

*The Practical Improvement of the Watchman's
Answer.*

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED TO THE
S O C I E T Y

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MDCCLIII.

A
S E R M O N,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

I CHRON. xii. 32.

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do: the heads of them were two hundred, and all their brethren were at their commandment.

IN this chapter we have an account of the persons that associated with David, shewed him favour, and assisted him when he was obliged to flee from Saul; and also of those of the several tribes of Israel, and the numbers of them that came to him in Hebron, after the death of Saul and Abner, to make him king over all Israel. And among the rest, those of

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the tribe of Issachar are mentioned; who, though but few, but *two hundred*, when those that came out of the other tribes were several thousands; yet being the principal men of the tribe, and having *all their brethren at their commandment* and beck, it was as well as if the whole tribe had come in a body; and besides, being men of skill and understanding in certain affairs, had an influence over all the tribes; for they *knew* and could tell all *Israel what they ought to do*; and so must be very beneficial and useful to David at this juncture.

What the *understanding* of these men lay in, is not easy to say; interpreters are divided about it: some take them to be chronologers, or astronomers, whose skill lay in the computation of times, in fixing the beginning of the year, and the beginning of the month, and in the intercalation of the year; and so were very serviceable to Israel, to let them know when the new year began, when it was new moon, when it was right to intercalate the month Adar; as they sometimes were obliged to intercalate a whole month together, to make their account of time come right; and when to keep their feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles: hence it is thought this tribe is said^a to *call the people to*

^a Deut. xxxiii. 19.

the mountain ; to the place of worship, the tabernacle or temple in mount Zion ; *there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness* : and this is the general sense of the Jewish writers. ^b Were this the true sense of the words, and known to be so ; since this is the day in which a late act of parliament ^c, concerning altering the style of the year, begins to take place, it might be thought that my view in reading this passage of Scripture was to amuse you with the difference of old and new style, and to shew you the superior excellency and usefulness of the one to the other : but as this is an affair that is not within my province, so I have that which is of greater moment and importance to lay before you. Others chuse to call them astrologers, who

^b The *Targum* of the place is, “ Of the children of the Issachar there were such who were skilful in the knowledge of times, (*i. e.* chronologers) and wise to fix the beginnings of the years, and the beginnings of the months, and to intercalate the months and the years ; dextrous at settling the new moon, and fixing the feasts (or appointed times) in their seasons ; well versed in the solar revolution ; astrologers *that had understanding* in the planets and stars, to know what were fit for the house of Israel to do.” To which agree Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Yalcut in loc. and Bereshit Rabba, §. 72. fol. 64. 2. See also the Targum and Jarchi on Deut. xxxiii. 19.

^c Entitled, An Act for regulating the commencement of the year, and for correcting the calendar now in use, made in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of his majesty king George the Second.

had

had skill in the motions and revolutions of the heavenly bodies ^d, and their influences upon the earth, which they had learnt from their neighbours the Phœnecians: or else, being a people much employed in husbandry, hence it is said of this tribe, that it saw that *the land was pleasant*, to till and manure, it delighted in agriculture; *and bowed his shoulder to bear* ^e, and carry in the corn when ripe: and dwelt in *tents* to keep its fields, or look after its flocks; they by frequent and constant observations had acquired a sort of rustic astrology ^f, and could discern the face of the heavens, and prognosticate what weather it would be; and they knew the proper times and seasons of doing business; and so could inform Israel, or the rest of the tribes, when they should plow, and sow, and reap, and plant, and the like. Others think they were historians and annalists, such as those in Esth. i. 13. where the same phrase is used of those whom Ahasuerus consulted, when Vashti his queen refused to come into his presence at his command, to know

^d Hence it is said, that the standard of this tribe was dyed black, and had painted on it the sun and moon, because it is said of them, 1 Chron. xii. 32. *of the children of Issachar, that had understanding of the times, &c.* Bemidbar Rabba, §. 2. fol. 178. 3.

^e Gen. xlix. 15. Deut. xxxiii. 18.

^f Yid. Poli Synopf. in loc.

of them what had been done in such cases in times past^g: and so these men were well versed in the history of ancient times, and had made their observations on things that had been done in former times; and were capable of giving advice what should be done in like circumstances. Though others seem more rightly to interpret this understanding of theirs of political prudence; they were men that knew how to time things, when was the fittest opportunity to do any thing: and whereas the present business was to turn the kingdom of David, they saw, and so acquainted the rest of the tribes, that this was the proper time to do it in, now Saul was dead, and Abner also, a powerful commander in the interest of his family, and David was the most likely person to humble the Philistines, who of late had been so victorious over Israel. Besides, they knew that there was the word of the Lord^h for it, ver. 23. or a prophecy that had been given out, that he should be king, which was known in Saul's life-time, and with which he himself was acquainted; for so said he to

^g By whom Aben Ezra understands either astrologers, or such who knew the time that was passed in the reigns of antient kings, *i. e.* historians; and the Targum on the place expressly interprets it of the children of Issachar.

^h The decrees of the word of the Lord, as the Targum.

David,

David, *I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand*ⁱ: and these men knew that the time was now come, and all circumstances concurring, they told Israel, what they should do at this juncture^k. The use that I shall make of this, shall be to accomodate the passage to the prophetic times, and the knowledge of them, the present ones, or what may be coming on; and shall sum up the whole in the following observation:

That those who have any understanding of prophetic times, relating to the church of God, and interest of Christ, should inform the true Israel of God, what they ought to do in them, or in the prospect of them.

I. There are some times fixed in prophecy, which by diligence, attention, and application, men may arrive to some understanding of. There are indeed some times and seasons, the knowledge of which is not to be attained unto; and

ⁱ 1 Sam. xxiv. 20.

^k Jarchi's note on the place is, "For they knew how to give counsel according to the nature of every case; for David had need to take advice how the kingdom might be confirmed from before the children of Saul."

it would be wrong, as well as in vain, curiously to search into them. *It is not for us to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power; for he has determined the times before appointed, when every thing that he has purposed or promised should come to pass; and he has fixed a time for every purpose under the heaven, for the performance of every thing he has designed shall be; a time to be born, and a time to die, and for every intermediate event^l; but these times are not known before-hand, until things are brought into execution. There are others, and very remarkable events, the times of which are pointed at in prophecy; and which, with diligence and application, the knowledge of them may in some measure be attained unto: as for instance, the first coming of Christ into this world to save men; the time for it was not only agreed upon, and settled between the Father and the Son, called *the fulness of time*^m, but there were several prophetic hints of it; nay, not only was it described by some general circumstances, as that it should be before the second temple was destroyed, since he was to come into it, and while the sceptre was in the tribe of Judah;*

^l Acts i. 7. xvii. 26. Eccl. iii. 1, 2.

^m Gal. iv. 4.

but the precise time was fixed by Daniel's seventy weeks, or 490 years, which were to commence from a date given him; and before the expiration of which, the Messiah was to come: and so as he, by reading Jeremiah's books, knew the time when the Babylonish captivity should end; another, by reading his prophecies, might know when the Messiah would come: and accordingly, about the time when those weeks were drawing near to an expiration, there were many that were looking for the Messiah, and redemption by him, as knowing that it was about the time, by these weeks, that he should comeⁿ. There is a time set for his second coming, and God *in his times* will *show* him, or cause him openly to appear; and though he will come in an hour we know not of, yet there are some circumstances pointed out in the word of God, by which it may be known that it is nigh at hand; as that the day when the Son of Man shall be revealed shall be as the days of Noah and Lot, when men indulged themselves in pleasure, lived in great security, unaware of the ruin coming upon them; and that when the Son of Man cometh, *faith* will not be *found in the earth*^o;

ⁿ See the Watchman's Answer, &c. p. 20, 21, 22.

^o Luke xvii. 26, 28. and xviii. 8.

whether

whether this be understood of the grace or doctrine of faith, or of faith with respect to Christ's coming: and when we compare these things with the present times, and consider the luxury, love of pleasure, carnal security and infidelity that abound among us, we might conclude that the coming of Christ is just at hand; were it not that there are many things, which require time, yet to be fulfilled, previous to it, as the destruction of Antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, and the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles. So the last judgment, which will take place at the second coming of Christ, and is most certain, being early known, and often spoken of; Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of it, and of Christ's coming to it; the day is appointed when it will come on, though of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels in heaven, but the Father only: but then the principal things that should come to pass, relative to the church, between the first and second coming of Christ to judgment, are signified to us in the book of the Revelation; and by diligence, attention, and application, the understanding of the times of their fulfilment may be come at. The state of the church in all ages is described by the seven churches of Asia, which were prophetic emblems

blems and representations of it. The truly apostolical church is signified by the church at Ephesus, which could not bear them that were evil either in doctrine or practice: the church under the ten persecutions is represented by the church at Smyrna, which had tribulation ten days. And those that lived in the times of Constantine, that had a spiritual discerning of things, when they saw the riches and glory of the world brought into the church, might know that they were in that state which was pointed at by high towering Pergamos. And such who were in the darkest times of Popery, who had any spiritual light into things, might see that they were in the Thyatirian church-state, in which Jezebel taught her pernicious doctrines, and the depths of Satan, and the mysteries of iniquity were practised. As we now, by comparing our case with what is said of the church at Sardis, may perceive that we are in the Sardian church-state; and so may arrive to some understanding of the times in which we are, and what are yet to come; as the Philadelphian church-state, which will bring on the spiritual reign of Christ, in which there will be an open door of the gospel, large conversions of Jews and Gentiles, much holiness and brotherly love, and great spirituality; after which
the

the church, being proud of its gifts, and the Spirit withdrawn, it will sink into lukewarmness and security; which will bring on the Laodicean state, which will issue in the general judgment, as its name signifies the judgment of the people^p. Moreover, there are certain very memorable events, the dates of which are peremptorily fixed; as the treading of the holy city forty-two months; the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and under discouragements, a thousand two hundred and threescore days: during which term of days also the church is to be nourished in the wilderness even for a time, and times, and half a time; and power is given to the beast, or antichrist, to continue forty and two months^q. All which began, and will end together; for these dates are exactly the same, one thousand two hundred and sixty days being equal to forty-two months, and forty-two months to one thousand two hundred and sixty days, reckoning thirty days to a month, as was used in the Eastern nations; and could we be certain when these dates begin, we should have no difficulty about the expiration of them, or how long it is to it; good men have been mistaken

^p See Dr. More on the seven churches, and my Exposition of the second and third chapters of the Revelation.

^q Rev. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6, 14. and xiii. 5.

taken in their calculations for want of this : however, though we can come at no certainty as to the precise time when these things shall be, yet some degree of understanding of these times may be come at ; and from the circumstances of things it may be concluded, that these dates can't reach beyond an *hundred and fifty* years more, and it may be they may expire much sooner.

In the annual sermon delivered to you about this time last year, and since published, you will remember I gave you some account of the revolutions of morning and night which have been, and will be to the second coming of Christ ; and how that we are entering into a dark night, the thickest darkness and midst of which will be the time of the slaying of the witnesses ; after which a glorious morning will break forth ; and it shall be said to the church, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come.* And now what I shall further do, and which is my principal view in reading these words, is to shew that this affair is not to be considered as a mere nicety, as a matter of speculation only, but as what should influence our practice. Theory without practice is of little avail ; all knowledge is to be reduced to practice ; and seeing these things shall
be,

be, and these times will come, what manner of persons *ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness*^r: I shall therefore attempt a practical improvement of these things, and what you may call, if you please, an application of my former discourse referred to; which brings me to observe,

II. The things which those who have skill in prophetic times should make known to the Israel of God, as what they *ought to do* in such times, or in prospect of those to come? And,

First, There are some things which true Israelites ought always, and at all times to do; even *every good work*, which they should be always *ready* unto, and should pray to God to *perfect* and fit them for, and make them *fruitful* and *establish* them in^s. I shall briefly consider, 1. What these are. 2. The necessity of doing them, and why, and for what purposes they *ought* to be done. And, 3. That of all men, Israel, or Israelites indeed, ought to do these things.

^r 2 Pet. iii. 11.

^s Tit. iii. 1. Heb. xiii. 21. Col. i. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 17.

1. What these good works are, that should be done ; and it may not be amiss to shew, *first*, what a good work is : it is often said that not *nouns* but *adverbs* make good works ; that it is not merely doing *bonum* a good thing, but doing that good thing *bene* well ; which is what the apostle calls † *well-doing* : an action may be *materially* good, when it is not *circumstantially* so. The circumstances requisite to a good work, and by which it may be defined, are, that it must be according to the declared and revealed will of God, must spring from love, be done in faith, in the name of Christ, and to the glory of God. If any of these circumstances are wanting, it is not properly a good work. It must be a part of that good, perfect, and acceptable will of God ; or otherwise it will come under the denomination of will-worship, or voluntary humility, and will be rejected by the Lord as not being required by him. By this rule many things will be excluded from the name of good works, which may have a shew of devotion and sanctity ; as the traditions of the elders among the Jews, and many things done by Papists and others, which may carry an appearance of religion and

† Gal. vi. 9.

piety in them. It must also spring from love to God; charity is the end of the commandment, and love the fulfilling of the law; this is not only the matter of it, but the source of obedience, which should be yielded to it; not through fear of punishment, or hope of reward, but without any sinister, selfish, and mercenary views, in pure affection to God that requires it; and that work is best done that is done in the view, and under the influence of the love of God. It must be also done in faith, the thing itself must be believed as right to be done; *for whatsoever is not of faith is sen^u*: and it should be done in the exercise of faith on God that enjoins it, and on Christ; in whom alone it is acceptable; *For without faith it is impossible to please God^w*; and therefore what is without it cannot be a good work: the apostle puts the superior excellency of Abel's sacrifice to Cain's, not so much upon the matter of them, though there was a difference between them in that respect, as upon the manner of performing them, the one being done in faith, the other without; *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain^x*: as faith without works is a dead faith, so works without faith are dead

^u Rom. xiv. 23.

^w Heb. xi. 6.

^x Ib. ver. 4.

works also. A good work must be done in the name and strength of Christ, without whom we can do nothing spiritually good and acceptable to God. If we pray, it must be in the name of Christ, which is always prevalent; if we give thanks, it must be to the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus; if we give an almsdeed to any of his people, it must be in his name, and because they belong to him; *Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*: and every good work must be directed to the glory of God; if men seek themselves, the applause of men, their own glory by what they do, as the Pharisees did by their prayers and almsdeeds, their works cannot be properly called good works. But to proceed to the particulars of those things which true Israelites ought always to do.

(i.) Every thing that relates to God, his will, and his worship. Every thing that is of a moral nature, or belongs to the moral law; for though the law is abolished, as it was a ministration of Moses, and as it is a covenant of works; and as to justification by it, and the curse and condemnation of it; yet is to be regarded as a rule of walk and conversation; and

believers are not *without law to God*, and are *under the law to Christ*²; as King and Law-giver. Morality, in its utmost extent, in all its branches, ought to be attended to, not only what is in the decalogue, or ten commandments, but whatever is to be found elsewhere. The decalogue is a good system of laws drawn up for the use of the Jewish people; but as all that is in it is not moral, so the whole of morality is not contained in that body of laws; and not only what is in that, but every thing of a moral nature that is to be found in any part of the word of God, either in the Old or in the New Testament, whether in David's Psalms, Solomon's Proverbs, the writings of the prophets, Christ's sermons, or Paul's epistles, or any others, is to be observed and done.

Likewise, whatsoever is of divine appointment, of positive institution relating to the worship and service of God; not indeed any thing of this kind that was under the former dispensation, such as circumcision and other rites of the ceremonial law, the law of commandments contained in ordinances now abolished: *Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, &c.* that

² 1 Cor. ix. 21.

is, let no man condemn you for the non-observance of these things; *which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ*^a: but every thing of this nature under the gospel-dispensation ought to be carefully observed and complied with; the ordinance of baptism ought to be submitted unto, and the Lord's supper should be kept as it was instituted, and all things which Christ has commanded should be done; all his precepts should be esteemed, and impartially regarded; Israel should walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; the assembly of his saints should not be forsaken; his word should be constantly heard, and every ordinance kept as delivered; and the Lord our God should be worshipped, and he only should be served.

Particularly, the duty of prayer should be attended unto; men should pray without ceasing; our Lord put forth a parable to encourage his people to pray always, and not faint: prayer in the closet should be constantly kept up; *When thou prayest, says Christ*^b, *enter into thy closet, &c.* and prayer in the family should be daily used; if neglected, God will resent it: he will *pour out his fury on the families that call not on his name*^c: prayer is a

^a Col. ii. 16, 17.

^b Matt. vi. 6.

^c Jer. x. 25.

powerful means of keeping up the spirit and life of religion, and without it, it cannot be kept up with vigour. Praying, says a good man d, will either make you leave off sinning, or sinning will make you leave off praying.

(2.) Every thing which concerns our fellow-creatures, whether as men or Christians, ought to be done by the Israel of God; they should love their neighbours as themselves, and do that to men which they would have done to themselves; nay, it becomes them to love their enemies, to do good to them that hate them, to feed them when hungry, and give them drink when thirsty, and to overcome evil with good. And as for their fellow-christians, they should by love serve them, both in things temporal and spiritual; they should do good to all, but especially to the household of faith: they should bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; they should support the weak, and comfort the feeble-minded; they should give advice and counsels where it is wanting, pray with, and for one another, and build up each other on their most holy faith. But I go on to shew,

2. The necessity of doing these things, or why Israel, or the people of God *ought* to do

d Mr. Vassar Powel.

them .

them: there are certain *necessary uses*, as the apostle^e calls them, for which good works are to be done; the question is, what they are? And,

(1.) Negatively: they are not to be done in order to procure the love and favour of God; as, *if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned^f*; so, if he was to perform ever so many good works, and those ever so well, they would not obtain the love of God, which is altogether free and unmerited; nothing out of God can be the cause of it: the reason why he loved Israel of old, and why he loves any, is, because he would and will love them; *he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious^g*: nor are they to be done to make atonement for sin, or to make peace with God. Was a man to bring *thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil*, or do ever so many works of a ceremonial, moral, or evangelic nature, they would never atone for his sins; present services due to God, can never make atonement for former transgressions, or reconcile sinners to God; atonement and reconciliation for sin, and peace with God, are made by another hand, and in a better way, even by Christ, and the blood of his cross.

^e Tit. iii. 14.

^f Cant. viii. 7.

^g Exod. xxxiii. 19.

Nor are they to be done to justify us in the sight of God, and to render us acceptable to him; there is no justification before God by the works of the law; were there, men would have whereof to glory in his presence; but boasting is excluded by the law or doctrine of faith, by the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ's righteousness: if righteousness was by the law and its works, the death of Christ would be in vain, and his obedience and sufferings useless; but it is certain, that a sinner is justified without the works of the law, and by a righteousness imputed to him without them: nor are they necessary to salvation, or to be done in order to procure it; salvation is neither according to them, nor by them; it is wrought out by Christ, and is so compleat and perfect, that nothing can be added to it to make it more so: he is the sole author of it, his own arm has brought it in; it is in him, and in no other. Nor are they to be performed with a view to merit any thing at the hand of God: it is impossible for a creature to merit any thing of God by what he does: men may talk of enthusiasts and visionaries, but they are the greatest, who dream of the merit of their good works; the least thing cannot be merited by us, not a morsel we eat, or a rag we wear,
 much

much less the above things relating to eternal salvation. That by which we merit should be profitable to him of whom we merit; but can a man, or any thing he does, be profitable unto God? It should not be due to him of whom we merit; but all our works are due to God, he has a prior right to the performance of them: what is done in a way of merit, should be done in our own strength, without any assistance from him of whom we should merit; whereas our best works are done in the strength of the Lord, and by the assistance of his grace: to which may be added, there should be some proportion between that which is merited, and that by which we merit; but there is none between eternal salvation and our works; wherefore these are not the necessary uses for which they are to be done. But,

(2.) Positively: these things *ought* to be done, and there is a necessity of doing them, with respect to God; because it is the will of God they should be done, he has commanded them, and because they are approved of by him, and are well-pleasing to him, through Christ, when rightly done; besides, they are the means of glorifying God, not only by the persons that do them, but by others that behold them; for
which

which reason our Lord directs unto them ^b, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* They are necessary with respect to men; they are good and profitable unto them; it is setting them a good example, and may be a means of recommending religion to them, and of softening their minds to an attention to the truths of the gospel, and of winning such without the word, who are not won by it; and, however, of putting to shame and silence such who are forward to accuse the good conversation of the saints. They ought to be done on account of the people of God themselves; to testify their subjection to God, and gratitude to him, for mercies received from him; to adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, and to evidence the truth of their faith, and the sincerity of their profession. And they should be done on account of the works themselves, because they are good, honestly good; they are things honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report; they are pleasantly good, there is a pleasure enjoyed in them; great peace have they which love the law of God, and obey it; and they are profitably good, though not to

^b Matth. v. 16.

God in the instances before mentioned, yet to men. But I proceed to shew,

3. Why Israel, the people of God, of *all* men, *ought* to do these things; and there are two reasons for it,

(1.) Because they are under the greatest obligations to do them. They are chosen of God unto them; though they are not chosen because they were holy, yet that they might be holy in heart and life; though the act of election passed before they had done either good or evil, and so is irrelative of their works; yet they are such *which God hath fore-ordained that they should walk in them*ⁱ; and it becomes them to *make their calling and election sure*^k; which should be done, as it seems, by some third thing, that is, by good works; and so some copies read the text. They are redeemed by Christ for this end, that they should be *a peculiar people, zealous of good works*^l; and unless they are performed, this end is not answered; since they are redeemed from *a vain conversation*^m, they ought not to follow one; and since they are not their own, but are bought with the price of Christ's precious blood, they should *glorify him in their*

ⁱ Eph. i. 4. and ii. 10.

^l Tit. ii. 14.

^k 2 Pet. i. 10.

^m 1 Pet. i. 19.

body and spirit, which are his. The love of Christ should constrain them to live to him who died for them, and rose againⁿ: they are effectually called by his grace, and though not according to their works, yet with an holy calling, and unto holiness: such who are called, ought to be holy, as he that has called them is holy, and should, by their lives and conversations, shew forth the praises of him who has called them out of darkness into marvellous light. They have received many exceeding great and precious promises from the Lord, that he will be with them, and not leave them or forsake them; that he will help and strengthen them, and assist them in every duty, and work in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure; will carry on and perform his good work in them until the day of Christ, and will be their God and Father, and they shall be his sons and daughters, and ever continue in this relation: *and having, therefore, these promises, says the apostle^o, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord:* to which may be added, that they have received

ⁿ 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20: 2 Cor. v. 14.

^o 2 Cor. vi. 17. and vii. 1.

many mercies and favours from the Lord, both temporal and spiritual, which they are unworthy of; and these should influence and engage them to the performance of good works: this is an argument the apostle Paul uses to this purpose; *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service* P.

(2.) Another reason why of *all* men the Israel of God, or his own special people, *ought* to do good works, is, because they are in the best capacity of doing them; nay, they are the only persons that can perform them aright. There is no good thing in unregenerate men, and therefore no good thing can come out of them, or be done by them; they have no true knowledge of that which is good, and much less to do it; they have no inclination or desire, nay, an aversion to it; they have no free-will thereunto, nor power to perform; it may as reasonably be expected to gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, as good works to be done by an evil man; a wicked man is to every good work reprobate and unfit: but Israelites indeed, they are good men, and so capable of doing good works; a man must first be a good man before

he can do good works : men begin at the wrong end, when they propose to do good works; in order to make themselves good men ; the first concern should be to have a good work of grace upon the heart, which is the Lord's work ; for unless there is a good work begun within, there will be no good works done without ; the tree must first be made good ere the fruit will be good. Moreover, such are made alive by the grace of God ; the Spirit of life from Christ has entered into them ; Christ himself has said to them *whilst in their blood, Live* 1. Principles of grace, life, and holiness are wrought in their hearts, and so they are in a capacity, under the influence of divine grace, of producing acts of holiness, or of performing good works ; whereas men dead in trespasses and sins, are not able to do any thing spiritually good, and at most and best their works must be dead works. Spiritual Israel are such as are regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God, and so are *meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work* 2: the Spirit of God is put within them, to *cause* them to *walk* in the *statutes* of the Lord, and to *keep* his *judgments* and *do* them 3. They are strengthened by him with all might in

1 Ezek. xvi. 6.

2 2 Tim. ii. 21.

3 Ezek. xxxvi. 27:

their

their inward man for this purpose. Besides, they are *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*^t; they are made new creatures in him, and by him, for that end; they are branches in him the vine, and by virtue of union to him, and through abiding in him, bring forth fruit; without whom they can do nothing, though all things through him strengthening them: to add no more, they are believers in Christ, and so as they are under obligation, as such, to be *careful to maintain good works*^u; they are the only persons that can perform them in faith, without which a man can do nothing that is pleasing to God. Faith is an operative grace, it works by love, and is always attended with the fruits of righteousness and good works; for good works, as one w calls them, are second acts necessarily flowing from a life of faith.

Secondly, There are some things particularly, which are to be done according to the times in which the Israel of God live, or are in prospect of. In the annual discourse for the last year, and which has been published, I observed to you, that the times in which we are, are those of the Sardinian church, which represents the reformed churches, and the latter part of those

^t Eph. ii. 10.

^u Tit. iii. 8.

^w Amel. Medulla Theolog. l. 2. c. 7, §. 35.

times ;

times ; in which that church, and those it is an emblem of, would have no more than the name of one, or the name of religion and Christianity, without the life and power of it ; and but few whose garments would be undefiled ; and when there would be a letting go, and departing from the doctrines of the Reformation before heard and received ; and which exactly describe the times in which we live : and therefore what is recommended to that church, as what ought to be done by them, should be observed by us ; *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die—remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.* And,

1. We ought to *be watchful*. This concerns not only ministers of the word, whose special business it is to watch over themselves and others, to take heed to themselves, and to their doctrine, and to take care of the flock, over which they are placed as overseers, and see to it, that they are fed with wholesome food, and are not infected with false doctrine ; but this is incumbent on members of churches also ; what is here exhorted to belongs to them, as our Lord said to his disciples ; *What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch* ^x ; against sin and the prevail-

^x Mark xiii. 37.

ing vices of the age, Satan and his temptations; false teachers and their pernicious doctrines; we live in ensnaring times, and therefore ought to be on our watch and guard. Times of great profaneness and immorality, in which not only the men of the world, but professors of religion, give themselves great liberties, and indulge to a vain conversation; and the more wicked the times are, the more cautious should we be, that we are not drawn aside by ill examples; and the more so, as they are set by such that profess the same name we do: Satan is very busy in laying snares in the way of a professing people, in using all devices, and wiles, and stratagems, to decoy them from the paths of truth and righteousness; wherefore we ought to *watch and pray*, that we *enter not into temptation*^y: false teachers are every where lying in wait to deceive, and therefore we ought to guard against them, and be careful that our minds are not *corrupted* by them, *from the simplicity that is in Christ*^z; and that we are not carried away with *the error of the wicked*^a; and seeing *the end of all things is at hand*, not only of the world, and the things of it in general, but of that church-state in which we are in particular;

y Mat. xxvi, 41.

z 2 Cor. xi, 3.

a 2 Pet. iii. 17.

let us *therefore be sober and watch unto prayer* ^b.

The word here used in the exhortation to the church at Sardis, is by some rendered *awake*, which suggests it to be a time of night, and so of sleepiness, as indeed it is now with us; they that sleep, sleep in the night; night coming upon us, we are fallen asleep; we are like the virgins, wise and foolish, who while *the bridegroom tarried*, not coming so soon as expected, all *slumbered and slept* ^c; very little lively exercise of grace, or fervent discharge of duty; great coldness, lukewarmness, indifference, and backwardness to spiritual exercises: much sluggishness and slothfulness, and a general contentment at most in the outward form of religion; *it is high time therefore to awake out of sleep* ^d, lest the day of Christ should come upon us unawares. The exhortation of the apostle is very suitable to us; *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light* ^e: which words are not spoken to dead sinners, but to sleepy drowsy professors, got into the company of carnal men, dead in sins, from whose conversation, which encourages a

^b 1 Pet. iv. 7.

^c Mat. xxv. 5.

^d Rom. xiii. 11.

^e Eph. v. 14.

drowsy frame, they are called. And now being called to awake, and being awake, we ought to keep so, and not fall asleep again; and the rather, since the grand enemy of Christ and his churches, is busy in sowing his tares of false doctrines, which to do is now his proper time and opportunity: *while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares*^f.

2. *Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*: meaning not so much good works, though these may be said to be dying in our day, as to the performance of them, and may be said to be strengthened, when men are diligent to do their first works; nor the graces of the Spirit, for however these in appearance may seem expiring, when not in exercise, yet in reality they cannot die, being the immortal incorruptible seed of the Spirit of God; besides, it is the Lord's work to strengthen these; rather, the truths of the gospel, preached at the beginning of the Reformation with great vigour and liveliness, but now almost dead, lost, and buried; and therefore should be restored, established, and confirmed: but it seems best of all to understand the words of the members of this church-state, (the *ta loipa*) the rest of them, those that are left of the great number of them that have apos-

^f Matth. xiii. 25.

tatized,

tatized, and yet in a sickly state, ready to give up their religion and profession; like those in the Corinthian church, of whom the apostle says, *Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep* ^s: some were wholly gone, had entirely apostatized, and others were weak and tottering, and ready to give up all; now means should be used, and attempts made to recover these persons, whilst there is any hope of them, to bring them back from whence they have partially departed, to invigorate them with zeal for Christ, and to establish them in the truths of the gospel; as our Lord said to Peter, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren* ^h.

3. *Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent.* Call to mind the doctrines of the Reformation, how they were received when first heard; with what attention and reverence they were listened to; with what affection and joy they were received, though now despised, discarded, lost and buried in forgetfulness; such as justification by the righteousness of Christ, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice: and you that know the worth and value of those truths, and still have them in esteem, *hold* them *fast*; don't let them go, don't part with them at any rate, no

^s 1 Cor. xi. 30.

^h Luke xxii. 32.

not the least branch of truth ; give up nothing ; if you would keep the enemy from within, preserve your outworks, stand by them, quit not even such as may seem of the least importance ; dispute every inch of ground ; give not way in any thing, nor for any time, *no not for an hour, that the truth of the gospel may continue with you*ⁱ : 'tis this giving up of one thing after another that is the ruin of us ; what is the reason that deism has had such a spread among us of late years ? Among the rest, not only is it owing to the books wrote against Christianity, but to the weak answers to them, and feeble defences of it ; one truth of the Bible being given up after another, till at length there is scarce any thing left worth contending for. And so it is in other controversies among those that are called Christians ; something is generally given up on the side of truth, for which the writer is complimented as an ingenious man, and a man of good sense : this proves a snare to him, and whenever he writes again, he'll give up something more to confirm his character ; or another will start up, and take the same method, observing which way the stream of reputation runs, whilst those on the other side secretly laugh at them ; and thus are we likely to be wheedled and cajoled out

ⁱ Gal. ii. 5.

of truth, by artful and designing men, on one hand, and through the weakness of some, on the other; and we shall have more and more of this giving up of truth, as the night we are entered into grows darker and darker; what therefore we ought to do is, to get what gospel-light and knowledge we can, and keep what we have, and part with none; but *repent* of our coldness and indifference to gospel-truths, our inattention to them, forgetfulness of them, and unfruitfulness by them, and do our first works of faith, love, and zeal. And to these things we ought to do in the present times, may be added, what the apostle directs to, when he says; *Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*^k; the former of these exhortations is the same as before given, and the rest agree. Wherefore,

4. *Stand fast in the faith*; in the grace of faith, and in the doctrine of it, and in the profession of both; don't depart from the faith of the gospel, though you live in times that others do; and have lived to see the times foretold, that *some should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits*^l; but in these departing times, let it be your honour to stand fast without wavering; *be not moved away from the hope of the gospel*^m; from the gospel itself, and that

^k 1 Cor. xvi. 13.

^l 1 Tim. iv. 1.

^m Col. i. 23.

hope which it gives of salvation, by Jesus Christ, and eternal life through him; *stand fast in one spirit*: let your whole soul and spirit be in the gospel, and be zealously affected to it, and be united in your endeavours to promote it; *striving together for the faith* of it against the common enemy; *contend earnestly for the faith* once delivered to the saintsⁿ; which is attempted to be wrested out of your hands, and is in great danger of being so. Let *none of these things move* you from your close adherence to it, which are objected to it, or you meet with on account of your profession of it. Abide by it, though the greater number of men is against it, and those the rich, the wise, and learned: and though it may be charged with novelty and licentiousness, and attended with reproach and persecution.

5. *Quit ye like men*; play the man; behave like men of courage and valour; be *valiant for the truth upon the earth*^o; do as the guard about Solomon's bed did; let *every man have his own sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night*^p: it is a night-season with you already, and it will be a darker still; you'll hear the noise of the enemy be not terrified at it; guard against the fears that may seize and surprize you: fight the Lord's battles manfully: *If the foundations*

ⁿ Phil. i. 27. Jude 3.

^o Jer. ix. 3.

^p Cant. iii. 8.

dations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? What indeed will they have to work, or build upon, or even to stand on, when the foundation of all faith, hope, peace, and joy is removed? But then they should not look on as idle and unconcerned spectators of these things: *what can the righteous do?* They should build up as fast as others pull down; do as Nehemiah and his people did, work with one hand, and hold a weapon with the other^r; a trowel in one hand, and a sword in the other.

6. *Be strong*; not in yourselves, but in the Lord, and in the power of his might, in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; go to him for strength under every trial and exercise, to carry you through every service and suffering for his name-sake, and to oppose every enemy, and to maintain your ground against them; go not forth in your own strength, but depend on him, and his grace, which is sufficient for you; encourage yourselves in the Lord your God; let not your spirits sink, your hearts fail, and be discouraged; but take heart, *be of good courage*; consider you are engaged in a good cause, fight under the great Captain of your salvation, you may be sure of victory in the end, and that the issue will be a crown of life and righteousness: *wait on the*

^q Psl. xi. 3.

^r Neh. iv. 17.

Lord,

Lord, in the way of his appointments, which is your duty, with patient submission to his will; until the time of your deliverance and salvation comes, and he will *strengthen your heart*^f; fortify your minds against fear and danger.

7. Keep close to the word of God; make that the rule and standard of your faith and practice; *believe not every spirit*, or every man that pretends to be a spiritual man, and to have the Spirit of God; don't believe every thing he says under that pretence, but *try the spirits whether they are of God*^t; try the spiritual doctrines he professes to deliver, by the word of God; do as the noble Bereans did, who *searched the Scriptures daily whether these were so*^u, as they were represented by the apostles; and the more reason there is for such care and caution, *because many false prophets are gone out into the world*, and deceive men, and destroy their souls by their false doctrine; *to the law, and to the testimony*, to the doctrine of the gospel testified in the sacred writings, bring every thing they say, and examine it by: *if they speak not according to this word*; if their doctrines don't agree with it, can't be proved and confirmed by it, *it is because there is no light in them*^w;

^f Psal. xxvii. 14.

^t John iv. 1.

^u Acts xvii. 11.

^w Isa. viii. 20.

though

though they may pretend to great light, and even revelations from the Lord, yet if what they deliver can't be seen by the light of the divine word, their light is but darknefs; the *word* of the Lord is *a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path*^x; and you would do well to make use of it: and when is a lamp or light more proper for use than in a night-season? The night is coming on, therefore take your lamp and light in your hand, the word of God, and walk by it: *this is the more sure word of prophecy, by which you may safely go; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts*^y; whilst the night you are in continues, and until the morning comes, and the day breaks, by the glorious appearing of the Sun of Righteousness; or, in other words, until the spiritual reign of Christ begins.

8. Abide with the churches of Christ, and ministers of the gospel, in the worship of God, and in the ordinances of his house: it is said to the commendation of the tribe of Judah, *Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints*^z; by no means *forsake the assembling of yourselves together*, but keep close one to another;

^x Psal. cxix. 105.

^y 2 Pet. i. 19.

^z Hof. xi. 12.

and so much the more as you see the day approaching^a; or time and hour of temptation coming that is to try them that dwell upon the earth; where *the shepherd's tents* are do you fix yours, and there abide; let nothing divert you, or cause you to turn aside from the churches of Christ, to which you belong, nor from his faithful ministers; no, let not a cry concerning Christ himself move you from thence; our Lord has cautioned his followers against this, *If any man shall say un'to you, 'Lo here is Christ, or there, believe it not'*^b; Christ is where you are; he is preached by his ministers, and in the churches you attend upon, and that is enough for you; this you are certain of; it may not be where the cry is: however, what separates you from the churches and ministers of Christ can never be right; Christ and his ministers, and churches, are not to be divided: there were some in the Corinthian church for Paul, in opposition to Apollos; and others for Apollos, in opposition to Paul; and some for Cephas, in opposition to Paul and Apollos; and others were for Christ, in opposition to them all; they were for Christ without his ministers; *is Christ divided'*^c from his ministers and from his churches? No, he is not; and such are they who are for Christ and

^a Heb. x. 25. ^b Matt. xxiv. 23. ^c 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

no order, Christ, and no ordinances, Christ, and no ministers.

9. Since there is a time of darkness, a night-season coming on, *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel*^d; with submission to his will, with dependence on him, and with expectation of support under the trying exercise and deliverance out of it. Remember it is *thy God*, thy covenant-God and Father, who will never leave thee, nor forsake thee; wherefore,

10. Don't be discouraged, for though the affliction will be sharp, it will be short; the severity of it will last but three days and a half, that is, three years and a half; and then a glorious time, and a glorious state of the church will follow: and Christ has promised, that such that *keep the word of his patience*, he will *keep from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*^e; and therefore when you perceive it coming on, and the signs of it, *look up, and lift up your heads*; don't be cast down, rather rejoice, *for your redemption draweth nigh*^f: the night of weeping will soon be over, and joy will come in the morning.

And now, as to the morning that will follow after, this you should most firmly believe;

^d Amos iv. 12.

^e Rev. iii. 10.

^f Luke xxi. 28.

though

though scoffers may mock at it, and carnal professors be unconcerned about it, and give no credit to it; yet assure yourselves, a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry; pray for his kingdom and coming; give him no rest day nor night, till he arise and has mercy on Zion, and make his Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth: be hastening in your warm affections, and earnest desires, after those glorious times, which God will hasten in his own time; and in the darkest season look for this morning, for *at evening-time it shall be light*; and a glorious one it will be, as a morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds. I shall close all with those words of our Lord; *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.* And now, as I have shewn you what Israel ought to do in those times, *Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing*^h.

g Zech. xiv. 7●

h Luke xii. 35, 36. 43.

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M D C C X C I I I .

[P R I C E S I X P E N C E .]

A
S E R M O N,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

2 CHRON. XX. 20.

— *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his Prophets, so shall ye prosper.*

IN the beginning of this chapter, we have an account of an invasion of the land of Judea, in the times of Jehoshaphat, by the neighbouring nations, who joined in confederacy against the Jews. These people were always a typical people, and in this their case and circumstances were an emblem of the church and people of God; who in their present state are militant. They are surrounded with enemies, as the Jews were, which are many, lively, and strong; they have numerous fleshly lusts, which war

A 2 against

against their souls; and some enemies that are not flesh and blood, but spiritual wickednesses, with whom they wrestle; and even the whole world is against them, and hate, oppose, and persecute them in one shape or another to the uttermost; so that, upon one account or another, for the most part, *without* are *fightings*, *within* are *fears*^a.

The method Jehoshaphat and his people took in this their distress, was to seek the Lord by prayer, and ask help of him. Prayer is a special piece of the Christian armour; it is the last that is mentioned in the account of it; it is the dernier resort of believers, and which they often use to good purpose and great advantage. There were some sort of devils in Christ's time, who could not be dispossessed by any other means: Satan has often felt the dint of this weapon of our warfare, and dreads it; and dreaded it has been by some of his instruments. Mary, Queen of Scots, used to say, that she dreaded more the prayers of John Knox, a famous Reformer, than ten thousand armed men; so effectual is the fervent prayer of the righteous, as for the bringing down the blessings of the covenant of grace

^a 2 Cor. vii. 5.

upon them, so for the intimidating of their enemies, and for their protection from them.

The excellent prayer of Jehoshaphat, on this occasion, is recorded; which begins with taking notice of the place of the divine residence, heaven; in like manner as our Lord taught his disciples to pray, saying first of all, *Our Father which art in heaven*^b; and of the sovereignty of God over all the kingdoms of the world; and of his uncontrollable and irresistible power; and of his being the covenant-God and Father of his people; all which are necessary to be observed by us, in our addresses to him, to raise in our minds just ideas of him, and to encourage our faith and hope in him. The royal saint goes on to make mention of the works of God of old; his works of power and might, of grace and goodness, in driving the heathens out of the land of Canaan, and giving it to the seed of Abraham for ever; from whence he hoped and concluded, it would not be given up again into the hands of their enemies. He takes notice of the sanctuary or temple that was built in it, where Jehovah dwelt, granted his presence to his people, and heard and helped them in the times of their distress; which was a type of

^b Mat. vi. 9.

Christ's human nature, the temple of his body, the true tabernacle which God pitched, and not man, in which dwells all the fulness of the Godhead; and, for the sake of him, the Lord hears and answers the prayers of his people, when they *look*, as Jonah did, *towards his holy temple* ^c; and which, with great pertinency, is here observed. Next the ingratitude of their enemies is taken notice of; when Israel came out of Egypt, and passed through the wilderness, they were bid not to meddle or distress the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, but turn away from them, as they did; who now reward them evil for good, by attempting to dispossess them of the land given them to inherit: and therefore it was hoped the Lord would judge their cause, and right their wrongs; since the king and his people had no power to oppose such a numerous army that was come up against them; but their eyes were to the Lord, and on him were their dependance, and with him they left the issue of things.

The Lord presently shewed himself to be a God hearing and answering prayer; for immediately, as the king and all the people stood before the Lord, to hear what he would say unto

^c Jonah ii, 4.

them,

them, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, a Levite, who stood up and prophesied, and bid the people not to be dismayed at the number of their enemies ; told where they were to be met with ; assured them of victory, nay, that they had no need to fight, the Lord would fight for them ; and that they had nothing to do, but to stand still and see the salvation of God ; which message Jehoshaphat and the people received with faith, with holy reverence and godly fear, bowing their heads and worshipping : and so fully assured were they of the truth of what was promised them, that they sung the praises of God, before the deliverance was wrought ; upon which they marched out to meet the enemy, when Jehoshaphat, at the head of his army, addressed it in the words first read ; *Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established ; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper :* “ Do not trust in your numbers, nor in your own strength, courage, and skill ; but trust in your covenant-God, so shall ye be strengthened, confirmed, and animated to engage your enemies, with true fortitude of mind ; believe what he has said by his prophets, particularly by Jahaziel, who has just now delivered a message from him to you, so shall ye succeed against your enemies,

“ enemies, and obtain a complete victory over
 “ them.” This is the sense of the words re-
 specting the present case ; but they may be ap-
 plied to believers in any age or period of time,
 in whatsoever case or circumstances they may
 be ; the main and principal thing in them is
 faith or believing : concerning which,

- I. I shall consider the kind and nature of it.
- II. The objects of it, as here expressed, *the
 Lord God and his prophets.*
- III. The advantages arising from it, *establissh-
 ment and prosperity.*

I. I shall consider the kind and nature of
 faith : there are various sorts of faith, as the
 apostle suggests, when he says^d, *Though I
 have all faith* ; that is, all sorts of faith, which
 he supposes a man may have, and not have *cha-
 rity*, love, or true grace ; he means all sorts but
 one ; namely, special faith ; for whosoever has
 that, has charity or love ; for *faith worketh by
 love*^e : however there are several sorts or kinds
 of faith.

I. There is a faith of miracles, or of doing
 miracles ; and which the apostle, in the above
 words has in view, since it follows, *so that I*

^d 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

^e Gal. v. 6.

could remove mountains; referring to what our Lord said to his disciples †; *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.* Christ, when he gave his disciples a commission to preach the gospel, gave them power of working miracles to confirm it; he gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of diseases; and Judas, no doubt, had this power as well as the rest; for a man in these times might have such a faith, and such a power, and yet not have that special faith which issues in salvation. We read of some that cast out devils in the name of Christ, and yet are not, and will not be known and acknowledged by him as his.

2. There is a faith which is commonly called an historical faith; which is a mere assent to a set of propositions as true, and which are true in themselves; as,

That there is but one God. That there is a God, may be known and believed by the light of nature, may be concluded from the things that are made by him; and that this God is but one,

† Mat. xvii. 20.

‡ Mat. vii. 22, 23.

is the voice of reason and revelation ; the language both of the Old and of the New Testament ; the faith of Jews and Christians ; and it is right to believe it ; and which may be done where there is not true special faith : *thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well, the devils also believe and tremble^h* : that is, they believe there is one God, and know there is but one, and tremble through fear of his awful majesty.

With this sort of faith a man may believe all that is said and is true of Jesus Christ ; as that he is God over all, blessed for ever ; the true God and eternal life ; that he is the Son of God, and Saviour of the world ; that he is God and man in one person ; that he became incarnate ; that he suffered and died for the sins of men ; that he was buried, and rose again from the dead ; that he ascended up to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, and will come a second time to judge the world ; all which a man may believe, and yet be destitute of the true grace of God. There are indeed some strong expressions in the epistle of the apostle John, where he says, that *every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is*

^h James ii. 19.

*of God*ⁱ; and *whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*^k: whereas now there are all nations that believe these things, of multitudes of whom it cannot be thought that they are regenerate persons. It will help us over this difficulty a little by considering times, and times: in the apostles times, these truths were generally denied; the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, opposed them; and then for a man to believe and profess them in the face of all opposition, and under the scandal of the cross, was a great matter; it was reckoned a proof of true grace, and a criterion of a man's regeneration: but now since Christianity is established, and become the religion of nations, to believe all this is no mark or sign of being born again; for such a national faith is no better than the faith of Indians and Mahometans, only it happens to have a better object; for the ground and reason of it is the same; namely, being born and brought up among those who generally believe in the same way. Though it may be, the true sense of the above expressions is this; that every one that embraces, possesses, or preaches that Christ is come in the flesh, or is become in-

ⁱ : John iv. 2.

^k : John v. 1.

carnate, is on the side of God and truth ; and that whoever believes that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah, is a regenerate person ; that is, not barely assents to this truth ; but whereas his work, as the Messiah was to make atonement for sin, and procure the pardon of it, and bring in everlasting righteousness, and obtain salvation for men ; he deals by faith with him for these things ; with his atoning sacrifice for the expiation of sin ; with his blood for pardon and cleansing, and with his righteousness for justification ; receives him as a Saviour, and depends upon him for life and salvation ; otherwise, barely believing him to be the Messiah, is no other than what the devils themselves do ; who, in the days of his flesh, knew and owned him to be the Christ, the Son of God.

With this sort of faith a man may believe all the doctrines of the gospel, and yet not have the root of the matter in him, or true grace. Men may have the whole form of gospel-doctrine in their heads, and deny the power of it, or not feel it in their hearts ; they may believe the things concerning the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, as Simon Magus did, or however professed to do, and yet be with him in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. Yea, many have

¹ Luke iv. 34. 41.

had such a degree of knowledge in evangelical things, as to be able to preach the gospel clearly and distinctly, to prophesy or preach in Christ's name, and yet knew him not spiritually and experimentally, or were known by him; they may speak with the tongues of men and angels, have all knowledge and all faith of this kind, and yet be without charity or true love to God, to Christ, and to divine and spiritual things. Indeed, without believing the gospel of Christ, and the things concerning him, there can be no true faith in him: men can't be children of light without believing the light of the gospel, or giving credit to the gospel-revelation; and therefore our Lord exhorts men to *believe in the light, that they might be children of the light*^m: the way and means of being so, is to attend unto and believe the gospel-scheme; but then this may be believed, and yet men fall short of the true light of special grace.

This faith is but a temporary faith, a believing for a while; and it need not be thought strange if persons that have only this should make shipwreck of it, and put away a good conscience; and which is no instance of a true believer's falling away from grace; whereas those who have true faith, and live by it on

^m John xii. 36.

Christ, are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul : which brings me to observe,

3. That there is a special and spiritual faith, to which salvation is annexed ; with which he that believes shall be saved according to the gospel-declaration ; and which directs and encourages sensible sinners to look to Christ, and believe in him, assuring them they shall be saved. The scheme of salvation the gospel publishes and proclaims is, that it is *by grace through faith* in Christ ; hence, I suppose, it is that this sort of faith is commonly called *saving faith*, to distinguish it from others ; though I think not with strict justness and propriety, and could wish the phrase was disused ; since it seems to derogate and detract from the glory of Christ, who is the alone Saviour, and to carry off the mind from the object of faith, to the act of it. But be this as it will :

This sort of faith is not of a man's self ; it does not owe its original to the creature ; it is expressly denied to be of man ; *that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God* ⁿ ; it is not the effect of pure nature ; it is not the produce of man's free-will and power ; *all men have not faith* ^p ; there are few that have it, and those

ⁿ Eph. ii. 8.

^p 2 Thess. iii. 2.

that have it, have it not from nature, but by the grace of God. *No man*, says Christ, *can come unto me*; that is, believe in him; for coming to Christ, and believing in him are the same thing, *except it were given him of my Father*^q. And again, *No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him*^r; that is, by the influence of his Spirit and grace.

Nor is this sort of faith of the law of works; for as *the law is not of faith*^s, so neither is faith of the law; the law is not so much as the means of it, nor does it reveal the object, nor require the act, or direct and encourage to it: it is not the means of true faith in Christ; *faith comes by hearing the word of God*^t; but by what part of it? not the law but the gospel; *received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith*^u? that is, by the preaching of the law, and the works of it, or by the preaching of the doctrine of faith? by the latter, and not the former: and as the Spirit is not received in that way, or by such means, so not the graces of the Spirit, and particularly faith. How should it come this way, since the law does not reveal the object of it, Christ,

^q John vi. 65.

^r Rom. x. 17.

^s John vi. 44.

^u Gal. iii. 2.

^t Gal. iii. 12.

or give the least hint concerning him? *By the law is the knowledge of sin^w*; but not the knowledge of a Saviour from sin: did it reveal Christ to a poor awakened sinner, it would not work that wrath in his conscience, or leave him without hope of mercy, as it does; and if it knows nothing, and makes known nothing of the object of faith, how can it be thought it should require the act of it? does it require an act upon an unknown object? does it require men to believe in an object it does not reveal or give the least discovery of? how should they believe in consequence of such a requirement, of whom they have not heard the least tittle from the law? nor does the law give any direction or encouragement to souls to believe in Christ; its language is, *Do this and live^x*, but not *believe in Christ and be saved^y*; this is the voice of the gospel, and not of the law. Should it be said that *faith* is reckoned among *the weightier matters of the law^z*; this is to be understood either of fidelity, of faithfulness among men, or of trust in God, as the God of nature and providence, &c. giving credit to the

^w Rom. iii. 20.

^x Gal. iii. 12.

^y Acts xvi. 31.

^z Matt. xxiii. 23.

revelation of his will, and the worship of him according to it.

True faith in Christ comes from another quarter than from the covenant of works, and flows in another channel; it is a blessing of the covenant of grace, of that covenant which is *ordered in all things, and sure*^a; for the glory of God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and for the good of the covenant-ones; it provides all blessings of grace for them, for time and eternity, and among the rest faith in Christ Jesus. This lays open and exposes a mistaken and false notion of some who assert, that faith and repentance are conditions of the covenant of grace, when they are the blessings of it, included in that promise; *A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh*^b; and these are gifts without repentance, which God never revokes or takes back, or suffers to be of no effect. Faith in Christ is the fruit of electing grace, and is as sure as salvation itself; the one is in the decree of the means, the other in the decree of the end; that de-

^a 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

^b Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

crece of election, which secures the end, *salvation*, secures also the means, *sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*^c; or faith in Christ, who is the truth; so it has been in all ages, now is, and ever shall be, that *as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed*^d: hence true faith is called the *faith of God's elect*^e; it being certain, proper and peculiar to them; and this is the true reason why one believes, and another does not; as our Lord says of some, *Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep*^f; the sheep which the Father gave unto me in election, and in the covenant of grace: let any man rise up and give a better reason if he can, than this that Christ has given, why one believes in him, and another does not. Believing in him is the pure gift of God, of his rich sovereign and distinguishing grace; he gives it to one, and denies it to another, as he pleases; he *hides* the things of Christ, and of the gospel, *from the wise and prudent*, and does not vouchsafe unto them faith in them; and *reveals* them *unto babes*; and gives them faith in his Son; and no other reason can be given of it than his sovereign

c 2 Thess. ii. 13.

d Acts xiii. 48.

e Tit. i. 1.

f John x. 26.

pleasure:

pleasure : *even so Father, says Christ, for so it seemed good in thy sight* g.

Special faith in Christ is of the operation of the Spirit of God ; he produces it by his mighty power in the soul ; he enlightens the mind, reveals the object, brings near Christ, his righteousness and salvation, and enables the sensible sinner to look unto him, lay hold on him, and receive him as his Saviour and Redeemer : hence he is called *the Spirit of faith* h ; because he is the author of it, who begins and carries on, and will perform the work of faith with power ; the principal use of which grace is to receive all from Christ, and give him the glory. God has put this honour upon it, to constitute and appoint it to be the *receiver-general* of all the blessings of grace. It receives Christ himself as the Father's free-gift ; it receives out of the fulness of Christ, even grace for grace, or an abundance of it ; it receives the blessing of righteousness from the Lord for justification ; it receives the remission of sins through his blood, according to the gospel-declaration ; it receives the adoption of children, in consequence of the way being opened for it through the redemption which is in Christ ; it receives the inheritance among them that are sanctified, the right unto it, and the claim upon

g Matt. xi. 28.

h 2 Cor. i. 17.

it; and to this post it is advanced, that all the glory might redound to the grace of God; *it is of faith, that it might be by grace* ⁱ: there are other uses of faith, and actings of it, which will be observed under the following head. I now proceed to consider,

II. The objects of faith, as in the words directed to, *the Lord God and his prophets*.
ⁱft. The Lord our God, who is the one Lord to be believed in; *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord* ^k: from which passage the ancient *Jews* ^l have established the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, as well as the doctrine of the unity of the divine Being; and certain it is, that Father, Son, and Spirit, are the one God; and each, and every one of them, are to be believed in, and are the proper objects of faith.

1. God the Father is the object of faith, who is to be believed in; and to believe in him, is not merely to believe his existence and perfections, for he is a fool indeed that believes ~~there~~ ^{there} is no God: nor merely to believe in him as the God of nature and providence, and to trust in him for the preservation of life, and the continuance of the blessings and mercies of

ⁱ Rom. iv. 16.

^k Deut. vi. 4.

^l See my Exposition of 1 John v. 7.

it, and to glorify him for them; though there are some who believe there is a God, yet do not glorify him as such, nor trust in his goodness, nor are thankful for providential favours: but to believe in him with a special faith, is to believe in him as he has proclaimed his name in Christ, *A God gracious and merciful, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin^m*; it is to believe in him as our covenant God and Father, for so he is to his people in Christ; he is to them what he is to him, as he saysⁿ, *I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God*: it was a noble act of faith expressed by David^o, *I trusted in thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my God*; and such should believe that this God, who is their God, will be their God and guide even unto death; since covenant-relation always subsists, and can never be made void. And whereas the Father of Christ stands in the relation of a Father to his people; it becomes them, having had the testimony of the Spirit of adoption, witnessing to their spirits that they are the children of God, to call him in faith, and with a filial fear and reverence, their Father, and not turn away from him: to believe in him, is to believe in

^m Exod. xxxiv. 6. ⁿ John xx. 17. ^o Ps. xxxi. 14.

his everlasting and unchangeable love; and to believe that it is so, and their interest in it, it being shed abroad in their hearts, by the Spirit given unto them; this love being declared unto them by the Lord himself, and affirmed in the strongest terms, saying^p, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love*; of which he has given full proof, not only by his choice of them in Christ, and by the redemption of them through him, but by drawing them with loving kindness to himself, in effectual vocation; it should be believed: it is a glorious act of faith of the apostle's, when he says^q, *I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*; this is to be rooted and grounded in it. To believe in God the Father, is to believe in him as the God of all grace, the author and giver of it; that his grace is sufficient for us in all times of need; that he is able to cause all grace to abound towards us; and that he will supply all our wants, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus: it is to believe in his

^p Jer. xxxi. 3.

^q Rom. viii. 38, 39.

promises,

promises, which are exceeding great and precious; that he is faithful who hath promised, and will perform; that he will never suffer his faithfulness to fail, nor any good word which he has spoken; that all his promises are yea and amen in Christ: it is to believe in his power, that he is able also to perform and make good what he has said; and likewise that there is in him everlasting strength, and that according to his promise, as our day is, our strength shall be; and that we are, and shall be kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation.

2. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is also the object of faith: *Ye believe in God, believe also in me*^r, says Christ himself; who is God as well as the Father, and to be believed in equally with him: the gospel directs to faith in Christ, and it is the principal thing it encourages to; the ministers of it point him out to sensible and distressed sinners, saying, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved*^s: the sum of the gospel, of the word of faith is, *That if thou shalt confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth*

^r John xiv. 11.

^s Acts xvi. 31.

unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation^t. The Targum, or Chaldee paraphrase of our text, is, *Believe in the word of the Lord your God*; where the Paraphrast, by the *memra Jehovah*, or *word of the Lord*, does not mean the written word of the Lord, the Scriptures; nor the oral word of the Lord, what was spoken by the prophets, as it is said he sometimes does; since it follows, in the same paraphrase, *Believe in his law, and in his prophets*; wherefore it is to be understood of the essential Word, the Son of God, who is to be believed in; and various are the acts of faith which are exercised on him, or believing on him is expressed by various things.

Faith in Christ is signified by *seeing* him, and looking unto him; an unknown Christ cannot, but an unseen Christ is, and may be, the object of faith: *Faith is the evidence of things not seen*^u, the principal of which is an unseen Christ: the believer, by faith, beholds the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, the excellency of his righteousness, the preciousness and efficacy of his blood, and the suitableness of his salvation; and it looks to him for peace and pardon, for righteousness, eternal life and happiness; and keeps looking

^t Rom. x. 9, 10.

^u Heb. xi. 1.

to him as the author and finisher of faith. It is a *motion* of the soul towards Christ; it not only looks at him, and gazes with admiration and pleasure on the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace, but goes out unto him: faith is the soul's coming to Christ, which it is encouraged to do, by his kind invitation, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest^w*; and by his gracious declarations and resolutions, that he *will in no wise cast out him that cometh to him^x*: yea, it is expressed by a swift motion to him; by a *fleeing* to him for refuge, under a sense of sin and danger; by *running* to the name of the Lord for safety, which is as a strong tower; and by turning into the strong-hold Christ, as prisoners of hope: to believe in him, is not only to behold him with an eye of faith, to flee and come unto him in a way of believing, but to *lay hold* upon him, and embrace him; for Christ is *a tree of life to them that lay hold upon him, and happy is every one that retaineth him^y*: it is to lay hold upon the skirt of him that is a Jew; to lay hold upon his righteousness; to lay hold upon his strength; to lay hold upon his covenant; the blessings and promises of it; to lay hold on him, as the Mediator

^w Matth. xi. 28.

^x John vi. 37.

^y Prov. iii. 18.

of the covenant ; to hold him fast, and not let him go ; saying with Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him—he also shall be my salvation*². Faith in Christ is a *leaning* on him, while passing through this wilderness ; it is a recumbency, a relying upon him for salvation ; a staying a man's self upon the mighty God of Jacob ; laying the whole stress of his salvation on him ; casting all his care, and all his burdens on him, who has promised to sustain him and them ; believing he is able to keep him from falling, and to keep what he has committed to him : for to believe in Christ, is to *give up* all into his hands, our souls, and the eternal concerns of them ; to expect all grace, and all the supplies of it from him, even all grace here, and glory hereafter : it is, in one word, to deal with his person for acceptance with God ; with his blood for pardon and cleansing ; with his sacrifice for atonement ; with his righteousness for justification ; with his fulness for every supply of grace, looking for his mercy unto eternal life.

3. The Holy Spirit of God is likewise the object of faith ; we read and hear much of faith in God, and of faith in Jesus Christ, but very little of faith in the Holy Ghost ; and yet as he is

² Job. xiii. 15, 16.

the one God with the Father and the Son, he is equally to be believed in as they are: and we are not only to believe his being and perfections, his deity and personality, his offices as a sanctifier and comforter, and the operations of his grace on the souls of men; but there are particular acts of faith, trust, and confidence, to be exercised on him: as he is God, he is to be worshipped, and this can't be done aright without faith; he is particularly to be prayed unto, and there is no praying to him, nor praying in him, without faith; we are to trust in him for his help and assistance in prayer, and indeed in the exercise of every religious duty, and even of every grace. I fear ministers of the word do not trust in him as they should do in the discharge of their work, nor private Christians in the performance of theirs: and besides all this, there is an act of special faith to be put forth upon him, as upon the other two persons; for as we are to trust in God the Father to keep us, through his power to salvation, and to trust in Christ for the salvation of our souls, and to trust the salvation of them with him; so we are to trust in the Holy Spirit for carrying on, and finishing the work of grace on our souls, who is equal to it; we are to trust the whole of it with him, and be *confident of this very thing;*

thing; as we may be, as of any one thing in the world, that he, the Spirit of God, which hath begun a good work in us, will perform until the day of Jesus Christ^b.

2dly, The prophets of the Lord are to be believed; first the Lord, and then his prophets being sent by him, and coming from him, bringing a message from him, and declaring his will; so the children of Israel at the red sea believed the Lord and his servant Moses ^c.

• 1. By the *prophets* are meant the prophets of the Old Testament, who are to be believed, since they spoke as they were *moved* by the Holy Ghost; *the Spirit of the Lord spoke by them, and his word was in their tongue^d*: he dictated to them what they should say; he led them into all truths they delivered; he indited the scriptures of truth, and therefore they ought to be credited as such: nay, not only *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*, even all the writings of the prophets; but whatsoever things were *written afore-time, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*: the whole of scripture is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in*

^b Phil. i. 6.

^c Exod. xiv. 31.

^d 2 Pet. i. 21. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

righteousness;

righteousness^e; which several advantageous uses should the more recommend the writings of the prophets to our faith and love; and especially since they contain many things in them concerning Christ, the more immediate object of special faith; there are many things in the Psalms, and in the law, and in the prophets concerning him; Moses wrote of him, and all the prophets bear witness to him. Their writings abundantly testify of him, of his person, offices, and grace, of what he should be, and what he should do and suffer; they testified before-hand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow; and especially we, at this time of day, have great reason to believe the prophets, since the far greater part of what they prophesied of, is exactly come to pass. The prophecies of Isaiah, concerning the captivity of the Jews, and their deliverance from it by Cyrus, who is mentioned by name a hundred and fifty years or more before he was born, have been punctually fulfilled. Also Daniel's prophecies concerning Darius king of Persia, and Alexander the Great, under the names of the ram and he-goat, and of the kings of Egypt and Syria, and what should be done in their times; and not only these, but others of greater im-

^e Rom. xv. 4. & Tim. iii. 16.

portance,

portance, concerning the Messiah, his birth of a virgin, the place of his birth, his miracles, sufferings, and death, his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, the effusion of the Spirit, and the spread and success of the gospel in the Gentile world, as well as the destruction of the Jewish nation, for their rejection of him; on account of all these things, and more, the prophets of the Old Testament claim our faith and credit.

2. The prophets of the New Testament are to be believed. The apostles of our Lord are by him called *prophets* and *wise men*; some of which, he says, the Jews would *kill*, and *crucify*, and others *scourge*^g: they are so called, both because they were extraordinary preachers of the word, and fore-tellers of things to come, and on both accounts were to be believed. He that received them, received Christ, and he that rejected them, rejected him, and his Father that sent him. John the divine, was eminently a prophet in both respects, as he was a faithful dispenser of the word, and bore record of it, and of the testimony of Jesus, and as he fore-told things to come, under a divine inspiration: his Revelation is a prophecy of what should be

^g Matt. xxiii. 34.

in the world and church, from his time, to the second coming of Christ; great part of which has been already fulfilled; and there is all the reason in the world to believe the rest will be accomplished. The sayings in it are the sayings of God, and they are faithful and true; believe what he has said by this his prophet. The ordinary and common preachers of the word are called *prophets*, and their preaching *prophesying* e: and though we are *not to believe every spirit*, and every man that pretends to be a spiritual man, and a prophet, *but try the spirits whether they are of God*, by his word, the standard of faith and practice; *because many false prophets are gone out into the world* f: yet such who bring the doctrines of Christ with them, such as are agreeable to the word of God, which are taken out of it, and established by it, ought to be believed and received, not as the word of man, but as in truth the word of God.

The whole of divine revelation is to be believed, which God has made by his prophets, whether of the Old or of the New Testament; and which is all comprehended in these words our Lord began his ministry with, *Believe the gospel* g: not to believe this, is the damning sin

e 1 Cor. xiv. 3, 4, 5. 29. 32. 37.

f 1 John iv. 1.

g Mark i. 15.

of unbelief, so much spoken of in the New Testament; this was the sin of the Jews, and in which the greater part died, that they believed not that Jesus was the Messiah, and other important truths concerning him, though they came with such full evidence; this is the sin of all to whom the external revelation of the gospel comes, and they believe it not; this is the sin of the Deists of the present age, of all deniers, rejecters, and despisers of the gospel; who either neglect to examine the evidence of it, or notwithstanding the evidence of it, reject and condemn it; what will the end of such persons be, that obey not the gospel of Christ, that do not embrace, but neglect or despise it? They will be punished with everlasting destruction; he that believeth not this revelation shall be damned. *This is the condemnation, the cause, and aggravation of it, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light^h; the darkness of nature, rather than a divine revelation.* This sort of unbelief, and not want of special faith in Christ, is the cause of mens damnation. No man will be lost or damned, because he has not this faith; to say that God will damn any man, because he has not this special faith in Christ, is to represent him as *the most*

^h John iii. 19.

cruel of all beings, as the Arminians say we make him to be, to damn a man for that which is solely in his power to give; for no man can believe in Christ with this sort of faith, unless It be given him of his Father: and which yet he determines not to give unto him, as unto all the non-elect; and which man never had in his power to have or exercise, no, not in the state of innocence. Can any man believe that God will ever damn a man on such an account as this? This is just such good sense, as if it should be said, that a malefactor dies at Tyburn, for want of receiving the king's pardon, he did not think fit to give him; 'tis true, if the king had given him his pardon, and he had received it, it would have saved him from dying; but then it is not the want of the king's pardon, or of his receiving it, that is the cause of his condemnation and death, but the crimes he was charged with, and convicted of in open court. So, though if it pleases God to give men special faith in Christ, for the remission of their sins, they will certainly be saved; but then it is not the want of this faith in the blood of Christ, for the pardon of sins, that is the cause of any man's condemnation and death, but the transgressions of the law of God, and the contempt of his gospel they have been guilty of. As is the re-

velation which is made to men, such is the faith that is required of them. If there is no revelation made unto them, no faith is required of them; and unbelief, or want of faith in Christ, will not be their damning sin, as is the case of the Heathens; for *how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* and *how shall they hear without a preacher*ⁱ? no, they'll be condemned, not for their want of faith in Christ, or his gospel, which they never heard of, but for their sins committed against the law and light of nature; *as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law*^k: if a revelation is made, this is either external or internal; if only an external revelation is made, the faith required is an assent unto it, and a reception of it; and such who do not attend to the evidence it brings with it, or reject and despise it, shall be damned: but if, besides the external revelation, an internal revelation is made by the Spirit of wisdom, in the knowledge of Christ; or God by his word calls men effectually by his grace, and reveals his Son in them, as well as to them; this sort of revelation comes with such power and influence upon the mind, as *certainly* to produce a true and living faith in the soul, which *infallibly* issues in eternal

ⁱ Rom. x. 14.^k Rom. ii. 12.

life and happiness; and of such persons, and of such only, acts of special faith in Christ are required: and though the sin of unbelief is often found in them, it is such as is consistent with true faith in Christ, and which in the issue is overcome by it: this is the sin of unbelief, that is opposite to special faith, and obstructs it in its acts; but partly because it is pardoned with the other sins of believers, and partly because it is finally subdued and vanquished, it is never the damning sin of any. So I think the truth of things stands. I proceed,

III. To consider the advantages arising from faith in God, and in his word. *establishment* and *prosperity*. Now, though establishment is annexed to faith in the Lord our God, and prosperity to faith in his prophets; yet this is not to be understood, as if establishment only followed upon faith in God, and not upon faith in his word; and as if prosperity was the consequence of faith in the word only, and not of faith in God; whereas, as on the one hand, the prophets and ministers of the word are the means of establishing believers; hence the apostle Paul was desirous of imparting the spiritual gifts he had received, *to the end* the

saints might be established^l, and speaks of God as of power to establish men, according to his gospel^m; so, on the other hand, spiritual peace and prosperity flow from faith in God, who keeps such in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on him, because he trusteth in himⁿ; wherefore these things are to be considered, not in a strict separate sense, but promiscuously, as they are the joint effects of both faith in God, and in his word.

1st. *Establishment*; which is to be understood, not of the state of believers, but of their hearts, frames, graces and duties.

1. Not of the state of the people of God, which is in itself firm and stable, and cannot be made more so: they are safe in the arms of everlasting love; they are not only engraven by the Lord upon the palms of his hands, and set as a seal upon his arm, but also as a seal upon his heart. Nothing in heaven, earth or hell, can separate them from his love; it is invariably the same, in whatsoever condition or circumstance they are; when he hides or chides, he still loves; he rests in his love; it is more immoveable than rocks and mountains. They are fixed in the hands of Christ, out of whose hands

^l Rom. i. 11.

^m Rom. xvi. 25.

ⁿ Isa. xxvii. 3.

neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world can pluck them, and out of which they shall never fall. What was said by the queen of Sheba, concerning Solomon, with respect to Israel; *Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them*^o, may be said of Christ, with respect to his people; that because he loved the saints, and in order to establish them for ever and ever, he put them into the hands of Christ, where they are safe from all danger, and from every enemy. They are secured in the covenant of grace, which is sure and immovable; its blessings are the sure mercies of David; its promises are yea and amen in Christ; it is established on better promises than any other covenant; and the persons in it can never be removed out of it. They are settled on the rock of ages, on which the church is built, against which the gates of hell can never prevail; they are built on a sure foundation God has laid in Zion; so that, though storms and tempests of corruptions, temptations, and afflictions, should beat upon them, they stand unmoved against them all, being built upon a rock. They are in a state of grace, in which they will ever remain; they are in a state of justification, and shall never enter into condemnation; they are

in the family of God, by adopting grace, out of which they will never be turned; for, *if a son, no more a servant, but an heir of God through Christ*; they are in a state of regeneration, and can never be unborn again; they have the principle of grace, which springs up unto eternal life; these things are so chained together, that not one link can ever be broken; *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified*⁹. Now this establishment does not arise from faith, nor is it by it; if all the faith that ever was in the world, from Adam to this moment, was engrossed and possessed by one man, it would not make his state, God-ward, a whit the surer and firmer than it is. But,

2. The hearts of God's people are very unsettled, and need establishing; they melt like wax, and flow like water through fear, and want of stronger faith. They are *unstable as water*, as is said of Reuben, and *do not excel*^r; their frames are changeable and various: one while their *mountain sands strong*, and they say they shall *never be moved*; presently God hides his face, and their souls are *troubled*^s: one that could say,

⁹ Gal. iv. 7.

^r Gen. xlix. 4.

⁹ Rom. viii. 30.

^s Ps. xxx. 6, 7.

*The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him, I don't come into such distress as to put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope^a; he whose love is as strong as death, exceeding fervent and ardent, the coals thereof give a most vehement flame, which many waters cannot quench^w; through the prevalence of corruption, the force of temptation, and the snares of the world, waxes chill and cold. And he that seemed to be steadfast in the faith, falls from some degree of his steadfastness of it; and instead of quitting himself like a man, is like a child, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, wavers in his profession, slackens in his duty, and is negligent of it. Now faith in God, and his word, has a tendency to establish the heart, and make it fearless; *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, even he whose heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid^x*: as is a man's faith, so are his other graces: if faith is in lively exercise, hope will be lively too, and be as an anchor sure and steadfast; his love will abound, for faith works by it; he'll become established in the truths of the gospel he believes, and has an experience of; he'll be more stable and constant in the discharge*

^a Lam. iii. 24. 25 ^w Cant. viii. 6, 7. ^x Ps. cxii. 7.

of duty; he'll be *stedfast and immoveable, & ways abounding in the work of the Lord*.

2dly, *Prosperity* arises from faith in God and his word; not temporal, but spiritual prosperity; not prosperity of body, but prosperity of soul; such as Gaius had, whom the apostle John thus salutes, *Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth*²; on which soul-prosperity faith has a very great influence. The soul is in good health, and in a prosperous condition, when there is an appetite for the word; when it hungers and thirsts after righteousness; when it desires the sincere milk of the word; when it finds it, and eats it by faith; when the word is mixed with faith upon hearing, and it is taken in and digested by it; as also when a soul has a comfortable view, by faith, of the forgiveness of its sins, through the blood of Christ: sins are diseases, pardon is the healing of them; and then is a believer in a prosperous condition, when *the Sun of righteousness* rises on him with this healing *in his wings*²; and when he, *the inhabitant of Zion, shall not say, I am sick*, the reason of which is, because *the people that dwell therein, shall be forgiven their iniquity*^b: so likewise

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 58.

^a Mal. iv. 2.

² 3 John 2.

^b Isa. xxxiii. 24.

when

When a man has much spiritual peace and joy, through believing in the righteousness of Christ, for his justification; in his blood for the remission of his sins; and in his sacrifice for the atonement of them; and spiritual joy is such a certain concomitant, or consequence of faith, that it is called *the joy of faith*^c; and whoever is possessed of it, must in a spiritual sense be in prosperous circumstances. Such a one is fat and flourishing, and all he does prospers: and as prosperity in the text carries in it an idea of victory over enemies, this may be ascribed to faith; it is by faith the believer resists Satan and his temptations: by holding up the shield of faith, he quenches his fiery darts, and obtains a conquest over him; as he does also over the world, the men, things and lusts of it: *This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith; who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God*^d? what heroic actions, what wonderful things have been done by faith! men *through faith have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, &c*^e. and

^c Phil. i. 25.

^e Heb. xi. 36.

^d John v. 5, 6.

such must be in prosperous and flourishing circumstances.

From the whole we learn, what an excellent and precious grace the grace of faith is; what use it is of, what purposes it serves, and what influence it has upon the stability and prosperity of the believer; it is pity it should be put out of its place; for when it keeps its place, it is very useful and serviceable; but if it is put in the room of Christ, it is good for nothing. Careful we should be, not to ascribe that to the act, which belongs to the object. It may be known, whether a person has this grace or no; for where it is, Christ is precious, *to them that believe he is precious*^f; it works and shews itself by love to him, his word and ordinances, his people, and his ways; and it is attended with good works, the fruits of righteousness; for *faith without works is dead*^g: and if persons are satisfied that they have this grace, they should be thankful for it, and attribute it, not to the power of their own free will, but to the free grace of God, whose gift it is; for it comes along with the abundant and superabundant grace of God in conversion. And such who have it should pray for

^f 1 Pet. i. 7.

^g James ii. 26.

an increase of it; since their stability and prosperity have such a connexion with it; and should guard against unbelief; and upon every appearance of it, pray as the poor man did, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*^h.

To conclude, since such are the advantages of believing in God and his word, *take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God*ⁱ.

^h Mark xi. 24.

ⁱ Heb. iii. 12.

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M D C C X C I I I .

[P R I C E S I X P E N C E .]

A

S E R M O N,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

PSALM lxxxvii. 3.

*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of
God, Selah.*

SOME think this Psalm was written by David, under a prophetic view of the temple to be built by his son Solomon; others, that it was composed by one that returned from the Babylonish captivity, for the comfort of those that wept at the laying of the foundation of the second temple: but let it be wrote by whom it will, or on whatsoever occasion, it is pretty evident that the subject-matter of it is the church of God in gospel-times, especially in the latter day glory; when there will be abundance of converts in the places herein mentioned. The title of the Sy-

riac version is, “ Concerning the redemption of Jerusalem.” It begins in a very abrupt manner, as the *Song of Songs* does, with a relative without an antecedent; *His foundation is in the holy mountains*: the foundation of the Lord which he has laid, who *loveth the gates of Zion*, and whose city is here spoken of, which is founded by him; or *its foundation*, the foundation of the city of God, the church, which comes to the same sense; for the church’s foundation is the Lord’s, being of his laying^a. In allusion to the foundations of Zion and Moriah, on which the temple stood, a type of the church; or to the mountains round about Jerusalem, which also frequently signifies the church; this foundation is said to be *in the holy mountains, or mountains of holiness*; the purposes and decrees of God, those mountains of brass, Zech. vi. 1. particularly the decree of election, the *foundation of God that stands sure*, and is the source of all true holiness; likewise the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises, sure

^a The Jewish writers connect these words with the title of the Psalm, and make the sense to be this; *The foundation* or argument of it, the Psalm, is *concerning the holy mountains of Zion and Jerusalem*. So Aben Ezra, Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech; the Targum joins them together thus; “ By the sons of Korah it is said a song that is founded by the mouth of the fathers that were of old.”

and immovable, and which provides both for internal and external holiness; and especially Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, the sure foundation laid in Zion, the Holy One of Israel, and the sanctification of his people.

It follows: *The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob*; he loves the church, which often goes by the name of Zion; and therefore he has chosen and founded it, and took up his rest and residence in it; and he loves her *gates*, or public ordinances, and them that attend them, the work done by them, their prayers and praises, and exercise of graces, and every act of religious worship: and though he loves *the dwellings of Jacob*, the private habitations of his people, having fixed the bounds of them from eternity, and delighted in these habitable parts before they dwelt in them; he loves the persons that dwell there, and what is done in them, their closet and family-devotion; yet he prefers public worship and ordinances to them, where he is more openly worshipped, and by more: and which makes more for his manifestative glory: hence follow the words first read, *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God*; which is not to be understood literally of the city of Jerusalem, though great and honourable things might be spoken of that;

as that it was a magnificent city, compact together; full of stately buildings, the metropolis of Judea, and the seat of the kings of Judah, and above all, the city of the great God; where his temple stood, in which were many glorious things; where God was worshipped, and he granted his presence: and many glorious things have been said of it, and which have been fulfilled; as that the Messiah should come into his temple, and give it a greater glory than the second temple had, which he accordingly has done; here he preached his glorious doctrines, and wrought his glorious miracles; near this place he suffered, died, was buried, rose again, and ascended to heaven; and here he poured forth his holy Spirit, in an extraordinary manner; and from hence went forth the word of the Lord, and doctrine of the gospel throughout all the earth: but rather this is to be understood figuratively of the church of God, which is often in Scripture compared to a city, and is a city of God's building, and where he dwells; the name of it is, *Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there*^b; of which glorious things may be said; as that it is the city of the King of kings, its foundation is Christ, its walls and bulwarks

^b Ezek. xlvi. 35.

are salvation, its gates praise; here glorious ordinances are administered, and glorious truths are preached; and so the words may be rendered, as they are in the Syriac version, *Glorious things are spoken in thee, O city of God.* There are many glorious things which have been spoken of the church, which have been fulfilled already, in the first times of the gospel; when there was an increase of it in Judea, and in the Gentile world; when the gospel was spread, when the apostles triumphed in Christ, and diffused the favour of his knowledge in every place; when Christ went forth in their ministry, conquering and to conquer; when paganism was demolished, and Christianity established throughout the Roman empire: and so likewise many glorious things spoken of the church were accomplished at the time of the Reformation from Popery; when gospel-light broke forth and spread itself throughout several nations of Europe; but my intention is to give an account of the glorious things spoken of it, which yet remain to be fulfilled.

In my two last anniversary sermons at this time of the year, I have touched upon future things. In the former ^d, I took notice of the several re-

^d Intituled, *The Watchman's Answer to the Question, What of the Night?* on Isa. xxi. 11, 12.

volutions of nights and mornings, from early times, to the end of the world, and shewed you the dark side of the cloud, and what a dismal night we are now entering into. In the latter^e, I pointed at those things which Israel, or the people of God, ought to do in the prospect of such times; and now I shall hold out unto you the bright side of the cloud, and give you, in one view, an account of the glorious things spoken of the church of God in the latter day; and which will be accomplished both in the *spiritual reign*, and in the *personal reign* of Christ; which two are very distinct things, and lie at some distance from each other, and ought to be carefully distinguished, and not confounded: by help of which distinction, we may better understand many prophecies of the Old Testament which are to be ranged under these different heads, and to be referred to these distinct periods of time; which are too often huddled and jumbled together by those that speak and write of these things. And,

I. I shall begin with the *spiritual reign* of Christ; by which I mean a future period of time eminent for spirituality; for otherwise Christ now reigns, not only in heaven, at his

^e Called, The Practical Improvement of the Watchman's Answer, on 1 Chron. xii. 32.

Father's right hand, where he must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, but also in the hearts of his people, by his Spirit and grace; into which he enters, as the King of glory, causing the everlasting doors to open to him; where he implants his grace, as a governing principle, sets up his throne, and dwells there by faith, and erects a kingdom, which lies in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and here he reigns in a spiritual manner; and so he has done in all ages, and now does: but this period of time I speak of, will be remarkable for his spiritual presence among his people; when he will *come down*, in the communications of his grace, *like rain upon the mowen grass, as showers that water the earth*^f; when there will be a large and plentiful effusion of his Spirit; when his people in general will be more spiritual in the temper of their souls, and in the frames of their minds; more spiritual and favoury in their discourses, and in the whole of their behaviour and conversation, and will eminently worship God in spirit and in truth: not that they will arrive to a perfection of spirituality; though there will be a great deal of light and glory break out, yet there will be a mix-

^f Psal. lxxii. 6.

ture of darkness, obscurity, and imperfection; in which this state will differ from the personal reign of Christ, in the new Jerusalem; of which it is said ^g, *The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there;* which of this state is thus differently expressed ^h, *Thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night:* It will be only in the personal reign, that the church's *sun shall no more go down, neither shall her moon withdraw itself;* when *the Lord shall be her everlasting light, and the days of her mourning shall be ended* ⁱ. In this spiritual reign, there will be the ministry of the word, for the conversion of sinners, and the administration of ordinances, for the comfort and edification of saints; all which suppose an imperfect state: whereas in the personal reign there will be none of these things, nor any need of them, or use for them; the new Jerusalem church-state will have *no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it;* no need of the gospel, and gospel-ordinances, to be administered, as now, for the light and comfort of the saints; *for the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb will be*

^g Rev. xxi. 25.

^h Isa. lx. 11.

ⁱ Isa. lx. 20.

the light thereof^k. In the spiritual reign, *the temple of God will be opened in heaven, and the ark of the testimony will be seen in it*^l; public worship will be set up and restored to its primitive purity; but in the personal reign, or new Jerusalem church-state, *no temple will be seen there; for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it*^m. The spiritual reign of Christ will be on this earth as it now is; and the same natural and civil actions of life will be performed as now, as eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, procreation of children, carrying on trade and commerce, and attention to the several callings and duties of civil life; neither of which will have a place in the personal reign: it is the present *earth* that will be *filled with the knowledge of the Lord*; the kingdoms of *this world*, that will become Christ's, when his *dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth*ⁿ, as now situated: whereas the seat of the personal reign will be *the new heaven, and new earth*, in which *no sea* will be seen^o; for at the personal appearance of Christ, the earth and the heaven, that now are, will flee away. This spiritual reign of Christ will take place upon the

^k Rev. xxi. 23. ^l Rev. xi. 19. ^m Rev. xxi. 22.
ⁿ Isa. xi. 9. Rev. xi. 15. Psal. lxxii. 8. ^o Rev. xxi. 1.

rising and ascending of the witnesses into heaven, which denotes a more pure, spiritual, and heavenly state of the church; it will be introduced upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, when *the kingdoms of this world* shall be subjected to Christ, through the power of his Spirit and grace accompanying his word; when the four and twenty elders, the representatives of gospel-churches, shall give him thanks, *because he has taken to himself his great power, and has reigned* ^P: thi state is no other than the Philadelphian church-state; all that is said of that church perfectly agrees with this, and which will follow upon the Sardinian church-state, in which we now are; so that we may hope it is at hand; and whereas the Laodicean church-state is between this and the personal reign of Christ, it appears that they are two distinct things, very different, and at some distance from each other. But to proceed, and take notice of the glorious things which shall be during this interval, or period of time. And,

1st, The destruction of antichrist is the grand leading event to the glories of this state. This is hinted at in the epistle to the church at Philadelphia, the emblem of the spiritual reign; it will be the last struggle of the beast that will

^P Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17.

cause that *hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try the inhabitants of it*⁹: when the seventh trumpet will be sounded, which will bring on the spiritual kingdom of Christ throughout the world, he will *destroy them which destroy the earth*^r; meaning the Papists, who have destroyed the inhabitants of the earth with their false doctrine, superstitious worship, and with those bloody wars, murders, and massacres, they have been at the bottom of. And till this is done, the spiritual reign cannot take place, especially in its full compass, and in all its branches; for so long as antichrist reigns, the church will be more or less in an afflicted state: the dates of the church's troubles, and of the reign of antichrist are alike, and will expire together: the power given to the beast, is to continue forty and two months; and so long the holy city, or church, is to be trodden under foot; and so long the witnesses will, prophecy in sackcloth, even one thousand two hundred and threescore days, which are equal to forty-two months; wherefore there can be no truly good and happy days, till these dates are ended.

The destruction of antichrist will be by *the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and the brightness of his coming*^s; that is, by his coming in a spiritual

⁹ Rev. iii. 10.

^r Rev. xi. 18.

^s 2 Theff. ii. 8.

way: or through the word of his mouth, his gospel attended by his Spirit and power; which will shine out with so much lustre, splendor, light, and glory, as will chase away the darkness of Popery, and enlighten the minds of people, to see into all the fopperies, absurdities, and wickedness of that religion, and cause them to cast it off: yea, even to open the eyes of the kings and princes of the earth, to behold and loath the abominations of the whore of Rome, they have committed fornication with; and fill them with wrath and indignation against her, as to hate her, make her bare and desolate, and burn her with fire^t.

This work will be greatly effected by the pouring out the seven vials of God's wrath, or the inflicting the seven last plagues upon the antichristian states, upon the western and eastern antichrist, the Pope and Turk; who must be both removed, to make way for the spiritual reign of Christ. These seven vials will be poured out, or those plagues inflicted by *Angels*; by whom we are to understand protestant kings, and princes, and generals of armies; and these will be given them by *one* of the first of the *four beasts*, or living creatures, the emblems of gospel-ministers; who having some notice of the

^t Rev. xvii. 16.

time of antichrist's destruction being at hand, will stir up and animate the christian princes and potentates, to take this work in hand; and who are therefore said to go forth from *the temple*, the church, the place of divine and spiritual worship, and where they themselves are worshipers; and from thence they have orders to go forth and do their work ^u.

The first *five* of these vials concern the western antichrist, and his dominions; between which, and the trumpets, there is a great correspondence, though they respect different times and persons. The *first* vial will be poured out upon *the earth*, and designs those Popish countries which are upon the continent, as France and Germany, especially the latter; and as the first trumpet brought the Goths into Germany, so the first vial will bring great distress upon the Popish party in the empire, and issue in a reformation from Popery. The *second* vial will be poured out upon the *sea*, and may intend the maritime powers belonging to the see of Rome, particularly Spain and Portugal; and as the second trumpet brought the Vandals into these places, so this vial will affect the same, and bring wars and desolations into them, and make a change in their religion. The *third* vial will

^u Rev. xv. 1. 6, 7. and xvi. 1.

be poured out upon the *rivers, and fountains of water*, which may point to those places adjacent to Rome, as Italy and Savoy; and as the third trumpet brought the Huns into those parts; so this vial will bring in large armies hither, which will cause much blood shed, and a great revolution in church and state. The *fourth* vial will be poured out upon *the sun*, which must denote some person, or persons of great dignity and influence; and as the fourth trumpet brought destruction upon the emperor of Rome, the sun of the empire, and upon governors under him, signified by the moon and stars; this vial will bring on the ruin of the Pope of Rome, the sun of the antichristian empire, with all his cardinals, bishops, priests, &c. The *fifth* vial will be poured out upon *the seat of the beast*, which is Rome, the seat that the dragon, the devil, gave to the beast, and will produce great darkness in his kingdom; though as yet it will not be utterly destroyed, which is reserved to the seventh vial. Now these several vials, as they will be so many plagues on the western antichrist, and make so many breaches and ruins upon his states and dominions, so they will be so many gradual steps to the advancement of the glory and kingdom of Christ, and issue in the reformation of these places from Popery. The

sixth

sixth vial will be poured out on *the river Euphrates*, which designates the Turkish empire, in the midst of which that river is; and as the sixth trumpet let loose the four angels, or heads of the Ottoman family into Europe, so this vial affects the same empire, and brings destruction on it, signified by the drying up the waters of that river, as Babylon's destruction is expressed by the drying up of her sea, Jer. li. 36. which will make way for *the kings*, or kingdoms of *the east*, the kingdoms of Persia and Tartary, and others, to receive and embrace the Christian religion: this is the second, or Turkish woe, which shall pass away; when the kingdoms of this world will become Christ's, and his dominion will be from sea to sea, from the Mediterranean sea to the Persian sea; and from the river Euphrates to the ends of the earth. The *seventh* vial will be poured out upon the air, the whole kingdom of Satan, in all the branches of it, who is the prince of the power of the air; and this vial will clear the whole world of all the remains of Christ's enemies, Pagan, Papal, or Mahometan, which the other vials left, or did not reach ^w; and now will Christ's king-

^w See more of these vials in my Exposition of the 15th and 16th chapters of the Revelation; and Bedford's Notes on Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah, part 3. p. 41, 42.

dom be in its full glory: Now the Heathens, Papists, Pagans, and Mahometans, will perish out of his land, and these sorts of sinners will be consumed out of the earth, and such wicked ones will be no more *.

It may be observed, that there is a great likeness between these vials and the plagues of Egypt; the noisome sore on men under the first vial agrees with the plague of boils and blains on man and beast; the sea, rivers, and fountains of waters, being turned into blood, under the second and third vials, are the same with the plague which in like manner affected the waters of Egypt; the beast's kingdom being full of darkness, under the fourth vial, much resembles the gross and thick darkness the Egyptians were in for some days; and under the fifth vial there is a manifest reference to the frogs that plagued Pharaoh and his court; and the great hail-storm under the seventh vial bears some resemblance to the plague of hail. And this observation may confirm the application of these vials or plagues to the great city, which is spiritually called Egypt and Sodom: and it may be also observed, that as the plagues of Egypt were very quick one upon another, so it may be thought that those vials, when once they be-

* Psa. x. 18. and civ. 36.

gin pouring, will soon be poured out; God will make a short work in righteousness upon the enemies of his church: as yet, I take it, none of them are poured out; though some great and learned men have so thought; as yet there have been no such devastations on the continent, as in France and Germany, as to produce the above effects; nor in the countries of Spain and Portugal; nor in Italy and Savoy, and the like places near Rome; nor in the seat of the beast, Rome itself; nor on the Pope and his cardinals; the river Euphrates is not dried up; the Ottoman empire is yet in being; the Turkish woe is not passed away; and much less the world cleared of all the enemies of Christ and his church; no, before this work is done, the outer court must be given to the Gentiles, and the witnesses must be slain. Had they begun to be poured out at the time of the Reformation, as some have thought, in all likelihood they would have been finished before now; and antichrist would have been destroyed, and better times than we are now in, would have succeeded: but, however, this we may be assured of, that as the plagues in Egypt issued in the destruction of Pharaoh, and in the deliverance of the Israelites, so these vials will end in the ruin of antichrist, and in the salvation of the church of

Christ. As soon as these things will take place, nay, as soon as you hear of those seven plagues, immediately you hear of persons on a sea of glass, triumphing over antichrist, having the harps of God, and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb^y; and no sooner is it said, that *Babylon is fallen*, but voices are heard in heaven, ascribing salvation, glory, honour, and power to God, for his judgments on the great whore; declaring that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; that the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his bride made ready; and proclaiming them happy that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb^z; all which respect the spiritual reign of Christ, now introduced by the ruin of antichrist.

2dly, There will follow upon this a general spread of the gospel; for which way will be made into the several nations of the world, by the pouring out of the vials. The gospel had a very great spread in the first times of it. The apostles having a commission to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, accordingly carried it not only into the several parts of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, but into neighbouring countries and islands, Phenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, and even into all the

^y Rev. xv. 1, 2, 3.

^z Rev. xix. 1, 2, 6, 7, 9.

Gentile nations; the apostle Paul himself went from Jerusalem, round about to Illyricum, preaching the gospel of Christ, which, he says, was come into all the world, and preached to every creature under heaven; and by one or other of the apostles it was carried into all the then known parts of the habitable world ^a, as it seems it was to be before the destruction of Jerusalem; for our Lord says ^b, *The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come*; the end of the world to the Jews, the end of their civil and church-state, when their temple should be destroyed, and not one stone left upon another. And ever since it has been preached in one place or another; and sometimes has had a greater spread, and sometimes a lesser; but now it is brought into a very narrow compass, and lies in very few hands; there are but few persons that preach it in the purity of it; the times are now, or near at hand, which Dr. Owen seems to have had in view, of whom it is reported he should say, that the time is coming when a faithful minister would be *more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir*; meaning they would be scarce and rare, referring to the pas-

^a Vid. Fabricii Lux Evangelii, p. 83. ^b Matt. xxiv. 14.

sage in Isa. xiii. 12. And few there are that receive the gospel in the power of it, cordially embrace it, and sincerely profess it, and walk according to it; it looks like the time our Lord speaks of when he should come, and would not be able to *find faith*, the doctrine of faith, *on the earth*^c. But though the gospel is now within such narrow limits, ere long it will have a free course, and run and be glorified. The earth, the inhabitants of it, will be filled with a spiritual and saving knowledge of God and Christ, communicated by it, and of the truth of it; and that not in a superficial way and manner, but even as the waters cover the sea^d, which are very deep, and large, and spreading, and which knowledge will be communicated to a large number of persons. This will be, when the *angel*, not any particular minister, as Luther, or any other, but a set of gospel ministers in the latter day, so called from their office, *shall flee in the midst of heaven*; discharge their office with great readiness and swiftness, and in the most public manner in the church of God; *having the everlasting gospel*, not a little dry morality, but the gospel of the grace of God, the good news of life and salvation by Jesus Christ; which consists of everlasting things, of everlasting love,

^c Luke xviii. 8.

^d Isa. xi. 9.

an everlasting covenant, an everlasting Sayiour, and everlasting salvation; and which was ordained before the world, as well as will continue to the end of it; having this not in their heads only, but in their hearts, and in their mouths, and a commission to preach it to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people^e. These will be very diligent and industrious, spare no pains, be indefatigable in their work; they will be *many*, and *will run to and fro*; and by this means *knowledge* will be *increased*^f: this will be the time, even in the Philadelphian state, when there will be an *open door set*, which *no man can shut*^g; an opportunity of preaching the gospel every where, and which will be taken and used; when a wonderful door of utterance will be given to ministers of the word, who will open their mouths freely and boldly, and with great success. The doctrines of the gospel are the *living waters*, so called, for their refreshing and quickening nature, both to dead sinners and drooping saints, that at this time *shall go out of Jerusalem*, the church of God; *half of them towards the former sea*, or the eastern sea^h, as the Targum; the Persian sea,

e Rev. xiv. 6.

g Rev. iii. 8.

f Dan. xii. 4.

h *Jma mancha*.

which

which lay east of Jerusalem, and so before it ; *and half of them towards the hinder sea*, or the western seaⁱ, as the same paraphrase ; the Mediterranean sea, which lies to the west of Jerusalem, and so behind it ; and both denoting the spread of the gospel in the latter day, east and west, for the conversion of the eastern nations in China, Tartary, Persia, &c. and for the conversion of the western nations in Europe ; *in summer and in winter shall it be* k. These waters will be ever flowing, these doctrines will be constantly preaching ; nor will the ministry of the word be hindered by any heat of persecution, or by any coldness or indifference to it.

3dly, There will be very large conversions every where, in the several parts of the world : in all Popish countries, and antichristian states ; even the ten kings, that have given their kingdoms to the beast, have been associates of antichrist, and reigned with him, shall withdraw from him ; they and their subjects shall revolt from him, and be converted, and embrace the pure gospel : as it will be the christian princes and potentates that will pour out the seven vials on antichrist, they will carry the gospel with them wherever they go ; or, however, the ministers of it will follow closely at their heels,

ⁱ *Jma mgurbab.*

^k Zech. xiv. 8.

way being made by the former for them, whose ministry will meet with great success every where; and those that escape the judgments of God in these nations, will not only be *affrighted* at them, but will be truly converted by the gospel, and *give glory to the God of heaven*¹. In the Mahometan nations, the Turkish woe being past, and that empire being destroyed, and way made for the gospel to be carried into the eastern kingdoms, great and large conversions will be made by it; there is a most glaring prophecy of this in Isa. lx. 7. which whole chapter concerns the spiritual and personal reign of Christ; *All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.* Now Kedar and Nebaioth were the sons of Ishmael, Gen. xxv. 13. who settled in Arabia, the country now possessed by the Turks^m; so that this is a prophecy of the conversion of multitudes in those parts, whereby the interest of Christ will be increased, and his church glorified. Moreover, in all Pagan

¹ Rev. xi. 13.

^m The Targum paraphrases these words, "All the sheep of the Arabians shall be gathered unto thee, &c." as it does the beginning of the preceding verse, "The multitude of the Arabians shall cover thee round about."

countries, the gospel will make its way, and be successful; the covering and veil of blindness and ignorance, cast and spread over all people and nationsⁿ, will be removed by it; not only the darkness of Popery and Mahometanism, but the gross darkness of Paganism shall flee away at the light and brightness of Zion's rising; the Gentiles shall come to it; the fulness and forces of them shall be brought into the church, being converted by the word: and not only vast multitudes of the common people, but great personages also; kings shall be enlightened by it; these shall come to Christ, fall down before him, and worship him; these shall come into his church, and become members of it; kings shall be *nursing fathers*, and queens *nursing mothers* to his people; they shall bring their riches, honour, and glory into his house, and his saints shall *suck the breasts of kings*^o, be enriched, honoured, and protected by them. This will be the time when *the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*^p; not that there will be any change or alteration in the form or order of civil government, which will be the same as

ⁿ Isa. xxv. 7.
xlix. 23. Psal. lxxii. 10, 11.

^o Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 16. and
^p Dan. vii. 27.

now ; there will be kings and queens then, as at this time, as these prophecies shew ; it will not be until the personal reign of Christ takes place, that *all rule, authority, and power*, will be *put down* : civil magistracy in the spiritual reign will continue as it is ; only it will change hands, it will be entirely in the hands of Christian kings and princes all the world over ; and no doubt but it will be better exercised, be more orderly and regular ; and that truth and righteousness will prevail every where. But I must not forget the conversion of that considerable body of people the Jews, who have been preserved a distinct people for several hundreds of years for this purpose ; the conversion of these people will be sudden, and of them altogether ; *a nation shall be born at once*^r. It looks as if their conversion would be like that of the apostle Paul ; and he seems to hint that it will, when he says that he, in obtaining mercy, was a *pattern to them which should hereafter believe*^s ; meaning, perhaps, his own country men that should believe in Christ in the latter day, whose conversion would be similar to his ; that as his conversion was sudden, in the midst of all his ignorance, unbelief, and rebellion, and without the word, by the imme-

q 1 Cor. xv. 24.

r Isa. lxvi, 8.

s 1 Tim. i. 16:

diate power and grace of God, so will theirs be in like manner; nor is it likely that their conversion should be by means of the word, since there is such an aversion in that people to the hearing of it; and a rare thing it is to see a Jew in a Christian assembly. But, however, all Israel shall be called, converted, and saved^t; there is a famous prophecy of this in Hof. iii. 4, 5. in the first of these verses it is said, *The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince; without any civil government of their own, the sceptre having departed from them many hundred years ago; and without a sacrifice, daily or yearly, or on any occasion; they believing it to be unlawful to sacrifice any where but in their own land, and at Jerusalem, and on the altar of God there; and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim; without any manner of idols, or idol-worship, they being not addicted to idolatry since their return from the Babylonish captivity: and now as all these things are exactly fulfilled in them, so will in like manner that which follows; Afterwards shall the children of Israel return; by faith and repentance, from their evil way, from their impenitence and unbelief, and rejection of the Messiah; and seek*

^t Rom. xi. 26.

the Lord their God, and David their king ; the Messiah, the son of David, their King, as their own Targum paraphrases it ; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days, in the spiritual reign of Christ ; and it is hinted at in the Philadelphian state, Rev. iii. 9. Then will the children of Israel appoint themselves one head, which is Christ, whom they will own and acknowledge to be their Head, Lord, and King ; and they shall come up out of the land, or countries, where they are, to their own land, and great shall be the day of Jezreel^u ; and this will make a considerable part of the glory of Christ's spiritual reign.

4thly, There will be at this time a large effusion of the Spirit of God : the prophecy in Joel, quoted in Acts ii. 17—20. was very applicable indeed to the case of the apostles at the day of Pentecost, but was not fully accomplished then ; the Spirit was not poured upon all flesh, nor were those signs in heaven in the full extent of them seen, then predicted in it ; the pouring forth of the Spirit then was only a pledge and earnest of what will be in the latter days ; some drops, as it were, were only let down then ; hereafter the Lord will pour the water out of his bucket, and his seed shall be in many wa-

^u Hof. i. 11.

ters^w: it will be owing to this that the above events will have their accomplishment; the destruction of antichrist will be *by the Spirit of Christ's mouth*, which will blow a blast upon him; the success of the gospel every where, and the large conversions of men, must be attributed to the plentiful effusion of the Spirit that will attend it; particularly the conversion of the Jews will be owing entirely to *the Spirit of grace and supplication*^x poured out upon them, when they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn; and it will be in consequence of this extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, that the following things will take place in this reign.

1. The light of the gospel, both in the preachers and professors of it, will be very great, clear, and distinct; *the light of the moon*, as in the present dispensation, to which it may be compared, *shall be as the light of the sun*, to which that dispensation shall be like; *and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days*^y; as if the light of seven days were collected together, and shone out at once; hyperbolic expressions, setting forth the exceeding greatness of gospel light in those times: not only *the watchmen*, ministers of the word, *shall see*

^w Numb. xxiv. 7. ^x Zach. xii. 10. ^y Isa. xxx. 26.

eye to eye^z, all truths clearly and distinctly; their ideas and sentiments shall be regular and uniform; there will be an entire harmony and agreement between them; but even private Christians, common members, *shall all know the Lord, and the things of the gospel, in a very clear and comfortable manner, even from the least unto the greatest of them*^a; when God shall lay Zion's stones with fair colours, and her foundations with sapphires, make her windows of agates, and her gates with carbuncles, and all her borders of pleasant stones; then all her children shall be taught of God^b, to such a degree as they never were before, so clearly, fully, and universally.

2. There will be great purity of gospel-worship and ordinances; *the temple of God* will be opened in heaven; the true worship of God will be restored, and observed according to the primitive pattern; the *ark of the testimony*^c will be seen in it; the ordinances of the gospel will be administered according to their original institution; there will be no disputes about the form or order of church government; every thing relating to it will appear evident; the ordinances will be kept as they were delivered; nor will

^z Isa. lii. 8.

^a Jer. xxxi. 34.

^b Isa. liv. 11, 12, 13.

^c Rev. xi. 19.

there be any doubts about the manner of performing them, or the subjects to be admitted to them, or the ends to be answered by them; all these things will stand in a clear light; and there will be no objector to them, or any division about them; nor will they ever be corrupted any more.

3. Brotherly love, which is now waxen cold, will be in its height and glory, agreeable to the name of this state, *Philadelphia* which signifies brotherly love: there will be no more contentions, animosities, and quarrels: *Ephraim shall not envy Judah*, on account of pre-eminence of office, gifts, and grace; *and Judah shall not envy Ephraim*^d, by an haughty and overbearing carriage, or with wrangling debates, and opprobrious language; the two sticks of Ephraim and Judah shall be one in the hand of the Lord; there will be a perfect harmony and love, nothing to disturb, distress and make uneasy, or tend to alienate the affections of one from another; there will be no *pricking briar*, nor *grieving thorn*^e among them; they will be like the first Christians, *of one heart, and of one soul*, being of *one mind*, and of *one judgment*, all studying to *keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*.

^d Isa. xi. 13.

^e Ezek. xxviii. 24.

4. Holiness, which becomes the house of God *for ever*, will now adorn every member in it ; nor will there be so much immorality in the world as at this present time ; holiness will be as common as profaneness is now ; *In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses holiness to the Lord—yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts^f* : Christ therefore takes his titles in writing to the church at Philadelphia, the emblem of the spiritual reign, suitable to its state : as truth and holiness shall then prevail, he addresses it thus, *These things saith he that is holy, he that is true^g* ; truth and holiness go together ; truth influences the heart, and that the life and conversation.

5. There will be great peace and prosperity of all kinds, inward and outward, spiritual and temporal ; in those *days* of the Messiah's spiritual reign, *shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth^h* : as the saints will enjoy great peace of conscience, and tranquility of mind, so they will have nothing to disturb them without ; there will be no more persecution, there will be none to *hurt* or *destroy* *in all* the Lord's *holy mountainⁱ* ; as there will

^f Zach. xiv. 20, 21. ^g Rev. iii. 7. ^h Psal. lxxii. 7.

ⁱ Isa. xi. 9. ~

be no discord among themselves, so no distress from any enemies; *Violence shall no more be heard in their land, nor wasting and destruction within their border*^k. O happy, halcyon days! I go on to observe,

II. The glorious things which are spoken of, and will be done in the personal reign of Christ: towards the close of the spiritual reign, things will be upon the decline; the Laodicean church-state will take place; there will be great coldness and luke-warmness in spiritual things, which will be very offensive to Christ; the Spirit of God will withdraw his gracious influences; and there will be little left but external gifts, and outward riches and honour, on which great stress will be laid; and there will be great boasting and bragging of them, as being *rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing*; whereas to spiritual grace, and the exercise of it, they will be *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*^l; and need the advice that Christ gives them, of applying to him for gold, white-raiment, and eye-salve: a general sleepiness will seize professors of religion; the wise as well as foolish virgins will slumber and sleep, when the approach of the bridegroom is

^k Isa. lx. 18.

^l Rev. iii. 15, 16, 17, 18.

near; immorality and profaneness will again spread in the world; and it will be as in the days of Noah and Lot; and in this condition will Christ find the world, and the church, when he comes a second time; which is what will introduce the glory of the following state.

1st, There will be a personal appearance of the Son of God, and a glorious one it will be: he will personally appear, *the Lord himself shall descend*^m; not by his Spirit, or by the communication of his grace, or by his gracious presence, as before; but in person he will descend from the third heaven, where he is in our nature, into the air, where he will be visible; *every eye shall see him, when he cometh with clouds*ⁿ; or in the clouds of heaven, which will be his chariot; he will descend on earth at the proper time; *and his feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives*^o; on that spot of ground from whence he ascended to heaven. Job seems to have this descent of his in view, when he says *p*, *He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*; which seems to respect not so much his first coming, as his second; since it is connected with the resurrection of the dead.

^m 1 Theff. iv. 16.

ⁿ Rev. i. 7.

^o Zach. xiv. 4.

^p Job^{xix.} 25.

This appearance of Christ will be a very glorious one; it is called *the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*^q; for he will appear under both characters to his people: when he appeared the first time, it was in the form of a servant, he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; but now he will come as King of kings, and Lord of lords; then he was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, to bear the sins, and work out the salvation of his people; but now he will appear without sin, to put them into the full possession of the salvation obtained for them: he will *come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels*^r; he will appear in the glory of his Deity, and all the perfections of it; who is *the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person*^s; it will then be evident, that he is the *Lord God omnipotent that reigneth*; and that he is omniscient, the searcher of the hearts, and trier of the reins of the children of men^t; and he will be seen in all the glory of his human nature, and with that glory he has with the Father as Mediator; all which, in some sense, may be said to be his Father's, because his divine

q Tit. ii. 13.

s Heb. i. 3.

r Luke ix. 26.

t Rev. xix, 6. and ii. 23.

glory is the same with his Father's ; and his human and mediatorial glory is what he has from him ; and he will come with all that power and authority vested in him by his Father, as the judge of the world : he will be attended with his holy angels, as when on mount Sinai, and as when he ascended to heaven ; whom he will employ in one kind of service or another, and who will make a considerable figure in this apparatus : to which may be added, that all the saints will come along with Christ ; the souls of all that have departed from the beginning of the world, in order to be re-united to their bodies, which will now be raised ; there will be Adam, and there will be Abraham, and all the ante-diluvian and post-diluvian saints, Old and New Testament ones ; when Christ will be glorified in them, and admired by them, and they shall appear with him in glory.

2dly, There will be a resurrection of the bodies of the saints ; *the dead in Christ*, who died in union with him, believers in him, and partakers of his grace, *shall rise first* ^u ; they will have the dominion over the wicked in the morning of the resurrection, who will not rise until the end of that day ; there will be a thousand years dis-

^u 3 Thess. iv. 16.

ance between the resurrection of the one and of the other ; hence the *resurrection of the just* w, as that is named in distinction from that of the unjust, is called *the first resurrection* x.

This resurrection will be a very glorious one ; it will not only be by the power of Christ, and in virtue of union with him, but in entire conformity to him ; as by him will be the resurrection of the dead, and every one will rise in his order, and they that are his at his coming, and because they are his ; so they will be *fashioned like unto his glorious body* y ; though they are laid vile bodies in the grave, they will rise glorious ones ; the body that is *sown in corruption*, will be *raised in incorruption* ; and though *sown in dishonour*, will be *raised in glory* ; being *sown in weakness*, it will be *raised in power* ; and *from a natural body* will be *raised a spiritual one* z ; and the *righteous*, in soul and body, *shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father* a.

3dly, The next thing will be the change of living saints : this is *the mystery* the apostle says he would shew the Corinthians ; and perhaps he was the first man that was led into it, or, however, the first that shewed it to others, that *we*

w Luke xiv. 14.

x Rev. xx. 5, 6.

y Phil. iii. 21.

z 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

a Matt. xiii. 44.

shall

shall not all sleep, or die, but we shall all be changed ^b; even those that die: such as will be alive at the coming of Christ, shall undergo a change equivalent to death; their bodies shall be changed from mortal to immortal, from corruptible to incorruptible ones; and their souls shall become at once perfectly pure and holy. I have sometimes thought, that that change which passes upon the hearts of the people of God at the instant of death, or will pass upon living saints at the time I speak of, when hearts so full of sinful lust, pollution, and wickedness, will be at once cleared of all, is a greater evidence and display of the power of God, than the change that passes upon their bodies, either at the resurrection, or at this time. This being done, these living saints changed, *shall be caught up together* with the raised ones, *to meet the Lord in the air* ^c; where it seems as if he and they should stop a while, until an after event is accomplished.

4thly, The precious dust of the saints being collected out of the earth, and their bodies raised and united to their souls, and living ones changed, and both taken up from hence; and with the Lord, the general conflagration will begin; *the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and*

^b 1 Cor. xv. 51.

^c 1 Theff. iv. 17.

the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up, with all the wicked in it; for the heavens and the earth that now are, that is, the earth, with its surrounding atmosphere, are kept in store, reserved unto fire, for the perdition of ungodly men^d; when,

*5thly, There will succeed new heavens and a new earth, which God has promised, and which, the Apostle Peter says, saints look for according to his promise; and which the apostle John had a vision of^e. In this new earth Christ will descend and dwell; here *the tabernacle of God* will be *with men*, and *he shall dwell with them^f*: this will be the seat of Christ's personal reign; here he will reign before his antients gloriously; here he will have his palace, and keep his court, and display his glory, and the greatness of his majesty; and here his people will dwell with him, who will now be *all righteous*, perfectly so, even righteousness itself; for in these new heavens and new earth will *dwell righteousness^g*; nothing shall enter into this glorious new Jerusalem-state, that makes an abomination or a lie; it will be perfectly an*

^d 2 Pet. iii. 7. 10

^f Rev. xxi. 3.

Rev. xxi. 27.

^e 2 Pet. iii. 13. * Rev. xxi. 1.

^g Isa. lx. 21. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

holy city, consisting wholly of holy persons; wherefore *bleſſed and holy is he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection*^h: nor will there be any enemy to annoy the ſaints in this ſtate; the wicked will be all burnt and deſtroyed at the general conflagration; the beaſt and falſe prophet, before this, will be caſt alive into the lake of fire burning with brimſtone; Satan will be bound by Chriſt, and caſt into the bottomleſs pit, where he will remain till the thouſand years are fulfilled: for ſo long will this ſtate continue; ſo long Satan will be bound; ſo long the ſaints will live and reign with Chriſtⁱ; this will be the day of the Lord, which is as a thouſand years, and which thouſand years will be as one day^k. At the cloſe of theſe years Satan will be looſed again, and the wicked dead will be raiſed^l; which, with the whole poſſe of devils, will make the Gog and Magog army, who ſhall be in the four quarters of the world, and go upon the breadth of the earth; and whoſe number ſhall be as the ſand of the ſea, being all the

^h Rev. xx. 6.

ⁱ Rev. xx. 1—6.

^k 2 Pet. iii. 8.

^l As I do not ſuppoſe that the earth, at the conflagration, will be annihilated, or be deſtroyed, as to the ſubſtance of it, only purified by fire, refined and cleared of all noxious qualities, and therefore called a *new earth*; ſo (conſidering the omnipotence of God) there can be no difficulty about the repositories of the aſhes of the wicked, or the place from whence they will be raiſed, any more than about the place where the duſt of Adam, and all from the beginning of the world, is laid up.

wicked that have been from the beginning of the world ; a large army indeed, such an one as never was before, consisting of enraged devils, and of men raised with all that malice and wickedness they died in, with Satan at the head of them ; by whom they will be animated to make this last feeble and foolish effort, for their recovery and liberty ; in order to which they will compass the camp of the saints about, the beloved city ; who will be in no manner of pain and uneasiness at the appearance of this seeming formidable army ; being clothed with immortality, secured by the power of God, and Christ being in person with them ; when fire shall come down from heaven and devour the wicked ; the wrath of God shall seize them, distress and terrify them, divert them from their purpose, and throw them into the utmost consternation and confusion ; and when they shall be dragged to the tribunal of Christ, and stand before him, small and great, and be judged according to their works, and cast into the lake of fire ; where they will be in company with the devil, the beast, and false prophet, and be tormented with them for ever and ever m.

This will issue in the ultimate glory ; when the saints shall be for ever with the Lord ; shall see him as he is ; enjoy uninterrupted commu-

nion with Father, Son, and Spirit; have the company of angels, and be in possession of those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of. But my intention being only to give you an account of the glorious things that shall be in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ; here I stop, here I end, and close all with a word or two.

1. All this shews and proves, that the church and people of God are the objects of his love, that he loves the gates of Zion indeed; the church is his Hephzibah, in whom he delights, and to whom he is married; and therefore has he said these glorious things of her; and therefore will he make them good: and if the faints have an interest in the love of God, they need not care what the world say or think of them, or what they can do unto them; though they are with them the offscouring of all things, they are precious in the sight of God.

2. It is evident from hence, that the church of Christ is lasting and durable, and cannot be destroyed; its foundation is in the holy mountains; it is built on a rock the gates of hell cannot prevail against; its walls, in the spiritual reign, are salvation, and its gates praise: and what a description have we of it; of its wall and foundation, of its security and glory in the

personal reign, under the name of the New Jerusalem? It will continue through every age, and come into every state it is said it should, and will endure to all eternity.

3. Seeing such glorious things are spoken of it, and that by the Lord, we need not doubt, but should believe, there will be a performance of them; and should be looking for them, and at the worst should lift up our heads with joy, since our redemption draws near.

4. Happy are those that belong to this city. who are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; whose citizenship is in heaven, and they have a right to enter in through the gates into the holy city, the new Jerusalem; but miserable will those be that will be without, *for without are dogs*; and then he that is unjust, will be unjust still; and he that is filthy, will be filthy still; and he that is righteous, will be righteous still; and he that is holy, will be holy still ^v.

^v Rev. xxii. 11.

F I N I S.

In the Press, and speedily will be Published,
 A Sermon preached Dec. 1753, entitled,
*Faith in God, and his Word, the Establishment
 and Prosperity of his People.*
 BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

