

The Lives

A

S E R M O N

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ZECHA. xiv. 6, 7. And it shall come to pass, in that Day, that the Light shall not be clear, nor dark; but it shall be one Day which shall be known to the Lord; not Day, nor Night: But it shall come to pass, that at Evening Time, it shall be Light.

N E W - Y O R K :

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S E R M O N, &c.

ISAIAH xxi. 11, 12.

The Burden of DUMAH. He calleth to me out of SEIR, Watchman, What of the Night? Watchman, What of the Night? The Watchman said, The Morning cometh, and also the Night, if ye will enquire; enquire, ye; return; come.

IT may doubtless, at first View, appear strange to my Brethren, that I have chosen this *obscure Passage* of sacred Writ for your Entertainment; when it might be expected, that the *Dignity and Duties*; the *Comforts and Trials* of the ministerial Office should be explained, or the best Method of securing good Discipline and sound Doctrine in the Church, laid open. These Subjects, I confess, are highly proper to be insisted on, and should generally be the Topics of our Discourse, on such Occasions as these. But, some dark Apprehensions, as to the *Times* into which we are fallen, turned my Mind to this Subject: And as it will lead our Thoughts to the present *Dangers and Trials*; to the farther *Prospects and Hopes* relating to the Church of CHRIST, it will, I imagine, when properly explained and applied, be thought not unsuitable for those, who are assembled to consult its Welfare and Prosperity.

WHAT I shall attempt, is,

I. *To explain the Words, and illustrate the Prophecy, by such historical Events, as seem to point out the Fulfilment of it, in its primary View.*

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II. *Apply*

II. *Apply it to the State of the Church in general, and to the Times into which we are fallen, in particular.*

THIS *enigmatical Prophecy*, seems in its primary View, to denote some further Calamity on the IDUMEANS, after the JEWS should be delivered from the *Darkness* they were then under; that while the *Morning* arose to the one, the *Night* should be continued to the other. It is called the *Burden of DUMAH*, because it brings sad and dark Tydings, what would prove an heavy Burden, hard to be born. DUMAH here, by a Contraction not unusual in the sacred Writings, seems evidently to be put for EDOM; and so for the Country IDUMEA, where the EDOMITES dwelt. This appears plain, by SEIR's being mentioned as the Place from whence the *Voice* came, which was that mountainous Part of IDUMEA, that lay next to the Land of CANAAN. The SEPTUAGINT therefore well translate it, *To' Horamates Idumaias*, i. e. the Vision of IDUMEA. In this *prophetic Scene*, there is one from that Country introduced, as addressing the Prophet in great Earnestness, about the State of the *Night*, or that *State* of Affliction and Oppression, which both the JEWS and IDUMEANS were under. *He calleth* (or there is one that calleth, or crieth) *to me out of SEIR*. The Word must be taken *collectively*, not denoting a particular Person, q. d. *there is a Cry, or the Voice of those that cry from that Country*; this appears from the Answer of the Prophet, *If ye will enquire, &c.* 'Tis observed that the original Word *Karah*, has an *Emphasis* in it, and denotes the *Cry* of Men in Anguish and Distress, impatiently waiting to see the End of their *Calamity*, and the *Dawn* of the *Morning* of their Deliverance. This shews a *Beauty* in the *scenical Representation*; as the Prophet is on the *Watch-Tower* among the JEWS, at a great Distance from *Mount Seir*, the *Voice* must be loud, in order to be heard. The Question follows, "*Watchman, what of the Night, or from, or concerning the Night?*" The Conjecture of COCCÆIUS, and some other *learned Commentators*, that the *Voice* is directed to GOD the Father, under the Character of a *Watchman*, because he is stiled the

the *Keeper of ISRAEL*; or to the *SON*, who is represented as the *Shepherd of his People*, I think groundless. It is not supposable, that the *Idumeans* had any such distinct Notion of the *Father* or the *Son*, as to address *one* or the *other* by this Title.---To apply it to the *Prophet himself*, seems much more natural; the Prophets being well known by the Character of *Watchmen*, as pointing out the *Design* and *Duties* of their Office: And thus they are frequently stiled in *sacred Writ*,* *I have set Watchmen on thy Walls, O JERUSALEM, "I have made thee, says GOD to EZEKIEL, a "Watchman to the House of ISRAEL."*† The Character is taken from those that are set to guard a *City*, or on a *Watch-Tower* to descry approaching Danger, and give the Signal: And they ought to be Men of *Courage*, that will not be frightened at the Shaking of a Leaf; *faithful*, who will not betray their Trust; *vigilant*, that will not suffer the Enemy to come by Surprize while they are asleep; *quick sighted*, to spy the Danger; *constant* and *unwearied* in their Attendance on the *Duties* of their Station; and being continually awake, it might be expected could readily give the *Hour* of the *Night*. 'Tis easy to see how applicable this is, not only to the *Prophets*, but to all the *Ministers* of the Gospel, who are set as *Watchmen, on the Walls of God's Jerusalem*; whose *Duty* and *Business* it is, to watch over the Heritage of the Lord; to give seasonable, plain and faithful Warning to Saints and Sinners. The various remarkable *Dispensations* of God to his *Church*, were revealed to the *Prophets*; they foretold the *desolating Judgments* that were brought not only on the *Jews*, but the neighbouring *Nations*; knew something of the *Time*, *Manner* and *Duration* of the *dark Night* they had to pass through; and so might properly be enquired of as to this Matter---*Watchman, What of the Night?* What have you discovered as to the State of the *Night?* How far is it advanced? What remains? Do you discern any Signs of the *Morning?* Any Signs

* ISAIA, lxii, 6.

† EZEK, iii, 17.

Signs that the present Scene of *Darkness* will soon be over? The Question is undoubtedly not about a *natural* but *metaphorical* Night,--that State of *Calamity* and *Distress* the *Jews* and *Idumeans* were under by the *Affyrians* or *Babylonians*; or, that *dark Dispensation* of the *Law*, the End of which was then expected, and earnestly desired. The *Repetition* of it, represents the *Panic* they were in; their *Distress*, or rather their *Impatience*, for an Answer.

It may perhaps seem strange at *first View*, that the *Idumeans* should make this Inquiry. What had they to do with the *Prophets* or the *divine Oracles*? Who were *Aliens* from the *Common-Wealth* of *Israel*, and *Strangers* from the *Covenant of Promise*.---But, the Difficulty will vanish, if we consider that the Scheme of this Prophecy is *emblematical* and *figurative*. The *Idumeans* are introduced here by the *Prophet*, as breathing after Deliverance under their *Calamities*, and making such anxious Inquiries as it is natural to suppose a People in their *Situation* would; and hearing that Deliverance was expected by the *Jewish Nation*, it was natural for them to desire to know the *Time* and *Manner* of it, in Hopes they also might Share in its Favour.---To this may be added---That the eastern Nations had a Veneration for the *Prophets of the God of Israel*, whose Fame was spread among them. And if we apply it to the then *dark State* of the *Church*, an Enquiry respecting a more glorious Dispensation, in which themselves, and all the *gentile World* were concerned, comes from them with singular Propriety. Some suppose the Question put by way of *Derision*, but I think without Foundation; had that been the Case, the *Prophet* would have given them a very different Answer. They seem to have a Degree of *Earnestness* about the Matter, and yet do not enquire with that *Faith*, and such *religious Views* as they ought. This is evident from the *Prophets* reply. *The Morning cometh, and also the Night, if ye will enquire; enquire, ye; return; come.* (i. e.) The *Morning* will be as dangerous as the *Night*, say some. Others translate it, the *Morning cometh*, and yet

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it is *Night*. i. e. Tho' there be a Deliverance from present Calamities, yet it will be but *partial*; *Light* comes, but *Darkness* will be intermixed with it; or according to our Translation, *The Morning cometh, but the Night will soon succeed*. It may mean, That tho' the *Morning* is coming to the *People of God*, it would still be *Night* with the *Idumeans*. 'Tis easy to see, that as *Night* is put for a State of *Affliction*, *Day* is a proper Emblem of *Joy* and *Comfort*. If ye will enquire; enquire, ye; return; come. The old *English* Translation under *Henry the VIIIth*, has it thus, "If ye will enquire indeed, and ask Questions in Earnest, enquire of GOD; first ask his Mercy, and then come again, and you shall have a more favourable Answer," which seems not far from the true Meaning.

As the Question, tho' not put with that Seriousness and Sincerity as it ought, implied a Desire to know the Purpose of GOD relating to their present dark and dismal Situation; the Answer seems to be to this Purpose, viz: Since you *Idumeans*, in your distressed Condition, seem to come to yourselves, express a Desire of returning to GOD, and knowing his *Will* concerning you, be in earnest in the Matter, enquire with Hearts suitably affected, with the *Dispensations* of divine Providence, with sincere Desires to know and comply with your Duty. Return to the God of *Israel*, come into the *Bosom* and *Communion* of the Church; since you are descended from *Abraham*, shew yourselves to be his *Children* indeed; come with *Sincerity* and *Faith*, to me and the other *Prophets*, to know the Mind and Will of GOD, and be suitably prepared to meet him, when he shall come forth against you. The Sum of what I have said is this: The neighbouring Nations, groaning under the same Oppression from the *Assyrian* and *Babylonish Princes*, as the *Jews* were, tho' the peculiar People of GOD, and favoured with his true *Prophets*; the *Idumeans* are introduced, enquiring after the *Duration*, and *End* of this common Calamity, in too careless a Manner, with too little Reverence or religious Sense of the Divine Dispensation. They have for Answer, That the *Morning* was coming, i. e. *Light* and Liberty

Liberty to the Jews; but that the *Night* still awaited them; i. e. their present Afflictions and spiritual Darkneſs, would continue, while they maintain'd their *preſent Temper* of Mind towards God, and remained *Strangers to the Commonwealth of Iſrael*. He therefore exhorts them to return to God, and enquire with a religious Diſpoſition, and right *Views* about this Matter.

THIS Interpretation may be illuſtrated by *hiſtorical Events*; either by refering it to the common Calamities that beſel the *Jews* and *Idumeans*, with other *neighbouring Nations*, under *Senacherib* King of *Aſſyria*; or to that which afterward beſel them under the Kings of *Babylon*. If to the *former*, the *Morning* that aroſe to the *Jews*, muſt be the *miraculous Deliverance* granted them, by the terrible Deſtruction of the *Aſſyrian Army* by an Angel. † The like Deliverance not being granted to the *Idumeans*, with them it remained *Night*. But, I rather ſuppoſe it may refer to the *Babylonish Captivity*, which involved the *Jews* and *Idumeans* in one common *Night* of Calamity and Diſtreſs, after which *long Night*, wherein the Church ſeemed as it were buried, a *glorious Morning* aroſe to the *Jews*, from the Deliverance granted by *Cyrus*; while the *Idumeans* continued in *Darkneſs*; as appears by *Malachi*, who lived after the Return of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish Captivity*; and deſcribes the *Idumeans* as impoveriſhed, unable to return and rebuild their waſte Places; being under the peculiar Diſpleaſure of Heaven. § We come now,

II. *To another View in which this prophetic Deſcription may be taken, and with Propriety applied to ſome remarkable Periods in the Church.*

As the *Prophets* were ſet as *Watchmen*, on the *Walls of God's Jeruſalem*, to publiſh his Deſigns of Mercy and Judgment to the *Church* and the *World*; ſuch as were concerned to know the *Times* and *Seaſons* of God's favouring his *Zion*, would naturally enquire at *their Mouths*, and as the *Idumeans* ſprang originally from the *ſame Family* with

† 2 Kings, xix. 35.

§ Mal. i. 1, 2, 3, 4.

with the *Jews*, and bordered upon them, they had doubtless some acquaintance with their *sacred Writings*. Some *Prophecies* had a particular Reference to them. It was foretold, that *Edom should be a Possession, and Seir a Possession of their Enemies* * It is natural therefore to suppose, that the more thoughtful among them, were looking for this Period, and being oppressed with Difficulties, were excited to enquire after the *Time* when they should be delivered from their *spiritual Darkness*, and united to the *People of God*. This Prophecy of *Edom's being a Possession of their Enemies*, was in Part accomplished under the *Assmonean Family*, when the *Edomites* were subdued by the *Jews*, many of them brought to embrace their *Religion*, and their Country became their *Possession*. To this *Time*, the *Prophet* may have a View; when 'tis supposed they would not neglect the *sacred Writings*, but get some Acquaintance with those Prophecies, wherein *glorious Things* were spoken of *Zion*, when the present dark and gloomy Dispensation should be at an *end*, and the *Gentiles* partake of the *same Privileges* with the *Jews*. This must excite in all who had any due Esteem for *spiritual Blessings*, a Desire to be informed when the happy *Æra* would arrive. In this View, the *Question*, the *Answer* of the *Watchman*, his *Admonition*, to return and continue their Enquiries with more Seriousness and better Views, all appear *natural* and *proper*.

By the *Night*, we may understand the obscure Dispensation they were then under, which was ushered in with *Blackness, Darkness, and a thick Tempest*. It is therefore called a *Ministration of Death, and Condemnation*, and proved so to the carnal *Jews*, who rested in the *Law graven on Stones*, not looking to *him* who was the *End of it for Righteousness to all that believe*.

THAT *Ministration* was indeed *glorious*, as it referred to, and pointed out the *Glories* of the *Gospel*; but how divinely glorious soever it was in itself, yet in Respect to the transcending

* Numb. xxiv, 18.

transcending Glory of that Dispensation of *Light* and *Grace*, which it shadowed forth, it might be said to have *no Glory*; the Lustre of it was swallowed up by the surpassing Glory of the *Gospel*, as the dim *Light* of the *Moon* and *twinkling Stars*, vanishes before the *rising Sun*. This Dispensation was not only *gloomy* and *dark*, when compared to the *superior Light* of the *Christian Revelation*, but was in a peculiar Manner so, by Reason of the *Blindness*, *Prejudices* and *Unbelief*, of those to whom it was given; which is fitly represented by the *Vail* *Moses* put on his Face while he delivered them the Law, to cover its *dazzling Brightness*, which they could not behold. This *Vail*, the Apostle expressly tells us, was on their *Hearts**, so that they could not look to the End of that which was to be abolished. They were as unable to behold the *Mind* of *Moses* in that *Æconomy*, as they were his *Face*; when he turned to the Lord he took off the *Vail*; which implies, that *that Dispensation*, as it came from God, and was revealed to him, was full of *Grace*, and shone with a divine Lustre; but when he conversed with the People he had it on, for the internal Glories of his Ministration which were delivered in *Types* and *Figures of good Things to come*, were rendered obscure and dark, by the *Blindness* and *Prejudices* of their carnal Hearts. When they shall turn to the Lord, at the *blessed Period* of their general Conversion, this *Vail* shall be taken away, and they shall clearly see how the *glorious Grace* of the *Gospel* was revealed under all the *Types* and *Shadows* of the *Law*. But, by Reason of the *Darkness* of their Minds, and the *obscure Manner* in which Christ, and the Blessings of his Kingdom, were then typified, the *Church* continued in a dark and benighted State. There was indeed a Mixture of *Light* with that *Darkness*; the *Prophets* were like so many *shining Stars* in the *Church*, and they had many *sure Words of Prophecy*, to which they might give *Heed*; but it was only as to a *Light shining in a dark Place*, till the *Day-star* appeared, and the *glorious Sun of Righteousness* arose. AND

* 2 Cor. iii. 13, 14.

AND 'tis worthy Observation, that the *Night* was peculiarly gloomy, towards the Close of this Dispensation, when the Darkness was much increased, by almost continual *Persecutions* and *Oppressions*, from the *Kings* of *Syria* without; while the *internal Glories* of it were greatly obscured, and almost wholly lost, by those dangerous *Corruptions* in *Doctrine*, *Discipline* and *Worship*, which then over-spread the *Jewish Church*, and those scandalous Divisions into which it fell.

IT was also eminently *Night*, with the *gentile World*, who being sunk into deplorable Darkness, were given up to the most abominable *Idolatry* and vile *Affections*. But as an Expectation of the Coming of the *Messiah*, the promised Deliverer, began now to prevail and become general, 'tis not strange, that some among the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Jews*, are represented, crying to the *Watchman*, *What of the Night?* When will the *Darkness* of the present Dispensation be over, and a *Deliverer* come out of *Zion*, to turn away *Iniquity* from *Jacob*? When will those *Times* of Ignorance which God has hitherto winked at in the *gentile World*, be at an End, and *Light* arise to those that now sit in the *Region of the Shadow of Death*? How much of this dark Season is past? What yet remains? When will the *Day* break by the Appearance of that *glorious Person*, who is to be a *Light* to the *Gentiles*, and a *Glory* to *God's People Israel*? It might be supposed, that the *Watchmen* who were enquiring and searching diligently, what *Manner of Time* the *Spirit* in them did signify, when it testified before *Hand*, the *Sufferings* of *Christ*, and the *Glory* that should follow, could give an Answer to such a Question, as the *Time* and *Manner* of his Appearance were so clearly pointed out. They might see, that the *Scepter* was about to depart from *Judah*, according to *Jacob's Prophecy* *. That *Daniel's 70 Weeks*, or *490 Years*, were near expiring. And as it must be during the Standing of the *second Temple*, to which he was suddenly to come, and fill with his *Glory*, according to *Malachi* ||, it could not be long delayed. By

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these Hints, the *Watchmen* might know the *Night was far spent*, and answer as in the Text, *The Morning cometh*, the long expected Day is at Hand. In this View of the Words, the *Watchman's* Answer, that *the Morning cometh*, may point out the *Light* and *Joy* brought to the World by the Appearance of the *Son of God*. The Day began to dawn under the Ministry of *John the Baptist*. He was indeed a *burning and a shining Light*, compared with the other *Prophets*; but was not the *true Light*, tho' like the *Morning Star* he ushered in the Day. But, when the *Sun of Righteousness*, arose with *Healing under his Wings*, he diffused *Light*, *Life*, and *Joy*, thro' a dark, dead, and cheerless World. The *Shadows* of the former Dispensation, and the thick *Clouds* of *heathenish Ignorance* and *Superstition*, fled before him, as the *Darkness* of the Night before the rising Sun. It was prophesied of him, that his *going forth*, should be prepared as the *Morning*.* As the natural Sun in the Morning spreads *Joy* and *Gladness*, thro' the wide Creation, so did CHRIST thro' a lost and ruined World. The Angel brings the News of his Birth, as *Tidings of great Joy to all People*. The Gospel preached in his Name, was a ravishing Sound to all that heard and received it: Like the *Morning Light*, it spread far and wide; grew brighter and brighter, towards a *perfect Day*. It had *free Course*, and was *glorified*; triumphing over all the *Opposition* of *Earth* and *Hell*.

WITH what divine Lustre and Beauty did the *Church* shine, in this *Morning* of her Days, when the pure *Doctrines* of the *Gospel*, were taught without that corrupt Mixture, which the *Pride* and *Ignorance* of Men have since introduced. She was as a *City set on a Hill*, and *Multitudes* both *Jews* and *Gentiles* rejoiced in her Light. She seemed to answer the Description given of her, by *St. JOHN*, in his prophetic Vision; where she is represented, as *clothed with the Sun*, *having the Moon under her Feet*, and a *Crown of 12 Stars on her Head*; a beautiful Image, expressing, in a lively Manner, the *Glory*, *Honour*, and *Dignity* of the *Church*.

* HOSEA vi, 3. LUKE ii, 11. § REV. xii, 1.

Church. There appeared in her Members, in this *early Age*, such genuine *Piety*, and fervent *Devotion*; such lively *Hope*, and strong *Faith*; such warm and unfeigned *Love* to one another; such *Meekness*, and undissembled *Humility*; such *Heavenly-mindedness* and *Deadness* to the World; such universal *Holiness*, and *Purity* of Life; as made them *shine like Lights in the World*. Religion then appeared *amiable* and *alluring*, as exemplified in the Lives of Professors; which tended greatly to the propagating the Gospel. The Brightness of this Morning was soon obscured. Many Errors of pernicious Influence crept into the *Church*, even while under the Conduct of inspired Men: But after the *Apostles* Decease, *Men of corrupt Minds*, began with more Freedom, to propagate their dangerous Doctrines, and licentious Practices, *bringing swift Destruction on themselves*, and their Followers. Towards the Close of the *first*, and during the *second*, and *third Centuries*, the *Church* was greatly infested with Persons, who advanced the most absurd and dangerous Opinions, tending to the Destruction of all *natural* and *revealed* Religion; -- the *Nicolaitans*, various Sects of the *Gnostics*, *Corinthians*, *Valentinians*, *Marcionites*, and *Manichæans*, with a Train of other *Heretics*, who appeared in the *early Ages* of the *Church*; venting many impious Notions about *God* and *Christ*; *the Origin of Good and Evil*; *the sacred Writings*; and *the Way of Salvation by Christ*; to the great Reproach and Hindrance of the Gospel. -- Some making *God*, the *Author* of Sin; others denying the *Unity* of the *Godhead*; some the *Divinity*, and many the *Humanity* of *CHRIST*; while others even blasphemously pretended to be the *Saviour* of the World themselves. What added to the Scandal of their Errors, the vilest *Debaucheries*, -- the most abominable *Crimes* were countenanced and practised, under the *Cloak* of Religion; which the *Enemies* of Christianity, were malicious enough to impute, however unjustly, to all its Professors. While the *Church* was thus darkened, corrupted, and exceedingly scandalised by *Heresies within*; she was almost continually harrassed with violent Oppressions and cruel Persecutions, under the

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beaten Emperors from without; which continued with but little Intervals of *Peace and Rest*, during the three first Centuries. Tho' there was, in those *early Ages* of Christianity, much spiritual Light, and plentiful Communications of Divine Grace; yet during the ten *general Persecutions*, which so quickly succeeded one another, it might well be called *Night*; when compared to that State of *external Peace and Prosperity*, which the Church shall enjoy in the *latter Days*, &c. with Respect to the glorious Diffusion of *Gospel Light*, which may then be expected.

AT the Close of the *third*, and Beginning of the *fourth* Century, the Church was reduced to the last *Extremity*, by a Number of cruel Persecutors, who seemed to combine together, for the utter Destruction of the Christian Name and Cause. *Galerius, Diocletian, Maximin, and Maxentius*, acted as if they vied with one another, in the unheard of *Cruelties*, and monstrous *Barbarities*, exercised towards the *innocent Disciples* of CHRIST: But the Churches *Extremity*, is GOD's *Opportunity*; He begins to make *bare his Arm*; visibly to espouse the Cause of his distressed People; and to recompence Vengeance to those that afflicted them. *Galerius*, being seized with an incurable and intolerable Disease, expires in the Midst of most bitter Anguish and Torment. *Diocletian*, forced to resign his Authority, oppressed with a *Load of Guilt*, groans and sighs away his miserable Life. *Maximin*, after being defeated by *Licinius*, attempts to put an End to his own Life; but dies a lingering Death, amidst the most amazing Torments, acknowledging his *Guilt*, in having persecuted the *Christians*. In this *dark Period*, GOD also raises up that great *Deliverer* and *Defender* of his Church, *Constantine*; who, *A. D. 312*, gains a compleat Victory over that cruel *Tyrant* and grand *Persecutor*, *Maxentius*; which gave rest to the Church in the *West*: And the Death of *Licinius*, which happened soon after, who was first a *Favourer*, but afterwards a cruel *Persecutor* of the *Christians*, seemed to put an End to all their Troubles: They enjoyed free Liberty every where.---
Constantine ascribes the Glory of all his Victories, to the
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God and Father of our Lord, JESUS CHRIST. And as a Token of Gratitude, gives public Countenance to the Christian Religion; secures it by *Edicts* and *Laws*; erects *Schools*; builds and endows *Churches*; bestows many *Immunities* and *Privileges* on the Clergy, and distinguishes them with many public *Marks* of Honour and Respect. Thus the Darkness which had overspread the *Church*, began to scatter, and the *Morning* to appear. The Gospel had free Course and was glorified; there was opened an *effectual Door*, which no Man was allowed to shut. A delightful Scene seemed now to open on the *Church*, and looked like the Beginning of a bright and glorious *Day*. Many had raised Expectations, that the happy Period was now come, when the *Kingdoms of this World, would become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ*: But alas! how different did the Event prove. This *Morning* was soon overcast, and succeeded by a dark and dismal *Night*. The Honours, Dignities and Riches conferred on the Clergy, and the *Church*, introduced Luxury, Pride and Ignorance, with a long Train of dangerous Consequences. About this Time, the *Arian Heresy* sprung up, and spreading itself over a great Part of the *Christian Church*, proved destructive to the Faith once delivered to the Saints; threw the *Church* into great Confusions, and produced very sore Persecutions: The *Emperors* favouring sometimes the *Arian*, and sometimes the *orthodox* Party; which brought infinite Scandal on the Christian Name, and caused the Enemy to blaspheme.

Soon after Christianity had spread over a great Part of the *Roman Empire*, under Protection of the Government; the most terrible Desolation, was brought on the *Western Empire*, by the northern barbarous Nations, *viz.* the *Goths, Vandals, Almain, Sarmatians, Picts* and *Scots*; who seemed to conspire together for its utter Ruin, and for a long Time continued wasting, burning, and destroying all before them. About *A. D. 410*, *Alaricus* the *Goth*, sacked and plundered *Rome*; about Fifty-five Years after which, it was again plundered, and burnt by *Genfericus*,

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the *Vandal*. Soon after, it met with the same Fate from *Richomerus* 472; twice by *Totila*; and again by *Attila*, King of the *Huns*, who was above all the Rest, a sore *Scourge*, in the Hand of Providence, to the degenerate Christians of that Day.

WHILE the *Empire* was in this dreadful Confusion, by those *barbarous Nations*, gross Ignorance began to overspread the *Christian World*; for, by the Ravages they committed, *Schools* were dissipated, *Ministers* banished, and *Learning* buried. Those who were then on the *Stage*, being soon wasted with the *Sword* and *Age*; the rising Generation grew up in lamentable Ignorance. The most indeed of the Rulers of those *barbarous Nations* embraced Christianity; but being very Ignorant, became an easy Prey to the *Pride* and *Policy* of the corrupt and degenerate *Clergy* of the Day. This Opportunity the *Bishop of Rome* improved, to set himself up as the *Head of the Church*; the *Successor* of *ST. PETER*; *CHRIST'S Vicar on Earth*; and found it but too easy a Matter to impose on those weak *Princes*, and an ignorant *People*, and thus to introduce those gross *Corruptions*, *Superstitions*, and false *Doctrines*, which have since proved so fatal to the Church. Thus *Antichrist* began to be revealed, and gradually grew up to that *Height* of Wickedness, which he afterwards discovered; *exalting himself above all that is called God*. The *Darkness* of this *Night*, brought on the Church, by Ignorance, Superstition, and the abominable *Corruptions* of *Popery*, were greatly increased by the *Rise* of that false Prophet and grand Impostor *Mahomet*, who made his Appearance, *A. D.* 606; and notwithstanding the People of *Mecca*, attempted to crush the *Impostore* in the Bud, yet, *A. D.* 615, it began to spread; for having by an apostate *Jew*, and *Nestorian Monk*, composed his *Alcoran*, and deluded his Followers, with a Notion of his being raised up by God, to institute a new Religion; he teaches them, that it is to be propagated by the *Sword*, and that it is meritorious to die for it.--- By this Means, he soon brought all *Arabia* into his Power; and his Followers (who, from their pretended Descent
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from *Sarah*, *Abraham's* Wife, were called *Saracens*) soon over-run the greatest Part of *Asia*, and began to spread themselves exceeding fast in *Europe*, till their memorable Defeat by *Charles Martel*, *A. D.* 734.

THE Miseries brought on the Christian Church; by the Spread of this Impostore, were exceeding great. The glorious Light of the Gospel, which began to be obscured, with the *Errors* and *Corruptions* of the *Church of Rome*, seemed as if it would have been wholly extinguished. By *this* they brought such Ignorance and Error, Deceit, Violence and Slavery, where ever they came, that it seemed as if the bottomless Pit had been opened, and *Satan* at the Head of the Powers of Darknes, come forth, according to the prophetic Description of the Rise of this Impostore, *Rev.* ix. 2. *And he opened the bottomless Pit, and there arose a Smoke out of the Pit, as the Smoke of a great Furnace, and the Sun and Air were darkened by Reason of the Smoke of the Pit, and out of the Smoke Locusts came,* which fitly enough describes the Misery and Woe, stupid Ignorance and Superstition, which every where attended the Progress of the *Mahometan Religion*. The coming up of the *Locusts*, and Destruction they make where ever they go, *emphatically* represents the amazing and destructive Progress of the *Saracens*.

THIS dark and dismal *Night*, brought on the Church by the Rise of *Poper*y, on the one-Hand, and the *Mahometan Impostore* on the other, continued for a long Time with but a little glimmering of Gospel Light, among a few that kept the Faith: Religion and Learning seemed likely to be banished from the World. But at the Close of the 15th, and Beginning of the 16th Centuries, the Day began to dawn, by a glorious *Reformation*, which had been attempted, and struggled for, by *Wickliff*, in *England*; the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, in *France*; and *John Huss*, in *Germany*, long before: But was now carried on by *Luther*, under the Protection of the *Elect*or of *Saxony*, with surprizing Success; in many Parts of *Germany*; who was joined by *Melancton*, and other noble *Reformers*; whilst

whilst *Calvin*, at *Geneva*, *Zwinglius* and *Farellus*, with a Train of faithful Witnesses for the Truth, who appeared about this Time, were strenuously supporting, and vigorously carrying on, (tho' with some small Difference, in lesser Matters) the same glorious Cause. The Light of the Gospel seemed for a Season to shine brighter and brighter, spread far and wide in Spite of all the Methods the *Popish Party* made use of, by *Bulls*, *Decrees of Councils*, and the most unheard of *Cruelties*, to stop and suppress it. The *Pope's* Authority began very fast to decline. The Nations of *England*, *Scotland*, and *Ireland*, the northern Kingdoms of *Denmark* and *Sweden*, with great Numbers in *France*, *Hungary* and *Bohemia*, all received the *Reformation*, and disclaimed any Subjection to the *Kingdom of the Beast*.

THESE Things appeared like the Beginning of a joyful Day, and many were ready to think, the glorious Things spoken of *Zion*, in the *latter Days*, were now at Hand. There appeared in many of the first *Reformers*, such a Love to the Truth, and Zeal for practical Godliness, as gave a fair Prospect of a thorough *Reformation*; from all the Corruptions in *Doctrine*, *Discipline* and *Worship*, which had crept into the *Church*: But the Event fell far short of the raised Hopes of *Zion's* Friends. In many Places it was carried on chiefly by the civil Magistrate, who went no farther than to answer their *political Schemes*, and in most it was too much a *formal, nominal* Thing, conducted by the *Wisdom* of this *World*. So that it soon came to a Stand, and has been for many Years past on the Decline, as to the Principles and Practice of *real Religion*, and this sad Declension is growing fast on the present Generation.

SOME may be ready perhaps by this Time, to put to Me the Question in the Text, *Watchman, what of the Night?* Whereabouts are We? Is it *Night*, or *Day*? What are the Signs of the *Times*, in which we are fallen? What may we look for? To which I answer, I am very far from pretending to a Spirit of Prophecy, or any such Insight into the prophetic Writings, as precisely to fix the

the Dates of those *Times* and *Seasons*, about which learned and pious Men have so widely differed ; I may venture however, to affirm, some Things that appear *evident* and *plain*, and modestly offer my Thoughts about others, more *doubtful* and *uncertain*.

It is, I think, very evident, that the *Night* brought on the Church, by the Delusions and Superstition of *Mahomet*, and the *Pope*, still continues. Notwithstanding the frequent Appearances of the *Morning*, the *Darkness* still remains, and at present seems to increase. *Popery* did indeed receive a great Wound at the *Reformation*, and the *Pope* considered as a temporal Prince, has, as to his *secular Power*, been ever since, very much on the Decline, very little Regard being paid him to what formerly was ; but this in many, arises more from Contempt of the *Gospel*, and all *revealed Religion*, than a Dislike to the Corruptions of *Popery*, or Regard to the Truth ; and however, he be declined in secular Power, the *Popish Religion*, still greatly prevails. The greatest Part of *Christendom* are *professedly* of that Communion, and *acknowledge* Subjection to the *Pope*, as their spiritual Head ; and the corrupt Doctrines of *that Church*, have of late Years very much prevailed in Protestant Countries.

THE *Turks*, who, when they defeated the *Saracens*, adopted their *Religion* and *Manners*, which they have ever since been propagating, by their victorious Arms, (tho' they have been something weakened by their late Wars with the *Germans*) are yet in Possession of a considerable Part of *Asia*, *Europe*, and *Africa*, where the Christian Religion formerly flourished. The *Mahometans* have ever been professed Enemies to Christianity, and endeavour to root it out wherever they come, and are at present, the greatest *Obstacle* in the Way of spreading the *Gospel*. And how great a Part of the World is yet involved in *heathenish Darkness* and *Idolatry* ? When with these Things, we consider the sad Declensions, Corruptions and Divisions of the *Reformed Churches*, we are constrained to pronounce it

Night. The Light of the Gospel does indeed shine, but 'tis like twinkling Stars in the Midst of *Darkness*, and *Error*.

SHOULD it now be enquired, What of this *Night*? How far is it advanced? And how much is yet to come? I answer, it appears to me, that we are in the *Close* of this dark *Night*, and that the *Morning* cometh. Could we determine when this *Night* began, it would be easy to fix on the Time of it's *End*; the *Duration* of it being plainly pointed out in prophetic Writings. The *Beast* to whom the *Dragon* (the *Roman Emperor*) gave his *Seat*, *Authority*, and *Power*, was to continue *speaking great Things and Blasphemies*, 42 Months, REV. xiii. 2 and 5; which is just equal to the *Time*, *Times*, and *half Time*; while the *Woman*, i. e. the *Church* is *drove into the Wilderness*, and there *nourished*, REV. xii. 14. During this *Period*, the *Witnesses* are to *Prophecy in Sackcloth*, or the faithful Messengers of CHRIST, are to Labour under Discouragements and Opposition, which was to continue 1260 Days, REV. xi. 3. These several Numbers in prophetic Stile, taking a *Day* for a *Year*, make the same *Period* 1260 Years. So long the persecuting Power of the *Beast* will continue; and while it does, the *Church* will be in a *wilderness State*, and the faithful Ministers of CHRIST will *Prophecy in Sackcloth*, This persecuted, oppressed, benighted State of the *Church*, will be succeeded by those glorious Times, when *Satan* will be confined to the *bottomless Pit*, that he may no longer deceive the Nations, and when there shall be nothing to offend in all God's holy Mount. But when this dark State of the Church shall End, or where to fix it's Beginning, is a Matter of Uncertainty, as it seems to have come gradually on. ST. PAUL, indeed tell us, That the wicked one, whose coming was to be after the Workings of Satan, with all Power, Signs, and lying Wonders should be revealed, when he that then let or hindered, was taken out of the Way. By him, that Let, the ancient, as well as modern Expositors, understand, the *Roman Emperor*, who, as long as he held his *Seat* and *Power*, prevented the *Pope* of *Rome* from deceiving the Nations, with his *lying Wonders*. The ancient
Christians

Christians, therefore used to pray for the Continuance of the Roman Empire, that the coming of *Antichrist* might be delayed. If the Downfal of the Roman Empire, may be reckoned from Rome's being sacked, and taken by the Irruptions of the Northern Nations, when almost the whole Empire, was over run and divided among them; when the ten Horns, or Kingdoms arose, and gave their Power and Strength to the *Beast*; || the Destruction of *Antichrist*, and the End of this *Night* of Popish Darknes, is near at Hand; when he shall be destroyed, by the Breath of CHRIST'S Mouth, and the Brightness of his Coming. But, tho' this *Night* is evidently far spent, and the *Day* draws nigh, yet it appears to me not improbable, that the darkest Part of the *Night* yet remains, and that the glorious Times, the Church will enjoy in the latter Day, will be preceded with a Season of the most Calamity and Distress. It is the Opinion of many learned Divines, that there will be a general Slaughter of the Witnesses, who have thro' all the dark Ages of Popery, born a faithful Testimony to the Truth and Ways of Christ, a little before the seventh Angel sounds his Trumpet, for the utter Destruction of *Antichrist's* Kingdom, just when they are about finishing their Testimony, and consequently that this Event is future. But as some eminent Divines, and One, for whose Judgment I have the highest Veneration, are of a different Opinion, and think it is already past, I shall offer what I have to say on this Head, with all Humility, and much Diffidence of my own Sentiments, about so dark an Event: The Account we have of it is, Rev. xi. 7---13. And when they shall have finished their Testimony, the *Beast* that ascends out of the bottomless Pit, shall make War against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them; and their dead Bodies shall lie in the Street of the great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. And they of the People, and Kindreds and Tongues, and Nations, shall see their dead Bodies three Days and an Half, and shall not suffer their dead Bodies

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to be put in Graves. And they that dwell upon the Earth, shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send Gifts one to another; because these two Prophets tormented them that dwell on the Earth. And after three Days and an Half, the Spirit of Life from God entered into them: And they stood upon their Feet, and great Fear fell upon them, which saw them. And they heard a great Voice from Heaven, saying unto them, "Come up hither": And they ascended up to Heaven in a Cloud, and their Enemies beheld them.

THE SUM of which Passage seems to be this, viz. That when these faithful Witnesses who have so long prophesied in Sackcloth, are about concluding their Testimony, there will be a severe Persecution raised by the *antichristian* Party; whereby all the faithful Ministers of the Gospel, will appear to be silenced or slain, and that in the most public, open, and ignominious Manner, so that their Enemies shall triumph as tho' the Day were their own; but this will continue only for a short Time, *three Days and an Half*; which, if it does not mean *three Years and an Half*, taking according to prophetic Stile, a Day for a Year; yet it doubtless means, that this Time of their Suffering will be but short, compared to the Time of their prophesying in Sackcloth; it will be but as a Day to a Year, as that is a Time, Times and half a Time, 1260 Years. After this they shall not only be restored to their former Liberty, but exalted to such a State of Dignity and Security, as they never before enjoyed, and that in the Presence, and to the Confusion of their Enemies; and the Reasons which have made it appear to me not improbable that the Church has this distressing Scene yet to pass thro', are such as these:

1st, It is to be at the Conclusion of their prophesying in Sackcloth, when they have just finished their Testimony. When they shall have finished their Testimony. Thus we translate it, which indeed seems the most natural, genuine Construction of *botan telestasi, cum perfecerint*, when they have about completed or finished off their Testimony, as the original Word properly signifies; at the Close of 1260 Days, when the Period of *Antichrist's* Reign will

will be just at an End. But, as yet, this Period evidently continues, the faithful Ministers of Christ may, on many Accounts, be said, still to *prophecy* in *Sackcloth*, as the *Mahometan* and *Antichristian* Darkness yet remains, and they are carrying on their Work under great Discouragements.

2d, HISTORY affords no past Events to which the *slaying* and *Resurrection* of the Witnesses, can well be applied. Some learned Men have, I know, endeavoured to find the Accomplishment of it, in sundry *Persecutions*, bro't on the faithful Witnesses for the Truth, none of which seem fully to answer the *prophetic* Description given of that Event. The *Waldenses* (Followers of *Peter Waldo*, a Merchant of *Lyons*, in *France*) A. D. 1160, were persecuted with great Severity: 'Tis computed, that not less than 80,000 sealed their Testimony to the *Truths of God*, with their Blood. Above a Million of the *Albigenses* (so called from their native Country in *Languedoc*) fell a Sacrifice in the same glorious Cause; but these were of too early a Date to answer the Description; of too long Continuance, and confined to a particular Country; whereas the *slaying of the Witnesses* will be a general Thing; and it is worthy of Remark, that this was in a Country where the Witnesses have, almost ever since, prophesied in *Sackcloth*, as all acquainted with the *History of France*, well know. If they were slain in that Place, it is hard to say, when they rose, or were exalted. Much less can we find this Event accomplished, in the short Persecutions by *Queen MARY*, in *England*, or under the *Duke of Savoy*, in *Piedmont*, which were confined to so small a Part of the Church, however exactly they may seem to answer as to Duration. Many severe Persecutions have been carried on by the *Papists*, against the *Protestants*, in *Hungary*, *Bobemia*, many Parts of *Germany*, and repeatedly in *France*; but all these were only partial *slaying of the Witnesses*. They were never so universally cut off, as the Prophecy seems to represent.

3d, IT would be difficult to show, that there ever has been that *Resurrection*, and glorious *Exaltation* of the Witnesses, which is to follow immediately after their *lying dead three Days and an Half*. What like this has happened upon any of the Persecutions that have yet been on the protestant Churches? They are not only to be restored to *Life*, but to *ascend up into Heaven*, i. e. to be exalted to an higher State of *Dignity* and *Power*, than they have ever yet enjoyed; and this is to be in a public, open Manner, in the Presence, and to the Confusion of their Enemies. They are to put off their *Sackcloth*, and put it on no more. The Reproach of their former suffering State, will be wiped away: But the faithful Witnesses of Christ don't seem ever yet to have enjoyed any such State of *Honour*, *Power*, *Influence* and *Security*, as is here represented. Something indeed, like this, seemed to have happened at the *Reformation*, when many of the first *Reformers* were protected and encouraged in their Work, against the Attempts of their *Popish* Adversaries; but when we consider the Opposition they met with, the frequent Persecutions in many Parts of the *Protestant Countries*, the great Discouragements one Way or another, under which the faithful Witnesses of Christ have laboured; we cannot but conclude, that the Time of their *prophesying in Sackcloth yet continues*.

4th, THE *second Woe*, does not appear yet to have passed away, nor any such Destruction and Consternation to be brought on the *Seat* of the *Beast*, as is to be at the same Time with the *Slaughter* and Resurrection of the *Witnesses*.

IF the *second Woe*, or *Plague* of the Sixth Trumpet, was brought on the Church, by the pouring out of the *fifth Vial*, when a *Way* was prepared for the *Kings of the East*; or, the *Turks* suffered to over-run a considerable Part of *Europe*; or, if it be referred to the Destruction and Darkness brought on many Parts of Christendom, by the *Saracens*; I say, to which soever of these *Events* it is referred, 'tis evident, this *Woe* brought by the *Mahometan Imposture*, is not yet passed away, great Part of the World still groaning under it; and it is probable, this *Woe* is to end with
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the total Destruction and Abolition of the *Turkish Empire*. Neither does there appear to have been any such *Destruction* and *Revolution* in the *Antichristian* Dominions, as is represented by the *great Earthquake*; the *Destruction* of the *Tenth Part of the City*, and *Slaughter of 7000 Men of Name*; especially the Time never has yet been, when the Reit were *affrighted, and gave Glory to God*. They have been grieved, vexed and tormented, at the Progress of the *Reformation*, the Liberty granted to the faithful Witnessess; but so far have they been from *repenting, and giving Glory to God*, that, on the Contrary, they have been continually venting their Spite and Malice against the *Reformed Churches*, and labouring, by all their hellish Arts, and *popish Rage*, to ruin and destroy them.

5th, It has been God's usual Method to prepare his Church and People for *extraordinary Favours*, by *extraordinary Trials*, and in the present corrupt State of Things, it seems highly proper that it should be so.

THE Affairs of *Jacob's Family*, are in the most distressed Situation, before he hears that *Joseph* was yet alive, and that by him a Door was open for their Relief. The Children of *Israel* were reduced to the last Extremity, in their *Egyptian Bondage*, just before their remarkable Deliverance. When was *David* in a greater Strait than at the Burning of *Ziklag*, a little before he was exalted to the Throne of *Israel*? The Persecution of the Church under the *Emperors of Rome*, was by far the most *extreme* and *dangerous* under *Dioclesian*, when her Deliverance drew nigh, and she was ready to be exalted under *Constantine*. The Experience of many Christians can testify, that those *Seasons* in which they have been most highly favoured, with special Communications of *Light* and *Love*, have been preceded by remarkable *Darkness* and *Perplexity*. That he should therefore prepare his Church, for those *glorious Things* spoken of it in the latter Days, by some *extraordinary Trials*, is no improbable Supposition. This Observation will be much strengthened, by considering the present degenerate State of the *protestant Churches*, which is such, that it can hardly be expected

pected God should pass by, without some *special Tokens* of his Displeasure.

AND if the *Slaying of the Witnesses* is not yet past, it is probable it may be near at Hand. But however it may be as to that particular *Event*, † about which I would be far from making any positive Conclusions, many Things may make us expect that *difficult* and *trying* Times are coming on the *Church* and the *World*. The dark Cloud that gathers so fast over our *Nation* and *Land*, seems to forebode Distress and Calamity, to the *protestant Churches* in general. The *British Nation* has been for a long Time the great *Bulwark* of the *Reformation*, and should it be subdued, the other *Protestant Powers in Europe* could, by no Means, be a Match for their *anticristian Enemies*, when united together; and a Door would open for a distressing Scene of Persecution, throughout all the *reformed Churches*. It gives me no Pleasure to be a Messenger of evil Tidings, nor would I make positive Assertions about *future Events*; yet I must say, our publick Affairs wear a dark Aspect. The Nation we are engaged with in War, is numerous, powerful and politic. *France* abounds with Men, and the *King* commands as many as he pleases into the Field; on every Occasion shows himself superior to our Expectations; and his being an absolute Monarch gives great Advantage in Point of Secrecy and Dispatch.

OUR old Friend and Ally, the *Queen of Hungary*, has joined the *King of France*, and so far as we can judge from her Conduct, designs to forsake us, whatever plausible Pretences,

† The Reasons for supposing this Event already past, are set in a strong, and clear Light, in that excellent Treatise, *An humble Attempt to promote extraordinary Prayer for the Revival of Religion*; which I had not by me when I wrote this Discourse, but on a Review of it since, find that such a Season of Trials, as I suppose the present degenerate State of the Church requires, may be expected on the Author's Scheme that the Witnesses are slain; for he says, Page 125, " 'Tis true there is abundant Evidence in Scripture, that there is yet remaining a mighty Conflict between the Church and her Enemies, the most violent Struggle of *Satan* and his Adherents, in Opposition to true Religion, &c. And some Parts of the Church may suffer hard Things in this Conflict."

Pretences, she may make to the Contrary. No other Construction can be put on her joining our *sworn Enemy*, when at open War with us, in the Manner she has done; No Power in *Europe*, under greater Obligations to the *British Nation*; almost all the Wars we have been engaged in, since the Accession of King *William*, have been undertaken in Favour of the *House of Austria*. *Louisbourg*, that important *Fortress*, was given up, that the Places the King of *France* had taken from her in *Flanders*, might be restored; yet now she has forsaken us at a critical Juncture; and what may we then expect from other *Popish Powers*. *Spain* appears waiting for nothing but a favourable Opportunity of declaring against us. The King of *Poland*, (Elector of *Saxony*) by a strange Turn of *Politics*, seems inclined to espouse the Interest of *France*. The Connections of the King of the *two Sicilies* are such, that he will readily join their Confederacy: And perhaps the King of *Sardinia*, will be obliged to join or stand *neuter*, in his own Defence. When to this, we add the *Coldness*, to say no worse, with which we are treated by some of our *Protestant Allies*; it gives the Situation of our publick Affairs a *dangerous and threatening Aspect*. And if we cast our Eyes on the *British Colonies in America*, Things look still darker. All our Schemes hitherto prove unsuccessful; our *Enemies*, small and contemptible as their Numbers appeared to us, every where get the Advantage. *Braddock's* mournful Defeat last Year, has been attended with a *Train* of destructive Consequences. 'Tis not easy to conceive, what we have suffered from the *barbarous Natives*, under the Influence, and by the Assistance of the *French*; scarce a Paper from the *Southward* but brings Accounts of new *Depredations* and *Murders*. What ruinous Consequences may we expect from the *Loss of Oswego*? What an Advantage is hereby put into the Enemy's Hand; the Lake wholly at their Command, where we have expended such *Suins*. Our *Shipping*, *Artillery*, with the other *Warlike Stores* and *Provisions*, which we had conveyed there with great Cost and Labour; all fallen into the *Hands* of the

Enemy, to be employed against us. All the *fine Country* adjacent, lost; and the few *Indians* that have hitherto continued in our *Friendship*, will probably forsake us; and those that have remained neuter, join in with the Enemy; for now seems verified the Observation they made in a late *Treaty at Albany*, "The *French* act like *Men*, build Forts and defend them; but the *English* act like *Women*."

DARK Tidings of late, like *Job's* Messengers, come in thick Succession, one after another. In the Midst of our Lamentations for the sad Fate of *Oswego*, comes the melancholly News, of *Port-Mabon's* being taken: The Loss of a *Fortress* so important, of such Consequence to the *British Trade*, in the *Mediterranean*, and which gives so much Advantage to the Enemy, must be exceeding great, highly aggravated by the disgraceful Circumstances which attended it; the Ferment into which it has thrown the Nation, and the lasting Dishonour done to the *British Flag*. I shall leave it to the *Politicians* of the Day, to point out the Cause of those fore Calamities, and make but one Remark, which must be obvious to all serious and thinking Persons.

THAT our Misfortunes have come upon us, in such a Manner, as plainly to point out the *Hand of God* therein; and shows us, that our Dependance on our own *Wisdom* and *Strength*, while by our Sins, we engage Heaven against us, is as *vain* as it is *sinful*.---We have been greatly disposed to boast of our superior Strength by *Sea*, and glory in our *Fleets*, as a sure *Refuge* in a Time of Danger; but even *they* have failed us, and at a *Season*, when we most needed their Help, and seemed to have the highest Reason of Dependance upon them. This might serve to cure us of our *Infidelity* and vain *Confidence*, and teach us our entire *Dependance* on *God*, and how great our Danger is, while his *Hand* is so evidently stretched forth against us. Our Expedition to *Crown-Point*, will probably again, like the Rest of our Schemes, prove abortive. These Things, together with our *divided Counsels*, and *dilatory Methods* of proceeding, make the Situation of public Affairs, look exceeding

exceeding dangerous, and may well alarm our Fears, as to what is coming on our *Nation*, and *Country*.----And if we consider the present State of the *Protestant Churches*, will it not tend to increase our dark Apprehensions on this Head. What mournful Declensions, as to *Doctrine*, *Discipline*, and *practical Godliness*! God has evidently withdrawn his Spirit; --- a sad Decay, as to *vital Piety*, is almost every where lamentably visible; ---- A Midnight Security seems to have fallen on the Churches; ---- Both Ministers and People, Saints and Sinners, *slumber* and *sleep*. *Iniquity abounds*; *the Love of many waxes cold*.----Lukewarmness and Indifference, in spiritual and divine Things; Want of Affection to *God* and *Christ*, to the *Truths* and *Ordinances* of the Gospel, are growing fast on the Professors of this *Age*. *The Things that remain are just ready to die, and our Works are not found perfect before God*.---The Gospel, and all its Glories, grow more and more contemptible in the Eyes of *Sinners*, and less precious in the Eyes of *Saints*.---The Lord's-Day, public Worship, and Ordinances of his House, disregarded and slighted;---The Ministers of the Gospel treated with Contempt by many, with too much Neglect and Disregard by all; their *Persons* and *Families* poorly supported, their *Character* and *Office* little revered, and the *important Messages* they bring, undervalued and rejected. How widely different are Things in this Respect, from what they were in the Memory of many now alive! How little of that Reverence and Esteem for the *ministerial Character*, which was so remarkable among our *Fore-fathers*, is to be seen in our Day; and these Things are waxing worse and worse. Whether this arises from Declensions among *Ministers* or *People*, or both, it must be esteemed a *dark Symptom* on the Church. Time would fail me, to speak of the mournful Growth of Infidelity, Profaneness, and all kind of abominable Immoralities: And when we consider these Things, have we not Reason to fear, that God will purify his *Churches* in the *Furnace*, that they may come forth as *Gold tried and refined*? Can we expect, that so much *Dross* and *Corruption*, as is now

found

found among us, will be purged off any other Way? The *Popish* Powers may be suffered to unite their Strength, to prevail, and carry all before them for a *Season*; to *slay*, or *silence* the faithful *Witnesses* of Christ; to *rejoice*, and *send Gifts*, as if the Day was their own, and to imagine they have nothing to fear from them, who used to torment them *Night and Day*. This, as it will be the last Effort of the *Man of Sin*, and his Adherents, may, probably, be one of the most *desperate Attacks*, he has ever made on the *Reformed Churches*. *Satan* will seem to be loosed from the *bottomless Pit*, and will come in great Wrath, because his Time is short. But, blessed be God, tho' this will be a Time of *great Darkness and Distress*, yet it will soon be over. The triumphing of the Enemies of Christ, will be short. When they think themselves most secure, and that there are none to oppose their Designs, *sudden Destruction shall come upon them, as on a Woman in Travail, and they shall not escape*. When the *Whore of Babylon*, or *mystical Rome*, shall say, *I sit as a Queen, am no Widow, and shall see no Sorrow*; then her Doom draws nigh; *her Plagues shall come in one Day; Death, Mourning and Famine; and she shall be utterly burnt with Fire* †. Happy shall they then be, *who have come out from her, and are not Partakers of her Sin, that they may not receive of her Plagues*. The Destruction of *Antichrist*, will not be all at once; yet on the *Resurrection and Exaltation* of the Witnesses, he shall receive a *deadly Wound*, of which he shall never be healed, but consume away by *the Breath of Christ's Mouth, and Brightness of his Coming*. Such sudden and awful Judgments will then be brought upon him, as shall affrighten the *Rest of the World*, and cause them to *give Glory to God*. This, with the passing away of the *second Woe*, in the Overthrow of the *Turkish Empire*, will open a Door for that *glorious Spread* of the Gospel promised in the *latter Days*. The *third Woe*, under the sounding of the seventh Angel, which cometh quickly, will issue in the final and complete

complete *Destruction of Antichrist*, and *Confusion* of all the implacable Enemies of the Church. Then shall be heard great Voices in Heaven, and the joyful Sound will spread far and wide on the Earth, saying, *The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever*†. Then, *My Brethren*, tho' we may be entering on the *darkest*, and most gloomy Part of the *Night*, which has continued so long, we may lift up our Heads with Joy; our Salvation draws near. *The Night is far spent, and the Day is at Hand*. The *Morning* cometh, and will usher in a glorious *Day*, when the *Sun of Righteousness shall arise*, and dispel the dark Clouds which now hang over his Church, become a *Light to the Gentiles*, and a *Glory to God's People Israel*; when the *Light of the Moon shall be as the Light of the Sun, and the Light of the Sun sevenfold as the Light of seven Days* §. This *Day* of the Churches Prosperity, is to continue for a *Thousand Years*; some suppose, prophetically taken, 360,000 Years, that Christ may have a longer *Reign*, and greater *Number* of Subjects, than the *Prince of Darkness* has had; but this may be accomplished in the Space of 1000 Years, (literally taken) of such *Peace* and *Prosperity* as the Church will then enjoy, when the *Increase* of Mankind will be 10 much greater, and their *Destruction* so much less than at other Times ||. Some suppose Christ will reign personally here on Earth, during these 1000 Years, and that his *bodily Presence* will be the *Glory* of his Church; that the *Saints*, or, at least, the *Martyrs*, will be raised from the *Dead*, and reign with him. But such perplexing Questions and Difficulties, are started on this Head, as I have never yet seen answered; and since it is represented as a greater Blessing to the Church, to have Christ *interceding* in Heaven, and the Presence of *his Spirit* on Earth; I see no Reason, either to desire or expect it. 'Tis expedient (says Christ †) *That I go away; for, unless I go, the Comforter will*

† REV. xi. 14, 15. § ISA. xxx. 26.

|| See this particularly illustrated in the Treatise above mentioned, Page 47 and 48. † John xvi. 7.

will not come unto you. Without pronouncing any Thing decisively, about the *exact Circumstances* of these *glorious Times*, and the *Manner* in which they will be brought on, I will only say, That it seems evident by the prophetic Description given of *those Times*, that their Glory will consist in the universal Promotion of *true Christianity* and *real Religion*, in the Gospel's having its *genuine Effect* on the Hearts and Lives of Men; such as were before *hateful*, and *bating one another*, will then have Hearts glowing with Love to God, and one another; such as were before the *Plagues and Pests* of Society, will then become its *Ornament, Delight and Defence*; such as were before *fierce and savage, malicious and revengeful, barbarous and cruel*, will then become *kind and gentle, courteous and forgiving, meek and humble*. The *Lyon* will be turned into the *Lamb*; and *there shall be Nothing to offend in God's holy Mount*. When supreme Love to God, and undissembled Affection to one another, reign; it will produce universal Harmony and Peace. Wars and Contentions, angry Jars and Disputes, will cease; *the Lamb shall lie down with the Wolf, and the Nations of the Earth will learn War no more*. Such a *glorious Change*, in such a corrupt apostate World, can be brought about by Nothing short of a *plentiful, out-pouring* of the Spirit of all Grace, who has immediate Access to the *Hearts* of the Children of Men, by his enlightning, purifying, and all-conquering Influences. That the Change must begin *here*; that without *this*, all Means must prove ineffectual; and that *this* is sufficient to effect it, might be easily proved. Such *abundant Effusion* of the divine Spirit; will open an *effectual Door* for the Gospel, to have *free Course* and be glorified, which no Man shall be able to shut. A preached Gospel will be attended with such *Life and Power*, as will subdue and soften the *hardest Heart*; it will shine with such *Light and Glory*, as that the Remainder of *Pagan, Popish* and *Mahometan* Darkness, will flee before it, as the Shadows of the Night before the *rising Sun*. The Inhabitants of the Earth shall be filled with the *spiritual Knowledge* of
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God and Christ, *as the Waters cover the Sea* † ; Conversions will be greatly multiplied ; Sinners will flock to Christ, *as Clouds, and as Doves to their Windows* ; ---it will seem as if *Nations were born in a Day* : Then will God remember Mercy for his ancient People, the *Jews*. They shall be brought in with *the Fullness of the Gentile World, which will be Life from the Dead* *. This is expressly promised †, *The Children of Israel shall abide many Days without a King, and a Prince, without a Sacrifice, Image, Ephod, &c. Afterwards shall they return, and seek the Lord their God, and David, their King*. Then may it be said to the Church, *Arise ; shine forth ; for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ; his Glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy Light, and Kings to the Brightness of thy Rising* §.

PRINCES and *Potentates*, will, I imagine, partake of this plentiful Effusion of divine Grace, whereby *Kings* shall be made *nursing Fathers, and Queens nursing Mothers* to the Church †, disposed to cast their *Crowns* at the Feet of *Jesus*, and employ all their superior Advantages for the Honour of his Name, and Advancement of his Cause ; and with what striking Beauty and Force will *Religion* then shine, when recommended by such distinguished Examples !

MINISTERS of the Gospel, will doubtless have a *double Portion* of the Spirit, when it is so remarkably poured forth. They will then be like the *Angel* spoken of in *Revelations*, who *flew through Heaven, having the everlasting Gospel*. They will fly on the *Wings of Zeal and Love*, to publish the *Wonders of divine Grace* to a lost and ruined *World*. And their *Meekness, Humility and Wisdom*, will be equal to their *Zeal*. How different in that Day, will be the *Preaching, Conversation and Examples* of Ministers, from what we now behold ? And what *glorious Effects* may be expected from the Gospel, when it is published by those whose Hearts are full of a Sense of its *Excellency*,
Truth

† Isai. xi. 9. * Rom. xi. 15. † Hosea iii. 4. 5.

§ Isai lx. 1, 2, 3. † Isai lx. 16.

Truth and Importance; and when this *shines* forth in their Lives. Alas! how little do we know of this in the present Day? what a mournful withdrawalment of the divine Spirit! our Words freeze between our Lips; the divine Art of reaching the *Heart*, and alluring Souls to Christ is departed from us. Long experienced Unsuccessfulness damps our Spirits; we speak as those that expect to *labour in vain*, and *spend our Strength for Nought*.

CHRISTIANS, in general, will be favoured with unusual Communications of divine Grace, and *shine as Lights in the World*. There will be something convincing and alluring in their *Example*: That mean, low, sordid *Temper*, that contentious, jangling, quarrelsome Spirit, which now appears in most *Professors*, obscures the Beauty of our *holy Religion* in the Eyes of Strangers, and is one of the greatest *Obstacles* to the Spread of the *Gospel*. But when *true Religion* comes to be properly exemplified in the Lives of *Christians*, there will appear such a Charm, and *Excellency* in it, as will strike and allure the *Beholders*, and have a peculiar Tendency to propagate it throughout the *World*.

FAMILIES will then, 'tis probable, be as remarkable for being *Nurseries of Piety*, as they now are for being Scenes of *Disorder, Corruption, and Vice*; when *Children* will indeed be *trained up for God*, and come on the Stage of Action with Hearts animated with Love to *him*, and to all *Mankind*, and glowing Desires of being distinguished Blessings in their Day.

PUBLICK SCHOOLS, and *Seminaries of Learning*, will probably become Seats remarkable for *Virtue*, and *true Religion*; where it shall shine with divine *Lustre*, and diffuse its benign *Influence* far and wide: From those *Fountains* thus purified, will issue *Streams* that shall make glad *the City of our God*. I hint at these Things, as probable *Means* whereby the glorious Designs of God's Grace will be carried on, in the *latter Day*, that with our fervent *Prayer*, we may unite our earnest Endeavours for their *Accomplishment*.

WHAT

WHAT a glorious Change will soon be produced, when God shall visit these dark Abodes, with such plentiful Effusions of his Spirit! What a new Face of Things must then appear in the *moral World*. Behold, *I create a new Heaven, and a new Earth; be ye glad, and rejoice, for ever, in what I create, for I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her People a Joy**. My Heart is enlarged on this delightful Subject, but having greatly transgressed my Bounds, I must conclude with a very brief Address, to *My Reverend and dear Brethren*, in the Gospel, who are convened on the present Occasion.

1st, LET us prepare for *dark and distressing Times*, if God should see fit to bring them on the *Church* in our Day.

THO' it be not for us to know the *Times* and *Seasons* which God has reserved in his own Power; yet when he is both by his *Word* and *Providence*, giving Intimations of approaching Judgments, we ought, like *Noah*, to be moved with Fear, and prepare to meet them. This may especially be expected of us, who are appointed as *Watchmen*, to give warning to others. Tho' we can't pretend to penetrate into the *Council of Heaven*, as to future Events, yet *be that runs, may read* the present threatening *Aspect* of divine Providence; the *loud Calls* God is giving to the *World*, and to his *Churches*, to prepare to meet him: He speaks once; yea, twice; and that in a most solemn and moving Manner; tho' few regard him. The *Cloud* gathers thick and dark upon us; our *Nation* and *Land*, filled with Sin against the *holy one of Israel*; challenging God to vindicate the Honour of his Majesty; ---engaged in War with an *ambitious; politic* and *warlike* Nation, strengthened by a powerful Confederacy, ---a Nation that has long been *drunk with the Blood of the Saints*; ---our *Councils* and divided Schemes, turned into *Foolishness*; our vain Boastings and groundless Expectations, repeatedly disappointed. Have we not then Reason to tremble, for Fear of those Things that are coming upon us? Should our *Enemies*, enraged as they have been, and flush'd with *Victory* as they now are;

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be

* ISAIA. lv. 17, 18.

be suffered to prevail, and put in Execution their wicked Designs, to fill with *Desolation* and *Woe*, with the direful Effects of *popish Bigotry*, and *lawless Tyranny*, this once happy *Land*, which has so long been distinguished with *Peace* and *Plenty*, with *Gospel Light* and *Liberty*; what a *lamentable Scene* would it open! and what can we expect, but that *Judgment* will begin at the *House of God*. The *Watchmen* will doubtless first be attacked;---the *Shepherd* *smitten*, that the *Sheep* may be scattered. What are we better than our *Fathers*? than the glorious *Train of Martyrs*, who have sealed their *Testimony* with their *Blood*; and why should we expect to die quietly in our *Nests*? And are we, *My Brethren*, prepared for such trying *Times* as may soon come upon us? Is *Christ*, his *Truths*, and *Ways*, dearer to us, than our *Lives*? And can we freely sacrifice the latter in Defence of the former? Should we who are *Leaders* in *Christ's Army*, give back, and cowardly desert the *glorious Cause* wherewith we are entrusted, our *Guilt* and *Condemnation* would be exceeding great. This would be to crucify the *Lord* afresh, and put him to open *Shame*, and for such there remains no more *Sacrifice for Sin*, but a certain looking for of *Judgment*, and fiery *Indignation*.

We may, perhaps, in a warm *Mood*, like *Peter*, say, *Tho' all Men forsake thee, yet will not we*. But have we that *Self-denial*, *Faith* and *Love*, that would carry us thro' the fiery *Trial*, bear us up under all the *Variety of Tortures*, which the *Wit* and *Malice* of our *Enemies* may invent? It must be *Love*, stronger than *Death*, such as many *Waters* cannot quench. We are loudly called in this *Day*, to stand with our *Loins* girt, and *Lamps* burning; to have all our *Graces*, in a lively vigorous *Exercise*; our *Evidences* for *Heaven* clear, that we may be ready, if the *Lord* should come as a *Refiner's Fire*, and *Fuller's Soap*, to purify the *Sons of Levi* †. Let us continually look to the *Author* and *Finisher* of our *Faith*, and be animated cheerfully to suffer with him here, under the glorious Prospect that we shall reign with him for ever.

2d. WITH

2d. WITH what Pleasure should we look forward to the joyful Period, when *the Kingdoms of this World shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*; and how ardently should we long and pray, for the Approach of it?

THO' many *Trials* may yet await us, and we should be called off from the Stage, before the *Darkness* of the present *Night* be past; yet it must be a delightful Thought, that the *Morning cometh*, and will usher in a *glorious Day* to the Church, when the *Cause* of Truth and Holiness, Peace and Purity, shall universally prevail, in Opposition to all the Heresy and Wickedness, Tumults and Corruptions, which have hitherto overspread the Earth; when the Prayers of the Saints in all Ages, for the *Prosperity* of Zion; shall be answered, and the *glorious Things* spoken of her in the sacred Oracles, be fully accomplished.

WE, indeed, may be laid in the silent Dust, before this *blessed Day* appears; but we can now behold it, as *Abraham* saw the *Day* of Christ; and if we are possessed of the same *excellent Spirit*, shall rejoice and be exceeding glad. An Heart touched with a dutiful Sense of God's Honour and Interest, can't but be pleased, that he will be highly glorified in this *apostate World*, where he has been insolently affronted, and provoked, for so long a Time: Such must feel some peculiar Emotions of Joy. While some say with the *Psalmist*, in Faith, *be thou exalted, O! God, above the Heavens, and thy Glory above all the Earth* §. To a Soul animated with unfeigned Love to, and zealous Concern for, the *Cause* and *Kingdom* of the dear Redeemer, how delightful the Prospect!---that he will *one Day*, have the greatest Interest in the Hearts of Men; *take to himself Power, and reign from Land to Land, and Sea to Sea*; that his *blessed Gospel*, which is now treated with Scorn, and Contempt, by lost and perishing Sinners, shall triumph over all the Opposition of Earth and Hell, have free *Course* and be glorified, *throughout the World*.

O! WHAT a refreshing, what a reviving Thought! that these *Regions* of *Darkness*, *Guilt* and *Misery*, shall be filled

led with spiritual Light, Life and Joy. The present *languishing State* of true Religion, is, indeed, distressing; and the more so, when we consider, that it may possibly continue to the End of our Lives: But how pleasing the Contemplation, that it will certainly be *revived*, and *flourish*, tho' among future Generations; that God shall be served and glorified, by our *Posterity*, in a far better Manner than he has ever been by us. And *that a People which shall be created, shall praise the Lord* §. This may solace us, under the *near Views* of approaching Death, if, with good old *Jacob*, we can say to our Children, *We die, but the Lord will be with you* †. As a believing View of *Zion's* further *Prosperity* and *Glory*, should support and comfort us, under our present *Labours* and *Trials*; so it should enlarge our Hearts, in constant, fervent Supplications to the Throne of Grace, that it may be accomplished. The Representation I have given, of the *exceeding* corrupt and degenerate State of the Church, with other dark Prospects in the *present Day*, should be so far from discouraging, that it should greatly enliven and animate our Prayers; partly, as it tends to give us an affecting *Sense* of our entire *Dependance* on God, for so great a Mercy; and the utter *Insufficiency* of all Means for the Revival, and general Spread of *true Religion* in the World, without a plentiful Effusion of the divine Spirit: And, partly, because Infidelity and Wickedness have arrived to so great an *Height*, and Religion is brought to so low an *Ebb*, that it seems as if Things were come to the *last Extremity*, and that it was a fit Time for God to appear, and display the Greatness of his Power, Love and Faithfulness, to his Church, to convince the World, that the *Gates of Hell shall not prevail against her*. Instead therefore of desponding, under the present *gloomy Appearance* of Things, let us be awakned to greater *Fervency* in Prayer, and look forward with more earnest Expectations, for the *Dawn* of that *glorious Day*, when *the whole Earth shall be filled with the Knowledge of the Lord*. And tho' he should come as *a Refiner's Fire*;

to

§ Psalm cii. 18.

† Gen. xlviii. 21.

to purge and purify his Churches, in the Furnace of Affliction, yet let us, with united Hearts, say, *Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly.*

FINALLY, Let us be awaked in this dark and difficult Day, to a faithful zealous *Discharge* of the Duties of our Stations. It would be sad indeed, if, at such a Time, we should *do the Work of the Lord carelessly and deceitfully*; if by our *Sloth and Negligence*, we should increase the deplorable *Darkness and Deadness*, which is already on the Churches, and suffer the Cause of God to *die* in our Hands. We have every Motive to awaken our *Zeal*, and quicken our *Diligence*, in our great Work. What we find to do for *God*, the *Souls* of our Hearers, and our bleeding Country, we should, in such a Day as this, *do with all our Might*. Allow me in particular, to press the *Necessity and Importance* of uniting our most vigorous Attempts for a thorough and general *Reformation*. This is what we proposed in our *Judicatory*, and to which we *unanimously agreed*, viz. That we would not only *explain, and warmly press in our public Discourses, the Necessity of a Reformation, but exert ourselves in our several Spheres of Influence, to bring it about*. This is what God is most evidently and loudly *calling us to*, in the present Day. He has of late been giving extraordinary *Warnings*, of impending Judgments, by mighty *Winds*, præternatural *Inundations*, and terrible *Earthquakes in divers Places*. The *Frame of Nature* seems to have been cast into a trembling Disorder, at the Approach of an *angry God*, and as it were in Astonishment, solemnly to call on the Inhabitants of a guilty World, to *repent, and return*, before his Wrath comes upon them to the utmost. The Displeasure of Heaven has been once and again testified against our *Nation and Land*. We have felt the *Rebukes* of an incensed Deity. The *Cause* of all which Calamities, is notorious and evident to all, who have any due *Sense* of God on their Minds, or believe that he *rules among the Children of Men*. God is openly and publicly *affronted*;---his *Name* used and prophaned, in the most *atheistical* Manner;---his *Laws* violated;---his *Authority* despised;---the

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loud Calls of his *Word* and *Providence* disregarded;--and all the Riches of his *Grace*, in the Gospel, slighted;--while *Profanity* and *Infidelity*, *Luxury* and *Debauchery*, *Pride* and *Oppression*, reign without Controul, among those that make no Pretensions to Religion. *Décays* in Faith, Love and Zeal, a *Conformity* to the World, and *Deadness* to spiritual and divine Things, are visible, and lamentable, among its *Professors*. These Things have kindled the *Anger* of Heaven against us, and it is *not turned away*; but his avenging *Hand* is *stretched out still*. And shall not God punish for these Things? Will he not be avenged on such a People as this? Can we expect, that all the *public Contempt* thrown on his Authority and Government, will be passed by without Tokens of his *angry Resentment*, unless Repentance and Reformation prevent.

It is well known, that I have not been backward in using the little Influence I have, in animating my *Countrymen*, to a vigorous Defence of their *Lives* and *Liberties*, in the use of all proper Means; and I wish it were in my Power, to awake in them a greater *Sense* of the Necessity of being alive, and thoroughly engaged in this *Matter*. But I must freely declare, I have no Expectations of Safety to the *Nation* or *Land*, from any of our *Preparations*, till a Sense of our *Dependance* on God, and a Disposition to return to him by *Repentance* and *Reformation*, prevails. The *Judgments* of Heaven are manifestly on us; but who lays it to *Heart*? Who suitably regards the *Works of the Lord*, and the *Operations of his Hand*? We can discern, or imagine we discern, the Cause of our *Calamities*, in the *Weakness of one*, the *Cowardice* of another, and the *Treachery* of a third, whilst the *procuring Cause* of all is *overlooked* and *forgot*. That our Danger is *great*, and *near*, is acknowledged by all; but where do we look for Deliverance? Is it not to our victorious *Fleets*?---the *Wisdom* of our Commanders?---the *Number* and *Bravery* of our Men? Our mournful Disappointments, instead of *curing*, do but *increase* our *Infidelity* and *Folly*. We can see the Error of our *last Scheme*, and determine to rectify it in the next; almost

almost every one imagines, he could conduct Matters better, and point out a Way of Safety, if he was at the Head of Affairs; but forgets, that *the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong.* The *Hand of God* is disregarded;---no suitable Pains taken, to remove the Cause of his awful Displeasure against us. But till there be some public, visible *Humiliation* for, and *Reformation* of, those open Abominations; which cry to Heaven for Vengeance; we need not think it strange, if God should send such a *Spirit of Confusion* into all our Councils;---suffer such cross *Interests*, mutual *Jealousies*, and *Distrust*; such *Divisions* and *Perplexities*, to prevail in our Schemes, as naturally tend to *defeat* all our Attempts, and bring about our *Ruin*. Should this, I say, befall us, it would be no strange Thing; 'tis no more than what has frequently happened to a *sinful, impenitent* People;---no more than what we have Reason to expect, if *Repentance* prevent not §. We, *My Brethren*, who are set on the *Walls of God's Jerusalem*; to give *Warning* of approaching Danger, can't but see the Necessity of *Repentance* and *Reformation*, to avert impending Judgments; and surely it concerns us, to join in with the *alarming Calls* of divine Providence, and endeavour to awaken in all around us, a Sense of these Things. The *Eyes of God, Angels and Men*, are upon us, to observe our Conduct in this *Day* of publick Calamity and Distress. From us, the beginning and carrying on, this so *necessary a Work*, is justly expected, whose Obligations to, and Advantages for it, are great and distinguishing.

THE *Glory of God*; the *Interest of Religion*; the *Welfare* of our bleeding Country; and the *solemn Account* we must soon give to our *Judge*, call aloud for our diligent *Activity* and *Zeal*, in this Matter, as well as our own *public voluntary Agreement*, that we would unite our *Endeavours*, and exert our *Influence* in our several Stations, for this Purpose; in which we humbly hope, and earnestly desire, that we may be joined by our *Brethren* of every
Denomination

Denomination throughout the Land. The Example and Advice of those of the *sacred Character*, we might reasonably expect; would animate *Magistrates*; and *Heads of Families*, to engage in the same *laudable Design*; prove the Means of bringing about the so much needed; and wish'd for *Reformation*, and so of saving a sinning Land; from deserved impending *Ruin*. Let our Attempts for this Purpose; according to *our Proposal**; be accompanied with extraordinary *Prayer* to God; who has the *Hearts* of all Men in his Hand; and to this we may be excited and encouraged; by a Variety of *Motives*; and in particular, from a Prospect of being joined by many in several Parts of the Land. Our *Brethren*, in some Parts of *New-England*, have set us a laudable Example, in this Respect, and I hope their *Zeal* and *Forwardness*; will provoke very many; and now God begins to pour out a *Spirit of Prayer*, and *Supplication* of *Repentance* and *Reformation*; on Ministers and People §; we ought to esteem it a *Token for Good*;--- it should animate our Prayers;---*envelope* our Hopes;-- and *enliven* all our Attempts for the Safety and Deliverance of our *Country*. And while we are opening to our People a *dark Scene*, from the crying *Sins*, and distressing *Calamities* of the Day, to alarm and arouse them from their Security and vain Confidence; I trust we shall not fail to animate them to a *vigorous Defence* of their Lives and Properties, by setting before them all the Horrors of *Poper*y, *Slavery* and *Death*, which may follow the *victorious Arms* of our antichristian Foes, on the *one Hand*; and on the *other*, all the invaluable *Privileges* of unadulterated *Christianity*; *British Liberty* and *Property*; in a delightful and fruitful *Country*, which may be the happy Consequences of our *vigorously exerting* our selves to bring them to *honourable Terms* of

* The Synod agreed to recommend it to their Congregations, to spend a Part of the last Thursday of every Month, in extraordinary Prayer to God, on Account of the distressed Situation of our public Affairs.

§ While I was transcribing this Part of my Discourse, received some encouraging Accounts of this Kind.

of Peace.--Privileges of infinite Value ! for which we should bravely resolve, to spend our last *Breath*, in Prayer ; the last *Penny* of our Estates, and the last *Drop* of our Blood. The Face of our public Affairs has indeed hitherto looked dark, from a Spirit of *Animosity* and *Division*, which has spread thro' the Country ;---divided our Councils ;---confused and greatly weakened all our Schemes. But, *blessed be God*, there is now a Foundation laid, for our happy Union under a *noble Commander*, a *Branch* of that illustrious Family, which has so long been distinguished for their warm Attachment *to*, and Zeal *for*, the *Religion* and *Liberties* of their Country. The signal Proofs he has already given, of his *good Conduct*, *unshaken Loyalty*, and *steady Attachment* to our excellent *Constitution* ; his generous disinterested *Love* to the *British American Colonies*, which induced him to submit to all the *Fatigues* and *Dangers* of his important Station, for their *Relief*, joined with all the *amiable Qualities* he has discovered ; conspire to raise him high in our *Esteem* and *Regard* ; and must naturally tend to raise our drooping Spirits, and enkindle in every Breast, a noble Ardor to distinguish themselves in the Service of their *Country*.

AND, should the several *Colonies* harmoniously unite, to strengthen his Hands, and nobly exert themselves in the *common Cause*, he might be, *under God*, a happy *Instrument* of retrieving our shameful *Losses*, of humbling our ambitious triumphing *Foes*, and restoring Peace and Tranquility to this bleeding *Land*. Which, may G O D, of his infinite Mercy, grant, thro' J E S U S C H R I S T, our L O R D, A M E N.

F I N I S.