretold. Is the truth avowedly opposed and born down? there doth the Scripture take place. Is it reproached? it behaved fo to be. Yea, is it by subtilty and under a cover of friendship affaulted? this also is some part of its own accomplishment. Do we not fee, wickedness is still the fame? and that it is the fame spirit now acts in the worth of men that was in former ages? which should no lefs tend to a confirming us of the certainty of the word, than the truth of holiness? have we seen any fuch dark hours as did ever want a witnefs to that bleffed promife of a watching providence over the church? but when he fmites with the one hand, he is still found to uphold by the other; and no fuch concurrence of things to cause grief, but fomething as remarkably fett against it, to be matter of joy and encouragement in the Lord; nor in any time is fuch poifon vented, but the very fame time it is found to bring an antide with it, and the greateft affaults again/f the truth made fubfervient for her further triumph. Now it is fure, this is no dream, no romance, or a conjec- tural thing, but what in the greateft compofure of spirit, each chriflian can difcern and know its truth to be as undeniable and clear, as it is certain there is a fun that shines in the firmament. What an ineffimable advantage is here, if we knew how to improve it, that under all the varieties of providences within time, we may go in and out and find pafature, and thus get our faith more strengthened, in feeing how men are forced to promote God's design by opposing it, and in refilling his will to fulfill it; the smallfleft things made fubfervient to great purpofes, when the moft promising appearances are bla/ed; how moft are every-where thronged about personal interefts, and their own things taking them up, whilst the holy God does moft convincingly turn all for his end. Yea, if we knew how to follow this great discovery, we fhould convincingly fee the greateft furprifals of providence, which upon no principles of reafon men could fore-fee, or any connection betwixt the means and fuch a product; how exactly they anfwer the word, and are a feal thereto. I fhall but add, how it is not more obvious, that to every crea-ture, faculty, and operation, there is as it were a thread fadhed, by which one may follow up and fee that God is, than it is fcrimernible here, how close a conjunction is betwixt the word and each piece of his work, yea, every step of providence in the earth; whereby we may know, he is that which the Scripture declares him to be.

Sect. 4. This peculiar advantage fhould chriflians make of fo great a dis-covery of the faithfulness of God, and how nothing fails of all that he has spoken in his word; for adventuring with a more full security on these rare politicks of the Bible, which concern mens interefts within time; yea, thus to fleer their course under many vicifitudes of this life, by fuch maxims of divine policy, which can neither err nor poifibly admit a fallacy or mi-stake. I muft touch this a little, it is fo strange how small weight even with moft of profefled chriflians these feem to have; and whatever refept they witnefs
witnesses to this blessed record, in taking it as their security for a life to come, or any spiritual interests; yet is it not seen, how visible an exception is made in their reliance on the word, for things of this life, but they will needs strive to be wise in their acts, like the men of the residue of the nations, and have the eternal and unchangeable truths of God come down to their mould and reasonings; which is an atheism too manifestly owned everywhere. Oh what can this mean, to half the scripture of God in such a manner, as to adventure with some professed security, on what is there for an eternal interest, but on other principles and contrivances go for their concerns within time; yea, so far allow themselves to lay this aside, as that which they think cannot possibly suit the posture and condition of their outward affairs: But for clearing this truth, I shall first offer some things to shew with what demonstrative evidence a christian may adventure here on the certainty of such infallible rules, for all his temporal interests, as well as those that concern an after state; and next offer some particular instances, where this demonstration may be more clearly understood.

1. Can we admit a divine authority of the scripture, and not see how the faithfulness of God stands good for every line and syllable there; yea, that these rules it holds forth, must be no less true for the least of a christian's interest, than for an eternal salvation by Jesus Christ.

2. Is not this beyond all possible debate, how great an interest mens outward lot and concerns have in the written word, that though no respect unto the command, principles of self-love, and the interest of gain as well as of duty should oblige to a close adherence thereto.

3. Though it seems as a romance to many, yet must we either quit the scripture, or credit this, that the most infallible rules for one to raise his fortune, and ensure a destiny that can controul the stars, are given forth there, where that evidently is found, Sapiens dominabitur aquis, & quo modo unusquisque faber potest effer fortune suse.

4. Are not these rules also known and tried, so as the experience of all, who have followed the way of the Lord, did yet never fail to witnesses.

5. And is it not clear, how such rules there are, of that universal truth, as in no time the contrary was ever seen to be true; but the greatest fun-fhine on mens wicked devices, and their contrivances of sinful policy, are still seen in the close to have some sad and tragicke result; yea, that the bringing these to pass, hath most convincingly tended for their further ruin.

6. Is not the true cause visibly writ forth here, whence the falling out of events is so frequently seen to be cross to all ordinary rules and method of second causes, and the wise disappointed in their work, for attaining such ends, as could not but be expected to follow thereon, from appearances to reason; yea, that such fruitless inquiries, with anxious and inordinate toil, the sad miscarriage of most desired and deeply contrived projects, is so usual a fight in the world, so as mens hearts are sometimes ready to depair of all their labours under the sun; that the scripture hath so little credit in their private concerns, but will fleer their course by some other compass for attainment of what they intend.

7. Is not this with greatest evidence demonstrable, how practical prudence is the native effect of piety; and what helps to make one more a christian, hath a necessary tendency therewith to make him more wise; and to these rare accomplishments of true policy; when these are so clear: How much it helps to get command over the heart, and the moderation of passions. 2. For one to know and discern his own way, which is to be wise at home, and in what his nearest concerns lie, Prov. xiv. 8. 3. To improve the present pro-
providence, and every change of his lot, for some further gain, so as he can follow his interest, by abasement as well as abounding, and get up by that which seems most to deprest him. 4. To have a more clear view of the consequence and future issue of things, by knowing how to discern time and judgment, A wise man foreseeth the evil, and hides himself, Prov. xxiii. 3. 5. Such also is its true tendency, to caution that temperature and counterpoise in the soul, amidst these continued vicissitudes here, as he can rejoice with fear, and have his greatest confidence under guard of a watchful circumspection. 6. Is it not evidently found, in so far as one walks by these rules, how his hand worketh by the guidance of his heart, and does then act dextrously which Solomon that great observer, did so much regard, Eccles. x. 2. A wise man's heart is at his right hand, but a fools heart is at his left. Yea, then is light found to shine on his paths; for a more clear and easy getting through these incumbrances which are found so distracting, and ready to sink the spirit of others.

8. For such as lay the whole scripture aside, and have no such weight upon them of an eternal state, It is not strange this should have no credit for their interests within time; but is not herematter of admonishment, what respect and confidence men witness, for adventuring upon part of the Bible, who visibly shew they have no confidence for the other? Can such be in earnest to improve supernatural truths there for spiritual things, who see nothing of its use on this account, what a pure trade they might drive in order to their temporal interests, (yera, whilst they converse not with the very notion of such a thing)? I must lay, no reason can comprehend this, how principles of self-love should have so little influence on men; nor can it be answered, but by admitting one of these two, that either the scripture is not truly owned and believed by most of professed Christians as a security, on which they can adventure their heaven; since the same assurances are there by the God of truth, for men's interests here in the way; or that such knowingly betray the end they propose to themselves in their labours under the sun, and act in direct opposition thereto, by so strange a neglect, and laying aside the scripture.

Having premied these, for giving light to so concerning a truth; let us but clearly state so great a duty, as the practical use and improvement of the word is in a temporal cafe, and with respect to our present interests in this life, as well as these which are eternal; that we may see the infallible connection which is betwixt the one and the other; for he bath shewed thee, O man, what is good, as well as what is just, and where the surest method and way lies for one to seek himself, and be wise for their own private interest; yea, to attain and enjoy an outward lot with unspeakable more advantage, than most let themselves know, to prevent disappointments, with sore and stinging crosses, that may be seen come not out of the duft, but are a product, that all might discern from the word, such means they chose to themselves must bring forth. It is clear, that the same light which shews the way for being eternally saved, lets men also see an exact and infallible method, in all their concerns within time, and for such a conduct as they may walk surely, by rule, and not at an adventure for this end; the flighting whereto hath caused many with forebore now the wind unto themselves. I come now to instance some of these rare politicks and highest principles of wisdom given to us in the written word, in living up to which, one may as it were chuse his own fortune; I offer these, which are such as we may fear more it shall cease to be day and night, feed-time and harvest, than that any of these fail.

1. Principle, That to secure the success of our way, in the appointed use of means, nothing is so effectual as a thorough commitment thereof to the Lord.
Lord; as it is clear, Ps. xxxvii. 5. Prov. xvi. 3. and a truth hath such a
seal from experience, that since religion was in the world, I must say none
ever tried it in vain; but the want of this hath instructed many to their cost,
how deceitful a thing the greatest abundance of means oft prove. Now for
confirming it, let us but compare the remarks and histories of all times with
the word, and I am sure it can be hid from none, how the most said ruining
strokes are seen to be a pit of men's own digging, and most observably hath
met thefe, who would chuse a way to themselves, and frame a policy of their
own, in counteracting the word, which did at last undo them.

2. Principle, If the scripture be true, men's interest and policy here then
is, That it is better to truft in God, than put confidence in man; yea, better
to truft in God, than put confidence in princes, Psal. cviii. 3. which is
a truth that never flaimed the face of any to this day who ventured therein,
but oft have their returns exceeded their venture. And most remarkably these
have been before the world fet against one another, which we fee, Psal. liii.
7, 8. Lo this is the man, that made God his strength, &c. But I am as
a green olive-tree, I truft in the mercy of God for ever. No time can
make that thrive on which the Lord puts fo dreadful a mark, as he hath done
upon human confidence, Jer. xvi. 5. But we may see, it was never more
discernible to the world than at this day; with such a breaking of visible props,
as calls aloud to ceafe from man, and thus be instructed, how men of low de-
gree are vanity, and great men a lie, Psal. lixii. 9. So as to know the alone
certainty of that which is, v. 7. In God is my salvation and glory; the
rock of my strength, and my refuge, is God. But oh how rare a practice
is it in the world, to rowl the burden of an outward interest so fully on God,
as to have the heart at a true repose and quiet, when visible appearances are
not.

3. Principle, Though nothing be more crofs to the politicks of this age;
yet it is clear, That to court humility is the rising hand, and the surest way
for preventing humbling strokes, as we fee, Mat. xviii. 4. And which seem
strange, though convincingly obvious in all times, that christians lying near
the duft in a low self-esteem, and being much on their knees, will keep such
more on their feet, than the eager graspings of others at that shadow which
flies the more it is followed. Nam sic descendo, ascensendum est in via
christiana.

4. Principle, That the surest means to have adversaries gained to be
friends, is by having our ways directed to please God, Prov. xvi. 7. and
thus endeavour a commending our selves to the conscience of men, but not
their humour; for which so great an allurcance is in the word, with that con-
vincing seal from experience, and the remarks of every age, as a christian can
solidly reason; when I follow my duty, then is it sure, I follow my
interest; and in consulting how to be accepted of God, and give him
the preference to all, I keep the straight line to gain both on the con-
science and respect of others. I know some will object the sad entertain-
ment faithfulness gets in the world; and which cannot be denied, how
close adherence to the way of God, hath brought many under a dark cloud;
but is it not as certainly known with what advantage this hath still brought
them out; so as their present lots hath brought a double gain, yea, found
to meet such many days after, even to the conviction of others.

5. Principle is this, That it's more true policy to give to the poor, where
no retribution can be looked for, than to give to the rich, Prov. xx. 27.
which if designed for God, does also ensure its return, and compensation
from him. I know nothing seems more crofs to reason and the rules mol
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in such a time walk by; but if the Lord be God, and the scripture his word and testimony, there should be no halting here; for to these is an express bond given from heaven, and put in register here upon earth, in which he who keepeth truth with men for ever, hath ensured by his faithfulness; that what is given to the poor, is lent to the Lord, and he will repay it; and I must say, none ever took this in earnest for their security, and found it fail; but when it seemed to be lost, and as eft on the waters, it hath been repaired, with a four-fold more to them or theirs. This I am sure many are debtors to witnesses; as also that no such bank can be, for the large improvement of a little, and where the principal will never be lost. But I must further add, in behalf of the faithfulness of God, whatever seem to answer this duty upon the matter, a wrong end and by that seeking acceptance with others will mar all, and be as a dead fly in the box which corrupts the most precious ointment; for how can they put this debt upon the Lord, when that is their reward from man.

6. Principle, That a publick spirit for God, is the best expedient for a man's own things, and to secure a private interest; and the want of this, the cause of faddell loss oft even upon that account; this we may see, Hag. i. 9, which if there were more of an observing spirit, could be under no mistake, why many sore, and bring in so little, with such personal grief, and bitter complaining at home; so iad a frustrating of the most painful endeavours, by an immediate blowing thereon from heaven; Why faith the Lord of hosts, because of my house that is waste, and ye run every man to his own house. One faith, shall I leave my sweetnees? and others shall I leave my fatines, to own duty in an evil time, and when visible hazard attends this? for which I may lay upon the warrant of the word, many now put their most endeared interests to be as a butt of the holy jealousy and indignation of God.

7. Principle, It is not duty alone, but a matter of self-interest, for a christian to keep close under the authority of the word, to prevent some sadder yoke; and then being put under that discipline of the rod, which none can mis in some measure for their recovery, where mercy is in their lot; for thus does the scripture method lie, and the way to make a fore and afflicting burden light that it is by bearing it, and an humble subjecting the foul thereto, with which the sensible abatement of its weight will be found, Heb. xii. 7. Jer. xxxi. 18. It is evident, how mens rods are taken out of their own sins, and that it is their wickedness is made to correct them; yea, how sin and the rod grow up together, according to that, Ez. xiv. 16. Where one growth may be seen for both, pride lads, and the rod blossometh.

8. Principle, That doing for the Lord, and a serious respect to him in it, is the surest way to prevent labouring in vain, and for enjoying long the work of their hand; Isa. lv. 22, 23. From the want of which, what work and labour is lost, with the sore toil of many in the external duties of religion, that will never redound on their account. Oh what an amazing thing is this, were it seriously considered, to see men in such earnest about a counterfeit thew, and to appear that which they are not, which so certainly leads into a real hell, and wants not some beginning here upon the confidence, yea, betrays that very end they propose to themselves within time; for the bed is shorter than they can stretch themselves upon; and is rare to find any get into another world, before the vail be taken off them here.

9. Principle, That a serious following the work of the present day, is the best way to provide for the event of the next, and for such who have but one
one hope, and all their dependencies on God, to have but one fear, that they
go not out of the way of the promise; this we see, Psal. xxxvii. 3. Gen.
xvii. 11. and is it not found by continued experience, how making haste
for bringing mens design to a desired issue, gains no time of a patient waiting
on the Lord? but the want thereof hath put many some steps backward,
when they seemed to make the furthest advance.

10. Principle, That the way of the Lord is strength to the upright, Prov.
x. 29. And is that alone which can make their feet stand in an even place,
when the world is reeling; this is a truth many have tried, and to this day could
never bear another witness, but that it gives more in to such as closely fol-
low it, than they could either lose, or give out on that account; yea, that
where men once find their hand to easy duty, though with forest wrestlings,
when the Lord's going before to clear their call is known, then hath their
heart and strength been remarkably found to follow.

11. Principle, That to be interested in the blessing, is that which maketh
rich; and the most certain way for attaining such an end beyond all the
devices of men's heart which can be tried in another road. I confess the faith
of such a truth seems to be little in the world, and the evidences thereof too
obvious to be denied; though thus it is written, and by the faithfulness of
God ensured to such who will give him credit, that it is his blessing maketh
rich, and adds no sorrow therewith, Prov. x. 22. But to acquit his way,
and certainty of the truth therein, of which one little cannot fall to the
ground; I offer these remarks, with a serious appeal to the judgment and dis-
cerning of the most ordinary observers, if they do not see, 1. That there is
an enjoying more in a little, yea, a real possessing some have of more than
others of the largest measure: Now it is sure riches can only be understood
as it reacheth the end for which by all it is sought after, satisfaction to the
mind; and not to have these things, but to enjoy them; without which,
what is most desirable to the sense, can have no pleasant taste. 2. Is it not
known such a visible income by the blessing there is, as causeth a real suffi-
ciency of the little of some for the owner's use, and to go further than the
great things of others, so as they are made to abound and have no lack, whilst
these who have gathered much, have nothing over, but in the fulness of
their sufficiency are in want. 3. It is sure, in no time this can be hid, how
something is above the care of the mind, or labour of mens hand, to crofs or
promote an outward interest, a falling in and surprisal of some providences,
which from no appearance, or the remotest tendency of outward causes, could
in the least be foreseen, but comes most viably crofs to the present scheme and
positure of their affairs, that in one day is found to undo more than many
years had set up. 4. In this I need but appeal to mens eyes, as well as to
their reason, if the pretended riches of many who unquestionably have a
great store of outward things, be not a false cover under which the world may
see what anxiety, trouble, fear, and most bitter complaints are, and how
rare such an instance is, to whom riches is given in their haftening out of the
way of the blessing, and not a large measure of sorrow added; so as it is
really no such thing that most have, but a serpent instead of bread, where
the fling is more sharp than the honey sweet; it is as the husk, when the sub-
stance thereof may be oft found in the houfe of the poor more than in theirs.
Oh what a mistaken thing is this, that with such eagerness is grasped
after, if there were more of the true use of reason, when it is so certainly known
that something there is above outward caufes to imbibit the most plentiful lot,
and take the use thereof from some, and its comfortable use from others,
whilst it is no lefs clear, the true joy and satisfaction of many in their lot,
yca what a sun-shine the blessing causeth such live under, on whom the world did never seem to smile; and what does this mean? Is it not to shew the performance of that scripture, which in no time can fall to the ground, That the blessing of God maketh rich, and adds no sorrow therewith.

12. I shall but add one principle more of that excellent wisdom given in the scripture, for men being wife to themselves, by their following duty, how it is the interest of state, and beyond all these politicks, or Arcana Imperii, for its preservation, which seems most infallible to many, to seek the promoting of truth and godlines; for if these should wear out, and go away, the land cannot possibly be safe where once they had an abode. I know, to mention this in such an age may seem for no other advantage, but to expose these truths to the derision of such who know no interest the Bible or its rules can have in the management of state affairs, yca look on these who are in any measure serious to live up to the truth and principles they profess, as the foreset grievance of the place they live in; so had a requital must such often meet with, who I may say, next to the long suffering of God, are the greatest means to prevent their countries ruin; but it is sure, this fame reason stands good, which Esther made use of, Chap. vii. 4. if these perish, and the truth be told, though with the greatest price of appearing advantage, and that all should hold their peace, yet could it not countervail the King's damage, and to inevitable to ruin the publick interest of the state which must follow thereon; for these are clear: 1. Whatever reacheth a stroke to truth and practical godliness amongst men, it doth the fame to the greatest security of government, and that which founds the strongest obligations to any civil and moral duties. 2. Is it not manifest if these wear out and be depressed in a nation, moral righteousness and truth amongst men will quickly follow, and the greatest security for all personal interest is so far gone? 3. And is it not obvious to reason, how the fame effect of deprivations and truth and practical godliness in a place, must help atheism and a prophane spirit to get up, which hath so direft and native a tendency to weaken the politick body, and emasculate the spirits of men to obstruct the vigorous improvement of natural parts; yca, most remarkably does depress and change the very Genius of such a people. It is true in such parts where the truth of religion had not come, none will deny what singular advantage there hath been both of natural and moral endowments, as of old in Greece and amongst the Romans. But from no records of times past could this ever be seen, that these were found with the departing of the truth from a place after its being professed and owned there; for which how far a virtu is a great part of the world this day, where it may be seen, the darkest night of barbarism and immorality hath beenfallen these places in a special manner, where the light of the gospel once shined, as much of Africk, and where these once famous Asiatick churches were, does evidence. 4. Can there one instance be given, of a nation's prospering, that opposed and sought a depress of the truth where it had once been received; but this all may see, who are serious to observe, how the most remarkable ruining strokes that have come upon a place have had some visible falling off, and withstanding of the truth to go before; for then will it not be with such a people as in former times to brook that peace which had been formerly known there before the light shining amongst them? but the scripture makes it clear, that the red and pale horse, and he whose work is to take peace from the earth, does immediately follow a rejecting of the truth. It is known what a flood of Judgments did fall in after so great growth of Arianism, and that height which it came to, not only by seduction but perfecution. And can it be forget what did so immediately precede these desolating strokes on
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the German empire, which was upon so remarkable a violence and depriving of the truth in Bohemia, and other places there.

S e c t. 5. This peculiar improvement might christians make of the present subject, with such clear discoveries of the continued verification of the word; to have some further reach and discerning of things to come, and what yet is before the church's hand, than what most satisfy themselves with. A truth in which is to be understood no following after secret things, which in the deep counsels of God are shut up from men; nor is it to know times and seasons, and pursue a wisdom above that which is written, which were to invade his prerogative, to whom alone this belongs to know things contingent with their proper circumstances, and foresee them falling out when no possible tendency of second causes can be alleged thereto; for divine revelation is the alone rule and measure of our knowledge, and the bounds set by the Lord, beyond which there must be no more search: yet is it clear, that a concerning use and improvement of the scripture lies here, and some part of the christians work to consider the truth of its accomplishment, as it looks forward to future events as well as for things past. We can blame our selves only that we live not in a more clear and comfortable view of things to come, when so much advantage is for this: yea, we see how the scripture speaks of there as already past, to witnesses not only the certainty of their performance, but that such a converse we should seek after by seeing them in the word, as if they were present in an actual existence before us? therefore is it thus expressed, Rev. xviii. 2. Babylon is fallen. But for clearing of such a duty in so dark an hour on the church, I shall lay down these three particulars to be considered. 1. What solid grounds there are to point out our way here, and let christians see what length they might come by scripture-light, and without extraordinary revelation for a clear and comfortable discerning of some future events, which at this day are upon a certain approach. 2. This also must be taken along with the former, what restraining bounds the Lord hath set, beyond which there must be no further search. 3. I shall offer a short touch at some particulars in so very dark and astonishing a time as this, to witness how clear and refreshing a look might be had of some great things to come as if they were now present before us, by getting up to that watch-tower of a near converse with God in the word.

For the first, it is certain, no vessel at sea keeps more exactly by the card and compass, than the church-militant does by the written word which stands open at all times for us to consult how her course lies and keeps her way, and how well the crofief winds fall in with her motion.

2. Though extraordinary ways of revealing Gods mind are now ceased, yet are they fill the same in the scripture as to the substance thereof, to which as a great height a chritian may get up in a serious enquiry after the truth, so as not only to discern present duty but things in their approach when at a distance, which the word is yet to bring forth, without any thing of that Lumen Propheticum, which in former times was known.

3. Is it not clear, how in the scripture there is a perfect Idea and comprehension of all those vicissitudes and changes which are to go over the church's head here, in what designs the Lord hath upon the after-ages of the world; so as thus her fate and destiny is brought to light? yea, is there not in the scripture this day a standing record of the ancient judgments of the Lord, where men may see the copy and presidents of his providence for after times of the church set in their sight?

4. As it cannot be denied what extraordinary discoveries some in these last times have had of future things, and remarkable exigencies of the church, whose eminent
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eminent holiness and sobriety made it the more convincing to others: yet even there did the general rule of the word still go along with them, and had no new things revealed but what was contained there, though carried therein by fingerul impulse of a scripture-spirit to apply the rule to particular cases and persons; but this are we not to look after, nor is there cause when so much in an ordinary way may be known by an humble, serious inquiry after the counsels of God in his word.

5. Is it not clear how Daniel underflowed by books, what yet was to come of that full accomplishment of the desolation of Jerusalem, and the years thereof, by what he found in that prophecy of Jeremiah, Dan. 9. 2. where we may see him there on the same scent (whatever otherways he had of an extraordinary spirit) for discerning things to come by this sure way of setting the word and event together; for which though there needs a special irradiation of the mind and a spirit of wisdom and revelation, Ephes. i. 17. Yet is that such as in an ordinary way should be sought by every one of the saints: But oh! we stand as it were upon the flat and low ground, and know little what a being more abstract and separate for such an end is, and have a near converse with God in that great study of his word and works in the world; and therefore is so little known how great a length christians might reach in the way of ordinary gifts and means to know the deep things of God, and what lies hid from the eyes of the most, though written forth before us in the word.

6. That special care the Mediator hath for his church and people that no bad trial and vicissitudes are to fall out, but the word is suited to give warning thereof before-hand: nor is there such a stroke whether on a nation or a man, but the cause thereof may be clearly found in the word if there were more serious converse with it: men need not be at such work as some are in searching out the fatality and periods of kingdoms and states to trouble themselves with the intricate numbers of Plato and predictions of Astrologers, when so clear a response from these infallible oracles may be had, and by a serious enquiry there, comparing the word with the continued course and conduct of providence in all ages of the church some solid ground to see that respect general denunciations of judgments to particular times, yea, from a national sinning and falling off from God force the certainty of national judgments.

7. Is not such an unchangeable series and order of things in the scripture as may cause a safe arguing from the causes to the effects: for though conditional threatenings be not declarative of the eternal purpose of God about the event, but are moral legislative acts; yet is it clear they express an undoubted connection betwixt sin and the punishment thereof, that at what instant the Lord speaks against a nation and kingdom to pluck up, root out and destroy, as we see Jer. xvii. 8. if the condition be not interposed of repentance and turning to God, then is it infallibly sure and obvious though outward appearances seem'd never so crofs, that such a sentence will not fall to the ground.

8. Thus also may we discern the church's rising and cure to be so far begun, as evidences of a through humbling work under her stroke are manifest, when such are made to come with weeping, and a power therewith to wrestle, who before lookt as a people bound under such bonds as they could not shake off: then may we know it is a Crisis tending to life, Jer. xiii. 19. and some previous stir and motion amongst the dry bones before they get to their feet.

9. There is solid ground whence at a distance it may be seen, what manner of judgment may be feared, since the word does so particularly circum-
stantiate this that a sword shall be sent from the Lord to avenge the quarrel to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, Lev. xxvi. 25.

10. It is clear also, the time and near approach of the judgment, may be seen from the word by a discernible signs and height, that a peoples sin is come to in some prodigious acts of wickedness, and when no access the word hath to reprove, when the judge oppreth and asketh for a reward, and the people love to have it so, which shews the fields becoming very white for judgment to put in the sickle.

11. Such as enquire seriously at the word, may find cause to discern the wearing out of an house and family, and of consuming strokes to come on their off-spring that have been remarkably given over to the sin of uncleanness, for such a sentence is given forth from him against that sin whose word never fell to the ground, They shall commit whoredom, but shall not increase, Hof. iv. 10.

12. I shall only add this, how easy it may be to discern some humbling stroke near, and undoubtedly to follow, whether on a nation or man, where swelling pride and infolence goes before; for this is a sure application of the general rule, Prov. xi. 2. When pride cometh, then cometh shame. And 16. That this goeth before destruction.

In the second place, let us consider these restraining bounds that the holy God hath set to his peoples enquiries, that there be no over-stretching the rule, or a going further than the clear light of the word goes before them, which I shall here particularly touch. 1. We may pursue no wisdom above that which is written, nor so much as look into that ark of the hid things of God, which he hath shut up: It is sure there is large enough room and bounds in the Bible to arrest the most un sober spirit, and give them work there.

2. The sovereignty of God and an awful impression of this on the soul must still bound the christian's furthest enquiry; since it's clear, he so walks by rule as his prerogative also takes place, which these marvelous surprisals of grace have oft withfeen in meeting thus a people at their greatest disadvantage; for who could have inferred such a consequent from these premises. Isa. lx. 17. For the iniquity of their covetousnes I smote them, and hid my self, and they went on frowardly in the way of their heart. Now should not judgment inevitably follow according to the rule? nay, faith the Lord, who is sovereign, and in his way infinitely above our thoughts, I'll answer all with one cue; I have seen their ways, and will heal them. 3. Whatever length is to be reached in the discerning future events by the word; yet here must all keep a due distance, Acts i. 7. that it is not ours to know the times and seasons which the Lord hath reserved to himself; as to any peremptory determining in such a case; though it is clear also that with a safe warrant we may enquire about the season and near approach of scripture-predictions, so far as previous signs thereof are by the word given for such an end. 4. It is here the Lord hath set bounds as to the way, means, or particular circumstance of events beyond what is expressly written and made clear from scripture-light. The matters of God are rolled on invisible wheels, whose motion gets oft out of our sight, and riseth so far above human reach, that men can find nothing after him so as to restrict the glorious God from one step in his way to the same method and circumstances in another piece of his work. Thus the scripture shews, How darkness is under his feet, and thick clouds round about, even when he comes to deliver his people. 5. These bounds must all our enquiries have, that they be in order to duty, and lead to some practical improvement for the work of our day; for thus were the men of Jezabel, wife to discern the times, not to answer their own humour, but that they might
might know what Israel ought to do. The prudent foreseeth the evil and hides himself, and this solid use and advantage should be look'd to in discerning what the Lord is about to do; that Christians may know what to pray for or to expect; that their hearts may go along with these ends the Lord is now bringing forth: And is not here matter of serious exercise in a day when the hearts of the godly are low, as their spirits seem to fail, and be ready to say, our bones are dried, our hope is past, and we are cut off, Ezek. xxxvii. 7. to know what aspect the written word hath on a linking church. I love no overstraining of our hope, but it is strange there is not more improving the scripture for our comfort against present appearances, from such clear demonstrative evidences we have there, of things to come; and what shall be the end of these wonders, wherewith we now look with such amazement.

These things being premised, to prevent mistakes about this subject, I shall adventure in following scripture light with some awful regard to these bounds the Lord hath set to our enquiries here, to touch this in a few words more particularly, as not unseasonable in a time when many are at work to kindle a light unto themselves, and walk in the sparks thereof; and so woul'd a trade of divination hath got up in the world, that men will go to the God of Ekrorn, by seeking a divinity either in the stars above, or from the powers of darknes below, as though there were no God in Israel, or such a thing as his written oracles to enquire at: But if the Lord be God let us follow him; and if the scripture be his undoubted word, I must say none need be in the dark about things to come; as to what is bringing forth for the church in the great event of these last times, when this blessed record is so near, which came down from heaven with a fulness of light unto men, for all that concerns them to know here, and now with so clear and certain a sound speaks.

1. From what point the church's motion unto this day lies, since antiquity's height and reign we know is over with the great apocryph of the church expressly foretold under the New Testament; for thus by keeping sight thereof, and more near converse with the word in every step, and turn of her way, it might be easy to discern though at midnight, the certainty of her course, and how exactly it keeps with the card and compas, where a full map of her journey and paffage, through time is held forth; yea, how far the hath got by the most hazardous part in her whole paffage; and now seems near to a falling under the favourable aspect of some most remarkable promises in her behalf; thus also is there solid ground to expect one of the greatest conjunctions that was ever known to the church, is not only to come but on some near approach, I mean of promises which from former ages have been sealed up, with their performance, of the prayers of the saints, that long have waited before the throne, and their full return, yea, of some very eminent providences for making these effectual.

2. This from the word, we may with clear evidence know what ever appearances seem to contradict. That a sad hour of temptation is coming on the world, and on these whose work hath been to trouble the church; where this clear ground is that the faithfulness of God stands good, to put a cup of poison and trembling in the hand of her afflictors, Isa. li. 22, 23; and cause such to wring out the dregs of that cup the churches have drunk of, Psal. lxxv.

8. Nor hath it ever been found that judgment began at the house of God and stayed there, or that the nations were a fore rod in his hand upon his people, but a judgment on these quickly follow, to shew forth the rightoufness of the Lord in recompensing tribulation to such for what they have done; and make way by a day of vengeance for the year of his redeemed to come.
3. This we may discern from the word, by comparing the times and present state of the church therewith, that a work of judgment seems yet to go before her further rising, and these forepangs and throws in the birth are not past, that most immediately are found to make way for approaching mercies; the scripture-grounds are these. 1. The method of providence, that with every flap of the church’s exaltation some previous down-calling hath still kept a proportion thereto: Nor is it found through the scripture where any great thing the Lord hath done for his church, but a remarkable height of trouble hath gone before; but is here any thing strange or matter of hesitation, where the light of the word goes so clearly before; that when one of the greatest events in behalf of the church since the Messiah came into the world, until his second coming in the full destruction of antichrist, is bringing forth a time of trouble and dismal darkness beyond what former ages have known so go before such a brightness. 2d. Ground, Is it not too manifest such evils now follow the Reformed churches, that it may be said in no time was it ever known, the Lord palling such by without some visible mark of his anger put them on; There needs no interlacing of these, where the discovery is so manifest. A 3d. Ground is this, that we have seen judgment begun, but no seen fruit thereof, strokes treading on the heels of others, yet do not reclaim. And is it not a scripture-inference, when a people will not be reformed, they lie near a further stroke, yea is to be feared that which comes with a cure, may be very fore ere it hath done its work. O who shall live when God does this! Can we be in the dark after all that is seen this day what is coming, for such clear prefaces are at some times of a future event, as it may be said what Amos shows, iii. 8. The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? we can discern the face of the sky; but oh how strange is it when spiritual judgments have gone the length almost of wearing out the churches, (which must yet have a recovery) that a found of outward judgment is not more continually in our ear! Is it time to be found lying in the hatches of the ship asleep when such unusual prefaces are before us. I may not in the least question where the scripture is so clear, that great brightness which yet waits on the church, to which all her trouble must make way, and that the time of the killing of the witnesses, and their prophesying in sackcloth is now past; yet there is true cause for fear of some unusually sharp and searching trial, and that ultima clades on the Reformed church, is yet to come, that may cause much shaking where there is not a thorough establishment in the truth.

4. Whatever height the church’s trouble comes at, ye have we solid ground for this, it shall not be long, nor such a lying storm as in former ages; but we know the adversaries wrath, though great, is now bounded to a short time in these latter days; and that the brightness of the light of the gospel does much ripen the harvest for judgment to put in the sickle: Yea, though sad and very dark intervals must fall in, yet is it clear, the great work and intent of providence in this time is, to put forward the church’s interest, make way for its enlargement, and bring her begun and growing victory over antichrist to a more full period, as is ensnared, Rev. x. 7. xii. 12.

5. It is no conjectural event; but such with greatest assurance we must believe, that there is a second rising the Reformed churches shall yet have in the power and spirituality of religion; where an immediate appearance of the Lord shall be no less seen, than in that first and marvelous recovery of the purity thereof, which for many ages had been over-clouded: The grounds are; 1. So remarkable an opposition as at this day is thereto in the world, over which the Mediator must prevail, and have the decision of that strife on his side. 2. If it be sure the churches shall yet recover and rise; must not the cure be where the ruin and wearing out hath
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hath been most evident: And such a blessed return of the sun, as will bring heat and love therewith, to be more answerable to their light? 3. Without this the truth of many promises yet to be fulfilled, could not be underflood in the event, which so expressly point at such flourishing times of the church, as shall have a more bright and hot fun-flince of the power of the gospel, and pouring out of the spirit therewith; so as the name of that place shall be called Jebouab Shammach, the Lord is there, Ezek. xlviii. 35.

6. Though nothing seem more crofs to outward appearances, yet is it sure, as the Lord is true, whose word is paffed thereon; That whofoever have engaged their power to support the Romish intereft, and heal that deadly wound it hath got by the gospel, shall lose the day, and find their caufe desperate: for the issue of this war is determined and sure, the party with whom these contend is Jesu Christ, he who was shewed John, Rev. xix. 13. with his veſture dipped in blood, whose name is called the word of God, and hath the armies of heaven to follow him; yea, by many degrees of wrath hath his design already taken place; which can be under no debate, when the Lord hath begun, but that he will also make an end, and no retrograde steps are in his way, as is clearly ensured, 2 Thes. ii. 10. Rev. xiii. 10. xvii. 14. Nor is there caufe to be staggered in the faith of the approach of Romes fatal period, though we should live to see Britain and the churches abroad on a fudden over-run by the rage of that beast; and her light eclipsed by the romifh darkness; but to look thereon according to the scripture, as the ultimus consatus of that wounded adversary; which would be found to have an immediate connexion with the ruin of Antichrift, and with the reviving and following glory of the church; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her, Rev. xviii. 8.

7. This also on solid ground from the word, we are called to believe, that no new assault by Antichrift and his followers can be this day against the church, but must help to put her interest forward, and be for the furtherance of the gospel; since it is clear, that by a continued war betwixt the Lamb and Antichrift, is every step of the church's life advanced; which were it seriously confidered, the most formidable appearances of trouble from that party, should with more comfort than fear be looked on. Yea, is not here from the Lord some part of his peoples mercy, that they go not out in hafe, nor get a hasty delivery, such as one step thereof may still fit and dispose for another.

8. It can be no conjectural event, where the scripture is so clear, of some very immediate appearance of the Lord, by making bare his arm against this adversary; that will be such as hath not been seen in former deliveries of the church, since the day he made his power known at the Red-fea; for thus in scripture is it held forth as a type thereof: therefore shall the song of Mofes be sung; though not of Mofes only, but of the Lamb, as importing something more glorious, and some greater brightness put on this, which is the most illustrious act of divine judgment, referred to the last times, and upon the greatest adversary that ever Jesu Christ had upon the earth. It is true, the church's help lies now hid, and in ambulh, Rev. i. 8. I saw by night, and behold a man on a red horfe; and where was this? it was among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, which lay not in the world's view; but then was the earth sitting still, and at refp, as we fee v. 11. whilst the Mediator hath his forces prepared, and is ordering and acting forth instruments for his peoples delivery; but at laft will make it known, that when he comes it is not too late with help.

9. That time must assuredly come, when a remarkable flattering up, and raising of spirits shall be, to build the house of the Lord, and be subficient to his design of judgment against Antichrift; though fuch in which nothing of
instruments shall obscure the brightness of his appearance, but bear a convincing witness thereto. It is clear, there hath been no great piece of service for the church, but some remarkable raising of instruments hath been previous thereto, see Ezra. i. 5. Hag. i. 14. And for what is to come, is not the word most express, Rev. xiv. 5. That such under the Mediator's conduct are making ready, who are chosen and faithful; yea must take place, that some of the Kings of the earth, even such whose forefathers had given their power to uphold the Romish throne, shall so effectually concur to execute that judgment written against that adversary.

10. Though we are to believe, that many shall be rescued by grace from that Romish darkness; yet is there undoubted certainty for this, for which the word gone out of the mouth of the Lord, that he will never have peace with that party and kingdom; and no possible treaty or reconciliation can be therewith, until the blood of the saints which they have shed be avenged; for with this adversary hath the Mediator declared war from generation to generation; who with the great Anathema is accursed to the second coming of the Lord; yea is judicially excluded from repentance, Rev. xvi. 9. And they blasphemed him who had power over these plagues, and repented not.

This also is clear, whatever present appearances now speak, that assuredly the day hatcheth, and will come, wherein the Lord shall roll away the reproach of his church before all the nations, and cause her rising and brightness answer the furthest measure of her abasement, and her enemies be found liars unto her, in their predictions as well as reproach; which though at this day is marvelous, how it can be effectuate; the promise will make way for it self thro' all these difficulties.

Sect. 6. This peculiar use might christians make of such a subject, and that certainty by the experience of the verification of the word on their soul; to be more fixed in the truth, against error and the subtil assaults thereof; when from a practical acquaintance with these truths which others impugn, they can with the furthest persuasion of heart put their feet to the same; and have an argument from within, which all the world cannot answer. How many scoff at assurance of salvation, the inward witnesses of the spirit, yea at the doctrine of imputed righteousness, who never knew the sure and sensible effects thereof on their soul; but there the judicial rise and pedegree of error may be seen, z Thef. ii. 10. Because they received not the love of the truth, &c. It is not strange, to see what liberty some of this generation take, to sport their wit and invention about the scripture, who know not these near approaches of God there, in the verification of his word; nor how clear and convincing a witness there is from the experience of christians, in so much, that if most within the church should deny the truth of a divine efficacious concurrence with the word, beyond what is objective and moral; these could not but put their feet thereto, yea how nature's light can be no reft and measure of supernatural revelation; from what they certainly know, and have proved of the certainty of these truths, which are above all reason to comprehend, though not contrary thereto. Thus they know how little their own activity and befailing themselves could do, without a supernatural influence; and that to will as well as to do must be given them, for which they are not sufficient of themselves. And what a sad mistake it is of true liberty, to have this lyce in an equal indifference to good and evil; can that be any begun part of the perfect liberty which is attained by a chritian's further growth in sanctification, that brings therewith a further distance and abhorrence of sin; yet none will deny this is a more near approach to that state of the saints above, where alone true and perfect liberty is. Thus from sure experience al-
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so, christians can witness against these who deny a standing ministry, and revile so divine an ordinance, (which is one of the most peculiar engines of the devil, he makes use of against the truth,) that they know Christ's speaking in them, and working by them with a most discernible authority and power in the furious following their master's work; yea how by the doctrine of the church, which meets with so much contradiction every where; they can assuredly say they received the spirit, and knows it to be the spirit of holiness which does in all correspond with the written word.

**SECTION 7.** This special improvement may be obvious, which the present subject had it rightly considered, leads neccessarily into, to have our spirits thus fixed in a more full assurance of the doctrine and principles of the Reformed church, as they stand in opposition to popery; upon these grounds.

1. That it is so evident, what most effectually tends to clear up the truth and divinity of the scripture; does inevitably strike at the root and foundation of that interest; since this cannot be in the dark, except we quit the use of reason, that the greatest controversy betwixt us and the Romish church, where the true state of the question lies, is here, if the scripture contained in the Old and New Testament be of divine authority; or whether it and the Romish Bible, which is tradition, and the infallible dictates of their church, be the rule and foundation of faith; according to which decision it is most clear, their cause stands or falls; which is in effect upon the greatest head of atheism, for if the scripture be not the sufficient and sure basis of the christian faith, all may see it can have none, whatever alleged, but what is from reason demonstrable to be a notorious falsehood, and the christian cause lost. I know this may seem too great a challenge, whilst they do not professedly dignify that divine record; but what a mock homage is here? And is it not thus worse used, with a more insufferable indignity put thereon, than the most avowed atheists could do; to put out its eyes, as the Philistines did Sampson's, and then bring it forth to make sport before the world, which is indeed their greatest enemy and plague; though they are not aware, that it will undo their mirth, and at last pull down the house above them. Can the truth of this be denied? Yea, how with the highest contempt and decision they deal with the scripture; as such who would take a sovereign judge, whose authority used to be venerable to all, and put a servant upon the bench above him; whilst he must not only sit in a lower place, but have it declared to the world, that none regard what he says, since to them he can speak no intelligible sense; nor hath any decisive power, or authority more than the meanest of the people, but what is from them alone: Now, is not this to declare him no judge, but a dead image set up for sport, with much more indignity than to thrust him out of door. I confess they have taken a sure way to end all disputes, nor needs any more contending about particular truths of the words, or to cite its authority; when these are their known and professed principles. 1. That the church of Rome can make that scripture, and to be authoritatively binding on their conscience, which was never writ in the Old and New Testament; so as they have such a large ground to go upon, that nothing possible can put them to a strait. 2. That the scripture itself hath no decisive voice, until theirs precede; nor any authority, but what is precarious, and dependent on them. 3. That to go in unto this blessed record, and seek the counsel of God there, is but to consult a mass of dead unfenced characters; that can have no intelligible found, nor articulate voice, until the Romish Clergy cause it to speak, and put a sense thereon: and thus is the letter of the scripture undeniably passed from and no other Bible but their sense and meaning. 4. That there is no founding the christian faith on any certainty of divine truth
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The truth in the scripture, nor on that ground, Thus saith the Lord: But, Thus do their church say, and the Pope as supreme head thereof. 5. That the very being of God, the death and resurrection of Christ, must have a dependence on the church c''er they can be articles of our faith, and be believed. It is sure, there is no access to deny that these are Romish principles, which they must either own, or impeach their greatest writers of fallhood, who so expressly maintain the same; but if these hold, it may then be said their work is done, and are got out of all possible reach of protestant arguments, with this one answer: you have no Bible, or any thing to prove your religion, but what you must have from us: so as the great work of the Reformed churches this day is to appear for the truth of christianity, and that such an authenticc, and sacred instrument of truth, certainly is, wherein it is founded.

2. This advantage is for being more throughly fixed in the truth against Popery, from these clear discoveries of the scriptures accomplishment, and what near converse is to be had therewith by experience; that thus it is sure, the scripture can be known with the greatest certainty of evidence to be the word of God, without all dependence on the church. Which makes void one of their greatest fundamentals, that none can be assured thereof, but by the church's testimony. It cannot be denied, that the whole frame and structure of the Romish church; with that appearance it hath this day, is a singular help to confirm the truth, where all may see these prophecies that concern the Antichrist, under the New Testament so visibly fulfilled: But I hope that gives no ground for a necessity on us to take the truth of the scripture implicitly off their hand; and I am sure there is none else.

3. This advantage there is from the present subject, for being more solidly fixed in the truth against popery; that we can thus know, and keep sight of the Reformed church, and the whole series of providence about her in the most remarkable changes she hath been under; both during antichrist's, and since she begun her rise: where it is so evident, how exactly all answers to the word, and that her case hath not been more low, afflicted, and latent, than is there held forth; and how certainly the Lord hath performed his truth, in what length hitherto his work about her hath come.

4. Is it not thus, by the clear evidence of the scriptures accomplishment, and a fierce converse therewith, we may see the certainty of antichristianism in the world (which as an event of the word behaved to take place under the New Testament) how convincingly it is verified in the doctrine of the Romish church; such as all who are in earnest so far as to compare this with the written word may know how not only different from the truth of christianity revealed there it is, but most visibly destructive thereto; as this day hath been fully cleared before the world by the labours of such, who since the breaking of the light, were helped of the Lord to contend against this adversary.
AN

EPISTLE

TO THE

Christian Reader.

Reader,

Hey are well, and at a blessed advantage in such trying and winowing times we are fallen in, whose great study is to make peace with God, and understand their way where it lies, and upon what security they adventure, when dark clouds are so remarkably casting up, and all sensible grounds almost shaken, so as the life of faith seems now in another manner the Christian's trial, how to be as rest and fully quiet upon the truth and faithfulness of God, I must say than in any former days, that we or our fathers have known, since the begun rise and recovery of the church from antichristianism; and should not this lie near, as the greatest interest men can have to be taken up with, that their anchor is sure, and cast within the veil, and to know on whom they have believed, when the jealousy of an highly provoked God is now ready to burst forth, and great wrath seems to be on this generation; when a strong and hot battle may be looked for to be yet before the Reformed churches, and very near; yet such times, when there may be no peace to him that goes out and comes in: But to these, these only, whose peace is above all such storms, as knowing the rock they found on is God, that the great things of the everlasting gospel are assuredly true, and the testimony of the word, whereon he hath caused them to hope to be such, as can make it sweet and easy to roll the whole of their interest thereon, not only for what doth concern them within time, but an eternity of glory to come, with some respect to this; and I may say, under some weight of this subject, is this small treatise offered to your serious perusal, being a brief touch of these great and marvelous things, which the Lord hath done for his church under the New Testament; O that with a blessing from him therewith, it might be a word in season to any, and an helper to their joy, and strengthening in the truth.

It is clear, that the works of the Lord and these marvelous things he did in the sight of our fathers for confirming the truth, is a weighty talent and truth, we find this day accountable for. 1. For being more strengthened in his way, since it is there, his name is near. 2. To observe and make a diligent search there amiss, for they are great, and sought out of all that take pleasure therein, Psal. cxiv. 2. Yes, Whilst we are under so prelent a call thus to come; and see the Lord's being God; whose work is honourable and glorious, and his righteous
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To keep up the remembrance thereof, that one generation may profit by works to another, and not lose sight of the great wonders of former ages, and those events of providence about the church, so famous, publick, and of such unanswerable evidence, though now many generations past, as even to this day might be, as if they were present in our sight, and a continued wonder before us. 

To do this, I must say, it seems to be a peculiar guilt and controversy, which the holy God hath with the present generation, when there is no suitable regarding his works, nor calling to mind his power and judgments of old, but so violable a tempting of him upon every new step of our trial. 4. And should not this cause a further weight and impulsion of such a duty on us, that we may give unto the Lord the glory of his works and wonders done in times past, and for putting to our feel to that glorious administration of providence under the Mediator's hand, about his church under the gospel, who alone was found worthy to looke that sealed book, and hath done all things well; that his work is perfect, and in a great part now brought forth in the event before our eyes; with such marvelous things, which in their appointed time and season, have been made known, as should never have entered into mens thoughts, if they had not been foretold in the scripture; so as a greater trust now falled under our hand, than those who lived in former ages. O how sweet should a serious aim at this be, for each in their several capacities to be thus concerned, how to advance the repute and credit of the truth of Christ; and make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom under the New Testament.

Though the church's state and condition, since that blessed restoration after the fall hath been still militant upon the earth, yet we may see the crofs with some further measure of sharp and searching trials have a more peculiar respect to the dispensation of the gospel, and remarkably suited thereto, to go through much tribulation, than it was to those times under the law; yes, thus some astonishing and more continued affaults, than was known to the ancient church, as confentaneous to a greater manifestation of grace, and higher degrees of light. Here also how sweet and confirming a prospect may we have of the way of the Lord, which this present eflay does point at. I hope with some clearness

1. That neither Greece nor Rome, who's conquests were once spread through most of the nations, did ever know such triumphs as the truth, and doctrine of Christ hath had in those times of greatest sufferings and persecution, both over the pagan and antichristian world, over the thrones of kingdoms, as well as the meanest cottages; yes, how this hath made the earth to tremble, and the nations shake in their day. 2. What rare examples of holiness, and of the marvelous power of the truth (yes, these not a few, but innumerable) we thus have in our sight, who did both burn and shine (though with borrowed light from their blessed head) and with so bright a lustre in the darkest night of the church's sufferings, as all might see the sport of God and of glory did rest upon them; yes, thus may have a more convincing view of the glory of the church militant, if they would but come near, and consider this strange light, what hath been her state under the gospel, the rush burning and not consumed, and what was said of Joseph in the type, how his bow did abide in strength, amidst such amazing and renewed conflicts. 3. That the recovery of christianity from antichristian darkness is such, as hath no less demonstrative evidence of the immediate power of God, and his outstretched arm, yes, most astonishing signs and witnesses of an extraordinary providence therewith, than the first spreading thereof amongst the nations. And though it is not now a time of miracles in that manner, as in the days of the apostles, yet have these been times of the great wonders of the gospel, as in many instances may be convincingly evident if men do not flout their eyes thereto.

For what passages are here inferred, I may with confidence say, there hath been some serious enquiry made, and a being not easily satisfied amen the certainty thereof, from the gravest both of ancient and modern histories, and to have such evidences of their truth as might be to the furthest convincing, to one who was under some preface on his own spirit for a clear quieting perversion hereof, no less than to satisfy others. O what is it to be pervaded of the reality of the gospel, to know and be sure, that when this earthly tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building in heaven eternal, that is not made with hands, since to be a christian in earnest, and have an aim to follow the Lord fully now in such remarkably dark and searching times; does indispensible call for some higher degrees of assurance and establishment, than seems by most to be understood; It is not easy sometmes for the most established to be kept from fainting in the way to their country, such may be the preface of affliction, and multiplied temptations, and so dark an hour on their soul, to bring in question, what with greatest assurance they once knew, and with humble confidence could bring in before the Lord, as his own seal; yes, a few days may come the church's way,
more remarkable for trial, than a most an age before. It is sure the furthest length in being confirmed in the way of the Lord, and of a solid establishment in the truth, was never more preltingly called for; yet how rare a sight seems this to be in the days we live in. Some things may seem strange, which I have been put to think on with astonishment.

1. That the measure of light, and these confirmations of the truth given in to this generation, doth fo far exceed the measure of former times; yet seems it to be the peculiar affult to this age, wherein the power of darknes's does most appear, that prodigy of Albeifon; yea, how far many have loft all perfwation of the truth, and makes it their work to revolve their faith in an uncertainty of any principles. 2. That judicial tendency the light and knowledge of most now seem to have, for a further deadning of their confidence, and where its true and nativ: fruit should be to humble and abase, how rare this is, but to the contrary effect, to swell and puff up, and what an ordinary way of converse have most learned with the greatest truths of the scripture, as if there were no more but to make these a sport of wit and invention, in their debatings. There anent, which could not be possibly confident with an awful regard and perfwation of its being the word of the living God or their souls being under the power and authority thereof; yea, none more found beyond the reach of conviction, and the awe of light further off their confidence, than many who have been once enlightened.

3. How men should live at such a distance of these great things that are so shortly to come to pass, as an eternal glade, and resurrection of the dead, which could not but enforce some converse therewith in another manner, to have them more present and as still in our sight, if they were truly believed. Oh! if christians were such a length in their being confirmed in the truth, which they are called to seek after, the greatest trait and trial even in times of heavines otherwise, then would be to bear their joy and comfort, which that marvelous change they shall ere long know and enjoy of an eternal glory could not but cause. 4. And can serious godliness be conceivable in its exercice, without deep and solid impressions of the certainty of divine truth, when this is so necessarily conjoined with a being kept in the love of God, and under a bliffed constraint thereof; thus a renunciation of their whole interests to him, is made sweet and easy, so as to know they can never make so much of any worldly enjoyment, as by an offering up, and resigning it to his bleft call. Yea, is thus made comforting to endure, and though hope deferred may make the heart sick, yet are they then kept unshaken with such a quieting assurance of the truth, that though it pleaseth us bee, when the return of prayer make hafe; yet since they know it gives more glory to God, when he dehys most, to have a sweet complacency therewith: If Job's trial had been sooner at a close, it might have been more his personal cafe, but not more for the Lord's honour; no mercy hath ever been more endeared, than what hath broke out of the midst of the thickest cloud, or more full and sweet, than what hath come after much patience, and continued wrestlings.

I must further add, as to some peculiar improvement of these passages here recorded, how a serious reader may find these truths both confirming and sweet, which convincingly are presented before him. 1. That the most rare experiences of the saints, and their sharpest trials have fo usually met, and these the sweetest dispensations, which would have been most croft to their own choice; yea, have seemed most judgment-like to ordinary observers. 2. That it is sure there are discoveries of the truth known to the saints in times of suffering, which are unconceivable to any at a distance. O how the world would wonder, if they underfood what these knew, and have been then admitted to enjoy. 3. How the continuance and preservation of the church in all the times of the gospel is such, as is peculiar to her alone, and can be paid of no interest or party else; which hath born out such great revolutions, as have most changed the face of the world; and these almost universal deluges of Paganism, Arianism and Antichristianism, which like an inundation did for a time go over her head. 4. Though the dispencations of the Lord have a wonderful deepness, and but a little thereof can be reached, whilst sin and mortality stand in the way; yet we may see here how patience can make an outgate break up before a deliverance, and tribulation for the gospel to be one of the saints privileges, which hath a peculiar rent and interest lying to it; that such have griefs and comforts the world is a stranger to; yea, how that measure of trial, grief or pain did meet none of his people in his way, which the spirit of the Lord had not made easy to endure, and to be comforted therein. 5. How such hath been the case and pressure off of the saints under their sufferings, as may demonstratively witness, it must be some strong consolation, and no shadow that could thus support them under the fame, when no visible caufe was for it. 6. That when the Lord calls his own quickly away, there is some discernible growth then usually previous thereto, and a
reaping of an early harvest may be seen. 7. That it is not by might and power but an immediate out pouring of the spirit, which can in a few years bring more forward than many ages could undo; as in that blesed recovery of the church from popery might be convincing to all, 8. And have we not here a demonstrative witness of the reality of that flare above, whither such a blesed company are entred, and knows now what it is to be there, when the fore thoughts thereof, and these sensible glances they got of that land whither they were going was such, as swallowed up these impressions, that their imbittering pain and torments could not but have left on them; O what they now enjoy, and what change is a christian to undergo when death comes, as it should not be strange though these long to be gone to that unconceiveable sweet and delightful paradise, which is above, who ever knew in themselves the truth thereof sealed by the earnest of the spirit. 9. It is thus we see, how the Lord hath made good his word to the church, in a most strange and wonderful way; so as nothing hitherto hath faied of the prophecies of the New Testament, but may be now read in the event; yea, these things brought forth in their appointed time and proper circumstances, as they were expressly foretold; when no influence of second causes in the remotes tendency thereto, could possibly be discerned; such as the greatest Atheists may fee, hath not come to pass at an adventure, or in an ordinary way of providence.

I judged it duty (and hopes it may not be found unreasonable) to give some brief touch also at the present state of the church of Christ in Scotland; and to bear witness to so great and weighty an interest on which the sufferings of his people there are remarkably stated at this day; having been surprized to have found how little this was understood by many, who want not otherways a ferious respect to the truth, and desire to be concerned in the church's case there.

Though extraordinary and immediate revelations, must not now be looked after, but the Lord's fixed and established way under the times of the gospel, to communicate light and give answers to his people, is by these living oracles of the scripture, and that it is sure the truth and authority of God there, is the alone formal object of his peoples faith; yet it cannot be denied nor strange, that he hath been pleased to reveal unto some of his servants; even in these late times in a more extraordinary way, things that were to come; especially in a suffering condition, and when some special service and necessity of the church did the more call for it. If an angel from heaven, much more men, should bring any light or discovery of things contrary to the scripture, or offer to add any thing to that perfect rule; they were to be accursed. But what in some singular passages here inferred, as I have else where upon such an account endeavoured to clear; we may see how these great servants of Christ were led in no other path than that of the written word, though they had some more extraordinary and immediate imitations of God's mind, as to the application thereof in particular cases, and with respect to that part of the church where they lived, which all with greatest caution, and much humble sobriety they did own. Nor is it strange, that such confirimations from the Lord given in to some of his servants are so rare now, while the ancient holiness of these days is so little known, and what it is to believe and follow the Lord fully, with clofs keeping by light, which these made their continued study.

I have aimed as far as the expressing the matter with some plainness could possibly admit, to prevent unnecessary multiplying of words, or encroach on your time that way, and I hope the subject being so grave and weighty may oblige the reader to some serious entertaining thereof. It is a great thing to discern the work of God aright, and what a marvelous seal is in every age given in to the truth, to see how all these lines of providence, and most astonishing revolutions which have gone over the church, do so convincingly lead into the scripture, and to the christian's further establishment.
THE
Fulfilling of the Scripture;
IN THE
Great Appearances of God for his Church under
the New Testament:

PART III.

CHAP. I.

Sect. I.

It is undeniable, that we must either cease to exercise reason, or confess the greatest interest men have to be most taken up with here, the greatest event that ever was brought forth within time, is what is delivered to us in the gospel, in that wonderful history by the four Evangelists of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ: That such a time assuredly was, and now many ages since past, when the glorious Redeemer of the church, the second person of the God-head, came down from heaven, and was revealed to the world in our nature, about which the Old Testament and prophecies thereof, had until then been traveling still as in birth; yea, with most clear and undeniable evidence did answer that season, which was expressly pointed at by the scripture, and in that time when the ancient church was with greatest longing and advertence looking forth for his appearance, which they knew could not be but very near.

Sect. 2.
Sect. 2. But such is this great subject of the gospel, and of that import, as nothing seems to bring it more in question, than that the christian world is not in another manner this day affected therewith, or can own a professed assent, without more serious returning on themselves in such an enquiry, if they can truly credit their own eyes herewith, yea, how christians indeed should be persuaded of its truth and certainty, and yet find it so easy to bear that joy, which this should cause within their soul, so as to awake in the morning, and lie down at night, without being in a more frequent transport of wondering, to know what great things thus they are called to know and converse with, when these thoughts are brought near to us. 1. What man's estate should be here upon the earth, if it were divided from the hope of the gospel; and the necessity thus of a Mediator, on whom the sin of the elect church might be by imputation transferred; since out of Jesus Christ God is not to be found, but as a consuming fire. 2. That it is sure God hath been manifested in the flesh, and the Redeemer of the church is no more to come, but hath come already. 3. To know how great that end was, to which the greatest design that ever the glorious God brought to light, in sending his own Son into the world could answer, which next to his own declarative glory, was to restore this rare work and frame of man, by a new creation to condemn sin, that he might have sinners to repair those ruins and breaches sin had made, for which angels, nor men could never have known a cure. 4. That thus our nature should be so highly advanced and exalted, as in the incarnation of Christ, to be assumed into that near conjunction and union with the divine nature. 5. That it was not acquaintance and abolition only, from eternal wrath that is brought to light and ensured by the gospel; but such a real change also, as hath therewith a being made meet by a new and spiritual nature form'd within, for that blessed estate which is above. 6. That it is so very short and uncertain a time, until these eyes of ours be shut on this lower world, and all things that are here, and when this earth must cease for ever to be the place of our abode, and we to return to it no more. 7. For such to know and bring near their thoughts, over whom many sad days and hours have gone; that no less than an heaven and an eternal glory is set before them; yea, such a marvelous and unspeakably astonishing change shall once be in their state, from what they now are, so as to be equal to the angels of God, to shine forth as the sun in their father's kingdom; when they shall draw in no other air, than the breathings of that higher paradise, and there in that blessed land be everlastingly ravished with the fulness of joy, and those pleasures for evermore which are in his presence? yea, that thus the most poor and delpicable amongst men, hath a prize set in his view to contend for, unconceivably greater than all the crowns and kingdoms of the earth. What thoughts are those that could not but follow on the believed truth and certainty of the gospel, and who would not thus endure and watch, who know such a change shall quickly be, of being entered into that state of glory? I suppose that such a proposal as this were made to any, to endure the sorest outward pain, or lie in a dark prison in an afflicted and defilited state, to conflict with much outward tribulation, for some twenty or thirty or forty years, and after to have ensured his being made king over the most flourishing kingdom, which is this day in the earth, and enjoy the fame for many ages without the least change; who would debate such a choice? Yet here is no possible shadow or resemblance to that blessed hope, which the meanest christian hath set before him. 8. Such also is the import of the truth of the gospel, as not only ensures that estate of glory above, but an eternity therewith. Lastly, that it was
was infinite love and distinguishing grace hath caused such a difference between those, who shall once dwell there, and that innumerable multitude adjudged to everlasting torment.

Sect. 3. Though such is the concernment of the gospel of Christ, as is no less than our being blessed here and for ever, yet we cannot but see it is no greater than that security and fulness of evidence, wherewith this day it is conveyed and made known, when it is so clear. 1. That this could never have possibly entered into the thoughts of men, or been devised, but paffeth all natural understanding, to know or comprehend in the leaf, if it had not been revealed to us in the scripture, nor could human knowledge have ever foreseen upon any principles of reason its taking place. 2. Was a truth, which then took men's minds most up, as being the greatest transaction which ever was in the earth, yea, thus not only to look on at a distance, as moft do on the strange emergents of the time, but that which lay near, as their own personal interest, wherein their state and being for all eternity, they knew was concerned. 3. A truth which is by length of time still more confirmed, with a visible attestation of its power and marvelous effects; now through these sixteen centuries conveyed to us; as the greatest atheists know not, though at this distance of time, how to contradict the certainty thereof, but by shutting their eyes; yea, visibly enforced oft to bewray some tremblings of heart within, to dare a disowning of that, which yet is their greatest torment. 4. A truth, which in all ages required no reception in the world, but on men's exact search and trial there anent, with a publick appeal, not to their light and judgment only, but experience. 5. A truth, whose known adversaries are such alone, as never knew it upon trial; and those in all ages most firm witnesses thereto, whose acquaintance hath been on the nearest approach, and had most familiar converse therewith, yea such who with greatest joy have sealed the truth of the gospel with their blood, because they knew it assuredly to be true; which is a weighty and strengthening remark, how the most experienced christians, who have the nearest fellowship with the gospel are those, and those alone, who have the greatest assurances thereof. 6. A truth whose record is not more clear and legible in the testimony of both Old and New Testament than it is upon the heart and lives of innumerable witnesses thereto, since the first times of the gospel, upon whom it hath been turned into a practical history, in the truth and vitals of a new life, and in their being visibly changed into the very same image. 7. A truth about which all divided parties of the christian world, who were otherwise at greatest distance among themselves, have been enforced to be one in their content here; yea, the Jews as well as the Christian writers, to bear the same witness, for matter of fact. 8. Such a truth, as could but once take place, and no possibility for its being re-acted ever again, to which its express time and bounds were set by the promise of God for many ages before the event, 1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory, which should follow, unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you. Which which could not be in the dark to the Jews, that his blessed coming was at hand, when such clear grounds were given for a right computation and understanding thereof, both from Jacob's prophecy of the scepters departure from Judah, from Daniel's weeks, with those great revolutions of the monarchies, which had then fo evident
evident an accomplishment in the event, and as high-way marks were for this end set forth in that prophecy; and whilst they knew certainly the extent of those weeks, could only be weeks of years, that surely the last period thereof was then drawing near about that very time of Christ's appearance. A truth not wrapped up in some general account, but such as both in the proph-ecies and event, is delivered with most clear and express circumstances, so equal and congruous to themselves in the whole relation hereof, as nothing can be more convincing.

9. Such is this greatest truth of the gospel, where all may see one aim and scope in the whole of that history, without intermixing any thing that hath not some evident congruity thereunto, yea, the different pen-men, and those at so great a distance of time, yet here are both the Old and New Testament, so closely connected and met in one blessed point and center, that to divide these from Jesus Christ, the whole work and frame thereof, should be dissolved.

10. A truth which none of the Gentiles could receive and own, but by quitting that religion they were bred and educated in, and of so long a time transmitted from their fathers; which was such a religion, as put no restraint upon following the lusts and pleasures of the flesh; yea, thus to abandon the fame, where no private interest or advantage, no visible incitement from any other ait, besides the power and certainty of the truth it fell on their soul, could possibly be known to influence such a change.

11. A truth, which with no human confidence or alliance, did then confront the world in its greatest strength, without the least flattering of any, nor did ever lose ground by the greatest opposition. Which was no transient glance to the world, not for some days or months only, but a continued time of several years, did our blessed Redeemer visibly converse here upon the earth, yea, to confirm our faith the more in his being truly man, did go through all those degrees of childhood, and infancy; and in that same ordinary way grow up to the full stature of a man, to shew his being made like unto us in all things, excepting sin, and that he did truly partake of flesh and blood with his children.

14. To confirm the certainty of this blessed truth, is it not also undeniable, that the Jewish and pagan adversaries, did not for so many ages conflict and wrestle with their own shadow, in opposing the Christian faith, but what to their torment they found to be in greatest earnest; nor was it a Comedy or perfonated suffering, which the first publishers of the gospel did undergo, but what was assuredly real, yea, that pain and hardship they endured in their confessing of Jesus Christ, and owning his truth, was no dream or illusion, either to themselves or the world; and what could have been to make the shadow and appearance of being Christians at such a rate desirable, no human understanding can reach.

15. And is it not clear, that Christianity is the very ornament and perfection of our nature, and in some begun degrees even here, doth restore us to that right and dominion over the flesh, which was once lost, to a transforming from the condition of beasts, unto that of men; yea, as love to the world doth visibly assimilate the spirits of men unto the same image, so as they more near approach to the flesh, the further they separate from God, and as the soul is defiled and turns earthly, in the same measure is it darkened and alienated from the life of God; there is nothing more clear also than this, how this love of Christ which hath its alone rise from him, doth by a blessed constraint, carry the soul with its furtheft confent to him again, to imbofom it self there, until it be wholly unite with its own element, and this with as native tendeney as the sparks fly upward.

16. Can it be in an other manner the Jews could expect their Messias, than in that way our blessed Redeemer came, except they bring some other authority than the Old Testament for it; and
terminate their desires herein, for having one to fill their belly, and please the flesh; or can their own either scripture or reason, and not see how far all earthly grandeur is below that inward beauty of the soul, and lively illumination thereof, with the knowledge of God, the hope of that glory which is to come, and begun victory over the flesh and lusts thereof; except they own a preference of the body to the soul, and the pleasures of the beasts, to those of angels. 17. Such is this truth, as could not possibly, without making void the faithfulness of God, have taken place in another time, or in the succeeding ages, when once the destruction of Jerusalem, the ceasing of the daily service, with the lettering of the Jewish nation, was accomplished. I shall but here further add, that such is the truth of the Gospel, as nothing could have been more cross to human reason, more obstrusive of its success, or have caused a greater stumbling to the dark world, than the delivery and publishing thereof, with those circumstances recorded in the history of the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ, with that ignominy which attended the fame, his low estate, and being rejected of his own people; if there had been possible access for consulting with flesh and blood, or to walk by rules of human wisdom herein, yea, any ground else to lean on, than the certainty of its own truth, and that allureth thus should be the power and wisdom of God, to such as were ordained to life. O blessed, blessed truth, on which to great an interest lean, and so rare a structure and workmanship hath been founded, as the christian church even to this day; here is enough to answer all, when human comforts do most fail, and to counterbalance the griefs and sorrows of a sad fate.

Sect. 4. We fee that time of the coming of the Messiah, at such a signal period and crisis in the condition of the then world, as should be gravely observed. 1. Under Augustus's reign when the temple of J anus was shut, because of an universal peace, that thus with more serious advantage the world might regard so great a thing, as could not but be astonishing with those circumstances that follow thereon, to most of the nations about, which then were not prejudged with the noise of tumults of war, from being reached with this great discovery. 2. At such a time did this blessed healer come, and made first offer of himself to the Jewish nation, when its condition was in that measure plorable, as it seemed to be almost past cure, and it is clear from the ancient Rabies and their own Talmud, how such a reckoning they did then make, for a most sad and dark time when the Messiah should first appear. 3. Such also was that blessed time of his being revealed to the Gentiles, when nothing could have been more repugnant to such times, than the doctrine of Christ and the cross, without the convey of an extraordinary divine power; when after so great universal peace, the Roman Empire with the nations about were most remarkably drowned in all luxury and voluptuosities, beyond the rate of former ages. 4. It was then the Redeemer came, and brought life and immortality to light unto the dark nations, where the world through wisdom knew not God, but was still as at dark midnight in the knowledge of divine things; yea, after the wisdom and learning of those ages past had been to the furtheft improvement in their enquiry after truth, when the Grecians had conveyed what they could from the Egyptians, and the Romans from them, yet did still lose themselves more in groping to seek the right doors, by the dim light of nature, nor knew how they came into that estate, in which they found themselves; so as all may see, 1. The utter insufficiency of natural abilities, now since the fall, to give light about divine truths, to know either what God is, or how he is to be worshipped, or the true cure and relief of such visible corruption of nature. 2. What a divinity
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a divinity men would frame to themselves, without supernatural revelation, whilst nothing was more absurd, and to astonishment irrational, than that religion which was then owned in the Roman Empire. 3. That it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ only revealed in the gospel, and his immediate concurrence therewith, could accomplish that change on the world, and the spirits of men, which no moral philosophy could ever do, to have such an irresistible prevalence over nature, custom, education, and whatever interest had formerly command over their natural disposition, which nothing but a divine power could bring about.

SECTION 5. We may see the world was in these times no stranger to the fame and report of Jesus Christ, and how publicly conspicuous his appearance then, as nothing could be more known for matter of fact, was in no hide corner but notour, famous and undeniably manifest, at Jerusalem, before the Romans, at the passover, when such a confluence of strangers from other places were present at the sufferings of our Lord; yea, which in so short a time after, put the world in such a flame, and for all hath befallen that people of the Jews, did they never to this day once offer to deny or dilate what their fathers did herein: some few passages I shall insert as a witness hereto.

1. What Josephus hath lib. xviii. cap. 45. in the same time there was a wise man (if we may call him a man) who was a worker of miracles, and teacher of them that would willingly receive the truth, had many both Jews and Gentiles his followers, and was believed to be the Christ: and when Pilate had crucified him, through the envy of our rulers, yet those that first loved him were constant in their affection, for he appeared to them alive the third day, as the prophets foretold both this and many wonderful things of him, from whom are the Christians so called to this very day. Thus Jerome in his book of Ecclesiastic writers sets down which reading of his (he was believed to be the Christ) is judged preferable to that of Enfebius (hic fuit Christus) or as it is in our ordinary translations of Josephus: since as Usher in his annals shews, what length soever Josephus came, yet was he not directly a professed christian. The Jews have in after-times esay'd to raze this whole testimony out of their books, as Baronius, and other writers shews, but with that disadvantage, that for so many ages before, this was publick and famoulsy extant, which their ancestors could not offer to contradict. 2. We have that honourable testimony Josephus also gives to John Baptist, lib. xviii. cap. 7. whose words are, Herod the Tetrarch killed John the Baptist, a most excellent man, who stirred the Jews to the exercise of virtue; especially to the washing of baptism, which he said would be then acceptable to God, but in having their minds first purged through righteousness, they added cleanliness of body thereto, and from the great report was to him, Herod fearing his authority might raise some rebellion, thought it safe to take him out of the way. 3. That of Corn. Tactit. a most known adversary to christians, whose words are these, annals 15. speaking of the christians, Christianos appellavit author ejus nominis Christus. qui Tiberio imperante per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum supplicio effus fuit. Thus expressly witnessing the sufferings of the Lord to have been under Tiberius's reign, and at that very time whilst Pontius Pilate did rule in Judea; a relation that all may see, could be from no respects in the least to that way, but to hold forth only the truth in matter of fact so famous and known in that time he wrote, which was almost in the very same age with the apostles. 4. Thus Macrobius also relates, Saturn. lib. ii. cap. 4. when Augustus heard how Herod, among the children he caufed kill of the Jews within two years old, that a fon of his own was killed also, said, It was better to be Herod's
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5. Both Ruffinus and Eusebius do appeal the heathen to their own annals, that in Pilate's time when Christ suffered, the sun did suddenly withdraw, and darkness ensued, which was then extant in the Roman records in their time, Euseb. lib. ix. cap. 6. and Tertullian Apol. ad Gentes cap. 21. shews how then the day was withdrawn, whilst the sun was at the height, which those who knew not that it concerned Christ, judged to be only an eclipse, yet saith he, ye find this recorded in your own monuments; yea Thallas an heathen writer, and Flieg. Tral. lib. xiii. Chron. a heathen also, are both cited on the same account, the one by Julius Africanus in the 3. of his Chronology; the other by Origen against Celsus pag. 83, as Usher in his Annals shews.

Sect. 6. It was with the first dawnings of the christian church, that stupendous and great seal was then put to the truth by the gift of tongues and different languages; which besides that infallible authority of the scripture, is with such undeniable evidence to this day demonstrable on grounds of reason, as can leave no possible access to debate the same, where it is clear. 1. That then was the time come for all nations to know the gospel, and when that wall of partition was to be taken down. 2. That the commission and authority given to the apostles and evangelists of Christ for their work and ministry was of no less extent, than to the whole world, with an express promise of this marvelous gift, as is clear both from the last of Matthew and Mark. 3. That the delivery over of the doctrine of the gospel to the nations, had then an undoubted necessity hereof, not as a confirming sign and miracle only to attest the truth of the gospel, but as an instrumental means for making the design thereof effectual, whilst these different languages put to evident a let to their work, or any successful pursuance of it, without such an extraordinary mean. 4. It is sure, that in no ordinary way, without such a miracle, could ever the christian faith have in that manner spread, and come to the most dark places of the earth, by those instruments, who were chosen, and made use of for the same; such as some poor fishermen and publicans, who were known to be rude and unlettered, even to the conviction of the Jews; yea when it is evident, their utmost reach could only have been, to know their vulgar language, which then was the Syrian. 5. Should not those undoubted and marvelous effects, which followed thereon infer the conviction of so extraordinary a mean, when in less than forty years, after the first publishing of the gospel, such famous churches were planted in the most dark and remote parts of the world, as all ancient records witness: so that we cannot more wonder to read such a stupendious thing, as the gift of languages was at that time, than we should know, how possibly without this such an early and universal spreading of the christian church could have been through the world.

6. Is it not clear, how this great miracle is of another manner, than others then wrought to confirm the truth, that it was not in some one place witnessed, where those only present could have access, but was notour and publick in those churches, where the christian faith was first planted by the apostles, so as the very being of the christian church could not be more obvious, than the truth of this in those times. 7. If such a matter of fact could have been possibly gain-faied, would the Jews then have been wanting, who so much sought to strengthen their prejudice against the gospel, to appear in open contradiction thereto, when the account given hereof was made publick and known to all. 8. It is thus evident, how the scripture of the New Testament not upon the matter only, but the very language wherein most of the penmen thereof wrote, was in an extraordinary way given them from heaven; nor can it be judged, that to such as Peter, James and John, who were fishermen,
men, and Matthew, who was of the meanest of the people, the Greek language could have been so familiar, which was not their own vulgar tongue, as to write therein. 9. Thus also may be seen, that which was a stroke and judgment once, in the first dividing and confusion of tongues, made so remarkable a blessing for the spreading of the gospel, the one suited to that time of the church's inclosure from the rest of the earth, and as an interdict on served upon the nations about, the other for its furthest extent and spreading, and so as the one did shut the door, the other did no less wonderfully let it open.

Sect. 7. Though such extraordinary signs were then undeniable, both for confirming and spreading of the gospel, yet is it manifest, that the greatest mean for making this effectual, and building of the christian church, where-in her blessed head chose to have his appearance most remarkable, and convincing in those times, was By the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and concurrence thereof with his word on the hearts of men, a truth I must say, should be in another manner thought of, if we knew the weight and import of this, that so great an attestation to the gospel, and the certainty of it, as nothing can be greater, is by those assurances to be known, and no less demonstrable, than we can be sure of the form and being of christianity. Though I have elsewhere touched this subject, I must here add some things further, to clear that peculiar respect this hath, in a greater manifestation thereof to the times of the New Testament, beyond any former ages of the church, as that greatest gift expressly promised and referred to the same, and how sure and visible it hath been in the event; when we may see, that until then, the work of the spirit was more known, as a private seal on the hearts of the godly, than by any such publick witnesses, as a confirmatory seal of the doctrine of the church, and commission of the publishers thereof before others; and until then was that evidence and demonstration of the spirit in no such manner known, with an enforcing conviction on the conscience of those, who were otherwise strangers to its work on their own souls, as hath been undeniable under the gospel; yea that the sin against the Holy Ghost, for which there is no atonement, is only thus mentioned under the New Testament, and with respect to those times of so visible a manifestation of the spirit let forth, for discerning of spiritual things, and opening up the mysteries of the gospel, for searching out the deep things of God, nor were those mysteries formerly sealed up, in such a manner unveiled until the times of the gospel. 3. It was most clear with those remarkable sufferings of the christian church, which so early then broke up, and for the most of after times continued till this day; how convincing the sending down of the Comforter was, to bear out the credit of his people, and make good their encouragement under those greatest trials, and that thus those living springs of the comforts of the Holy Ghost, did in those times no less remarkably break up; yea, in some suitable measure, to the dying up of those lower confolations, which were formerly let forth, when the promises lay more in externals. 4. If we own this visible creation to be the immediate work of God, above the possibility of second cauës, it is then sure, the spirit of the Lords moving thereon for its first bringing forth, is not more demonstrable, than that effectual operation and moving of the same spirit with the doctrine of Christ, for a bringing forth of the christian world, which is no less wonderful and stupendous in its frame, than the other, and the concurrence of instruments in that time, as to what they were in themselves, so suitable for such an end; as all may see, it was the same word that said in the beginning, let there be an heaven, and an earth, which then with no less evidence said, let there be a new christian world, and flourishing churches brought forth out of the most rude, dark and savage parts of the earth. 5. It is now under the
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New Testament, that the spirit given by our blessed Redeemer, to supply his room with his church here until he come again, is made eminently forth, in sealing us to the day of redemption, Ephes. i. 13. And imparting the first fruits, and earnest even here, of that glorious inheritance above, yea in a more discernible acting and writing forth in a practical history, those truths of the breathings, movings, teachings, quickenings, and comfortings of the Holy Ghost, as the real work and transcript of the spirit on the hearts of the faints, causing them to know the kingdom of God within. 6. It is now also that the spirituality of religion, and necessity thereof in the worshiping of God, is in a further measure opened up and made known, which in former times, whilst the gospel was exhibited under shadows, was then more in the letter, in external ordinances and duties, than in the spirit and inward conformity thereunto, which is so sweet and easy a way the Lord hath put his people upon to serve him. I shall but add this one thing more, how under the times of the gospel, that marvelous indwelling of the Holy Ghost, is more eminently known to the church, not by some transient motions of light and love: but that familiar abode and residence ensured thus by an irrevocable donation to the Christian church, John xiv. 16, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you, and abide for ever.

Sect. 8. It was then with the first dawning of the gospel, and ingathering of the nations to the church, that so conspicuous an attestation of that truth did immediately follow thereon, Jo. xii. 32. that in Christ’s being lifted up from the earth, he should draw all men after him; when a standard was thus lift up to the dark and Pagan world, not to invite them only, but by an invincible efficacious power to determine their consent and incoming unto him. This was indeed a most strange astonishing prophecy, and now is one of the greatest feals, that ever was appended to the Christian faith, than which nothing could be more clear in the event, that he who hath spoken, hath also done this, and is no illusion or imposture. 1. That no such change was ever known upon the world, until that blessed time came of the Redeemers being lift up on the cross, and then did he rent the heavens and come down, to cause the mountains flow down at his presence. 2. That this power which thus drew the world after it, did not strive or cry, nor was it voice heard in the streets, yet such a voice as enforced the uttermost parts of the earth to subject thereto, with greatest desire and content. 3. That the need’s pointing to the Pole, which is certainly one of the greatest mysteries of nature, can be no more sure, than that fuch who were as uncapable to move or flir, as the cold Iron, did then by a touch of this hyper-nagnetick power, natively move toward Jesus Christ, yea whom having not seen to love, by such a pull at their heart, as could not fail to bring the grip therewith. 4. That no rank or state of men from the greatest monarchs to the meanest, no different size of man’s life, from infancy unto old age, hath been since Jesus Christ was lifted upon the cross, on whom this blessed drawing power hath not been conspicuously verified. 5. How innumerable are they, who were thus drawn, and made to move against their native byways, so as with their deliberate choice, to quit their right eye and hand for the truth; to let the world see, and oft hath this sight been its amazement, how a touch of this power at the heart is such, as in one moment can prevail more, than all the incitements of the earth can withstand. 6. How oft this power hath been most discernible, when least of ordinary means was for such an end, whilst no teacher but the inward teaching of the spirit though by the word, yea on such, where the greatest disadvantage, both from education and their natural disposition might be evident; what rude, savage, unfeminisble and stupid persons imbittered in their
their enmity to the gospel, hath our blessed Redeemer thus drawn into himself by one touch of his hand at their heart.

Sect. 9. It was the immediate appearance of God's judgment, which no distance of time can darken; in that desolating stroke on the Jewish nation and Jerusalem, within a few years after the suffering of Christ by the Romans under Titus Vespasian; a stroke both in the manner and continuance, such as no instance present or past could ever be found to resemble, and when seriously considered, one of the greatest appearances of God against a people hath been, since man was formed in the earth; where these concurring circumstances, for giving light thereto, call for our serious observing. 1. That in so short a time after the death of our blessed Lord, not above forty years, this should take place, and that blood fall on them in that very generation, with their hands as it were hot and reeking in the same, which they had wished on them and their children. 2. By the Romans, whose interest in their opposition to Christ, they pretended most to own. 3. By such an instrument also, as Titus Vespasian, of so singularly sweet a natural disposition, so mild, and compassionate, as he was called delicatissimi humani generis; yea one, who to the furthest sought a preventing of their ruin, that all might see it was the finger of God. 4. Their being visibly enforced to be executioners of their own judgment, so as the adversaries without did not so effectually concur to accomplish this, as they did amongst themselves, to shew its being something fatal beyond all possibility to save. 5. That the time thereof should be at the passover, not only thus for a greater ruin, by the gathering of such multitudes from the whole land into the city, but also by this remarkable circumstance, to point as with the finger at the cause of so extraordinary a judgment, and thus try it at that very time of the sufferings of the Lord there. 6. That no repentance or serious enquiry after the true cause did follow, but more desperate induration, a being broken without contrition, or humbling. 7. That strange contrariety and malice then, and to this day against the christians, more than any other party, yea than against the Romans, who had been the instruments of their ruin; even whilst they knew the christian church fought no other decisive judge than these sacred records of the Old Testament betwixt them. 8. A stroke not on the nation, their families, and persons only, but on the temple, to the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, and that Levitical service, they so much trusted in, with such a concurrence of providences therein, as might thus shew the instituted that service was then ceased. It is observable that after the coming of Christ, and that one blessed sacrifice in his death was offered up, that the custom of sacrificing, not only amongst the Jews, but what had been this way amongst the heathen also, did then cease every where through the world. 9. So convincing was a divine hand in this stroke, as Titus, though a heathen, could answer his friends in their desire to have him crowned, that he was not the author of that work, but had only given his hands to serve the judgment of God herein, as even by heathen writers is witnessed; and those known medals, which have to following ages been still referred, have that impress thereon, of Vespasian, and a woman sitting sorrowful, under a Palm-tree with these words JUDÆA CAPTA, S.C. 10. We may see also their scattering, so far extended through the world, that there might be as conspicuous a monument of judgment set up, and made discernible to all, as the furthest extent of christianity. It is indeed strange men do not more seriously turn aside to consider those two great lights, now under the gospel, the one of the scattered Jews, so amazing a beacon set up for all ages to look on; the other of the Roman church, so as to enquire what these mean, whilst both give
such clear light to the truth and accomplishment of the word, as may silence the greatest Atheist.

SECT. 10. It was with those first times of the gospel, that the fall and ceasing of the whole heathenish oracles was so remarkable, and confirming a seal thereto, as all times might see, before what power it was they fell, and could no longer stand, these concurring circumstances being clear. 1. That for so many ages the Devil thus had a throne and subjection from the world, and was one of the greatest engines he ever followed, for keeping it in awe by such a counterfeit, set up against the living oracles of God in his word. 2. That thistime and season of their fall, and being struck dumb for ever, was so evident whilst the Devil was put to the hottest war, for keeping up his interest, and to close a siege laid to his kingdom by the gospel, so as on the furthest contest and stragglings he could then make, his scepter was wrested out of his hand, and broken in the open field. 3. We see, this marvelous event most clearly answer to what was foretold in the scripture thereof, and as that which should follow on the promised time of the gospel, Zech. xiii. 2. Job. xii. 31. 4. It is known in what a strange amaze this put the world then, and into perplexed enquiries, what it could mean that their Gods whom for so many ages, the nations adored and sought to in all doubtful cases, should thus at once be struck dumb, about which Lucan heavily complains, and Juvenal Satyr. iii. that the Gods by whom the Empire stood, had thus abandoned their temples and sacrifice, and left them alone. Strabo confesteth the priests of Delphes were brought to beggary by it, yea, Plutarch hath a book expressly thereupon, De conticentia oraculorum, and could no further reach it, but that it seemed they were mortal, and that prefaging virtue the earth had, where the seat of those oracles was, had been spent and exhausted.

SECT. 11. It may be convincing also, that testimony which the Devil was then forced to give, and confes by what power those oracles were restrained; as that known answer to Augustus Legat about his succesor, cited by Suidas out of Aenilus Portus, and other most ancient writers. Me, puri hebraeis, jubet hoc dicide re templo. Rex divum & sigyium, rursus r. meare sub orcum. Tu tacitus quare hoc ultra altaria lingue. Likewise that which Justin Martyr, who wrote in the second century, cites of the oracle of Apollo, in these words. Soli Chaldaei sapienti: & hebrae a viro, gens; qui puro haud gentum, venerantur petitore Numen. Jusf. Mart. p. 2. 1 confess those with many passages of the Sybills I sometimes judged to be no other, than the pie frauds of some christians, which I know is the judgment of many; but on more serious enquiry, I cannot see how these possibly can be cast or rejected, where such clear and pungent evidences are of their truth, as, 1. That such a force put upon the Devil to confess the truth of christianity, is that which hath cleared scripture light and precedent for the same Acts xvi. 17. Acts xix. 15. 2. As it is sure, the Devils believe and tremble, and that there is no possibility for Atheism, or questioning the truth of the scripture by thole reprobase spirits, there seems no cause for any to hesitate at such an enforcement as this from the Lord to confess the same, as a witness of his sovereignty over them. 3. It is clear also, that upon this account the Roman senate was then forced to forbid the reading of the Sybills, as well as of the scripture, by publick edict; left thus any should be staggered about the Pagan religion; as most ancient records of those times witness, and is particularly cited by Justin Mart. Apol. 2. p. 82, and Hottinger holds forth hist. lib. 1. p. 55. 4. There is no possible eviting that citation of the oracle, at Cume, by Virg. Eclog. 6, which so evidently points at the incarnation of Christ, and being born of a Virgin, and was so near the
time of that Ancinus Pollio, to whom in flattery he applieth this. 5. Tho these are not to be owned as any seal or confirmation to the christian faith, but to leave the heathens thus more excusable, whose religion was to worship the Devil; yet may it be clear, what horrid impiety this should have been for any Christians to obtrude such a falsehood on the world, if the truth thereof had not been evident; yea, how is it possible for this to pass without public contradiction there to by the heathen adversaries, and such knowing critics among them; as Lucian, Porphyry, Celsus, and Libanius the Sophist were in these times?

Sect. 12. It was remarkable then, whilst Satan is beat off his throne, by this fall of the oracles, what stragglings he still hath to counteract the gospel, by some lying wonders, in opposition to those extraordinary signs, which were then given to confirm the truth; as in Simon Magus whose dreadful close our church writers hold forth; but most remarkably in setting up that notable Magician, Apollonius Thianesus, one beyond most that ever the world knew of that kind, yea, such as Hierocles brings in, to compeart with those miracles of the gospel; but how quickly, as in a moment, did that hellish vapour exhale out of the bottomless pit to trouble the air, in a little, evanish and disappear?

Sect. 13. It was remarkable what breathing for a time the christian church, with its first upbreaking gor, during the reign of Tiberius Caligula, and Claudius, which though short; yet was until that blest feed of christiannity, in a great measure was sown among the nations by the preached gospel, and had begun to take root, e're that dreadful impetuous storm of persecution, which came after, broke up. Tiberius being certified by Pilate out of Palestine, concerning the affairs of Christ, proposed to the Senate his being reckoned amongst the Gods, which they opposing, he threatened it should be dangerous for any to accuse a christian, as Tertul. relates Apol. c. 5. 21. Euseb. lib. ii. c. 2. also Gildas in his epistles, upon which it was judged after the killing of Stephen, that persecution to quickly ceased, through fear of Tiberius. Thus the Lord in his blest way disposing that the seed of the gospel should get a growing time, and come to some solid growth, before any sharp and great storm, and the truth be received before the trial came, yea, that Christ himself in the power of his word came first to encrease the heart, before his crofs, and a time of persecution.

Sect. 14. We fee the first entry of the church's sufferings from the Gentiles by a Nero, than whom none more visibly could be ever known, transformed into the image of the Devil; yea, such a monster as at last the Roman Senate declared him to be Hostis Patriae, & Hostis humani generis: That thus it might be in the blest dispofal of the Lord discernible to all. 1. By what spirit such an instrument was acted forth to exercize those cruelties then among the christians, as human nature though corrupt, yet could not but stand at. 2. What a more excellent spirit, and invincible power was in thofe to support and overcome such a fury. 3. That then the great standard of Satans kingdom was thus remarkably set up, and brought to the fields against the kingdom of Christ, by such a spirit of persecution; and then did open war begin against the gospel by the world; which though not always in a like manner, or by the same weapons, hath these 1500 Years past successively continued, what this fer persecution by Nero was, Church Hi-stories give but little light thereto; but I shall offer another Martyrology for this, which none willingly will judge to be given as an intended witness to the christian truth, out of Cornel. Tacit. whose words are these. "Nero "having set Rome on fire, to extinguish the rumor thereof, did fallly ac-"
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"cuse and punish with exquisite torments those whom the people then cal-
led Christians. First, they were apprehended, who confessed themselves to
be Christians, then an huge multitude were convicted for setting the city on
fire, but as he faith, for that hatred all men had against them, scornfully
were added to their sufferings; some were covered with beasts skins to
be torn by dogs, some were crucified, and some burnt, and when the day
failed, they were burnt to give light by night, whilst Nero made his garden
fit for that spectacle; so as pity was by others taken, seeing they suffered not
for any common good, but to satisfy his cruelty," thus Tacitus lib. xv.
cap. 44. which Juvenal also holds forth.

Sect. 15. It may be truly said, and on clearest grounds demonstrable,
that the Lord's way with the Gentile church in the first inbring of thereof,
and for two ages after, was as a continued miracle, when these are considered
and brought near our thoughts. 1. How it is so obvious, that that very
time in the first two centuries of the church's hottest persecution was that
time, wherein the christian church so remarkably spread in the world, yea,
her begun declining did no less observably contemnate with that sun-shine
which followed of outward peace and prosperity, after Conftantine's time; a
truth so known and undeniable, that it yet should be to us as it were a pre-
ent object of sense this day. 2. That marvelous resolution and joy which
then attended christians in their extreme sufferings, as they could not soothe
or conceal the truth thereof, to the astonishment of the world, when nothing
could be a greater contradiction to sense and reason; here was that pretended
Apathy of the ancient Stoicks, which they owned in their doctrine but not
example, in another manner to be underflood, not that they wanted sense
and feeling of their pain and sufferings, but these were made sweet and easy,
by a more sensible over-powering taste and feeling of the comforts of the
Holy Ghost. 3. How here was a bearing up with more than human
strength against a cruelty, so visibly inhuman and savage. 4. As it's clear from
the primitive histories of the church then, what amazement and conviction
was thus enforced on the conscience of the adversaries, as it put them to en-
quire into the causes of their sufferings: As Tertullian shews thus, Quisque
enim tantam tolerantiam spectantes, ut aliquo scrupulo percussis inquirere ac-
cendentur, quid sit in causâ, & ubi cognoverit veritatem; ipse statim sequitur.
Tertul. Apol. cap. 50. To wit, that whilst on-lookers saw such resolution
in the sufferings of the saints, were put to search what might be the cause,
and when once they knew the truth, did themselves also fall in love there-
with to follow it. And further thus, Quis enim non in contemplatione ejus
concentitur ad requirendum quid intus in re sit, quid non ubi requisisit, ac-
cedit, ubi accedit, pati non exoptat? that is, who then in beholding this,
was not shaken in that manner, as to a serious enquiry what might be in
the matter, and who thus did once search after the truth, did not also engage
therewith, yea, who embraced it whose choice and desire was not also to suffer
for the same? 5. The greatest of Atheists must fee, that tho' did not thus
suffer, to propagate a known delusion, and that such joy and exultation of
spirit amidst those torments, is not conceivable without a divine immediate
afflance, as the same Tertullian who lived in the second century, thus attefts
the Heathens herein, Cum omni savitii vetustà concertamus, etiam utro
erumpentes, magisque damnati, quam absoluti gaudemus. That is, We con-
flit and are helped to overcome your greatest cruelty, yea, cheerfully to go
through all, rejoicing more in being sentenced and condemned then in abso-
lution. 6. How mean and feeble Pertons, as many of tho' were,
(when considered what they were in themselves) should thus endure that,
which
which would have fainted, and been a terror to the greatest natural courage.

 Sect. 16. It was in those times that this might be clearly seen, how such strange and amazing effects of the gospel upon Christians were not more obvious than such judicial effects of rejecting the same were upon others; with that rage and malice against the truth, which did in such a manner then burst forth, as the world had not known before, yea, no interest can be extorted from any records of former times had such a strange opposition and contrariety thereto, as the truth of the gospel; a mystery which in ages before was not known by such appearances until then, what that enmity between the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent was, as may be evident.

1. That infatiable thirst after Christian blood, as Stelipius tells the world was no less exhausted then by one persecution, than by the most bloody wars. 2. How this strange violence and rage against the truth of the gospel could be owned upon no interest or private quarrel, but against such as shewed greatest kindness to their persecutors, and greatest freedom from revenge; such, whom Justin Martyr and Eusebius also in his Ecclesiastical History, lib. viii. cap. 8. sheweth that the adversaries could not deny such tenderness of Christians towards them, as they prayed for their persecuting Emperors, for all the people that looked on, for the judge that condemned them, yea, for the Exe- cutioner, to shew the world how far the spirit of Christians rises above the world, and what a spirit that must be, that did oppose and persecute them.

3. Such cruelty to be thus exercised on all conditions, of women and children, which almost from savages would have pleaded compassion and tenderness, as Laetianus shews, Ecco sexus infirmus, & fragilis etas, dilacerati toto corpore, unique perpetitum, non necessitate, quia hic vitare solent, fed voluntate, quia confident in deo. Laet. lib. v. c. 1. Which was, that such of that tender sex of women, and those of so young years, did endure to have their bodies rent, yea, the flames of the fire, and this upon choice, and no enforcement of necessity, since they could have escaped, but because they adventured on God himself. 4. This might be notour from the manner of such persecutions, as Justin Martyr shews, how usual then it was to expose them to wild beasts, and invent torment for putting christians to death, but withal adds this, the more thes were tried, the further increase had the church. To witness that dreadful and black day the light of the gospel puts such as reject it, and bring forth what is latent in nature, that they could not have believed themselves, yea, that something further than mens natural enmity is here: to draw forth this to such an astonishing and height of fury and violence, and the very immediate power and incitement of the Devil.

Sect. 17. Whilst Satan thus slayed but in vain by such as Nero and Domitian to withstand the gospel, and such first budings thereof, we see a little after how he tries the same weapon with more subtility in putting on, such as Trajan, Adrian and Antoninus Pius, to follow the same work of persecuting the church, thus to caufe in the world a greater abhorring against the truth in its being assaulted by such Emperors, that for their justice and moderation in regard of the laws, were so endeared to the Empire. But as no weapon formed against the truth can prosper, this did not lett that marvellous spreading of the gospel then. But a clear commentary was thus given upon that scripture truth, that the wisdom of the world is enmity with God, and none flated more remarkably at a disadvantage with the gospel than such: yea, what a change that inbred contrariety in men against the truth, will caufe on the greatest moralists, those of most calm and peaceable dispo-
fion, to a breaking forth in rage, when once they begin to be scorched with the heat and power thereof.

Sect. 18. It was then, that this immediate appearance of the Lord, to give some breathing and lucid interval to the church, amidst such lafiting storms, might be evident. 1. In enforcing some of the adversaries themselves, such as Plinius Junior, who was in greatest repute in those times to acquire the chirilians of what they were charged with, as by his letter to Trajan, which gave some frow to the present persecution then, is clear: for he shews how far that infection (as he calleth it there) had crept into cities, towns and villages, and that except in the matter of their religion, they were known to abstain from all gross crimes, to keep their faith, and defraud no man; yea, which is more observable in the clofe of his letter, doth propose to the Emperor a more favourable dealing towards the chirilian church, as the probable means to prevent their further increace, which did the more advance, the more violence had been used against them. This letter with Trajan's answer by Tertull. Apol. & Eus. Eccles. hist. lib. iii. c. 33. are there set down at large. 2. By that extraordinary appearance of the Lord as anfwering the chirilin legion under Aurelius Antonius, when the Roman army was at a remarkable expence in war with the Vandales and Sarmates, which was fo convincing both to the Emperor, and his whole army, as enforced this account by his letter to the Senate and people of Rome thereof: That being with his army ready to perifh for want of water, and environed by the enemy, having fought of their country gods, but in vain, for help, this chirilian legion, which then was among it them, fell prostrate on the ground, and by prayer obtained such an answer as there fell among us (faith the Emperor) a moft pleafant cooling shower from heaven, but against the enemy a florm of hail mingled with lightning, as so fpecially we found the invincible aim of the moft mighty God. Upon which he orders all perccutions throughout the Empire to ceafe against the chirilians: This in the fame age doth Justin Martyr set down in his Apology to the Roman Senate, and is at length also cited by Tertullian and Arofius, who herein appeals the adversary to the Emperor's letters in their own standing records. 3. Which is most remarkable, that even under the reign of Commodus the Emperor, fuch a bloody monfter and scourge to the Roman Senate and Empire, the church of Christ then got a fweet and favourable calm, with some reft for a feon, yea, more than under the reign of fome more favourable in their natural disposition, to shew that dominion which the glorious God doth exercise, not only over the greaftest but the wofli of men, and how the moft notable merccies and advantages of the church are moft usually brought forth against all visible appearances.

Sect. 19. This also for the church's support and strengthening in those times, should not want a grave remark in the Lord's calling forth fome with singular advantage of gifts and human learning, to oppoie against the subtle cavils and reproach of the adversary for clearing of the truth; fo as we may fee when fuch as Porphyry, Lucius, Celfus, &c. were at work to discredit the chirilians by their writings, fuch excellent men were no lefs discernibly brought forth, for this present service of the church, as Quadratus, Ariflides, whose notable Apologies for the truth of Christ, the one to Trajan, the other to Adrian, with some conviction, that this was enforced upon them, are cited by Euseb. hist. lib. iv. and Jerome in his Catalogue, and Justin Martyr, who wrote a twofold Apology, the one to the Senate, and the other to Antonius the Emperor, and a little thereof, Tertullian and Melito of Sardis, whose weighty arguments are set down by moft of ancient church historics,
that it thus may be seen, no time since that marvelous erection of the christian church, hath wanted some discernible out-lettins of the spirit for its present exigencies: Yea, that such is the truth of the gospel, that it comes with the furthest and clearest advantage to convince the judgment as well as to engage the affections, and to offer it self to trial to all, anent its truth, by undeniable reason, as well as experience. Thus did they appeal their adversaries anent the truth, with such advantage, to enforce a conviction upon them, if these things could possibly be denied. 1. That their gods were forced to confess themselves to be Devils, as Tertullian shews, Apol. cap. 23. And why do you not herein, (faith he) believe, when they speak truth, who yet believe them when they speak lies, whilst you see this could not be their own choice, whilst they witness against themselves, if they were not enforced. 2. That where-ever the name of Christ was called upon, those spirits whom they worshipped, were under a visible restraint, as to their power; yea, the presence of a christian, when the Heathens were about their divination, and by their priests seeking an answer from the Devil; did so visibly frustrate those essays, as made them cry out, they were hindered by some of the company. See Latianius lib. iv. c. 27. 3. That they could not but see in delivering the doctrine of the gospel and profession thereof, there was no negotiation, nor any possible advantage to be looked for from the world, but did visibly counteract any such end, as repute and credit in the earth, outward riches or delights of the flesh, their whole life a continued course of suffering and trouble, no visible grounds of hope, but were of all men most miserable, if in this life they had owned their hope, and had no other assurances than what is here. 4. If that doctrine they professed and bare witnesses to of the gospel, did not bring with it the greatest enforcements of sincerity, truth in the heart and inward parts, and speaking of the truth in every thing, whatever hazard should follow. 5. If such was not the doctrine of christianity, as all might see, so far above the reach of human wisdom, the furthest learning of the Greeks, as was wholly impossible, that such persons as the Apostles were, could ever have had or known this of themselves. 6. That the christian doctrine, and that only could settle the soul on a sure foundation, whilst the most knowing amongst the heathens were in such continual fluctuating and uncertainty about any truth of religion, or an after flate; and most of their gods, as Jupiter, Saturn, &c. by that very account themselves give, were some of the vilest of men, and had been in the former ages, notable for oppression and villanies. 7. That the very mysteries of the heathen religion were horrid and impure, so as they durst not let them be common and known; but O that infinite purity of scripture, Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth, Job. xvi. 8. This also the heathens could not know how to deny, that christianity brought with it such a publick blessing to mankind, did so undeniably tend to a perfecting of human nature, and engaging to those duties of mutual profit and subservency amongst men towards one another, such as love, tenderneys, sympathy with the afflicted, which by their own greatest writers was accounted pfufilanimit, and as a vice rather than a virtue, as Laertius in vita Zenonis expressly shews, p. 512. and of what singular use to prevent those imbittering torments, disorders and perturbations, that as natively follow a proud and vindictive spirit, as the shadow the body, by its blessed tendency to move the soul, yea, transform it into humility and meekness, and what a lustre it puts not on men only, but on those very parts of the earth, where christianity doth in its vigour shine forth.

Sect. 20. It is remarkable, how in the very close of the church's sufferings, from the heathen adversary, that last assault under Dioclesian, was of all most
moit grievous and searching; whose express edicts were then given forth not against christians only as to perfonal perfecution, but againft christiani-
yty, and who laid forth himself more than any before, to have struck, if po-
tible at the whole roor, by fubtilty as well as violence, fo as this greateft dark-
ness, did go but a very little before the dawning of an univerfal peace, but
with these convincing advantages to the truth. 1. In the bringing forth
thus a moft remarkable witnefs thereto, that when he purfued fo much the
delivering up of their Bibles, which he moft vigorously then efayed, and when
it was ineffeclual, fought but a leaf of clean paper, as a test of their yielding;
the christians then choofed the furtheft ofufferings, rather than to come this
length: upon which that name was given to any, who thus yielded, of being
Traditories. 2. It was no lefs clear, that whilst this Emperor, in his boafting
confidence had caufed erect a pillar, with that inscription on it Diocles. Ces.
August. Superfitione Christi Ubique Deleta: Cultu Deorum Propagato:
As Baronius at length, Vide Hottine. Part. 1. cap. 4. pag. 182.
And thus fung the trumph before the victory, he was broken in all his at-
tempts, and fo caft down with the church’s further rife and growth, as at
laff he resigned the Empire. 3. Then alfo was this marvelous appearance
of the Lord, when the church seemed to be at the very loweft, that fo very
short a time should intervene betwixt a Dioclesian and a Conflantine.
Sect. 21. We fee in thofe times when the church’s wrflings and per-
fecutions, were fo remarkable, fuch great examples of judgment alfo fet up, and
made obvious for the worlds observing as might infer fome conftitution there-
with, that assuredly they were no ordinarie or casuall occurrences, or fuch as have
had ufual prefaces in the change of human affairs, but the very immediate
appearance of God made difcernible therein, to whom the blood of the faints is
precious. 1. It is known that Pilate was fo continually vexed by Cajus
the Emperor; even he, who had over the wrftlings of a natural confidence
given forth that sentence againft our bleffed Lord, as he was enforced to kill
himself and be his own executioner, as Hierome in his Chronicle of the Ro-
man hiftory, Eufebius in his ecclefiaftick hiftory, out of the Greek writers
of the Olympiads, lib. ii. cap. 7. Alfo Caffiodorus in his Chronicle do with one
content witnefs, as Ufher in his Annals, hath set down; and certainly was
then such a pagefie, considering the party to whom it relates, as would be
grevyly noticed, and with the exaileft enquiry by christians of that time, yea
this muft have been fo publick, as all may judge the convoy and transmitting
thereof could not easily have come under miftake, to thoSe times wherein
Eufebius and Hierome wrote. 2. We may fee in that instance of Herod
Agrippa, the very firft of the kings of the earth, that stretched forth his hand
againft the chriftian church, a publick beacon of divine judgment, thus fet up
for the great men and Monarchs of after ages to take warning by; who, af-
ter he had killed James the brother of John by the fword, in a publick ap-
pearance after the blafphemous houtings of the people, was flimm’d by the
angel of God, Acts xii. 17. Which (the very fame in substance) is related by
Josephus, Antiq. lib. xix. c. ult. That when he had finifh’d the third year
of his reign, and at Cesarea solemnized fome plays for Cefar’s health, to
which a great number of noblemen and young persons came, on the second day
thereof, he goes in his princely robes, rich and curiously wrought with filver,
which by the funs refleffion made an extraordinary lufter, and whilef upon
fome flatterers saluting him as God, he did not refuse nor rejefl fuch im-
pious adulation, did a little after fee an Owl over his head, a prognoftick
of his ruin, was struck to the heart, with moft grievous torments in his
bellly, fo as he was forced to turn to his friends, and fay, behold I, who by
you
you was called a God, am commanded out of this life, and my present fate gives the lie to your flatteries, being forced to death whom you taluted as immortal; after which his pains increasing in great extremity, he died. Which passage besides scripture authority may be convincing to the greatest Atheists, to see whilst it is one in substance therewith, is in so different a manner, and with other circumstances by Josephus, set down; and how far this was from any intended concurrence with the evangelical Luke therein, but as a part of the history of those times; yea was by him written in the very fame age when it fell out, an occurrent of that nature, as concerned all Judea to know, and could not from any private information be obvious to mistake, which was then so publick and famous in the view of the world. 3. We may then also see that famous apostate Lucian, who lived near the first Century, once a profest minister of the gospel at Antioch, but after an avowed Atheist, and in hatred of the christian faith, a promoter of Paganism, as those horrid Dialogues by him set forth, shew, was at last torn in pieces by dogs, as Suidas, with other writers of the church history then shew. 4. It may be an astonishing remark to following ages, that for the first two hundred years after Christ, wherein were near thirty two Emperors, not three of them was without either a violent death, or something singularly tragick in their clofe, as may be clear from the whole confent of the records of that time. 5. It is most evident also, under those fore and continued perfections of the christian church, what remarkable judgments were then inflicted on the Roman Empire, and how heavy and sad the hand of men, and their yoke was upon them, by those bloody and cruel tyrants, who for most of those times were set over them, who would not come under the sweet and desirable yoke of Jesus Christ in his offer of the gospel; there being no histories can shew such a series of visible monsters as most of those were, excepting Trajan, and few else, who then succedingly were advanced to rule, so as in those two ages, when the church history might be read in characters of blood, and such continued sufferings of the saints, the tragedies of the roman Empire might be as obvious and have as large a room in the records of that time.

Sect. 22. It was in those trying times, we may see a singular providence of the Lord, to secure that blest invaluable record of the scriptures, and particularly that of the New Testament in all the parts thereof, after its delivery to the church, beyond the possibility of hazard, or access of obstructing any false transcript; so as then, and in all after times, the churches of Christ might even with the greatest advantage of reason and moral inducements be assured anent the Canon, and what is truly canonical and what not; 1. By the swift and astonishing conquest the gospel then had in so short a time, thro' most of the known world, so as in the age of the apostles, not only in Asia, but places most remote, where famous churches were planted, there was necessarily enforced, a diffusing of innumerable copies of the original, the Greek then being so universally known, even whilst the Autographs of the evangelists and apostles were still extant in the church; as Tertullian says they were in his time, who lived in the second century: And it is sure no other way could they make use of, for delivering of the doctrine of christianity, or instructing the people there anent, but from those pure fountains themselves, which they had to shew as their authority and warrant; for the doctrine of implicit faith was not then known; but all expressly called to search the scriptures. 2. By those sharp and extreme perfections the church then was under; when to profest the christian faith, and suffer for the fame, was every where so inseparably linked, as could not but enforce each christian to a near and personal converse with that infallimably divine record, for having some copy under their reach, to know the solidity of that
that doctrine which they were to seal with their blood and adventure on into eternity. 3. By those various controversies and outbreaking of error then in the church, with such heat and animosity as followed thereon, which necessarily enforced all who loved the truth, to be sure and confirmed from the text and letter it self. 4. By that necessity the church was then put to on the furthest enquiry, and certainty of what was truly canonical from the up-breaking of some counterfeit books, as a special engine of the Devil to darken the truth, such as the Acts of Paul the epistle of Barnabas and revelation of Peter; but this tended in the blest providence of the Lord to its further clearing; being thus after an exact and trial exaufforated by consent of all the churches of Christ, and what was truly canonick more known. 5. By that remarkable providence for the church's confirming, of the continuance so long of John the evangelist after the rest of the apostles, to some more than an hundred years after the birth of Christ, as Irineus shews, Lib. ii. p. 192. with other ancient writers: Whole work was peculiarly given him of the Lord, to set up and seal the Canon of the whole scripture; and then lived, when he could procure and attest the whole books of the New Testament, and difference them from any counterfeit writings; that thus the Canon of the New Testament might be unanswerably cleared by apostolick authority; which Eusebius expressly shews also from the testimony of the most famous writers of those times, how on the earnest desire of the Asiatic churches, the whole of the New Testament was confirmed by the attestation of John thereto. 6. By that singular advantage, in the counsel of the Lord for preserving his truth, that the doctrine of the gospel by the apostles and evangelists, was delivered over, not only in writ, but in such a form of sound words for the church to keep close by, as left no liberty for after times in the least to alter the same. 7. From the christian church, being so absolutely founded in the whole both of faith and practice on the New Testament, as well as the Old; so as with the first spreading of the churches of Christ among the Gentiles, it may be seen, the same use, and continued improvement of those records was as necceflarily required to know the certainty thereof; as Britain, or any other kingdom can have of those fundamental statutes and laws, on which the very standing and safety of the nation most leans; for though the validity, or sure convey of private record might possibly come under debate, where there is not evidence enough to demonstrate the contrary; could any judge, or have the least hesitation thereon, that the Isle of Britain, or the German Empire, were not to the furthest secure, acent the certainty of those statutes and securities, with which their greatest interest and property is in a manner incorporated, and indissolubly conjoined: so as not to know from one age to another the undoubted truth and authority thereof, when such constant and continued use in application of those in the whole concerns of the nation, is so undeniable? 8. By that providence in directing those divine records, and delivering them over to the church, not as a publick monument to be kept only, but for each private christian's use and comfort wherein they must live and feed in their journey through time, so as it may be truly said, not particular churches alone, but that innumerable company of christians dispersed through the world in those first times, were the common liberty of those blessed records; though with the first planting of some of the churches, some part thereof could not be so soon spread amongst them, as the rest, being the last of canonick scripture written, which occasioned some questionning at first by a few, until its authority was more fully known and received. 9. By those many commentaries and other works on the scripture so near to the first times of the gospel, which were then publicly spread, and frequent citations of most of the
the New Testament, as it may be clear they had the very same scripture, and knew no other than we have now. 10. By those various translations also in divers languages, which were so early spread, as the Syriack not without ground judged to be in the very first century, the ancient Latin, which was long before Hierom's translation, yea near also with the first age, as may be evident from the church-historics, with other translations, such as the Arabick that though with some small differences, yet in substance retains the whole of the christian doctrine.

Sect. 23. What hath in after ages seemed to be the greatest loss to the church, and much regared by many, that so great a want now is of some clear and particular account from the histories of that time, of the lives and actions of the apostles after their dispersing through the world, and of the planting of particular churches; should if seriously considered, tend much to our further confirming in the truth; where all may see so convincing a providence from the Lord, to prevent after times laying that weight on example, or practice of the primitive saints, which alone must be on the scripture it self, whereto (as it is too obvious) they have been so eagerly prone: The God of truth thus foresaying, what need there was for the church in following ages, to be kept off this rock of following the traditions of men, or leaning thereon, more than on those living oracles of sacred truth, that we might know no copy of to write after, no human authority to compete therewith, but this alone to be the rule and standard, by which the doctrine of the church is to be tried, and at whose bar and decision it must stand.

Sect. 24. Yet is it clear from the surest records of those times with what lucre and advantage, the christian church, and primitive christians then did appear, who were a part of the first fruits of the gospel amongst the Gentiles, and as the first copy taken off that divine original pattern the scripture it self; such as walked in singleness of heart, and in the joy and comfort of the Holy Ghost, whose love is so particularly mentioned, Rev. ii. 3. and as Ege- fissus cited by Eusebius, lib. iii. cap. 29. shews that unto those times, which was that of Trajans, the church of Christ remained a pure and uncorrupted virgin: For such, as endeavoured to corrupt the perfect rule and found preaching of the word, then hid themselves, in some secret and obscure place: But though such particular account thereof be wanting, as hath been much witheld for, yet it is sure that those visible realities of the ancient holiness of that time, and what a rare sight then the christian church was of an excellent society, though in the world, yet living much above it, may to this day be on clearest grounds demonstrable. 1. In that primitive zeal and fervor that was for the spreading of the kingdom of Christ through the dark world, and at that rate, those whom the Lord called forth on such service, did adventure in the most rude and savage parts, with no visible encouragement, no incitements, but the service of such a matter, which they more valued, than any trade the merchants of the earth have, for gold and silver; so as it is convincingly transmitted, what a victory such then had over the flesh, with the world and sensual pleasures there; and how those who got the first trial of the gospel, found it assuredly to be a matter of substance, and truth, and no shadow; and put their seal thereon. 2. It is known what such then were, in a singular usefulness and largeness of heart, for the interest of others; so as even the corrupt world could not but see those were the common good, and blessing of mankind, whom they did thus persecute; as both Tertull. Apol. pag. 83. & Euseb. out of Dionysius L. vii. Cap. 17. do at large witness, how convincingly; The primitive christians did appear, not only in the exercises of holiness.
holiness and fervent worshipping God, but in those duties of humanity and sympathy with others, yea not amongst themselves alone, but toward the heathens also, in owning the afflicted with their help, regarding the sick and destitute; not fearing at those diseases which were most loathsome and contagious, without respect to their own hazard therein, from the love of Christ.

3. We may know from the whole content of the histories of that time, what choice and excellent persons, many of the ancient Eremites were, who under those bloody persecutions in the first and second centuries, when they thus were forced to retire, did fequester themselves from the world, for the exercises of godliness searching out the mysteries of the kingdom of God from the scriptures, yea how far they were from that way; or following such unwarranted acts of mortification and abstinence, as the legends of the Roman church, did in after times admire and cry up; and have been an effectual engine of the Devil, to bring the truth of holiness, and what was unquestionably obvious there anent in first times under discredit. It is true, they were not of one rank, as the most Ecclesi. writers shew, some keeping together more in societies, who were indeed seminaries for the service of the church, amidst the sharp persecutions, which then were; others have been more abstract and retired in their living alone, yet this account is most certainly transmitted even of such, how laborious they were in their duty, not laying themselves aside from being useful to others, even to the meanest, where they had access; of the first sort, we find a long continuance in the church, as it evidently appears, with whom Epiphanius from his youth was brought up, and gives a most honourable account of them in his works, and Ruffius lib. ii. cap. 8. shews his visiting of those in Egypt, and what excellent persons they were, even in that time.

4. We may see, with what lustre of the truth, of holiness and simplicity of the gospel, is the remembrance of thofe, who then were called Culdees in several places of Scotland, from their being such industrious worshippers of God, to this very day transmitted by the most pure and ancient records we have of that time, who as Buchanans shews in his Chronicle, came into the country in Diocleian's time, being then forced to flee to thee northern places from the violence of that persecution, and by a remarkable providence, thus determined for spreading of the gospel there, whose work was not only convincing in the secret exercises of holiness, but in publick preaching did lay forth themselves, for bringing in the people to savage and barbarous then, to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and for some ages after had a visible succession of others, who followed them in this blest work, for whom those times had such veneration, as their cells were afterwards turned into churches, and bear to this day their names, who then were among the first publishers of the gospel.

5. It is sure also, that such visible realities of the state of the churches of Christ then, transmitted even to this day, as all may see, what an innumerable company, in these times, loved not their life to the death, but choosed the greatest of torment for Jesus Christ and his truth, as the Martyrologies of the church do clearly witness; and thus what fervency of love, subdudness to the flesh, and the world, with the lively hope and assurance of that glory to come did shine forth; the truth of which marvelous effects, must convincingly witness both the reality of the cause, and the excellency thereof.
SEC. I. That great event and revolution of providence, when the set time was come for giving rest to the churches after such sore and continued sufferings was such, as no serious observer, but even at this day may see as it were, in some manner present, the very immediate finger and appearance thereof of God. 1. In calling for one, from so remote a corner as Britain, where Constantine then was, to serve his counsel, in breaking that formidable power of the heathen Empire, when Maxentius the son of Maximianus Hercules, an horrid flagitious person, an avowed adversary to the christians, was by the Roman legions set up. 2. In that remarkable providence of Maxentius's being drawn forth, without the gates of Rome with his forces, yea, forced in his flying to take that very fame bridge for passing over the river, which of purpose was contrived to enfnare Constantine and his army, and so joined and linked together for that end, which then fell asunder, as soon as he and his army had taken the fame, where himself with the chief of his followers sunk down and plunged like stones in the river; a verifying of that truth which the christian church then was made to observe, That the wicked are spared in the work of their own hands, yea, on such an account to sign the song of Moses at the Red-sea, how the horse and his rider he had thrown in the sea, as Eusebius and Socrates, the first of whom lived in the present time expressly witnesses, wherein they have the concurrence of all our church histories. 3. Though it is on no miracles or extraordinary providences we lean, or must lay any stress anent the truth of christianity, who have the scripture of God in the Old and New Testament to found on, yet since it is an unquestionable duty to observe the great works of the Lord, and to make a diligent search therein, we must also consider that extraordinary and miraculous appearance to Constantine and his Army, which they had of a vision in the heavens in the noon day, before their engaging with Maxentius, of a pillar of light, in some form of a cross, with these words most legible in Greek about the fame: En τῷ νῦν ἥκε Socrates lib. 1. cap. 1. Eusebius lib. xxii. cap. 24. About which being much troubled to know the meaning of so stupendous a providence, he was that night by an audible voice in his sleep, shewed, that he should cause that figure, which was shewed to him and his army, to be put forth in his banner to the view of his enemies; a relation indeed strange and astonishing, but with that advantage of clearest evidence, though by human record transmitted to after ages, as could almost be sought for the further moral certainty of any matter of fact, and may cause this to take deeper impression on our spirits, even in this present time if we seriously consider. 1. That the account hereof (which by no party within the church then, or in after times, was called in question) was in a solemn address after prayer, by the Emperor to God, for revealing of himself to him, when he was doubtful and solicitous, to know the true object of his adoration, being then no christian, though he had some respect to that way, from his father Constantine's counsel to him on his death bed. 2. That this extraordinary appearance of the Lord, in the calling and the conversion of the first christian Emperor, hath so obvious a congruity to the first calling, in such manner also of the great apostle of the Gentiles, the one by an audible voice, with a great light at the noon-day, the other by such a stupendous vision and brightness there with about the same time, the one thus called to go forth and bring in the nations by the word of the gospel, the other to appear and act by the sword against the heathen adversary, yea, to bring the first christian standard to the field,
field, as a trophy of the Mediator's conquest over them. 3. It is clear, how no advantage thus the Roman church can have, for that idolatrous abuse in adoring the sign of the cross; this being an extraordinary providence at such an exigence, expressly directed by the Lord, to shew Constantine and his army, they were now called to act for the christian interest; and an undoubted miracle from heaven, to confirm before their eyes what they were so hesitating about, as to the truth of christianity, yea, by such an hand-writing in the very heavens; to shew unto men, that the heathen Empire of Rome was then weighed, and at a close: And the time now come for Jesus Christ's making himself known to the world in another manner than by sufferings, and taking the fields in a warlike posture, with garments rolled in blood against his greatest adversaries. Nor was it then the sign of the cross, but a sight some what like it, and after that fashion as the histories do clearly witness; and rather a character of Christ's name, as hath been transmitted in the ancient coins of Constantine and other christian Emperors, in that form, as it is a mark of the name of Christ, with the words 'En τῷ νῦν, in hoc Doce vince, to wit in Christ ye shall overcome. 4. The vision was not to Constantine alone, but at the noon-day to his whole army, which Socrates shews, lib. i. cap. 1. did so amaze the Emperor, as mistrusting his own sight, he demanded of them that were present, if they saw not the same, which when all were forced to confess, and were sure thereof, his mind was then settled there anent. 5. We have Eusebius, who lived in the very time, making this publick, whilst many were then alive, who were eye witnesses thereto, and so famous in those days, as no passage could have been more known, and easily contradicted, if it could have come under question, whilst the Heathens did not then cease by all efforts to discredit the christian cause, yea, we find him solemnly declare, that ere he wrote the same, he had it also by oath attested from that good Emperor: And it is known what respect both Hierome and Basillus, with others of the ancients do witness for this Eusebius, as a learned and godly man, though some few passages of his history, which were more remote from the time he lived, seem to have been taken with too much credit from others; he was a diligent at the Nicene Council in condemning Arius, though by some mistaken, as if he had favoured and owned his way, there being then another Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia, who in that very time was an avowed patron of Ariamnus: and most different from this Eusebius Pamphilus of Cæsarea. 6. This also we have transmitted for the certainty of it in that time, not only by history, but by those ancient medals and coins, some of which I doubt not but are yet kept to this day, and Socrates shews how more than an hundred years after in his time, that that banner was still kept in Constantine's palace, and is it not also convincing, how the truth thereof with the setting up of that standard was then published in the Roman army, whilst Constantine might have feared some dividing thus, and falling off of so many to the adversary, before the battle, by his so early declaring himself a christian, and to provoke Licinius, with whom he was then joined in affinity, a known adversary to the christians, if so great a miracle had not been thus publick and notour, beyond the possibility of debate.

SECT. 2. Upon this marvelous change, which was in the state of the church, and ceasing of outward persecution, we may have this discovery of the truth and tenderness of the Lord for his people, in that short respite and breathing they then got, that this silence in heaven should be but as for half an hour, Rev. v. 1. and a lucid interval, only to draw their breath a little before a new trial. 1. To prevent a further ruin, which an outward peace and enjoyment of the world, was like to cause in the very power

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and vital part of Christianity, for it may be astonishing to consider, what
ground was thus lost in those few years of the churches reft, both as to the life
and purity of religion, which under her greatest wrestlings before, had been
remarkably gained. 2. To inftuct hereby, that no ceffation the churches
of Christ must look for from war in this militant state, the church being the
party alone, with whom the Devil wrestleth, and then rageth most, whilst the
gospel begins more clearly to shine forth. 3. That it is not still in the
fame manner this great adversary will affault, but when refrained, to rage by
open perfeftion, then are the most remarkably trying times of the church
to be looked for, yea, some more searching trials than before; as congru-
ously suited to the condition of such a time.

Sect. 3. When once the churches were at reft, we fee the inbreaking of
that flood of Arianism hath its fcafon, and advantage to affault the truth, yea,
in a short time fo prodigiously to spread and over-run the Christian world, as it
seemed to carry all before it; an affault that struck not at the uppermoft boughs,
but at the very root and being of Christianity: But then also may be feen the
truth's advantage, and the Lord's own immediate appearing under fhuch a trial.
1. In renting the vail off many, to bring them to the open view in this dread-
ful apoftacy, who had not received the truth in love, and might in the dark
trade more to the churches prejudice, than fhould after that recover,
yea, how herein the earth was made to help the woman, fuch as only in ap-
ppearance had owned some profeflion of the gospel, to drink in this flood.
2. In bringing thus forth that famous Council of Nice, where were gathered
moft of the grave and godly minifters in that time, through all the churches
both in the eastern and western parts: who had then special advantage for a
more publick testimony, and strengthening of the church thereby, in that great-
eft foundation truth of the God-head of Christ. 3. Thus did the Lord con-
vincingly witnefs, though it was in another form by this trial, than what was
formerly from Heathens, how one and the fame spirit acted in both; fo as the
cruelty and violence of this party of the Arians against the orthodox Christians,
both in Egypt, and amongst the Vandals in Africa; was almost the fame
length, where they could have advantage, of the old adversary the Heathens.
4. It is known how marvelously the Lord did then own and follow with a
blessing the witnefs of a few under this trial, in contending for the truth, to
the churches being kept alive, fuch as Athanasius; when that impetuous tor-
rent of apoftacy seemed to over-run all, and was matter of affoniment to see in how short a time, much of the Christian was turned Arian; but the
greater the conflict was, the more difcernibly might the truth's overcoming
be feen, which muft flill out-live falfhood; yea, the Lord's calling forth fome
witneffes then, with much of his preference and spirit to fland and withiland at
fuch a time, was not more obvious than thofe extraordinary providences of
their prefervation when oft like to be swallofed up by the adversary, as histo-
ries of that time give a peculiar account of in the life of Athanasius.

Sect. 4. That amazing frofte of judgment on Arian himfelf the fift
leader of this party, is testified by the concurrence of all our churches records,
with this account thereof, that being called before Conftantine, who was
then at Conftantinople, to reftact his former tenets, and subscribe to the
Council of Nice, he not only yeilded thereto, but with an oath declared his
believing of what he fubfcribed whilst in the very time he had another paper
of his own with him, in which he had written and fubfcribed his own re-
tents; but coming forth to the city in much pomp with many of his fol-
lowers, who then waited on him, as he came near Conftantine's market,
which was about the middle of the city, where ftood a pillar of red marble,
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A sudden horror fell upon his conscience upon what he had done, and withal a feeling a tendency to some flux, was enforced to get into a common jacks near that place, where he was taken with a faintness, and together with his excrements voided his guts: a great stream of blood following, the slender and small bowels not only falling out, but blood, together with the spleen and liver, so as he there presently died in this dreadful manner, and those jacks do some of the writers of the time relate were still to be seen then, behind Constantine's market in the pork-thimbles; and how passagers, in their going by, did use to point at this place in remembrance of the miserable end of that wretched man: The report whereof was not only spread through the whole city, but quickly through much of the world, causing much terror and amazement on his confessors that followed him. The Emperor by this means cleaved more to the Nicene creed, saying it was now visibly ratified by such an extraordinary testimony of God thereto, and much rejoiced in it. Thus Socrates sets it particularly down with most of our church-writers. And is a passage (though at this distance of time) should be still affecting and remarkable when so evident. 1. How it was in the open view, and most conspicuous then city in the earth, in such manner as could admit no possible concealment, or contradicting thereto by his followers, so that thus in the providence of God the report thereof might go as far as the contagion had spread. 2. Its following immediately on some horror of conscience, and though he was not his own executioner as Judas, yet hath it a most visible resemblance to that stroke of judgment, Acts i. 18. where by the Holy Ghost it is shewed that he falling headlong burst asunder and his bowels gushed out, the one who under simulate friendship had betrayed the Son of God, the other prettily denying him, though with some pretended respects also. 3. What befell Georgius the Arian, that violent promoter of this way at Alexandria, is likewise evident from the records of that time, who after such cruelties exerted on the christian church there, for purifying that interest, being then the Emperor's depute in that place, was pulled out of the church by the Gentiles upon a tumult they made, tied to a Camel, and thus pulled in pieces, and his body burnt to ashes; and Valens the Arian Emperor, a cruel persecutor of the orthodox (for those cruelties by this adversary then seemed to exceed the Heathens) was in battle against the Goths wounded, and being carried to an house near by, it was set on fire by the enemy, where he miserably perished, who had but a little before put ninety eight ministers in a ship, and burnt them together for their owning the truth against Arianism, as Socrates who wrote near that age holds forth, lib. iv. cap. 45.

Sect. 5. That sharp storm though short, in those times upon the whole christian church under Julian the Apostate, seemed not more strange and surprising than the convincing necessity thereof, and the Lord's tender respecting for his people might be clear, for getting thus some new strength and uplift after such withering, and being almost spent in the vitals of christianity, by that outward peace under Constantine and Constantius, as from the clearest account given of that time, we may see. 1. What tendency to strengthen more than shake the faith of the saints, this sharp storm of persecution then had. 2. In that discernible advantage, which followed to unite further those amongst themselves with the more warmings of that ancient love that was wont to be amongst them, which through the abounding iniquity of those times of peace had become more cold. 3. In bringing forth a new testimony to the truth of the gospel, and of the divinity of Christ, even amidst those remarkable essays which had been made by the Arians to darken the same, we have recorded then amongst other instances that of Marcus Aretusius, who being
being commanded to build one of the idol temples he had thrown down, and on his refusal prefet to give but for that end some very small thing, to put some daffh thus on the profession of Jesus Christ, he cheerfully underwent the greatest of torments, rather than to give but one obolus or farthing for such an end. 4. It was here also, that conspicuous victory our blest Redeemer had over this adversary, was brought forth in the view of the world, when in that height of contempt against the Son of God, whilst he was deadly wounded in battle against the Persians, he was made to fall by a Pagan adversary, whose greatest aim had been to set up Paganism in his time, and taking his blood which then gushed out of the wound in his hand, threw it up in the air with these words Visifió Galilææ, as is shewed by Socrates, lib.iii. c. 18. Sozom. viii. c. 2. Theod. l. iii. c. 25.

Sect. 6. That stupendous passage is transmitted to us by clearest evidence from those times, of an immediate appearance from heaven against Julian's attempt to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem, which in opposition to the chri- stian church, he then vigorously set on foot, and for this end did far com- ply with the Jews, as by an edict he gave warrant for their setting about that work, and to have their sacrifices there as in former times; yea, that the charge and expense of the building should be answered out of the publick treasur, as Sozomen lib. v. c. 21. Socrat. lib. iii. c. 17. do at length relate. But I rather here set down the account by Ammianus Marcellinus, a known heathen writer in his own words, that Julian the Emperor having enjoined the re-edifying of the Jews' Temple; and ordering all the expense there- of from his own treasure, was from heaven enforced to stop, and give this over, the workers who then were setting it on foot being struck with flames of fire, breaking up from the foundation, as they neither could nor durst more adventure upon it. Ammian Marc. lib. xxiii. Sozomen doth further add, 'that beside those flames, the very earth did cast forth great stones, by which many of the workmen were destroyed. The Jews in great mul- titudes looking on with astonishment and confusion of spirit, at such a sight: So as Julian upon the certain account he had thereof, was struck with some fear, 'to as he fully gave over the attempt, and adds, 'if any will but go to Jerusalem, they may see the visible marks of this truth upon that place: of this passage (faith Sozomen) we are all witnesses, for it was not in for- mer times, but in this very present age it fell out.' And it is known how about the very same time fire came down from heaven, and destroyed the temple of Apollo and Daphne, and beat the images of Apollo in pieces, like to the smallest powder, as Theodore shews, lib. iii. c. 9. 10.

Sect. 7. 'This memorable passage doth Rufinus in his church-hiftory set down near to that time, of a heathen Philosopher in a publick dispute at the town of Nice with some christians there, who had a singular advantage in arguing and for subtle evading the strength of those arguments by which he most was strained, until one in the meeting, an elder then of the church, as the history shews, being much flirted in spirit therewith, craved liberty from the meeting to reason a little with this proud disputant, and though his truth and seriousness in the way of the Lord was convincingly known, though with a very small measure of gifts and human learning, it put his friends then to fear, left the christian cause might be prejudged in to publick an appearance, by his weakness, but he still preserving the same and directing himself to the adversary begun thus. In the name of Jesus Christ, I require you to hear the truth; there is but one God who made the heavens and earth, and hath formed man of the dust thereof, with a living and immortal soul, who by his word and power accompanying the same did bring
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bring forth this whole creation, and sanctifies us by his spirit, and he who is the word, whom we own to be the Son of God, taking compassion on fallen man hath become man; was born of a Virgin, and by his sufferings and death delivered us from an eternal death, and by his resurrection made sure eternal life, whom we certainly look for again to be the judge of the world! Believest thou this O Philosopher? To which, he being struck with a visible conformation, under the awe and authority of the truth, then in such simplicity delivered, was enforced to answer, 'that he confessed the fame, and that it was indeed true.' To whom that holy man did then speak. If you believe and confess the truth of the gospel, arise and follow me in unto the choice of the church, that you may receive the badge and cognizance of this faith by baptism, which he did, and turning himself to those of his own party then present, said, 'Whilst I had to do with words and the reasonings of men I could oppose words thereunto, but now when I find a power, I cannot resist following the same, I could stand out no longer, but find that man cannot oppose himself to God.' Ruff. Hist. Eccles. lib. ii. c. 3. A passage upon such a publick account could not callily then by this ancient writer have been published to the world, and the place where it was so particularly circumstantial, without access to the adversaries of that time to have repelled the fame, if any falsehood therein could have been evinced; and indeed a convincing passage for the world to know, that it was not by the greatest advantage of gifts or human learning the interest of the gospel was promoted, but that the spirit of the Lord, with the meanest instrument, gains more to the church, than the further of human eloquence.

S e c t. 8. It is a grave and weighty passage also, though in some ages after, which answers well to what goes before, set down by Matthias Parisiensis in his history, of one Simon Shakrina doctor of greatest note at Paris about the twelfth century, one of singular judgment and learning, and for sharpness of wit accounted then beyond most of the time, in clearing the most dark and difficult cases, so as he was throng'd beyond all the masters of the University with a great reftort to his lesson. 'One day when he had most subtly disputed, and with most profound and strong arguments handled that subject of the persons of the Trinity, but not having access through time to follow forth what he intended, shewed to the auditory that the next day he was farther to treat thereon, upon which the report going, occasioned an extraordinary confluence of hearers, who were indeed astonisht with his discourse, and the great account he then gave of extraordinary parts, so upon the close he was prect by divers there present that his discourse then might be put in writ, and published to the world, wherewith he was so pult up, as in the dreadful manner of blafphemous insolence he brake forth thus, O Jesus Jesus (though this in a contempleable manner was extrept) how much have I in this question confirmed and exalted thy laws: but if I please to oppose my self thereunto, I know how with stronger arguments as much to weaken and depress the fame, which no sooner spoken than he was pretently struck dumb, that for the time he could speak no more, and not only thus, but became a most notour idiot, so as he could neither read nor know what was spoken to him in any rational way, and became as publick an object of derision, as he had before been almost of mens adoration.' This is at length by that bibliotarian set down, Matth. Par. Chron. 121 p. 198, with these two convincing remarks also which are there held forth. i. That at this time school-theology wholly was turned to be a matter of wit, and subtle disputation for ostentation, but not to edify, whilst by such stupendous providence, and in so publick a place the Lord put such a mark on one who
was of greatest repute then in that way. The 2d. doth shew some effects it had upon many scholars in that age, not only to enforce a conviction of the truth of the christian religion, but to suppress the arrogance and insolent boastings which in many then was too discernible, as if the doctrine of the scripture flood or fell by their reasonings.

Sect. 9. 'We may see a most convincing appearance, of the Lord recorded by our ecclesiastick writers, for Theodosius that good Emperor, who after Julian, was given as a blessing then to the church, how in his war against the tyrant Eugenius, with whom Arbogastus the chief leader of his forces, had conspired against Valentinian the second, and caused strangle him in his bed; being forewarned in fight, and like to succumb, did then before his army turn himself to God by prayer, for some evidence of his present help; whereupon such a mighty tempest of wind was sent, and blew so vehemently in the face of Eugenius's army, as their darts were ranverfed, and turned back by the violence of the wind, in their own faces, and the enemies broke, and Eugenius being hardly pursu'd fled into the Emperor himself, falling down on his knees for relief, but such was the hot and eager pursuit of the soldiars, as he was instantly killed, and Arbogastus flew himself'. This Socrates sets down lib. v. c. 23. of which miraculous appearance of the Lord; the Poet Claudian hath these verses.

O nimium dilecto Deo! cui fundit ab antris
Aelus armatas acies, cui militat aether
Et conjurati veniunt ad classica venti.

In which passage we may see, what remarkable difference, by the immediate appearance of God, for confirming his truth, was made obvious to the world, betwixt a Theodosius and a Julian.

Sect. 10. We see in this time of the church's renewed calm and peace, after Julian's being taken out of the way, those fore intellecuble troublesome and conflicts which then brake up; yea, the depths of Satan in his working by a spirit of error some further length than before, not only by the Ariam party, in denying the Deity of the blessed Lord, but by those dreadful tenets of Pelagianis', which then began to appear in opposing his grace, merit and satisfaction, and a poison that did more subtly diffuse it self through the vital parts of the church: We may convincingly see also that special tender care of the churches head over her, and for securing his truth in such cloudy times. 1. By raising up then those excellent lights with gifts and endowments suitable to the service of the time, for contending against those adversaries, such as Augustine, Hierome, Basilius Magnus, Prosper, and Gregory Nazianzen; as we may see clear from our church histories, yea, whilst in after ages this horrid poison of Pelagianism was continued, we find a Bradwardine that great light then raised up. 2. It was also obvious for the church's confirming, how this sad declining from the truth and corruption in doctrine, and a declining in the practice and power thereof, did not only break up, but had their growth and advance together, so as each serious observer might see whence those errors had their true root and strength. 3. But the truth then had that advantage, that the spirit of error breaking thus up and making such formidable approaches, was not more discernible than its being expresly foretold by the Holy Ghost in the word, that such a departing from the faith, and giving head to seducing spirits was to be looked for in those times 1 Tim. iv. 1. And such a trial was to follow the church under the New Testament, of grievous wolves entering who should not spare the flock, yea, come
come that length in falling off from the truth as to deny the Lord that bought them.

Sect. 11. It is most remarkable and confirming, what we see in the state of the Jesus after their dispersion, now in the times of the gospel, how this people would not embrace the true Messiah Jesus Christ, did so easily follow Impostors, and those who rejected the Messiah in his blessed offer to save, was in judgment after, yea, often delivered over to embrace a counterfeit Messiah for their destruction, so as from some of their own writers, yea, the most famous histories of the church in former times, it is most evident, the greatest strokes have followed that people since the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, have been this way which in these instances we may see. 1. Under Adrian's reign, whilst they could not evade the conviction, that the time of the Messiah coming, if it was not past, could not but be instantly near, so as upon the least false appearance they were prone to be stirred; we find that egregious impostor embraced by them, whom they called Bar Cosbah from that veneration they had then to him, and that this was the flat should arise from Jacob, Numb. xxiv. 14. and whom they followed to their own ruin in greatest multitudes, so as it is almost incredible the account, that both our ancient and modern writers give of that slaughter which thereon followed by the Romans, to have been no less than many millions of that deplorably wretched people, yea, how the blood of the slain was so great, as run like rivers in those places, Juil. Mart. Eufcb. iv. cap. 6. Buxtortf. Syn. Jud. cap. 36. Caron Lib. iii. Chronic. 2. We have that memorable passage to witness this also, of their Moses Cretenfs, one who appeared amongst them about the third century, giving out that he was sent to take them through the sea to their own land, as of old Israel was under Moses's leading, and for a year together made it his work through the towns of that island of Crete, where he most appeared, to persuade them hereof, and that they should quit their estate and possessions to follow him, giving greatest assurances that they should be carried safe and without wetting the sole of their foot through the sea, for which he set them a day to accomplish this, whereupon that poor people, eager and confident herein, came with their wives and children in great multitudes to a rock hanging above the sea, whom he there exhorted to go forward, and that without fear they might forsworn throw themselves in the sea; which delusion they were under, was so strong, as divers leaped down, and were instantly swallowed up, and perished in that depth. Whereupon the multitude seeing he was but an impostor, turned themselves in rage to look for this their leader, but he was gone, having infantly disappeared, and was found to be the Devil in human shape, as Socrat. Lib. vii. cap. 57. with other greatest writers relate. 3. It is known that passage of David, El David, whom the Jesus in Persia and those adjacent places then followed as their Messiah in the twelfth century, which their own writers do not in the least deny, and that strong persuasion they had thereof, as made them gather every where and flock with him; yea, to oppose themselves to the Persian power, from the confidence they had in this their deliverer, till they were broken and scattered, this impostor taken and his head struck off by the King of Persia's order, and the Jesus at last forced to redeem their own lives with a great sum of money.

Sect. 12. We may see of what short continuance some of the choicest Emperors, for piety and zeal in owning the truth then were, thus the Lord disposing as more congruous to the church's condition under the New Testament, that their favourable blinks and breathings should be of a short time, as is evident in that instance of Jovinian, that excellent man, who was next after Julian,
Julian, yet lived not out eight months; Marcian the Emperor, who reigned not fully seven years, but left behind him great grief, to the hearts of all the godly in that time, that so choice a prince had so short a reign: Likewise Valentinian the first, who succeeded Jovinianus, whose reign though somewhat longer than that of, was but thirteen years, in whom was accomplished remarkably that truth, that such as honour God he will honour, yea, even in this life, Valentinian having for Christ's sake lost his office in Julian's court, and being degraded from any honour there, who a little after was advanced to the Empire.

Sect. 13. In those sad declining times from the truth of the gospel, and that dark night of antichristianism entering upon the church, we may see the special providence of the Lord in behalf of the scriptures, that the whole Canon of both the Old and New Testament had been so publicly owned and received by all parties, both in the eastern and western churches, with that universal dispersing of copies, even from the first times through all those following ages, and in the most remote places of the earth, as put it beyond possible reach for depraving or rejecting the authority thereof; yea, how in the sixth century by the Council of Toledo, the revelation of John was so solemnly declared to be Canonick scripture, and that none should dare to question this; that as the Jews have been forced by the blest dispensation of God to own their affent and subjecting to these records of the Old Testament, by which they are so convincingly judged: Thus also we may see by the no less marvelous providence of God, the whole of the New Testament kept and owned by the Romish church, yea, under an invincible necessity, for some profec veneration thereto, by which Antichrist is so clearly revealed and made known, and the sure founding of the Protestant faith, with the greatest fulness of evidence made clear, as they are now forced to gnaw their tongue with pain, to see by the clear shining of this light their kingdom so visibly darkned; which when they could not but see, even with the first revealing of that man of sin, and when Popery had got to the throne; there was then no help left, but to户 up these fountains from the world's ordinary converse therewith. 1. By reason of the independency of the Greek churches then upon their power, where the chriftian faith was still owned and adhered to with some more purity, and thus the preserving of the scripture, and the whole of the New Testament beyond their possible reach to get corrupted. 2. That still in those darkest times, whilst the Romish interest was at its greatest height, the most knowing and learned who were at the greatest advantage to obviate any such design, and had most familiar converse with the scripture, may be clearly seen, were such as kept furthest from the corruptions of the Romish church, and appeared against the fame. 3. This also, (though in judgment to them) was remarkably subfervient to this end, that corrupt application, which their own greatest writers and Schoolmen made of the scripture, for accommodating it to their interest and design, having established the conclusion before the premises, their greatest work then was to have the written word suited to their way, and to oppose the truth against itself; which yet by a supreme over-ruling hand tended to their publick owning of the text and the letter of the word, even by those false glosses they put upon it.

Sect. 14. It is known from the gravest histories of those times, what amazing signs and prodigies in a more extraordinary and unusual way than had ever formerly been, did then give forewarning to the world of this fatal change, and the bringing forth of that greatest monster of Antichristianism, to be near; of which we find the primitive times have had such dread, as put many to pray Pro mora, finis, upon that sad mistake, that they judged the
Part. III. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

the coming of Antichrist should be near to the close of time, because they knew his final destruction was to be by the brightness of the second coming of Christ, whilst it might have been as obvious, that the begun working and breaking up of this mystery, had respect to the first ages of the christian church. Aventin shews how in Constantine's time, when outward prosperity began to smile, and great revenues were settled on church-men, how such a voice was heard from heaven most audibly at Rome, Hodie effusum est venenum in Ecclesiæ. To day is the Church poison'd. Avent. lib. v. Sigebert, in Chron., which Platina is forced also to confess, yea most writers do all give that account, how from the eight century for several ages after, what extraordinary and amazing prodigies then were seen, as did aftenith and affright the minds of most; the heavens seen many times to burn; the sun and moon to loose their light, the stars to fall from heaven to the earth, most strange and monstrous births, overspreading of many places with such swarms of locusts, and those of an extraordinary form, as destroyed most of the ground, great inundations, as Aventin, Nauelerus, yea Baronius in his centuries with most historicus then do all hold forth: so as the most discerning men in those ages looked forth and saw the empire of Antichrist to be certainly beginning, and some remarkable work of judgment then bringing forth on the world.

Sect. 15. Seeing it is undeniable, the greatest discovery that ever came to men, is that of the Gospel, and of redemption by Jesus Christ revealed to us there, a mystery hid and shut up for so many ages from most of the world, and that it is so clear also the greatest contempt of the holy God, that men could witness, is the displeasing of so inexcusable an offer of this great salvation, can it be strange, that such a delivering up of mens reason and judgment, even to such a height of strong delusion, as Antichristian Popery is, should follow thereon, which is certainly one of the greatest and most stupendous strokes from the Lord, that ever was inflicted. A mystery, which after much hid working under the ground for several ages, did at last ripen to its full height, and discovery thereof, about the year 607, whilst that vile monster Phocas did then sway the empire. This was the season, when the papal power got at last to the throne, and that Boniface the third by a particular grant from Phocas the Emperor, took to himself that title of Universal Bishop and Head of the church: about which these remarks may be convincing from the histories of that time. 1. That with a visible decay and declining of christianity both in the power, and purity thereof, did the revealing of the Man of Sin find so fit and opportune a season for this: for it was then the going down of the sun, the shadow's waxing great, with a thick and palpable darkness every where overspreading, so as it might be seen, the outer court of the visible church was given to the Gentiles; and christianity almost lost, as to any publick appearance thereof. 2. It is remarkable what then followed, as one of the first effects of that new empire and universal head-ship over the church, that it was to bring Christianity and Paganism in a conformity to other, and cast that old Idolatry of Heathenish Rome into a new mould by a publick consecration of the Roman Pantheon, that temple which they had for all their gods, to be for all saints, as Platina himself with other popish writers holds forth, and then did ordain that feast of all saints, which is all Hallowes, to be kept through the whole church. This was the first application we find of that Universal supremacy by the Romish church, with a visible falling from the worship of the living God to such avowed idolatry. 3. What sad and dreadful times those then were to live in, this followed on the christian world; we find the greatest of their own writers with such horror and amaze-
ment feized, that they knew not how to express it: yea but let any read the records of thofe times even of their own writers, fuch as Baronius in his Annals, Platina, Benno, &c. for feveral ages that followed, and it is sure, they muft read also a continued Tragedy of the flate of the chriflian world; of blood, tyranny, oppression and fallhood, which brake loose thereupon; yea a flavery more than Turkish impoft both on the confcience, and civil interets of men, by this pretended Popifh Supremacy. 4. It is strange to read what impression was then upon many of the Romifh church, and fuch as were moft knowing in thofe times, that certainly Antichrift was come: Though of all flrokes from the Lord, that of judicial blindnefs may feem moft strange, yet many could not get this lid, how fuch publick intrufion into the impereal power, and exalting themfelves above Kings and Emperors, did fo convincingly anfwer to what was foretold of the man of fin, and his being revealed; as Azorius the Jesuit, Part 2. lib. iv. cap. xx. fheweth, this was fo ordinary to the Romifh church, as their Popes took upon them to difpose of Kingdoms no less, than of Bishopricks. 5. Thus also in the providence of the Lord was that Romifh hierarchy, which had fo far fubjefted the world under it, made manifeft, that at one time this monstrous body might be seen with a trepole head, as well as with a trepole crown, and three Popes contending to the utmost, with one another by excommunication and the temporal fword, fuch as Benedict, Sylvester and Gregory, whom Baronius calls a three headed beaf, arifing from the gates of hell, yea whom Platina calls three wicked monsters. Nor hath after ages been a stranger to this, how two Popes at once have fat on that throne, and thus what a flame the poor blind antichriftian world was put into, and rent in their adhering to the one fide or other.

S E C T. 16. It was no casual ftumble, but a convincing providence may be fcn therein, that in the year 854. and in a time, when moft did not regard the word, or know the judgment they were under by the finipire light, there fhould be fuch a visible emblem then of the Romifh state, in a Woman Pope a moft vile whore getting up to that throne, to head their church, as Peter's fuccelfor. This for matter of fact, their own writers, yea fuch as depended moft on the Pope, do expressly confefs, with fuch particular circumftances, as fhew there could be no poifible concealing thereof, though it be grievous to this day their reflecting on it, as 1. Her bringing forth a child, and dying in the birth, whilst she went in procession to the Laterane, between the Thearre and St. Clements, in a publick ftreel, as a witnefs againft this adversary; which the Lord would not fuffer to be hid, but to be fet forth to the open view of the world, to know what a mother church is, and what are her children; yea with what security they lean their faith on the decision of fuch a judge. 2. It is known their keeping off this ftreel, and difhaunting it in their processions fince. I know Platina, in the relation of this fhews that it was generally received to be true, without being more positive, but Marianus Scotus, Petrarch in Chronic. with other ancient writers of greatest repute in the Romifh church, do with the further of evidence atteft this, and are cited herein by moft of our modern histories.

S E C T. 17. It is fo manifeft, as there needs no particular infances but a view of the whole Series of thofe times, to fee what a tragick Theatre moft of Europe then became, and for feveral ages continued, of blood, troubles, and intefline broils, oppression by church-men, difpoftelling princes of their temporality by a pretended spiritual power, both in the empire, and in all places, where the Romifh hierarchy did ftreth it felf; yea that vast expence of blood and treafure by the contrivance of the popifh party, which then followed that long continued war to regain the holy land, whilst under that cover.
cover their work lay to gain a further intereft upon the power of princes
and great men, and for weakening the strength of Europe. O what a visible
plague was this on the antichristian world, whilst their eyes were so shut, as
they could not see it.

Sect. 18. This special providence of the Lord for his truth in those times,
may be most observable, that this great adversary of Jesus Christ, should be
judged not only by the scripture and its light, and those convincing provi-
dences against them, but by themselves also, and out of their own mouth
have so convincing a testimony that way, as from those writers of greatest
weight amongst them, is clear; to shew that dominion which the holy God
hath overs mens confidence, as they find an accuser within their own breaf,
whose sentence and judgment they cannot possibly decline, but doth exer-
cise its power on them, even whilst it is against them: For it is evident,
what account, these known friends to the Popish intereft, such as Benno the
Cardinal, Lutebrand, Platina, Bernard, yea Baronius himself gives of the
Romish church and its hierarchy, as might almost justify paganifm confidered
therewith, and enforce the world to see, that either the scripture is not the
word of God, or the Romish church hath made visible profacy from the chri-
tian faith, and turned antichristian; some particular inftances for this, I shall
only offer.

1. Of Gregory the great in his epiftles to Mauritius the Em-
peror, what exprefs witness he there bears against any claim to be universal bi-
shop, whereunto John the Patriarch of Constantinople seemed then to aspire,
telling him that by owning such a title, it might be known the time of An-
tichrift was at hand, in this imitating Lucifer, who not satisfied with what
be poftle in common, with the whole of the angels, would needs seek after
a singularitie above the refl, and in his writing to this John says, what will
thou answer to Christ the true head of the universal church, in that day of
judgment, seeing that by this name of universal, thou seek'st to enthrall
the members of his body unto thy self; and again in his writing to the Emperor
thereauen, hath these words. Be it far that your time should be thus defiled
with the exaltation of one man, consider that antichrift shall call himself
God, and if ye look to the quality of that word, universal, it confifteth only
of two words, but if you regard the weight of iniquity therein, it is an un-
iversal enemy; wherefore I speak confidently, that whoforever calleth himself,
or defireth, to be called an Universal Bishop, is in the elation of his mind the
foomerunner of Antichrift. This is the testimony of that Gregory, who amongst
the greateft of their faints is canonized, and is set down in his own epiftles,
Lib. iv. Epift. 28. and 54. yea, is inserted in the Decretals of the Canon-law
which Gregory XIII. knew not how to redrefs, when he found their loss there-
by.

2. We have this account by Melchior Canus, a known popifh writer,
anent their Legends, that with less integrity and faithfulnefs were they writ-
ten, than the lives of the heathen were writ by their authors, and adds, Do-
leutor hoc dico multo a Laertio severius vitas philosophorum scriptas effe, quam
a christianis vitas christianorum. Canus lib. xi. cap. vi. pag. 533, and it is
known what Marcius Patavinus is enforced to confess in his book called De-
fenfor pacis, that the Clergy of Rome was a den of thieves, it leadeth unto
eternal death; and how that famous learned man, Franciscus Petrarcha
writing in the year 1350. Epift. 19. Thus speaks to one of his friends. Let no
evil entangle thee, that thou shouldft address thy self again to those princes
of darknefs, to what purpose wouldft thou go thither (meaning of Rome)
that thou might fee good men born down, and evil men advanced, eagles
creeping, and affes flying, wolves to be free, and Lambs to be in bonds,
finally Christ to be banifht, and Beelzebub to be judge: but such inftances

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are so numerous, besides such as Gerhomon and Clemangius, who wrote that book De corrupto statu Ecclesiæ, as one needs but look through many of the known popish writers, to have a clear witness against popery.

Sect. 19. We see in those dark times, when men grew weary of the truth, and were so universally carried off from the simplicity of the gospel, to fabulous traditions of the extraordinary perfection of some of their saints, and after miracles and visions, how discernibly this became their plague and judgment, no less than it was their choice, yea, to what a length, as ever was known in any time, Satan was then let loose, and had greatest liberty with such a darkening of the air, by that smoke which arose from the bottomless pit, as men seemed to have wholly left their way, whilst they choosed another guide than the scripture, the heavens so darkened, that they sought another entry there than by the blood of the everlasting covenant, yea, thought it enough to secure them from going down to the pit, to have the Pope's pardon, and to be about outward penances; yet even then was the truth thus remarkably confirmed in the blest providence of the Lord, that in those most strange and extraordinary things they boasted of, all might fee, their being suited to confirm such tenets of the Romish doctrine, which could not possibly abide the test of the scripture or its light, nor admit another seal of ratification but from the Devil, as the histories of those times, and their own legends so clearly shew, by what means purgatory, the mafs, praying for the dead, the condignity of works, the use of images, the adoration of the Virgin Mary, &c. first got credit amongst them, by having that visible seal of signs, and lying wonders appended thereto, by which now in the event it is so discernible, how those may be called the doctrines of Devils, as they are by the spirit of God termed, 2 Tim. iv. 1, not only as they tend to promote his interest and kingdom; but such wherein his power is no less vigorously put forth, for getting credit thereto, than it was formerly for Paganism, as in innumerable instances from their own writers may be clear.

Sect. 20. Whilfit the Devil was aloft, and so visibly let loose in this great darkness of Antichristianism, we may see the Lord's marvelous appearing for his latent church then in sackcloth, for her being kept alive and fed in such times, which was no false or pretended miracle, but one of the greatest confirmations of the truth of Jesus Christ, given under the New Testament: whilfit it is so clear, no human relief or encouragement was then under their view, her trials more searching and sore, than in the first times of the gospel from the Heathens, and their adversaries such, for whom most of the christian world seemed to own a profest veneration; no possible access then to embark with such an afflicted and defpised party, as the true worshippers of God in those times were, but at the rate of being a prey to the worlds cruelty, and to make shipwreck of both credit and comfort in their outward state, and whilst such as had opposed the truth formerly, as the Arians, Nestorians, &c. as well as the present adversary, with whom they now were enforced to con- flict, gained what ground they had by greatest infallions on the civil power, and could not endure that test of suffering for their way, yea, no intercct or advantage from this earth had those blest winceless, whose close adhering to the truth in that long and dark night of Antichrist's reign, is even by the confession of their adversaries transmitted with honour, and a sweet and odoriferous scent to this day. About whom these marvelous providences of the Lord for their feeding and support, was then most convincingly evident, 1. That they had the Old and New Testament translated in their own vulgar tongue, which as Reinerus a popish writer, who wrote about the twelfth century, shews, they taught and learned so well, that he hath himself seen a country-
country-clown recite "Job" word by word, and several others who could perfectly deliver the whole New Testament, having then such familiar converse therewith, thus Rein. de Valdenfius: O how wonderful a teacher is the spirit of God by the word, in times when all other helps fail; this also was a remarkable providence for a more safe preferring of the copies of the scripture in such dark times, from any possible access to get them corrupted. 2. They wanted not then a continued succession of ministers amongst them, who had no dependance on the Romifi church, with the exercise of church government, to which in greatest singleness and integrity they did submit, and this succession of ministers still kept up, until that blessed rising of the church after Luther and Zuingius appeared, as both Skeladan and Thuan do fully clear, and how two of those were then sent to the German churches, to witness their doctrine was one and the same with theirs, for which see Morland's history of the Valdenfes. 3. How the church then in her latent and percutted state was fed, and kept alive, this confession of their adversaries may shew, that their holding fast the truth was in no naked form, but by such visible realities of holiness, and the life of religion, as did enforce that conviction on others, they lived on the marrow and power thereof, and did burn as well as thine in those darkest times, as the fame Reinerus confesseth, That among all Selãs that had ever been, they were most dangerous, others procured horror by the ir blaspheemies against God: But those of the Valdenfes and Lionifts had a great appearance of piety, did live uprightly before men, and put their trust in God in all things, observed the whole articles of the Christian Creed, only did blaspheme the church of Rome, and held it in contempt, wherein (faith he) they are easily believed by the people. The fame witness both Jacobus de Riberia bear, That those Valdenfes being simple in all things, yet through the excellency of their learning and doctrine, had such weight amongst the people, and were in so great honour, that a man would not hurt his enemy, if he should meet him in the way accompanied with one of those hereticks, so as the safety of all men seemed to consist in their protection, those are his words, Jac. de Riber. in collectiones de urbe Tholouse; holding forth that awful regard, which those who knew their way and familiarly conversed with them, were enforced to have. 4. It was also in those foreafflicting times, that the true church had this observable advantage, to see some clear continued succession of witnesses to the truth against the same apostacy of the time still kept up, so as they could trace the footsteps of the faints before them, know where their fathers left, yea, from one age to another hath still been delivered, with some pure tranmitting of the same doctrine by some witness, and publick appearance of those, who had gone before, for which they then were put to contend, this is no conjectural thing: but beside their own records, is acknowledged also by their adversaries, as the fame Reinerus a known and famous writer of the popish church shews, That this was one ground, why there was such hazard from them, because they had continued longer than any else, some say from the time of Sylvester, who was contemporary with Conflantine, but others confess (as he faith) from the time of the Apostles. Which was indeed undeniable, that the truth and purity thereof was more ancient, with some continued witness thereto, before their corrupt and fallen church, and that it is sure, chriftianity had gone before Antichriftianism; But upon this ground he was the more enforced hereto, that the true Valdenfes was no new upbreaking to own the truth, upon Waldo's first appearing at Lions, as if the tract and scent of this clear testimony had been before that loft and unperceivable; but was only a more observable increase, and upbreaking in those places,
with a marvelous spreading thereof, to own the same doctrine, which had been still in some visible testimony thereto continued. 4. It may be seen in those dismal times, how the church was then fed also by the rod, and had some part thereof of the same comforts and allowance of the primitive church under Heathens, so as to gain and grow, the more they were opprest, an advantage tried and known in all the times of the New Testament, how no connexion in nature is more sure than this hath been, betwixt the church's most discernible vigour and lustre, yea, her truest growth and perfecting times: And as to the sufferings of those then for several ages, with the sore and violent assaults they had, and the Popes giving forth indulgences at the furthest rate, and remitting all fin to such as would come forth, and take the crosses on them to extirpate this excellent people, whom they dreaded more than the Pagans, is at large held forth in the Martyrologies of the church.

Sect. 21. We see this observable providence of the Lord for his truth; by the fore perfecting of the Valdenses, after they had been first excommunicated by Alexander the third at Lions, how their enforced dispersion and scattering abroad, did tend to the gathering of a great number of churches over Europe, as our church histories witness, not only thus multiplying over all France, yea, from the Alps to the Pyrenean mountains, but got over to Britain, with whom Wickliff and many others there, did in the same doctrine and testimony concur, yea, through Germany, with some places of Italy, as after by a more publick united appearance was in the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Lord thus marvellously shewing his being God, in determining those very counsels and acting, for the church's greatest good, which of all would seem most destructive thereto, as if they intentionally moved for such an end, that men may know there is surely a living spirit in the wheels, and an infinitely wise and unerring conduct, in their strangest motions.

Sect. 22. It was a glorious appearance of Jesus Christ for his truth, that testimony by John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, at the Council of Constance, with what followed thereon in the church of Bohemia; a passage so remarkable, and those convincing circumstances therewith, that if judicial induration were not a stroke which refuseth all cure, and binds where none can loofc, there could have been no restitting this conviction by the world, that surely it was the finger of God, and his immediate work, when these are considered, 1. How in a time of such darknes, and the Romish church at its greatest height, those were raised up with some more than ordinary elevation of spirit, and of the Lord fued to appear on his interest: Aeneas Sylvius himself, who afterwards was Pope, faith that with the sound of their voice, the spirit of God adhering; the word thundering in them, did awake the people out of their dead sleep, as they run by flocks to this great light, inviting their neighbours thereto. If any question this, see An. Sylv. Hist. Bohem, cap. 35. 2. That this testimony, even whilst the church was hid in the wilderness, could not get leave to be hid or smothered in a corner, but in the most publick view, where nothing could be more notour and conspicuous at the general Council of Constance, the world must be forced to see, what authority Jesus Christ can put upon the meanest of his followers in their appearance for the truth, yea, what another spirit this is from that of the world, which could thus fland, and withstand, to impetuous a torrent of universal apocay, even there where the united strength of the Romish church and Empire were at once met, yea, by patience and resolution in avowing the truth, overcome their persecutors, and resist those allurements of preferment, and an honourable place of the church, which were then offered, if they would renounce this doctrine, to which the same Aeneas Sylvius cap. 36. shews
what answer they made, that they taught the truth, being the disciples of Christ, and directed themselves according to his gospel, whilst the church of Rome was departed from the traditions of the Apostles, seeking after riches, pleasure and dominion over the people; yea, Poggius secretary to the said Council, gives this account of Hierome of Prague, that being called before the Council, after he had lain for a year in a most filthy prison and fetters, and in want of all earthly comfort, where he could neither read nor fte, It was incredible to be spoke, how he then answered, and with what arguments never spake any thing unworthy of a good man, and at last hath these words, O man worthy the eternal memory of men. Pogg. in Epift. ad Leonard. Aret. 3. That whilst they were sentenced to die, notwithstanding of the Emperor's assurance, and fate conduct given, an extraordinary presence of the Lord in that hour of their suffering was thus also made publick; for which I shall insert the very words of those formentioned writers, whom none could suspect or question to be partial. Aeneas Sylvins says, That both of them suffered death (though not at one time) with a constant mind and went joyfully to the fire as to a feast, without the least beaciness or discontent, and at the fire sung an hymn, neither have we read (says he) of any of the Philosophers who did suffer with more resolution. And Poggius speaking of Hierome, faith, When the fire was set unto him, he began to sing an hymn, which bellowed his courage, and when the executioner would have kindled the fire behind his back, that he might not see it, come (faith he) and do it in my sight, bad I feared this, I would not have come here, when I might have avoided it. And in this manner (says he) was that man rare and excellent beyond all belief, confined to affes; and adds: Neither Mutius with so constant resolution endured the burning of one man, as he of his whole body; neither Socrates so willingly drank his poison, as he embraced the fire, 4. That known prophecy of his at the stake, turning to the prelates there present, After an hundred years you shall answer to God and me, was then so notour and undeniable that upon the money coined after in Bohemia, this inscription was put on the one side in Latin, Centum annis revolutis, Deo respondebitis & mihi; whilst nothing then of the event could be known, which so remarkably answered to the first breaking up of the Reformation, Luther's appearing being 1517. and Zwingius a little before; and this was Anno 1416. 5. Upon this testimony sealed with the blood of these excellent men, such wonderful providences did attend the actions of that party in Bohemia, then stirred up to appear against such horrid cruelty, yea, to adventure not only against the Empire, but that whole formidable power of the Romish church in Europe, as would seem almost incredible, if the adversaries themselves were not enforced to testify this: Eleven battles fought by Ziscab, with the Emperor Sigismund, and still with continued victory, and in some of those after he had lost his fight; yea, with that witnes of the terror of the Lord upon the one, and an extraordinary spirit of resolution in the other, as enforced sometimes the adversary, when all visible advantages seemed to be on their side, to flee at the very first appearance of the Bohemians, nor could give a reason else for this, but that a terror thus struck them as they could no longer stand, and at last was the Emperor put on such terms, as to suit and supplicate for peace, on which Am. Syn. Hift. Bohem. cap. 46. hath this reflection, What a shame was it, that our age hath seen Sigismund an Emperor, and born of an Emperor, whose name Italy, France, Germany and all Europe honoured, and whom barbarous nations feared, become a suppliant to such. Sure it is, the world then and after ages to this day, cannot but see something more than human here, and the immediate appear-
ance of God, for confirming his truth first by suffering, and after by a spirit for acting with such stupendous providences, as might shew there is no standing for the greatest of the earth, when the Lord awakes to judgment, to plead the cause of the oppressed. This also was some remarkable prelude of that great raising of the church, which then was in its approach from under the power and dominion of Antichrift.

Sect. 23. In considering the works of the Lord, and his great appearances, both in judgment and mercy now under the Gospel to men, this may with astonishment arrest our thoughts, the breaking forth at once, and growing up together, of those two prodigies, the forest plagues, that ever came on the world, of Popery and Mahometanism, which as it is clear from the whole content of the records of those times, so did meet in the very fame age, and have their first appearance, Mahomet's discovery being in a few years after that title of Universal Bishop, upon Phoca's donation, was assumed by the Roman church; being thus no less discernibly linked together in the event, then they are in the scripture, Rev. ix. Here is indeed one of the greatest depths of the judgment of God known, since the gospel was sent to the Gentiles, such as hath no parallel in former ages, yet such a visible seal and witness to the truth, and brings those advantages for our further confirming therein, as we may wonder how this is not by most looked on in another manner. See 1. How both grew up off one root, to wit an apostacy from the truth and simplicity of the gospel, yet so as the one was discernibly suited to be a stroke and scourge on the other, and thus see such a fatal conjunction and crisis to be no casual trift, but where each giveth light to the other, for making this strange mystery more clear and intelligible; how judgment follows at the very heels of sin, and gets strength with its further growth and ripening, yea, how an unusual manner of sinning, will not want some strange and unusual a stroke. 2. We see here the congruity of such a judgment to the condition of the time, that the blood and oppression of the church of Christ, under Antichristian popery, should be closely followed with this bloody oppressor the Turk. And whilst most had turned brutish in their religion, from the pure and spiritual worshipping of God, to the worship of idols of gold and silver, the work of men's hands; so savage and brutish an adversary should be made their scourge. 3. We must see here also how fierce and astonifhing the judgments of the times of the New Testament are, beyond whatever was known in former ages of the world, that since the gospel is the greatest of blessings, which ever came to the dark world, the greatest of plagues should be this way executed, so as we may with amazement observe, how far those places and people, which had once sinned away this blessed light from them, as is here obvious, fell not only under greatest darkness anent the truth of God, but from those advantages of natural and moral endowments which both in Greece and Rome, whilst they were Heathen, was so discernible, before the gospel came there; yea, how fast this funk into that dreadful gulf of immorality and barbarism. 4. In looking on this strange fight and appearance of both, we see the holy and unspotted judgment of the Lord, in delivering up men's reason and judgment to embrace so strange and horrid an impostor, as is visible both in the Popish and Mahometan religion, and how nothing is so absurd and irrationally grofs, with which a corrupt world will not then easily suit, and drink in, when they have rejected the truth. And is it not seen, how both, in their religions, found upon the very fame ground and authority, which is a mass of human traditions, with some fained and lying wonders to attcft the fame; both following the fame method also, to have their doctrine believed, and get credit,
without access for any further trial, and that under the greatest hazard, none may question what is thus obtruded upon them.

Sect. 24. It is sure, the very immediate appearance of God and his hand, may be discernible, in raising of this Turkish Empire, and their being extraordinarily called forth on such a remarkable work of judgment against the Antichristian world, if we consider. 1. It was upon the very evening of the gospels departure from the Eastern parts of the world, and such a sad period of time, when they first brake up. 2. That visible blighting of mens counsel, judgment, and ordinary parts, with the falling of their spirits and wonted resolution, where this adversary came, so as the nations and countries about, which had formerly another appearance, could not then stand before such a torrent. 3. The hand of the Lord strongly upon them, for the service they were called about, so as they ran without wearying, and did not stumble, as instruments visibly fitted for their work; nothing can be more clear than this is upon perusal of the histories of those times.

Sect. 25. With what advantage for our further establishment in the truth, may we now look on this strange fight of the Turkish Empire, when these are convincingly evident. 1. That nothing can be more gross and absurd, or more visibly tend to debate the nature of man, yea, to expel the very name and form of religion to the derision of Atheists, than Mahometism is in the whole of their way, and the Alcoran wherein they found. 2. Nor could thefè ever bring any internal evidence of the truth of their religion, to convince fuch who would but admit the use of reason herein, either as to the purity and perfection of the rule, or any subiervency to the glory of God, and solid blessedness of men; both here and in the other world. 3. Such was the undeniable evidence of christianity, when that horrid imposition of Mahometism broke up, as this adversary knew not possibly, nor durst adventure to deny the fame, in the matter of fact, but to eflay a darkning thereof by false and lying comments; for it is clear they professedly own our blessed Redeemer, with most of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and history of the Evangelists; yea, own some veneration to the name of the Messiah, though they denied the Trinity, and seek how to reproach the christian church, from the differences and variety of sects amongst them. For this is undeniable, that the most inquisitive and knowing of the adversaries of christianity, whether Jews, Heathens or Mahometans, could never once attempt to accuse the christian church of deceit or falsehood in the matter of fact, as it is delivered to us in the gospel; yea, how are the Jewish Rabbis racked to evade those scriptures in the Old Testament, that so clearly point at the sufferings of the Messiah, by putting some other fentic thereon; the truth of that blessed history of the death and sufferings of our Lord, being fo publick and famous to all their nation, and before the world, as there could be no possible questioning thereof.

Sect. 26. It surely was no strange accident in nature, but that wherein we must look higher to a supernatural causality, that amazing prodigy which fell out, through moft of Germany, and in other places Anno 1501 of bloody crosses, in the true form thereof, appearing not only in publick places and churches, for many days together, but upon the very cloaths of men and women, their tables, linens, and such things which were of most ordinary use amongst them, as almost all modern histories particularly shew, yea, how for a time these could by no possible means be washed off, Franciscus Mirandula treats particularly about it, and how not only Maximilian the Emperor, was struck with astonishment thereat, but his seeing them with his own eyes also; it is not transmitted to us what impression this strange thing had upon men in that time, but sure it is convincing and observable. 1. That such, who...
had in an idolatrous way so much looked after this sign, and made it the object of their adoration, should have it given them as an afflicting prodigy, and this is remarked by the histories of that time, how a dreadful famine within a very little followed thereon. 2. It was under that badge and cognizance, we find the Romish church did usually draw forth multitudes, to make slaughter of the followers of Christ, and made so subservient to their design, for shedding the blood of the saints, as in the histories of the Valdenses may be seen, and now are they in another manner marked with this peculiar sign of bloody croffes, which but a very little was before that deluge of blood, after the breaking up of the light of the gospel, that brake forth through Germany, France, and the Low-Countries, and the Lord's giving thole, who had shed the blood of his saints, blood to drink in great measure.

Sect. 27. Whilst the dawning drew near of that blest day of the church's rising, after that dark night of Antichristianism, we may see some previous advantages most remarkably from the Lord falling in, to prepare the way thereof. 1. That in the preceding age, the knowledge of the Original languages begun to break up, and some instruments eminently fitted for the same; human learning did in some further measure revive. 2. Many excellent men of rare endowments then brought forth, beyond what had been known for diverse ages. 3. But which should be most convincing, how then Anno 1449. or there about, that rare invention of Printing broke up, as a blest and promising preface, to tell the world of the near approach of time, when the temple of God should be opened in heaven, and the Bible which had for so many ages been shut up, be universally spread, and thus made accessible, for the poor's boy, or maids, having familiar converse therewith, and to have it at the easiest rate; yea, for bringing forth those works to the world, in defence of the truth, and promoting of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which no pen could ever have possibly reached without the advantage of such a singular mean given of the Lord for his churches use, so that the thing itself was not more marvelous and remarkable, than the time and season of its being brought forth, yea, as those instruments of slaughter, the Guns by the invention of Gun-powder, did obviously testify with that solemn time of judgment, when the Turkish power was let loose as the scourge of God on the apostate world; this excellent mean of Printing should fall in fon coke with the seaon, and appointed time of the spreading of the kingdom of Christ, when men shoul run too and fro, and knowledge be increased.

It will not be unsuitable, er ed pass this, to give in here some instances of such choice instruments for knowledge and learning, who were then raised up a little before the dawning of that blessed Reformation from Papery, as pioneers to prepare the way of the Lord. 1. As Ruggio Montanus who died in the year 1470. One of great knowledge in the Original languages, and who had such love to the Scripture, as that he wrote the whole New Testament in Greek with his own hand. 2. Rodolphus Agricola, who died in 1465. singularly learned in Philosophy, Greek and Hebrew languages, which he studied with a special respect to the knowledge of the scripture, did much lament the churches darkness under which she then lay, and expressly owned the doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ. 3. Wesselus born at Groningen, and of deferred renown at that time, both for his knowledge in the Languages, Laws and Divinity. At his death, as at length by Melchior Adams is shewed, when he was asked by a friend how he did, he answered, his case but conform to his age, and painfulness of his disease, but one thing he was troubled with, which was a being tossed with doubtings as to the truth of Christiandity, but shortly after, when his friend returned,
with great expressions of joy, he said, now blessed be the Lord, for all these doubtings, and reasonings are gone, yea I know nothing now, but Christ and him crucified, he died 1489. 4. Moffianus a professor of the Greek tongue at Lipsick, one of singular candour, besides his great knowledge in the Original languages, yea in those dark times most convincingly pious also, as his epistles made to the learned of that age, can witness: I judge it edifying to set down here, what account he gave of himself, with much serio-
ness sometime before his death: Let not God, to whom all things are known, be gracious to him in the last clock and conflict with death, if he had not from his youth with greatest care been concerned to wrong the fame of none unjustly, yea to confound the honours, pleasures and profits of this natural life, and hath not made this his one thing, to have his Spirit kept from being defiled with the pollutions of the world, and given up to Jesus Christ the alone fountain of wisdom and knowledge, for being influenced and watered by his spirit: This I have had continually in my thoughts, have resolved in the night, this with all earnestfi ews I have contended for, yea hath been first in all my desires, to wit, left that should be wanting, which was to that rich man, who came to Jesus Christ, (when he gave such an account what length he had come) of the faithful improvement of those talents put under my hand, I can say, I had had no other scope nor intent, but this in my life: for if I had purfued honours and greatnefs in a world, which might not have been successful for such an end, I had taken another way. He died Anno 1524, at the very breaking up of the Reformation. 5. I shall but further add that notable learned man Capnio, who died 1521. Stephanus, Eratfinus truly learned in the languages, and a special Critick, for collating the most ancient copies then extant of the New Testament, whilst Printing was but of late broke up in the world.

**CHAP. III.**

**Sect. I.** It was at such a time, that bleffed day begun to dawn of the church's delivery from that darkness and bondage of Antichri-
tianism, under which for so many ages the truth had been in bonds, and the witnesses thereto enforced to prophecy in fackcloth; when nothing could have been more surprising and improbable upon all visible grounds; that the imme-
diate appearance of God herein, and its being his work alone, might more eminently shine forth. A time when, 1. The Romifh power was in its greatest height and splendor, under which almost the whole of the western parts did bow, when the empire and nations about were fo visibly subject and devoted thereto; and whilst Leo X. did reign, the most magnificent and splendid Pope of any had gone before. 2. When thus the christian world was under such darkness, with that implicate reliance on the Romifh church, as there need-
ed no more, but for the Pope to fend one of his emiilaries, if he desired mo-
ny, with a patent for indulgences and be confident thus to get in a vaft trea-
sure, as the laid Leo did, in commifiionating Texelius a Friar, who met with
that success, as in each city where he came, he was met by pertons of all ranks in proceedi ons, and magistrates of towns, the Pope's grant being spread forth in parchment written in letters of gold was carried before him, and in that man-
er received, as the church histories shew, as if our bleffed Redeemer had come down to the earth. 3. A time when every where the christian world was fo strangely subjected to blind superflition, their confidence, as well as pertons under the awe and dread of the Romifh power, and of theo legendary
wonders and miracles, which were then fo continually noised, and appariti-
ons of the dead to be delivered out of purgatory; then was that time also, when a standard was displayed for the truth, and that Jesus Christ met his enemies in their greatest strength.

SECT. 2. This may be further convincing and manifest, what disadvantages the first stirrings of that glorious Reformation had, and what a strong tide of opposition went against it, if we consider. 1. How this was to pursue a change in religion, and pull men from a way, in which they and their fathers had for so many ages been rooted. 2. To pursue this with so visible an opposition to their carnal ease, and delights in the flesh; to which the Popish religion was so specially suited. 3. When such a party was to contend with, as was publicly owned by the example and countenance of the greatest princes and monarchs of the earth, and had these visible advantages for engaging the world, as the baits of honour, riches and preferment, whilst the alone strength of the Reformed churches then was prayers and tears, and in the naked truth and simplicity of godliness. 4. Whilst thus the Reformed religion did lie under that scandal to the world of the cross, contempt, a low and afflicted state, yea no visible encouragements to commend the ways of the Lord to any, but the arms of their warfare spiritual, yet might through God, whilst the strength of their adversaries was carnal, and followed with what in an ordinary way, and on grounds of humane reason, might seem insuperable; so as a learned and judicious man upon Luther's first appearance, shewed him, that it was unquestionably the truth he bare witness to, but was in vain for him, or any such to adventure further, when nothing else was left, but to retire to a cell, and pray, Miserere mi. 

SECT. 3. We see, what a remarkable calm of outward peace, not in Germany only, but most of the nations about did then try to with the dawning of this day, when the truth began to shine forth, after that long night of antichristian darkness on the world; yea how this for some little time continued, both in the clofe of Maximilian I. his reign, and entry of Charles V. that thus the voice of the gospel in the blessed providence of the Lord, might with the more advantage, get a publick hearing amongst men, and without that disturbance of the noise and confusions of war; as it was also most remarkable, at that blessed, blessed time of the manifestation of the Messias, yea thus not only the earth's being still and at rest for a short time; but a restraint also upon the rage and fury of men to persecute, until the seed fown had begun to take some root, and a people prepared for the Lord. So as we find no remarkable violent assaults, or hot persecution in France, until the reign of Henry II. nor in Germany, and other adjacent places, for a time there, Charles V. being upon politick grounds, and by reason of that friendship he had for the Duke of Saxony (but by a supreme over ruling power) engaged for a little to some moderation.

SECT. 4. It was then a new face began to appear on the world, and whilst so great a harvest was near, the reapers also prepared such a rare concurrence of instruments for the service of that day, as all might see it to be the work and immediate power of God. 1. By such remarkable variety of gifts suited to the service of that time; and for what the church then needed, not only to perfwade and apply the truth to the conscience, but those sent forth who were mighty in the Scriptures, as well as fervent in spirit, to convince and inform, as in no former ages had been known, since the times of the Apostles. 2. What choice and wailed instruments such were, who were thus called forth not to publish the doctrine of the gospel only, but to contend for it against all opposers, with the furthest advantages of human learning, as well as divine, as might indeed put the world to enquire, whence had those come, when a few such
The prince, but 3. 2. How but fuch an age formerly would have been a wonder and amazement. 3. It cannot be denied, but the calling of fuch instruments in the entry of the Reformation was in part extraordinary, and is clear. How in no ordinary way those could ever have adventured to answer fo great a service, as they were then sent upon; or had the leaft promising appearance of fuch success, as after followed, to be an incitement to their work. 2. That power and authority of God they went forth with, as all might see some thing more than human in it.

3. The hand of the Lord made strong upon them, to go forth upon his call, and leave all to follow him, who might otherwise have had fuch advantages of credit and cafe in the world, without which some extraordinary enforcement upon their spirits, could not possibly be understood. And it is clear, that a greater out-letting of the spirit was then, than can be instanced even since the first times of the christian church.

Sect. 5. It is undeniable, that fuch whom the Lord so eminently made use of in the firit breaking up of the Reformation, had no visible bait or incitement from any outward advantage could be expected. 2. The doctrine they owned and contended for fo expressly, that of felf denial, and to take up the crofs, to reprefs and oppofe thofe incitements of the grandeur and outward splendor of church-men, and to fhew that the being miniflers of Jefus Chrift, was a matter of work and labour, yea of fuffering, when a fentimony to the truth called for this, which required fubduednefs and mortification to the felf; and nothing thus to commend or make desirable their work, but that it was the service of fuch a bleffed matter, and that refpect to the recompence of reward, which is above.

3. It is fure, no lucrative design could be supported here, in embracing the Protestant doctrine and profeflion thereof, since thus nothing could have been more perfwading to Popery, and that way, when fuch of mean and ordinary parts were fo easily advanced to the moft gainful places amongft them; but it is known with what fweet and cheerful contentednefs of spirit thofe great and bleffed instruments of Reformation, fuch as Luther, Zuinglius, Calvin, Beza, Bucer, &c. followed their work, whof outward encouragements were fuch only as were indifferentially neceffary, who might otherwise have had the greateft benefices amongft their adherents: but as it was faid in the Romifs conclave of Luther, Beftia hac non curat aurum: Tbis Beast don't value gold. They were enforced to fee, that it was some greater thing, than gold and filver, that influenced fuch in following the Lord. And what was it that should caufe that excellent man Peter Martyr, quite all his places and preferments in Italy, when he was prior of a confiderable monaftery at Luca, made general vifitor of one of their orders, and in fuch favour with the greateft of the Romifs clergy, for following the work of the ministry; and choose an uncertain and fuffering lot elsewhere? Also Musculus that worthy fervant of Chrift, after he was chosen prior of a monaftery, where he had been, to quite all for the truth, and come to Strasburgh in a mean condition, where for a time he was brought to that trial before he was known, as to dig in the town ditches, with a fweet subjectednefs of spirit herein, who might have lived in greateft outward pleafure and advantage otherwise. It could be no lucrative intereft, that enforced Vergerius, who had been the Pope's legate in Germany, in the state and condition of a prince, and expecting to be a cardinal, to forfake all his hopes, and upon his greateft hazard to preach the truth, againft which formerly hy had fo much appeared. And to fhew there is no flanding before the power and authority thereof, whilft defignedly writing againft the truth, was converted to the knowledge thereof.

Sect. 6. We fee, whilft that time was once come of the Lord's appearance for his Church, this providence made conspicuous, that the greateft engine which had been to fix the Popifs intereft, and keep the world under sub
tion thereto, should be the first mean of its fall and breaking, to wit, the Pope's power for abolition, and remitting of sin, by which his dominion over the confinences of men had got the deepest root; upon which Luther that great instrument in the hand of the Lord was first called to appear against Popery, when Texelius kept such a market in Germany to put the Pope's Indulgences to sale; to whom Luther (then but an obscure person) went requiring in behalf of Christ, the grant of one of those Indulgences, but was rejected, without he gave money for it, pretending the Pope had need thereof, and by no importunity of those that then were present could be persuaded herein, a providence which may call us to these grave remarks. 1. How the counsels of adversaries are oft determined to bring forth the very contrary effects, and the wicked snarled with the work of their own hands. 2. How discernibly the Lord's time of working is, when it may be least our time of expecting. 3 From how small, and very ordinary things to appearance, have the greatest revolutions of providence about the church had their first rise.

Sect. 7. This the world was enforced to see, how the truth and doctrine of the Reformed churches, when once it began to break up in the first times of the Reformation, did then offer it self to the publick light and trial of all; to be known and searched out in what their greatest adversaries could object; yea this with a most solemn and publick reference in the Scripture, and the pure primitive times of Christianity. Thus may all see, how those blessed instruments in the Reformation, by pureness, by long suffering, by the word of truth, by the armour of God on the right hand and on the left did oppose themselves to the adverse party: thence were those famous meetings for publick disputation, which at length are recorded in the late histories of the church, where the truth did so convincingly justify it self, with that prevalence and authority on the confinences of men, not only to break the adversaries confidence, and force the weapons out of their hand, but to enforce an open confession of many, yea to a publick reformation also by the magistrates in most considerable cities, and this without tumult or blood. As, 1. At Zurich 1523, set down at length by Hottinger in his Ecclesiastic history, with that marvelous change that then followed, in abolishing the Mafs' idolatrous images, and setting up the true worship of God. 2. At Baden 1526, whereon followed such a publick reformation through that country, so as abbacies and monasteries were given up, and their revenues applied to colleges, and such publick uses. 3. At Bearn 1527. December 17. where the Senate and most of the adjacent Clergy were present, was that solemn publick appearance for the truth by disputation, whereon followed (after by the preached gospel, for sometime before, the truth had been getting ground on the confinences of many) such a total abolition of Popery, and setting forward an effectual reformation, as the day and year was by publick order in gold letters set upon a pillar. 4. That memorable, and solemn meeting at Geneva 1534. May 30. where Farelus and Viret, with some others of the Protestant church there on the one side, with some of the most learned of the Popish doctors on the other, did in that great confinence meet, where after much serious disputation and conference, such was the blessed were and authority of the truth upon the confinences of men, as not only tended to a more solemn and universal reformation through the city, with an inscription of the year and day, by a publick decree on a plate of brass: but which was most remarkable, that those adversaries themselves, who most opposed in the disputation, particularly Chappius, a learned Dominican, and others were so overcome, that by a rare example of candor and ingenuity, they made publick confession of the truth. This at length may be read in that excellent dif-
discourse of learned Spanheimius called Geneva Restituta, and several other
writers. And it is clear, whatever falling off seems this day by many to Po-
perty, it is upon no debate, or by arguments to convince the judgment, but that
their greatest strength and advantage, is the fad abounding Atheifin and ig-
norance of this time, yea, that thus proflane and licentious spirits do find so
favourable a retreat and patrocity in that way.

Sect. 8. Is it not undeniable to the conviction of all, how such a cruelt-
y hath been exercised by the popifi adversaries in these late perfecutions of
the church, as no former times, even under the most savage of Heathens,
give a parallel, yea, such as a most visible incitement and power of the De-
vil could only be underflood herein. Inflances are fo innumerable, as it
might be a work by it fell to infer, which the most grave and known histo-
ries of the late times give account. Nor is it strange, why the Popifs cruel-
ty should even be a length beyond that of the Heathens, seeing it was again-
steder greater light, and in a more express way doing violence to the spirit of God,
in discoveries of the truth to their own confience. I fhall but give this
short touch, what that Maffacre of Paris was, which went through moft of
France, where fuch abominating things are in all histories thereof given, as we
should judge human nature, though corrupt, would fear, and be affrighted at;
how they spared not infants in the cradle, nor in their mothers womb, the
streets covered with mangled bodies, and their blood running in the high-
ways, nothing almost to be heard, but the cries and groans of the dying,
with that hellifh noife and shoutings of the murderers: yea this, where they
could pretend no personal provocation in the leaft: one of thofe horrid
wretches snatching up a little child, whilst it smiled on him, and began to
play with him, did kill it forth-with, and threw it in its blood into the river.
At Trous, the blood of the flain Protestants run fo violently forth out of the
prifon doors where they were murdered, as it run through the channel into
the river, and turned it into the colour of blood, which caused an horror to
some of their own way. And at Lions, where moft prodigious cruelties were
used by Mandelot the governor, that when some Popifs after went into the
prifons, where the fhaff had been, and saw fuch a fhight of dead corps,
and in what manner mangled and hewed in pieces, as fome had no part of hu-
man shape remaining, were enforced to confefs, that furely thofe were not
men, but Devils in the likenefs of men, who had done this, as moft grave
writers off that time atted: nor were thofe things in any private way, or in a
corner done, but fuch as the adverfaries could never offer to contradift in the
matter of fact. For that late amazing Maffacre in Ireland by the Irish Pa-
pifs there, to which they were moft priflingly incited by their prifcs and
church-men, it is so known in this age, as if it were yet present before us.
But befides thofe, let any read Paulus Servetus, that famous excellent Vene-
tian, though profefefly popifer, his History of the Spanifh Inquisition,
what could be more of cruelty and strange engines thereof, if infernal spirits
(as thofe may be truly called) were fitting in that bench of the Court
of Inquisition.

Sect. 9. That hath been with the furtheft evidence made clear, and a
truth now of singular use for the church's support and strengthning, that no
human power or force could yet ever undo that blessed interest of the Re-
formed Religion, though put forth to the furthest againft the fame; but that it
hath till in thefe late times gained more ground by the moft formidable af-
faults and opposition, than by the greatest calms. Anent which, thofe par-
culars I fhall in a few words here offer to be confidered. 1. What a remark-
able issue all the counfels, expence and cruelty of Philip the Ild. of Spain had,
to bear down the rifing of the gospel in the Netherlands, which at last by the
mar-
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marvelous appearance of God for his church there, did most effectually tend to the establishment of the united Provinces, and as it was then observable, how at once the rifle and outward flourish of that Common-wealth, and their owning the interest of God did most visibly go together. 2. How immediate the appearance of God was, for counteracting that formidable and united confederacy of the Catholick League in France in that time, to the convulsion of the world, and how all their essays and counsels did at last resolve in their own ruin. 3. I shall here give Erasimus's observe upon this, in one of his epistles, At Bruxells two suffered for the Reformed Religion, would you know the product thereof, (says he) That city which had been most free of those found quickly such to spread amongst them most discernibly, yea, what shall I say (faith he) both here in Holland and every where, where violence is once exercised against those of the Reformed religion, it tends but to their further increase. With which I would add some words of Farellus in a letter to Zuinglius in the year 1525, which are indeed weighty. *Singuam fæse obtulit latitiae & gaudii ratio propter persecutiones, ejeliones ob Christi num quam maxime: nam quid queae intutatun relinquat impii, scire velim vel unam rimulum superesse, qua pios aggregi possint, quam non sunt percutati. Verum si Deus pro nobis, quis contra nos. To wit, that never was there more true cause of joy and gladness, than now is under faddel sufferings for Christ, for what hath the Adversary untried I would know, if the leaf chink accessible, by which they might trouble and assault any of the saints in this time, which they have not narrowly searched: But since the Lord himself is for his people, it is enough. 4. I shall but further mention for this some words of that famous late historian Thuan, in his epistle dedicatory to his history to Henry the IVth. We are sufficiently taught by experience, that neither the sword, the fire, exile or proscription can in the least do the turn against the Reformed Religion, but tends more to put it forward, yea, how in this kingdom, the more they are pursued, the more their number and authority grows, and rather seems to lose ground, when they have most outward peace. It is (faith he) worthy of remark the report of one here amongst us, when brought to the stake, to be burnt for owning his religion, how he sung a psalm, while he was bound to it, so as both the fire and the smoke breaking forth upon him, did scarce interrupt this; and when the executioner a little before was kindling the fire behind the place where he stood, that he might not see it, he said to him, come and let it be kindled before me, for if I had feared this fire, I needed not to have come hither, but could easily have escaped.

Sect. 10. This hath the Lord appeared in these late ages of the church, that almost no kingdom, or place, where Popery hath this day its power and advantage, but there also hath the truth had an eminent triumph, and a publick witness given thereto,sealed with the blood of the saints. As that account the church martyrologies give of the fore persecutions 1. In Spain, where at one time in Sevil 800 christians were under inquisition for the truth, and 20 burned in one fire, with a peculiar relation both of the torment and constancy of such, in many notable instances; as that of Juliano, who had been most instrumenental to get many Bibles, that were printed in Germany, in the Spanish Language, both conveyed and spread through Spain; but being taken at last, was thrown into prizon, where he lay three years, for the most part laden with fetters, though neither pain, threatenings, nor extremity of the rack did in the least cause him faint, but when he returned from the rack would lay to his fellow-sufferers, They depart vanquished, and fly with shame; and at his death, with a cheerful countenance exhorted those that were to suffer with him, to be comforted, since now was the hour for them
them to witness for God, and his truth, before men; and within a few hours, we shall have him to witness for us, and triumph with him for ever. Likewise Pontius a learned and pious man, who with great resolution suffered for the truth there. And that excellent young man called Ferdinando, a member of the congregation at Seville, whose torments both on the rack and through he so cheerfully endured, though in that manner shaken, that he could not go, but was dragged into his prison, and after to the fire, besides many other divers choice women, yea, some of great quality, who sealed the truth there with their blood. 2. What a conspicuous victory did the truth have also in Italy, those famous witnesses, who suffered there, both in Ferrara and Venice, amongst whom was that choice gentleman Anthony Ricceto, to whom the Venetian Senators offered to free his estate of some mortgage it was under, besides his liberty, if he would retract his confession, which he refused. Franciscus Segà and Spinola also Persons considerable, and of note there, who thus refuted unto death for the truth; yea at Rome it felt besides others we have these notable instances; one of that rare gentleman Algerius, who sometime lived at Padua, whose relation he gives himself of the unexpressible comforts and joy, he had in prison, is at large set down in our martyrlogies, was transported at last to Rome; where after many assaults and perjuries to recoil, he most steadfastly embraced death, and was burnt there alive. Also Johannes Mellius, a most eminent preacher of the word, whose publick confession and appearance for the truth he at last sealed with his blood in the same place. I shall but add that passage farther of Barth. Pontius, being called from Venice to Rome upon the Pope's publick faith given for his safety; but after his resolute adherence to the truth there, and confession thereof, was most cruelly put to death in the year 1538. as that account given in a letter to Bullinger thereof, doth appear lengthnew; as also that after his death there were many even at Rome, remarkably stirred up to appear for the truth and own it in his room.

Sect. II. We may see amidst these remarkable wrestlings, the churches of Christ then had for the truth some more and searching assaults, that almost met at once, both by that out breaking of the spirit of error in Germany, from the dreadful party of the Anabaptists, so strangely then let loose, and the decrees and hot perjury by the Emperor which then followed there, anent which I shall but set down a part of two of Luthers letters to worthy Melanthion, whose spirit was then much sunk under the weight of these, first as to the Anabaptists he thus writes, whilst he was in his Patmos being forced to retire. They pretend to have revelations from the spirit, and conferences with God. I commend not the fears, and seeing these bear witness of themselves, they should not be regarded for that, but as John saith, try the spirits, my advice is, that ye try whether they can prove their calling, for God never sent away, but being either called by men or declared by signs, no, not his own Son, and in no wise to accept an asserter of their call by a naked revelation. The Prophets formerly had their power according to the law and prophethical order, as we now by men. This is especially necessary unto the publick function of preaching, and that ye may try their private spirit, ye may try whether they know anguish of mind, the new and spiritual birth, to be exercised about death and hell, if you hear all things from them smooth and pleasant, though they call it devote and religious, and should say, they have been ravished into the third heaven, approve them not, because they want the sign of the Son of Man, the only power of Christians, and sure searcher of spirits, would ye know the place and way of talking with God, it is here; as a lion he hath broken all my bones, and I was cast forth from his face, my soul was filled with sorrows, and my life drew
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drew near unto hell: try therefore, and bear not a glorious Jesus, unless you knew he was crucified. Thus doth that great man write, Tom. ii. of his Epistles. A second letter he wrote was upon their sharp threatnings and apparent hazards of that time, whilst Melanthon gave himself to weeping, and in much anguish, not for himself as he professed, for he knew what he believed, as for the pottcrity to whom Luther hath these words, (If this be the cause of God and not of man, all the burden should be cast on him, why dost thou afflict and torment thy self, seeing God hath given his Son for us, why do we tremble or fear! will he forfake us in smaller things, who hath given us so great a gift? Is Satan stronger than God? Should we fear the world, which Christ hath overcome? If the cause we contend for be not the truth, let us change; but if the cause be holy and just, why do we not credit the promise and faithfulness of God? Its true Satan can reach no further, but this present life; but Christ reigneth for ever under whose protection the truth now is, he will not fail to be with us unto the end. If he be not with us, I befeech, where shall he be found? If we be not of his church, do ye think that the Bishop of Rome, and our adversaries are of it? We are indeed sinners, but Christ is true, whose cause we have in hand. Let kings and nations threaten and fume as they please, he that fits in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, he hath maintained his cause hitherto without our counsel, and so he will do unto the end.) See this at length in Sleidan's Com. lib. vii. Thus we see how the Lord was pleas'd in different ways to exercise his church and people then, and from what ait they had their encouragement alone, when all visible props were most broke under their hand.

Sect. 12. In considering this great work of God about his church in these last times, we may see how not at once, but by a gradual advance and renewed conflicts with much wrestling hath the truths advance and victory over Antichristianism been brought forward, yea, what changes has thus gone over the church, with most remarkable trials and extremities, that have been the very entry to most surprising enlargements of her comfort and outreach. Which for our strengthening and establishment in the truth, to see thus both the scripture and event thereof in these providences now before our eyes, I shall touch but a little in some grave and weighty remarks hereof. 1. That the Lord's opening a great and effectual door by the gospel to his church, hath in these last times so discernibly still had such great opposition therewith, as almost it will be hard to find any where, or at any time, where these have not kept together. 2. That no sore and pressing assault by Antichrist and his followers we have seen was put on foot against the church, but might be found in the clofe and idle, to have put her interest forward, and for the furtherance of the gospel. 3. Tho thus, even with the incoming of the tide, such dark hours and renewed conflicts were in that manner often, as made the rife and advantage of the Reformed churches to be the alone object of his peoples faith and not of their senate, it is most convincing and clear also, how Antichrist's fall and judgment, in the various steps thereof, must be in such a manner looked for, and expressly by the scripture held forth, with a peculiar resemblance to that judgment with Pharaoh and the Egyptians, of whom he appears to have been a type; with these judicial strokes of induration on both, and gradual procedure by one plague after another; yea, this with the same product and effect: not to cease, as Pharaoh then, did for pursuing that quarrel, and with renewed assaults after any respite from judgment, until the holy God do once for all make his power known, as at the Red-Sea, and bring forth that blest victory, when the song of Moses and the Lamb shall be sung together. Nor should it be strange, it most immediately before this then the darkest hour, and most sharp assault from Antichrist may be expected; yea, which with
with some assured confidence from the scripture, and providences of this time compared therewith, I may adventure to write, now is this time, and present approach thereof, before a greater height of that promised victory, than any which hath ever yet been known over Antichristian Popery, be brought forth.

CHAP. IV.

In this dark hour now on the church, which almost every where is afflict- ing and fad, and fo many ready to humble and faint, it might be of greatest use and weight to bring near our thoughts, and have this still kept in sight, what an undeniable and marvelous witness from the Lord hath been to the publick cause and doctrine of the Reformed churches, for confirming the faith of his people herein, and convincing others; yea, how in diverse instances the Lord’s way in the bringing in and building his church in the last time, may be seen extraordinary and miraculous, as I shall briefly touch in these following sections.

Sect. 1. That swift progress and conquest, which the truth then had in this great day of the gospel’s triumph, and what interest it got for the fixing of those famous plantations of the church through much of Germany, France, Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, the Low-Countries, with Britain and Ireland, in less than forty years time, with which these things are observable. 1. How the truth of the gospel then came not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, 1 Thess. i. 5. Assurance of faith and understanding anent the truth, and with that seal of the greatest enlargement of joy and comfort; so as the receiving of the word in much affil- cation was with joy of the Holy Ghost, v. 6. 2. That in this blessed way and truth of the Reformed Religion now owned and professed, the church did receive the Spirit, and so innumerable a company in these last ages were sealed thereby, which is that undoubted seal and attestation from the Lord of his own truth and doctrine thereof, so expressly promised to his church under the New Testament. 3. That this high spring-tide of the power and efficacy of the word was after so sad and visible a restraint had been for many ages before, whilst Antichristian darkness had overspread the visible church; but what of the work of the spirit was then more known, as a private seal on the hearts of the godly in those times of sackcloth and latent condition in the wilderness; not in any such way, as a publick confirmatory witness to the truth, and with that evidence and demonstration of the Holy Ghost, before the world, as hath been now since the Reformation: after this blessed day once began to dawn, that the Lord did so visibly rent the heavens, and caused the mountains flow down at his presence, with so solemn a down-pouring of the Spirit following the gospel, as there could be no standing, but cities and nations were subjected to so marvelous a power, for embracing of the truth. 4. That this great work of God was no transient glance, or for a short time; but for many years where-ever the truth came, did most discernibly accompany the same, not only to affect and convince by some transient flash upon the spirits of men, but to that solid and effectual change, as had thus a visible transforming into that blessed image of Christ by the spirit of holiness, so as it was given both to believe and suffer for his name. 5. That this allurely was above all secondary causes, is such as the greatest Antichrist may see, and how little interest instruments then called forth could have in it, but that it was the immediate power of God, yea, such as even enforced the Antichristian world to wonder and be in a strange amaze, what such a thing could mean, to see this spreading of the truth in so short a time, yea, over the belly of mens further violence and opposition thereto, where no outward gain or ad-
vantage could be possibly known, so as to them it might look as some universal enchantment; but then, O then, was the going out of the Lord seen in his sanctuary full of Majesty, and the host of a King in the midst of his people; the ministration of life and power did attend his ordinances, whilst the hearers might be seen with their ears and hearts at once arrested under a melting frame of spirit, and as embracing the word with their arms.

SECT. 2. This great witness and confirmation of the truth hath been given thereunto since the late Reformation; that such a remarkable growth and spreading of the church, and her present oppression from men should so visibly contemporate and meet in the same time; and this to be the very season of building his house, yea, which palieth all natural understanding, when these are so clear. 1. That such sufferings for the truth were not by a few, which could have been judged as some strange and unusual an occurrence only: but of so innumerably a company, who thus overcame by the blood of the Lamb and their word of the testimony, and loved not their lives unto death. 2. Who were not in one place and corner only, where they could all meet and have a joint correspondence with other; but in parts of the earth of remote distance, yea, of several nations tongues and languages, and these also of such different ages and sexes. 3. Of these so many wise, knowing and judicious, whom none could judge ever to have adventured on so visible a ruin and suffering, without the greatest assurances of the truth, and that undoubtedly it was their interest and up-making otherwise, whilst none then could embrace the truth of the Reformed Religion, but on such terms also to embrace a suffering and persecuting lot. 4. That here might be seen not more of constraint from men, than a visible choice and delight on their part to encounter the same, when a confeffion of the truth necesfarily called thereunto. Yea, (as is known from the surest records of the church, since the Reformation) even to a courting of the flames, that they might get a share of that blessed triumph, yea, such as have been found to shrink, and some times to faint upon the approach of lefser troubles, thus raised above themselves with greatest exultation of spirit, to quite wife, children, edifies and life for the testimony of Jesus Christ, as is not conceiveable without an immediate divine power, and furtherance of truth, with some unconceiveable fight and lively hope of that glory which is in another world.

Sect. 3. It was then whilst the fountains were thus fent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, that so visible a fulfilling of that promise of our Master, even to the conviction of the world, was made out, Matth. x. 19, 20. When they shall deliver you up, and lead you before rulers, take no thought, for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak, for it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you, and Lukeii. 15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to reft or gainsay. Which may be yet matter of adoration to consider. 1. With what advantage in a grave and serious composure of spirit such did depart, as were then called to witness for Christ, and with that evidence of the sensible presence of their Master with them, as made them no lefs a wonder to themselves, than they were to others. 2. How thus the authority of the truth did appear even in the meanefl of thole blessed witnesses to confound and silence the adversary with amazement, that as the high priests, when the apostles were before them, were enforced to have this remark, that they were but mean and unlearned men, and took notice that they had been with Jesus. 3. Nor can it be in question with any, who do not shut their eyes hereat, that this could not possibly be of themselves, or ascribed to flesh and blood, but to the immediate aflliance of the
the Holy Ghost. Yea, nothing could have been less expected in an ordinary way, considering of what rank and condition in the world many of these were, who with the first breaking up of the work of Reformation, were then called to witness and suffer for the truth, of whom we have to sweet and large an account transmitted, what surprising light, strength, freedom of spirit, and resolution was in that present hour given, where there had not wanted most sensible faintings and fears before. It is a most grave remark, and worthy to be noted, which doct or Ridley hath in a letter to Mr. Bradford, whilst in prison, which is this. It is wonderful to behold, how the wisdom of God hath infatuated the policy of the world, and scattered the crafty devices of the wife, for when the state of religion was once altered here, and persecution began to grow hot, no man doubted but Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley, should have been first called to the stake : But the subtile policy of the world setting us a part, first assaulted them by whose weakness and infirmity they thought to have more advantage: But God disappointed their subtile purpoifes, for whom the world esteemed the weakest, they found (praised be God) most strong, valiant and sound in Christ's cause unto the death, to give such an onset, as I dare say, all the angels in heaven do no less rejoice to behold in them, than they did in the victorious constancy of Peter, Paul, Isaiah, Elias or Jeremy.

Sect. 4. It was not extraordinary only, but in some manner might be called truly miraculous, that resolution and joy, which attended christians then in their extreme and sufferings, and those comforts of the Holy Ghost, which they did witness. This must be acknowledged amongst the great things of the Lord, and his immediate appearance, in making himself thus to be admired in his saints, those blessed suffering witnesses to his truth in these last times. An History of that import and weight, which brings in a rent there with, for confirming the church in after times, and to the praise and glory of her blessed Head, as doth to the furthest compensate all that blood (precious in the sight of the Lord) and forefet wringlings of his people. Yea, where, 1. Its sure, none can suppose a dissimulation, or that this could be a counterfeit or perforate business, what those choice witnesses of Christ did then witness, of that unexpressible joy and comfort they felt upon their soul ; or that such would then cease to speak the truth, who in that very hour for the truth's sake had chosen death rather than life, and were stepping in upon eternity.

2. Whilst nothing visible could be known to give a rise thereto, is such that no natural reason can comprehend, as if they had foregone human passions, and that feeling, which flesh and blood must needs have of such torments they then endured. 3. Yea, which our nature cannot but abhorre and shrink at, and whilst life is so sweet and natural for all to seek and preserve, and on the smallest receding from the truth, deliverance was to easy to be had, sure this (even the most prophet Atheists being appealed to herein) must enforcing a conviction of a more excellent spirit than that of the world. 4. That this also was no product of a disordered judgment, whilst their adversaries were forced to see what seriousness of spirit, meekness, tenderness and bowels of compassion even towards their persecutors, without bitterness and revenge, such did witness in those great sufferings. 5. What rare examples those also were, of the reality of holiness, mortification to the world, and subduedness to the flesh, and as a visible transcript in practice of that truth and doctrine of Christianity, which they bare witness to before men. To give in instances to confirm this, is some way the more difficult, that they are so innumerable, nor can it answer here, where I judge it necessary to be short, whilst the Martyrologies of the church are extant. Some few only I cannot well pafs without:
out a brief touch thereat. 1. That remarkable and sweet account, which Faninus an Italian Martyr, who suffered at Ferrara gave to some, as he was going to suffer, who asked him the reason of such joy and comfort: he then witnessed, after so many sharp conflicts he had before, and what now he was to undergo, since his Lord and Master was in such agony before his death; answered, that Christ had suffered all those conflicts with hell and death that were due to us, being in our room, that we might be freed from the pain and pressure thereof, when called to suffer. 2. That instance let down at large by Mr. Fox, in the book of Martyrs of a faithful and holy minister in Queen Mary's time, Mr. Robert Samuel, whose cruel usage in the prison was such, that he was chained up to a great pole, so that standing only upon one foot, he was fain to bear up the weight of his whole body, and gave him only once a day three mouths full of bread, and as much water to preserve him more for further torment, than for necessary food; at last, when he was brought forth to be burnt, which was early, to what he had suffered before, he related to his friends, That after he had been thus cruelly used, and for some days pinched with hunger and thirst in the greatest extremity, he fell into a sleep, at which time one cloathed all in white seemed to stand before him, who ministered comfort to him, saying, Samuel, Samuel, be of good cheer, and take good heart unto you, for after this day, you shall hunger and thirst no more, which accordingly he found come to pass: Yea, he told them, that he had such wonderful comfort, in those afflictions, imparted from Christ, as he could not in modestly utter the fame. During the time of his burning, his body did shine, and looked as bright as new tried silver, to the conviction and astonishment of all that looked on. 3. That notable instance related by Beza, and particularly let down in learned Hottingers Ecclesiastic History, of one whom Beza calls that Christian Scavola, though a mean country man, who being occasionally present at Tournay in France, where Maff was said by a priest, was so overcome with the zeal of God, and against such horrid idolatry, whilst he was lifting up the Hostia, as he went to him, and pulled it out of his hand, throwing it down on the ground, and turning to the people, said, do ye worship such a God as this? Thus being prefently taken and sentenced to have his right hand cut off, and one of his legs to be burnt in the fire, before the rest of his body, when brought to the stake, did most cheerfully hold forth his hand, and suffered the burning of it, without the least visible appearance of pain or shrinking: and after this, cheerfully smiling, suffered also his leg to be put into the flame, saying, O how blessed a step and way is this, by which I am to enter into eternal life. After which his whole body being thrown into the fire, he leapt in the Lord. 4. I shall here also let down that astonishing example, by the same author at length let down, which was so publick and famous in the year 1550. of Gabriel Beradinus, that blessed Martyr, who was burnt at Cambray, who a little before had been much taken with fear and horror, whilst a witness to the sufferings of another Martyr, so as upon his being apprehended, did a little shrink in his testimony to the truth, but after through grace got such recovery, and in that manner strengthened in his soul, as with greatest resolution he chose to embrace death, yea, in a manner, which was to be burnt alive, rather than to recede in the least from the truth; which his adversaries perceiving, and fearing that his speaking to the multitude at the stake might wrong their Cause, did order the executioner to have his tongue cut out: But after, by an extraordinary, yea, miraculous appearance of the Lord, he did not at all cesse to speak at freedom, so as he was fully understood, upon which the
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the magistrate who was then present, and had ordered this, did severely accuse the executioner, as if he had not cut his tongue rightly out, tho' without ground, to whom Berodimus answered, to the hearing of many, That that was not in his power, nor is any way possible to hinder him to speak, and thus to confess the truth. 5. That English gentleman Thomas Haukes, who for a time had followed the Court, but after the Lord was pleased to make himself known to him, suffered for the truth in Queen Mary's reign, whose resolution and constancy is at length shewed by Mr. Fox; yet wanted not sometimes a thinking in his thoughts at that torment of the fire. And thereupon being pressed by some of his friends, as he was going to the stake, that in the midst of the flame he would shew them some token if he could, how it was with him, and if the fire was not so intolerable, but that therein one might have his mind kept quiet and patient, which he promised, that if the rage of the pain were made easy and tolerable, he should lift up his hands above his head before his death, thus with much quiet and patience of spirit he addressed himself to the fire, where after he had continued long, and his speech taken away by the flame, his skin drawn all together, and his fingers consumed with the fire, so as all thought he had been dead, he gave the forementioned sign, suddenly lifting up his hands all burning in a light fire, and with great joy clapt them three times together. Whereupon there were shoutings amongst the people, especially by those that knew the meaning of it, as the like has scarce been heard, and to this blessed Martyr pretently sinking down into the fire, gave up his spirit unto God, in the year 1555, which could not but enforce a strange amazement upon the adversary, to see what could make such insufferable pain and torment so sweet and easy, as some of those, when they were witnesses to the joy and resolution of the Protestants, when brought to the fire, said it behoved to be from the Devil, who had taken all feeling from them.  

Sect. 5. It is sure, that convincing seal and witness to the truth of the Reformed Religion can be hid from none of the opposition and contrariety of the ungodly world, and spirit thereof to the same. And thus, 1. How such a darkness is a witness to the light, and the excellency of this blessed way may be known by that opposition and contrariety of the spirit of propinanity, and ungodliness thereto. 2. So strange and natural an antipathy in acting thus, as from inward principles might be seen, with that persecuting spirit of the popish adversaries to the truth, so as they cannot be at rest, where they have the smallest access or advantage of power, to pursue those, from whom they are forced to confess they had no personal injury, or incitement that way. Let any peruse the most impartial records of church history, in these late times, yea, let the most indifferent onlookers speak but their conscience herein, if the most leading persecutors which have still been against the Reformed church, have not been as visibly staked in opposition to the truth and power of religion. And as Tertullian of the primitive times speaks in his apology anent Nero. The truth might boast in having such open adversaries. 3. Thus was it seen by what a spirit, such instruments were then acted to exercise these cruelties, and with what fury and impetuous violence, as under some visible force they acted, as it might be truly said of many, they were almost diveded of human shape, and visibly transformed into the image of the Devil. 4. We see also, when once that great standard of Satan's kingdom was so remarkably set up, for an open war against the kingdom of Christ, after the Reformation, what a more excellent and invincible spirit did then lift a standard against this, before which their adversaries could not stand; yea, even in being overcome, how those blessed witnesses to the truth were made
made overcomers. I shall but set down two instances, the one under the Ne-
therland persecution by Duke de Alva, of one John Harwin, a soldier of
a most dissolute life, but being once enlightened with the knowledge of
the truth, so as this change was evident to others, was quickly noticed, and put
in prison, about which the godly in these parts were in some fear, consider-
ing his late beginning, and what his former life had been: but he disappoint-
ed all their fears with clearest evidence, not only of a sound judgment, but
also how he had profited in the school of Christ; and when he was condem-
ced, as he went to execution. Said, see here how the wicked world reward-
eth the poor servants of Christ, whilst I was a drunkard, and player at cards
and dice, and living in all dissoluteness and profanity, I was never then
in hazard; but no sooner began I to seek after the truth and a godly life,
buts presently the world made war against me, and became my enemy, but the
servant is not better than his Lord. The other is that famous passage of
the Affimation of John Diazius a Spaniard, after he was enlightened by the
truth, and at once through grace began to know the Reformed religion, and
what it was to be a christian in earnest; against whom his own brother Al-
phonjus Diazius was driven with such a fury, yea in that deliberate manner
also, as under cover of greatest affection he did unawares assail him, and was
the instrument of his death, who though by the friendship of the PapiC party
he was acquited, after he was taken for that fault; yet by the holy judgment
of the Lord was forced to be his own executioner.

Sect.6. The visible fall and decrease of Satan's kingdom before the truth,
when once the light of the gospel after the Reformation broke forth, may be
convincing and clear. 1. That then Satan's binding up and fall did follow
from such an open reign, which in former ages he had under the darkness of
popery, by that prevalence of ignorance, idolatry, superstition and persecuti-
on against the truth, over the world. 2. So remarkable a restraint which
followed of such frequent apparitions, which had been in former times, of
spirits, giving out that they were in souls of persons departed, and craved help
from their friends, of soul-masses for their relief out of purgatory. It is, I
confess, strange and amazing to think what a darkness this was, and under
what an awe and dread by such an ordinary converse of the Devil in this man-
ner of his appearance, most of the christian world were then; yea upon what
authority did the Romish church lay the greatest weight of many of their tenets,
such as purgatory, the necessity of soul-masses, &c. though nothing more evi-
dently contrary to the scripture, which shews there can be no return of the spi-
rits of such as are departed, nor are to expect another teacher to be sent to
us, than the scriptures of truth. But now since the breaking forth of the light,
it might be clearly seen how much these are gone, and Satan's power thus un-
der restraint, to act that part and deceive the world as formerly, though noth-
ing was more ordinary and frequent in those dark times. 3. It is known
now by the gospel, within the precinct of the church, how remarkably the
Devil's power hath been restrained, from that familiar converse which was then
under such appearances, as of Fairies, and other spirits also haunting of
houses, so as the ceasing of the heathenish Oracles did not more discernibly
follow upon the first times of the gospel, than this restraint of evil spirits
in such ordinary appearances hath followed, even to the conviction of the
papist adversaries, since the late blessed Reformation from antichristian popery.
Many confirming instances might be given for this. I shall here mention one,
which is at large set down by Mr. Fox and other writers, of that holy and ex-
cellent minister of Christ Mr. Tindal, the first translator of the scripture into
English after the Reformation, that being at Antwerp, whilst the persecution
was
Part III. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

was hot in England against the truth, he was shewed by some English merchants there, of a notable Magician in the place, whose use was at feasts, or when they used to meet at supper, to bring to the table whatever wines, or delicious fruit the company would desire, and set presently before them, with other amazing proofs of the power of the Devil. Upon which Mr. Tindal perceiving what a snare this might be to some, desir'd, that when they met the next time together with him, he might be present, without being known what he was, and after they were met, and at table, this wretched Magician after his manner began to try his art, but in vain: for whilst he had wearied himself in following all his spells and incantations, and what the furthest that hellish skill and power could do, to satisfy the company, he was at last enforced to that confession before them all, There was one of the company hindred his work, by reason of whom he could get nothing done at that time.

Sect. 7. I shall further add this great witnes and attestation to the truth of the Reformed religion, to wit by the spirit of holines, and how the power of christianity, and love thereof, did at once break forth with the purity thereof; about which these things may be demonstrably clear. 1. That with the discovery of that sweet and excellent truth of the righteousnes of the gospel, and the doctrine of grace in our being justify'd by faith alone in Jesus Christ, (the clear breaking up of which light in these last times, was as life from the dead to the church; after a long and dark night of Antichristian had gone before to obscure it. A truth for so many ages detained in unrighteousnes, that our being justify'd is in the accepting of Jesus Christ, as he is offered in the gospel, and as it is in the case of marriage, which consists not in the lending, or accepting of gifts, but in the accepting of the person;) how remarkable an enlargement, and cut-letting therewith was not only of the peace and comforts of the Holy Ghost, but of the spirit of holines; so as the freedom of grace leading into the greatest tendernes in the walk and practice of christians, with that native tendency, which the one hath to the enforcement of the other, did then visibly appear, yea that marvelous change with a new lucre and appearance this did put upon the church, with such innumerable and rare examples of holines brought forth, who shined in that day, in love, humility, mortification, selfdenial, and zeal for the interest of Christ, to enforce this conviction therewith, that then was the spirit given from the Lord to this church, and that wind did blow upon his garden, when the spices thereof did send forth so sweet and fragrant a scent. 2. It was then the truth of holines, and that this was no perfronated shew and appearance, did so visibly appear upon trial, in preferring Jesus Christ and his truth to the world, and all interests there, when brought in competition with him. It is sure, no weapon hath been made ufe of against the church, and hath tended to ruin more than this, that whilst other snares had killed their thousands, of this it may be truly said, it's ten thousands: but thus the conquering power of Christ on the spirits of his people had such a solemn triumph, as that great cloud of witneses, who refilled unto blood, chooseth to forsake houses and enjoyments on the earth, for the truth, may unto this day be a standing witnes thereto. To give instances of such should be unnecessary, when the whole speaks this forth. I shall touch these three remarkable examples of some who had a great interest in the earth to adventure beyond others, and the more rare, because not many noble, not many wife, or of great possessions here, of whom can be expected such a testimon[y. 1. That famous instanve of the Marquis of Vico, Galileaus Carracciulus, who a little after the Reformation being one of the most natural accomplishments, had
had what the world could desire of outward pleasures, with further expectation of preferment, being the Pope's nephew; yet for the truth did quit all, yea wife and children, choosing to live rather in a mean state, and as an exile in Geneva, than in all the fulness of those desirable things that Italy could afford. Yea upon his parting with his friends and family, when he was put to conflict with so extraordinary assault, with the weeping and cries of his lady and children, had these words, Let him be assured that prefers all the pleasures of this world to one hours communion with Jesus Christ.

2. That choice prince John Frederick of Saxony, when detained captive by Charles V. Emperor, was prefingly importuned to cede a little in the interest of religion, and to embrace that doctrine called the Interim, then designed for a reconciliation betwixt Protestants and Papists, by the politicians of that time, yea this with such a bait of having liberty and restitution of his estate; did with that blessed peremptorines, which is becoming those, whoever knew that power of the love of Christ on their souls, reject all with this return: Since the Lord had enlightened my spirit by the truth, and knew it assuredly to be such, there was no lefs terms, whereon I can recede from it than everlasting perishing, and should thus condemn what hitherto I owned and embraced, as the doctrine of Christ; yea even to adventure on the sin against the Holy Ghost. And why do you think I am thus tenacious, to hazard all outward interests for adherence to the truth, but that my study and aim is here, that after this sad and short time of my continuance in the world, I may reach forward unto an eternal life, and to that unexpressible joy that is above. I know by some I am defamed, as if it were not religion, but matter of fame and repute I fought after: but would any think that these could be preferable to me, before my estate, liberty, and enjoyment of wife and children with comfort as formerly, and here before God I bear this witness, and hope to have confidence herein, when I shall be called before his judgment seat, I have had no other aim in my publick actions than this, that keeping close by the truth, and way of the Lord, I might attain that blessed inheritance which is in heaven. Thus did that blessed Hero stand and withstand in such an assault, as Sleidan doth at length shew, lib. xx. Pag. 260.

3. It is worthy of obverse alio of Henry, one of the princes of Saxony, to whom his brother George one of the dukes of that house, having a great principality and estate, but most bitterly Popish, sent some ambassadors in time of his sickness, shewing that if he would renounce the Protestant religion, yea that if he would endure to make no alteration, to prejuge the Popish interest in his territories, he on that condition would make him heir of all, otherwise had by Testament dispone the same unto Cesar and Ferdinand his brother. To whom this prince gave this answer, This is such a temptation, as Satan had against Christ, fall down and worship me, and I will give thee all these things. But think ye that I would forsake the known truth and purity of religion for riches? Nay, he dismiffed them with a moft peremptory refulal; but c'er these ambassadors were returned to their prince, he was departed, and Henry went immediately and entred into possession of that estate, and restored the Reformed religion there.

3. These deep soul exercises, brokenjies of spirit, yea the terrors of the law in greatest earnest prevailing down the souls of many christians then, with that sweet refult after in a solid ferenity and peace, yea tenderness of walk under their death, may convincing-ly witness that weight and power of the truth of godliness such were under. It is true, the Lord was graciously pleased to keep this much off the spirits of his suffering witnesses, who were then called forth to witness even unto death for the truth: and it might be seen, what a sun-shine of unexpressible joy and
and light, they were then kept in, amidst those sharp assaults; but after the extremity of persecution had some abatement, then were those inward conflicts more frequent. Instances have been so known, as I judge it not needful to speak much therein. Two passages only I must touch. One of that rare English gentleman Mr. John Glover, who suffered, and was in hazard from the Popish party, yet not unto death; which is the more remarkable, that his brother Mr. Robert Glover, who was burnt at a stake for the truth, was not in that manner tried. I shall shall set down Mr. Fox’s own words in the book of Martyrs of him. I was twice or thrice with him, whom partly by his talk I perceived, partly with my eyes I saw to be so worn and comforted by the space of five years, that neither almost enjoying of meat, quiet of sleep, pleasure of his life, was left him, so that if it had not pleased Christ sometime to have relieved his poor servant, so far worn, with some seasonable comforts now and then betwixt times, it had been impossible for him to sustain such torments, the chief cause whereof was, that having been graciously called by the light of the gospel, and felt wondrous tastes of Christ’s heavenly kingdom, upon some declining of his heart after the world, he was affrighted with that text, Heb. vi. 4. of having esteemed against the Holy Ghost, which so wrought upon him, that if he had been in hell, he could not have more despaiared of his salvation. In this his intolerable anguish, though he had no joy in his meat, yet was he forced to eat against his appetite, that he might thus defer the time, as long as could be, of his damnation. But though he suffered many years such sad temptations and strong buffetings of Satan, yet the Lord, who graciously preserved him all that while, did at last not only free him thereof, but also frame him thereby, as he being like one already placed in heaven, and dead to this world, both in words and affections, led a life wholly celestial, abhorring all profane doings, his discourse and words being always suitable thereunto. 2. I shall add here that known and rare instance also of Mrs. Catharine Brettergh, who lived in Lancashire, as her life and death, which is at length set forth by it self, shews what a singular, grave and solid christian she was, to the conviction not of a few, but of the place and country where she lived, but some short time before the Lord called her to himself, was exercised with such strange inward terrors upon her spirit, as all might discern, not by her cries and complaints only, (though otherwise in greatest composure of mind) that she was forlaken of the Lord, but to the affecting her body, bringing it low, sometimes the sweat burbling out upon her, so that all might see what that preciure and pain was, which she had within: the rife whereof was her apprehended hypocrisy, wanting of that seriousness, and being suitably earnest in embrazing of religion; yea that she had not so glorified the Lord, especially with her tongue, nor had that sincere love to him that she ought. Her conflict and terror continued a considerable time, some of the most solid and grave ministers of that country being oft with her, but at last, that blessed victory and triumph she got was no less marvelous, after the Lord did break in with light, and discoveries of himself. Some of those expressions she then had of her comforts, I shall but in a short touch here mention, with which she was sometimes forced to burst out: O the joys, the joys, the joys that I feel in my soul! O they be wonderful, they be wonderful! The place where I now am is sweet and pleasant, how comfortable is the sweetness I feel, that delights my soul? The taste is precious, do you not feel it? Oh so sweet as it is! And at other times, O my sweet Saviour shall I be one with thee, as thou art one with the Father? And dost thou so love me that am but dust, to make me partaker of glory with Christ? O how wonderful is thy love! And oh that my tongue and heart were
were able to sound forth thy praises, as I ought. At another time the burst forth thus; yea Lord I feel thy mercy, and I am assured of thy Love, and so certain am I thereof as thou art that God of truth, even so certainly do I know my self to be thine. O Lord my God, and this my soul knoweth right well, which last words she again doubled. To a grave minister one Mr. Harrison then with her, she said, my soul hath been compassed with the terrors of death, the forruses of hell were upon me, and a wilderness of woe was in me, but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Lord my God, he hath brought me to a place of rest, even to the sweet running waters of life. The way I now go in is a sweet and easy way, strowed with flowers, he hath brought me to a place more sweet than the garden of Eden, O the joy, the joy, the delights and joy that I feel, O how wonderful? And as her strength began to fail her, with a sweet countenance and still voice said, my warfare is accomplished, and my iniquities are pardoned, whom have I in heaven but thee, &c. This infatue I choose the more to set down, that several of the popish party in that country then, did object this against the protestant religion, that it had such soul terrors following the fame, but it is not strange, for such as are strangers to the scripture, to the life of the saints there, to the truth of holiness on their own soul, that this is beyond their reach, or understanding. Yea a wounded spirit with those great realities of the joy and consolation of God, by a touch of the blessed healers hand, is no fwe, but found to be in greatest earneft, though he does not in like manner or measure, thus deal with his people. Here I must add a passage of one of the most grave, judicious and holy ministers of Christ I knew in the age he lived in, that having been most of the day before in fellowship with some christians, who were under rare and deep exercise of mind. He lay down at night in some heavines, and much troubled that he knew not such by experience as those were, but that night in the midst of his sleep, he said (I shall set down his own words from himself, who now is in glory,) 'There came upon me such a terror of the wrath of God, that if it had increased a small degree higher, or continued a minute longer than it did, I had been in as dreadful a condition as ever living man was in: but it was instantly removed,' and then he had a voice spoke to him within his heart and said, 'See what a fool thou art, to define the thing thou couldst not endure, and which he thought strange also, that neither the horror, nor the relief he had out of it, did then awake him out of his sleep till the morning, but the weight and impression of it remained for a considerable time thereafter.' 4. It may be evident, not only in those suffering times of the church since the Reformation, but to this very day, that majesty and authority, doth attend holiness, so as to enforce an awe, and respect on the conscience even of the haters thereof, and their being struck with the conviction of a more excellent spirit in such (whole zeal and close adherence to the Reformed religion hath been also most discernible) than that spirit which is of the world, yea how visibly thofe did move in an higher sphere and from other principles than upon any outward interest, and that it was an undoubted product of the spirit of God. This was so convincing after the Reformation to the adversaries themselves, that many judged it their interest to have sufferings of protestants left publick and obvious, since their deportment struck a fearful conviction upon them, that assuredly God was with them, nor hath there any time since been wanting most observable instances to confirm this. I remember amongst other remarks of the church in Ireland, a little time before the rebellion there, I had from a great minister of Christ, who was most instrumental in the work of the Lord there, that as he did not think there were more lively and experienced christians any where, than were at that time there,
there, and these not a few: but in a large number, and several of them persons of considerable outward state in the world, who were then brought in by the gospel, most of whom before that change, had been most ignorant and prophet: how such likewise was their convincing and tender walk, as they were generally reverenced by the graceless multitude, yea, on whose conscience was enforced an awful regard of the truth of holiness, that was so convincingly witnessed in their practice. And then also (which was observable) how almost no jar, or jealousy was to be found, either amongst ministers or private christians there: But their great contention was to prefer others to themselves, and in these days it was sweet and easy for ministers to preach and pray both in publick and private, such was the hunger of their hearers, their food being remarkably let out to so large a desire and appetite.

C H A P. V.

S E C T. 1. Besides that which hath been shewed in the preceding chapter of those great confirmations put to the protestant cause and doctrine of the Reformed churches in these latter times, yea, thus also to the truth of christianity, it being sure the Protestant religion is nothing else but this, in the truth and purity thereof. It may be further strengthening, and a sweet remark, in this sad and shaking time, to consider with what brightness and lustre so many have gone off the stage, of such as have been most serious and fervent in the Reformed Religion in these after times, since that great fury and persecution from Antichrist hath been restrained; whose unexpressible peace and joy with some extraordinary glances then of that blessed estate they were entering into, could possibly be hid from none, even most ordinary onlookers, and with these convincing evidences thereof. 1. Of that complacency and joy their souls had in the truth they had professed, and their finding the witness of their conscience, and the approbation of God herein so sweet a feast, whilst they were then turning their face to the wall, as it might be seen that inward joy and peace did thus far exceed their outward pain, and more sensible to them than their sickness. 2. That surely the ground on which such a confidence and serenity of spirit was founded, must be some thing above nature, and such as was able to bear out under the greatest storm and afflict, as all might see, here could be no naked shew or counterfeit. 3. That thus even here, a more near and sensible correspondence with heaven is known to some than might seem to be aware of; yea, such as (except men shut their eyes) it might be easy to discern, how these when dying have had the veil in an extraordinary manner drawn by, and been admitted to some fight of that, which themselves could not possibly express, and to know something of an actual perfection, and those foretastes of the glory they were entering into, than can be conceived at a distance. 4. How discernibly this abundant entrance, and fullness of peace, enjoyed in the dying hours of the saints hath followed their close adherence to the way of the Lord, and the Protestant doctrine now under such triumph. It is true, that not in a like manner is the Lord's dealing with the choicest of his people, but such who have shined brightly in their day may go off the stage silent and with little appearance. I have known some, of whom I write this with the greatest certainty, how their continued walk and practice did speak to all, the truth of serious godliness, the blessed finishing of whose course hath some discernible restraint as to any such appearance then, whilst the Lord's condescending with such a visible gale of lenite, and triumphing joy to others in the close of their life, may be understood more with respect to some publick use and import, than for themselves, as a dying

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testimony and seal of the saints to the truth. And I hope this may be for advantage and edification to let down here some special and weighty instances to commend the blessed way of the Lord, and for confirming others therein; whose last testament and dying breath, (whilst their words are of more weight than at other times) did solemnly witness to his truth and faithfulness, by putting their seal thereto: Yea, such instances as the world may see, and have the conviction hercelf enforced by this short touch, what is that blessed fruit and gain, which follows upon serious godliness, when once it comes to an acting the last scene of death; what another appearance thefe have, and that here must be something above nature, yea, what rare endowments and parts these had, as well as piety, who with such sweet andodoriferous fragrancy have their remembrance thus transmitted; that we may see also what choice and excellent persons have followed, and been brought forth since the Reformation from Popery, of such various degrees and employments, bearing one and the fame witness to the truth. Some of which I have chosen to insert here, are out of Melchior Adams, a grave writer, being in the Latin, and these books so rare, as might be little known or accessible to the most, for these other pages which follow, I may with confidence say, I have been to the furthest concerned anent the certainty thereof, as shall be more particularly shewed.

SECT. 2. First instance set down, of that notable German Physician Jeuchim Curatus born in Fr. afei, who died Anno 1573 a man, as of choice and singular piety, was of great learning also, had his days shortened by a burning fever, in which as in the whole of his former life, did appear the subject edness of his soul, yet with most fervent breathings of love towards Christ (and as its usually found) a most sweet concord here betwixt the conclusion and promises of his former walk and practice, amongst many remarkable speeches he then had, and are at length recorded by Melchior Adams, thefe I shall here mention. I am oppressed Lord, but to me it is enough, that thy hand hath done it, my body now suffers because of sin, but my soul is raised and comforted with the assurance of eternal life: but I will wrestle with Jacob, until the brightness of thy light appear to me. Come Lord Jesus, and let all that love thee say come, and be that loves thee not, let him be Anathema Maranatha. Thou knowest who searchest the heart, I love thee, with thee I shall be at the beginning of this new year, and satisfied with thy light, and drink of the wine of that everlasting joy in thy father's house, where there are many mansions, and one also is for me there. And then had these words, which I choose rather to let down in the Latin, having such a sweet empkasis there. Jam meum pe~ius ardet confpetu vita eterna, cujus, vere sentio, in me, initia. * I have learned to know thee, and with some aim to have others know thee aright, Son of God, acknowledge me also and take me into thy embracements. To come to thee, my soul with desire leaps for joy, and because it is yet with-held, I think the time long; I desire to be dissolved. O dissolve me, that I may be with thee, I am over weared here, I groan for that dwelling above, which thou hast revealed to me as the traveling man in a dark night looks for the Sun, to do I cannot ly look after the brightness of that light, which is in the fight of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Now when my breath and spirits are to fail, let O blefed Saviour, thy spirit speak and interceded in my soul for me, with unutterable groans. I shall see my Saviour in the flesh, who is exalted at the right hand of the Father, and there blefs him for all the blessings I have had from him. Thou wilt also put a guard to this body, even thy holy angels to keep my dust and bones, which were and shall be for ever the dwelling place
place of the Holy Ghost; for it is impossible this flesh and mass of my body, which hath been quickned by the outletting and communion of the spirit, and thus ingrained into the body of Christ, to be annihilate, or to be for ever continued in the state of death, as a dead mass: but thou the fountain of life shalt require from the earth this thine own image, even out of the smallest crumbs of dust and ashes that are there; and by sending forth thy spirit again, build up this as a glorious and living body, that it may be for a dwelling for thy Divinity to dwell in for ever. There we shall follow the Lamb where ever he goes. With these words which he adds, O vener pulchram, Duem & Divinum. There we shall sing a new song. Let us rejoice, Hallelujah. O come let us go forth to meet our Redeemer. Our conversation is in Heaven; but even in this life we must begin to know an eternal life, and follow in that order Christ hath appointed.

We shall be clothed upon, and not found naked; and he who is the beloved Lamb of God, who takes away the fins of the world, shall lead us to the fountains of living water, and take all tears from our eyes. What the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath entered into the hearts of men, is prepared for the lovers of God. This earthly life is but death: but that is life indeed, which Christ hath begun in my soul; and now I live, not I but Christ liveth in me, therefore I will praise him, O blessed soul where Jesus Christ hath his seat, who doth lead and rule in all our motions and actions, I see the Heavens now open. Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. Thou Jesus Christ art my resurrection and life. How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Redeemer? Keep my soul that it suffer not hurt from that horrible Dragon the Devil, let it be bound up in the bundle of the living, and my journey be to those who now live an immortal and heavenly life. Thus is there in part a touch of the breathings of that blessed man before his close, which the witnesses thereof shew was but some part of what he expressed, and this with greatest candour and fervency. And said again a little before his close: I die in the Lord, who is my life, and in the acknowledgment, faith and remembrance on Jesus Christ. O sweet glory and desirable righteousness! O pleasant change and translation from sin, into a state of holiness, from darkness into light, and from death into life! It was observed that he had divers words prophetic, whereof many choice and faithful witnesses were then present, who declared all that they were exceedingly comforted by him; but needed not comfort him, in whom so singular a desire and breathing towards eternal life, with such establishment in the faith was discernible to all, and thus at the close he was heard say, Now I die, and have got admission, as with old Simon; I die witnessing to the truth of the prophets and apostles, and adhering to the Augustan Confession, blessing the Lord that in his marvelous goodness, had the light of the gospel to return after such darkness.

Sect. 3. Sebastian Munsterus, one excellently versed in the laws, who made it his study to have his knowledge therein subservient to the publick good, and making peace amongst others, not his own private interest. At his death he shewed much patience, being seized on by the plague, and a few hours before his close, shewing to some friends about him these dreadful marks of the disease, that were broke forth in his hands and legs, faith to them, O what precious marks are those which Christ hath put upon me, and how pleasing are they? Do not you loath at such a sight, for I am now putting on my wedding apparel, for as loathsome as it is, whither I am going to enjoy that heavenly feast with Christ for ever, yea even in this sad dres's
drefs do I flit to that glorious assembly of the spirits of the just above. Thus
as it were triumphant, and full of joy he left the world, when he had got a
clear sight of that which was before him. 1st omnis anima; & spe tua
damna levabat. He died at Wittenberg about the year 1540.

Sect. 4. Franciscus Burgardus a German lawyer, and fervent protestant
also, moft dear to Luther and Melanthon, both for his singular learning
and piety, of whom that account is given, that his family did reprefent both
a Church and Academy,fo as it may be questioned whether serious piety, with
prudence and great judgment did moft shine forth? Was heard off to exprefs
upon the complaints of fome, what hazard then feemed to attend the truth,
that he much rather would choose death, and the greatest of fufferings, than
in the smallcft point recede herein; about which he was perfuaded in his
heart. At his death did thus alfo exprefs himself, when his ficknefs was very
fore. 1feem the afflictions of this preffent time, not to be compared with
the glory, which fhall be revealed in us, and though I fhall now walk in
the valley of the shadow of death, I will not fear, fince thou art with me,
whose red and staff have comforted me. And with furtheft affurance of
ternal blessednefs did thus part with time at Wittenberg 1560.

Sect. 5. Joannes Clotzus, counfellor of law to the Landgrave of Heffen,
and after by him made his chancellor, though with great aversion thereto,
as reckoning that the greater dignity had moft weighty cares, and trouble fol-
lowing the fame. One fervously godly in his life, at death had these expres-
sions: The whole of my life is placed in God. O let thy fervant depart
in peace. Thou art my fure anchor, my falvation, and only refuge to me.
Now the honors of the world, and all momentary things, yea, this life it
felf is diftaleful, in reft of thefe eternal joys, and that kingdom above,
to which I breath, and with joyful mind bafen, even where thefe many
mansion are. And thus moft comfortably rennd his spirit to the Lord.

Sect. 6. Joachimus Bergerus, a famous lawyer and counfellor to the
Emperor Maximilian, by whom he was fometimtes fent in embaflcy to other
princes, whom Melanthon did fo much admire, as he expreffeth his fervent
declares, that the Lord would preserve fuch an inftrument for his church, of
whom that account is given. His religion was a foul-work and bufines to
him, nor did he fatisfy himfelf with a form of duty, but oft might be seen
pouring out his heart unto God in prayer, with many tears in his family, a rare
influence of one in fuch throng of publifh employments. He was much in
converfe with the fcripture, not to know it only for light, but to conform
himfelf thereto, as the rule. He used to have thefe words frequently to
others, That ones time fhould be much, either in speaking with God by
Prayer, or have him speaking to us, by reading and meditation, which
he had drunk in from his youth: Ofingular humility, as a few weeks
before his death, he declared, That besides fome defire to renounce the
world; he defigned to die a capital enemy, above all things to that
fin of pride. And whilst on his death bed with greatest affurance he
looked out for his change, using thefe words of Job, I will wait till my
change come, as one who femed to have no more to do then, but to die,
having been fo fervious in making ready for it in his former life. This account
is given of his words. Though I be moft weak and deftitute of outward
help, I am one of the flock of Chrift, whom Satan by all his power fhall
never be able to pluck out of his hand: and was fure that no created
thing could ever be able to pluck out of his hand: and was fure that no-
thing could ever be able to separate him from the love of Chrift, with which
he was fo firmly united. He had that word as moft comforting to him.
Part. III. The Fulfiling of the Scripture.

He is my life, and the length of my days, Deut. xxx. 20. And then after said, Farewell, O farewell all earthly things, and welcome heaven. Let none hereafter make mention of the things of this world to me. And to some of his friends, who were by, did seriously witness, he never through the blessing of God was more firmly persuaded of the truth, nor had ever found the spirit of the Lord bearing a more full and comforting testimony to his soul for his adherence to the truth, than at that present time, so as now he found it easy, and was in peace, if he were called thereunto, to lay down his life as a martyr upon that account, which was not easy to him before, and withal witnessed his inward joy, and sense of the Lord’s tenderness to him at such a time, to dismiss him out of this prison, when so dreadful things seemed eminent upon the country and place he lived in. Thus died that excellent man, leaving a sweet favour behind to all who knew him, Anno 1602.

Sect. 7. Gafpar Peucerus, fon-in-law to Melanthon, and a most famous physician in that time, was a man of great learning and piety, and in the bleffed disposal of the Lord exposed to much suffering upon the sacramental controversy with the Lutherans, which how far sooner to him in the time, did at last resolve in much joy, and being strengthened in the way of the Lord thereby. He was kept for many years in prison on that account, where he was forced to see his profiting more in the knowledge and love of the truth, than in all his former liberty; having been of an high and lofty spirit until thus he was under the crofs broken and subdued, so as he bare that testimony, It was good for him, the Lord had af{licted him. In his prison he met with hard usage, and expecting his change by death, his body being spent and brought very low, he wrote his testament as is at large (and truly edifying) the account thereof let down by Melchior Adamus, where he owns the innocency of his caufe, exhorts his children to godliness, and love amongst themselves, having amongst other these words, as an enforcement from his own practice: I commend my soul, and the whole of me, with daily groanings to God, through, and for his Son Jesus Christ my Lord, in confessing of whom by the help of his spirit, I hope to continue, live and die, waiting for the coming of our great God our Saviour Jesus Christ, shews also, that during his imprisonment with bleffing the Lord for it, how he had been kept still unmoved, with all their threatenings of death, or continued restraint. And when he called to mind the death of his choice wife, from whom he was kept, so as he could not have access to see her at her death, which af{fected him with much grief, he said, the considerers of these words of Christ, that he who forsakes not father and mother, wife and children for his sake, is not worthy of him, did much help to subdue, and bound his af{fections herein: he after experienced the Lord’s marvelous providence, both in his delivery and comfort of his after lot. Outliving these sufferings sixteen years, and attained to greater honour and respect than ever before, so as he could seal the verification of that truth, of the Lords making glad his people according to the days wherein he had af{licted them, and years wherein they had seen evil. He died Anno 1602. with a most sweet refreshing testimony to all present, of his assured hope and comfort in the Lord.

Sect. 8. Fredericus Taubmannus born Anno 1565, was a man of great learning and piety, which made him to be an ornament to the profession of the truth in the place and time he lived; was also much exercised for confirming himself in the way of God, not only in the publck hearing of the word, but in those more secret duties, reading, meditation and fervent prayer. He had some clear discerning of his approaching death, whereupon he laid to his friends, This I do not fear, let my God call when he will, I de-
fire to obey, I know he will never forsake me. And under his sickness, when it came upon him, and whilst his disease began to increase, to some then who were exhorting him to patience, he said, God is faithful, whom I have before now tried, and at this hour have no cause to bring his truth into ques-
tion. Let his blessed will concerning me take place. In the evening be-
tore his death, being asked what he was doing, he answered. I by here, I
am wrestling with my Lord Jesus Christ after Jacob's example, and resolve
not to let him go, till he give the blessing.

Sect. 9. Matthias Vossenbehins, famous for learning and knowledge
of the laws, which was his profession, a fervent Protestant, and remarkably
called to the knowledge of the truth, when he studied at the University of
Lovaine, by being a witness to the sufferings of a poor godly man in that
place for the truth, which put him after to a serious search of the scripture
had a marvelous delight in a special way to read much of the Psalms, and up-
on the New Testament: a great opposer of the litigious wrangling of
the law, and to have truth and righteousness in that employment promoted. At
his death did witness much peace and comfort, having oft in his mouth these
words of the apostle, 2 Cor. i. 22. Who hath confirmed us, and given us
the seal of the spirit, by which we cry Abba Father, and that in Rom. vii.
24. O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of
death? Adding the following words as his confidence, that this was ensured
through Jesus Christ, he said also to those that were present with great af-
furance. That now the Lord had given him a sight of that blessed place of
eternal joy, and where he would be quickly, which was his greatest longing
to have it bestowed. And with his last breathing almost, had these words. He
was within the covenant with Jesus Christ. He died Anno 1556. Profes-
sor of the law at Wittenberg.

Sect. 10. Jacobus Zunigerus, a famous German professor of medi-
cine at Basl, and ornament not only to the University, and his Profession
as a Physician, but to the truth in a most convincing Christian walk, was
plucked away in the time of a great pestilence, which was at Basl,
whilst he made it his work to be useful at that time to others. The
first touch of his disease was quickly discerned by him, and that his
change would quickly follow upon it, so as his business was wholly anent
his inward state. And as one panting after a better life, had once and again
these words to his friends. I rejoice, yea, my spirit leaps within me for joy,
that now the time is at last come, when I shall see the glorious God face to
face, whose glory with wondering I have oft got some glance of here, in
the search of natural things, whom I have worshipped, whom I have by
faith longed after, and after whom my soul hath panted. And whilst his
pain through the malignity of the disease was very grievous, he did express
greatest patience and composure of spirit, having these words of Job. Though
he should kill me, I will trust in him, and only did often groan forth his
desire, that Jesus Christ would come and hasten his escape. So as all who look'd
on, might see him dying, and overcoming in such a sharp conflict at once.
He died Anno 1610.

Sect. 11. Olympia Fulvia Morata, an Italian born at Ferrara, and bred
at the court there, with the young Princez, who was the Duke's daughter, of
a singular spirit for learning, besides her other excellent endowments, so as
she could both write and speak most elegant Latin and Greek in her very
young years. But then by reason of her education, and the place of her a-
abode, wholly popish, was at last bereft of her father, who had a publick
charge under the Duke there, with some visible with-drawing after, of that
wanted respect she had in that court. In the blessed providence of the Lord
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for her good, though upon the account given of her life, she was such a person as enforced a conviction upon all that knew her, not only of excellent natural endowments, but of her modest, prudent and virtuous deportment in the place she lived, which through the good hand of the Lord did occasion a learned German physician then at Ferrara, a fierce Protestant, to propose marriage with her, and this was the occasion of her withdrawing from that country, and to leave her father's house. Her husband with whom she was then engaged, returning within a little to his own country, where she gave her self most to study the scripture, to which before she was wholly a stranger, and had accounted it hazardous to converse with, the Lord thus breaking in upon her with the light and knowledge of the truth, that in the short time of her life after, it was not only the Protestant Religion she then embraced; but in greatest earnest followed the power and truth thereof: so as only her delight and comfort was in converse with divine things. In a letter she writes to that young Princess, with whom she was bred at Ferrara, which among some other things she had writ, was after her death published. She hath these words: So soon as by the singular goodness of the Lord to me, I had got out from the idolatry of my own country, and gone with my husband to Germany, it may seem incredible to you, what a change the Lord then made upon my spirit, that the former aversion I had to read the scripture, from which I had kept at so great a distance, was then turned to have this my greatest delight and pleasure in the world, and now my soul is most taken up there with: And there I may say is my only comfort and pleasure, about which my study, work and care I have placed; so as the world and the pleasure and delights therein, which once I was wont to admire, and too much taken with, are become wholly contemptible with me. That short time of her abode with her husband in Germany before her death, was almost a continued conflict with renewed trials they met with in their private lot, being tossed from several places by reason of the wars, her husband taken by some Popish soldiers, and in much hazard of his life, which was one of the sharpest conflicts she had in her time, upon any outward account; there being very great love betwixt them; so as for a little she was almost crazed: but the Lord who heard her groans, by a remarkable providence, returned him safe. Thus did he graciously try and exercise this choice person to early, after her being enlightened, with the crofs, yea, and thus further, to gain her soul to himself, that her fervency in following the Lord was no less remarkable, than their tossings of her life were. But at last a blessed period comes to all, having settled with her husband at Heidelberg, where they had some lucid and comfortable interval. She takes sickness, which in a few days brought her to the grave, but with greatest advantage in her inward case, as is set down at length by her husband under his own hand, whom he faith, with greatest desire longed for her departure, and witnessed her comfort and joy herein, that now the time was come, when she had so remarkably experienced, to enjoy that blessedness which is above. Nothing she could worse bear, than to hear of any prefaces of her recovery; and said to her friends: The Lord had been pleased to give her a short course, but full of tossings and trouble, and now could no more desire to return again, when so near the port. She was asked by some, if there was now any hesitation in her soul anent her fate, and what peace she had there anent to whom the answer was thus. For these seven years before, which was since the time of my being engaged to the Lord in embracing the truth, I had seldom any castigation from some assaults or other of the Devil, to shake my faith, and weaken my hands anent the truth: But now, as if he had lost all his darts, he appears no more this way: Nor
feel I in my soul any thing, but unexpressible tranquility and peace with God through Jesus Christ. Nor did she doubt in the least to call her self one of the children of God. And a little before her close, having awaked out of sleep, she seemed to her husband to look in an extraordinary manner, with a cheerful countenance, which made him ask the cause, to whom she said, I have now got a sight in my rest, of a most excellent and pleasant place, shining with an unexpressible light and brightness. But her weakness was such, as she could get no more at present spoken. Her husband being much affected, told her she had indeed cause of cheerfulness, since it was sure she should now within a little space dwell in that pleasant and desirable place, of which she had got such a sight. To whom with a most sweet and comfortable smile she could only say, Tota (inquit) sim bata. I am full of joy; but now I know you no more. Thus did that sweet soul render up her spirit, who had through most of her sickness oft these words: That her sole desire was to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, and so far as her weakness could permit, did express to others her sense of the marvelous goodness of the Lord, in bringing her from her own country, his enlightening her with the knowledge of his truth, and that he had taken her heart off the world, and from all the pleasures and delights thereof, and wrought in her so ardently a desire after eternal life, about which she had then no fear. These were but a few, as her husband relates, of what in that time she expressed, to the comfort and wondering of all about her. She died at Hidleberg in the year 1555, in the twenty ninth year of her age. This instance not only is at length fett down by Melchior Adamus, having the account thereof from her own husband, as he had writ it after her death, but I find the fame particularly mentioned by famous Voeius. 

Sect. 12. Having mentioned in the preceding section that rare example of piety, whom the Lord did thus marvelously rescue from the darkness of Antichristian Popery under which she lived; it may not be unsuitable, and I hope for edification, to join such an observable instance therewith, of the conversion of a Lady, in our own country, now several years ago, from Popery, who not only from her education, but with some serious and conscientious respect, before she was enlightened by the truth, did own the profession of that way. The account let down is of her own words transcribed, which with much assurance I can here insert; yea, who after her conversion, until the Lord's calling her to himself did confirm the truth thereof, by convincing and exemplary piety, to all that knew her. 'I have changed no good thing I had before: but what I then in appearance had, I labour to have it in truth now. I did ever believe the Articles of the Creed, and now believe to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, and no other way, that true faith must bring forth the fruits of repentance, and good works, else that faith is but dead and counterfeit. This change upon me, neither I, nor any creature in the world made, but the Lord himself within me: For I strive against it all I could, till he let me know that it was himself dealing within me: And I now perceive had a work in me from the beginning, though I then knew it not. I had still a love to the truth, and earnest desire to know God, and studied according to my knowledge to do what might please him and durst not follow, but made some conscience to shun what I judged wrong. This now I know was the beginning of the Lord's work with me: My love to his service, and that desire I had to be saved, which made me piece and piece to search out the grounds of that religion I profest: And when other means failed, gave my self to reading of books, choosing rather to be under that challenge of curiosity, (for so it was accounted) than
than to be careless of my own salvation: Yea, it became my pleasure above all things in the earth, to know what might further me to heaven; so as I could have been satisfied. (If the Lord had thought fit) to have renounced all the honour and pleasure of this world, for time and occasion to use those means which might help me to heaven: but when I got understanding of the grounds of that religion I professed, and my teachers accounted sufficient, I could find no true comfort there, nor how any could have it thereby either in life or death, since all my life I might not seek after assurance of being faved, for that was called the Protestants presumption, and at my death nothing but purgatory, a fire as hot as hell, and as great torments there, as they made me trow I must go to, but wist not how to get out again, yea, how to ecape hell it self, since I behoved to come so near to it. I wondered, and yet wonder how any that looks for purgatory at their death, can either have true peace, or any comfort in the world; I am sure they must either take it for a fiction, as it is, or else forget themselves, when they are cheerful: Yet for all this I continued in obedience for their injunctions, but would gladly have had a reason for what I did, and a warrant that God would be pleased therewith: But could find nothing, but man's word for all; and was told by fuch, as gave themselves for teachers, that either I must be content to believe as the Kirk believed, or else I would get no other satisfaction. I thought upon this from time to time, and at laft faw, that this was no fure ground to lean upon, except I would content my felf with this, that the Clergy knew, albeit I knew not, that they faw, albeit I was blind; that they knew the gate to heaven though I was not sure whether I was going to heaven or purgatory: but this blind obedience might well please them, it could never give me content, except they could fhow, that my obedience to the Pope, and his Clergy, fhould be as acceptable to the Lord, as if it were to Christ and his Apoftles, and would not be quarrelled at the day of judgment. These queftions rising then in my mind, with the llight fatisfaction I got, I muft confefs, put me to many thoughts of heart; yet still I kept from protestant books, or conference with any fuch, especially the mini- flers, as long as I could: but when I faw no outgate, I was forced to lay aside all my beads and books, and go to God himfelf for Christ's fake, to teach me how to do his will: but more and more doubts arose about fundry points of my religion, though I would never let the truth have place, fo long as I could hold it out. The Lord forgive me, for I did it ignorantly. Yet notwithstanding he was pleased to bear in light, and his truth upon me, as I was forced to acknowledge the fame, and leave these errors. I cannot tell all, nor the order of this, how they fell in my mind: but firft I refolv'd to believe neither prieft nor minifler, except fo far as I understood their warrant from the word of God: For I knew there was no fure ground to reft on, and if any thing pleased the Lord, it would be obedience to his own direction, and might well quarrel mens doctrine; but could never quarrel his own word. I refolved then to read the Rhemist's New Testament, and the Protestant Old Testament, for I wift well the Lord would never be angry to read his own word, since I knew it pertained to my foul, as well as other folks, and I found it the sweeteft and pleafanteft book that ever I read in my life. I loved their caufe the worfe who held me fo long from read- ing it, and a bad token of them that loved not the scriptures, for if they loved them, they could not have spoken of them as they did, faying they are not perfect, they are not clear, nor plain, but obfcurc and ambiguous; yea, dangerous to be read, for breeding errors in fuch that read the fame, which cannot but Icare all that believe them from the Lord's word. Sure
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this is an injury to Christ and his Apostles, to speak so of their writings, as they could not be content that men should speak so of theirs. Thus I perceived to be false, their alleging the Pope and Roman Kirk could not err, and how proud a word this was for any sinful flesh. Sure the apostle Peter was as good as any such, and yet erred, and might have erred further, if God had not preferred him. And in reading the Rheims New Testament, I found a warrant that young children might read the scriptures with profit, and that it serves to instruct and make men perfect in what concerns salvation. I fell another day upon the first epistle of John, where I found no necessity was of our confessing of sins to the priest; but of confession thereof to God; who is faithful to cleanse us from all sin; and that no advocate there is, but Christ. And again, if any say, they have no sin, they lie, and the truth is not in them, which I thought a fore word against them who say, they cannot fulfill the law only, but do more than God commands, by works of supererogation. As for that acceptance of mortal and venial sins, it could not satisfy, when Christ shews, that they who say, thou fool, are guilty of hell fire. Although some sins be greater than others, yet the least brings us under the curse, if God deal in the way of justice with us, I fell out of conceit with their legends and live of their saints, when I considered some abominable lies I found in them: As that of St. Catharine of Sienna, whom they allege laid her mouth to Christ's side, and drunk her sacrament, and that he interchanged hearts with her, and came down from heaven, and brought his mother with St. Peter and St. Paul with him, and wedded her with a ring. I was made to differ, in the form of prayers, and repeating over and over again the same words, until their beads be ended. I perceived all their devotion they taught, flood in words and ceremonies which God cares not for. However, I disliked many things, and was assuaged they were wrong, yet I never renounced them, till I found my self mistaken in the matter of the sacrament, and found in reading the epistle to the Hebrews, there is no necessity to offer daily Hosts for the sins of the people. For this Christ did once in offering up himself, who continues for ever, and hath an everlasting priesthood, whereby he is able to save for ever them that go unto God by him. And again, that Christ was gone into heaven, to appear before God, not that he must offer up himself any more, for then must he have often suffered from the beginning of the world, but now once he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Thus I perceive, if the scripture be true, no man can offer Christ but himself, nor can there be a priest after him now, since he ever lives himself to make intercession for us, nor can Christ be offered oftner than once, neither is any need of this, since by one offering he hath taken away the sins of his people; yea, this is impossible, as that he should suffer oftner than once. Then I thought, if Christ be not offered in his bodily substance in the mass, there can be no Transubstantiation in it. My teachers herein called me curious, but gave me no good answer. I wondered also at that place, 1 Cor. x, where it is said, that in the wilderness they did eat the same spiritual meat, and drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock, which followed them, and that rock was Christ. Since they made me believe, that Christ could not be in a spiritual way by faith eaten or drunk, as the Protestants teach, but his very flesh and blood taken in at the mouth substantially. I thought, how can the rock be called Christ, since literally it could not be in the sense of the Roman church, since he was not yet incarnate: if it be a figure, then the Protestants must have the better in the matter of the Sacra-
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ment, since as the rock is called Christ, so is the bread called his body.

These doubts about the Sacrament so affected me, as I could not but choose, and send for a minister, (Let any judge, if it was not then time) with whom I reasoned thereon. He answered my doubts, and directed me to prayer herein, shewing I could not get solid rest, till the Lord made his word lively on my soul, which I found after made good, the Lord making the scripture efficacious, lively and clear in the points I doubted of, and gave both such assurance of his love, and of the true religion, that all the earth could not have bred me such joy and solid peace, beyond any thing I can utter. I have now got the assurance in some measure, which I was seeking. I have found the true ground to rest upon, and God's own truth made lively. I am now free from the fear of purgatory; I fcor that fiction now with joy, and I am assured the Lord is righteous, who will not exact twice payment of one debt, Christ's passion, and his peoples torment in a fire as hot as hell. The Lord, who hath promised a sufficient cautioner for us, that we might escape torment, cannot come short herein. The Lord help such, who live in fear of this wicked fiction. If the Pope, and the Clergy, for the love they have to money, keep the world in such fearful blindness, they have their judge to answer unto. I praise the Lord who has delivered me out of these errors, I renounce them, and have found too great mercy in the knowledge of the truth to make an exchange again. O that all knew the difference as well as I have felt.

Besides these choice and weighty instances before mentioned, I must here further add a few memorable passages of the death of some grave and eminent ministers of Christ in our country, worthy to be recorded, as a seal not only of their ministry, and acceptance therein with their master, but to the truth of godliness, and doctrine of the Protestant church; which have hitherto been little known, nor were mentioned amongst the instances of some great and extraordinary ministers of Christ in the church of Scotland formerly published; the truth whereof I had from one of the gravelest ministers of our church, both for judgment and piety in that time, yea under his own hand, who was himself present at the death of all here mentioned, excepting this first instance, which was many years before.

Sect. 13. It may be an astonishing passage anent the death of that worthy man of God Mr. David Black, set down by his old intimate friend Mr. Andrew Melvin, with whom for a time he was colleague in St. Andrews, until for the truth, and his adherence thereto, he was after forced by a confinement to a more retired place beyond Tay in Angus, where his ministry was until his death, which passage he assuredly knowing, the truth thereof he relates thus. That after near communion with God, and extraordinary afflictance in publick a few days before his death, where he feemed not only to surpas all others, but himself also at that time, with such a discernible gale of the spirit, both to humble the hearts of his hearers, and after to such a melting of their spirits, as they burst forth in rivers of tears, and thus to engage them to take on the sweet and easy yoke of Christ. He found then also upon his own soul such a sensible taste of heaven, and being admitted to feel, as it were, the air of that country with some unusual enjoyment of the hid pleasures and delights, which are there. He was seized with a fervent longing to put off his earthly tabernacle, that he might get a dimissi on from the Lord from his prison here, to that unconceivably blest state and fellowship of the society above, to which, by a marvelous condescendence, the Lord did so far indue his servant after many fore conflicts, and wrestlings he had in his life, to give such a secret hint and intimation of this to him-
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Mr. Robert Scot, a truly godly and able minister of Christ at Glasgow, died January 18, 1629. On his death-bed he did witness his soul's abhorrence at the wicked and corrupt courses of the time, * and my com-fort is, faith he, that God with-held me from them. If I were to live, I should not be so sparing as I have been to witness against these.* And a little before his death, he lay sometime as in a kind of trance, and after his awaking out of it, took off his night-cap, and threw it to the bed-feet, and cried out, I have now seen the Lord, and heard him say, make way for my faithful servant Mr. Robert Scot, bidding his friends farewell; and then after died.

Mr. Robert Cunningham, minister at Holywood in the North of Ireland, about whom this account I had from the fame worthy relator and others his intimate acquaintance there, that he was the one man to his discriminating of all that ever he knew, who resembled most the meekness of Jesus Christ, in his whole carriage, and was so convincing in his way to the most gross, and reverenced by all, that he was oft troubled with that scripture, * woe to you, when all men speak well of you,* so as it was told some of his adherents in that place, that it was sure, if ever they meddled with Mr. Cunningham, their cup would be full. He was sometimes in publick preaching to his own sense, not so lifted as usually: but even then to the discerning christians of these times; was as edifying and refreshing as at any time else, but ordinarily was born through with a full gale. I was with him (faith he) at his death in Irwin in the year 1637. At which time, besides many other weighty expressions, he said one time. I see Christ standing over death's head, and saying, deal warily with my servant, loose now this one pin, and here another, for this tarr-nacle must be set up again. A little before his death, his wife sitting on the bed-side, where he lay, and her hand in his, he did by prayer recommend to God the whole church, the word of the gospel in Ireland, his own pa-riſhs, and his children, and in end said, And lastly O Lord, I recommend to thee this Gentlemewan, who is no more my wife, and with that saying, he softly loos'd his hand from her's, and gently thrust it a little from him, at which both she and some others prest burst out in weeping, and within a little after he render'd up his spirit.

Mr. Josias Welþ, minister at Temple Patrick in Ireland, as the former worthy relator shews, died June 23, 1634. with whom he was then
then present. He had many gracious and edifying expressions, though also some wrestlings, as in much of his life he had been thus kept under deep inward exercises, a little before his close he said with a sad groan, Oh for hypocrisy, upon which one speaks to the company of Christians then present; See how Saran fastens on the heel of this servant of Christ, even when he is going in over the threshold of heaven. A little after, whilst he was at prayer at his bed-side, and that word Victory, coming out of his mouth, he presently took hold of his hand, and desired him to cease a little, and clapping both his hands together cried out, Victory, victory, victory, for evermore, and then desired him to go on in prayer, and in short time after died.

This was the more observable, in so sweet and triumphant a close, that, through most of the time of his ministry, he had such frequent and sharp conflicts in his own private cafe, so as once after he had been through the exercise of his spirit brought to low, as put his friends to some astonishment thereon, he was enforced to define a meeting of these great and eminent ministers of Christ who then lived in that country near him, shewing his prelure was such, as he could no longer conceal what was on his spirit thereon: And after meeting together with prayer, whilst his countenance spake the weight of his inward exercise, and with tears running over his face, he told them the cause of that meeting, that he had been now for a long time preft to defect the miniftiy; having preached for so many years the gospel of Christ to others, and yet himself but a cast-away. Thus did the Lord graciously deal with his servant, so as the truth of his own grace was hid from himself, whilst it shin'd in the greatest luftre to the conviction of others: but this advantage also followed thereon, that his miniftiy then was made most remarkably fruitful, not in the place he lived in only, but in the whole country, and thus fitted by his own exercise and wrestlings, to deal with the confciences of others.

Sect. 17. Mr. John Schrynger minifter at Kingborn, a man not fo polished, but rude-like in his deport and manner, but of a deep reach of natural wit, very learned and knowing in the Hebrew language, and of eminent piety. He told this passage to some of his intimate friends, that having divers children taken away by death, and one young daughter at that time, whom he loved most dearly, under that diseafe of the crucels, which is called the King's Evil, with several running fores thus upon her, so as she was at the point of death. He was one night called up to fee her die, and finding her in that cafe, went out to the fields, as he told, in the night season, being in great grief and anxiety, so as he adventured when alone on such expolulating with the Lord, and with such expressions, so as for all the world he durft not again utter. And being thus preft, said, thou know'st, O Lord, I hitherto have served thee in the uprightness of my heart according to my power, nor have I sinned in awe to declare thy mind before the greatest whatsoever in the time, and thou fafi, I take pleasure in this child, and cannot obtain such a thing at thy hand as her sparing: for I was (faith he) then in great agony of spirit: but at last it was said to him from the Lord, I have heard thee at this time, but use not this boldnes with me in time coming for such particulars. And when he came home, the child was sitting up in her bed taking meat, and fully whole, and when he look'd to these fores, that had been running upon her, they were quite healed. A little before his death, that forefaid worthy minifter of Christ the relator, went to see him, where he was under such fore pain of the stone, as he was sometimes enforced to cry out. He said to him, my nature hath been rude and flunkard all my days, and now by this pain, the Lord is even dauntoning me, to make me as a Lamb, before he take me to himself.  

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 Sect. 18. This instance I judged worthy to be inserted, having such assurance of the truth thereof, namely of Mr. John M‘ Birney, minister in Aberdeen, a godly, zealous and painful preacher, he used always when he rode to have two Bibles with him, the one in the Original, the other in English, and being alone was then exercised, either in reading, meditating or praying, and if any were in company with him, he would read or speak from the scripture to them. When he died, he called his wife, and told her, he had no outward means to leave either to her, or to his only daughter, who had survived him, but had got assurance from the Lord, that he should provide for them both. And accordingly the day he was buried, the magistrates of the town came to the house after the burial, and brought two subscribed papers, one of a competent maintenance to his wife during her life, another of a provision for his daughter.

C H A P. VI.

 Sect. 1. That the Lords way and appearances for the church of Scotland, since the late blest Reformation from Popery, both in the rise, and advance thereof, had been truly extraordinary and marvelous, may be demonstrable on these grounds. 1. That this great Reformation, was at such a remarkable period, as at no time it could in an ordinary way have seemed more hopeless, these being considered. 1. How little of any human or visible encouragements concurred thereto, to darken that brightness of the Lord’s own appearance in this marvelous and spreading of his kingdom through that land. 2. That by the Queen’s marriage with the French King, the adversaries of the truth, had the strength of this kingdom, besides those that were amongst themselves to concur in opposition to the work of God there. 3. We see the Queen Dowager then at the helm of government, and her greatest aim with the utmost both of subtlety and force, to crush and bear down any stirrings of the work of the Lord at that time. 3. That bloody and cruel man Cardinal Berton, who with greatest vigour and authority did act beyond any of his predecessors, to bear down any rising of the gospel at that time.

 Sect. 2. It was undeniable, how the first instruments whom the Lord called forth about his work in that land, were then extraordinarily called, and had a most convincing zeal thereof. I shall only set down the first three; who with such an extraordinary appearance of the Lord, were sent forth upon his work in that land. 1. Mr. Patrick Hamilton, a young gentleman of great birth, of excellent parts and learning, fervent in the truth, who was quickly taken away, whom the zeal of God did so eat up, that after his travelling abroad, and familiar converse with such men as Luther and Melanthon, those bright beams of light then planted in his heart, did enforce a publick vent of the fame. But the pope’s Clergy, under the dread of their own hazard did with all possible vigour beseech themselves to have him taken away, and to labour with the King then young, to go in pilgrimage to St. Duthies in Rosfs, that thus no intercession in his absences might be made for him. But it may be no less seen, how this heat for having him taken out of the way, did most obsequiously help to bring down the house over them, and a greater ruin to their interest by his death, than his life. At the place of his execution he exhorted to bear in mind the example of his death, which though bitter to the flesh, (yet said) it is the entrance into eternal life, which none shall possess, who denies Jesus Christ before this wicked generation. And whist one Campbell’s Friar, did most trouble him in the very time of his sufferings, he said, Wicked man, thou knowest the contrary and hast confessed the same
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to me, I appeal thee before the tribunal seat of Christ: After which, within a few days the said Friar died in much terror of conscience, and as one desperate. This was Anno Ch. 1527.

Sect. 3. As a further witness to this, I must instance that great servant of Christ, Mr. George Wishart, who a little after was sent forth to publish the gospel there, whose life being at large inserted in that history of the Reformation of the church of Scotland, was the reason I forbore to mention him amongst these great instruments of our church, I have else where recorded. But since many can have little access for perusal of this, yea, that without the least hesitation, from all the records of the church since the first times of the apostles, a more extraordinary ambassador of Christ cannot be influenced. I shall give this short account of him, from Mr. Knox himself, who then was much with him; yea, not only from the printed history of the church, that was by him penned, but by a manuscript from his own mouth bearing the same account, which I have beside me. This great man, after this being for a considerable time abroad, being one of admirable grace and singularly learned, both in divine and human Sciences, did at last return to his own country, where he first preached in Montrose, and then in Dundee, to the admiration of all that heard him, until that one Robert Mill in that town, at the instigation of the Cardinal (though he being a principal man there, had sometiming been a professor of religion) did in the time of publick sermon, inhibit his troubling their town any more by preaching, since he would not suffer it. Whereupon this blessed man, musling a little with his eyes bent unto heaven, said, God is my witness, that I never minded your trouble, but your comfort; yea, it is more sad to me than your selves: But I am sure, that to refuse and chafe from you his messengers, shall not preserve you from trouble, but bring you into it, and God shall send you ministers, that shall neither fear burning nor banishment, I have offered you the word of salvation with the hazard of my life, but now ye refuse me, and I must leave my innocency to be declared by my God. If it be long prosperous with you, I am not led by the spirit of truth, but if unlooked for trouble come, acknowledge the cause, and turn to God who is gracious and merciful. Some noblemen then present persuaded him to stay, which by no means he would, but went to the west country with an offer of the gospel, where he was gladly received by many, though the Bishop of Glasgow, with his trains came to the town of Air to reft him, and secured the publick church for himself to preach in, which whilst some opposed, Mr. Wishart said, let me alone, let us go to the market cros, and so they did, where he made so notable a sermon, as his very enemies themselves were confounded. After he came to Mabden, where he was by force kept out of the church. To some who would have broke in he said, Jesus Christ is as mighty in the fields, as in the church, yea, be often preached in the desert, at the sea side, and in other places. It is the word of peace God sends by me, the blood of none shall this day be shed for it, and so going to the fields, he stood on a bank, where he continued preaching three hours, and God wrought so wonderfully thereby, as one of the wickedest men in all the country, the Laird of Schild, was converted, and his eyes ran down with such abundance of tears, as all men wondered. It was then the news was brought to Mr. Wishart, that the plague was broke up in Dundee, within four days after he was prohibited to preach there, yea, with such rage, as its almost beyond credit how many died. This being related to him, notwithstanding the importance of his friends, he would go thither, laying, they are now in trouble, and need comfort, perhaps this hand of God will make them reverence his word, which before they lightly esteemed. Coming to Dundee,
Dundee, the joy of the faithful was exceeding great, and because most of the inhabitants were either sick or employed about them, he choofed the caft-gate to preach upon, where the whole were within, and the sick without the gate, his text, Ps. cxviii. He sent his word and healed them, &c. Where he fo comfortably held forth the gain and comfort of God's word; what punishment comes by contempt of it, and freedom of his grace to such as truly turn to him, with the happines of his people whom he takes from this miſery, as the hearts of the hearers were so raffed not to regard death, but to judge them the more happy who should then depart, not knowing whether they might have fuch a comforter again with them. After this the plague almoft quite ceafed, and when he took his leave of them said, that God had almoft put an end to that plague, and he was now called to another place, and thence he went to Montrofs to salute the church, where he sometimes preached, but spent moft of his time in private meditation, in which he was fo earnest, as night and day he continued in it. It was at that time the Cardinal confpired his death, by a counterfeit letter of a friend of Mr. Wisbart, the Laird of Kinnere, that with all possible speed he would come to him, since he was taken with a sudden fickneſs. In the mean time, did fixty armed men ly in wait within a mile and an half of the town of Montrofs to murder him in the way. The letter coming to his hands by a boy, who alfo brought him an horfe to ride on, he fet forwards with fome honest men there, who were his friends: but suddenly floping and mufting apace in the way, he returned, which they wondering at, asked the cause, to whom he said, I will not go, I am forbidden of God, and affuredly there is treachery: Let fome of you go to yonder place, and tell me what ye find, which they doing, foud to be truth, and on their return told Mr. Wisbart of it, whereon he faid, I know I shall end my life by that blood thirlty man, but it will not be on this manner. The time approaching for his meeting the gentlemen at Edinburgh, he took his leave and departed, and by the way, as he lodged with a faithful brother, James Watson of Innergowry, he got up in the night, and went into a yard, upon which two friends hearing, did secretly follow: there he walking in an alley for some space, breathing forth many fobs and deep groans, then fell on his knees, and his groans increafed, and then upon his face. Thofe that watched him found him thus weeping and praying an hour, after which upon his incoming, they aventured to ask him where he had been, saying, be plain with us, for we have heard your mourning, and saw your gestures; to whom with a fad countenance he faid, I had rather ye had been in your beds: but I will tell you, I am affured my warfare is near an end, and therefore pray with me, that I think not now when the battle is moft hot: upon which with weeping they faid, this is small comfort to us, to whom he anfwered, God shall fend you comfort after. This Realm shall be enlightened with the light of Christ's gospel as clearly, as any day since the days of the Apostles; yea, the house of God shall be built there, and shall not want in defpife of enemies the very copftone put upon it, nor will it be long before this shall be, and many shall notuffer after me, till the glory of God shall appear and triumph in defpife of Satan: but alas! if the people afterwards prove unthankful, then fearful shall all the plagues be that will follow. Then went he upon his journey to Leith: but hearing nothing of thofe gentle- men that were to meet with him, he kept himself retired and grew penfive, and being asked the reafon, faid, what differ I from a dead man: hitherto God hath used my labours for inftruction, and to the disclosing of darkness, and now I lurk as one that dare not fhow his face, hereupon his friends finding his defire to preach, faid, it is moft comfortable for us to hear you, but for
for the danger you are in, we dare not defire it. To whom he said, let God provide for me, as pleaseth him, if you dare hear; and so preached on the parable of the Sower, Mat. xiii. and a little after preached at Enneresk near Musselburgh, where was a great confluence of people, and whilft two Gray Friars then at the church door, whispered to such as came in, Mr. Wilfart observing said to the people, I pray you make room for these men, it may be they come to learn: and to them he said, come near, for I assure you, ye shall hear the word of truth, which this day shall seal up either your salvation or damnation. But whilft they still continued to disturb the people, he turned to them the second time with an angry countenance, and said, O ministers of Satan, will ye neither hear the truth, nor suffer others to hear it: depart and take this for your portion, God shall shortly confound and disclose your hypocrisy within this kingdom, you shall be abominable to men, and your places and habitations defolate. This he spake with much vehemency, and turning to the people said: These men have provoked the spirit of God into anger, and then proceeded in his sermon. After he preached in diverse places else, the people much flocking after him, and in all his sermons foretold the shortness of time he had to travel, and nearapproach of his death. Coming to Haddington, his auditoriy began much to decrease by the Earl of Bothwell, whose power was great there, and upon the infliction of the Cardinal had prohibited such, both of the country and town, from hearing. As he was going to church, he received a letter from the west-country gentlemen, and having read it, said to John Knox, who then diligently waited upon him, that he was weary of the world, because he saw men to be weary of God, for the gentlemen of the west have sent me word, that they cannot keep the meeting at Edinbegh. Mr. Knox wondering he should speak this so immediately before sermon contrary to his way, said, Sir, Sermon now approaches, I will leave you to your meditation. Then Mr. Wilfart walked up and down about half an hour, his sad countenance shewing the grief of his mind, and after went to the pulpit, where his auditoriy being small, he began in this manner: O Lord, how long shall it be, that thy holy word shall be despised, and men not regard their own salvation. I have heard of thee O Haddington, that two or three thousand persons would be at a vain and wicked play, and now to hear the messenger of the eternal God, can scarce one hundred be numbered. Sore and fearful shall the plagues be, which will ensue on such a contempt, with fire and sword shall thou be plagued, yea, thee Haddington in special, strangers shall possess, and the present inhabitants shall either in bondage serve their enemies, or shall be chased from their own habitations, and that because ye have not known, nor will know the time of your visitation. This prophecy was accomplished not long after, as Mr. Knox shews, and was then known to all; whilft the English made it a garrison, and after having burnt and spoiled a great part of it, the French that came as auxiliaries did help forward that stroke, so as this town did never recover her former beauty, nor men of such wisdom and parts, as did formerly inhabit it. That night was Mr. Wilfart apprehended in the house of Ormefonie by the Earl of Bothwell, suborned thereto by the Cardinal; The manner was thus. After sermon he took his last farewell of his friends in Haddington, John Knox would have fain gone with him, but he said, Return to your children, and God bless you, sufficient is one for one sacrifice. And then went to the house of Ormefonie with the Laird, and others who accompanied him, and after supper had a comfortable discourse of the love of God towards his children, upon which after singing Ps. li. he retired to his chamber, praying that the Lord, if it were his good will, would give comfort
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fortable rest to them that night: but at midnight the house was beset; and the Earl of Bothwell shewed the Laird of the house; it was in vain to resist, since the Governor and Cardinal were within a mile thence at Elphinstone, with a great power, but gave further assurances, that if they would open the gates, Mr. Wiffart should be safe; to whom the Laird of Ornessfane, with some Barons then present; said unto Bothwell (such was their love and fervency for the truth,) My Lord, if you keep promise, we will give you a band of manrent, and not only our fellows will serve you, but will procure all the professors of Louthian to do the same. But this was quickly broke upon Bothwell's account. And after was that holy and excellent man taken to St. Andrews, where the Cardinal, with others of the Clergy did with greatest vigour pursue him to death, at which time turning to the people, when he was brought to the fire, he said, I beseech you, be not offended at the word of God, for the torments which ye see prepared for me, but I exhort you to love the word and suffer patiently, and with a comfortable heart for the word's sake, which is your undoubted salvation; and everlasting comfort. I pray you also shew my brethren, that they cease not to learn the word of God which I taught, according to the measure of the grace given; for no persecution nor trouble in this world, and that this doctrine was no old wives fables, but the truth of God, for if I had taught men's doctrine, I should have had greater thanks from men; but for the words sake I now suffer, not sorrowfully, but with a glad heart; for this I was sent into the world, that for Christ's sake I should suffer this fire. Behold my face, you shall not see me change my countenance. I fear not the fire, and if persecution arise for the word's sake, fear not them that can kill the body, and have not power to hurt the soul. And when the fire was kindled, said, this torments my body, but no whit abates my spirit. Then looking towards the Cardinal he said. He who in such state from that high place feeds his eyes with torments, within a few days shall be hanged out of the same window, to be seen with as much ignominy, as he now leans there with pride. Which prediction was a few days after moft remarkably fulfilled.

Sect. 4. Seeing there is a publick account of Mr. Knox, that deservedly famous instrument for the work of Reformation in the church of Scotland, I forbear to give any repetition here: But this further, which is not infected in the account given of his life, and which with some assurance I can set down here, I thought worthy to relate. How before his death, when he was enforced to go over to St. Andrews from Edinburgh, because of the Queens faction, which was so strong in the town and the castle, kept out upon her interest, 3ca, was so weak, as to be helped to the church, leaning upon his servant Richard Balantine; he told the people, that the castle should vomit out the captain thereof, who was the Laird of Grange; and that he should not come forth of the gate, but over the walls, and that tower of the castle, which was called David's Tower, should run like a sand-glas; upon which one Mr. Robert Hamilton minister there, used some freedom to ask what warrant he had for this; he answered, Thou shalt see this with thine eyes; and know it to be truth; as it came to pafs, he being then in Edinburg, when the fore work of the castle was demolifhcd by the English cannon, and run down like a sandy bray, he faw the captain come over the walls with a flag in his hand, because the gate was then flopped with the rubbish, and how in this very circumstance the words of that man of God were accomplished. It was a little before this he fent by Mr. David Lindsay, a grave minister, to the Laird of Grange, that meffage which is published in his life, to whom he faid, you know I have loved this gentleman well, but flew him from me, that if he do
not give over his hostile opposition, he shall be brought over the walls with flame, and he hung up with his face to the sun, as after exactly fell out and said further of this, God hath assured me. Upon which delivery of that message by Mr. Lindsay, and a return of his answer both from the captain and secretary Lesbington, who was then there, he said, *I am sorry, that this should befall him, yet God assureth me, there is mercy for his soul, for the other I have no warrant that it shall be well with him, which words after, Grange dired Mr. David Lindsay to tell him over again before his death, (being truly penitent) and was much comforted therewith, and said, I hope to give some evidence of the Lord's making good the words of that man of God at my death, as fell out most discernibly both by his words and carriage at that time. A little before Mr. Knox's own death, he said, I have been fighting with spiritual wickedness, and have prevailed, I have been in heaven and tasted of the heavenly joys, and if it were the good will of the Lord, he hath so far subjected my spirit to his will, as to be content, though for many years, to lie under this pain and trouble, which now is upon me.*

Sect. 5. Some signal and alonifying providences for making way to the work of Reformation, there might be seen then, as a convincing witnes thereto, 1. That surprizing death of Henry II. of France, and within a little of Francis his son, to whom the Crown then by marriage with the young Queen was so far made over, as was like to bring both the civil and religious interest of the nation under the French yoke, and to have most enforcing shares therewith, for engaging such as were of greatest power then, to a compliance with their way, on whom they saw their hope so visibly depend. 2. That stupendious and lately act of the judgment of the Lord, in the death of Cardinal Berton, who was so great an adversary to the truth, and in whose hand the whole power civil and ecclesiastic seemed to be ingrossed; where all may see an extraordinary providence, and the immediate finger of God, except they will shut their eyes. 1. In the strange excitement of instruments to adventure thereon, against all human reason, or any appearance how they could withstand the power of the Popish party, both at home and abroad. 2. How some of those were enforced to declare their having no interest or motive else, but to avenge the blood of that excellent man Mr. Wishart; and of his being a sworn adversary to Jesus Christ and his truth, for which they were sent of the Lord. 3. So strange a concurrence of things to make this effectual, that in one morning, not above eighteen seised on that strong castle in St. Andrews, where he lived, and put near an hundred servants and workmen out of the gates, without tumult or blood. 4. How this was in a very few days after the sufferings of that man of God, yea, so manifest an accomplishment of his prediction before the world, that out of the place where the Cardinal was looking forth, with greatest joy to feed his eyes upon the sufferings of that blessed witness for Christ, he should be hung over as a spectacle of the holy judgment of God, whilst nothing then, in an ordinary way, could have seemed more improbable. 5. The remarkable preservation and return of all these, after they were sent prisoners to France, as Mr. Knox, who was then there, did with greatest assurance from the Lord promise.

Sect. 6. It is alonifying, and should be matter of wonder and praise for after ages, to consider that solemn time of the Reformation, when the Lord began to visit his church there, what a swift course the spreading of the kingdom of Christ had; and how Professors of the truth thronged in, amidst the greatest threatenings of thofe on whose side authority and power then was: O how
how astonishing and extraordinary was this appearance of the Lord there, on all ranks, to offer themselves willingly for the truth, and upon such of his servants, as were sent forth in the work of the ministry; with such zeal and oneness of spirit, as on the utmost hazard of their lives and estate, they did enter into covenant for mutual defence for the truth of Christ, and a free profession thereof, as is laid down at large in the history of the Reformation; first in the year 1557, and after at Perth in the year 1559, by the congregation of the west country, Perth, Dundee, Fife, Angus and Mearns; to concur, assist and consent together, and not spare labour, goods, substance, bodies and lives, (for these are the words thereof,) to maintain the liberty of the congregation, and every member thereof, against whomsoever that should trouble them for the cause of religion. Thus with no less evidence was this promise then accomplished in that age, as ever, Isa. xl. 31. That they who wait on the Lord, should mount up as with Eagle's-wings, should run and not be weary, &c. As Mr. Knox then shewed; for what was our force, faith be, or number to bring so great an enterprise to such a close, our very enemies can witness, yet in how great purity did God establish his true religion amongst us, and this we confess to be a strength given us from God, because we esteemed not ourselves wise in our own eyes, but knowing our wisdom to be foolishness before God, laid it aside, and followed that which was only approved of him. In this point could never our enemies cause us faint whilst for this we wrestled, that the reverend face of the first primitive and apostolick church, should be reduced to the eyes and knowledge of men, and in that point hath our God strengthend us till the work was finished, as the world may see. To this purpose doth Mr. Knox speak. Hist. of Reform. p. 303. 304.

Sect. 7. To witness the immediate finger of the Lord here, and that his people's strength then was in his presence going before them, it was remarkable, that sudden surprising darkness, and almost universal faintness, upon the spirits of all then engaged for the truth, a very little before this great deliverance, and settled calm in the church's establishment. For at that time, whilst the French kept Leith, and the Protestant party seemed most unite with a greater concurrence of the nobility and gentry, than had been formerly; such an amazing fear and terror, did then seize on most, as they withdrew without any discernible cause, that all might see the Lord's blessed concurrence, and such an high spring tide of his peoples zeal and resolution for the truth, to have no necessary connection with human assistance, and further encouragements from that airth. At which time Mr. Knox preaching at Stirling, whither most in that confusion and panic fear, were retired, had these words, as are at length set down in the church history. This day are our faces confounded. Our hearts have quaked for fear, when we were very few in number in comparison of our enemies, and had neither Duke or Lord, (for at this time Duke Hamilton was joined with the Lords of the congregation) except a very few. We called on God, and took him for our protector; and amongst us was heard no boasting of multitude, strength or policy: but only did God up to God the equity of our cause: But now since our number is multiplied, especially the Duke with his friends have joined with us, nothing was heard, but such a Lord will bring to many hundred spears, and this man hath credit to persuade the country. And thus we, who felt God's potent hand for our defence, have of late made flesh our arm. And a little after faith, it refeth that we return to our God, the Eternal God, who bears down to the death, that he may raise up again: and to have a remembrance of his wondrous deliverance to the praise of his own name, which if we do unfain'dly; I no more
more doubt, that this confusion and fear shall be turned into joy, honour and boldness, than I doubt that God gave victory to the Israelites, after they had been twice repulsed. Ye, whatever become of us, I doubt not but this cause in despite of Satan shall yet triumph in this realm, for as it is the eternal truth of God, so shall it once prevail, though for this time it be impugned, yea, it may be, God shall plague some, because they delight not in the truth, but for worldly respects favour it: and take away some of his dear-est children, but neither shall the one or other hinder this work, but in end it shall triumph. Hist. Reform. p. 209, 210. The verification of which did in a short time most remarkably follow.

Sect. 8. Such was the Lord's marvelous appearance then in the behalf of his church after so long a night of Antichristian darkness; as a few years, yea, months did bring forth that, which would have seemed improbable for an age to accomplish; that we find betwixt the suffering of the last Martyr for the truth then, Walter Mill, who was burnt at St. Andrews, April 1558. and the establishment of the Protestant Religion and civil sanction to the confes- sion of faith, by the three elects of the nation, with a full abolishment of Popery, which followed that treaty and transactation at Leith with the French in July 1560. was but little above two years, to shew what great things the Lord can do, above that his people could either think or ask, and how sometimes one year may bring forward that, which could not have been expected in many.

Sect. 9. Though it was not long before a sharp and searching trial was upon the Queen's arrival from France, and these essays put on foot by fidelity, to accomplish what open force could not do. Some memorable providences therewith are also worthy to be noticed. 1. That remarkable preface at her very first arrival of what after followed, when so extraordinary appearance the face of the heavens had, that besides the surface so moist, and corruption of the air, such a mist then was with a thick darkness, as scarce any could esp'y another for a little way, that day of her arrival, and two days after, nor did the sun once shine all that time to the discerning of any, so as it is set down in the History of the church, a more dolorous and astonis'hing face of the heaven hath not been since the memory of man, and in such a time of the year. 2. The Lord's breaking of the most visible essays, which then was againgt the Protestant interest, as in that memorable deliverance at that battle in the North against the Earl of Huntly, where the strength of the Popish party was much joined, and a few on the Protestant side, but with such a mar- velous assistance, as they broke that army, even whist by a correspondence, a considerable number of those that were joined with them, fell in with the enemy in the very heat of the fight. At which time of so remarkable a strait, Secretary Leithington being then present with the Earl of Murray, made a publick reference to the Lord by prayer in the heat of the conflict, to decide in the justness of their cause betwixt them and the adversary, and a most surprising victory quickly followed. The Earl of Huntly was killed, who was next to the Queen, the most leading person to promote the Popish interest, and carried dead upon an horse to the church in Aberdeen, where the Lady Petshgo, a grave and godly woman, amongst others who came to see him, burst out in amazement in these words. What stability is there in human affairs. For this is his body here lying upon the ground in so poor and desplicable a manner, who this very morning was by all judged the richest, wisest, and most powerful of any of the nation. 3. That memorable deliver- ance the church had a few years after, against the Queen's party at the battle of Lang-fide, by that truly good Regent the Earl of Murray, where the Lord's
immediate decision might be discernible to all, whilst the very Protestant interest there seemed to be at the stake, and in such visible hazard. 4. It was written in greatest letters for after ages to notice, that stupendous judgment in the tragicke close of this Queen, who wanted not notable accomplishments of nature, but had still contended how to weaken the Protestant interest, yea, to divide and break them amongst themselves after her return from France.

Sect. 10. It is true, the sufferings of the church of Scotland, resulting to blood for the truth, were not in such measure then as in other churches, though these few, who were thus called to seal the truth and testimony of Christ, were most remarkably owned with his countenance: but these also would be considered. 1. How then the Lord did in an extraordinary way call his people to an active testimony, and with such an immediate power on the spirits of all ranks, as put them in so short a time in a capacity, for appearing against the cruel tyranny of their adversaries, that to this present time it may be as a continued wonder before us. 2. We may see in what an other manner the Lord hath exercised his church there more than any other churches, with such fore continued conflicts upon the Government of his house, and purity of worship, that it may be truly said, it hath been the lot of the church of Scotland to have a more continued wrestling part with remarkably searching trials, than any of the churches abroad, and it may be said, that the part and service of his church peculiarly allotted her since the Reformation, hath been to contend for the crown and prerogative royal of Jesus Christ as the supreme head and king over his church, and on this great interest have the trials of his people been most remarkably stated.

Sect. 11. Whist after the sweet and comfortable calm the church had from that former bondage of Popery, there wanted now new assaults from such, who sought to invade the liberties of the kingdom of Christ there, and in a more sublimer manner, with cloister approches followed the same; It was seen and may be instructing to this day, what visible marks of judgment did the holy God put in the very entry of this trial on such as did first adventure to bear down the liberties of the church there. As 1. The Earl of Morton, one otherwise of most excellent endowments, who had been zealous against Popery, but observably swayed with that sad predominant of covetousness, which (whilst he was Regent, to have some legal claim to the Bishop's revenues) put him to essay some new mould for their establishment, with some abridgment of their power, that thus by compact he and others of the nobility then might have a considerable share of the church rents: but as both the end and midiles he followed for attaining thereto were sinful, and this was the first assault to the government of the Reformation. We may see a remarkable beacon for after times in the holy judgment of the Lord set up thereon; in his being thrown down, arraigned upon treason, beheaded, and his estate brought under forfeiture, though not without some convincing evidences at his death of serious repentance; and then did he call to remembrance Mr. Knox's last words to him whilst he was on his death bed: How the Lord had given him both wisdom, riches and honour, and then was calling him to the government of the nation, (for at this time he was chosen Regent) and that he would be careful to improve these for the Lord and good of his church: but if otherwise suffered him of a sad fall, and that his end should be shame and ignominy. 2. It was upon his fall, that violent man the Earl of Arran, then got up to the publick government of the nation, whose great aim was, but with more rage and fury, than had been formerly ellayed, to break the government of the church, and bring it in subordination to the civil magistrate; but in a few years did the righteous God so conspicuously break him, as he
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was enforced to fly from the court, and retire in disgrace, is put out off all publick truft, and at last upon the high-way, by a strange surprize of providence, was assaulted, and killed dead upon the place by my Lord Torriborel, a friend of the late Earl of Morton, and in revenge of his death. And for these wretched church-men, who then vigorously concurred, in such an attempt, such as Mr. John Douglas, Mr. Patrick Adamson, with some others also that followed after, a signal remark of the holy judgment of the Lord, was then made as notour before the world, as their defection from the truth had been: But having given some account thereof elsewhere, I forbear now to touch it further.

S E C T. 12. We may see in those times after the Reformation how there wanted not still some great and extraordinary instruments sent forth for the service of the church; of whom I have formerly given some account, as it might be clear to us of something from the Lord of an extraordinary and apostolick spirit with them; but since it is congruous to the present subject, and that I hope it may be for edification to the Reader; I shall yet add but some few passages more anent two of those instances, whom I have elsewhere touched. These great servants of Jesus Christ in their time, Mr. Robert Bruce, and Mr. John Welch, having such a convincing assurance of the truth thereof.

1. As to Mr. Bruce, after he had studied the laws in France, and was by his father's direction commanded after his return, to wait on the Court and Seffion for his affairs, there having a patent ensured for his being made one of the Lords of the Seffion, it was then the Lord began to work mightily upon his conscience, so as he could find no rest until he went to St. Andrews to Mr. Andrew Melvin, to study Theology, which his mother so much opposed, till he first denuded himself of some lands and casualties wherein he was infed (his father at that time being a Baron of greatest quality in the nation) and thus did he willingly shake off all impediments, laying aside his court apparel, to follow the Lord. But whilst he was there, did not want some sharp conflicts in this matter, so as walking at a certain time in the fields with that holy man Mr. James Melvin, he said, before I cast my self again in that torment of conscience, which I have had in resisting the call of God to the ministry, I would rather choose to pass through a fire of brimstone, were it half a mile long. After he had been for the truth enforced to leave the country, (which was several years after this, and settling in the ministry) upon his return he was advertized by Chancellor Seton, of the kings express order to discharge him to preach, yet said, he would not use his authority, but only request him to desist for nine or ten days, which he consented to, thinking it was a small import for so short a time: but he quickly found, how deep the smallest ceding upon his matters interest may draw, so (as he shewed after) that night his body was cast into a fever with the terror of his conscience, and he promised never to obey their commands any more. The manner of his death I have elsewhere touched. He had much longing desires before that, for his change, so as sometimes he said, I wonder how I am kept by my matter so long here, since I have lived already two years in violence. Meaning that he was then 72 years of age. From a grave and eminent minister of Christ, who was intimate with Mr. Bruce, I had this further account, how one day visiting him at his house, it was long before he came out of his study. But found by his face he had been weeping bitterly, and after told him some occasion of his grief, that having heard of the sharp sufferings of a godly minister of the gospel, in another country for the truth, yea upon the same account for which he had suffered confinement himself: He said, If I had been faithful, I might have also shed some of my blood for Christ as well as he, but he hath got the crown from us all: And that my grief
gras was not for what befell that godly man, but for my self. He had also related from him in private, a strange dream: How he had seen a great long book with black beards flying in the air, with many black fouls like crows about the same, and as it touched any of them, they fell down dead, upon which he heard a voice, which he said, was as audible, as he then heard him speak to him: Hec eft ira Dei contra Pastores Ecclesie Scoticae. Whereupon he presently fell a weeping, and crying to God, that he might be kept faithful, and not be one of those, that were thus struck down by a touch of his wrath, through defeating the truth. And said, when he awaked he found the pillow all wet, and drench’d with his tears. This was at a remarkable time also of the defection of many ministers there from the way of the Lord.

Sect. 13. This further account anent that famous servant of Christ, Mr. John Wels to what hath been formerly published, I shall here give in some few particulars, which I hope may be confirming and edifying to the reader. 1. That witness he bore for the Lord, upon his journey to the assembly of the church at Aberdeen, whereon his after imprisonment and exile was slated; and about which he had been so much press’d upon his spirit to go thither, for owning the liberties of the church, which so visibly were then struck at by the magistrate. His words I shall set down. ‘Never a greater providence found I in my life-time, nor I found this last time in my journey: And here I thank my God for it, and I allow, that if this blood of mine should go for it, it was acceptable service we did to God that day. I know there were many, who sent up their prayers to God for the maintenance of this liberty of the church, which I am sure the Lord heard. And I can say, the room was never yet that I came to, but I found the Lord meeting me there, and confirming that as acceptable to him, so as I never found a sweeter providence since I was born, and sees that the Lord’s hand is not shortened. O Scotland, O that thou would repent and mourn for the contempt of so great a light, that hath shined in thee, thou shouldst see as glorious a day of the power of God in this island, as ever was seen in any church before. What is it to the Lord? And let any think of it what they will, I know who has approved me, for it is the running of the gospel thro’ this whole island, and that the net of Christ may be spread over all, that if it were possible we may catch in a world into it, that they might not perish, is that which we seek. And when I look to that eternity of wrath abiding the wicked, I must say, who would not pity a world of sinners’. This was preached by him at Air, a very little before his imprisonment, which having occasion to see, as it was written from his own mouth, I thought truly worthy of remark, and to set down here. 2. As also that testimonie he gave in publick against that great assault, the church was then meeting with from Prelacy. ‘I know there will come a shaking time, and the glory of the world will bewitch many, but tell me, received ye the spirit of God by his lordly miniftity of the Prelate, or by the pure miniftity of his servants? And shall we begin in the spirit and end in the fleas? This truth we have believed, professed and subscribed, the King and nobility abjuring alio and condemning that wicked hierarchy of the church. This is a thing that hath been spoken long since, that there behoved to be a trial in Scotland. If this new erected domination be it, leave it to the Lord; but if ever I had familiarity with him, and if ever his spirit sealed any part of the scripture to me, the purity of the gospel, and kingdom that hath been in this island, was from God. And that this new erected kingdom of Prelacy is not from him, was sealed to my conscience, and those are names of blasphemy, (for I count him a blasphemer, who takes to him the proper stiles that belong to the Lord)
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4. Lord) since there is but one Lord, and ye shall not be called such, faith Christ to his disciples, but if any desire to be great, let him be your servant.

3. Is it not the mark of the Woman cloathed with the sun, that is persecuted in the wilderness, and has the moon under her feet? but it is the mark of the Beast, that speaks blasphemies against God, and makes war with the saints, and to ministers, and men are become earthly minded, who were wont to be capable of spiritual things, there must be a fiery trial to follow with it, and at another. There is a fword coming, which shall be drunk with blood, the Lord knows from whence it shall come, but I cannot be quit of it, but that this land, which is defiled with blood, must be cleansed with blood again; but if we could be humbled, and run to God by prayer, it may be, he would send peace in our days. Remember this poor Church, that's like to be brought under with their masked and men tworn abominations, which are creeping in piece and piece. Remember these things with tears, and I am assured, that the Lord shall lend as glorious a deliverance to this church, as was ever heard of. These few notes, having such assurance of the truth thereof, I thought worthy to be noticed. That testimony he gives also to the crofs of Christ after his exile, in a letter to my Lady Marr out of France, having the fame by me, I shall here touch. I thank my God in Christ, for all the gracious consolation it pleaseth him to vouchsafe on me in the days of my affliction, whereby I perceive the good pleasure of his will to minister unto me comfort; that not only with patience, but with joy I may bear his crofs, and I dare not but give testimony, that the Lord has been faithful in his promises, and has remembered his mercy and covenant towards me, has made his yoke easy and his burden light, and has made his consolations abound, far beyond all that ever I yet suffered. It's true it cannot but be sometimes grievous, to remember the glory that I have seen both in publick and private in the communion of the saints, from which I am excluded, yet it pleaseth my Lord to minister such tranquility of mind unto me, that I cannot but wonder at, and of these exceeding great and incredible joys, and wherewith I now fee by experience it pleases him to accompany his own crofs. O how sweet a thing it is to suffer for Christ! how glorious and rich treasures are there, that lie hid under that vile and ignominious vail of the crofs. The world yea the princes and wife of this world, know not the glorious and unspakeable joys, that are joyed with the crofs, yea who knows it but he that hath experience thereof? Certainly if the adversary knew what joy it were to the children of God, to be under the crofs, instead of being instruments thereof, they should envy them for so great a good. Blessed be my Lord, that ever it was his will, and that it entred in his heart, thus to make manifest his love to me, and to vouchsafe this grace, in causing me to suffer for his names sake so much. I thank my God in Christ, for unto me it's a sure argument of his accounting me worthy of that kingdom, for the which he hath caused me with some gladness and joy to suffer, and for the which to give some readiness to suffer more; surely affliction is a testimony and seal of the love of God.

S E C T. 14. In this hour of trial then on the church of Scotland, when Prelacy was making so formidable an assault, it is truly worthy remark, and to be transmitted to after times, with what zeal and feriousness the faithful ministers of Christ then were concerned to stand in the breach, as interceffors betwixt
betwixt an highly provoked God, and his people, under whose hand so great a ruin was like to fall, which in two instances, (besides many else might be given) I shall touch, having such allured evidence of the truth, and certainty thereof. 1. In the Year 1596. upon Tuesday the thirtieth of March, the ministers and other commissioners of the General Assembly met at Edinburgh, found it duty by themselves to con vene in the church at nine a clock. One of the doors being shut, and the other kept open for the meeting only; for humbling themselves and wrestling with God, to pursue a national, as well as a personal reconciliation, the whole number amounting to four hundred of ministers and some select christians and elders of the church with them. Where after prayer, and Mr. John Davidson, (whose life I have elsewhere touched,) chosen to preside amongst them, he caused the third and thirty fourth chapters of Ezekiel to be read, and then said: Seeing it had pleased the Lord to move them to choose him, who was the unwortheft and unmeetest of the number for that place, of a preacher that day, they were not to look that he came to be cenfured by them, but to use the authority of a teacher, as to hearers, without any prejudice to that liberty given them of the Lord, to try the spirits, whether they be of God or not. He showed what was the end of their meeting, that it was the confession of sins, and to promise a forsaking thereof, to turn unto the Lord, and enter into a new covenant and league with him, that thus by repentance they might be the meeter to provoke others to the same. In which he was followed with that power for moving of their spirits in application, that within an hour after they were entred into the church, they look'd with another countenance than that wherewith they entered. And whilst he exhorted them to that retired work of meditation and acknowledgment of their sins, whilst then together, for the space of a quarter of an hour, they were thus humbling themselves, yea such a joint concurrence with those sighs and groans, and with shedding of tears amongst the most, every one provoking another by their example, and the teacher himself by his, so as the very church resounded, and that place might worthily be called Bochim, for the like of that day had not been seen in Scotland, since the Reformation, after prayer and publick confession, he treated upon that scripture, Luke xii. 22. wonderfully aslifted by the spirit of the Lord for the work, both of calling down and raising up, which exercise continued, till near one a clock afternoon. And when they were to disolve, they did there solemnly join, and enter into a new league and covenant with God, holding up their hands thereto, with that sincerity and weight, as was a moving sight to all present. And that afternoon by the General Assembly, was the renewing of the covenant in particular Synods concluded.

Sect. 15. At the Synod of Fife met at Dunfermlin May 12, 1596. where Mr. James Melvin did preside as Moderator. The articles for reformation of the church set down in the last Assembly were read in publick, and ordained to be in effect, and thereafter did Mr. Melvin gravely discourse upon the last chapter of Jofua, with that evidence and demonstration of the power of God therewith, as all who were there were enforced to a strange and unusual motion, with groans and tears, yea then to some retired personal meditation for searching each of them their own ways. And after some time did he make publick confession in name of the rest, of unthankfulness, negligence, coldness of spirit, instability, unsuitableness in speech and conversation, as too visibly fashioned after the world, yea thus with trembling and weeping, for the misusage of so honourable a calling, and the fear and dread of that weight of the wrath of God lying over them, for the blood of so many souls.
souls belonging to their charge, did then weep bitterly, and pour out their souls before the Lord, pleading for grace, and an effectual help to be strengthened against these evils. After which, the Lord having been so marvelously present, a minute of this solemn work was by consent of the Synod to be inserted, both for their own use, and an example to posterity in the publick Register.

CHAP. VII.

Sect. I. 
HAVING some occasion to touch this subject of the Lords marvelous appearances for the Church in Scotland, in that great work of Reformation from Popery, wherein I designed only but a short account, which otherwise, were it followed, should be a work by itself. Before I leave this, I hope it may not be unuitable to speak a few words concerning the present state of the Church of Christ there, which with some confidence, as before the Lord, I may say, is far from the bitterness of the spirit, prejudice at the persons of any, or intended reflection that way: But for the truth's sake, upon which the trials of his people have been so remarkably there stated, which in some few particulars, I hope in the words of truth, and soberness; I shall here offer.

Sect. 2. 
First, It is known, how very sad, as to all visible appearances, the case of the church there hath been and now is, by the blessed difposal of the Lord, whose ways are holy and just, and thus graciously sees fit to assign a different lot and service, not only to several ages, but to particular churches; he hath in faithfulness put this cup of trial and affliction in his peoples hand; and now for sixteen years past hath a most remarkably suffering time gone over their head, nor as to the ministers there only, who found grace to abide faithful, and keep the word of his patience in this hour of great temptation: But most universally through the whole land, to christians of all ranks and conditions, yea in such a manner, with that frequency of assaults, as I judge, if a particular account were given, it could hardly be credited at a distance; and which is astonishing, that no length of time, no appearances of the Lord, nor these most obvious remarks the adversary might have had of his hand being against them, both in their Councils and actings for this end, have yet been a let thereto; but at this day their violence seems to be a length beyond all that hath formerly been, and the waters to grow without any discernible abatement thereof, yea I must say, such a persecution under these circumstances is now followed; as cannot easily find a parallel from any times past.

Sect. 3. 
For the cause and grounds hereof, though it may be judged, that few at a distance are so unconcerned, with whom the Protestant interest hath any regard, as not to enquire and know, why the Reformed Church of Scotland should be thus exposed to these fore and continued sufferings, (nor hath there hitherto wanted some serious endeavours for clearing of this to the world) yet I may say, (under some weight of present duty, and I hope it may not be unfeasable, or unnecessary) am pressed to give this short account to any, who enquire, and would design an establishment of their spirit in the way of the Lord, That in opposition to Prelacy, so expressly contrary to the rule of the Scripture, and in adherence to this cause and truth, that Jesus Christ is a King, and hath a kingdom and government in his Church distinct from the kingdoms of the world, or any civil government there. A truth, to which he did himself so expressly bear witness, and sealed with his blood, and for standing fast by these dearly purchased liberties thereof, hath
this sad and long continued persecution of his church and people there been obseverably flated. Nor can this be strange that such as ever knew the fellow-ship of the crofs of Christ, and what it was to have their soule under the power and authority of the truth, should be found so tenacious and peremptory in their testimony to so great a piece of his interest, whilk it is now called for in the seafon therof, yea to rejoice in their sufferings upon such an account, when these are so undeniably clear, about which I may say, (not of late) I have fought to have my own spirit persuaded:

1. That the great Lawgiver and Head of his church doth so expressly dis-charge all Lordship and Domtion over his church, yea therewith also all titles of honour to be assumed by them, not to these only who by his institution are fixed officers of his house, until his coming, but even to his Apolliches, who then were extraordinary Officers, both as to their calling and endowments in the church, as is clear, Luke xxii. 24, 25. Matth. xx. 25.

2. That it is manifest, the government of the church under the New Te-

tament is so evidently Ariftocratisch, with a party amongst the officers of Christ in the administration of their power, and a subordination of the lesser parts to the greater, and for this that apostolick pattern and practice held forth for after ages so expres, and which so clearly holds out not only what was de facto their practice; but as a rule binding de jure to the church, and a piece of the word written for our instruction, to be kept till the second com-
ing of Christ, 1 Tim. vi. 4. yea on such moral and perpetual grounds is held forth, as in Acts xv. and other scriptures, convincingly clear.

3. That it is manifest, (and I judge few can be so grossly ignorant amongst the advocates themselves to debate this;) that the name, office, qualificati-

ons and ordination of a Bishop held forth in the word, hath no respect further, than to all the ministers of the gospel, and that a Bishop, which in theoriginal is an overseer of the flock only, and a preaching Presbyter, is one and the same office, for as the one holds forth ejus industrium, so the other Sapientia maturitatem. which I leave to any to consider in comparing these scriptures.

Acts, xx. 28. 1 Pet. i. 2. Phil. i. 1. Tit. i. 5. considered with v. 7.

4. That it is demonstratively clear, Jesus Christ hath power of the keys for discipline and government, in foro externo, and where that scripture grada-
tion is so observable for the church's edification in the way of discipline and cenfures; that it is from one to two or more, and from them to the church, as

Matthew xviii. 15, 16. Likewise from a lesser to an higher judicatory, as

Acts xv. whilst on the contrary by this establishment of Prelacy the course is visibly retrograde from many to one, in whom the final decision must reft. And it is sure, if the rule of the written word have weight, the government of the church under the New Testament is committed not to one, but to a plurality of Presbyters, who are not only to feed, but to oversee by an expres appointment of the Holy Ghost, Acts xx. 28. Yea, the highest acts of jurisdic-
tion, such as Excommunication is committed to the church and ordinaryoffi-
cers theof, we may see Matthew xviii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. v. 4. Yea, how this was not practised by one, but by many, 2 Cor. ii. 6. That censure being in-

flicted by many, &c. as also the power of Ordination, 1 Tim. iv. 14. which was to be by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, so as both the keys of doctrine and discipline are expressly committed to the community of Prefbyters, without giving the greatest Prelate, that ever claimed such a title, any room by himself there.

5. In all the New Testament such an office as this of Prelacy different from an ordinary Pastor, cannot possibly be found, but whilk that roll and catalogue of the officers of the church of Christ, and their qualifications, even to the office
office of a Deacon, is so express, both as to ordinary and extraordinary officers is clear, 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11. 12. There can be found no such office of scripture and apostolick institution here, as a Bishop over his pretended Diocese: and I hope it is not under debate, that the scripture and pattern of the apostolick church is more ancient and authentick, than any practice of after times, whilst the streams began early to be polluted, and this mystery of iniquity in that pretended Hierarchy and precedence in the church did even in the days of the apostles begin to stir.

6. It is clear that whatever of a double honour by the scripture is given and allowed to Officers of the church; is upon no ground of prebeminence in jurisdiction: but their labouring in the word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v. 17. which I judge is an act, wherein no Prelate will challenge a singularity above the ordinary Pastors of the church, nor upon that ground, Mal. ii. 7. that the priests lips should preserve knowledge, who account the preaching of the word so far below the grandeur of their office, except at some extraordinary and festival time.

7. As there is a beautiful order in the christian church, which we may see in these extraordinary officers of Christ, his Apostles then had above ordinary pastors, whose endowments also were extraordinary for that time, which I judged no Bishop can claim to; yet is there no such thing, in an office of the same kind, as a majority of power or priority of degree, not an Apostle, or one Evangelist above another; or one Deacon above another: and should there be only in the office of ministers an inequality? It is sure the scripture hath no such warrant for inverting such an excellent order.

8. And is it not on the same ground of an expediency and warrantableness of a Bishop over a Diocese, or a Primate over a national church, for preserving unity, that by undeniable consequence an Universal Bishop over all the churches must follow, as a gradual difference between them: Yea, how the Romifi Hierarchy did first begin there, it may be demonstrably evident.

9. If that power given to the officers of the church of Christ be alone ministerial, to declare and execute his will, and but one Lord over his house, it must then be undeniable, that Prelacy is inconsistent therewith, which is so clear an incroaching on his Regal and Despotic power, as master over his house. And it is remarkable, how the Apostle Peter, on whom any such claim of Hierarchy in the church hath been first founded, is so express, 1 Pet. v. 3. Not as being Lords over Gods heritage, but examples to the flock.

10. Doth not this office visibly bring therewith a confounding two distinct jurisdictions and callings in one person, as it is incompatible with the kingdom of Christ, which is spiritual and not of this world, so also with the condition of his servants, who are not to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life; but give themselves to the word and prayer, so as the Apostles counted even the service of tables, and administering to the poor extrinsick to their proper work and calling.

11. Besides, that the sad and undeniable experience of this way, as destructive to the church, and that which is the end of the church government, the edification of the body, doth not this of its own nature most evidently tend to bring in ambition into the church? Against which the Apostle John with such indignation speaks in his second epistle, v. 9. in the person of Diotrephes, to give loose reins to prophanity, whilst that which should be the proper work of many to oversee, (and who is sufficient for these things) is here put wholly over upon one, and but a shadow thereof left to inferior officers.
12. And can it be strange, that all who truly loves the truth there, should with such seriousness be prett in their adherence to the government of Christ in his church, which they know to be that good and old way, wherein so innumerable a company of most known, tender, solid and lively christians, since that blessed Reformation of the church there from Property, have received the spirit, and been sealed to the day of Redemption: Yea, have found such abounding comforts of the Holy Ghost to their testimony, and suffering upon this interest, and which also hath had so eminent an attestiation, by the conversion as well as building up of many thousands now taken up into glory, and pillars in his temple, where they shall no more go out. Yea, such a piece of the truth of Christ, to which so great a witness hath been born, by many of the most eminent servants of the Lord, of whom in sobriety I may say, there hath not been greater known to the church, since the times of the Apostles, by whose wrestlings, prayers, tears and sufferings, it hath been through the good hand of the Lord upon them, transmitted to us, and which is not our interest alone, but a truth we stand under to profess.

I shall but further add that indispensible obligation the churches of Christ in Britain and Ireland more peculiarly now stand under, by the oath and covenant of God, which though it were in a thing indifferent, should be determining, how much more when this solemn tie is but superadded to that, which in itself doth so clearly, and on moral grounds, bind and oblige?

Sect. 4. It may be matter of astonishment how much the sufferings of the church of Scotland, have been heightened and now are, by the adventuring of the ministers of Christ there, upon the authority of their master, to preach the gospel amongst the people, notwithstanding the magistrates discon- nance and prohibition: When both a convincing necessity, and their longing desires to hear did enforce a call hereto; yea, how this should be challenged in a land, where the scripture and doctrine of the reformed religion is not publicly disowned. It hath been far from the least intended irritation to provoke any, much less the magistrate, I can say, with the furthest assurance and would judge, that the adveraries themselves do allow these so far the use and exercise of reason, nor can want some enforcing conviction of this on their conscience; that they would not expose themselves to such visible hazard, labour, weariness, with many pressing difficulties that way, yea, with so little of any known outward encouragement, if some greater interest did not preponderate it, which should lie more near than all enjoyments in the earth: That it is the service of their blessed master, for which nothing must be too dear, so as they may finish their course with joy, and this ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. But since many upon mistake, or at a distance may be prejudged, or put to some enquiry here aent: I hope it shall not be found unnecessary to give this short touch, what pressing constraint of duty the ministers of Christ there are under, for adventuring thus, and on grounds so convincingly clear. 1. That it is a matter of confession, as to their ministry and the authority thereof from Jesus Christ alone, though in a mediate way by the church, and upon an hazard greater than all the kings of the earth can threaten, which is not their's to subject unto the civil power, yea, with this further enforcement thereto, that this restraint now put upon them to exercize their ministry is expressly owned by virtue of that supremacy, attuned by the magistrate over all church causes, as well as persons, and as being the fountain of church power: A claim, which without the furtheft of blasphemy, is incommunicable to angels or men, which is the alone prerogative of the Son of God, the head and builder of his church. 2. That their ministry both
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in its office and exercise comes under no sentence of the civil magistrate, whatever subjection they own as to their persons and outward concerns: Nor can a restraint be put upon them here, to make void that authority and warrant they have from Jesus Christ, and conveyed by his church; but as an ecclesiasticall cenfure. 3. That it is clear the great commiffion, wherewith they are cloathedit to preach the gospel, bounds them to no particular place, but their primary relation is such to the church universal, so as wherever they be, and upon an evident call they stand there related, as the ministers of Christ to dispence his ordinances. 4. And is it not morally binding and of force to the times of the New Testament, as well as of the Old, that the priests lips should preserve knowledge and the people to seek the law at their mouth as the messengers of the Lord of Hosts, Mal. i. 7. Yea, should be the more pressing at such a day, when evident hazard is so many from Atheism, Quakerism and Popery: and many also ready to faint under the preflures of an afflicting time: How onerous and pressing a duty it is to comfort the feebleminded, to support the weak, 1 Thes. v. 14. to draw forth the breasts to the hungry, unto whom the ordinances of Christ are suited to be as their very natural food, and have such continued need to be confirmed thereby. 5. Yea, it is under a greater penalty than any magistrate can threaten. They stand accountable for discharge of that talent, given them of the Lord, with a necessity laid upon them, to preach the gospel of Christ, 1 Cor. ix. 16. Who have their master’s eye continually upon them, how they answer to that power and trust committed to his minifters; that in season and out of season they should follow their work and no latitude here for subjecting it to human rules, where the great Law-giver hath given forth his mind. 6. No contempt of the magiftrates authority or just power can be obtruded in this matter, except they own it upon this, that the ministers of the gospel in Scotland dare admit no unlimited, or implicit obedience to their acts; but with a preference herein to the express commands of their matter, and whether it be better to obey God than man, (if they own subjection to the scripture) let their own confcience then judge. 7. It is sure, no fuch debate was in the primitive times of the church, whilst the Roman Emperors, (though heathen) were in things lawful owned and subjected to, as the magiftrate, when the ministers of Christ then, in opposition to all their Edicts, and greeft fury of perfecution, ceafed not to preach the gospel, yea, and this way, (that is now called fo irregular and feditious) was not the christian church, for the first two Centuries, with fuch marvelous appearance of the power of God, brought in and built up? And as it is the fame truth and doctrine which is now preached, I hope that with much confidence we may own the fame scope to pre-judge none, much lefs the magiftrates in their right; but to pursue the treaty of the gospel, with all ferioufines for their embracing that great offer of reconciliation by Christ, and to pref the indifpenfably neceffary study of holines. But if magiftrates this day in being chrifrians pretend fome higher power and authority, I hope they must take themselves to the Bible for this warrant, and fhew if they have fuch power given, pretend what they will, which is deftructive to the truth and to counteract the express institutions of Jesus Christ in his word. Oh how sad and afftonifhing is it, that when the great law-giver and head of his church hath given princes and rulers fo fully their due, and eftablihed their rights, they will thus dare to rob him of his, and keep no bounds nor marches with the kingdom of Christ, but will thus break over to invade his intereft: who muft reign until all his enemies be made his footfool, and affuredly will carry back the war on themselves, and in his blessed time appear againft fuch evil neighbours, as will not be wife, and instruct this day, who are the judges of the earth,
earth, and see these dreadful marks have been of an holy avenging God, in the quarrel of his church upon the greatest kingdoms and states. 8. This great trust committed to the ministers of the gospel is not theirs only; but the interest of the povertier and generations to come, to stand close by the truth, and these dear bought liberties of the kingdom of Christ. 9. I must further add, that convincing and undeniable seal the Lord hath given to his own ordinances, and ministry of his servants now of late, when under most visible threatenings and discomptenance of the magistrate is such, as this continued and amazing opposition thereto seems to be a more than ordinary counteraffecting of light, and doing despite even to the spirit of grace under such clear evidences of his work.

Sect. 5. I must further add, in giving some account of the present state of the church in Scotland, now amidst these sad and astonishing times, which have of late gone over her, how demonstratively manifest this is, if our eyes be not in a strange manner withheld from considering the work of God, and his appearances in mercy, as well as judgment, that he hath not forsaken his church and people there, nor doth his truth and tenderness fail: But is such, as we may this day, with no less astonishment see, yea, to arrest our eyes here-with, in the great restoring providences of this time, than of such as have been hitherto most breaking: and the gain thereof, for all that is come, which I fear not to say, hath a visible proportion to the greatest sufferings and losses; yea, rather to exceed the fame. And whilst we wait and wonder, that the holy God comes not our way, who are thus too ready to flint our thoughts by limiting of him, he calls us to see him meeting his people another way, beyond all they ever could have thought of. This being a duty of such weight, and that with some evident suitableness falls in with the present subject, to observe the great things of the Lord for his church: yea, a duty (could we be faithful therein) which wants not a promise to have more given in, and laid to our hands for observation. I shall but in a few words touch some convincing, and memorable providences for his church there, as some part of that rent and testimony of these sad suffering times, to the way of the Lord.

1. This witness we must bear to what in these times he hath done for his church there, and the greatest Atheists may see, that not in an ordinary way of providence hath her interest and preservation been hitherto carried on: But whilst all visible advantages were on the adversaries side, their enmity at such a height, nor their will wanting to their power, yea, with such frequent assaults and different methods for a breaking of his poor church, which we have seen with our eyes; yet is this truth sure, persecuted, but not forsaken: cast down, but not destroyed: the church sinking, but not perished, and amidst the flame, but not consumed, to witness that her God lives, and is still the same, yea, doth own the same interest and cause; though his appearance now be in another manner.

2. We have yet seen, if we would seriously observe, no remarkable concurrence of sad and cruelling things have been from the Lord for his peoples trial, but with some obvious tendency thereof to as manifold an use and advantage, whilst in this, human reason could never have supposed what hath been the product of these strange times, or have judged the conclusion by the premises.

3. In this time we have been called to that great appearance of the Lord against his adversaries in their breaking, turning them out of their places, who had first moved, as the great leading instruments to bring in Prelacy, and for breaking, so far as they could, the church of Scotland, and cause to sad a ruin there. Yea, how this was in so short a time when least expected, that diverse
of them had not three years together, to enjoy that sad conquest they had fought, to found on the ruins of the work of God there, and share in that spoil, which with such confidence they had then divided amongst them. What I write hereof, with some confidence I may say, is with no prejudice to the persons of such, but should own the more tendernefs and compassion to any, when once brought low: But since the holy judgment of the Lord, and his glory herein is so eminently concerned, and that this convincing witnesses to the truth hath been written in greatest letters for the obervation of the age, I could not pass it without some remark; yea, to bring the remembrance thereof before others, who will adventure to follow that way, on which the holy God hath set up so remarkable a beacon before their eyes. Oh, that such would consider, what reward these have got, who so vigorously then acted for the Prelatick interest in Scotland, and how the foundation of it was laid in the visible ruin of such, as were the greatest promoters thereof, as a publick warning from the Lord against such a way, and that the curse then of Hiel the Bethelite, for building of that secured place, against which the Lord served such an interdiction, hath not there fallen to the ground, and I am persuaded shall be made more remarkable yet in the close: Yea, how that great man, who then acted in the highest place and authority, should at last after so remarkable a fall, die in a remote place of the world, and in a kind of exile, (whatever cover it had,) who turned so many of the godly, both ministers and others from their dwellings, and some most eminent from their own land, and dipt his hand in the blood of some faithful and choice witnesses to his truth. And his death by so strange a fall, and in that astonishing manner circumfumtionate, as hath been shewed by some who were then in the place. It is true, the judgments of the Lord are a great depth, and with much fear and sobriety should we adventure to apply the same: but there may be no less to fear unfaithfulness in our being not more observers thereof, when in such legible characters they are oft written, so as all who run may read.

4. That publick witnesses, which hath in these times been given to the truth and cause, (on which the church there is suffering) by some at their death, who did before vigorously oppose themselves thereto, as it is an evidence of the Lord's eminent appearance, and dominion he exercised over the consciences of men, is a seal also to his truth, with the dying breath of such who were once known haters thereof, which should call for a grave remark. There have not wanted signal influences hereof: But amongst others publicly known and noted, I shall give this general touch of two gentlemen of considerable note, and interest in the Nation; the one in the West some years ago, the other but of late in the South, whose consciences were most remarkably seized on by the dread and terror of God, to the amazement and instruction of all about them, most especially for their being involved in the publick defection of the time, and for concurrence in the abjuration of the covenant, which after much wrestling with tears, whilst the pain and anguish of their spirits was discernibly above their sickness, they did then witness, how above all, this guilt did most pressingly touch them, and lay in the way betwixt their souls and peace with God: Yea, with all seriousness befeecning others not to adventure on that which drew so deep on their consciences! though I must add also, they were not thus more publick instructors to the Nation, how dreadful it is to give the interests of the church a wrong touch, than examples of the freedom and riches of grace.

5. We have seen a change of weapons the adversary hath made, for having a snare thus laid in ambush, and with a smiling face, whilst adder's poison was under
under their lips; but yet so as the bait with their further care could not hide the hook, but that the Lord graciously hath still helped to some clear discerning, and advertence thereto, even whilst the net was most closely spread under their feet: Yea, that most dreadful clay, that ever they followed, (with Balak) to lay a flumbering block in the church's way for her halting, as the most allured means to prevail, and divide the godly amongst themselves, hath been in some measure, through the good hand of the Lord made void, and I trust shall be yet more, by some close uniting of his peoples hearts there together, and with a more watching and jealous eye over the plausible intiminations of such, who are the known adversaries of the truth. Nor can it be past without a remark of the righteous God's recompensing them with breaches of another kind.

6. The tried faith and establishment of his people in thissearching time, is again beyond the faddest loss we can reckon on, 1 Pet. i. 7. That the trial of your faith, which is more precious than that of gold, may be to the praise, honour and glory at the appearance of Jesus Christ, anent which their enemies have been found liars, who had reckoned e'er now to break and faint them from their duty. And it is sure, the more sharp and shaking a trial is, it is so much the more one of those rare opportunities of a chriitian's life to be seriously followed, that it be not loft: Yea, which, with some proportion to the measure thereof, should bring in more abundant joy and peace, than any loss or grief that hath gone before. And is such an account, that through grace hath been given to this church there, to be small in our eyes?

7. That honourable testimony given to the cross of Christ by so many suffering witnesses, to the conviction and astonishment of their adversaries is such (could an account be particularly given of what hath been remarkable and publick this way) as should be a sweet and large record for confirming others in the truth: How they never knew divine strength more sensibly, and the power of Christ resting on them, than when called to suffer for his name, and were most pressed above their own strength, that there is under the cross a length beyond report, or testimony of others to be known, what sweet hours of fellowship with God are to be then found; yea, whilst something more than ordinary allowance did then wait upon it, and what company the scripture hath been sometimes in a prison; or their necessary retirement from others, through the violence of these times, beyond all they ever knew hereof before.

8. We have seen also the truth then have a most discernible triumph when the adversary seemed most to prevail; yea, thus to gain that interest by a suffering testimony thereto even on a scaffold, so as the begun fall of Prelacy, and most remarkable spreading of the kingdom of Christ through the land might be seen to follow, yea, that which would have looked as hopeless and an irrecoverable froke, of which in an ordinary way none could see a comfortable outgate thereof to have a most effectual tendency to the church's greatest advantage.

9. We have seen the marvellous providences, which have followed the church there in such remarkably sad and trying times, that when it looked as a winter seafon, then should the spring break up, and the wilderness blossom, by so great an increase to the church, beyond all that had formerly been seen, when outward things did most smile: A people formed for the Lord, and made willing in the day of his power to follow him in these parts, where but a few years before, and whilst no visible difficulties did then lie in the way, a few serious christians would have been a sign and a wonder to all about them. Yea, how thus the church hath been fed under the rod, and the scattering of the ministers
of Christ through the land by the violence of these times, to have tended more for the spreading of the gospel, than could ever in an ordinary way have been looked for in their former state. Oh! are our eyes shut, so as not to see this marvelous work of the Lord, which he hath brought about in these times, which without a strange inadvertence may be seen to be the immediate finger of God, and something above all second causes, how such a death-like wound should make way for so blessed and effectual an healing, yea, which may be a comforting preface of some excellent building yet of his house there, by such a preparing of materials for the same?

10. Thus hath the Lord appeared there in this time, to cause a suffering lot be the first means to enter and fix some most remarkably in his way, and for a serious owning of the truth, than which nothing upon any ordinary grounds raised, could have been less hoped: and thus their hearts gained and pulled in by that means, whereon so many have stumbled and broke, that truly it may be seen, this must be an immediate touch of his power, before which there is no standing. Were it expedient, I could give in some special instances to witness this, and I hope there be not a few such, who can date their first acquaintance with the truth of the gospel, not only from a suffering time to universally upon the church, but a peculiar call thereof in their own personal case, and in such a marvelous way, how Jesus Christ did thus endear and commend himself to their soul.

11. That he hath graciously taken some service off his peoples hand under much visible weakness, and when they had but a little strength to keep by his word, and not to deny his name, yea, to contend and wrestle against so strong a tide of opposition to the truth, is a gain to be reckoned upon, unexpreffibly beyond all the losfs and sufferings of the time, for thus hath a rent been payed in to the praise and glory of the church's Head, and more honourable testimony, which could not in that manner have been accessible in the greatest outward calm of a prosperous state.

12. How remarkably hath the Lord prevented the scandal of the cross, as to many in this time, with that surprising outcome of encouragement and resolution in some to adventure for the Lord, and embark with his suffering interests, where least could have been expected: Yea, in such where an eager pursuit and gripping after the world, would have been most feared from what was their natural disposition, to commend that marvelous conquering power of grace, before which there is no possible standing, that can make it then easy for men to part with their right-eye, or their right-hand. And hath it not been astonishing, how far many have been found above themselves, or what in an ordinary way could have been looked for in their appearance for the truth, and confession before men, when they were of the Lord called forth hereunto.

13. That in this strange trial, which hath occasioned such great thoughts of heart hitherto, and whilst the adversaries strength lay there, that they were the rod of God in his hand for his churches humbling, yet hath he not stirred up all his anger, but hath stayed his rough wind in the day of his east wind, and hath still been a sanctuary and hiding place to his scattered people, how in such a strange circuit of providence he loeth no time in bringing forth his work, but every new step thereof with such observable advantage in the first season; and by withdrawing visible encouragements hath thus the more endeared his peoples mercies, by his own immediate appearance, and some surprising relief, when he saw their power was gone, and that there was none shut up or left.

14. These remarkable providences, which have attended the godly, and so many suffering and desolate families for the truth there, amidst such manifold
outward straits and difficulties, as a witness, I must here give in for the Lord, and in behalf of his truth before this generation; and I doubt not shall be yet matter of a sweet after-reckoning, how such were carried through in a way so contrary to their thought and surprizing, as hath caused them after, with greatest astonishment reflect thereupon, and how they thirsted not when they led them through the desert, &c. I sa. xlviii. 21.

15. This also may be obvious, what an actual discovery this strange perfection from Prelacy hath made, for bringing forth to the light, as a preventing mercy to the church, such, whole trading more clofe under ground might have, tended more to obstruct the interest of the gospel, than now when the cover is taken off, and how thus the Lord hath led them forth with the workers of iniquity.

16. I shall but add, which I am sure that the adversaries of the truth there must fee and be enforced to confess, if they would give their own conscience an hearing. How in both their counsels and actings, and all these essays they have had to bear down the Church of Scotland, a divine hand hath visibly appeared to withstand them therein, and to an ensnaring them in the work of their own hand; yea, have been thus often determined, but by an unseen power over them, to fall on that way, than which nothing could have given their interest a greater daff (and as though intentionally they had moved), for the church's good. O that such would but so far open their eyes; yea, let the nations about consider the work of God herein, what hath been the product of all the counsels, statures, acts and most vigorous essays in the execution thereof, to bear down the truth, and for wreathing the yoke of Prelacy on the church there, but to commend the government of Christ, according to his own institution more universally to the Nation, to promote Non-constancy, with the furthest abhorrence (even by all ranks) of this Prelatick interest, so as it is demonstrably evident, besides these laving effects of the power of the gospel, they are fix fold more this day in number, to whom that way is made disfattful and grievous, than was sixteen years past. Thus hath the truth prevailed, and been found stronger than they who would oppose themselves thereto. And for all that is come, are we not enforced to fee, that the Lord hath not forfaken his church there, but her gleanings, (I doubt not to say,) are yet preferable to the vintage of many others. O that men would give glory to the Lord, and cease to follow such a war in contending with him, whom they have now taken to be their party: but if not, fall they must, and be broken by his hand, who cutteth off the spirits of princes, and is terrible to the kings of the earth.

C H A P. VIII.

W H I L S T we see in the blest disposal of the Lord that different lot he assignes to particular churches, as well as perfons, and that it is not then worft, when such exercising and sharp trials do most abound, there seems some further cause of enquire to press us at this day, upon the present state of the Reformed churches, as it is most discernibly manifelt, and what so visible a hazard and ruin (which without some marvelous appearance of the Lord is like to fall under our hand in our age) doth now pressingly call for as duty.

S E C T. I. For the first, this sad view, (though not without some greatest allurces from the word, to be ground of hope) anent the state of the church, I shall in a few words offer, 1. That now is the time, when judgment seemes to be begun at the house of God, and most remarkably marks at the green tree: when his church is now called to drink first of that cup of childse-
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chastisement and trial, before the dregs he wrung out to the adversary: a time beyond what our fathers have known, when the hand of the Lord is in a very immediate way heavy and sore upon his people, and his dispensations many ways corrective and judicial, more than comforting.

2. That it cannot be hid, how unanswerable our groaning, or any suitable weight of this seems to be to such a stroke we are under, so that some sharp fever may be looked for, to prevent so visible a lethargy: whilest most seem to be pret more anent their personal ease and satisfaction under the rod, than to answer its design; to crouch under the burden more, than a being exercised anent the present duty of the time; Oh! may not this be a seen cause, why our own things press us so sore, that the care of the church and kingdom of Christ, is this day become so light a burden?

3. We may now see such a remarkable Crisis and struggling in the present state of the Reformed churches, as of a woman in travail, in extreme between life and death, when all things seem to have this voice, be in pain, and labour to bring forth O daughter of Zion, and if some great assurances from the word of truth were not to rest on, Oh! what could be under our sight, which is not matter of grief and fear?

4. And is it not obvious, how all grounds, which in an ordinary way, have been most hopeful and promising of the churches encouragement, have in a strange manner been broke and disappeared? And that gourd of the shadow and friendship of princes and great men so remarkably withered and gone, that we may know the churches interest and thriving, leans on no human prop, nor her hope at this day, either by might, or by power, but by the spirit of the Lord: But O here is enough for all, and I doubt not that in his blessed way, he shall yet serve himself of such means for the great service of this time, as that the less promising they are, the more convincing witness shall be thus of his being God, who by things that are not, can confound the things that are, that no flesh may glory in his presence, but that he that glorieth, may glory in the Lord.

5. Is there not at this day a most discernible sound and cry of judgment to be near, if we knew in earnest how to bring the written word and these times more near to other; for it must follow what, Amos shewed chap. iii.

8. The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy. Oh! if we were but such a length to be under some dread and awe of these abounding spiritual plagues in this time, and what follows thereupon, Isaiah vi. 11. Until the cities be without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and a great forsaking be of the land, but yet in it shall be a tenth, &c. which sad heavy words I must say, had not a more affrighting aspect upon that people then waited under spiritual judgments, than they seem to have on the visible church of Christ at this day: though a blessed recovery, (how sharp forever the cure may be) we must not bring under debate.

6. That at this day there is such abounding atheism as lies in the bosom of a profest affent to the truth, as too visible for bringing it under debate, and one of the faddest plagues, which hath almost overgone the Reformed church; yea, which is the more dreadful, as it seems no less to be kept hid by most from themselves, than it is from others: but Oh! must we not give this such a name as Atheism, where these evidences hereof are so clear. 1. How easily many more satisfied anent the great concerns of Religion, to take them upon report, without any further enquiry, than they would be in the most common interest of their life. 2. How men are thus hesistant and unsure about an after and eternal state, whilst they know no possible way, from being secured from

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this fear, which is of all undeniable the greatest, that an eternity of woe may be before them. I confess, some way it is not strange, if any question, if there be such a thing as the power and truth of religion, and these marvelous experiences the saints have hereof, because so few know what this means. for if the generality of the world were blind, and knew not what a thing feeling is, it might probably cause them doubt if there were any such thing as light and colours, that others did see, or if there were in truth such a thing as light is; but Oh! how amazing is it, when the great things of God do with such seri- ouness offer themselves to trial, and calls us with the furthest certainty of seeing, and not by report to know the fame. How soon yet live wholly strangers thereto? 3. And is not rare such an exercise this day, as any serious reflection on those truths, and import thereof, to which men find so easy to give an assent, or to bring this once near their thoughts, that as religion and the power thereof cannot possibly be known but by experience, there is such a demonstration of it to be assuredly had, as that of a living man, whereby he knows that he lives and breathes. Oh! at what rate do now most professed Christians enjoy their peace and quiet, when the acceptable hour and season of making sure for another world is flattering so fast, without being once concerned to have serious godliness a personal business, and to know it on some assurance on their soul, who yet knows that to die, and pass that great step out of time into eternity, must ever long be their personal work, though men can but once die without all possible reflecting of it again for ever. 4. Though there seemed never more cause for such a sad remark than now, which was in former times in the church, that either the scripture must not be the word of God, or most then were not Christians, who professed themselves such: yet how few can be seen, to be such a length in this day, as to bring themselves and their way into the scripture, and before its judgment. But Oh! in a deplorable and desperate kind of peace, do keep at a distance with such clear and enforcing discoveries of the truth, who do not professedly oppose the same. 7. It may by too manifest this day, how much it is become a matter of wit and invention to be Christians, rather than of power and life, and so act hand- somely such a part, as it were by rules of art, than a serious following of the truth in the simplicity thereof. This being now a time, when the Theory and Notion of practical divinity hath been too much enlarged, and this in so different a mould and shape, as harsh too visibly tended for its darkening, and to render it more perplex and thorny, whence, 1. It may be seen, how such a length in the notion and form of knowledge as sways most in the judgment hath almost taken up the room in the applicatory part thereof, to have light brought near to the soul by a personal application, as though the great interest of religion were not more to live the truths thereof, than to know them. Oh! how sad a snare is like to be for helping many to perish with the more quiet and security, the more they are inured in such an ordinary converse with the Theory of godliness. 2. And may we not thus fee a feeding and living on the known and greatest truths, which have a communication with the very vitals of religion, such as the doctrine of redemption, adoption, justification, and effectual calling, &c. is so rarely known this day in the church. 3. How little also is this work of a Christian followed about their affections, so as to be kept vigorous and warm in the matter of duty which so much influenceth that dead and uncomfortable walk, and driving heavily in the ways of the Lord by a great part who are professed in this time. 8. I shall but further add upon so sad a subject, how visibly almost every where is that great interest of the life and power of religion through most of the
the Reformed churches spent and worn out, with that ancient love and tenderness in following the Lord, which was once in the first times of the Reformation discernible, which seems now to have no proportion to that measure of light and knowledge we are under. Oh! whether is this gone even in those parts, where sometimes the word of the gospel did with such burning and shining light go forth, so as the very sight and remembrance of such times is like to wear out.

C H A P. IX.

Having given this short touch of some sad appearances of this time, and what seems most discernible in the present state of the church, when (if ever in any age) that call to the church of Ephesus, does now speak with greatest weight to the Reformed Churches, to remember from whence they are fallen, and do their first works; lest the Lord come, and remove the candlestick. And so sad a declining from the ancient power and life of religion, which once was, may have the form also taken away. And since this is a matter not only of a publick concern for the life and being of the church; but what should lie so near to every one, with respect to their eternal state: yea, that its undeniable, where the present hazard and ruin of the churches is now most discernible, there must a healing and recovery also be sought. I fhall but in a few particulars speak to something of present and pressing duty, which through the Lords gracious concurrence, should be of singular use, to promote this great interest of the power of Religion.

S E C T. 5. That this day, christians work in the duties and exercises of godliness, and the doctrine of the church thereon, did lead more in, with some serious tendency to the Gospel, and to Jesus Christ there, as the alone Center, whether the whole of truth and godliness must meet. Oh! how sad and astonishing is this? And I must say one of the most influencing visible causes of such an ebb and consummation, as is now so universal in the vital parts of christianity, that this great study of practical religion, which is not conceivable, but as it is evangelick, does not more closely keep betwixt these; a moving unto Jesus Christ our blessed head, as the last end, and alone pattern, to which it must be conformed, and its being derived from him, and its alone fountain: Yea when so great a trade is about religion in the church, yet how little thofe seem to be known or lie near in the practice of most. 1. That the christians stock is not in his own hand: but all the disbursements and our giving to each of these must come through his most blessed hand, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulnes should dwell, and from whom we must receive grace for grace. Oh! should it be strange, though these gracious influences of light and life, are so much withheld in these times, as to that measure which hath been formerly known thereof, when so many are upon another scent, than this blessed and straight way of the gospel in rolling the fire of their work and duties upon Jesus Christ by a continued trade, and use making of him as our sanctification, and to improve his kingly power for that end. 2. That it is not more pressing upon us to have that blessed sacrifice of Christ our passover once offered for sin, to be continued as a strengthening staff, to live and feed upon, 1 Cor. v. 8. As we are there called to keep the staff, and thus know, what it is to have the blood of atonement by a clear warming and sensible application thereof, laid as the alone healing salve, to a wounded spirit. 3. To have the whole of a christians trials and exercises thus airdhed and brought to the gospel, as the sure and alone way of their strength, that should let them know in another manner their joy break up,
when under necessity, distress, reproach, and felt weakness in our selves, that the power of Christ might rest upon them, 2 Cor. xii. 4. To know more by practical light, not only these ineffimable fruits and blessings of Redemption by Christ; but what it is to have our love and delight carried forth towards his glorious person, and for embracing thus of himself, as altogether lovely. O this is the alone object, which beyond holiness, and all the promised advantages of his death and purchase, we should move most towards, to know an union with his person, and taking up our alone rest there in himself, where the christian's choice and consent, with the furthest complacence and delight, in so ineffimably great an offer, should terminate in him, as their exceeding joy. O blest, and unexpressibly sweet truth, (were this more known by practical light in the power and efficacy thereof) that the christian's claim and intereat to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and all the blessings of the gospel does thus follow a marriage union and propriety in his person, and our being betroathed indissolubly, in that nearest tie, and by an irrevocable consent unto Jesus Christ, as he stands to us in all his offices, and upon his own terms, what might be then hoped of another lustre and appearance upon professors of the truth in this age; and that some should not find it so easy to offer a thruff in such a manner to darken the doctrine of grace, and give the world such a scheme and mould of the gospel, as they do at this day. And it is sure, a more serious looking in upon this great mystery, should enforce some conviction with it, that its another thing to be a christian, than many professors now take it to be: I have known some who had been a remarkable length beyond others in following of duties, and in light there anent; yea, to the conviction of all that knew them, were in this judged true serious in their way; who after by the gracious work of the Lord, were made to see the truth of conversion to be another thing, which they had been wholly strangers to, even when such a length in christian duties, until once this marvelous light by the gospel shined in upon them, and therewith knew what it was to have their heart pulled in to Jesus Christ, by such a blessed drawing touch of his power, as did determine their closing with him in his way, and upon his own terms.

Sect. 2. It seems a preliss call to many in these times, who own a profession of the truth, with such a doubtful and fluctuating assent thereto, what we may see, Rev. iii. 15. that they would be in earnest, and exercise reason there anent, as to know their state, and how it is with them upon these great concerns of an immortal soul; so as either to quit an empty shew of godliness, or follow this in the power and truth thereof, since it is not conceivable upon clearest grounds, what possible hesitation should be betwixt these, that if the Lord be God, and the scripture revealed in the Old and New Testament, his undoubted word and counsel, by which the alone way of being eternally saved, is revealed unto men: It is then sure, that this must be their greatest interest to follow him, and own his truth with all their heart, and with all their strength; but if not, and that they are not persuaded upon their soul hereby; there must needs be a being positive, and determined here, without the furthest contradiction to reason. Now for enforcing some conviction hereby, if through the blessing of the Lord this might have weight on the confidence of any, I shall offer these to be considered. 1. That it is a thing so unanswerable, why men be not either seriously godly, or real Atheists, either to quite duty, or what herein they stand found, to do it with all their might, since it is upon no less than an eternal interest, and the season now so quickly hasteneth away for any possible access to such a trial. 2. What if upon the very supposifal and report hereby, that this account given by
Part III. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

by the whole race of the saints since the beginning, of those marvelous things of religion, in the power and reality thereof, be assuredly true: and this blessed way, which they see others to be serious in, be the alone way to a blessedness for ever, then in what a dreadful case are they, or can they think to meet with such, and enjoy one state together in another world, whose way and principles have been in such a real opposition to others stated here. Oh! what an astonishing peace is this, and which most at this day entertain, and when it is under some few and profession to be christians? 3. How is it possible, to shut their eyes at these enforcing evidences of the power and life of religion, to be an undoubted certainty, and known unto others by experience, tho' they were never acquainted therewith themselves: when it is sure they must see in the life and practice of such some visible transcript of what is also so expressly witnessed in the scripture thereof, nor can they debate such to be highly rational, as much as any in other things; yea, to justify them in their confidence of being serious in what they own? and must it not be some other sight there have hereafter, than they yet have ever understood? 4. It seems a strange contradiction to reason, if they would but once reflect upon this, what ground of prejudice and casting of reproach on that way is there, which they never yet knew upon trial, whilst they see this doth not flie the light, or their exact search and enquiry; but that the cause most visibly is an imbrued enmity and aversion at the power and truth of godliness, for which they yet know not how to give a reason. 5. How they come such a length in the form and external duties of godliness, when they suffer so much hereby, as a fad and bitter yoke to the flesh, and know no solid gain and income this way; whilst duty in the power and spiritual exercise thereof is so sweet and satisfactory, yea, such unexpressible delights found, when it is seriously followed. Oh! what a fore part is religion in the practice, if it be not on mens heart? Or what comfort is there to come so near in a being almost christians, and yet perish in the close? to hazard some little, but with such a reserve, as yet to adventure all for Jesu Christ, if they should be called thereto, and upon each hand be so sad thereof? 6. To admit the truth and authority of the scripture with so visible a latitude, as is by many this day owned in their way, may seem indeed strange, and what a lax conception and mould of religion thefe frame to themselves, as tends to lay aside that fear, tenderneff, and serious work in the things of God, which the word so pressingly enforceth, as if mens real interest thus, were how to perish without fear and dread. 7. It is a strange length most in these times come, in a concurrence with others in the publick duties of religion, when they know so little any prefluence upon their spirit, what should be their work alone, in the retired duties of a christain, which are unquestionably the most substantial and weighty part of my duty, and can religion be there in truth, (whatever name these have to live) where its more secret work under ground keeps no proportion to that which is publick in the view of others. 8. That now when there is so much discernibly to imbrue the world to them, and their outward comforts do so rarely answer to the fore labour, toil and griefs which are here. Oh! how is it, so few are found on this blessed scent and enquiry, to know the power and truth of godliness, and what a sure and unexpressible relief is there for every state and condition: in delighting their soul in God, and near and feeling converse with the great truths of the gospel, which are to most, known but by report only: so as they might once know upon trial what thus it is to have the desires of their hearts answered.

Sect. 3. Since this is of greatest weight, and that it is sure, the alone frame and mould of practical religion is with such express plainness showed us
in the scripture, as none needs be in the dark, without flattering their eyes; yea, I must say, if these signs and characters given of the reality of godliness were seriously pondered, there was never an age, wherein more professors are like to come short of heaven, and be found in a dreadful delusion; and so much the more affrighting, as to little acci- cens seems this day for many's being convinced, through that length they have come in a form; the truth whereof is so great a mystery: Nor ever was a time of such light, when the thoughts of these great truths of heaven and hell, and for being eternallyaved, seem'd to have had so little weight on mens soul. Oh! that serious work and exercise, which was so known in former times of the church, for working out their salvation with fear and trembling, seems almost gone in a throng of other things. It is true, there are remarkably different faces and degrees among the saints, and the infancy of some, as well as the further age of others must be considered: But since it is like a peculiar stroke upon most, that they will not once come near to the light, and be tried by that infallible rule; I judge it duty, whether they will hear or forbear, to offer some scripture truths that lies so near to the very state and being of a christian; that if ever I knew any thing of the way of the Lord, I must profess I know not, how any can be strangers there-to, and to some near and feeling converse therewith in experience, without being strangers to the very essentials of christianity, or can have any comfortable evidence, that they shall live that life of glory, who have not thus known by practical light, what it is to live the life of grace here.

1. That such as have passed the new birth, must know a spiritual and new life, with which they were not born, and is from no natural causes, but formed and wrought within by the spirit, whereof there is as certain and undeniable a demonstration, as they are sure that they breath, and have a natural life, a life that hath its peculiar operation and vital acts put forth in its breathings, delights and desires, in a near converse with the Lord, as truly as any acts of this natural life; with these sensible languishings and over-cloudings thereof, as well as enjoyments and pleasures, proper to its own nature, as the influences and breathings of the spirit of the Lord are let forth, or restrained. It is sure, nothing can be more expressly shewed, than this from the whole of the scripture, and how it follows on an union with Jesus Christ, in whom it is bid, Col. iii. 3. and a living in him, Gal. ii. 20. to dwell in him, Eph. iii. 17. to be quickned in him, Eph. ii. 5. yea to be nourished and increased in him, Col. ii. 19. and is not this a serious business for trial, what is the seal to the truth thereof from experience?

2. That a spiritual evidence and discovery of divine truth, which differs not in degree, but in kind, is now known to them, as is clear, 1 Cor. ii. 14. whence the truth, of the word are sometimes set home on the soul with that light and power, which is unexpressible to others; and though it be a knowing the same truths, yet in another manner than before; when by the Spirit they know the things that are freely given us of God, which no report could ever have made them believe, until by grace they were taken out of that dreadful gulf of the darknes of nature, unto that marvelous light revealed in the gospel, which then caused such a change betwixt them and what they once were.

3. That the peace of God, which passeth natural understanding, and preserves the heart and mind through Christ Jesus, is not to be kept without a continued war and wrestling, and that as they have two parties within, flated in most vigorous opposition to other; so the more spiritual duty is, and the more clothy the law is pressed in its spiritual extent, the further averseon hath the carn-
nal heart thereto, which is not more clearly shewed, \textit{Rom.} vii. 22. 23. than
their experience can witness.

4. That this truth of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is to be known on the soul,
as well as his visible kingdom over the church; which conflict in righteousness,
peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, \textit{Rom.} xiv. 17. but such as cannot possibly
be known or underflood, but by a practical and feeling light thereof: \textit{And in his working all our works in us:} whence such sensible liberty at one
time more than another, and confidence in our approach to God after fadd
feft bondage and fear, so sweet a calm and fun-fline, when the storm is moft
sharp without, and a being carried through these difficulties with such ad
vantage, which at another time and in another frame, they would have faint
ed at.

5. That a new acquaintance and some other society, than that of men;
and a real fellowship and converse with God both in secret and more pub
lick duties is assuredly true; so as they have been never left alone, with more
fold refreshment, than thus alone, in the retirements of a chrifian now: as
the whole of the scripture bears such a witness hereto, as there needs no clearing
thereof. \textit{O what a testimony have the saints also to give? and where this
is taken upon report, can it be, that religion hath ever been a matter of pow
er and reality to such? I thought it a choice word from a grave and exercifed
chrifian in the ways of God, that being frequently and much alone in the
exercife of prayer, to fome that thought strange thereat, faid, he could not part
with his duty, until he found the Lord, and when he found him, it was fo
sweet, as made it not easy to go forth to the world.} Yea, that also of a
other famous chrifian of our nation, who had fo oft known an immediate
strength and support under greatest preflures sealed in this way of retired fel
lowship with God; \textit{with him the moft of mofts is lefs than nothing, but without
him I find the leaf of leafs to be more than my burden.}

6. It is surely conjoined with the being and fiate of a chrifian, to know
in experience, a power with the word and ordinances of the gospel, above
the moft perufive words of man, or any moral influence; yea, with that
different manifestation, both as to light and power at one time, as they can
no more have at their choice at other times, than to have the fun-fline upon
the earth, when under a dark cloud: and thus must know something of that
\textit{Luke xxiv. the burning of their heart within when the Scripture hath been
opened, that the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.} \textit{1 Cor. iv.}
\textit{20. yea what an evidence and demonstration of the spirit is with the gospel,
1 Cor. ii. 6.}

7. That fuch great things are undoubted realities, as the feal and earneft of
the Spirit of promife; the comforts of the Holy Ghost, \textit{Ephef.} i. 13. which
in fome meafure must be known here to each of the fants; the fensible in
imation of pardon on their foul, after contrition and brokennefs of heart;
that voice of joy and gladnefs, than which, no audible voice was ever more cer
tainly known, than this hath been on their foul; the immediate presence of the
comforter, and truths brought in fo feafonably in a day and hour of ftrait,
as hath unexpressible ease and refreshment therewith.

8. It is fure, this truth also lies fo near the flate and being of a chrifian,
as there must be fome praftical knowledge of it, who ever knew the work of
God on their own soul, that there is access and liberty of pouring out the
heart in prayer, and a being determined to approach unto the Lord with a fen
fible power from himself; the felt taste of this acceptance of them in their
fuit, and being admitted to fee his face with joy; yea, is thus made asdienceib
ble as it is enjured, \textit{Phil.} iv. 5. \textit{Ps.} xci. 15. as on the other hand; upon
some
some wearing out and restraint in this blessed exercise, the sensible abatement of that spiritual life, and vigour they formerly knew in the ways of God; so as to find these duties both burdensome and distasteful, in which they formerly have known such delight, and how that truth, Matt. xxvi. 41. doth then enforce a witness thereto, that watching and prayer is the tried means to keep any from falling into temptation.

9. That as there are unexpressible delights in holiness, yea, such a reality as the joy and peace in believing, which they certainly know; so also a discernible quenching of the spirit by adventuring on any known sin; and when they would not read their bosom dispositions from the word, they have been enforced oft to look in again upon them by some sharp and visible check from the Lord, and know the truth of that 1 Thes. v. 19. Ps. lixvi. 11, 12.

10. That sensible influences of strength from the Lord, and his gracious concurrence, which waits on commanded duty assuredly are, not only as to the frame of their spirits, but as to the exercise of their gifts, and how without him who is our strength we can do nothing; I should think it a strange thing how a Christian can be in earnest with his work, and a stranger to this.

11. Lastly, That it is sure, the fruit of righteousness is seen in peace, and how at no time doth tenderness and straightness in men walk want some inward taste and feel of its acceptance with the Lord: When it is no less discernible, such a withdrawing thereof upon some wrong step and turning aside in his way, as discouragement and darkness doth sensibly meet then, to let them know that it is surely a bitter and evil thing to depart from the Lord.

SECT. 4. This duty in these sad and winnowing times we are fallen in, should lie near us, with respect to the publick interest of the church, as well as to our own personal case, to guard against prejudices at the way of the Lord, which on these grounds I would press. 1. That such a remarkable case, is denounced in the scripture, not only against those by whom offences come, but to the world, because of offences, this being one of the deadliest strokes from the Lord, when a disposition and tendency to stumble, hath judicially a stumbling-block laid in their way. 2. As under that predominant humour of the jaundice, the colour is suitably represented to the eye; it is strange to think what a judgment an evil eye doth pass on the footless ways of the Lord, yea, with that satisfaction an impoisoned nature doth seek to strengthen it itself. 3. It is sure, the truth suffers not more from open opposition, than oft it does by these hid reflections, and subtil conveyances of reproach from many in these times. 4. It hath not been known since that blessed Reformation of the church from Popery, that where in any of the churches the Lord hath had some special work on foot, and the interest of the gospel gaining ground, but Satan there hath followed the same remarkably with some such close and subtil allure, in bringing forth something of his work in resemblance thereto, to beget prejudice against the way of truth. It was unquestionably one of the most searching trials the German church had, by that strange appearance of the Anabaptists there. But this being so notour and publick in the histories of these late times, besides other remarkable instances of the like kind, I forbear to mention it further. One memorable passage, that is left known to many, may be for some advantage and confirming to the truth, the infecting of it here. When the gospel was flourishing in the church of Ireland by the ministration of some eminent servants of Christ, who were labouring there some years before the rebellion, and a most extraordinary time of the power of the spirit following the ordinances; when others of Satan's devices to cast a lot in the way, had proved abortive, this great destroyer was
at last let loose in a strange manner, to defy a counterfeit of the work of the Lord there, which was then so effectual to the conversion of many. This first began about Locblern upon several ignorant persons, who in the midst of the publick worship fell a breathing and panting, as these who had run long, with strange pangs like convulsions; yea, thus were affected, whatever purpose was preached, even by such ministers who were known enemies to the truth, the number of which still increased through several parishes for a time. At first, both ministers and christians there were put to a stand, but after upon further discovery of the tendency of their way, and found no solid convincing work, which had therewith any sense of sin, or panting after a Saviour, did quickly perceive this to be one of the depths of Satan, and his design to slander and disgrace the work of the Lord, fo as after some grave ministers, who were then there, when they began in that manner to appear in publick, did with great authority rebuke that lying spirit in their Master’s name; yea, it was evident how after such did continue rude, prophane and ignorant. Through this engine did the Devil thus drive to beget prejudices amongst those, who did but look on at a distance; against the power and life of religion.

Sect. 5. What a blessed and effectual means should this be, to promote seriousness, and against such sad and spreading formality of these times, the churches are so much now wafted under; to have more deep and frequent thoughts on that great subject of death, about which there is no debate amongst us, yet it is strange to consider in what a manner it’s kept at a distance with most of the generation. O what an enforcement should this bring with it, to follow godliness, not in a form, but in the power and truth thereof, if such who have profited fo little under the ordinances of the gospel, would but fit sometimes alone, and hear this grave preacher speak to them, and bring these things near to their thoughts. 1. That strangely, and paffage they are assuredly to go through, which was never known to them before, but must once pass it, betwixt time and eternity, and what this will be, when they are entering on that dark and unknown ground; whilst the keepers of the house shall tremble, and these that look out at the window are darkned, because man goeth to his long home. This is a grave and serious work, if men could find such time, amidst the throng of other things, to advise how they adventure, and on what terms into another world. 2. How near this great change is, without a possibility to have one hour ensured beyond the present hour of our life, fo as each night we lie down, not knowing but our breath may be stopp’d with some sudden arrest of death before the morning, which might put us oft to think, without a strange and desperate security; how would death now meet us at this hour? I thought it a great word of a choice and serious christians a few years ago, when he was called to suffer for the truth, and was sentenced to die; said before his judges, I bless the Lord, that these seven years past, death could not have come wrong to me, not one day. 3. What serious thoughts should this cause, in one moment to admit to great a change, and in the very instant of the souls parting with the body, a present entering into that after state, which shall put the christian once and for ever, yea, in one moment, in the fulness of un conceivable joy, in the immediate embracings of Jesus Christ, the society of the blessed angels, and church triumphant, and what a sight shall that be, which no thoughts or words can possibly reach, when with the fluttering of these eyes here, they are then opened in the paradise of God, and know the state which is there, and what is the inheritance of the saints in light. 4. What a change this must be to such, who in one moment shall part with their heaven, and
and find a real hell; for the men of this world, whose portion is here, to be pulled from all the delights and pleasures they had once had, to take up their lodging in these dark and horrid prisons, which are in the pit, and then know this to be sad earnest, of which they made so small account, while they were upon earth. Oh! will nothing bring near! the doctrine of hell, and eternal damnation to most of this generation, until they know it upon trial, when these gates shall be everlastingly shut never to admit an opening. 3. To consider what thoughts and reflection must men in eternity have of their former state and condition. And what will the remembrance of a life time here in the fulness of outward comforts amount to, which are gone, never to return more. Yea in that hour, when the great men of this earth are turned out of all their possessions, and their soul taken from them, by that dreadful pull of grim death, not by a rendering and commitment thereof to Jesus Christ, which his people only know; then what shall all these possessions be? O! but that must be an heavy and sore pull for an unmortified man to die and leave the world, whilst his heart is still alive to it. 6. What an other account, upon the approach of this blessed change will the Christians then have of their most imbibing crosses, which through grace have been tended both to trial and furthering of their faith and love; and some solid fruit for the Lord, beyond these, who once had the greatest delights and pleasures here, when they are past and gone? 7. Is it not near, when many shall question whether their life was real or a dream; whilst each day and hour as it is hastening over the parts of the worlds comforts, putth by also some of the Christian’s crosses and griefs; that whilst his work lies most to make some gainful improvement thereof; he knows also now, this sad and searching trouble, and I, shall never meet again: though the fruit thereof goes before, and shall meet him in that blessed state which is above. 8. To consider also that sweet and sound sleep the bodies of the saints shall have for a time in the grave, which is the bed of their rest; yea, how indissolubly there, is their dust still united with their blessed Head, and within a little, how ravishing shall their wakening be. It was a sweet thought to that excellent servant of Christ, Mr. Rollock, when he stretched forth his hand on his death-bed, with a serious looking thereon, and said: Tea, even this hand shall once shine in glory. It is sure, the earth now could not be capable of the least of the saints, who are entered into a glorified state, so unconceivably great is that distinction betwixt that condition where now they are, and the highest state of a christian here in this lower world.

Sect. 6. This weighty duty I must touch a little here, to watch and guard against that dreadful hazard and wafting plague, which hath had so visible a tendency, almost to ruin the interest of the churches of Christ this day, of love and eager pursuit after the world. It is remarkable with what further light this is enforced under the New Testament, than under the Old, both as to the hazard, which followeth thereon, and that reckoning the saints must make with the strait and narrow way, and much tribulation to enter into glory. Present things lie near the fenes, and have oft that force, as most will not cease to follow the bait, even when that destroying hook of the hazard of losing their immortal soul is so discernible, yea, how loath many in this age are to come near to scripture light hereafter: But oh it is undeniable how much this hath tended to a wearing out the power and spirituality of religion with that life and tenderness that did formerly appear in the church, when to quit all for Jesus Christ, and his truth was with such joy and delight then reckoned upon in these times of persecution; yea, their serious and earnest pursuin
pursuing after the substance, and reality of godliness was no less discernible, than now this eager tendency and grasping after that shadow of the world by most, who profess the truth. But though the publick concerns of the kingdom of Christ should not have weight with some: Yea, if men cease not to exercise reason, and be under any awe and dread of the scripture, yea, have not concluded their hope in this life only; this subject, I am sure, may enforce some serious thoughts to them. I confess I must say, upon any light from the scripture, with the too manifest discovery of any of that eager feent most seem to be upon in this age, how to be rich, and have great things in the world, it hath put me to a stand; not but it is an unquestionable duty for Christians in their several callings to be seriously concerned therein, and not slothful in busines's, and that such are, and have been in all times, who have got their spirits more dead and subdued to the world amidst the greatest enjoyments thereof, than many of a low and mean estate; yea, that there are, I hope, not a few whose interests here tend to some further service for the Lord, in consecrating the gain thereof to him: but this is an attainment indifferently linked, not with the truth and reality of grace only, but much of the power and vigorous exercise thereof, and needs more than ordinary watching with prayer against that hazard they are in: But upon the other hand, it seems strange, that scripture truths so plain, pungent and weighty, (if men do truly believe, and credit the testimony of God therein,) should not cause more fears and tremblings of heart on most of the generation, yea on many, who I hope, want not some serious respect to the better part, when these are brought near and seriously pondered. 1. That it is so expressely told us by the Lord, Matt. xix. 23, 24. Verily, I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven; and again, I say unto you, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And the very same fet down by the Evangelist, Luke xviii. 24, 25. And though our blessed Master expounds his own words there, and that these are not inconsistent; even for such as are rich to be saved, since nothing is impossible to God, yet does it most clearly shew these rare and great instances of an infinite power; yea, that the world and a large share thereof is such a let in the way, as we may fee it something extraordinary, with such a load of the earth for any to get through the strait and narrow gate, which is indeed as the needle eye, without subduing and mortification. 2. We see a dreadful woe denounced against such, Luke vi. 24. Woe to you that are rich, for you have received your consolation; and how these torments of the rich man fliewed, Luke xvi. 19 are by Christ himself there, though in a parable, with an having received his good things here in this life; and though he graciously allows his people the comfortable use, and enjoying of their outward lot, though the convey of these true and great comforts, which are spiritual, is oft in the way of the crofs, yet is that sad mark by the Holy Ghost put on others, Jam. v. 5. They have lived in pleasures, and nourished themselves as in a day of slaughter. That it seems matter of astonishment how men live under any awful regard of the scripture, if a large interest in the earth be not some cause of fear and dread. 3. And is not men eager love and desires after the world, a scripture sign and mark of a reprobate state? Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John ii. 15. And that sad note put on the covetous man, Prov. x. 3. That he is the man whom the Lord hateth; yet oh how rare a sight is riches this day, and without love, inmoderate desires, and a setting of the heart thereon? 4. That such eager desires, when men will be rich is so expressly
prely shewed in the scripture, to be the very scent and path that leads down to
death, and a being drowned in eternal perdition, 1 Tim. vi. 9. and the cause
thereof held forth, that native tendency this hath to a falling into many foolish
and hurtful lusts. And is not the carnal mind enmity to God, yea every
length and advantage this gains, so much further does men stand in a direct
contrariety and opposition to God. 5. Though such do bless themselves in
their heart, and are looked on with envy by others; what a dreadful mark
doth the Holy Ghost put on these; with a call unto all to consider the same.
Whose eyes stand out with fatness, and have more than heart can wish, and
are not in trouble as others. Lo these are the ungodly that prosper in the
world, Ps. lxxiii. 11, 12. yea, are thus set a part with that fad designation,
that they are men of this world, whose portion is in this life, they are full
of substance, &c. Ps. xvii. 14. oh is it not caufe of fear, that where the
world hath got mens hearts it is a sad evidence, they have got it for their por-
tion? 6. Where riches are given, is it not upon trial, yea one of the greatest;
which men can have to keep them under some weight and exercise, more than
the most searching cross; since it is clear, the more interest any thus have, it
adds so much to their talent, which is not theirs, but committed under trust,
of which every one must be accountable according to their measure, Matth.
xxv. 15. Luk. xix. 15. and will e'er long hear that awful call, Come, give
an account of your stewardship, Luke xvi. 2. which will be found another
thing, as to a faithful improvement of that measure, than seems by most to
be either believed or laid to heart. 7. And is there an other way leads unto
life than the ftrait and narrow way, yea nothing more dangerous, than to be
entangled with riches, honour or pleasures? it is utterly impossible to serve
God and mammon. And is it not one of the most difficult steps of a christian,
and rarest victories he gets, 1 Job. ii. 10. This is your victory, whereby
you overcome the world? When the native tendency thereof is so discernibly
to take the heart off God, and favouring spiritual delights, to pull downward,
and make a sensible interposition betwixt heaven and the soul; to go betwixt
us and the better part, yea to deprive men of that blessedness in another world.
8. Besides such express testimonies of the scripture, which are so full, clear
and peremptor, as all may see what a beacon the Holy Ghost hath put on this
rock in a special way; can any thing be more visible through the various
changes of this life, how mens interests in the world tend to load more, than
to satisfy: and yield least when most preferred; how rare these are, who
are not in some measure discontent with their lot, and finds the best of outward
things in their hand are not that, which they seemed to be at a distance. Yea
what can the further delights of riches amount to, beyond the present time;
where no comfortable reckoning can be on what is gone, for we are truly
dead to what of our life is here past; and no possible security for one day or
hour, of what is to come.

Sect. 7. It is undeniable, how much the recovery of the life and power
of religion lieth this day at the door of the ministry of the church, as a special
subsient means thereto, and what near and undoubted connection this in all
times hath with the thriving of the gospel in any particular church. I know,
there wants not an horrid party in this time, whose work is to decre, and cast re-
proach on that excellent office and appointment of Jesus Christ, which he
hath given as a perpetual standing ordinance for his church to the end of
time: But it's not Ministers, but their great Master, whose they are, and
holdeth the stars in his right-hand, against whom they appear herein; and
though there want not such in all times, yea, remarkably at this day, than
whom, none do more obstruct the interest of the gospel, and counteract the
very
very end of this great office, in a sad opposition of themselves to the truth and power of godliness, and wound instead of healing, yea handle the word of the Lord deceitfully, by accommodating it to their private interest and design in a corrupt application thereof, which is nor more sad, than we may find foretold, and the church expressly forewarned in the word of such: Yet I judge this comes not under debate with all, who own the truth, that there are, I desire to hope, not a few ministers and watchmen in the church of Christ, whose greatest aim and study is, to be found faithful to their Master's interest, and have a weight of that work on them, without respect to any outward encouragement; yea, that such are in truth, and not in a few Ministers of the New Testament, of the spirit, and not of the letter. O what a promising evidence and door of hope were this to the present time, or any particular church, when such a ministry is given of the Lord, of whom that account can be given.

1. That they discern the times, so as to be deeply affected with the appearances of judgment.

2. Who live much under another weight, than the discharge of ministerial duties, or following that which is publick before men, in some serious exercise of spirit, about their own personal case; otherwise how sad and heavy were it to be inured with practical truths, without a near and feeling converse therewith upon their own soul. And as it is a great thing for a minister to be saved; so, to be pressed in the trial of conversion, and the work of sanctification on his own spirit, no less than in pressing it on others; yea, with fear and trembling to work out their salvation, who thus stand accountable upon so great a trust committed to them.

3. That their great scope in preaching is still to lead into the gospel, and to have all their doctrine, and holding forth of duties thus pointing, with a clear tendency to Jesus Christ, and for an aithing the hearers unto him.

4. Such whose preslure and continued exercise on their spirit is, how their ministry may tend to their Master's praise and exalting, whatever entertainment they should meet with from men. And it is sure, there is a shining in humility, with a much more convincing lustre than in gifts; yea, it is ever seen, that the humblest preachers have been most instrumental to convert others, and not the most eloquent or polished, who never knew brokenness of heart, and some weight of their own inward case.

5. Such who are kept with much serious dependance on the Lord in their duties. It was the saying of a choice minister of Christ, that he never came off with less comfort and more discontent with himself, than when to appearance he was best provided, not because of his diligence, for being thus prepared, since that was his duty; but because he was then apt to neglect dependance on the Lord.

6. Whose great and most weighty part in the ministry is to live religion, more than how to discourse thereof; to whom preaching is not the heaviest part of their work, nor a going about duty upon the matter, as to have their principle herein right, for that only abides, which is done for the Lord, and will have a true income of solid peace and joy. Such is the impression on the wax, as it is on the seal; and it is sure, where that holy fear and love to Jesus Christ hath a deep engraving on our heart, it will make a suitable impression on our duties.

7. I must add that, which hath so near and closes a connection with the fruit and success of the ministry in all times, a serious study to have this followed in secret prayer, and wrestling before the Lord, no less than in publick appearances; when it is so undeniable. 1. To be a fruitful and lively minister
minister can be no more, than what the Lord does make him hourly to be, and needs a new influence of the blessing for every new piece of his work. 2. That it is not the further advantage of gifts, or the most polished discourse, but the spirit of the Lord, that makes this great service for the church successful; yea, that it must be another key than moral persuasion can open the heart of the hearers. 3. That a lively frame, and to have their work prepared within, by some serious impressions of the truth on their own spirit, is found one of the most sensible advantages, both to himself and others, that a minister goes forth with in any publick appearance: Not but that a serious studying of what is to be delivered in the matters of God, is a necessary duty: But O! what a promising token should it be for better times to the church, and some recovery of the wondrous life and power of religion, which was formerly so discernible; when the publick work of preaching is thus carried on with much of that preparatory work of secret prayer, the want whereof makes oft such weak preaching, even with the most visible advantage of gifts and human eloquence. And I must here add, how this weighty duty lies upon the hearers of the gospel, as well as ministers, who have any respect to the kingdom of Christ, to help forward the publick work by secret prayer; whence such advantage of an open door for the word is found in some places more than in others, where there is a serious people to entertain it, and have the publick work, as well as their private cafe much on their heart.

Sect. 8. In so remarkable an hour of trial now on the church, what a blessed and hopeful means might this be, to see a more near correspondence, and unite concurrence about the work of the Lord, not only amongst Christians themselves: but particular churches; with some serious enquiry and search, what may be the provoking cause of this ad over-clouding darkness now over the Reformed churches, after such manifestations of the power and brightness of the gospel to our fathers. Oh, how sad a want is this in time of eminent hazard, that almost there is none found to stand in the breach, but every one hangs on his loins, and no stirring, or essay for some unite striving together, and contending for the truth once delivered to the saints, which is to great a truth on the present generation, not for themselves only, but posterity, when to sore a ruin is like to fall under our hand. I confess, it may seem hopeless to mention such a duty, when these impressions as sometimes have been of this, are discernibly off the spirits of most. But I am sure these prelting arguments may be undeniable to enforce some conviction.

1. That the want of a publick spirit hath put the most endeared interests of many to be as a butt of the holy indignation of the Lord and is the seen cause, why many sow much, and bring in little, with such sad personal grievances and complaints every where, even amongst the Professors of the truth. Hag. i. 9. Why then the Lord of Hosts, because of my house, which is waste and desolate, and every man runs to his own house.

2. It is known, how singular a blessing hath followed some very hopeful essays and endeavours of a few in behalf of the truth, when there has been a falling in upon the right light of present duty, to keep it alive in a remarkable hour of defection, yea, to effects above rational belief, and what surprising issue the improving a little strength, which forest wretcheing have oft had, for the service of the church and generation.

3. It is now clear, what a remarkable appearance is against the truth, how the enemy is like to break in as a flood, and the assault not from a private adversary,
Part III. The Fulfilling of the Scripture.

fary, but from a publick, unite and formidable combination this day from the Romish party? And oh! are we fallen into such a dead lethargy, not to be awakened to some more unite concurrence, upon that great interest of the truth, to know the condition we are in, for mutual sympathy and upfurring to the duties of the time, for communication of counsels, and promoting further oneness of heart amongfuch, with whom the things of Christ have any weight.

4. We see in these suffering, and truly flourishing times after the Reformation, with what seriousness and advantage it was followed for mutual intercourse, and being concerned in the publick cafe and concerns of the church, and christians amongft themselves. What a grave enquiry was then, what tenderness and sympathy amongft the followers of the Lord, when they knew but at a distance the suffering lot of their friends? yea, with what defire and longings to know the success of the gospel, and what further interest it did gain any where? But oh! now most seem to be only minding their own things, and how to secure a private interest, to whom these words may have a sad and dreadful found: Esther iv. 11, 14. Think not with thy self. that thou shalt escape more than all the Jews, for if thou holdest altogether thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place: But thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed. Some may have an advantage and opportunity for improvement of themselves beyond others in behalf of the bleeding interests of the church; and I have confidence to say, that any such serious aim once followed should be the way both of their strength and encouragement, and to know that an enlarged heart for the interest of Christ, will never want a large allowance.

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