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THE
CHARACTER, HISTORY, DEATH, AND
RESURRECTION,
OF
THE TWO WITNESSES,
PROPHESIED OF IN
THE APOCALYPSE.

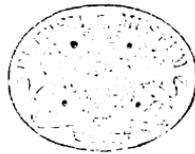
BY THE LATE
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" This abridgement has done injustice to the author's argument, the whole of which is worthy of serious consideration. The interpretation may be doubtful, but its coincidence with the present troubles in the Scottish Establishment, and the rise of Tractarianism in England, is not a little singular."—DR CANDLISH.

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THE TWO WITNESSES.

“ And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth,” &c.—REVELATION xi. 3.

THESE are a small company of true Christians, defending the interests of religion against all opposition, and frequently sealing with their blood the testimony which they hold.

You will no doubt be desirous to understand their *character*, and become acquainted with their *history*. It is the principal object of the little book to gratify this desire. In examining its contents, and in meditating upon the representations which it makes, you will know by experience, that it is well calculated to excite the opposite affections of gladness and grief. It is *sweet in the mouth, and makes the heart bitter*. I lay the whole passage before you.

Verses 3—12. *And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters, to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues as often as they will; and when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth 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 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 dwelt 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.*

Such is the information concerning the witnesses, with which we are furnished in this prophecy. We shall endeavour to ascertain,

I. *Their character*, in order to assist in discovering their persons in the light of ecclesiastical history.

Witness is a term borrowed from the courts of law, and is applied to the person who declares facts upon oath for the purpose of deciding controversies. *An oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.*¹ The word *μαρτυρ* or *μαρτυρ*, witness or martyr, is derived from *Μαη*, *manus*, the *hand*;² because witnesses anciently used to lift up their hands in giving evidence upon oath.³ God's cause, the Christian religion, is in trial before the world, the tribunal of public opinion among the nations. It is opposed always by corrupt society; and those who give their testimony in its favour are witnesses for God. At the time referred to in this part of the Apocalypse, anti-christ opposes Jesus Christ; and the Saviour employs certain persons to give testimony against the whole claims of the man of sin—*I will give power unto MY witnesses.* In former ages, they who supported the cause of Jehovah against the pretensions of idols, were called witnesses.⁴ The apostles and pastors of the primitive church were Christ's witnesses against Jewish unbelief and misrepresentation.⁵ And those who suffered death for the testimony of Jesus, rather than deny the truth, are in every age emphatically called witnesses or *martyrs*.⁶

The witnesses in the case before us, have, however, a distinguishing character. They give testimony to the truth in opposition to the antichristian system; and as we have shown that this system is described in the little book before us, as an *apostate church in league with the beast of the pit*, these witnesses are of course opposed to the *antichristian corruptions of civil and ecclesiastical polity* throughout the whole extent of the Latin Roman empire.

This is their distinctive character. For this express purpose they are introduced; and every assertion concerning them confirms this to be the case.

1. They are *distinguished, as a part from the whole*, from the great body of those who are to be considered as true Christians, and even from the visible church of God in general at this period. They are Christians, and they belong to the true visible church; but they are a distinct class of Christians in the communion of the visible church. "These witnesses differ as much from their contemporaries, the 144,000 sealed ones, as Elijah differed from the 7000 in Israel in his time, 'who did not bow the knee to Baal.' Those testify *openly* against the antichristianism of the papacy; while these abstain from the corruptions, and worship God sincerely *in secret*."⁷

They stand in the inner temple, but they are distinguished from

¹ Heb. vi. 16.

² See Hedericus, and Damm. Coll. 1495.

³ See Parkhurst, and page 305 of Lectures by the author.

⁴ Isa. xliii. 10.

⁵ Acts x. 39.

⁶ Acts xxii. 20; Rev. xvii. 6.

⁷ Fraser's Key, page 148. Phil. 1802.

the *measured temple, altar, and worshippers*, verse 1, and from the *woman and her seed*, chap. xii. 14—17. These are preserved completely throughout the period of 1260 years, until the millennium; but the witnesses *lie dead three years and a half*. God is never, for a moment, without a people upon earth;¹ and the visible church is an indestructible society;² but these witnesses are actually *killed by the beast*.

2. They are represented as *principally* engaged in the contest with the beast, verses 5, 6. They bear the principal *suffering* in the contest, verse 7. They occupy even in antichristian estimation, the place of most importance, for they are most feared; their death affords the greatest satisfaction; they suffer the chief reproach, a refusal of the rights of sepulture to their slain bodies; and inasmuch as they inflicted, in their life, the greatest torments upon their antichristian enemies, these enemies are, at their resurrection, filled with peculiar alarm, verses 8—11.

3. As *king, horns, &c.*, represent in prophetic style, not an individual, but a succession of men in power; so *witness* is not to be applied to certain individuals, but to a *succession* of faithful men, opposing the antichristian corruptions both in church and state, throughout the gloomy period of 1260 years. These witnesses are *two* in number, because *one* is not sufficient, according to the law,³ to prove the guilt of the antichrist; and because there were as few employed as would be sufficient to attest the truth, and protest against the perversions of the Christian system.

There is besides in this number *two*, an allusion to well-known characters who appeared, *two and two*, and who exemplified in their own day, and taught with fidelity, that doctrine which antichrist remarkably opposes, and which these witnesses are authorised to maintain,—the doctrine which requires that man should regulate all his social concerns by the principles and precepts of revealed religion. This doctrine has always been opposed by the supporters of the man of sin; and in direct hostility to it, the antichristian system has been established. The *two* great branches of that system, the heathenish church and beast of the abyss, have of course corrupted the moral order of the *two* great kinds of society in Christendom, civil and ecclesiastical. They who bear testimony against this *two-fold* corruption of religion and morals, are not improperly called *two*, in allusion to several remarkable instances of two distinguished cotemporaries, who had applied true religion both to civil and ecclesiastical polity. Moses and Aaron are well known to those who read the Apocalypse. These *two*, the one *king in Jeshurun*,⁴ and the other *high priest* of the sanctuary,⁵ were eminent witnesses of the religious duties of the church and state. They are referred to in the description of our *two* witnesses, verse 6, as they who in the land of Egypt exhibited

¹ Ps. cii. 28.

⁴ Deut. xxxiii. 5.

² Matt. xvi. 18.

³ Deut. xvii. 6; 2 Cor. xiii. 1.

⁵ Exod. xxviii. 1, and xxix. 21.

power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues.¹ Elijah and Elisha were distinguished cotemporaries, who restored the law, purged the sanctuary, and made Ahab to tremble on the throne of Israel. They contended for the reformation of society, both in church and state, and are referred to as possessing the spirit of these witnesses whose character we are now investigating, verses 5, 6. To bring fire from heaven to devour the enemy, and to prevent the refreshing rain from descending on the earth, are a reference to the actions of Elijah, whose mantle descended upon Elisha.² There are *two* other remarkable witnesses, of whom *these* are the legitimate successors, referred to in this prophecy. They are Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel prince of Judah, who returned from the Chaldean captivity, and actually restored the moral order of the house of Jacob, re-establishing their civil and ecclesiastical polity.³ This fact leads me to state as the

4th Consideration, to show that we have not mistaken the character of the witnesses, the allusion in verse 4, *These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.* Here is an immediate reference to the vision of Zechariah the prophet, at the restoration from the captivity of Judah, chap. iv. A candlestick or lamp-bearer of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, which communicated by seven distinct pipes, to as many lamps, the oil which it contained, appeared to the prophet, after his attention had been excited by an angel. That, however, which excited his curiosity most forcibly, was what respected the two olive trees. These stood, one upon each side of the lamp-bearer, emptying golden oil out of themselves through two golden pipes, into the bowl which

¹ Exod. vii. 17.

² 1 Kings xvii. 1; James v. 17; 2 Kings i. 10-12.

³ "The prophets are particularly described, verse 2, by, 1. Their special work to witness and give testimony for Christ, against the *corruptions and usurpations* of these times; so ministers are called witnesses, Acts i. 7, 8. Their work should be to be witnesses for mistaken truth, and against antichrist.

"They are said to be *two*, (1.) Because two witnesses are the least that confirm a truth, but they are sufficient; so it importeth they shall not be many, yet sufficient to testify against these evils fully. (2.) Because of allusion in the words following, where something of *three couple* of famous witnesses is attributed to *these two* mentioned here; in allusion, I say, to God's way of making use of two, in all dangerous periods of the church, viz. Joshua and Zerubbabel, Moses and Aaron, Elias and Elisha; in respect to which three couple, the following description of the witnesses here, is holden forth as the effect of their prophesying, both to friends and enemies, viz. (1.) They are as Zerubbabel and Joshua, *two olive-trees*, Zech. iv. 3, from whom droppeth the oil to keep light and life in the two candlesticks.

"(2.) If any will oppose them, *fire proceedeth from them*, as Elias destroyed the two fifties, 2 Kings i. 10. So their enemies shall be destroyed as surely, and their word and threatenings shall take effect on them.

"(3.) Their power is described by other effects, that as Elias, by prayer, prevailed to shut heaven, that it rained not, and Moses and Aaron did turn waters into blood, and wrought other wonders in *plaguing* of Egypt, so shall they have."—*Durham on the Revelation*, p. 496. Glasgow, 1788.

"It is a sufficient reason why these witnesses are said to be *two*, as *two* were the legal number of witnesses, and as in the times of the ancient prophets, on greater occasions, two were usually joined together, as Moses and Aaron in Egypt, Elijah and Elisha in the apostasy of the tribes, Zerubbabel and Joshua after the Babylonish captivity."—*Lawman*.

communicated with the seven several lamps of this splendid object. Three several times did the prophet ask of the angel an explanation of this symbol. At last he is informed that these two olive-trees are *the two anointed ones, or sons of oil, that stand by the Lord*. These olive-trees represented to the prophet, for the encouragement of the emancipated Israelitish captives, in the holy work of reform in which they were engaged, the *two distinguished anointed servants* of the Lord, Joshua the high priest, and Zerubbabel the governor, both celebrated by name, and recommended also as worthy of confidence in chapters 3d and 4th. They represent the two great standing ordinances of God, for the preservation of moral and religious order in the human family, the ministry and magistracy, which antichrist is endeavouring universally to corrupt. The two witnesses, therefore, standing before the Lord of the whole earth, and proclaiming the dignity of Jehovah-Jesus, of whom Joshua and Zerubbabel were eminent types, in the two-fold character of Head of the church, and Prince of the kings of the earth, oppose the pretensions of the antichrist, who, having usurped the temple of God, claims also the right of disposing of crowns and kingdoms.

The sons of oil are, accordingly, those who maintain and promote the light of truth respecting the application of Christianity to the social order of both church and state. They are the two candlesticks, *lamp-bearers*, because they proclaim the truth, and hold up its light to the world. They are the two *olive-trees*, because they contend for those ordinances, and have succeeded to the spirit of those men, that by divine appointment support the light of truth in its sanctifying influences over the sanctuary and the throne.

After these observations, it will appear unnecessary to enter upon a formal examination of the several opinions which have been offered relative to the character of the witnesses.¹ We pass on,

II. To the *history* of the Witnesses.

Having endeavoured to ascertain the *character* of these eminent witnesses, and to prove, what ought to have been upon first sight obvious to all, that they are the opponents of the system against which they testify,—both the *heathen church* and the *beastly state* of civil government which exists throughout the western empire, we shall take a view of their history.

The time of *forty-two* months, in which heathenism prevails in Christendom, is the same with that in which the witnesses prophesy: forty-two months of thirty days each amount to 1260 days. I now take for granted, what I shall afterwards prove, that these days are put for years, and that they are to be dated from the year 606, when the holy city was put under the feet of the man of sin, by the authority of the supreme head of the empire. It follows, that the

¹ Opinions relative to the witnesses:—1. The Old and New Testament. 2. The Old and New Testament churches. 3. The Protestant and Greek churches. 4. Some two distinguished individuals, Luther, Calvin, &c. 5. All Christians, or the protestants. 6. The French republicans.

period of history now under consideration, is from the year 606 until the year 1866, or 1843, according to the rules of chronology by which the length of the year is determined.¹

During this period, which is now drawing near its close, the *sons of oil*, or witnesses, prophesied; and this consideration ought to have prevented the application of the prediction, either to individual men, or to any society which did not exist from the beginning to the end of the specified time.

They are said to *prophesy*, not because they are themselves inspired, but because they act under the direction of the inspired writings, and apply the predictions to their proper objects.

Their clothing is sackcloth; because they are in mourning — exposed to oppression — and banished from the palaces of the great, where those dwell who are clothed in rich attire. They are habitually persecuted by the powers of this world.

The witnesses send *fire out of their mouth*, when they denounce from the scriptures, and in the spirit of true religion, just judgments upon their antichristian enemies. They *smite the earth with plagues*, when, according to their prayers and declarations, vengeance comes upon the advocates of the apostacy, the inhabitants of the symbolical earth. They *turn the waters into blood*, when the nations are made the instruments of punishing one another for their opposition to the testimony of Jesus Christ in the hands of his servants, as will more fully appear in the history of the *seven last plagues*. All these judgments, indeed, refer to the seven golden vials; and the *witnesses* co-operate, throughout the whole period of their history, with the *living creature* who gave the *vials* into the hand of the angels.

The *fact* of the faithful contendings of such characters during this whole period, — their *death* — and their *resurrection*, are the most interesting subjects of discussion relative to this part of the Apocalypse.

Discarding all other interpretations of the *WITNESSES* of this *little book*, we maintain that they are

Those faithful men, of whatever age, nation, or church, who, during the apostacy of the Roman empire, maintain the doctrines of Christianity, and insist upon their application to the whole moral order of society, both in church and state, bearing their testimony against all persons and communities who refuse submission to Messiah our King.

I consider all other representations of the witnesses as confused, unsatisfactory, and inconsistent, in themselves; and as it respects the several systems upon which they proceed, private, partial, and illiberal. We ought not to embrace, among the few select servants of our Lord who prophesy in sackcloth, those splendid heretical establishments of the nations, which evidently abuse Christianity; but we ought not to discard from their fellowship those men of piety, discernment, and fidelity, who, according to their several cir-

¹ This question must be hereafter discussed.

cumstances in society, wheresoever they live, or may have lived, are found engaged in contending against the great antichristian system of the Latin empire, and vindicating the doctrines and mediatorial prerogatives of Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, and Governor of the nations of the earth.

It is *a fact*, that a succession of such characters has always existed since the rise of the man of sin.

The Waldenses, from the earliest ages of antichristian usurpation, contended against the enemy, and resisted in open warfare the power of the beast. The Bohemian brethren, the reformed cantons of Switzerland, and some of the states of Germany, resisted tyrannical power, and papal domination, and gave a practical example of their opposition to the heathen church, and the beast of the pit. The reformers in the Netherlands taught the principles of the Christian faith to statesmen and warriors, as well as to church members, and succeeded once in wresting from the man of sin, for a time, the oppressed provinces of Holland.

The French witnesses were numerous, and learned, and pious, and powerful; but although they deserved success, they were overcome. The *age of the reformation* confessedly exhibited, very extensively throughout the empire, able supporters of the Christian system, who laboured for the establishment of true religion in church and state. The British reformers, at the time in which the venerable Assembly of Divines sat at Westminster, exhibited the most accurate and comprehensive system of truth and order which has yet appeared in the national churches of Europe; and they abundantly exemplified their testimony against the beast of the pit, in their exertions to purify the throne as well as the sanctuary. For this purpose, the English and the Scottish Presbyterians entered into the solemn league and covenant, which made them one body of witnesses, bound together by the oath of God, to contend even unto extirpation against the claims of antichrist in both church and state.

The United States of America feel the heat, and rejoice in the light of the sacred fire, which was transported by their fathers across the Atlantic Ocean, when the British *horn of the beast of the pit* had succeeded in overthrowing the holy fabric of the reformation. Able and eminent men still exist among the several nations and churches, contending as witnesses for those principles which are destined ultimately to bless the moral world.¹ Such witnesses will continue to pro-

¹ The history of the true witnesses of Christ is exceedingly interesting, and here too rapidly sketched. In the works of Usher and of Allix, the learned reader will find much desirable information on the subject. Bishop Newton's dissertation on the text is replete with important matter. But a comprehensive and satisfactory account of the *two witnesses* and of their testimony, from the rise of antichrist until the present day, would be a very valuable document to the Christian scholar. It would furnish an account of the *remnant of the faithful* as distinguished from nominal Christianity in the first place; and in the second place, an account of those pious and public-spirited men who testified against *thrones of iniquity*. At the present day, these two witnesses, according to my definition of them, are greatly scattered; but still there are many in Europe, and not a few in the

phesy ruin to the advocates of the anti-christian system, and deliverance to the holy city from the feet of oppression, until they are made to seal their testimony with their blood.

We must now, painful as it is, consider

THE DEATH OF THE WITNESSES.

This alarming event is described in the following words, verses 7—10, "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth 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 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 dwelt on the earth."

As there have been various opinions respecting the witnesses themselves, there have been different interpretations given of this interesting part of their history. The kind of death which they suffer must depend upon the kind of life and action which belongs to them; for death is the extinction of life, and puts an end to exertion. The *power* also which kills, the *length of time* in which they lie dead and unburied, the *place* and the *time* in which they are put to death, must all be explained in consistency with our ideas of the witnesses themselves. An error, of course, in designating their character, will pervade the whole exposition of their history. This will account for the great disagreement among the expounders of prophecy upon this subject. I shall lay before you at one view,

The principal opinions concerning the death of the witnesses.

1. The general suppression of the Bible by the Papists and Mahometans.
2. The general persecutions of Christians by papal power from its origin.
3. The opposition made by the Protestant and Greek churches by the papacy.
4. The burning, for heresy, of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, &c. &c.

United States of America, who, in opposition to the prevalent errors of their age, have raised a voice too loud not to be heard, too distinct not to be understood, and too persuasive not to be respected, both in defence of evangelical doctrine, and in support of the maxim, that religion should influence the political as well as the ecclesiastical conduct of man. Their names and their testimony to this truth, deserve to be distinctly made known in a history of the witnesses. For such a work, the author has already made some preparation. Should his life be spared, he may hereafter, unless anticipated by a more able hand, lay it before the public.

5. The defeat of the Protestants, in the battle of Mulburg, in April 1547.

6. Persecutions in England, under Queen Mary, 1553.

7. The French St Bartholomew's massacre, in 1572.

8. The persecution, by Louis XIV., at the revocation of the edict of Nantes, 1685.

9. Persecutions in Piedmont, by the duke of Savoy, in 1686.

10. The opposition to Christianity, by the French revolutionists, 1792.

Lastly, some terrible persecution which is, as yet, to come.

It would lead me too far from the immediate object of this discourse, should I attempt to examine minutely each of these opinions. I propose only to establish the truth of that which represents the death of the witnesses as still future, and thus supersede the necessity of discussing any other hypothesis.

In adopting this view of the subject, I confess I do not follow where inclination would lead. Could I find it consistent with the word of God, I should rather exhibit our calamities as past, than hold out to your fears the gloomy side of the picture. Even in this case, however, the friends of God ought not to be discouraged. Although the slaughter of the witnesses is yet to come, the cause of religion will generally prosper henceforward throughout the earth. The immense exertions which are at present made to send the word of life among the nations, and the state of Christianity already in places to which the power of the beast does not extend, secure under the divine blessing and protection the progress of godliness over the earth, although iniquity shall have a short-lived triumph on the street of the mystical Sodom. The nations within the symbolical earth, which are to be immediately affected by the approaching catastrophe, will be spared until they have done their work of providing elsewhere a place of refuge for the faithful. And our own country, remote from that earth and from the power of the beast of the pit, will remain as an asylum to the dispersed saints, at the time when the witnesses shall be slain in their native land. The religion of Christ shall still continue to move with accelerated velocity, and the number of its votaries shall continue to increase, as shall afterwards be made to appear from other prophecies, at the very time when Satan descends in extraordinary wrath,—because his time is but short,—to animate his servant the beast to kill the witnesses of Christ against antichrist. In a very short time after their death shall they arise where they fell, and even there obtain the power over their enemies.

“Many good and great men,” said an able divine, venerable for his age, his learning, and his piety, “entertain serious apprehensions of approaching evils, and cannot divest themselves of anxious fears, that the gloom will actually thicken at the close, that the number of believers will be greatly diminished, errors overwhelm the church, and true religion be reduced to an extreme point of depression.—

But if such apprehensions are the result of ignorance or unwarrantable timidity, if they are not supported by the word of God, especially if they contradict the word, and oppose the evident procedure of Divine Providence, let them be dismissed."¹ In these sentiments we acquiesce, and we dismiss undue *apprehensions*, although, contrary to the views of President Livingston, we maintain the death of the witnesses to be still a future event. We do not admit, however, the charge even of *timidity* to apply in this case. When the hour of trial came, there was as much magnanimity displayed by Jeremiah, who predicted the fall of Jerusalem, as there was found in those who disbelieved that prediction. *I have believed, therefore have I spoken.*

The witnesses of this chapter we have already described. They are immediately opposed to the complex system of tyranny and superstition, and display a testimony against antichristian principles in church and state. They are, of course, esteemed *bad subjects to the beast and his ten horns*; and are therefore said to torment them that dwell on the earth. The *present truth*, whatever may be most disputed, they more immediately maintain. And wheresoever they are, they testify against the prevalent corruptions. That point upon which antichrist attacks Christianity they for the time defend. They are the friends of both civil and religious liberty; but it is *Christian liberty*, and not irreligion, which they defend, and which they recommend to society, civil and ecclesiastical. They are not timid or partial, but boldly declare the truth; and because they are unyielding, they are hated. They are always persecuted during the 1260 years, in which they prophesy in sackcloth; and with a *progressive* testimony against the errors of the man of sin, they go on to complete it; and it is about the time in which they finish their testimony they are killed.

Their death is caused by the beast of the pit. The heathenish church excites the immoral power of the state to this deed; but it is the *revived empire of the west* which kills the witnesses, either directly by its own power, or by employing one or more of its horns or kingdoms to do this. "Let the reader," said Mr Faber, "only compare together the following texts, and he will be sufficiently convinced of the truth of my assertion. Rev. xi. 7,—The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them. Rev. xiii. 1,—And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns. Rev. xvii. 7, 8. I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit. It is a palpable truth, that the beast of the sea, and the beast of the bottomless pit, are the self-same ten-horned and seven-headed beast."

The time in which they lie dead is three days and a half. A day

¹ Dr Livingston's Missionary Sermon, New York, 1804.

for a year. The time is specific. It is a forced construction, which, to answer a purpose otherwise irreconcilable with this prophecy, would render the three days and a half equal to the 1260 days of their prophecy. In that case the witnesses never lived. If they lay dead during the whole time of their prophecy, when was it that they tormented the nations? for in their death the nations rejoiced. With such a latitude of interpretation, dates may signify any thing. The plain truth is, those witnesses bore their testimony 1260 years, under circumstances of great affliction. At the close of this period they were silenced by the last struggles of the beast to preserve his power. He triumphed, and they were silent for three and a half years. They revived at the end of that period; the beast disappeared; and the time of Daniel came when the saints possessed the kingdom. The little book terminates, and the narrative of the sealed book commences, where it was interrupted, with an account of the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Such is certainly the idea that a plain unprejudiced reader of intelligence would annex to this passage. Nothing but the design of making it consistent with some system, adopted from prejudice, would torture the three days and a half to an equality of 1260 days, and so rob us of all our living witnesses, keeping them dead during the whole time. Death and life, in relation to the same thing, cannot be predicated of them at the same time. It was their *life*, as witnesses, to bear testimony against antichrist; it is as witnesses they are put to *death*, when such testimony is violently and effectually silenced. There *will be* Christians, there *will be* churches, as there always have been; but for three years and a half there *will not be* found, within the bounds of the Latin Roman empire any witnesses to bear a public testimony against the man of sin, at the close of his reign. I shall, however, lay before you in this place, a summary of the argument by which we prove the death of the witnesses to be yet a future event.

1. The death of the witnesses is yet to come, because they are now neither dead nor arisen from the dead.

They still prophesy in sackcloth. It is not imagined by any expositor that we are now under the three and a half years; and it is manifest we are not, from the fact that no joy is felt by the antichristian nations, no mirth, no sending of gifts, according to verse 10th, for such an event. There is too much activity still among Christians in opposing the grand enemy, to admit the idea that the witnesses are now lying unburied in the streets. And if their character has been properly defined in this lecture, it is equally manifest that their resurrection is not arrived. Immediately upon that event, extraordinary terror falls upon their enemies; and they are themselves, by the voice of God, called up to heaven, no longer to wear sackcloth, for that is not the place of mourning. The throne is then occupied by the saints, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. The great predicted earthquake arrives—the antichristian system shakes to its

centre; the impenitent supporters of it perish in despair; and the remnant submit to true religion, and give glory to God. Nothing like this has as yet accompanied or flowed from the French revolution—the only event to which the earthquake, verse 13th, has at all been applied by modern expositors. The friends of religion, and the most enthusiastic admirers of civil liberty, find now that their early impressions were incorrect, when they hailed as the resurrection of the witnesses the convocation of the French national assembly.

Like other events, the French revolution will be overruled by the King of nations for his own glory; but it was unreasonable ever to have expected from such men, as made the principal figure in that work of judgment and of blood, that they should personate the arisen witnesses of the living Saviour Jesus Christ, or even that civil liberty itself should be established and protected by them.

2. We consider the event as future, because these witnesses have not as yet employed, in prophesying, the *whole time* unto which they have been called, and it is not until then that they are slain.

The *time*, definitely marked out in prophecy for this work, is 1260 years, and these years are not expired. The *evils* against which they testify still exist—corrupt constitutions of church and state—the *heathenish church*, and the *seven-headed ten-horned beast*. However happy the deliverance procured for the churches by the Protestant Reformation, there is not among these nations of the western empire a single one to-day without an antichristian constitution. So far, therefore, from being themselves, in their political character, ranked among the witnesses against the corruptions of church and state, are these nations, that they require from the faithful a testimony against the immoralities which they have incorporated with their several establishments. In each of these nations mere politicians have modified even the Protestant churches into such a form as that, while they are *severed* from other churches contrary to the *unity of the Spirit*, they are made a part of the civil government of the nation, and are thus degraded to the earth.

These corrupt establishments place the churches in league with the beast with the ten horns; and instead of being themselves witnesses against corruption, there are, both within and without their communion, men who in sackcloth prophesy against them, and bear a testimony against the evil. It is when *they shall have finished*, at the end of 1260 years, their testimony, they shall be killed. Whether we render *σαν τελωσει*, in verse 7, *when they shall be finishing*, or *when they shall have finished*, is a matter of no consequence. The idea in either case carries us where the whole history of the witnesses leads us, to the termination of the period.

3. From the *nature* of the work of bearing testimony against anti-christian misrule, in church and commonwealth, it is evident that it is still incomplete; and hence also it appears that they who carry on the work are not yet dead.

Christ, our pattern and example, the faithful and true witness, was

not put to death until he finished the work given him to do. And by the reference to his crucifixion, verse 8, it is to be expected that his witnesses shall not be slain until, as he did, they finish, in their last sufferings, the whole work they have to perform. This is the true import of the expression *οταν τελειωσι*. In suffering death, our Saviour finished *his* work. When finishing *their* work, the witnesses are slain. By the blood of martyrdom, they seal the *last* article in their testimony; and thus is the testimony *completed*.

Of these articles, it appears from the history of the persecutions which preceded this age, there remains one, an important one, and only one, to be a ground of suffering. In testifying for it, there is high probability, the witnesses must be slain.

The true cause of all persecution is, in all ages, the same—DISOBEDIENCE TO THE POWERS THAT BE. If Christians would act, as such powers desire, in all cases, there would be no controversy, no martyrdom. If in every point they obey, but in one, for that one they must suffer. Such is persecution.

Under the Old Testament, the saints suffered for worshipping the true God, and rejecting idols. At the commencement of the Christian era, they suffered from Jews and Gentiles for receiving Christ as Messiah, and for defending the doctrine of faith in his name. Under antichrist they suffered, at and before the Reformation, for defending the doctrines of grace, and the order of the sanctuary, against the *heathen church* in league with the *beast*. Antichrist tolerated what the Jews and the pagans condemned. He permitted men to worship God, and acknowledge Messiah, but not to oppose the papal superstition. After the Reformation, the Protestant powers, as well as the popish kingdoms, claimed the right of *prescribing* a religion for their subjects. The saints then suffered, not merely for their abstract articles of belief, or for their opinions of the pope, but for not submitting to the religious worship supported by the government of the country. This was the cause of the persecutions in France under Louis XIV., and in Britain UNDER THE HOUSE OF STUART. Everywhere, throughout the Roman empire, the witnesses have testified that Christ is the only Saviour, and they died to seal that testimony. The Hugonots, the Puritans, and the Covenanters, have suffered death in bearing testimony to the exclusive headship of Jesus Christ over his own church, and in disclaiming all human lordship over the conscience, but it does not appear that witnesses have been put to death for testifying against the *irreligion* of civil polity any where as yet in the antichristian world. This article still remains to be completed. As these sons of sorrow, clad in mourning apparel, were originally *cited* to give evidence for the cause of truth and order in the world, against the pretensions of the *heathen church and beast of the pit*, it is necessary that they be as explicit, in opposing the *beastliness* of the one, as they have been in opposing the *heathenism* of the other.

Christ's HEADSHIP OVER THE NATIONS is the present testimony.

It is not probable that the witnesses will escape better in maintaining this doctrine than in other cases. Modern principles of government, it is true, disclaim persecution for articles of faith, or modes of ecclesiastical government: but the ten-horned beast will not submit to be told that he *must* kiss the Son: and that true religion is not merely to be *tolerated*, but is in fact to influence civil polity, and to overthrow all inconsistent establishments. When this *one remaining* article of the testimony against the antichristian system is so generally espoused, as that the number and power of the witnesses are sufficient to excite notice and alarm, then will the beast slay them, and *in dying*, will they have completed their testimony. This period is not yet arrived; but is fast approaching.

4. That the death of the witnesses has not, as yet, come to pass, appears from the fact that it is caused by the *last great struggle* of the beast against the saints. This is obvious, because this war is *peculiarly* mentioned in the prophecy; and because, at the resurrection of the witnesses, the power of the enemy comes to an end.

No event corresponding to this has hitherto occurred in Christendom; nor *can* such an event occur until knowledge is so far increased, and influential men are so well instructed, both in the character of the mystery of iniquity, and in that of the true moral order which Christianity recommends for the government of society, as to be in due measure prepared both to testify against the one, and to reduce the other to practice. When the numbers, the learning, and the talents, enlisted on the side of the Bible religion, and Bible politics, are become so formidable as to alarm the beast, then will he make war upon them; and for three years and a half that war will be successful. Dreadful will be the effect; but God will speedily interfere. The witnesses shall stand upon their feet before him. He will call them into supreme power, and the reign of antichrist is then no more. The nations are not as yet ripe for this harvest: but knowledge is certainly in rapid progression. Attention to the Bible is increasing every day; and mankind have many inducements, in the present convulsed state of the moral world, to fly for refuge to *that book* which contains the only correct view of the principles which will bless the earth with peace.

RESURRECTION OF THE WITNESSES.

We have it not in our power to describe very accurately an event which is still future, but we are assured that when those faithful martyrs shall have been silent for the space of *three prophetic days and a half*, that is, *three natural years and a half*, *the Spirit of life from God shall enter into them*. By the grace of God they shall arise, in those who succeed to their principles, and shall assume a respectability and an influence which puts down all subsequent opposition.

The experiment of antichristian policy will have been, in the estimation of civilized Europe, carried to a sufficient length; and it will be prepared to yield its government to the influence of true religion.

All irreligious polity will be discarded as insufficient to bless the earth with peace and happiness, and the saints alone exalted to the political heaven. The voice of God will cause this change. Divine grace will influence men to exalt to power over them by their suffrages none but those who will *rule in the fear of God*. *They ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.*

Cotemporaneously (*εἰ ἐκείνη τῇ ὥρᾳ*) with the resurrection of the witnesses is the final *earthquake*, and the fall of the *tenth part of the city*. Time will be the most accurate expositor of this prediction. Some kingdom, probably that very one in which the witnesses were slain, and in which most has already been done for the dissemination of sound doctrine; some one of the ten kingdoms which have acted as the horns of the beast, will be distinguished in the general earthquake, by the first actual and complete secession from irreligious policy, and be the *first* to exemplify, upon a permanent footing, since the dismemberment of the Jewish monarchy by the *first great beast*, the true scriptural order of civil government.

This great and salutary change cannot be effected without the entire prostration of former civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries. *In the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand.*

In the original it is *ὀνόματα ἀνθρώπων*, *names of men*, that thus fall. The expression signifies, of course, the prostration of *titles*, rather than the destruction of *lives*. The inhabitants of other countries saw and imitated this example. *The remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.*

Here the *little book* closes. It is a summary history of the remarkable 1260 years, with special reference to the witnesses. It describes the state of the church become heathen in league with immoral power, and the state of the true church measured by the Word of God, and worshipping at the New Testament altar; and it emphatically exhibits the few faithful men among the scattered churches who maintained correct principles relative to social religion, in opposition to the corrupt constitutions of church and state in the antichristian empire, until their cause became triumphant, and the reign of the man of sin had terminated.

CONCLUSION.

I must now conclude this lecture, already prolonged to an extraordinary length. I have it in my power, from the sacred text, to assure my hearers, that the Christians and the witnesses of this land shall not suffer in the catastrophe which we have considered. That event takes place within the bounds of the western empire. *We* shall have, it is true, our trials and our sorrows. Our sympathy will be excited by the sufferings of others; but as we never formed a street

of mystical Babylon, the great empire, in which our Lord was crucified, and which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, we cannot, by the death of our own citizens, exemplify the death of the witnesses. No: here they have hitherto found protection. Let this be the asylum of the oppressed. Our nation was peopled, in a great measure, by the persecuted pilgrims, and it has grown by accessions of a similar character. Whatever may be its crimes, and they are very great, and will assuredly be punished by a righteous God, whatever are its crimes, they are small compared with those of other civilized nations.

America has not been guilty of shedding the blood of the martyrs. She has not persecuted the wandering and benighted sons of Abraham, still beloved for the fathers' sake, and again to be brought back to the knowledge of the truth. She has not, either by sea or land, encouraged oppression, or despoiled of his goods him that was at peace with us. This hitherto happy land has been a place of refuge from the storm which desolates the old world. Long may it retain this character! Let its door of hospitality be still open for the reception of the stranger, who sighs for a participation in the blessings of liberty enjoyed by the sons of Columbia! And let the republican banner cover as a mantle, and continue to protect its adopted citizens against the unholy claims, and unblessed pretensions of perpetual allegiance to despotic power!

But if *we* are safe from the last war of the beast against the witnesses, where shall the blow fall! On what street, in what kingdom of the ancient empire, shall the witnesses of Jesus Christ lie dead, and unburied, the sport of the sons of darkness? In what land are to be found the victims, the last victims, to be offered upon the altar of the man of sin.

You anticipate my reply. There is one nation to which the eye is irresistibly turned. It is not a secret to the Christian world, in what country dwell the witnesses of our Redeemer at the present time, in the greatest number, with the greatest zeal, intelligence, activity, and usefulness. There, too, they are likely to continue in the greatest notoriety during the few years which remain of the time necessary for them to complete their testimony. It is painful, brethren, to anticipate this event. It embitters the heart. Heavy are these tidings from the little book: but we must receive it out of the angel's hands. Shall our fathers, our friends, our brethren in the faith of God's elect, bound with us in the most sacred ties, for the promotion of the Lord's cause, be opposed, and persecuted, and put to death in the British dominions?

It is only a conjecture. We do not, we dare not predict. The place is not absolutely pointed out in the prophecy. We cannot be certain until the event declares what street of the great city, the old Roman empire, is to be the place of slaughter. The British empire is within the bounds of the symbolical earth. She is, at present, the principal support of the old antichristian systems of Europe. She

bears up the empire of the west against the third and the last woe, now pouring out its plagues by the agency of revolutionary France. Should *that woe* be permitted, in the providence of God, to break over the cliffs of Albion, and its foaming billows roll along to the high mountains of Caledonia, where the old Roman legions were stopped in the days of other times, the war of the beast against the witnesses must become matter of history. The best of the saints, and the most magnanimous, intelligent, and faithful of that land, as they would not be silent, could not be safe.

Men of no religion—men inclined to a splendid form without life or reality—the avowed enemies of evangelical doctrine—the high advocates of arbitrary power and prelatical pride—those who excommunicate from the pale of the church of God all but themselves and the church of Rome, would easily embrace the views of the anti-christian conqueror.* But thousands among the several religious denominations of the British isles would seal their testimony with their blood.

Such an event—sufferings extreme from the hand of France—sufferings approaching to desolation, have been expected for ages by the pious people in that country. What is to prevent such a catastrophe? Britain, first in crime, because sinning against the clearest light, and the greatest mercies, deserves the scourge. Britain, possessing the most active, useful, and important part of the church of God, will be preserved from wrath until the work assigned to her pious sons shall have been accomplished. Let that work be done, and then, though Noah, and Daniel, and Job were there, they cannot prevent the evil to come.

Let us tremble and adore. Let us hail the prospect of a speedy resurrection to the successors of the martyrs. For in the fall of this tenth part of the idolatrous city, is involved the ruin of those who prevent the re-establishment of the Reformation. And soon thereafter shall the friends of righteousness in the church and in the commonwealth be exalted to a station which shall be powerful and permanent. The country in which they suffered during the last struggle may be the first to redeem its character, and to set the example to others of a kingdom which is, in fact, and by profession, one of the kingdoms of our God and his Christ. AMEN.

¹ *High churchmen*, contending for the *divine right of prelacy*, consign to *uncovenanted* mercy all who do not submit to *their* bishops. They claim a nearer connexion with the papists than they do with other protestants.