

OF ANTICHRIST AND HIS RUIN



JOHN BUNYAN



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Of AntiChrist and His Ruin

AND

Of the Slaying the Witnesses.

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By John Bunyan

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PREFATORY REMARKS BY THE EDITOR

This important treatise was prepared for the press, and left by the author, at his decease, to the care of his surviving friend for publication. It first appeared in a collection of his works in folio, 1692; and although a subject of universal interest; most admirably elucidated; no edition has been published in a separate form.

Antichrist has agitated the Christian world from the earliest ages; and his craft has been to mislead the thoughtless, by fixing upon the humble followers of the Lamb his own opprobrious proper name. The mass of professed Christians, whose creed and mode of worship have been provided by human laws, has ever been opposed to the sincere disciples of Christ. To imbibe every principle from investigation and conviction of the holy oracle to refuse submission to any authority in the spiritual kingdom of God, except it is to

Christ, the supreme head and only lawgiver in his church to refuse obedience to human laws in the great concern of salvation and of worship; whether those laws or decrees emanate from a Darius, a Nebuchadnezzar, a Bourbon, a Tudor, or a Stuart to be influenced by the spirit which animated Daniel, the three Hebrew youths, and the martyrs, brought down denunciations upon them, and they were called antichristian: but alas! the sincere disciples of Jesus have ever known and FELT who and what is Antichrist. They have been robbed, incarcerated in dungeons, racked and tormented, transported, drowned, hung or burned. The most frightful atrocities have been committed upon the most peaceful and valuable members of society; because they valued their soul's peace in preference to temporal advantages. These cruelties are THY cursed deeds, O Antichrist! The hand writing against thee is exhibited in blood-stained and indelible characters. The Great God has decreed thy downfall and ruin "That wicked whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth," (2 Thess 2:8). All who are found partakers in his community, must be consumed with an everlasting destruction. No "paper-winkers" [1] can hide this truth from the enlightened regenerated mind. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel!"

In Bunyan's time great cruelties were practised to compel uniformity. To that absurd shrine many thousand invaluable lives were sacrificed. Blessed be God, that happier days have dawned upon us. Antichrist can no longer put the Christian to a cruel death. It very rarely sends one to prison for refusing obedience to human laws that interfere with religious worship. "My kingdom is not of this world," said the Redeemer: and his followers dare not render unto Caesar, or temporal governments, that which belongs exclusively to God. Human coercion, in anything connected with religion, whether it imposes creeds, liturgies, or modes of worship, is Antichrist: whom to obey, is spiritual desolation, and if knowingly persevered in, leads to death.

On the contrary, the kingdom of Christ is love, meekness, forbearance, persuasion, conviction, and holy faith. The Christian who dares not obey Antichrist may still, in some countries, suffer personal violence; but the olden cruelties have given way to the spread of the gospel. Should the wicked spirit of persecution still light its unhallowed fire in any sect; may heaven forgive and convert such misguided men, before the divine wrath shall consume all that pertains to Antichrist. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord."

Bunyan conceives that previous to the universal triumphs of the Saviour, Antichrist will spread his influence over the whole earth; and the church be hidden from outward observation, in the hearts of believers. This idea, which was also cherished by Dr. Gill, and others, deserves careful consideration; while we keep in mind, that leaven which must spread, however invisible in its operation, until the whole earth shall be leavened.

The dread enemy may yet appear in a different shape to any that he has hitherto assumed. When mankind, by the spread of knowledge, shall throw off the absurdities and disgraceful trammels of hypocrisy, fanaticism, and tyranny, which has so long oppressed them; there may be experienced a vast overflowing of infidelity, and perverted reason assume the place of Antichrist. Through this and all other opposing systems, Christianity must make its irresistible progress: all that opposes is doomed to ruin by the Great God. Every heart will be subdued by that blessed knowledge, which has the promise of the life that now is as well as of that which is to come. Bloodless victory! The ark being exhibited, every Dagon must fall before it, then shall be realized the heavenly anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

GEORGE OFFOR.

A PREMONITION TO THE READER.

After that God had delivered Babylon and her king into the hands of the kings of the Medes and Persians, then began the liberty of the Jews, from their long and tedious captivity: For though Nebuchadnezzar and his sons did tyrannically enslave, and hold them under; yet so wrought God with the hearts of those kings that succeeded them, that they made proclamation to them to go home, and build their city, temple, &c., and worship their own God according to his own law (2 Chron 30:6; Ezra 1). But because I would not be tedious in enumerating instances for the clearing of this, therefore I will content myself with one, and with a brief note upon it. It is that in the seventh of Ezra 26: 'And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be to death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.' This is the conclusion of a letter that king Artaxerxes gave to Ezra the priest and scribe, when he granted his petition, and gave him leave to go to Jerusalem to build the temple, and to offer sacrifice there to the God whose house is in Jerusalem. And a conclusion it was, both comfortable and sharp; comfortable to Ezra and his companions, but sharp unto his enemies. I shall here present you with a copy of the letter at large.

'Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own free-will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. Forasmuch as thou art sent of the king, and of his seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which is in thine hand; And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, whose habitation is in Jerusalem. And

all the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the free-will-offering of the people, and of the priests, offering willingly for the house of their God which is in Jerusalem: That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their meat-offerings and their drink-offerings, and offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which is in Jerusalem. And whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, that do after the will of your God. The vessels also that are given thee for the service of the house of thy God, those deliver thou before the God of Jerusalem. And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow it out of the king's treasure-house. And I, even I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which are beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily. Unto an hundred talents of silver, and to an hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much . Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? Also we certify you, that touching any of the priests and levites, singers, porters, nethinims, or ministers of this House of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment' (Ezra 7:11-26).

This is the letter; and now for the scope thereof. First, Generally. Secondly, Particularly.

GENERALLY. The general scope of the letter is this: A grant given by

the king to Ezra the scribe, to go to Jerusalem, and build there the temple of God, and offer sacrifice in it according to the law: With commissions annexed thereunto, to the king's lieutenants, treasurers and governors on that side the river, to further the work with such things as by the king was commanded they should.

PARTICULARLY. But we will consider the matter particularly. 1. As to the manner of the grant which the king gave to Ezra and his brethren to go thither. 2. As to the king's grant, with reference to their building, and way of worship. 3. With reference to the king's liberality and gifts towards the building of the temple, and by what rules it was to be bestowed. 4. As to the way that the king concluded they should be governed in their own land. 5. With reference to the king's charge to his officers that were thereabout, not to hinder Ezra in his work. 6. And lastly, with reference to the king's threat and commandment to do judgment if they should hinder it.

First, As to the manner of the grant that the king gave to Ezra and his brethren to go to build, it was such an one as forced none, but left every Jew to his own choice, whether he would go, or forbear. The words are these: 'Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven, perfect peace, and at such a time. I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own free-will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee' (verse 12,13).

Thus gracious then was the king: He made a decree, That all they of the captive Jews, their priests and levites, that would return to their own land, to build their temple, and to sacrifice there, might: He would hinder none, force none, but left them free, to do as they would.

Secondly, As to the king's grant, with reference to their building, and way of worship there, nothing was to be done therein, but according to the law of the God of Ezra, which was in his hands (verse 14). Hence, when he was come to Jerusalem, he was to inquire

concerning Judah and Jerusalem; to wit, what was wanting in order to the temple and worship of God there, according to the law of his God, which was in his hand. Also when they went about to build, and to sacrifice, all was to be done according as was commanded by the God of heaven (verse 23): Yea, this was granted by the king, and his seven counsellors.

Thirdly, As to the king's liberality towards the building of this house, &c. it was large: He gave silver, gold, bullocks, rams, lambs; with wheat, wine, oil, and salt (verse 17,22); but would by his royal power, give no orders how in particular things should be bestowed, but left all that to Ezra the priest, to do with it according to the will, word, or law of his God (verse 18).

Fourthly, As to the way that the king concluded they should be governed in their own land, it was by their own laws; yea, he did bid Ezra the priest, after the wisdom of his God that was in his hand, set magistrates and judges, which might judge all the people, &c. only he bid him make them such, which did know the law of his God: Also the king added, That they should teach it to them that knew it not.

Fifthly, As to the king's officers, he gave them a charge not to hinder, but further this work. To further this work, not by putting their hand thereto, (that was to be left to the Jews alone, especially to Ezra, according to the law of his God,) but that they should speedily give him such things which the king had commanded, to wit, silver, and wheat, and wine, and oil, and salt, for their encouragement; and to do therewith, as by the law of their God they should. Further, That they should not impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon the priests, levites, singers, porters, nethinims, or ministers (verse 20-22).

Sixthly, And now we come to the conclusion, to wit, the king's threat and command to do judgment on them that obeyed not the law of Ezra's God, and the king.

Considering what hath been said before, I conclude,

1. That this king imposed no law, no priest, no people upon these Jews; but left them wholly to their own law, their own ministers, and their own people: All which were the laws of God, the priests of God, the people of God, as to their building of their temple, and the worship of their God.

2. He forced not THIS people, no, not to their land, their temple, nor their worship, by his or their law; but left them free to their own mind, to do thereabout as they would.

3. He added not any law therefore of his own, either to prescribe worship, or to enforce it upon the Jews.

But you will say, upon what then was the threatening and the command to punish grounded? I answer, upon a supposed breach of two laws. He of the Jews, that in Jerusalem, rebelled against the law of the Lord, was in his own land left by the king to be punished by the same law, according to the penalties thereof: And he of the king's officers, that refused to do the king's laws, that refused to give the Jews such things as the king commanded, and that would yet exact such customs and tributes as the king forbade, should be punished by the king's laws, whether unto death or unto banishment, or unto confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

And if all kings would but give such liberty, to wit, that God's people should be directed in their temple-building, and temple worship, as they find it in the law of their God, without the additions of man's inventions: and if all kings did but lay the same penalty upon them of their pretended servants, that should hinder this work, which this brave king Artaxerxes laid upon his; how many of the enemies of the Jews, before this time, would have been hanged, banished, had their goods confiscated to the king, or their bodies shut up in prison! The which we desire not; we desire only that this letter of the king might be considered of, and we left to do as is there licensed and directed: And when we do the contrary, let us be punished by the law of God,

as we are his servants, and by the law of the king, as we are his subjects; and we shall never complain.

Only I cannot but observe how prettily it is done of some, who urge this text to colour their malice, ignorance and revenge withal, while they cry, The law of God, and The law of the king, when they will neither let, according to this scripture, the law of God, nor the law of the king take place: Not the law of God; for that they will not leave us to that, to square and govern ourselves in temple-work, and sacrificing by. Nor will they do the law of the king, which has made void, ipso facto , whatever law is against the word of God; but because themselves can do, they will force us to do so too. [2]

Before I leave this, I would touch once again upon the candour of this king Artaxerxes, who thus did: Because he gave this leave and license to the Jews, contrary (if he had any) to his own national worship; yea, and also to the impairing of his own incomes. Methinks he should have a religion of his own; and that, not that of the Jews, because he was a Gentile; and not, as we read of, proselyted to the Jews religion. Indeed, he spake reverently of the God of Israel, and of his temple-worship, and sacrifices, as did also several other kings; but that will not prove that he was adapted to that religion.

That his incomes were impaired, 'tis evident; because he took off toll, tribute, and custom from them, of whom mention is made before; nor is it, I think, to be believed, that he did exact it of their brethren. But we may see what the Lord can do; for thus to do, was put into the heart of the king by the God of heaven (verse 27). This therefore ariseth not of nature: no more did the kindness of Cyrus or Darius, of whom we read in the beginning of this history. As God therefore did put it into the hearts of the wicked kings of Babylon, to distress his church and people for their sins; so he put it into the hearts of the kings of the Medes and Persians, who were to be, in a sense, their saviours; to ease them of those distresses, to take off the yoke, and let them go free. Indeed, there was an Artaxerxes that put a stop to this work of God (chap 4), and he also was of the kings that had

destroyed the Babylonians; for it doth not follow, because God hath begun to deliver his people, that therefore their deliverance must be completed without stop or let. The protestants in France had more favour formerly, than from their prince they at this time have; yet I doubt not but that God will make that horn also one of them (in his time) that (indeed) shall hate the whore. As the sins of God's people brought them into captivity; so their sins can hold them there; yea, and when the time comes that grace must fetch them out, yet the oxen that draw this cart may stumble; and the way through roughness, may shake it sorely. However, heaven rules and overrules; and by one means and another, as the captivity of Israel did seem to linger, so it came out at the time appointed; in the way that best pleased God, most profited them, and that most confounded those that were their implacable enemies. This therefore should instruct those that yet dwell where the woman sitteth, to quietness and patience.

To quietness: For God rules, and has the dispose of things. Besides, it is a kind of arraignment of his wisdom, to be discontent at that which at present is upon the wheel. Above all, it displeases him that any should seek, or go about to revenge their own injuries, or to work their own deliverances; for that is the work of God, and he will do it by the kings: Nor is he weak, nor has he missed the opportunity; nor doth he sleep but waketh, and waiteth to be gracious.

This also should teach them to be patient, and put them upon bearing what at present they may undergo, patiently. Let them wait upon God; patiently let them wait upon men, and patiently let them bear the fruits of their own transgressions; which though they should be none other but a deferring of the mercy wished for, is enough to try, and crack, and break their patience, if a continual supply, and a daily increase thereof be not given by the God of heaven.

And before I do conclude this, let me also add one word more; to wit, to exhort them to look that they may see that which God at present may be doing among the Babylonians.

When God had his people into Babylon of old, he presented them with such rarities there, as he never shewed them in their own country. And is there nothing now to be seen by them that are not yet delivered from that oppression, that may give them occasion to stay themselves and wonder! What, is preservation nothing? What, is baffling and befooling the enemies of God's church nothing? In the Maryan days here at home, there was such sweet songs sung in the fire, such sweet notes answering them from prison, and such providences, that coals of burning fire still dropped here and there upon the heads of those that hated God; that it might, and doubtless did make those that did wisely consider of God's doings, to think God was yet near, with, and for, a despised and afflicted people.[3]

I conclude then, first with a word of counsel, and then with a word of caution.

First, Let us mend our pace in the way of reformation, that is the way to hasten the downfall of Antichrist, ministers need reforming, particular congregations need reforming, there are but few church-members but need reforming. This twenty years we have been degenerating, both as to principles, and as to practice; and have grown at last into an amazing likeness to the world, both as to religion and civil demeanour: Yea, I may say, so remiss have churches been in instructing those that they have received into fellowship with them; and so careless have the received been, of considering the grounds of their coming into churches, that most members, in some places, seem now to be at a loss; yea, and those churches stand with their fingers in their mouths, and are as if they would not, durst not, or could not help it.

My Second is, A word of caution.

1. Take heed of over-looking, or of shutting your eyes upon your own guilt: 'He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper.' It is incident to some men, when they find repentance is far from them, to shut their

eyes upon their own guilt, and to please themselves with such notions of deliverance from present troubles, as will stand with that course of sin which is got into their families, persons, and professions, and with a state of impenitence: But I advise you to take heed of this.

2. Take heed in laying the cause of your troubles in the badness of the temper of governors. I speak not now with reflection upon any, excepting those concerned in this caution: God is the chief, and has the hearts of all, even of the worst of men, in his hand. Good tempered men have sometimes brought trouble; and bad tempered men have sometimes brought enlargement to the churches of God: Saul brought enlargement (1 Sam 14:28). David brought trouble (2 Sam 12:10). Ahab brought enlargement (1 Kings 21:29). Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah did both sometimes bring trouble (2 Chron 19:2; 20:35; 32:25). Therefore, the good or bad tempers of men sway nothing with God in this matter; they are the sins or repentances of his people, that make the church either happy or miserable upon earth.

Take heed, I say therefore, of laying of the trouble of the church of God at the doors of governors; especially at the doors of kings, who seldom trouble churches of their own inclinations: (I say, seldom; for some have done so, as Pharaoh:) But I say, lay not the cause of your trouble there; for oftentimes they see with other men's eyes, hear with other men's ears, and act and do by the judgments of others: (Thus did Saul, when he killed the priests of the Lord (1 Sam 22:18); and thus did Darius, when he cast Daniel into the lions' den (Dan 6:7). But rather labour to see the true cause of trouble, which is sin; and to attain to a fitness to be delivered out thence, and that is by repentance, and amendment of life. If any object, That God oftentimes delivers his of mere grace: I answer, That's no thanks to them; besides, we must mind our duty. Further, When God comes to save his people, he can cut off such objectors, if they be impenitent, as the sinners of his people; and can save his church, without letting of them be sharers in that salvation: So he served many in the

wilderness; and 'tis to be feared, so he will serve many at the downfall of Antichrist.

I shall say no more, but to testify my loyalty to my king, my love to my brethren, and service for my country, has been the cause of this my present scribble. Farewell.

Thine in the Lord,

J. BUNYAN.

OF ANTICHRIST.

Antichrist is the adversary of Christ; an adversary really , a friend pretendedly : So then, Antichrist is one that is against Christ; one that is for Christ, and one that is contrary to him: (And this is that mystery of iniquity (2 Thess 2:7). Against him in deed ; for him in word , and contrary to him in practice . Antichrist is so proud as to go before Christ; so humble as to pretend to come after him, and so audacious as to say that himself is he . Antichrist will cry up Christ; Antichrist will cry down Christ: Antichrist will proclaim that himself is one above Christ. Antichrist is the man of sin , the son of perdition; a beast, [that] hath two horns like a lamb, but speaks as a dragon (Rev 13:11).

Christ is the Son of God; Antichrist is the son of Hell.

Christ is holy, meek, and forbearing: Antichrist is wicked, outrageous, and exacting.

Christ seeketh the good of the soul: Antichrist seeks his own avarice

and revenge.

Christ is content to rule by his word: Antichrist saith, The word is not sufficient.

Christ preferreth his Father's will above heaven and earth: Antichrist preferreth himself and his traditions above all that is written, or that is called God, or worshiped.

Christ has given us such laws and rules as are helpful and healthful to the soul: Antichrist seeketh to abuse those rules to our hurt and destruction.

Antichrist may be considered either more particularly, or more generally. 1. More particularly: And so there are many Antichrists (1 John 2:18). 2. More generally: And so the many maketh but one great Antichrist, one man of sin, one enemy, one great whore, one son of perdition (2 Thess 2:3; Rev 19:2).

Again, Antichrist must be distinguished, with respect to his more internal and external parts; and so there is the spirit, soul, or life (1 John 4:3); and also the body and flesh of Antichrist (2 Thess 2:7). The spirit, or soul, or life of Antichrist, is that spirit of error, that wicked, that mystery of iniquity, that under colour and pretence of verity, draweth men from truth to falsehood. The body or flesh of Antichrist, is that heap of men, that assembly of the wicked, that synagogue of Satan that is acted and governed by that spirit. But God will destroy both soul and body; He 'shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: [or from the soul, even to the flesh] and they shall be [both soul and body] as when a standard-bearer fainteth' (Isa 10:18).

A PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION OF ANTICHRIST.

Antichrist therefore is a mystical man, so made, or begotten of the devil, and sent into the world, himself being the chief and highest of

him. Three things therefore go to the making up of Antichrist, the head, body, and soul. The devil he is the head; the synagogue of Satan, that is the body; that wicked spirit of iniquity, that is the soul of Antichrist. Christ then is the head of his church; the devil is the head of Antichrist; the elect are the body of Christ; the reprobate professors are the body of Antichrist; the Holy Ghost is the spirit of life that actuateth Christ's body; that wicked spirit of iniquity, is that which actuateth the body of Antichrist. Thus therefore are the two great mighties set forth before us, who are the heads of those two bodies; and thus are these two bodies set before us, who are to be actuated by these two spirits.

The reason why Christ came into the world, was, That he might destroy all the works of the head of Antichrist, and they which he endeavoureth to complete by his wicked spirit working in his body (1 John 3:8). And the reason why Antichrist came into the world, was, That the church, which is the body of Christ, might be tried, and made white by suffering under his tyranny, and by bearing witness against his falsehoods. For, for the trial of the faithful, and for the punishment of the world, Antichrist was admitted to come: But when he came, he first appeared there where one would have thought there had been no place nor corner for his reception.

WHERE ANTICHRIST FIRST APPEARED.

The devil then, made use of the church of God to midwife this monster into the world, as the Apostle plainly shews, there he first sat, shewing himself (2 Thess 2:4). Here therefore was his first appearance, even in the church of God: Not that the church of God did willingly admit him there to sit as such ; he had covered his cloven foot; he had plumbs in his dragon's mouth, and so came in by flatteries; promising to do for Christ and his church, that which he never meant to perform. For he shewed himself that he was God, and in appearance, set his heart to do as the heart of God (Eze 28:2-6). And who could have found in their hearts to shut the door upon such an one? True, he came, when he came thither, out of the bottomless-

pit; but there came such a smoke out thence with him, and that smoke so darkened the light of the sun, of the moon, of the stars, and of the day, that had they [the church] been upon their watch, as they were not, they could not have perceived him from another man. Besides, there came with him so many locusts to usher him into the house of God (Rev 9:2,3), and they so suited the flesh and reason of the godly of that day, that with good words and fair speeches, by their crafty and cunning sleights, whereby they lay in wait to deceive, they quite got him in, and set him up, and made him a great one, even the chief, before they were aware. Further, He quickly got him a beast to ride on, far, for sumptuous glory, beyond (though as to nature, as assish a creature as) that on which Baalam was wont to ride: And by this exaltation he became not only more stately, but the horns of the beast would push for him (Rev 17:3-6).

Again, This man of sin, when he came into the world, had the art of metamorphosing, and could change himself, both in form and shape, into the likeness of a beast, a man, or woman; and the kings of the earth, with the inhabitants of the world, began then to love such women dearly; wherefore they went to her into the bed of love, and defiled themselves with the filthiness of her fornications, gave her their troth, and became her husbands, and beloved sons; took up helmet and shield, and stood to defend her; yea, though Christ himself, and some of the chief of his followers, cried out of her shame, and of the evil of their doings; yet would she be audacious.

Also this woman had now arrayed herself in flesh-taking ornaments, of the colour of purple and scarlet, and was decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, after the manner or attire of harlots. Thus came she to them, and lay in their bosoms, and gave them out of her golden cup of the wine of her fornication; of the which they bibbed till they were drunken; and then, in requital, they also gave her of such liquors as they could, to wit, to drink of the blood of saints, and of martyrs of Jesus, till she, like these beasts, was drunken also.

Now when they were drunken, they did as drunkards do, revel, roar, and belch out their own shame, in the sight of them that were sober : Wherefore they cried out upon such doings, and chose rather to die, than to live with such company. And so 'tis still with them where she yet sitteth, and so will be till she shall fall into the hands of the strong Lord, who will judge her according to her ways. And that she must do, as is implied by this, That her fornications are in a cup; she has therefore but her cup to be drank out; wherefore when it is empty, then, whether she will or no, the Lord God will call her to such a reckoning, that all the clothes on her back, with what pearls and jewels she has, shall not be able to pay the shot.

OF THE RUIN OF ANTICHRIST.

Antichrist, as was said, had a time to come into the world, and so must have a time to go out again: For although he saith that he is a God, yet must he be subject to the will of God, and must go as well as come according to that will. Nor can all the fallen angels, with all the members and limbs of Antichrist, cause that this their brat should abide so much as one day longer than our God's prefixed time. And this the head of Antichrist understandeth very well: Wherefore the Holy Ghost saith, 'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time' (Rev 12:12).

Besides, the text says plainly, The Lord shall destroy him (2 Thess 2:8), and that he goeth into perdition (Rev 17:11; 19:26). Also the church of God believes it, and the limbs of Antichrist fear it.

Now when, or as his time shall come to be destroyed, so he shall be made a hand of; and that with such instruments and weapons of God's indignation, as best shall be suited to his several parts.

Such weapons as are best for the destroying of his soul , shall be used

for the destroying of it; and such weapons as are best for the destroying of his body, shall be made use of for the destroying of it.

THE SOUL OF IT DESTROYED, AND HOW.

And therefore, as to his soul , or that spirit of error that governs him in all his works of mischief; this must be consumed by the spirit of Christ's mouth, and be destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

This we have in the words of Paul: 'For [saith he] the mystery of iniquity [the spirit of Antichrist] doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let , until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming' (2 Thess 2:7,8). The Apostle here treateth of Antichrist, with reference to his more subtil and spiritual part, since that indeed is the chiefest of Antichrist: Wherefore he calls it that wicked; not, that wicked one, as referring to the whole; but that wicked , as referring to the mystery or spirit of iniquity , the heart and soul of Antichrist; and tells us, that the Lord shall 'consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy him with the brightness of his coming.'

Now, by the spirit of his mouth , I understand his holy word , which is called 'The word and breath of his lips' (Isa 11:4). And also, 'The sword of his mouth' (Rev 2:16). By 'the brightness of his coming,' I also understand, not only his presence, but an increase of light by his presence; not only to help Christians to begin to bear witness against some parts and pieces of the errors of Antichrist, but until the whole is rooted out of the world. By this, I say, must the soul, spirit, or life of Antichrist be taken away. But how shall Christ by this rod, sword, or spirit of his mouth, consume this wicked, this mystery of iniquity? Not by himself immediately, but by his spirit and word in his church; the which he will use, and so manage in this work, that they shall not rest till he by them has brought this beast to his grave. This beast is compared to the wild boar, and the beast that comes out of the wood to devour the church of God, (as we read in the book of Psalms:

80:13) But Christ, with the dogs that eat the crumbs of his table, will so hunt and scour him about, that albeit he may let out some of their bowels with the tushes of his chaps, yet they will not let him alone till they have his life: For the church shall single him out from all beasts, and so follow him with cries, and pinch him with their voices, that he alone shall perish by their means.[4] Thus shall Christ consume and wear him out by the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming

Hence you find again, That this wicked , is to melt and consume away as grease: For the Lord Jesus shall consume him, and cause him to melt away; not all at once, but now this part, and then that; now his soul, and after that his body , even until soul and body are both destroyed.

And that you may be convinced of the truth of this thing, do but look back and compare Antichrist four or five hundred years ago, with Antichrist as he is now, and you shall see what work the Lord Jesus has begun to make with him, even with the spirit and soul, and life of Antichrist; both in confounding and blasting of it by this spirit of his mouth, as also by forcing of it to dishonourable retreats, and by making of it give up to him, as the conqueror, not only some of his superstitious and diabolical rites and ceremonies, to be destroyed, but many a goodly truth, which this vile one had taken from his church, to be renewed to them: Nay, further, he hath also already began to take from him both kingdoms and countries, though as to some not so absolutely as he shall do by and by. And in the meantime, this is the plague wherewith the Lord shall plague or smite the people that have fought against Jerusalem: 'Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth' (Zech 14:12). And how has this long ago been fulfilled here in England! as also in Scotland, Holland, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, and other places! (Isa 17:4-6). Nor hath this spirit of Antichrist, with all his art and artificers, been able to reduce to Antichrist again, those people, nations, or parts of

nations, that by the spirit of Christ's mouth, and 'the brightness of his coming,' have been made to forsake him, and to turn from him to Christ: The reason is, for that the Lord has not retreated, but is still going on in the spirit of his mouth, and his brightness, to make that conquest over him that is determined, in the way that is determined: Of which more shall be spoken afterward; for the path-way that he goeth, is as the shining light, which shines more and more unto noon. True, the fogs of Antichrist, and the smoke that came with him out of the bottomless- pit, has darkened and eclipsed the glorious light of the gospel: But you know, in eclipses, when they are on the recovering hand, all the creatures upon the face of the earth cannot put a stop to that course, until the sun or the moon have recovered their glory. And thus it shall be now, the Lord is returned to visit the earth, and his people with his primitive lustre; he will not go back, nor slack his hand, until he has recovered what Antichrist has darkened of his. 'The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart: in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly' (Jer 23:20). Therefore he saith again, 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun [was in her eclipse;] and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound,' &c. as the verse before has it: 'In the day when the towers fall.' For (as was said before) as to the recovery of the light of the gospel from under antichristian mists, and fogs of darkness; Christ will do that, not by might nor power, but by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming: Wherefore the soul of Antichrist, or that spirit of wickedness by which this gospel-light hath been diminished, must be consumed and destroyed by that spirit also. Nor can any other way of conquest over that be thorough, and lasting; because that spirit can by no other means be slain. The body of Antichrist may be destroyed by other instruments, but spirits cannot be killed but by spirits. The temporal sword then may kill the body, but after that it hath no more that it can do, wherefore, the other must be dealt with by another kind of weapon: And here is one sufficient, the spirit against the spirit; the spirit and face of Christ, against the spirit, that wicked, of

Antichrist. And by this spirit of Christ's mouth, all the spirit that is in all the trinkets and wash of Antichrist shall also be destroyed; so that those trinkets, those rites, ceremonies, and ordinances of this man of sin, shall be left as carrion upon the face of the earth, and shall stink in the noses of men, as doth the corrupted blood of a dead man.

THE ORDINANCES OF ANTICHRIST.

Now therefore will the beauty of Antichrist fade like a flower, and fall as doth a leaf when the sap of the tree has left it; or as the beauty departeth from the body, when the soul, or life, or spirit is gone forth. And as the body cannot be but unpleasant and unsavoury when under such a state; so the body of Antichrist will be to beholders, when the Lord has slain the spirit thereof. It is the spirit of Antichrist that puts life into the body; and that puts lustre into the ordinances of Antichrist, as the light of the sun, and of the moon, and of the stars, do put lustre upon the things of this visible world: Wherefore, when this spirit, and soul, and life of Antichrist is slain, then it will be with him as 'twould be with the world, had it no light of the sun, of the moon, or of the stars.

And hence, as the loss of our natural life is compared to the loss of these lights (Eccl 12:2); so the loss of the life, soul and spirit of Antichrist is compared to these things also. For, the soul of Antichrist is compared to a heaven; and her ordinances and rites, to the ordinances of heaven: wherefore, when the Lord comes to fight against her with the spirit of his mouth, he saith, 'The stars of heaven [shall be darkened], and the constellations thereof shall not give their light' (Isa 13:10); because he will slay that spirit of Antichrist that is in them (Isa 34; Rev 6:13,14).

Take things therefore more distinctly, thus: The antichristians' spirit, is the heaven of antichristians; their sun, moon and stars, are their superstitious ordinances; their earth is the body or flesh of Antichrist, otherwise called the church and synagogue of Satan. Now as the earth cannot live, and be desirable, without the influences of

the spirit of the heavens; so neither can Antichrist live, when the Lord shall darken the light of his heaven, and shall slay the spirit thereof. Hence you read, as I touched before, that when his heaven shall be rolled together as a scroll, 'all the host thereof,' unto which I compare the ordinances of Antichrist, 'shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree' (Isa 34:4). But how, or why doth the leaf, or the fig fall from the tree? Why, because the spirit, or sap of the tree, is gone from them.

Therefore, the first and chief proceeding of the Lord with the man of sin, is to slay his soul, that his body may also be consumed: And when the spirit of Antichrist shall be made to leave both the body and ordinances of Antichrist, 'twill be easy to deal both with the one and the other. And first, for the ordinances of Antichrist; because the spirit of error is in them, as well as in the body itself. When that spirit, as I said, has left them, they will of themselves even moulder away, and not be: As we have seen by experience here in England, as others also have seen in other countries. For as concerning his masses, prayers for the dead, images, pilgrimages, monkish vows, sinful fasts, and the beastly single life of their priests, though when the spirit of Antichrist was in them, they did bear some sway in the world; yet now, of what esteem are they? or who has reverence for them? They are now blown together under hedges, as the dry leaves, for the mice and frogs to harbour in: yea, the locusts too, camp in the hedges among the dry leaves, in the cold day, and 'when the sun ariseth they flee away' (Nahum 3:15-17). When 'tis a cold day for them in a nation, then they lurk in the hedges, though their ordinances lie there, as leaves that are dry, and fallen down from the tree; but when the sun ariseth, and waxeth warm, they abide not, but betake them to their wings, and fly away. But one would think that fallen leaves should have no great nourishment in them: True, if you have respect to men, but with vermin any thing will do: We speak then of them with reference to men, not with respect to the very members of Antichrist: And I say, as to them, when the spirit of Antichrist is gone out of these ordinances, they will be with them as dry leaves that no body seeketh after. The ordinances therefore of

Antichrist are not able to bear up themselves in the world, as the ordinances of the Lord Jesus are, for even the ordinances of Christ, where the spirit of Christ is not, are yet in some esteem with men: But THESE, when the spirit of delusion has left them, are abhorred, both skin and bones: For in themselves they are without any sense, or rationality (Eze 20:25,26); yea, they look as parts of things which are used to conjure up devils with: These were prefigured by the ordinances that were NOT good, and by the judgments whereby one should not live . For what is there, or can there be of the least dram of truth or profit in the things that are without the word, that being the only stamp by which one is distinguished from the other? I say, What is there in any of them, to the man whose eyes are open, but delusion and deceit! Wherefore, as has been expressed already, when the Lord Christ, by the spirit of his mouth, &c. shall drive this mystery of iniquity from them, and strip them of that spirit of delusion that now by its craft puts bewitching excellency upon them, they will of themselves become such stinking rivers, ponds and pools, that flesh and blood will loathe to drink of them; yea, as it was with the ponds and pools of Egypt, they will be fit for nought but to breed and hatch up frogs in.

Wherefore these ordinances shall be rejected, not one of them shall find favour with men on earth; when the Lord, 'by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming,' shall have separated their spirit from them.

Now, by ordinances of Antichrist, I do not intend things that only respect matters of worship in Antichrist's kingdom, but those civil laws that impose and enforce them also; yea, that enforce THAT worship with pains and penalties, as in the Spanish inquisition: For these must, as the other, be overthrown by Christ, by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming: For these laws, as the other, took their being, and have their soul and life by the spirit of Antichrist; yea, as long as there is life in them, 'tis because the spirit of that man of sin yet remaineth in them. Wherefore, these are also great ordinances, though of another nature than those mentioned

before: Great, I say, are they; forasmuch as neither the church of Antichrist, nor his instruments of worship, can either live or stand without them. Wherefore, it was admitted to the image of the beast, not only to speak, but to cause. To speak out his laws of worship, 'and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed' (Rev 13:15). And mark, This is because that the life that was communicated to the image of the beast, was by him also communicated to his word and authority. Wherefore, these laws must not be separated from those in which the spirit of Antichrist is; yea, they are the very pillars and sinews by which antichristianism remains: And were these dis-spirited, the whole building would quickly become a ruinous heap.

What could the king of Babylon's golden image have done, had it not been for the burning fiery furnace that stood within view of the worshippers? (Dan 3). Yea, what could that horrible command, to pray, for thirty days, to neither God nor man, but to the king, have done, had it not been for the dark den, and the roaring lions there in readiness to devour those that disobeyed it? (Dan 6). As therefore the burning fiery furnace, and the den of lions, were the support of the horrible religion of the Babylonians of old; so popish edicts are the support of the religion of Antichrist now; and as long as there is spirit, that is, authority, in them, they are like to those now mentioned; the spirit of such laws is that that makes them dreadful: For as the furnace would have been next to nothing, if void of fire; and the den as little frightful, if destitute of lions; so these laws will be as insignificant, when Christ has slain that spirit that is in them; that spirit that causes that as many as will not worship the image of the beast, should be killed.

Nor can any sword reach that life of Antichrist that is in these, but the sword of Christ's mouth: Therefore, as all the religious rites and ceremonies of Antichrist are overthrown by his spirit working in his, as Christians; so those antichristian laws will have their soul and their life taken from them also by this spirit of his mouth working in some of his, as magistrates, and no otherwise; for before kings and

princes, &c. come to be enlightened about the evils that are in such edicts, by the spirit of the living God, they will let this image of the beast both speak and cause, &c. But when they shall see, they will say, let it be decreed that this prop of Antichrist be taken down. It was decreed by Darius, that they that prayed, for thirty days, to any God but him, should be cast into the den of lions (Dan 6:9); but this was before he saw; but when he came to see, then he decreed again; a decree that quite took away the power of that which he had decreed before (Dan 6:26).

Nor are we without instances of this kind nearer home: who is now afraid of the act for burning of those that papists call heretics, since by the king and parliament, as by the finger of God, the life and soul is taken out of it. I bring this to shew you, that as there is life in wicked antichristian penal laws, as well as in those that are superstitiously religious; so the life of these, of all these, must be destroyed by the same spirit working in those that are Christ's, though in a diverse way.

Nor will the life of these sinews, as I have called them, be taken away; but as God shall enlighten men to see the abominable filthiness of that which is antichristian worship: as would easily be made appear, if some that dwell in those countries where the beast and his image have been worshiped, would but take the pains to inquire into antiquity about it. As the noble king, king Henry VIII did cast down the antichristian worship; so he cast down the laws that held it up: so also did the good king Edward his son. The brave queen, queen Elizabeth also, the sister to king Edward, hath left of things of this nature, to her lasting fame behind her. And if one such law of Antichrist hath escaped the hand of one, another hath taken it, and done that execution on it that their zeal and piety prompted them to.

There is yet another thing that the spirit of Antichrist is immediately concerned in; and that is, the antichristian names of the men that worship the beast: the names, I mean, that the Antichrist hath baptized them into: for those names are breathed upon them by the

very spirit of Antichrist; and are such as are absolutely names of blasphemy, or such as do closely border thereupon; some such as Elihu durst not for his life give unto men, only he calls them 'flattering titles' (Job 32:21,22). Now therefore, of the danger (though not of the names themselves) you read sufficiently in the scripture; and perhaps the Holy Ghost has contented himself with giving of items that are general, that men might, as to them, be the more cautious of what names they give one to another (Rev 17:5); but this is clear, they are worn by men of spiritual employ: but since they are but mentioned, and are not distinctly nominated, how should we know which are they, and which not? Verily, by searching the word of God, and by seeing by that what names we are allowed to give unto men, with reference to their offices, dignities, and places: for God has a quarrel with the names, as well as with the persons that wear them; and when his Son shall down with Antichrist, he will slay seven thousand names of men, as well as the persons of the worshippers of the beast (Rev 11:13).

But there are things, as well as men (Job 22:28); and these also have been baptized into those names by the very spirit of Antichrist, and must be destroyed by Christ, the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming: 'The idols he shall utterly abolish' (Isa 2:18); and there are men that are idols as well as things (Zech 11:17): wherefore, let men have a care, as to shun the worship of idols, so that they bare not the name, or stand in the place of one: and the reason of this caution is, because name and thing are both abominable unto God.

To give you the number of these names that the spirit of Antichrist has baptized men into, (besides the things that do also wear such blasphemies upon them,) would be a task too great for me, and too wearisome for you. It shall satisfy then, that I give you notice that there are such things and men and names; and that I put you upon search to find out what they be. But whatsoever of the spirit, or soul, or life of Antichrist is in these names, men, or things, must be consumed by Christ, by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of

his coming.[5]

Another thing that I would touch upon is this; to wit, The lying legends, and false miracles that Antichrist cries up: These , by the means of which such as dwell upon the earth are deceived, and made to adore and worship the beast: these have their life and soul (as had those mentioned before) from the spirit of wickedness; and must be destroyed as they, namely, by Christ, the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming: for these are not of the body of Antichrist, but rather such implements, or whatever you will call them, by which the spirit and soul of Antichrist is conveyed into, and kept also alive in the body of Antichrist, which is the church and synagogue of Satan; you may call them organs and means by which that wicked worketh in the mysteries of iniquity, for the begetting of, and maintaining a lying and false belief of the religion of the beast: nor can it be thought, but that, as the antichristian statist[6] of Antichrist, mentioned before, do put a dread and fear upon men that are worshippers of the beast, and his image, to the holding of them still to his service; so these legends and miracles do, on the other hand, abridge and bind their consciences to that worship; but all because of that spirit of Antichrist that is in them.[7]

So then, here is the spirit of Antichrist diffusing itself into all the things pertaining to the kingdom of the beast; for it dwells in the body of Antichrist; it dwells in the matters and things of worship of Antichrist; it dwells in the titles and names that are antichristian; and it dwells in the laws, legends and miracles of Antichrist. And as it is the spirit of Antichrist, so it must be destroyed; not by sword, nor by bow, but by Christ, as fighting against it with the spirit of his mouth, and as conquering of it by the brightness of his coming.

THE BODY OF ANTICHRIST DESTROYED, AND HOW.

We come now to discourse of the body or flesh of Antichrist, and of the destruction of that; for that must be destroyed also. Now the body of Antichrist, is that church or synagogue in which the spirit of

Antichrist dwells, or unto which the spirit of Antichrist is become a soul and life.

And this is to be destroyed, either as it is a body mystical, or under the more gross consideration.

First , As it is a body mystical, and so it is to be destroyed absolutely.

Secondly , As it is to be considered more grossly, and so it is to be destroyed conditionally. That is, if repentance doth not save the men that have gone to the making up of this body, and to the rejoicing in it.

As she is a body mystical, so she is to be destroyed the same way that the things of Antichrist, of which we discoursed before, were to be destroyed; to wit, by Christ, the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming.

This then is the sum, as to this: That the church of Antichrist, as a church, shall be destroyed by the word and spirit of Christ . Nor can anything in heaven prevent it, because the strong God has decreed it: 'and a mighty angel took up a stone, like a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all' (Rev 18:21). This city, Babylon, is here sometimes considered in the whole , and sometimes as to the parts of it; but always, whether in whole, or in part, as some , or else as the whole of the antichristian church; and as such, it must not be destroyed, but by the means aforesaid. By which means her witchcrafts, spiritual whoredoms, spiritual murders, thefts, and blasphemies, shall be so detected and made manifest, so laid open, and so discovered, that the nations shall abhor her, flee from her, and buy her merchandise no more (Rev 18:11). Hence her tempting things rot, and moulder away; for these will not keep, they are things not lasting, but that perish in the using: what then will they do when they are laid by? Therefore it follows, 'All things which were [thy] dainty and goodly [ones] are departed

from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all' (Rev 18:14). Now, if when she had things to trade with, her dealers left her; how shall she think of a trade, when she has nothing to traffic with? Her things are slain, and stink already, by the weapons that are made mention of before; what then will her carcase do? It follows then, that as to her church- state, she must of necessity tumble: wherefore, from Revelation 18:22 to 24, you have the manner of her total ruin as a church, and something of the cause thereof.

But as she must, with reference to her body, be considered mystically as a church; so also she must be considered as a body of men, (this is that which I called more grossly ,) and as such, against whom the wrath of God will burn, and against whom, if repentance prevent not, he will have indignation for ever. These, I saw are them; to wit, as they are the body of the people, that have been seduced by this spirit of Antichrist, that have been made use of to do all the mischiefs that have been done both to true religion, and to the professors of it, for this many hundred years, wherefore these must not escape. Wherefore you find, that after Antichrist, as to the spirit and mystery of Antichrist, is slain, that the body of Antichrist, or the heap of people that became her vassals, come next to be dealt withal.

Therefore, the angel that standeth in the sun, makes a proclamation to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, to gather themselves, and to come unto the supper of the great God; that they may eat the flesh of the several sorts of the men that have been the lovers, the countenancers, the upholders and defenders of her antichristian state, worship, and falsehoods (Rev 19:17,18): for abundance of their hearts shall be hardened, and made yet more obdurate, that they may be destroyed for the wickedness that they have done.

Wherefore, you find (as did the enemies of the church of old,) that they might revenge themselves for the loss of their idol, or antichristian state, begin a new war with the king, whose name is the Lord of hosts: 'And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on

the horse, and against his army' (Rev 19:19).

Their implacable malice remained when their church-state was gone; wherefore they will now at last make another attempt upon the men that had been the instruments in Christ's hand to torment them that dwelt on the earth; of which more hereafter.

Now therefore is the last stroke of the batter,[8] with reference to the destroying of the body of Antichrist; only the head of this monster remains, and that is SATAN himself: wherefore, the next news that we hear, is, that he is taken also: 'And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. and he laid hold on the Dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled,' &c. (Rev 20:1-3).

BRAVE DAYS WHEN ANTICHRIST IS DEAD.

Now therefore there will be nothing of Antichrist to be seen throughout the nations, but ruinous heaps, and desolate places. It is said of the army of the man of sin, when he came into the land of God's people, though it was before him 'as the garden of Eden,' yet behind him 'twould be as 'a desolate wilderness' (Joel 2:3); such ruins would he make of the flock of God, and of all their ordinances, and heavenly dainties. But when the days that I have spoken of, shall come, it will be to him a time of retaliation: for it shall then be done unto Antichrist, as he hath done to the church of God: As he hath made women childless, so shall he be made childless; as he has made Zion sit upon the ground, so now must this wicked one come down and sit in the dust; yea, as he has made many churches desolations, so now shall he be also made a desolation. Wherefore, whoso will find his body, they must look for it in the side of the pit's mouth; and whoso will find his friends and companions, they must look for them there likewise. 'They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with

all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit, he is put in the midst of them that be slain. There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: There is Edom, her kind, and all her princes, &c. There be the princes of the north, all of them, which with their might' are laid with them that are 'slain by the sword, and bare their shame with them that go down to the pit' (Eze 32:25-30). For 'as Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth' (Jer 51:49). The margin reads it thus: Both Babylon is to fall, O ye slain of Israel! And with Babylon the slain of all the earth. Now then she is gone down, when all these things shall be fulfilled; and what remains now, but to talk of her, as folk used to do of them that are dead: for the day will come that the church of God shall have no more of Antichrist, Babylon, or the mother of harlots, than only the remembrance of her; to wit, that there was such an enemy of God in the world; that there was such a superstitious, idolatrous, bloody people in the world. Wherefore the people that shall be born, that shall live to serve God in these happy days, they shall see Antichrist only in its ruins; they shall, like the sparrows, the little robins, and the wren, sit and sing, and chirrup one to another, while their eyes behold this dead hawk.

'Here [shall they say] did once the lion dwell; and there was once a dragon inhabited: here did they live that were the murderers of the saints; and there another, that did used to set his throat against the heavens; but now in the places where these ravenous creatures lay, grows grass, with reeds and rushes (Isa 35:7), [or else, now their habitation is cursed, nettles grow, and so do thorns and brambles, where their palaces were wont to be]. And as no good was with them while they lived, so their name stinketh now they are dead: yea, as they wrought mischiefs, and lived like the wild beasts when they enjoyed their abundance; so now the wild beasts of the desert, yea, they of the desert, shall meet with the wild beasts of the island: and the satyr shall cry to his fellows. Their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, even as devils and wicked spirits do haunt the desolate

houses of the wicked, when they are dead' (Isa 34). 'And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there: neither shall the shepherds make their folds there' (Isa 13:19,20). A while after this, as was hinted before, the Christians will begin with detestation to ask what Antichrist was? Where Antichrist dwelt? Who were his members? And, What he did in the world? and it shall be answered by them that shall have skill to consider his features by the word, by way of taunt and scorn, 'Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch; and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcase trodden under feet' (Isa 14:16-19).

There will be a strange alteration when Antichrist is dead, and that both in the church, and in the world. The church and the members of it then, shall wear the name of their God in their foreheads; that is, they shall be bold in the profession of their king, and their God; yea, it shall be their glory to be godly; and carnal men shall praise them for it: the praise of the whole earth shall the church of God be in those days.

Then there shall no more be a Canaanite in the house of the Lord: no lion shall be there; the unclean shall no more tread in the paths of God's people, but the ransomed of the Lord shall walk there.

Glory that has not been seen nor heard of by the people that used to walk in sackcloth, shall now be set in the land of the living. For as it was said of Christ, with reference to his day; so it shall be said of saints, with reference to this day: many kings and righteous men have desired to see the things that will be seen then, and shall not see

them: but without all doubt, the men that shall be born at this time, will consider that these glories, and liberties, and privileges of theirs, cost the people that walked in the king of Babylon's fiery furnace, or that suffered the trials, troubles and tyranny of the antichristian generation, more groans and hearty wishes, than they did them that shall enjoy them. Thus then it will go; the afflicted prayed for them, and the possessors bless God for the enjoyment of them.

Oh! now shall the church walk in the light of the Lord, and sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make him afraid!

'For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for servants and handmaids: And they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city, (or the exactress of gold) ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no seller is come up against us' (Isa 14:1-8).

Also the world will now be (as it were) another thing than it was in the days of Antichrist: now will kings, and princes, and nobles, and the whole commonality be rid of that servitude and bondage which in former times (when they used to carry Bell and the dragon upon their shoulders) they were subjected to. They were then a burden to

them, but now they are at ease. 'Tis with the world, that are the slaves of Antichrist now, as it is with them that are slaves and captives to a whore: they must come when she calls, run when she bids, fight with and beat them that she saith miscall her, and spend what they can get by labour or fraud upon her, or she will be no more their whore, and they shall be no more her bosom ones. But now! Now it will be otherwise! Now they will have no whore to please! Now they will have none to put them upon persecuting of the saints! Now they shall not be made, as before, guilty of the blood of those against whom this gentleman shall take a pet! Now the world shall return and discern between the righteous and the wicked; yea, they shall cleave to, and countenance the people of God, being persuaded, as Laban was of Jacob, that the Lord will bless them for his people's sakes: for at this day, 'the remnant of Jacob shall be [among the Gentiles] in the midst of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men' (Micah 5:7).

Also in these days men shall come flocking into the house of God, both kings and princes, and nobles, and the common people, as the doves do to their windows: and for that cause it is spoken to the church, with reference to the latter days, saying, 'Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited' (Isa 54:2,3).

Now will be broken up those prophecies and promises that to this day lie as under lock and key, and that cannot be opened until they be fulfilled. Now will the Spirit of God be poured forth abundantly; and our rivers shall be in high places, that is, shall break forth from the hearts of great ones; yea, then shall our waters be made deep: 'And I will cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord God' (Eze 32:14). Then shall the differences, the divisions and debates that are among the godly, cease: for men 'shall see eye to eye, when the Lord

shall bring again Zion' (Isa 52:8): yea, the watchmen of God's people shall do so; for it is for want of light in them , that the lambs have so butted one another.

Now the church of God shall read with great plainness the depths of providence, and the turnings and windings of all God's dark and intricate dispensations, through which she hath waded in the cloudy and dark day: now, I say, they shall see there was an harmony in them; and that if one of them had been wanting, the work and way of her deliverance could not have been so full of the wisdom, and justice, and goodness of God; Wherefore now will that song be sung with clearer notes than ever: 'Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of Saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest' (Rev 15:3,4). And again, 'For true and righteous are his judgments: For he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand' (Rev 19:2).

OF THE MANNER OF THE RUIN OF ANTICHRIST.

What Antichrist is, I have told you; and that as to his soul and body. I have also told you where, or in what things the spirit and life of Antichrist lieth, and how he shall reign for a time. I have moreover shewed you that he shall be destroyed, and by what, and that with reference both to his soul and body. Wherefore, waving other things, I shall here only present you with a few short hints concerning the manner of his downfall.

There is the downfall , the time of the downfall, and the manner of the downfall of Antichrist.

The manner of the downfall of Antichrist, may be considered, either with respect to the suddenness, unexpectedness, terribleness , or strangeness thereof. It may also be considered with respect to the way of God's procedure with her, as to the gradualness thereof. As to the suddenness thereof, 'tis said to be in an hour . It is also to be, when by her unexpected ; for then she saith, 'I sit a queen' (Rev 18:7,8). For the terribleness of it, The nations shall shake at the sound of her fall (Eze 31:16,17). And for the strangeness thereof, it shall be to the wonder of the world (Isa 14:12), it will be as when God overthrew Sodom.

But I shall not enlarge upon this method in my discourse, but shall shew you the manner of the ruin of Antichrist, with respect to the gradualness thereof (Eze 16:36-43; Rev 18:8; Isa 47:9).

Antichrist then shall be brought to ruin gradually; that is, by degrees: A part after a part; here a fenced city, and there a high tower, even until she is made to lie even with the ground. And yet all shall be within the compass of God's days, hours, or moments; for within the compass of these limited times Antichrist shall be destroyed.[9]

Now, (as I said) He, she, Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, Antichrist, shall be destroyed, not all at once, after the way of our counting of time; but by step after step, piece after piece. And perhaps there may be in the words now following, something that signifies this: They shall 'shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end' (Jer 51:31). This is also shewed by the vessels in which is contained the wrath of God for her, together with the manner of pouring of it out. The vessels in which it is contained are called VIALS; Now a vial is that which letteth out what is contained in it by degrees, and not all at once.

There are also two things to be considered, as to the manner of its being poured out of them. The first respecteth the nature of the vial. The other, the order of the angels that poured forth this wrath.

For the First: The vial, as it letteth out what is in it by degrees; so it doth it with certain gusts , that are mixed with strength and violence, bolting it out with noise, &c.

As for the order of the angels, or that order that they observe, they plainly shew that this enemy must come down by degrees; for that these vials are by them poured out one after another, each one working something of their own effects, before another is poured forth. The first is poured forth upon the antichristian earth : The second, upon her sea : The third is poured forth upon her rivers : And the fourth, upon her sun : The fifth is poured forth upon the seat of the beast : The sixth, upon her Euphrates : And the seventh, into her air (Rev 16:2-17). And, I say, they are poured forth not all at one time, but now one, and then another. Now, since by these vials Antichrist must fall; and since also they are poured forth successively: 'Tis evident that this man of sin , this son of perdition , is to fall and die by degrees. He would not die at all, as is manifest by his wrestling with it; but he is a strong God that judges, and therefore he must come down: His friends also, with what cordials they can, will labour to lengthen out his tranquility; but God hath set his bounds, and he cannot go beyond the time appointed.

We must also put a difference betwixt her being fought withal and wounded, and that of her dying the death. Michael and his angels have been holding of her in play a long season; but yet she is not dead (Rev 12): But, as I said, she shall descend in battle and perish, and shall be found no more for ever.

A TENTH PART FALLS FIRST.

To speak then to the manner of the ruin of this Antichrist, with respect to the gradualness thereof: It must piece after piece be overthrown, until at last every whit thereof is rolled down from the rocks as a burnt mountain.

And hence we read that this city falls first in a tenth part thereof,

even while nine parts remain yet standing: Nor doth this tenth part, notwithstanding the faith and faithful testimony of the two witnesses, quite fall, until they are slain, and also raised again: For 'tis said, The same hour that the witnesses were raised, the tenth part of the city fell (Rev 11:13): The tenth part of that city that reigneth over the kings of the earth, which city is Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, or the great whore (Rev 17:18).

By the city then, I understand the church of Antichrist in its utmost bounds; and so it reacheth as far as the beast with seven heads and ten horns hath dominion. Hence this city is also called cities, as one universe is called by the name of several countries, &c. And them cities also are called 'the cities of the nations' (Rev 16:19): For as when they are put together, they all make but one; so when they are considered apart, they are found in number ten, and answer to the ten horns upon the heads of the (seven headed) beast that carries her, and do give her protection.

This then I take to be the meaning: That the antichristian church is divided into ten parts, and each part is put under one of the horns of the beast for protection: But that aid and protection shall not help, when God shall come to execute judgment upon her: For it saith, 'A tenth part of the city fell'; that is, first, and as a forerunner of the fall of all the rest: Now where this tenth part is, or which of the ten parts must fall first, or whether indeed a tenth part is already fallen, that I will leave to those that are wiser than myself to determine.

But since I am speaking of the fall of a tenth part of Antichrist; a word or two about the means of the fall thereof.

The means of the fall of this tenth part, is an earthquake; yet not such as is universal, over the face of all, but an earthquake in that tenth part where that city stood that should fall. Now by earthquakes here, cannot be meant any thing but such a shaking as unsettleth the foundations of this tenth part: But whether it shall be in this tenth part as a city, or in it as a state, that I shall not determine; only my

thoughts are, That it shall be an earthquake in that kingdom where this tenth part shall happen to be: An earthquake not to overthrow further than is appointed; and that is the city which is called the tenth part of the great Antichrist. So far as that state is a state, so far then it is shaken for reformation, not for destruction; for in the earthquake were slain seven thousand (names of) men; and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. But thus much for the first: Great Babylon falleth first, in a tenth part of it.

THE NINE PARTS FALL.

Again, The next step that the strong God taketh towards the utter overthrow of Antichrist, will be more sore upon the whole, though not at first universal neither, yet in conclusion, it shall throw down the nine parts that are left: For thus it is recorded: 'And the cities of the nations fell': The cities of the nations, the antichristian churches, otherwise called the daughters of the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.

Now to shew you the hand of God in this second stroke, wherewith the Lord will smite this enemy. 1. Here we have a great earthquake.

2. And then, The fall of the cities of the nations.

For the earthquake, it is said to be such as never was, 'so mighty an earthquake, and so great' (Rev 16:18); for it extended itself as far as the other nine cities had any ground to stand on; for it shook the foundations of them all.

The fall of the cities, was not immediately upon the shake that was made, but the earthquake produced an eruption, an eruption in the nine remaining parts of this city: And such an eruption as is of the worser sort, for it divided them into a three-headed division: 'And the great city was divided into three parts': the great city, to wit, the powers by which they were upheld. The meaning then is this; when

God shall strike this man of sin the second time, he will not be so sparing as he was at first, when he struck but a tenth part to the ground; but now he will so shake, so confound, so divide, so raise up Antichrist against himself, to wit, in the body and members of him, that they shall set to fighting, and to tearing one another in pieces, until they have consumed the whole of these nine parts. It was, saith the text, divided into three parts, which divisions are the worst of all: It will be therefore such a division as will bring them all to ruin. Hence it follows, 'And the cities of the nations fell.'

Wherefore, this three-cornered eruption will be the most dreadful to Antichrist that ever was: It will be like that that was in Jerusalem when she came to be laid even with the ground; and like that that came upon the armies of the Gentiles, when they came up to fight against Jehoshaphat.

'For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them : And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another' (2 Chron 20:23). This, I say, is the division that this mighty earthquake shall make betwixt the horns that are left to these nine parts that remained, when the tenth part of the city fell. And this will come to pass through the increase of the heat of God's anger: For he is angry with the waters where the woman sitteth, because they have delivered up his beloved to the bloody whore; wherefore, he now will give them blood to drink in fury.

Hence his beginning to deal with Antichrist, is called, the beginning of revenges: 'I will make [saith God] mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy' (Deu 32:42). And therefore it is said again, that when God comes to do this work upon this Antichrist, it is because 'it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion' (Isa 34:8). 'For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the

year of my redeemed is come' (Isa 63:4).

A peace therefore cannot be made among these cities when God has forbidden it: Wherefore the effect of all, is, The cities of the nations fall . There is therefore like to be no more good days for Antichrist after this earthquake has begun to shake her: No, nothing now is to be expected of her, but rumours, tumults, stirs, and uproars: 'One post shall run to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is taken at one end': And again, 'A rumour shall both come one year; and after that in another year shall come a rumour, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler,' &c. (Jer 51:31,46). So that this earthquake has driven away peace, shaken the foundations, and will cast the nine cities down to the ground.

GREAT BABEL FALLS.

And this is a second stroke that God will give this man of sin, and a third cometh quickly. Wherefore it follows upon the downfall of these cities of the nations, that 'great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.' Now then, have at great Babylon. Great Babylon ! What is that? Why, I take it to be the mother , the metropolitan , the great whore herself: For though sometimes, by the great whore, or great Babylon, we may understand, the church of Antichrist in general; yet by it is meant more properly, the mother of the daughters, of whose overthrow we have spoken before. We are now then come to the threshold of the door of the house of the OLD one; to the door of the mother of harlots, and abomination of the earth. This then that but now is said to come into remembrance with God, is that which gave being to the cities destroyed before; to wit, the mistress, the queen, the mother- church, as she calleth herself.

And this is the wisdom of God concerning her, that she should not be the first that should die; but that she should live to see the destruction of her daughters, and pine away under the sight and sense of that, even until judgment also shall overtake herself.

Thus Pharaoh and his chief ones did live to see the greatest part of Egypt destroyed before judgment overtook them, but at last it came to their doors also.

Zedekiah lived to see his children slain before his face, before judgment overtook him to his own personal destruction (Jer 52:8-11).

Babylon also, when God sent the cup of his fury unto her, yet was to live to see the nations drink before her: 'Take the wine cup of my fury [said God to the prophet,] and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it' (Jer 25:15). To wit, All the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth. 'And Sheshach shall drink after them' (verse 26). But what was Sheshach? may some say. I answer, It was Babylon, the princess of the world, and at that time the head of all those nations (Dan 4:22), (as this queen is now the mother of harlots). Wherefore, the same prophet, speaking of the destruction of the same Sheshach, saith, 'How is Sheshach taken? and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!' (Jer 51:41).

Now, if this was the method of God's proceeding with his enemies in the way of his judgments of old, why may we not suppose that he will go the same way with his great enemy now: especially since those judgments mentioned before, were executed upon those, which, in some things, were figures of the great whore. Besides, we read here plainly, that when the cities of the nations were fallen, great Babylon came into remembrance before God, to give her to drink of the cup.

From all which I conclude, as I did before, that the mother, the metropolitan, the lady of kingdoms, shall live to see her daughters executed before her face: After which she shall come into consideration herself; for she must assuredly drink of the cup.[10]

This destruction therefore must be last, for the reasons urged before,

and also because she most deserves the bottom of the cup. The bottom is the dregs, the most bitter part, and that where the most heat, and fiercest wrath of God doth lie (Psa 75:8): Wherefore, although you find that by the first earthquake a great slaughter was made, and that a tenth part of the city fell; yet from that judgment some did escape: 'And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven' (Rev 11:13). But now, this earthquake, by virtue of which the cities of the nations fall, and as an effect of which great Babylon is come into 'remembrance before God,' neither spares one of the daughters of this whore, nor any man that is a lover of them; but it so is seconded by a 'hail-storm,' and that hail-storm worketh so in wrath, that not one escapes by repentance. Every hail-stone was the weight of a talent, which some say is six pounds above half an hundred weight:[11]By this therefore God shews, that now his anger was wrought up to the height. I know not wherewith so to compare these hail-stones, as with the talent of lead that was laid over the mouth of the ephah, which was prepared to hold the woman, whose name was wickedness, this very whore of Babylon: For that talent of lead was to keep down this mistress, that she might get no more out of the ephah, and these hail-stone are to banish her out of the world (Zech 5:5-11): Therefore it follows, that she must have the most heavy judgment, even the bottom of the cup.

'And great Babylon came into remembrance before God.' To remember with God, is to visit either with grace or wrath, God is said to remember Rachel, when he visited her with the blessing of a fruitful womb (Gen 30:22). It is said also that God remembered Noah, when the time came on that he was to be delivered from the flood (Gen 8:1). Here also he is said to remember Babylon, that is, to visit her with his anger for the wickedness that she had committed: 'To give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.'

Now then is the time of iniquity, when it will be come to the full; and now also is the time of God's anger, when it will be come to the full: Now therefore must the murders (Rev 18:24), and thefts, and blasphemies, and fornications, &c., belonging to this mother of

harlots, be recompensed to the full, to wit, with the dregs of this cup: Yet since the hail-stones come by weight , and the wrath comes by measure , (for so a talent and a cup imports) it follows, that the Almighty God, even in the midst of the heat of all this anger, will keep to the rules of justice and judgment while he is dealing with this enemy: He has not passions , to carry him beyond rules of judgment; nor weakness , to cause him to fall short of doing justice: Therefore he has (as was said) his judgments for her by weight, and his indignation by measure: But yet this weight and measure is not suited to her constitution, not with an intent to purge or refine her; but it is disposed according to the measure and nature of her iniquity, and comes to sweep her, as with the besom of destruction, until she is swept off from the face of all the earth.

And thus I have shewed you the manner of the ruin of Antichrist; that is, That it will be gradual, part after part, until the whole be overthrown. And this truth may be applied both to the soul, as well as to the body of Antichrist: For the soul, spirit, or life of Antichrist must also after this manner be destroyed. And hence it is said to be consumed, that is, by degrees: For to consume, is to destroy by degrees: Only this caution I would have the reader remember, That much of the soul of Antichrist may be destroyed, when none of her daughters are; and that the destruction of her spirit is a certain forerunner of the destruction of her body in the manner that we have related.

Now since she is dying, let us ring her passing-bell; for when she is dead, we that live to see it, intend to ring out.

'For thus saith the Lord God; When I shall make thee a desolate city, like the cities that are not inhabited; when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; when I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, with the people of old time, and shall set thee in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old, with them that go down to the pit, that thou be not inhabited; and I shall set glory in the land of the living; I will make

thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God' (Eze 26:19-21).

OF THE SIGNS OF THE APPROACH OF THE DOWNFALL OF ANTICHRIST.

Having in the foregoing discourse spoken of Antichrist his ruin, and the manner thereof, I now come to speak of the signs of the approach of her destruction. And whether I shall hit right, as to these, that I must leave to time to make manifest; and in the mean while to the wise in heart to judge.

That she shall fall, there is nothing more certain; and when she is fallen, that she never shall rise again, is also as firmly decreed; yea, and shewed too by him that cast the millstone into the sea, and said, 'Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all' (Rev 18:21). This is therefore her fate and destiny, from the mouth of the holy one; and is sealed up in the scriptures of truth, for the comfort of the people that have been afflicted by her.

True, the time of her fall is not certainly known by the saints, nor at all believed by her; wherefore, her plagues must come unlooked for by her. And as to the saints, their guesses, as to the time of her ruin, must needs be conjectural and uncertain. For her part, she shall say, and that when she stands where she must suddenly fall, 'I shall be a lady for ever' (Isa 47:7-9). And as to the saints that would very willingly see her downfall, how often have they been mistaken as to the set time thereof.

Nor have I been without thought, but that this mistake of the godly

may become a snare to Antichrist, and a trap to her upholders. For what can be a greater judgment, or more effectually harden the hearts of the wicked, than for them to behold that the predictions, prophecies, expectation and hopes of their enemies (as to their ruin) should quite (as to the time) be frustrate, and made void.

Moses prophesied, and the people hoped that God would give Israel 'the land of Canaan'; and yet the Canaanites beat them (Num 14:40; Josh 7:5-9).

Jeremiah prophesied that the enemy should come and take the city [of] Jerusalem; but because he came once, and went back without doing it, how stout and hardened were the hearts of that people against all the rest of his prophetic sayings, as to such a thing (Jer 37). Now the error lay not in these prophets, but in the people's mistaking the times: and if mistakes do so much harden the heart of the wicked, what will they do to such of them who make it their business to blind and harden their hearts against God, by abusing all truths? Surely, when men seek to harden their hearts by abusing of truth, they will do it to purpose, when they have also the advantage of the weakness of their professed enemies to do it by: especially when their enemies shall say they speak by the word of the Lord, and time shall manifest it to be both a mistake and a falsehood.

It is to be bewailed, namely, the forwardness of some in this matter, who have predicted concerning the time of the downfall of Antichrist, to the shame of them and their brethren: nor will the wrong that such by their boldness have done to the church of God, be ever repaired by them nor their works. But the judgments of God are a great deep; and therefore who can tell, since the enemy of God would not be convinced by the power of truth, and the virtuous lives of some, but that God might leave them to be snared, hardened and emboldened to run upon their unavoidable destruction, by the lies and lightness of others. They begin to vaunt it already, and to say, Where is the word of the Lord, as to this, let it come now. But when Agag said, 'surely the bitterness of death is past,' then was the time

for him to be hewn in pieces (1 Sam 15:32,33). I shall not therefore meddle with the times and seasons which the Father hath put in his own power; no, though they as to Antichrist's ruin are revealed; because by the Holy Ghost there is a challenge made, notwithstanding the time is set, and by the word related to the man of wisdom, to find it out if he can (Rev 13:18).

If Samson's riddle was so puzzling, what shall we think of this? and though the angel hath intimated, that this sealed matter shall be opened towards the time of the end (Dan 12:9); yet 'tis evident, some have either been so hasty, or presumed too much upon their own abilities: for I am sure they have missed the mark, hardened the heart of the enemy, stumbled the weak, and shamed them that loved them.

But since the most high hath irreversibly determined her downfall also, let us see if we can have better success in discoursing upon the signs, than others have had who have meddled with the timing thereof.

FIRST SIGN.

First then. The downfall and ruin of Antichrist draws near, when the church and people of God are driven from all those hiding-places that God has prepared for them in the wilderness. The church of God, when the dragon did his worst, had an hiding-place prepared her of God, that she might not utterly be devoured by him; and so shall have till the time of his end shall come.

Of this you read in the 12th of the Revelation, a place worthy to be noted for this. But now, when the time of the ruin of Antichrist draws on, then is the church deprived of her shelter, and laid open, as one would think, to be utterly swallowed up for ever, having no more place in the wilderness, that is, among the nations, to hide herself from the face of the serpent. But how comes this to be a SIGN of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist? why thus. The time of this beast's

war with the church of God, and the time that the church shall have an hiding-place in the wilderness, are both of a length, the one continuing forty-two months , the other a thousand two hundred and threescore days . Now since the war that this beast makes with the woman and her seed, and the woman's hiding-place in the wilderness from his face, are, for length of time, the same; what hindereth but that when the woman and her seed can find no more shelter in the nations, the time that the beast hath allotted him to make war against her, should be finished also? when we therefore shall see that plots and conspiracies, that designs for utter ruin, are laid against God's church all the world over; and that none of the kings, princes, or mighty states of the world, will open their doors, or give them a city for refuge; then is the ruin of Antichrist at hand: for Haman's plot, though the most universal that ever yet was hatching, (being laid in an hundred twenty-seven provinces,) did but presage the deliverance and exaltation of the Jews, and the hanging of Haman and his sons: yea, and I take it, that the very day that this great enemy had set for the utter overthrow of the church, God made the day in which their deliverance began, and that from whence it was completed; and I take that to be a type of this.

There is but one thing that I can think of that can give matter of a shew of doubt about this thing; and that is, though the time of this war against the saints, and that of the woman's shelter in the wilderness as to length, be one and the same; yet whether they did commence together, and begin to take their rise, as men do that begin to run a race? a word therefore to this. I suppose they did commence much together; for else with whom should this beast make war, and how should the church escape? Or, if the beast began his war before the woman began to have a hiding-place, why was she not swallowed up, since in the wilderness was her only place of shelter? Again, what needed the woman to have a place of shelter in the wilderness, when there was no war made against her? And yet this must be, if her thousand two hundred and threescore days, began before the beast's forty-two months: but they ended both together; for the beast could not kill the witnesses before they had

finished their testimony; which testimony of theirs lasted this full time that the beast had granted him to make war with them, to wit, one thousand two hundred and threescore days (Rev 11:3): therefore their times went out together, as will be made appear, if you consider also that the witnesses were slain, by virtue, not of the old, but of a new war levied against them; and that, as it should seem, at the very time when her hiding- place was taken from her; for then indeed, for a little season, will the church of God be overcome, as I shall shew by and by.

Wherefore, let God's people consider and remember that when God's church is absolutely forlorn, and has no hiding-place any longer in the world, the kingdom of Antichrist will quickly begin to tumble. Nor is this the alone place from whence we may gather these conclusions.

The time of Pharaoh's tyranny, of his life, and of the deliverance of the children of Israel, came out much together; as any will discern that shall consider the history of them (Gen 15:13).

David, when Saul did sorely prosecute him, fled last into the wilderness to Achish the king of Gath, a Philistine, for shelter; and he gave him Ziklag for his refuge (1 Sam 27:5,6). And that place so continued to David, 'till just about the time in which Saul must die; and then behold, David's Ziklag is burnt with fire, and himself stript naked of harbour! (1 Sam 30:1). But what matter! The time of Saul's life, as well as of David's Ziklag, was now upon expiring; for within three or four days after, David became the king of Israel (1 Sam 31:1-6).

And thus also it was with the Babel-beast: His time expired, when the captivity of Israel was upon the finishing: then was the time of his land come, and 'in that' very 'night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain' (Dan 5:25-30).

Thus therefore it will happen to the church in the latter days: her

place of shelter in the wilderness; her Ziklag will be taken from her, about the time that the war that the beast has to make upon the woman and her seed shall be finished. But now the church is not therefore immediately delivered, when her Ziklag is taken from her; for after that, the beast levieth a new war, to the overcoming and killing of the church: I say therefore, that this is a sign, not of the downfall of Antichrist, but of the approach thereof: for the church's bondage shall continue but three days, and a little after this [shall be her deliverance]. Much like to this was that of David; for after he had lost his Ziklag, for two or three days he had sore distress: but lo, then came the kingdom to him.

Indeed, sense and reason saith, it is a fearful thing for the church of God to be exposed to the rage of her enemy all over the world at once; and that all nations should shut up their gates, let down their portcullises, bolt up their doors, and set open their flood-gates to destroy them: but so will be the dispensation of God, to the end deliverance may be the sweeter, and the enemies fall the more headlong, and the arm of God the more manifest, both for the one, and against the other. And in this will that scripture be fulfilled: 'And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book' (Dan 12:1).

Let us gather up what has been said again; namely, that it is a sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, when God's church can find no more shelter in the wilderness; because when her Ziklag is burned, the time of the war that the beast is to make against her, is finished. Wherefore, when she hath given one desperate struggle more, and laid the church of God, or his witnesses, for dead, in the street of his great city, for three days and an half, then comes the kingdom, and the long, long-looked-for rest and glory. Wherefore it remains, that an angel should stand in the sun, and make proclamation to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, to gather themselves together to the supper of the great God: 'That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of

horses, and of them that sit on them; and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great' (Rev 19:18). This is to be after the forty-two months of the beast; and consequently, after the thousand two hundred and threescore days that the church was to be in sackcloth; yea, after the resurrection of the witnesses, as is evident by that which follows: 'And the beast was taken, [that is, after the second year] and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone' (verse 20).

SECOND SIGN.

Secondly, Another sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, is this: towards the end of her reign, the nations will be made to see her baseness, and to abhor her and her ways. They will, I say, be made to see these things, in order to her ruin: also, when they shall be made to see, her ruin will not be far off. For so long as the nations and their rulers shall continue in that dead sleep that she hath bewitched them into, by their drinking of the wine of her fornication; so long we have no ground to think that her ruin is at the door: but when God shall lay her before kings, and shall discover her nakedness to the nations, then be sure her destruction is at hand. Hence you read, that precedent to her downfall: An angel comes down from heaven, and enlightens the earth with his glory (Rev 10:1). [The earth ;] that is, the kingdoms, countries, and nations where the woman sitteth, or they that border thereupon. [Enlightened ;] to let them see the filthiness of the whore. [With his glory ;] with the doctrine that he had commission to preach against her, for the discovering of her lewdness to the earth. This also was the way that God took with backsliding Israel of old, (and she was a type of our religious Babel) when he intended to bring her to judgment for her sins (Eze 16:37); and this is the way that God will take to destroy our religious Antichrist, when he comes to deliver his people out of her hand.

For though the people that suffer at her hand, can do nothing against

her, but lay, in prayers and tears against her before the God of heaven, and bear their witness against her before the gods of the earth; yet when kings shall come to be concerned, and they will count themselves concerned when they shall see how they have been deceived by her; then let her look to it. 'Behold, I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts; and I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and I will shew the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame. And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock.' And what follows? 'And it shall come to pass, that all they that look upon thee, shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her? whence shall I seek comforters for thee?' (Nahum 3:5-7).

Wherefore, there wants nothing but that she be discovered to the nations and their kings; for did they but see her, though they lay yet in her bosom, they would rise up against her, that she must die: wherefore it is written again, I will 'bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee' (Eze 28:18).

The chief of the wisdom of Antichrist this day is laid out, if perhaps by it she may cover her nakedness, and keep it from the eyes of kings and their people. But God has said it shall not avail: 'Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man' (Isa 47:3). But how will he make her naked? Verily, by kings. But how shall kings do it? Why, by virtue of the glory of the angel: yea, they 'shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire' (Rev 17:16).

Let this, I pray, be considered, That Antichrist shall not down, but by the hand of kings. The preacher then kills her soul, and the king kills her body. And why should not the kings have it granted unto them, that she should fall by their hand? the kings are those that she has abused, that she has in the grossest manner abused, and has served herself of them: but the time of the end of Antichrist, mystery

Babylon is coming, 'and then many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of him' (Jer 27:7).[12]

Nor shall all the tricks, lies, and deceit under which formerly she used to shroud herself, be able to prove a balm to her any longer: No, 'in vain shalt thou use many medicines'; for no cure shall be unto thee; 'the nations have heard of thy shame' (Jer 46:11,12).

Babylon has for a long time been 'a lady of kingdoms,' and 'a golden cup in the Lord's hand': the nations also have largely drank of her cup, and the kings have committed fornication with her (Rev 18:3). But now the angel is come down, and hath enlightened the earth with his glory . Wherefore now it follows immediately, 'Babylon is fallen! is fallen!' That is, in the eyes and esteem of the nations, as well as otherwise.

True, some of the kings will bewail her fall, and will cry, Alas! Alas! when they see that they cannot help her; for that they shall see, as is evident, because they stand afar off to lament her, 'afar off for the fear of her torment.' The kings therefore into whose hands God shall deliver her, and who shall execute his judgments upon her, shall be more mighty and powerful to bring her down, than shall be the whole world besides to uphold her.

The Protestant Kings.

And this observe further, That as the kings that shall hate her, shall hate her because in the light of the glory of the angel they are made able to see her filthiness; so the kings that shall bewail her, are such as in judgment are left in the dark, and that shall be bewitched by her to the end. This therefore will let us see something of the meaning of God, in that he has drawn off from her some of the kings already; to wit, that he might train them up by the light of the gospel, that they may be expert, like men of war, to scale her walls, when the king of kings shall give out the commandment to them so to do.

There has been a great deal of talk in the countries about the ruin and destruction of Babylon; but could we see more of the kings engaged against her, we should hope groundedly that her fall was at the door. Well, blessed be God for what kings there are, and the Lord turn the hearts of many more to hate her.

Some, as I said before, have adventured to foretell the time of her downfall; but give me the signs thereof. This therefore is a sign, a sign that her downfall approaches, when God shall lay her nakedness before the nations, and put it into the hearts of kings to abhor her. The signs of the times the Lord Jesus would have us mind; and because the Jews neglected them, though as to the time they hit pretty right, yet they missed of the thing that the time brought forth.

THIRD SIGN.

Thirdly, A third sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, is this: 'When Babylon is become the habitation of devils, &c.,' then the downfall thereof is upon us. True, Babylon was always an habitation for devils; but not an habitation only for them; Israel once dwelt there, and our Antichrist was sometimes a place of residence for good men. The meaning then, is, When you shall see the church and people of God so forsake her that she is left in a manner to herself, and to her disciples, then she is to fall quickly. When you hear it proclaimed by them that are yet in her, of God's people, 'We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country' (Jer 51:9): Then she will soon be hissed out of the world: for this is the way of the wisdom of God; namely, to bring his people out of a city or place, when he intends the ruin of that place. When God was about to destroy the old world, he put his Noah into an ark: when God was about to destroy Sodom, he sent his Lot away thence to Zoar: when Christ was about to destroy Jerusalem, he bid his disciples flee from the midst of that: and when there shall be by God a hissing for his people; and when they shall hear him, and obey, and gather to him, then you shall see what will become of this enemy of Christ: 'I will hiss for them, and gather

them; for I have redeemed them' (Zech 10:8-12).

I say therefore, when Babylon shall become the habitation of devils, a hold for all foul spirits, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird, then Babylon is fallen.

And thus the angel that lightened the earth with his glory, proclaimed, 'Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen! and is become the habitation of devils, and a hold for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird.' Wherefore it must be, that by that her time is come that she should fall, God will have gleaned his people from the midst of her. And when God shall have gleaned his people from the midst of her, those that are left behind will appear more than ever to be what they are, to wit, devils, foul spirits, and hateful birds; wherefore, now will Antichrist appear in his own most proper colours.

But to comment a little upon the words.

Babylon 'Mystery Babylon' (Rev 17:5). The antichristian church.

'Is fallen! Is fallen!' In the eyes and faith of the godly, by her dropping into the dregs of degeneracy, and so is become the habitation of devils, &c., in order to her falling into utter and unavoidable destruction for ever.

'Is become.' That is, through the labour of the fanners and winnowers that God hath sent to fan Babylon, and to fetch out his people, that she might be left to her chaff: 'I will send [saith God to Babylon] fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land [of good men;] for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about' (Jer 51:2).

'An habitation of devils.' Devils: not such by nature, but by practice. Incarnate devils. For when the time is come that Babylon must be destroyed, she shall be found to be an habitation for the most vile of

the sons of men. For as devils have acted towards the world, so shall the sons of this sorceress, and this whore, act towards Christ and his members in the latter days. And, perhaps, the departing of Zion from the midst of her, will blow her up into this spirit of devilism. Let God's people therefore, when Antichrist is towards her end, look for nothing from her, but what the devil, in times past, used to do; to wit, all sinful subtilty, malice, wrath, fraud, deceit, lying, murder, false accusings, and implacable madness of spirit to do them mischief. (But Lord God! think I, what will become of good men! and where will they be safe in such days? Only I comfort myself, by saying to myself again, this a sign that the ruin of Antichrist is at the door.) But this I say, he must needs be a tuneable man, that shall be able in those days to sing this song to himself at all seasons: for this is to drive reason backward, and to set the cart before the horse. For what will the good man's reason say, when it seeth all Babylonians are become devils, but that the church of God will certainly be torn in pieces? But behold! the text and the Holy Ghost runs counter. 'Babylon is fallen! is fallen! and [or, for it] is become the habitation of devils.' These words for certain are the words of an holy angel; for it could not have entered into the heart of mere man to have conceived them.

'An habitation.' To be an habitation (for devils) is to be their house, their dwelling-place, their place of privilege, their place of rest and abode, or thither whither they have right to go. And thus will Babylon be; that is, an house, an habitation, a dwelling-place, and a place of rest, only for devilish-minded men; thither may such men come; for such her doors stand open, and there may such inhabit. When therefore you see good men come out thence, and all sorts of wicked men flock in thither, then know that Babylon is near her end.

'And a hold for every foul spirit.' Understand by spirit, either those that are devils by nature, or such as are such otherwise. But I think that the angel chiefly intends all manner of unclean and filthy spirits; and so the church and members of Babylon, their only place of safety: Or if you understand it of the uncleanness of the spirits and

minds of men, then the meaning is, that they are called foul spirits, in allusion to those of devils which go by the same name (Mark 9:25). But however, or which way soever taken, it seems Babylon is their hold ; that is, their place of defence: For by an hold, we often understand a place of strength, a castle, a fort, a tower; so that these devils, these foul-spirited men, these Babylonians, will not only find house-room and harbour in Babel, but shelter, defence and protection, when she is near her ruin: yea, they will find her an upholder to them, and a countenancer of them, in all their foul and devilish pranks; yea, such an hold shall she be to such foul spirits in such foul acts, that it shall not be possible that they should be driven from her, or from them: For an hold is often taken in the scriptures for a place that is impregnable, and must be so taken here. This intimates then, that some faint opposition by the kings and nations will be made against these inhabitants, foul spirits, but to little purpose, until the time of her land shall come (Jer 27:7); for in their hold they still will be secured and defended from what reason, law and scripture can or would do unto them. Thus then we see how Babel, towards her end, will be filled, and with what, to wit, with devils and foul spirits; yea, and that she will not only be an habitation, but a place of defence for such.

'And a cage for every unclean and hateful bird.' Those that before are called devils, and foul spirits, are also here called 'birds, unclean and hateful beasts.' By the term [Birds ,] he may allude to that of the prophet Isaiah, where these unclean birds are mentioned (34:11-17) And by cage , he may allude to the prophet Jeremiah, from whom, as I think, the Holy Ghost takes those words; but then we must put men in the place of birds , and the Babylonian kingdom for the cage (Jer 5:27).

'Every unclean bird.' As was said before, a hold for every foul spirit. These unclean birds therefore are not all of one feather, or kind, but of all and every kind; and it intimates, that the worst act of all professions, shall be, as in a cage, in Babylon, a little before her downfall. But I say, if they will not be all of one feather, yet in their

temper they will somewhat agree, being either in shape , monstrous; of appetite , ravenous; or, of inclination, lovers of the night. For of all these sorts were the forbidden, or unclean birds among the Jews. Now since these unclean birds are not all of one feather, or kind, it intimates that the basest of all sorts, sects, professions and degrees, shall take shelter in Babylon towards her end; and that they shall there, in their temper, unanimously agree to show themselves monstrous, to devour and eat up the poor and needy, and to blow out the light of the gospel.

'A cage.' Not to imprison them in, but for them to sit and sing in, to confer their notes in, to make melodious music in; I mean, melodious to their own thinking; for the ass thinks that he sings full favouredly, and the owl endeavours to lift up her voice above all the birds of the wood: But it will be a prediction of her fall, and that her ruin is at the door.

Of these birds Zephaniah speaks, when he prophecies of the downfall of Nineveh, saying, 'The cormorant and the bittern [shall] lodge in the uppermost lintels of it, their voice shall sing in the windows; [when] desolation shall be in the thresholds' (Zeph 2:14). An unseasonable time to sing in; for when death is coming in at the door, mourning should be in the chambers. But this is the judgment of God, That she should be a cage for every unclean bird to sing in, even then when her destruction and desolation cometh upon her.

To sing, as in a cage, doth also denote security, and that the heart is far from fear; for she saith, 'I shall see no sorrow, in that hour in which her judgment comes.'

But is this a sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist? And must those that shall live to see those days, rejoice when these things begin to come to pass? Are not these things rather a sign that the utter overthrow of the church of God is at the door? Indeed, to sense it is, and reason will be apt to say so: But hark what the Holy Ghost saith! 'She is fallen! is fallen now!'

When therefore we shall see men like devils; yea, every foul spirit, and hateful bird, flock to, and take shelter in Babylon; let us not be frightened or dejected, but pluck up our hearts, and say, This is one of the signs that the downfall of Babylon is near. Wherefore it follows, after that the prophet had told us that these birds should dwell in the land of the people of God's curse (Isa 34). That 'the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; [for that they are there] and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose: It shall blossom, [saith he] abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.' And to support the weak from those fears that in those days will be pulling of them down, he adds, 'Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: In the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein . No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there . And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away' (Isa 35).

What say ye now, ye sons of God! Will you learn to make a judgment of things according to the mystery of the wisdom of God, or will ye longer conclude according to sense and reason: 'He turneth the shadow of death into the morning' (Amos 5:8). And commands oft-

times, that the fairest day should succeed the foulest night. Wherefore, when we see these devils, foul spirits, and unclean birds in Babylon; yea, when we see good men leave her, and the vilest run in to her, then let us sing the angels' song, and say, 'Babylon the great is fallen! is fallen! and is become the habitation of devils, and a hold for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hateful bird.'

FOURTH SIGN.

Fourthly, another sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, is, 'The Slaying of the Witnesses': For the witnesses are to be slain before the fall of Antichrist; and that by the hand of the beast, who shall manage the members of Antichrist, having qualified them before that work, with those qualifications of which you read in the sign foregoing. For what can better fit a generation for such a work, than to be themselves all turned devils, and also succourers of all foul spirits. Wherefore, they must be the wickedest of men that shall do this: the very scum of the nations, and the very vilest of people. Nor is this a new notion: God threatened to give his sanctuary 'into the hands of strangers for a prey, and to the wicked of the earth for a spoil' (Eze 7:21); To robbers, burglars, and they should defile it (verse 22). Again, saith God of his people, 'I will bring the worst of the heathen, and they shall possess their houses' (verse 24). For the truth is, this work is too bad for men either of reason or conscience to be found in the practice of. The hangman is usually none of the best: The witnesses are also to be slain; but not a man, but a beast must slay them; 'a den of thieves, a hold of foul spirits,' must do it.

That the witnesses must be slain before the fall of Babylon, has been hinted already. Also, that their death is a forerunner of the ruin of Antichrist, has before been touched upon; but in this place I shall a little enlarge.

And therefore I proceed: '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 into graves.' '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' (Rev 11:7-12).

Thus you see their death is before their deliverance . Also their death is to be by the hand of the beast; to wit by the men that have and hold his mark, and that of his image, and that are of the number of his name. You see also that their death is not only a forerunner of their deliverance, but a sign that their deliverance is at the door; since the one is but three days and an half before the other.

And if a short comment upon this text will give a little light to the reader, I shall not count my labour lost.

And when they shall have finished their testimony, when, or about the time they have done their work of witness-bearing for God in the world: When they have made or are making an end of giving their testimony for Christ, and against the witchcrafts, idolatries, sorceries, fornications, thefts, murders, and wickedness of Antichrist: Then and not till then.

'The beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit.' The beast : The power that carrieth and beareth up Antichrist, the mother of harlots: The beast upon which the woman sitteth, and by the heads and horns of which she is protected and defended; he is said to ascend out of the bottomless pit; for that he manifesteth by his doings, that he was born there, and came to [do] the work of the king thereof.

'Shall make war against them.' We read that he made war against

them all the time of their prophesying in sackcloth, while they were bearing their testimony against his doing; and that his commission was, That he should have leave to make war so long (Rev 12:6). But here we read again, that when they had finished their testimony, and so consequently he had run out the time of his first commission for war, he makes war again. So that this war which now he raiseth against them, seems to be another, a new war, and such as is grounded upon other, to wit, new arguments, besides those upon which his first war stood. By his first war, he sought to beat down and overthrow their testimony (Rev 13:4). By this war he seeketh to overthrow themselves. The first war he made, was grounded upon a vain confidence of his ability to destroy their faith; but this last was grounded upon madness against them, because their testimony had prevailed against him: Wherefore, Torment, wherewith these witnesses by their testimony tormented him and his followers, was the cause of this last war. And this is insinuated when he saith, 'They make merry for their victory over them, because these two prophets,' (to wit, by their testimony,) 'tormented them that dwelt on the earth' (Rev 11:10).

The beast therefore will make a war against the witnesses all the time of their prophesying in sackcloth, which will be a thousand two hundred and threescore days (Rev 12:6). In all which time they shall give him the foil, and overcome him by their faith and testimony; and be proclaimed more than conquerors over him, through the Christ that loved them. But now in this second war he overcomes them, 'he overcomes them, and kills them.'

Jezebel for a long time made war against Elias the prophet, seeking to overthrow the worship of God which he maintained, and to establish the religion of Baal: But when she saw that by all she could do she got nothing, but that the prophet got the day of her worship, priests and worshippers (1 Kings 18:30-40), she breaks out into a rage, as one tormented almost to death, and raises a new war; not now against his religion, but his person, and desperately swears by all the gods that she had, That by tomorrow that time the life of the

prophet should be as the life of one of her priests whom he had slain for an idolater (1 Kings 19:2). When the devil sees that he cannot do by argument, he will try if he can by blows.

When Zedekiah, the son of Chenanah, saw that with argument he could not overcome Micaiah, he steps to him, and takes him a box of the ear (1 Kings 22:24). This new war, is a box of the ear which the beast will give the witnesses, because they overcame him by their faith and testimony, all the time that the first war lasted.

Now how long this second war will last, and what strugglings the witnesses will make before he shall overcome them, I know not: This I know, that the text saith, 'by this war he shall overcome them.'

'And shall overcome them.' Saints are not said to be overcome, when they are imprisoned, banished, and killed for their faithful testimony: No, by these things they overcome. To overcome then, is to get the mastery, to subdue, to turn out of possession, to take and hold captive, to strip the subdued of power and privilege, as is sufficiently manifest both by scripture and reason: 'For of whom a man is overcome, of the same he is brought in bondage' (2 Peter 2:19).

So then, when he is said to overcome them, it is meant, he shall get the mastery of them, they shall grow faint before him, have no heart or spirit to bear up in their profession against him: Against him, I say, as she did the thousand two hundred and threescore days' war with him; for then they were overcomers, and did bear away the garland.

Nor do I, for my part, wonder at this, when I consider that these witnesses are a succession of good men; and that when Israel came out of Egypt of old, the feeble and weak-handed did come behind (Deu 25:17-19). It will be the lot therefore of the church, in the latter end of the reign of the beast, to be feeble and weak in their profession, the valiant ones having gone before: These will come,

when those that were able have bravely borne their testimony, or when they are upon finishing of that: In comparison of whom, they that come after will be but like eggs to the cocks of the game: wherefore they must needs be crushed, cowed, and overcome. And then will the beast boast himself, as did his type of old, and say, 'My hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped' (Isa 10:14).

A sad time, and it is to happen to the people that are left, to the latter end of the witness-bearers; and that too when they shall have finished their testimony.

Of this tyranny the cruelty of Amalek was a type; who, as was hinted before, smote the hindermost, the weak: But his judgment is, That 'he shall perish for ever.'

'And shall overcome them.' There are two ways of overcoming; to wit, by power and policy: And perhaps by both these ways they may be overcome. However, overcome they shall be; for so saith the holy word of God; yea, the beast shall overcome them. Wherefore the church of God, at that day, will be under such a cloud as she never was since Christ's day. Now how long they shall thus be held captive before they are brought to execution; whether the beast will ride in triumph while they are in his bonds; or whether he will suddenly kill them; that time, and observation, and experience, must make manifest: But kill them he shall, that's most certain, for so says the Holy Ghost.

'And shall overcome them, and kill them .' In this method therefore God will suffer the beast to proceed with the church of God, after she has sufficiently borne her testimony for him in the world. He shall 'war against them,' but that is not all: He shall overcome them, but that is not all; he 'shall overcome them, and kill them.'

'And kill them.' Of their slaughter also I shall speak a word or two. But first I would note, as all know, that there is a difference to be put betwixt killing and overcoming: For though every one that is killed, is overcome: yet every one that is overcome, is not killed (Acts 21:32): men may be overcome, and yet live (Jer 12:11); but when they are killed, it is otherwise: There may be a cry heard from the mouth of them that are overcome, but not from the mouth of them that are killed (Exo 32:18; Acts 7:34): They that are overcome, may consult their own enlargement, and deliverance; but they that are killed, cannot do so. I do therefore distinguish between killed and overcome, because the text doth so: 'He shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.'

'And kill them.' From these words therefore I will take occasion to inquire,

1. How they are to be considered as to this slaughter.
2. What death they must die to accomplish this prophecy.

FIRST, How they are to be considered?

I answer: Not in a carnal or natural, but in a mystical sense. For, first, they are called witnesses. Secondly, They are put under the number of two: 'My two witnesses' (Rev 11:3). Both which are to be mystically taken.

First, Because their testimony standeth not in their words only, but in their conversation; yea, in their suffering also: and that is a mystical witness-bearing.

Secondly, They go under the number of two: Not because there were indeed two such men in the world, but because two are a sufficient number to bear witness (Num 35:30; Deu 17:6; 19:15); and God's church, in the most furious heat and rage of Antichrist, has been at least of such a number of professing saints, to proclaim against the

beast and his worship in the name of God. To think that there have been two such men in the world, is ridiculous; for these witnesses must continue to give their testimony for God against Antichrist, a thousand two hundred and threescore years. Nor can they scripturally bear this title, My two witnesses , but with respect to their prophesying so long. The witnesses therefore are nothing else but a successive church, or the congregation of God abiding for him against Antichrist, by reason of a continual succession of men that is joined by the special blessing of God unto it.

SECONDLY, What death they must die? I answer, Not a corporeal one, but that which is mystically such. And I choose to understand it thus, because this suiteth best with their state and condition, which is mystical. Besides, thus did they (when they did overcome,) slay their enemies, even with the fire or sword of their mouth: 'If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed' (Rev 11:5). As therefore they went about to kill their enemies, so their enemies will kill them: But they sought to kill their enemies by their testimony, as to their antichristian spirit, and church-state; and their enemies will kill them, as to their Christian heat and fervency of mind; and also as to their Christian church-state. So that, (at least so I think,) there will be such ruins brought both upon the spirit of Christianity, and the true Christian church-state, before this Antichrist is destroyed, that there will for a time scarce be found a Christian spirit, or a true visible living church of Christ in the world: Nothing but the dead bodies of these will be to be seen of the nations; nor them neither, otherwise than as so many ruinous heaps. For the love that I bear to the church of Christ, I wish, as to this, I may prove a false prophet: But this looks so like the text, and also so like the dispensations of God with his church of old, that I cannot but think it will be so. For the text, I have spoken to that already; wherefore I will now present you with some things that look like parallel cases.

First, When the church was coming out of Egypt, just before they

were delivered from Pharaoh, they were in their own eyes, and in the eyes of their enemies, none other than dead: 'It had been better [said they to Moses] for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness' (Exo 14:12). The people said so, Moses feared, and Pharaoh concluded they were all dead men (Exo 12:33). Also Paul tells us, 'that they were baptized [that is, buried] unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea.' They were, for the time, to use the expression, a dead church both in the eyes of Pharaoh, in the eyes of Moses, and also in their own.

And 'tis to be taken notice of: As the witnesses in the text were slain but a little before the ruin of Antichrist began; so this church was baptized in the sea but a little before great Pharaoh was drowned there.

Secondly , In the time of Elias, which time also was typical of this, what church was there to be seen in Israel? None but what was underground, buried in dens, and in caves of the earth: Yea, the prophet could see none, and therefore he cried to God, and said, Lord, they have 'dugged down thine altars,' and slain thy prophets, 'and I am left alone, and they seek my life' (1 Kings 19:14; Rom 11:3). What visible living church was now in the land, I mean, either with reference to a godly spirit for it, or the form and constitution of it? What was, was known to God, but dead to every man alive.

Thirdly , What was the dry bones that we read of in the 37th of Ezekiel, but the church of God, and also a figure of what we are treating of? And why called dry bones, since the people were alive, with their substance, wives, and children; but to shew, that that church of God was now, as to their spirit and church-state, accounted as dead , not only by themselves, but by the king of Babylon, and the nations round about? Babylon then was the valley, and the grave; and the church of God were the bones: Bones without flesh, sinews, or skin; bones exceeding dry; yea so dry and dead were they, that the prophet himself could not tell whether ever they should live again (Eze 37:1-3).

Now this, as I said, was a state that was not to end with the church of Israel, but to be acted over once again by the beast with the church of the new testament: Yea, it is an easy matter to make their witnesses in this their death, and the church of Israel in this their grave, in many things to symbolize.

Fourthly , Take another instance, or rather comparison, into which the church of God compared herself, when under the king of Babylon's tyranny: And that is, she counted herself as the dung that the beast lets fall to the ground from behind him. And doth this look like a visible church-state? Or has it the smell or savour of such a thing? Nebuchadnezzar (said she) 'hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out' (Jer 51:34). Pray, what would you think of a man, of whom one should tell you, That he was eaten up of a dragon; made to fill the belly of a dragon; and cast out as the dung of a dragon? Would you think that such an one did all this while retain the shape, form, or similitude of a man? Why, thus the church said she was, and thus the church shall be again: For she is once more to be overcome, to be overcome and killed; and that by the beast, the dragon's whelp, of which the king of Babylon was a type. And therefore I conclude the premises; that is, That the beast will kill the church that shall be in the latter days, as to her Christian spiritedness, and her church-state. And I could further add, That if we hold they die corporeally, we must conclude, that their natural body being slain, shall lie three years and an half in the street; yea, that their resurrection shall be corporeal, &c. But why we should think thus, as yet I can see no reason, since the persons are such mystically; the beast mystically so; the street in which they be, mystically such; and the days of their unburied state, to be taken mystically likewise. But we will pass this, and descend to other things.

Fifthly , I will yet add another thing. When Israel was coming out of Babylon; yea, while they were building of the temple of God, which was a figure of our church-state now under the Gospel; they were not

only troubled, hindered and molested in their work, but were made for a time to cease, and let the work lie still.

'Now [says the text] when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter [which he sent to forbid the Jews in their work] was read before Rehum and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease by force and power. Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia' (Ezra 4:23,24).

And I pray, since their temple-worship was a type of a new testament church-state and worship, what doth their causing of that work to cease signify to us, but that we must have a time also to cease as they? And since their temple-work was caused to cease before the house was finished, what face could there be at present thereupon, but that, to look to, it was like some deformed, battered, broken building, or as such an one that was begun by foolish builders? Yea, and since the Jews left off to build God's house at the command of the heathens, what did that bespeak, but that they had lost their spirit, were quashed, and so as to their temple-work, killed, as it were, to all intents and purposes? And thus it will be, a little before the church of God shall be set free from the beast, and all his angels: For these things were writ for our admonition, to show us what shall be done hereafter; yea, and whether we believe or disbelieve hereabout, time will bring it to pass.

I do not question but many good men have writ more largely of this matter: but as I have not seen their books, so I walk not by their rules. If I mistake, the mistakes are only mine; and if I shall merit shame, I alone must bear it.

Some may think they have said enough, when they assert, that for the witnesses to be killed, is, To be dead in law. But I answer, That is not to be overcome. They are here said to be overcome; and that is more than to be dead in law: For a man may be dead in law, and yet

not be overcome; and if so, then far enough off from being killed. So then, for as much as they are said to be overcome and killed, it must be more than to be dead in law. Besides, the text supposeth that they had yielded up, as dying men do, their souls, their spirit of life into the hands of God: For it saith concerning them, That at their resurrection, the spirit of life from God entered again into them: Into them, antecedent thereunto. 'and after three days and an half the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet' (Rev 11:11). thus it was concerning the dry bones, of which mention was made before: 'Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live' (Eze 37:9). And thus much concerning their killing.

Now, as I said, since in death, the body doth not only lie dead, but the spirit of life departs therefrom; it is to shew, that not only their bodies, their church-state, shall die, [for churches are called bodies, (1 Cor 12:27; Eph 3:6; 4:12; 5:23; Col 1:18)] but that spirit of life that acted those bodies, shall be taken up to God. There shall, for a time, be no living visible church of Christ in the world: A church, but no living church, as to church-state: A church in ruins, but not a church in order: Even as there was once a Christ, but no living Christ in the grave; yet the gates of hell shall not prevail to an utter overthrow thereof, no more than they prevailed to an utter overthrow of Christ; but as one did, so shall the other, revive, and rise again, to the utter confusion and destruction of their enemies: Yea, and as Christ, after his resurrection, was, as to this body, more glorious than he was before; so the witnesses, after their resurrection, shall be more spiritual, heavenly, and exact in all their ways, than they were before they were killed. Resurrections are always attended with new additions of glory; and so shall the church of God, as to her church-state, be in the latter days.

But yet the beast shall not altogether have his will, (if that at all was his will) that these witnesses, in this second war, should be

conquered to a compliance with Antichrist in his foolish and vain religion: For it is not with dead men to comply; but as they are dead to their own church-state, so they are to his. When the Jews had killed Christ, it was beyond all the art of hell to cause that his body should see corruption; so when the beast has killed the witnesses, he shall not be able to corrupt them with any of his vices.

Hence you find, that not the witnesses, but the dwellers upon the earth were them that danced after the devil's pipe, when he had fulfilled their murder.

Nor doth this murder, as to the fulfilling of it in those nations where the woman sitteth, seem to be a great way off, if all be true that from foreign parts some have said: For what a withdrawing of God and of his Spirit is there already in some of the churches of God! The word worketh not that sound repentance which it was wont to do: Preachers preach for little, but to spend themselves, as men that are wounded do when with groans they let out their life. Where (say some) is the spirit and life of communion? And where that practical holiness that formerly used to be seen in the houses, lives and conversations of professors? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint already; and how long will it be before churches die of the wound that the beast has given them, time must make appear: But die I perceive they must; for if the wound already given will not kill, repeated blows shall.

By all that I have said, I do not deny but that many of the people of God may die corporeally, by the hand of the beast, in this second war that shall be made by him against the witnesses. But should as many more die, that will not prove that that death will be that that by the killing of the witnesses is intended.

Some thing I would bestow upon the reader, for him to carry with him as a memorandum, while he reads this account of things: As,

First , This victory of the beast, is not to be until the witnesses have

finished their testimony; and so by all that he shall do, he shall not hinder the revelation of any of the truths that they either were to bring to light, or to confirm by their witness-bearing.

Witnesses are not always bound to speak: There is a time 'to keep silence' (Eccl 3:7), and 'thou shalt be dumb' (Eze 3:26). But how shall we know when this time is come?

1. When a sufficient testimony has been given for Christ, and against Antichrist, before the God of heaven; for he must be the judge.
2. When her enemies forbear to plead against her by argument, and rather betake themselves to blows (Matt 10:19).
3. When the spirit of testimony-bearing is taken from the church; for that is not essential to Christianity, but is given and taken away as there is occasion.
4. When testimony-bearing becomes a vain or needless repetition, when they have heard sufficiently of things before (John 9:27).

Secondly , This victory of the beast shall not invalidate or weaken their testimony; no, not in the eyes of the world; for they will still remember, and have a reverence for it: This is intimated by this, That 'they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations(that are neither the witnesses, nor they that in the next verse are called the inhabitants, or they that dwell upon the earth,)shall not suffer their dead bodies to be (buried, or be) put in graves' (Rev 11:9).

Thirdly , This shall not lengthen the reign and tranquility of the antichristian kingdom; nor frustrate, drive back (or cause to tarry) the glorious freedom and liberty of the saints. But some may say, This will be a SAD day.

So it will, and gloomy; but it will be but short, and 'the righteous shall have dominion over them next morning.' 'Twill last but three

days and an half; nor shall it come, but for the sins of churches and saints, and to hasten the downfall of the kingdom of the beast, and for the sweetening to the church her future mercies. Christ Jesus, our Lord, in answer to the question of his disciples, about the destruction of Jerusalem, presented them with a relation of many sad things; but when he was come even to the hearts of men, and had told them 'that they should fail for fear': He said, 'when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh' (Luke 21:25-28).

'Tis as ordinary as for the light to shine, for God to make black and dismal dispensations, to usher in bright and pleasing [ones]; yea, and the more frightful that is which goes before, the more comforting is that which follows after. Instances in abundance might be given as to this, but at present let this suffice that is here upon the paper before us; namely, the state of the witnesses, with their glorious resurrection.

FIFTH SIGN.

Fifthly , Another sign of the approach of the ruin of Antichrist, will be this: The great joy that will be in her, and among her disciples, when they shall see that the witnesses are slain, and lie dead upon the spot: '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' (Rev 11:10). Babylon has been always a merry city, and her disciples merry men; but the poor church of Christ has been solitary, and as a wife forsaken; her tears upon her cheeks bear her witness, and so doth her sackcloth- weed.

Hence our Babylon, under the name of Nineveh, is called, 'the rejoicing city' (Zeph 2:15). Only her joy is distinguished from that which is the joy of God's people, by these two things.

First, Either she rejoiceth in outward and carnal glory, or else in the

ruin of the church of God. This last, to wit, the supposed ruin of the church of God, is that which will be now the cause of her glorying. And this is the joy that God complaineth of, and for the which he said that he would punish Babylon: 'Chaldea shall be a spoil: All that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith the Lord. Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage,' &c. (Jer 50:10,11). The joy therefore of Babylon, Antichrist; the joy that she shall conceive in her heart upon the slaughter of the witnesses, is a sure sign of her unavoidable ruin and destruction. These two prophets tormented her; they were to Babylon as Mordecai was to Haman, a continual plague and eye-sore: As also was David to the wretched Saul: But now they are overcome, now they are killed; now she rejoiceth, and maketh merry. And this her joy was of old prefigured by them that in her spirit have gone before her: As, First, When the Philistines had, as they thought, for ever overcome Samson, that Nazarite of God, how joyful were they of the victory! 'Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, [saw him in chains] They praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us' (Judg 16:23,24). Poor Samson! While thou hadst thy locks, thy liberty, and thine eyes, thou didst shake the pillar that did bear up their kingdom! But now they have conquered thee, how great is their joy! How great is their joy, and how near their downfall! This therefore is a joy that is like that we have under consideration, to wit, the joy of them that dwell upon the earth; for that the witnesses that did bear up the name of God in the world, were overcome and killed.

Secondly, Like to this, is that which you read of in the first book of Samuel, concerning the men that had burnt David's Ziklag. Ziklag was poor David's place of safety; nor had he any else but that under the whole heaven: But the children of the east came upon it, and took it; set it on fire, and carried thence all David's substance, with his wives and his children. (Very ill done to a man in affliction; to a man

that went always in fear of his life, because of the rage of his master Saul.) But how were they that had got the victory? Oh! joyful, and glad, and merry at heart at the thoughts of the richness of the booty? 'Behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines (from Ziklag) and out of the land of Judah' (1 Sam 30:16). Here again you find a joy and merriment like these that we have under consideration, and that upon such like accounts. Nothing pleases the wicked more, than to see the godly go down the wind; for their words, and lives, and actions are a plague and a torment to them: As 'tis said of these two prophets, 'They tormented them that dwelt on the earth.'

Thirdly , While the church of God lay dead in Babylon, and as bones exceeding dry; what a trampling upon them was there by Belshazzar a little before his death! He called for his golden and silver vessels that his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of God that was at Jerusalem, (those holy vessels once dedicated to the worship and service of God) that his princes, his wives and his concubines might drink therein. An high affront to heaven: 'They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone' (Dan 5:4). And all to shew what a conquest, as he thought, he had got over the God of heaven, and over his people that dwelt in Jerusalem, and over his ordinances and vessels used in his worship and service: Yea, this he did with such joy that was not usual, as is intimated by his doing of it before 'a thousand of his lords,' and that till he had drank himself drunken. But all this while, as was hinted before, the church of God, as it were, lay dead at his feet; or as the phrase is, 'as bones exceeding dry.' This too will be the joy of the beast and his followers in the latter days; they will make war with the witnesses; they shall overcome them, and kill them; and when that is done, they shall rejoice over them, and make merry. But as Belshazzar soon after this, saw the handwriting that made his knees knock together ; and as he lived not to see the light of another day; so 'twill be with the beast and his followers; the next news that we hear upon this mirth and jollity, is,

the tenth part of his kingdom falls, and so on till the whole is ruined.

Thirdly, Moab also, in the day that Israel was taken captive by their enemies, could not forbear but skip for joy, so glad was he in his heart thereat. But what saith the jealous Lord? 'Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against the Lord: Moab also shall be in derision: For was not Israel (saith God) a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy' (Jer 48:26,27). Of all things, God cannot away with this: For when the wicked would rejoice that they have been suffered to make havoc of the church of God, they deny the wisdom and power by which they were permitted to do this, and offer sacrifice to their own net and drag (Hab 1:16); which provoketh the holiness of Israel: 'Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? As if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.' But what follows? Why, burning and consuming of soul and body of them that do such a thing (Isa 10:15-18). And this text I the rather bring, because 'tis to be the portion of Antichrist.

And therefore let this be a caution to the men that wonder after the beast, to caution them to repentance, for he will assuredly go into perdition. What! shall the witnesses of God be killed! Shall the beast stand glorying over them while they are dead, with his feet in their neck? and shall none be angry at it? Let them that love themselves look to themselves: God will be concerned, and will assuredly for this quickly put a period to the kingdom and reign of Antichrist (Jer 50:13).

And although this glorying mistress of iniquity, this Antichrist and Babylon, may say that her power is the hammer of the whole earth; yet God will cut him in sunder, and break him in pieces with his bout-hammers, [13] with the kings [14] of the earth, that he will use to do this work withal; that is, when this last sign is fulfilled: I call it the last sign; I find none that doth intervene betwixt the slaying of

the witnesses, and the beginnings of the ruin of Antichrist but this.

But a little to comment upon their joy, as the Holy Ghost doth set it forth. The cause of their joy we have touched already; which was, for that they had slain their tormentors. For, as was shewed you, the witnesses had been their tormentors: But when they shall overcome them, and kill them, they rejoice, make merry, and send gifts one to another.

This repeating, and repeating with aggravation, doth manifest, and at that day their joy will be exceeding great: 'They shall rejoice, and make merry,' &c. They shall rejoice over them, over their slain, their enemies, their tormenting enemies. This joy therefore, is a joy that flows from victory, from victory after a war that has lasted a thousand two hundred and threescore years. They shall rejoice, as they do that have a most potent, vexatious, and tormenting enemy lying dead at their foot, and as those that ride in triumph over them. They shall therefore rejoice as conquerors used to do, who make the slaughters of their spoiled enemies the trophy of their joy.

For the devil, that great deceiver of mankind, will so flush up and bewitch the men that wonder after the beast, with the victory that they shall get over the faithful witnesses for God and his Son, that they will think ('twill never be day) that the victory is so complete, so universal, so thorough, that the conquest must be lasting. And from sense and reason they will have ground to think so; for who now is left in the world any more to make head against them? but here comes in that which will utterly spoil this joy; these conquered, killed, dead men must come to life again, and then what's become of their joy? 'And great fear fell upon them which saw them' (Rev 11:11). Wherefore, this joy must fade and vanish: But, I say, the followers of the beast will be far from thinking so; for they will 'rejoice over them, make merry, and send gifts one to another,' concluding that these tormentors shall never torment them more. But Jacob's blessing upon his son Gad, shall be fulfilled upon these witnesses: 'Gad [saith he] a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last'

(Gen 49:19). So then these conquerors must not always rejoice, though they will suppose they shall, and also make merry too.

'And make merry.' To make merry, is more than to rejoice. To rejoice, doth shew the present act of the soul; but to make merry, is to use the means as will keep this joy alive, and on foot. Joy is one thing, and the continuance of it is another (1 Sam 25:36). Joy may be begotten by a conceit, a thought; but it cannot be maintained so; because deliberation will come in and spoil it (Esth 5:4), if sufficient means is not used to continue it: wherefore he adds, They rejoiced over them, 'And made merry.'

And there are five things that are usually made use of to keep up wicked joy. 1. There is the merriment of music (Luke 15:25,32). 2. The merriment of feasting (Judg 19:6,9). 3. The merriment of laughter (Eccl 10:19). 4. The merriment of fleshly solace (Jer 31:4). 5. Revenge upon a supposed enemy (2 Sam 13:28). So then, by these five things we see what is the way that sinful joy is maintained in the hearts of wicked men; and also by what means the limbs and brats of Antichrist will keep up that joy that at first will be conceived in their hearts at the thought that now they have killed their tormentors. They shall have music. They shall have feasting. They shall have laughter. They shall have fleshly solace. And they shall have their fill, for the time, of revenge. Thus therefore shall they rejoice over them, and make merry, all the time of that little, short everlasting that they are to live in the world.

'And make merry.' To make merry, to make wicked mirth, there must be a continual fraternity, or brotherhood in iniquity, maintained among them, and that where none may come to interrupt; and that they will be capable of doing any where then, for that their tormentors will be dead. Wickedness shall walk with open face in those days; for then there will be none alive for God and his ways; wherefore, the beast and his train may do what they will: now will be the time for men to live carelessly and wantonly, and to make their wantonness their joy, (after the manner of the Zidonians) for there

will be none to put them to shame.

'And shall send gifts one to another.' This is another token of their gladness, and also a means to buoy them up still. And it will be a sign that they have joined hand in hand to do this wickedness, not dreaming of the punishment that must follow. This sending of gifts to each other, and that after they have slain these two prophets, doth also declare that they will be far from repentance, for the commission of so great an offence. Nay, it signifies further, that they were resolved, and determined to quench all manner of convictions one in another, that might arise in their hearts for the sin which they had committed: for a gift blinds the eyes of the wise, and perverts the judgment of the righteous; how much more then will it stifle and choke appearances of such upon the spirits of wicked men! I question not at all but many have been, by the favours and gifts of wicked men, drawn down into the belly of hell.

Now what these gifts will be, either as to kind or quantity, that I can say nothing to: but probably, whatever they will be, there will be but little of their own cost in them. Victors and conquerors do used to visit their friends with their spoils won in battle, with the spoil of the enemies of their God (Ezra 10:7).

And this was David's way, after he had recovered the loss that he had sustained at the burning of his Ziklag; he sent to his friends of what he had taken from his enemies, as token of victory: 'David sent of the spoil (says the text) unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoils of the enemies of the Lord' (1 Sam 30:26); And why may not those we have now under consideration, do so to their god, and their friends also? Spoiling is like to be one of the last of the mischiefs that Antichrist shall do to the church of God in this world: And methinks, since the beast will have power to overcome, and to kill, he should also have power to take away (Dan 11:33): 'Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?' said the prophet to wicked Ahab.

However, whatever their gifts may be, and at whose cost soever bought, 'tis a sign their hearts will be open, they shall send gifts one to another: their merry days will then be come, and their enemies will then be dead at their feet; wherefore, now they will have nothing to do but to rejoice over them, and to make merry, and to send gifts one to another.

Thus as to sense and reason, all shall be hush, all shall be quiet and still: the followers of the Lamb shall be down; the followers of the Beast be up, cry peace and safety, and shall be as secure as an hard heart, false peace, and a deceitful devil can make them. But behold! While they thus 'sing in the windows,' death is straddling over the threshold! (Zeph 2:14). While they are crying peace and safety, sudden destruction cometh: By that they have well settled themselves at their table with Adonijah (1 Kings 1), they shall hear it proclaimed with sound of trumpet, the witnesses are risen again.

Now the Christians' pipes will go again, and surely the earth will be rent with the sound of their shouts and acclamations, while they cry with joyful sound, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever' (Rev 11:15).

But woe to the wicked, it shall be ill with them; for the Lord Jesus will now begin to shew his jealousy, and to make known his indignation towards those that have thus cruelly slain his prophets, digged down his altars, and made such havoc of the afflicted church of God (Isa 66:14). Now will he whet his glittering sword, and his hand shall take hold on vengeance, that he may render a recompence to his enemies, and repay them that hate him (Deu 32:41).

But this he will not do immediately by himself, but by such instruments as have been spoken of before: of which more particularly to treat, shall be that I shall next take in hand.

OF THE INSTRUMENTS THAT GOD WILL USE TO BRING ANTICHRIST TO HIS RUIN.

Although I have hinted at this before, yet it may be convenient briefly to touch it again. Antichrist, as I have told you, consisteth of soul and body, and must be destroyed by such instruments as may most properly be applied to each. Further, As to the soul, spirit or life of Antichrist, and its destruction, of that we have also spoken already: It remains then that now we discourse of the ruin of his body and flesh.

I then take it, That the destruction of her flesh shall come by the sword, as managed in the hands of kings, who are God's ministers for the punishment of evil deeds, and the praise of them that do well (Rom 13). Not that the church, even as a church, shall be quite exempt and have therein no hand at all; for she, even as such, shall with her faith and prayers help forward that destruction.

The church therefore, as a church, must use such weapons as are proper to her as such; and the magistrate, as a magistrate, must use such weapons as are proper to him as such. When the church of Israel were prisoners in Babylon, they did not fight their way through their foes, and the countries to Jerusalem; but waited in their captivated state with patience, until the kings of the Medes and Persians came to deliver them. Nor is it to be sleighted, but to be thought on seriously, that before there was an Israelite captive in Babylon, their deliverer Cyrus was prophesied of: which Cyrus did afterwards come and take Babylon, and deliver the captives, as it was foretold he should. He saith unto Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid' (Isa 44:28). And again, 'Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, &c. I have raised

him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of Hosts' (Isa 45:1,13). And this accordingly he did, to wit, when the time was come; as may be seen in those holy records where these things are made mention of. Indeed, as I said, the church is not excluded (2 Chron 36:2); she may, and ought, with her faith and prayer, and holy life, to second this work of kings (Ezra 1:2,3). Wherefore, when God speaks of bringing down the lofty city and of laying it low in the dust by the church, he saith, they shall do it by their feet, and with their steps: 'The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy' (Isa 26:6).

By feet and steps, I understand the good lives of the children of God: but now, when kings come to deal with her, as kings, they serve her as Samuel served Agag, as a judge, 'cut her in pieces with their swords': or as you have it elsewhere, 'They make her desolate and naked; they eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.' The sword will be put into their hands for this very purpose. Thus therefore must their deliverance be begun.

It is also to be considered, That after these first kings of the Medes and Persians had broken the yoke of the king of Babylon from off the neck of the captive church, and had given her license to go to her place to build her temple and city, and to sacrifice there according to the law of their God, (as both in Ezra and Nehemiah we read;) and when their work was hindered by under-officers, or they endeavoured so to do, they pleaded the license that they received to build and sacrifice by the decree of the first kings, and so finished their deliverance: They went not on in headstrong manner, as if they regarded neither king nor Caesar: 'But Zerubbabel, and Joshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them,' that sought to hinder their work, 'Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us' (Ezra 4:3). And as they said, so also they did: 'The elders of the Jews builded, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the

prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded, and finished it, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia' (Ezra 6:14). Yea, they did not only accept of the kindness of kings, but did acknowledge that kindness with thanksgiving, as a gift of the God of heaven: for the kings had commanded and given leave to the Jews to go to Jerusalem, to build their temple, and to do sacrifice there, according to the counsel of the priests that were at Jerusalem, and according to the law of God that they had in their hand (Ezra 7:13,14). For Artaxerxes sent Ezra the priest to inquire after the condition that Jerusalem and Judah was in, according to, or by the law of God that was in his hand (verse 14). And he had license also further to do with the king's silver and gold, which he gave of the service of the house of the Lord, 'according to the will, word or law of HIS God.' 'And thou, Ezra, [says the king] after the wisdom of thy God, [that is, after his word] that is in thine hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, [that is, worship, and walk by the rule of his testament,] and the law of the king, [that is, shall refuse to give Ezra such things as by the king was appointed for Ezra's help in the furthering of the worship of God, according to the law of his God,] let judgment be executed speedily upon him whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment' (Ezra 7:25,26). This was therefore a wonderful gracious license that the king now gave to Ezra: he imposed nothing upon him or the Jews in matters of religion and worship, but left him and them wholly to the law, will, and word of God, only he laid check upon wicked and ungodly people: that if they did things contrary to the laws of Ezra's God, or did sleight the king's law, as aforesaid, that then such penalties and pains should be inflicted upon them.

To the same purpose was the decree of Cyrus, and that of Darius, to put it in execution. Also the penalty enacted against such offenders, was full as sharp and severe: 'Also I have made a decree [said the

king,] that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, let him be hanged thereon; and let his house be made a dunghill for this. And the God that hath caused his name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter and to destroy this house of God which is at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed' (Ezra 6:11,12).

Indeed, sometimes a stop was put to this work by the kings, and the Jews were made to cease by force and power, (Ezra 4:23,24) the which the good people did bear with patience (Ezra 4:11-21): also they waited to see their God go before them among the kings, who at length took away Artaxerxes, who for a time had put a stop to the work, and brought in another, who gave leave that with speed it should be set on foot again (Ezra 5).

The Jews did also in these vacancies, or times in the which hindrances were put, carry it very tenderly and lovingly to those kings that at present they were under, submitting of their bodies and their goods to their will, and meekly endured the trial and affliction, serving them with all faithfulness, watching to save their lives from the hands of bloody men. Also when the king's laws, and the law of their God, did at any time come in competition, they would indeed adhere to, and do the law of their God; yet with that tenderness to the king, his crown and dignity, that they could at all times appeal to the righteous God about it (Dan 6:22). Nor did they lose by so doing; yea, they prospered; for by this means Mordecai was made a great man, and a saviour of his people (Esth 2:21-23) By this means also was Daniel made a great man, and helpful to his brethren (Dan 5:29).

Kings , I say, must be the men that must down with Antichrist, and they shall down with her in God's time.

God hath begun to draw the hearts of some of them from her already, and he will set them, in time, against her round about. If therefore

they do not that work so fast as we would have them, let us exercise patience and hope in God: 'tis a wonder that they go so fast as they do, since the concerns of whole kingdoms lie upon their shoulders, and that there are so many Sanballats and Tobias's to flatter with them and misinform them concerning the people that are delivered but in part. See what an ugly account was given of Jerusalem by the enemies of the Jews, even then when they were in the hands of their deliverers: 'Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us, are come unto Jerusalem, building the rebellious and bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations. Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the walls set up again, then will they not pay toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the revenue of the kings' (Ezra 4:12,13). Oh! what a be it known, be it known, is here! But were not these gentlemen more afraid of losing their own places and preferments, than of the king's losing of his toll and custom? But the whole was a lie, though it hindered the work for a time, and the patience of the people, and their loyalty to the king, did conquer and overcome all.

I speak the more to this, because, (as I have said) I believe that by magistrates and powers we shall be delivered and kept from Antichrist; and because God has already begun to do it by such, by which also she shall be destroyed: and I have a few things to present to good men, to be conversant in, in such a day as this.

Let the king have verily a place in your hearts, and with heart and mouth give God thanks for him; he is a better saviour of us than we may be aware of, and may have delivered us from more deaths than we can tell how to think. We are bidden to 'give thanks to God for all men, and in the first place, for kings, and all that are in authority' (1 Tim 2:1,2).

Be not angry with them, no, not in thy thought; but consider, if they go not on in the work of reformation so fast as thou wouldst they should, the fault may be thine; know that thou also hast thy cold and

chill frames of heart, and sittest still when thou shouldest be up and doing.

Pray for kings to the God of heaven, who has the hearts of kings in his hand: and do it 'without wrath, and doubting'; without wrath , because thy self is not perfect; and without doubting , because God governeth them, and has promised to bring down Antichrist by them.

Pray for the long life of the king.

Pray that God would always give wisdom and judgment to the king.

Pray that God would discover all plots and conspiracies against his person and government.

Pray also that God would make him able to drive away all evil and evil men from his presence; and that he may be a greater countenancer than ever, of them that are holy and good, and wait and believe, that God that has begun his quarrel with Babylon, Antichrist, the mother of Antichrist, the whore; would in his own time, and in his own way, bring her down by the means which he has appointed.

I do confess myself one of the old-fashion professors, that covet 'to fear God, and honour the king.' I also am for blessing of them that curse me, for doing good to them that hate me, and for praying for them that despitefully use me , and persecute me . And have had more peace in the practice of these things, than all the world are aware of. I only drop this, because I would shew my brethren that I also am one of them; and to set them right that have wrong thoughts of me, as to so weighty matters as these.[15]

Now these kings whose hearts God shall set to destroy Antichrist, shall do it without those inward reluctancies that will accompany inferior men: they shall be stript of all pity and compassion. Hence they are compared to the mighty waves of the sea (Jer 51:42), which

saith, when the wrecked and dying mariners cry out for mercy for themselves, and for their children, I am a sea; 'I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins' (Isa 23:4,5): I have therefore no pity for these, or any of them. Therefore they must be swallowed up of this sea, and sink like a stone in the midst of these mighty waters.

And thus much for the means by which God will destroy the body and flesh of Antichrist.

OF THE CAUSES OF THE RUIN OF ANTICHRIST.

Although the causes of the ruin of Antichrist be to some conspicuous enough, yet to some they may be otherwise; yea, and will to all kings and people whose eyes shall be held, that they may not see the judgment, in the reasonableness and equitableness thereof; and these shall wail when they see 'the smoke of hertorment'; and these shall cry, Alas! Alas! (Rev 18:10). Wherefore, for further edification, as I have treated of the man of sin already; so will I now, of the causes of his downfall. And,

FIRST CAUSE.

First, He must down, for that he hath usurped, and taken the name and attributes of God upon himself : He hath said, 'I am God': He hath set in the temple of God, 'shewing himself that he is God'; yea, and that in contempt and scorn of any other, 'exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped' (2 Thess 2); yea, hath cried down all gods but himself. Wherefore it must needs be, that he be brought to judgment, that the truth of his saying may be proved. And for this cause he is threatened, under the name of the prince of

Tyrus: 'Because thine heart is lifted up (saith the Lord) and thou hast said, I am a god, therefore I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas. Wilt thou yet say before him that slayeth thee, I am god? but thou shalt be a man, and no god, in the hand of him that slayeth thee' (Eze 28:2,7-9).

If God will not give his name or glory to another, be sure he will not be under another; but this to have, and thus to do, Antichrist has attempted. But how? In that he has been so bold as to prescribe and impose a worship besides, and without reverence of that which God has prescribed and imposed: For to do this, is, to make one's self a God. 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them': For he that thus doth, is an idolater; and he that these things doth impose, is one that shews himself a God. But this doth Antichrist do: And 'tis worth the noting, That God forbids not only images, but the likeness of any thing ; books, altars, fancies, imaginations, or any thing in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, to bow down to, or to make them a means to worship or come to God by, if he has not commanded nor tolerated them in his holy word.

Thus saith the Lord : And, I am the Lord , is the stamp , the seal , and sign of all true rules of worship; and therefore it is so often repeated both in Moses, and in the prophets, where God commandeth worship to be performed, and imposeth the means and methods of it. Now this, Thus saith the Lord , Antichrist has rejected; and I am the Lord , he hath assumed to himself: and therefore without the law, the word and commandment, hath framed and imposed a worship, exalting himself in the temple of God, although he is but the man of sin, above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.

Nor is he in this his so foul a fact, without them that adore, worship his image, and wonder after him; yea, he hath got by this means almost the whole world to himself, who say, 'Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?' (Rev 13:4). And that they might shew their resolvedness to stand by him, they receive his mark in their forehead, or in their hand; His mark ; that is, they either openly or seriously become his disciples, and worship him according to the rules, methods, and ways that he hath prescribed. Wherefore, these with him, are also to drink of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God: 'If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb' (Rev 14:9,10).

But, I say, for that Antichrist hath thus taken the place of God , prescribed and imposed a worship as a God , got the world to worship and wonder after him as after a God . Therefore shall he die the death of the uncircumcised, both in the soul, spirit, body, or flesh of Antichrist; therefore will God enlighten, and gather, and set the kings and nations against him, that both he and his may be buried, and have their dolesome withdrawing-rooms from the world in the sides of the pit's mouth.

SECOND CAUSE.

Secondly , Antichrist must be destroyed, because he hath set himself against the Son of God; against the Father, and against the Son. He had a spite against the Son betimes, even then when he came forth but in little bits , when he attempted to deny that he was come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-4). But seeing he could make no earnings of that, he hath changed his methods, and seeks to run him out and down by other means and ways: because therefore he hath set himself against the Son of God, the king, therefore he must die. That he hath set himself against the Son of God, is also evident; for he hath his name

from thence: He is therefore called Antichrist. That he hath set himself against him, is yet further evident; for that he hath endeavoured to take from him his headship over , and his offices for and in the church, which is his body. He hath plainly endeavoured to be head, for that he hath striven to take his wife from him, and to cause that she should be called HIS: Yea, he hath endeavoured by all inventions to prostrate her to his lusts, to deflower her, and to make her an adulteress. He has been worse than Pharaoh, who took Abraham's wife (Gen 12); and worse than Abimelech, who lusted after Isaac's (Gen 26): Yea, worse than Phalti, who run away with David's (1 Sam 25:44); forasmuch as she is higher, beloved better, and cost more than did any of these. Would it not be counted an high affront, for a base inferior fellow, to call himself the head of the queen? Yet thus has Antichrist done, and worse; he has called himself the head of the universal church of God.

And as he has attempted to be head in his stead, so to be king, priest, and prophet.

[1.] He has attempted to wrest his sceptre and kingdom from him, in that he hath endeavoured to thrust himself into his throne, which is the heart and conscience of his people. The heart and conscience is that which Christ claimeth for his own proper and peculiar seat: 'My son, give me thy heart.' 'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith' (Eph 3:17). In this therefore the church is not to be for another man, so will he be for her; but this throne Antichrist has lusted for, attempted to take, and made war with Christ and his church, because they would not yield up to him this glorious throne of his, and therefore he must die.

[2.] He hath intruded upon the priestly office of Christ, hath called himself high-priest ; though the Lord hath said, 'Because thou has rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children' (Hosea 4:6). But he will make himself a priest; he hath invented sacrifices for the quick and the dead : he hath put, as he

presumes, merit and worth into these sacrifices; he hath commanded that those that worship, should have faith in, and expect benefit by these sacrifices, although he offereth to his God nought else but the flesh of the hog , and of the mouse , with the broth of his abominable things (Isa 66:17). Many and sundry ways he hath set himself up to be high-priest, though God knows no high-priest but one, though the church ought to know no high-priest but one; yea, though no high-priest but one can approach God's mercy-seat, to do for us the necessary and desired work.

[3.] He hath intruded upon the prophetic office of Jesus Christ. What else means his pretences to infallibility?[16] And that too when he imposes unwritten verities, abominable traditions, blasphemous rites and ceremonies; and forbids or dispenseth with the holy commands of God: Yea, when he enforceth these his Omrian statutes, and doth impose the works of the house of Ahab (Micah 6:16), he doth all in the name of the Lord Christ, when himself hath set himself in his place, and in his room. This is mystery Babylon, the mystery of iniquity : This is Antichrist's soul and body, and as such, must be destroyed. But,

THIRD CAUSE.

Thirdly , Antichrist must be destroyed, because he hath blasphemed against the Holy Ghost , and so set himself above the Father, the Son, the Spirit; against ALL that is called God. The Holy Ghost is that Spirit of truth that Christ has promised to give unto his church, to help her in the understanding of his holy word, and to enable her to believe, and walk humbly and holily before God and man. The spirit of Antichrist is that spirit of error that hath puffed up the false church into a conceit of herself, and unscriptural worship; and that hath made this false church, which is his body, to ascribe all the horrible things and acts thereof, to the wisdom, guidance, directions or operations of the Holy Ghost: As,

1. In all her unscriptural councils, assemblies and convocations, they

blasphemously father what they do upon the Holy Ghost, and make him the inventor and approver thereof.

2. She also blasphemeth the Holy Ghost, in accusing and condemning the holy scriptures of insufficiency, for that she saith, though it is a rule, yet but an imperfect one; one deficient, one that is not able to make the man of God perfect in all things, without the traditions, inventions, and blasphemous helps of antichristian wisdom.

3. She hath also blasphemed the Holy Ghost, in that she hath set up her own church-government, offices, officers and discipline: None of all which is the church of Christ directed to by the wisdom of the Spirit of God in his testament.

4. She hath also sinned against the Holy Ghost, in that she hath, as it were, turned the Holy Ghost out of doors, in concluding that he, without the works of the flesh, is not sufficient to govern the hearts of worshippers, in the service and worship of God.

5. She hath also thus sinned, in that she hath wrought many lying miracles in the face of the world, and imposed them upon her disciples for the confirming of her errors and blasphemous opinions, to the confronting of the true miracles wrought by the Holy Ghost; and also to the concluding, that there was an insufficiency in those that were true, to confirm the truth, without the addition of hers; which she has wrought by the power of Satan, and the spirit of delusion, only to confirm her lies.

6. She hath sinned against the Holy Ghost, in that she hath, with Jeroboam the son of Nebat, striven against the judgments wherewith God hath punished her; to call her back from her wicked way; and persisted therein, to the effectual proving of herself to be the lewd woman (2 Kings 13:4-7,23,24).

7. She hath sinned, by labouring to hide all her wickedness, by lies,

dissimulations, and filthy equivocations of her priests, friars, Jesuits, &c. I say, her labouring to hide the wickedness that she hath committed against kings, countries, nations, kingdoms and people. She hath hid these things by the means or persons made mention of before; as by the tail; for they indeed are the tail of the beast, that cover his most filthy parts: The prophet that speaketh lies, he is the tail (Isa 9:15). But,

FOURTH CAUSE.

Fourthly , Antichrist must be destroyed, for the horrid outrage, and villainous murders that she hath committed upon the bodies of the saints. For there is none, as to these things, for cruelty, to be compared with the church of Antichrist, and her followers: For upon whom hath not her cruelty been shewed; have they never so little stood in her way, though never so innocently and honestly by so doing, stood to the truth and verity of God? Yea, the promoting of her own superstition, idolatry, and blasphemous rites and ceremonies, have been so pursued by her, that she has waded through a sea of innocent blood for the accomplishment thereof.

The poor church of God is a sensible bleeding witness of this, and so has been for hundreds of years together; witness the chronicles of all nations where she hath had to do; yea, and the sackcloth and ashes, and tears, and widows, and fatherless children, and their cries, of all which the holy word of God is a sufficient confirmation; 'And in her,' when God shall come to make inquisition for blood, 'will be found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth' (Rev 18:24). And yet has she such a whore's forehead, such a blindness in her judgment, and such an hard and obdurate heart, that it is not possible she should ever repent. Murders have been so natural to her, and in them her hand has been so exercised, that it is now become a custom, a trade, a pastime to her, to be either in the act, or laying some foundation for murders: Witness those plots, designs conspiracies, and frequent attempts that are, one or other of them, continually on foot in the world for the commission of

murders.

Nay, the text last mentioned seems to import, that blood is so natural to her, that she sticketh not at any condition, sex, age, or degree, so she may imbrue her hands in blood. In her was found the blood of saints and prophets, and of all other carnal, natural, ignorant, graceless men that have been slain upon the earth. It is she that sets kings and kingdoms at variance: It is she that sets parents and children at variance, by her abuse of the word of our Lord and Christ. And besides, is it not easy, if we do but consider those bloody massacres that have been committed by her hand, both in France, Ireland, Piedmont, and in several places besides, without wronging of her, to conclude, that the blood of thousands, that have not known their right hand from their left in religion, hath been shed, to quench, if it might have been, her insatiate thirst after blood. Therefore, for these things shall she be judged, as women that shed blood are judged; because she is an adulteress, and blood is in her hands (Eze 23:45). She hath been as a beast of prey: Nay, worse; for they do but kill and tear for the hunger of themselves, and of their whelps: but she, to satisfy her wanton and beastly lusts. 'They have cast lots for my people; [saith God] and have given a boy for an harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink' (Joel 3:3): and therefore must Antichrist be destroyed. Forbearance is no payment, God's patience is not a sign that he forgetteth to take vengeance; but rather, that he waiteth till his own are come out of her, and until her iniquity is filled up: For then he will execute the judgment written, and will remember, as has been said, the Babylonians, and all their ways. [17]

FIFTH CAUSE.

Fifthly , Antichrist must be destroyed, because she hath put out of order, and confounded the rule and government that God has set up in the world. I say, she has put it out of order, and confounded it in all places where she rules; so that it cannot accomplish the design of him that ordained it, To wit, To be a terror to evil works, and a praise to them that do well. Wherefore we read, That those horns or kings

where Mystery Babylon sitteth, are upon the heads of that beast that carrieth her, which beast is her protector. Magistracy is God's ordinance, appointed for the good of society, and for the peace and safety of those that are good. But this Antichrist has, where she rules, put all out of order; and no wonder, for she has bepuddled the word of God; no wonder, then, I say, if the foundations of the world be out of course. 'Tis she that hath turned the sword of the magistrate against those that keep God's law: 'Tis she that has made it the ruin of the good and virtuous, and a protection to the vile and base. Wherefore, when the Holy Ghost tells us, that the time is coming in which God will count with the bloody-minded, for the murders that they have committed; he in a manner doth quite excuse the magistrate, saying, 'Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and robbery; the prey departeth not: The noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots. The horseman lifteth up both the bright sword, and the glittering spear: and there is a multitude of slain, and a great number of carcasses; and there is no end of their corpses; they stumble upon their corpses' (Nahum 3:1-3). But what is the cause of all this slaying, and the reason of this abundance of corpses? Why, it is because of the unsatiabable thirst of the bloody city after blood: and, 'Because of the multitude of the whoredoms of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts, that selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts' (verse 4). But doth this bloody city spill this blood by herself simply, as she is the adulterated whore? No, this church has found out a trick; that is to say, to quarrel with Christ in his members; and to persuade the powers where she rules to set ensnaring laws to catch them, and to execute the same upon them.

Thus when the synagogue of Satan, of old, had taken Christ, and accused him, they made Pontius Pilate to condemn and hang him. But God has begun to shew to some of the kings this wickedness, and has prevailed with them to PROTEST against her. And in the mean time, for those that are yet in the bed of love with her, the Holy Ghost doth, in the text last mentioned, and in Revelation 18:24 much

excuse them for the blood that they have shed, and for the injuries that they have done to his people; because they have not done it of their mere inclinations, nor in the prosecution of their office, but through the whoredoms and witchcrafts of this well-favoured harlot, who hath with false doctrines, false promises, and causeless curses, prevailed on them to do it. And they have done it, rather of fear than favour . Some indeed have more doted upon her beauty, and have more thoroughly been devoted to her service: But they also had not that aptness to do so of themselves, but have been forced to it by the power of her enchantments: Therefore, I say, the main guilt shall be laid at her door, for that she in chief has deserved it. 'Son of man [says God] take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel.' Why? Because their mother, the church, was at that time adulterated, and become a lioness, had lain down with the heathen, and so brought forth young lions, that is, rulers: 'And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men' (Eze 19:1-3). It learnt , It learnt : But of who but of its dam , or of the lioness to whom she had put it to learn to do such things? Therefore they are to be lamented and pitied, rather than condemned, and their mother made to bear the blame. Wherefore it follows, 'She was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them. And now she is planted in the wilderness, (in the provinces of Babylon,) in a dry and thirsty ground. And fire is gone out of a rod of her branches, which hath devoured her fruit, so that he hath no strong rod to be a sceptre to rule. This is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation' (Eze 19:12-14).

SIXTH CAUSE.

Sixthly , Antichrist must be destroyed, because of her exceeding covetousness . Religion, such as it is, is the thing pretended to: But the great things of this world, are the things really intended by her in all her seeming self-denials and devotions. And for this covetousness also it is that this destruction is to fall upon her: 'Woe to him that

coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, (to his church) that he may set his nest on high' (Hab 2:9); (for he could not do the one, before he had obtained the other:) for then indeed they began to be high, when they had so inveigled Constantine, that he bestowed upon them much riches and honour; and then it was cried by an angel, and the cry was heard in the city, Constantinople! 'Woe! woe! woe! this day is venom poured into the church of God!' (as both my Lord Cobham and Mr. Fox witness in the book of Acts and Monuments). [18]

Nor has any generation since the world began, been so insatiably greedy of gain, as these poor people have been: They have got kingdoms, they have got crowns, they have got, What have they not got? They have got everything but grace and pardon. Did I say before, that religion is their pretence? Doth not the whole course of their way declare it to their face? Every one of them, from the least even to the greatest, is given to covetousness, from the prophet even to the priest, every one dealeth falsely (Jer 6:13, 8:10): Money, money, as the peddlar cries, [19] broken or whole, is the sinews of their religion: And it is for that they set kingdoms, crowns, principalities, places, preferments, sacraments, pardons, prayers, indulgences, liberty; yea, and souls and bodies of men, women and children, to sale. Yea, it is for this that they have invented so many places, offices, names, titles, orders, vows, &c. It is to get money, to rob countries, that they may make their nests on high. And indeed they have done it, to the amazement of all the world. They are clambered up above kings and princes, and emperors: [20] They wear the triple-crown: They have made kings bow at their feet, and emperors, stand barefoot at their gates: They have kicked the crowns of princes from their heads, and set them on again with their toes. [21] Thus their covetousness has set them high, even above the suns, moons and stars of this world: but to what end? That they may be cast down to hell.

SEVENTH CAUSE.

Seventhly , Antichrist must be destroyed, because he standeth in the way of the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the world . Many princes were in Edom before there was a king in Israel; and Christ has suffered Antichrist to set up before him. And he standeth in his way, and has so overspread the world in all places, with that which is directly contrary to him, that he cannot set up his kingdom, until that which is Antichrist's is tumbled down to the ground; even as a man whose ground is full of thorns, and briars, and weeds, cannot sow in expectation of a crop, until he hath removed them. And these seeds has Antichrist sown where the kingdom of Christ should stand: 'Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: Because the palaces shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left; the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks, [this is to happen to the church of God,] Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest' (Isa 32:13-15). And the antichristian synagoue be turned into a wilderness.

When God came from Egypt with his people, to set up his kingdom in Canaan, he cast out the heathen before them in order thereunto; 'Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it' (Psa 80:8). Wherefore, Antichrist must be removed and destroyed for this: For Antichrist is in flat opposition to Christ, as Tibni was to Omri (1 Kings 16:21,22): Wherefore Antichrist must die. The reason is, because Christ's kingdom shall be peaceable, without molestation; and glorious, without the fumes and fogs of antichristian darkness: Because also, as the world hath seen the manner of the reign of Antichrist, and how tyrannical and outrageous a kingdom his is: so they shall see the reign of Christ, by his word and spirit in his people, how peaceable, how fruitful in blessedness and prosperity his kingdom is. And hence it is that God purposeth to bury Antichrist, before he sets 'glory in the land of the living' (Eze 26:20,21). As also you read in the book of Revelations; for there you find the kingdom of Antichrist was destroyed before the new Jerusalem was set up. When men intend to build a new house, if

in the place where the old one stood, they first pull down the old one, raze the foundation, and then they begin their new. Now God, as I said, will have his primitive church-state set up in this world, (even where Antichrist has set up his;) wherefore, in order to this, Antichrist must be pulled down, down stick and stone; and then they that live to see it, will behold the new Jerusalem come down from heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband.

New wine is not put into old bottles, nor a new piece into an old garment; nor shall any of the old anti-scriptural ordinances, ceremonies, rites, or vessels of the man of sin, be made use of, or accounted anything worth, in this day of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. And thus I have shewed you something of Antichrist, of his ruin, and of the manner and signs of the approach thereof; together with the means and causes of his ruin. All which I leave to the judgment of the godly, and beg their instruction where they see me to be out; and shall conclude, after a short word of application.

First, Must Antichrist be destroyed? Then this informs us, that a time is coming wherein there shall be no Antichrist to afflict God's church any more. 'Tis Antichrist, antichristians, and antichristianism, that is the cause of the troubles of Christians, for being Christians . And therefore 'tis from the consideration of this that it is said, men 'shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks,' and that they 'shall learn war no more' (Isa 2:4): Yea it is from the consideration of this, that it is said the child shall play with venomous and destroying beasts, and that a little child shall lead the wolf , the leopard , and the young lion , and that the weaned child shall put his hand into the cockatrice's den, and catch no hurt thereby (Isa 11:6-9). For as was said before, 'tis through the instigation of this spirit of error, that the governors of the world have heretofore done hurt to Zion, and I say now again, all things shall turn to their right course, and occupy their places, as do the bodies in the higher orbs.

Secondly, Is Antichrist to be destroyed, and must she have an end?

Then this gives us to understand, that a day is coming when Antichrist shall be unknown, not seen, nor felt by the church of God. There are men to be born who shall not know Antichrist, but as they read in the word that such a thing has been. These shall talk of her, as Israel's childrens' children were to talk of Pharaoh, of his cruelty; of his tasks, of his pride, of the Red Sea, and how he was drowned there: They shall talk of them, as of those that have been long dead; as of those who for their horrible wickedness, are laid in the pit's mouth. This will be some of that sweet chat that the saints shall, at their spare hours, have in time to come. When God has pulled this dragon out of the sea, this leviathan out of his river, and cast his dead carcase upon the open field, then shall those whose ancestors have been put into terrors by him, come flocking to see the monster; and shall rejoice for all the mercy. In that day, the church of God shall say, 'O Lord I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. In that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people,' &c. (Isa 12:1,4). O how sweetly did David, and the church in his day, sing of the ruins of the Egyptians, and the deliverances of their fathers, which had been in times of old! (Psa 68). to wit, what God did in Egypt, what he did at the Red Sea; what he did to Sihon, to Og, and to the remnant of the giants: How he divided the waters of Jordan, and gave the land of Canaan in its fruitfulness among his people (Psa 105): How that though Pharaoh and his horsemen and chariots were terrible then, yet now there is nothing left but their souls, their feet, and the palms of their hands; nothing but that which can do no hurt; nothing but what may minister an occasion of joyful remembrance of them (Psa 106; 132).

Thirdly, Is Antichrist to be destroyed? Then this calls aloud to God's people to make haste to come out of her. 'Ho, ho,' says the prophet: He cries out as if the people were asleep: 'Come forth, and flee from the land of the north' (Zech 2:6). The people of God in the latter days will want a heart to come out of her, with that fear of her plagues as they should: Wherefore another says, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins and that ye receive not of her

plagues' (Rev 18:4). When Israel was carried into Babylon, 'twas not that they should dwell there for ever: Though they were bid to build them houses, and beget them children there. But when they had built, planted vineyards, and got wives and children there, 'twas hard getting them from thence again: For now they were as it were naturalized to the country, and to the manners of it (Jer 29:4-7). But God will have them out, (but they must not think to carry thence their houses and vineyards on their backs,) or he will destroy them with those destructions wherewith he hath threatened to destroy Babylon itself. Flesh will hang behind, because it favoureth the things of the flesh, plenty of which there is in that country: But they that will live after the flesh must die. 'Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty' (2 Cor 6:17,18). But why (some may say) must we come out ? I answer, because God has temple-work to do, temple-worship to do, temple-sacrifices to offer, and none of these things can by any means be done, but at Jerusalem. But if you still object and say, 'The Lord has raised us up prophets in Babylon,' and we will not come out; you must not murmur if you feel what is to follow. And that such may know upon what bottom they stand, let them read the 29th chapter of Jeremiah 15-19.

Fourthly, Must Antichrist be destroyed? Then what mean they, who were to appearance once come out, but now are going thither again ? If it cost Lot's wife dear for but looking back, shall not it cost them much dearer, that are going back, that are gone back again? and that, AFTER the angel had fled through the midst of heaven, preaching the gospel to those that dwell on the earth? (Rev 14:6-10). They that received the mark of the beast at first, before this angel came forth, are when compared with these, excusable (Rev 13:16,17): Wherefore, they are not threatened with that smoking wrath, as are these which are here under consideration.

You dread, that which is like to become of them that will be so mad

to run into an house, when fire is putting to the gunpowder barrel, in order to its blowing up: Why thus do they, let their pretended cause be what it will, that are returning again to Babel. Are her plagues pleasant or easy to be borne? Or dost thou think that God is at play with thee, and that he threateneth but in jest? Her plagues are death, and mourning, and famine, and fire (Rev 18:8); are these things to be overlooked? And they that, as before is hinted, shall receive the mark of the beast in their forehead, or in their hand, and shall worship him, they, 'the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God' (Rev 14:10): And will this be a delightsome draught? Remember how ill God took it, that his people of old, in their hearts, though but in their hearts, went back again into Egypt. You may say, but I have friends, relations, and concerns in Babylon. And, I answer, so had Lot in Sodom (Gen 19:14-16); but for all that, he must either quickly come out, or run the hazard of being burned there with them. But methinks, a people that belong to God, should be willing to leave all to follow him: Besides, his presence is promised at Jerusalem, there also will he accept thy offerings.

Fifthly, Is Antichrist to be destroyed? Then let them that love God, his Son, and his Zion, cry to God, that it may be hastened in its time. One of the songs of Zion is, that Babylon shall be destroyed. The cries of the souls of them that were slain for the witness of Jesus is, that Babylon may be counted with, and that their blood may be revenged upon her. The promise is, that Babylon shall be destroyed: And do we hold our tongues? The church of God will not flourish as it should, until Babylon is destroyed: The world will never be in its right wits, until Babylon is destroyed: The kingdom of Christ will never be set up, in and by his church, as it ought, and shall, until Antichrist is destroyed: There will never be peace upon earth till Antichrist is destroyed: And God has promised that there shall be peace and truth, and glory, when Babylon is destroyed: And do we hold our peace? Besides, your innocency in suffering; your honesty towards God, in your testimony for his truth; the substantial ground which you have for the bottom of your faith, as to things controverted betwixt Antichrist and you, will never be manifested as

it will then; and so consequently, you never so brought out to the light, and your enemies never so put to shame as then. 'Then shame shall cover her that said unto thee, Where is the Lord thy God?' Wherefore, as I said, cry unto the Lord, keep not silence, give him no rest, let him not alone, until he has delivered his miserable people out of the mouth of this lion, and from the paw of this bear.

Sixthly, Is Antichrist to be destroyed? Then let us live in the expectation of it ; and let this be one of our songs in the house of our pilgrimage. God bids his people, while in Babylon, to let Jerusalem come into their mind (Jer 51:50), and writes to them that then were in her, to acquaint them that he remembered them still, and would assuredly deliver them from that place and state . And wherefore doth he thus, but to beget an expectation in them of their salvation and deliverance? (Jer 29:13,14). The Lord is so pleased with the faith and expectation of his people, as to this, that they seldom are herein concerned as they should, but he steps in with them, and warms their hearts. The reason is, because the faith of God's people, as to the downfall of Babylon, stands upon as sure a foundation as doth the salvation of their souls; and that next to that, God is as much delighted in what he has purposed to do against Babylon, as in anything else in the earth: And therefore, if you consider it well, the great and glorious promises that are to be fulfilled on earth, are to be fulfilled when Antichrist is dead and buried: These bits are too good even for his children to have, so long as this dog is by, lest he should snatch at the crumbs thereof; wherefore they are reserved until he is gone: For thus saith the Lord, 'That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place: For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.' This is in Jeremiah the 29th chapter, verses 10, 11 and in the 31st chapter he adds, 'Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and of the young of the flock and of the herd: and their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all.

Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord' (verse 12-14). Again, in the 32nd chapter, still speaking of the same thing, he saith, 'Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul' (verse 41).

I conclude this with that which I find in the 33rd chapter: 'And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honour before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble, for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it' (verse 8,9).

Seventhly, Must Antichrist be destroyed? Then this should make us glad, when we see the signs of his fall presenting themselves to our view . Indeed, the signs of his fall, or those that forerun it, are terrible, and amazing to behold. But what of that, since the wrinkles that are in their faces threaten not us but them? A man is angry, and will punish; yea, and whets his sword, makes his rod, and he speaks not a word, but blood, blood , is in it. Indeed, this should make them that are concerned in this anger, be afraid; (but the judgment is, they are fast asleep,) but what is in all this of terror to them, for the pleading whose cause he is so angry with the other? Nothing whereat the innocent should be afraid. Cold blasts in November are not received with that gentleness as are colder in March and April; for that these last cold ones are but the farewell notes of a piercing winter; they also bring with them the signs and tokens of a comfortable summer. Why, the church is now at the rising of the year; let then the blasts at present, or to come, be what they will, Antichrist is assuredly drawing towards his downfall: And though the devil, knowing what is to be done to him, and to his kingdom, shall

so blind his disciples, and fright the godly, do something like it upon the church of Christ; yet we should look through these paper-winkers ,[22] and espy in all this, that fear, yea, certain terrible judgments are following of him at the heels, by which not only the soul, spirit, and life of Antichrist, but the body thereof; yea, body, and soul, and head, are quickly to go down thither; from whence they, as such, shall not arise again. Amen.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] 'Paper-winkers, ' in every edition, except the first, which was from the author's manuscript, has been altered to 'paper-windows.' Bunyan's allusion is to the winkers, called by many 'blinkers,' put by the side of a horse's eyes, to keep him under the complete control of his driver and by 'paper-winkers' the flimsy attempt of Antichrist to hoodwink mankind by printed legends, miracles, and absurd assumptions it is one of the almost innumerable sparks of wit, which render all the writings of Bunyan so entertaining and strikingly instructive. Ed.

[2] The absurd act to compel uniformity in modes of worship, (14) Charles II, had then recently passed; and when this treatise was written, it desolated the country. This paved the way for the glorious Revolution. The wicked fell into the pit which they had dug for the righteous; the hopes of the Papists were crushed; toleration to worship God was established. Let us follow Bunyan's example, and attribute these mercies to a gracious God. Ed.

[3] When seven members of the first protesting church in London were burned, a proclamation was made that no one should pray for them, speak to them, nor once say, 'God help them.' But the church pressed through the officers, embraced and prayed for and with the martyrs; and all the people with one consent said, Amen; to the

astonishment of the officers. And so these godly martyrs, praying and praising God, sweetly ended their lives in the flames at Smithfield. Clarke's Martyrology , p. 500 and 516. Ed.

[4] Christian, read in these words your duty. Bunyan felt the tusks of the wild boar, even to the peril of his life. He bore with resignation all his sufferings, and was blest. Pity those whose souls are under the yoke. Antichrist, if cruel to the body, is more dangerous to the souls of men. Your prayers and exertions should be redoubled until it is delivered up to the just judgment of the Almighty. Come out, O Christian, and be separate from every system which is stained with the blood and defiled with the soul-harrowing groans of the saints of God. Ed.

[5] No man of the most refined education could have manifested greater delicacy than Bunyan has in treating this subject, leaving his reader to imagine whether the high-sounding titles, such as 'His Holiness,' 'God's Vicegerent upon earth,' which are given to men, are consistent with the simplicity of the gospel or not. If they are not, they belong to Antichrist, and will be consumed with the stubble at the brightness of Christ's coming, when he shall judge the earth. Ed.

[6] Antichristian statistics of Antichrist. Those who weigh things to place them in their relative order in the kingdom of Antichrist, as the decree followed by the lions' den, &c.

[7] The homilies read in the Church of England prior to the Reformation, called 'The Festival,' contains the pith of these lying legends and pretended miracles. Omitting the obscene parts, it ought to be republished, to exhibit the absurdities of popery as it was then seen in England. Ed.

[8] 'The last stroke of the batter,' probably alludes to an engine of war used by the ancients, called a battering-ram. Ed.

[9] Upon the Sunday sports being authorized, and pious ministers

persecuted for refusing to wear popish vestments in the reign of James I, that godly Puritan, Mr. Carter, exclaimed, 'I have had a longing desire to see or hear of the fall of Antichrist: but I check myself. I shall go to heaven, and there news will come, thick, thick, thick.' Life by his Son , p. 13.

[10] How remarkably has this come to pass since Bunyan's time; a slow but sure progression. That darling ugly daughter, Intolerance, was executed by the Act of Toleration. The impious Test by the repeal of the Sacramental Test Act, &c., &c.Ed.

[11] There is great difficulty in estimating the weight of a talent. Dr. Gill considers it about sixty pounds; this was the lesser Roman talent. Michaelis estimates the Jewish talent at thirty-two pounds and a half. The attic talent of gold used in Greece in the time of Homer is estimated at less than an ounce. The safest conclusion as to the weight of the hail-stones is, that they were enormous, and fell with a velocity to crush all animals to instant death.Ed.

[12] The reader must not misunderstand the words, 'The king kills her body.' Bunyan does not in the slightest degree concede to kings or nations a right to interfere with 'the soul' or religious principles or practices these are to be slain, if false, by persecution of the preacher. Kings and nations will restore to the people the immense property and revenue of which they have been plundered, under the hollow knavish pretence of curing souls and forgiving sins. THUS will human laws kill the body of Antichrist. Every motive for professing to believe absurdities and contradictions will be at an end, when neither rule nor honour, nor pelf is to be gained by hypocrisy.Ed.

[13] This is a very expressive term, but better understood by Bunyan the brazier than by many of his readers. It is well known to those who live near a coppersmith's, when three or four athletic men are keeping up, bout and bout, incessant blows upon a rivet, until their object is accomplished.Ed.

[14] Protestant kings.

[15] This Christian temper of Bunyan certainly saved him from much suffering while under persecution. It probably saved his invaluable life. But how deeply it increases the guilt of his persecutors, to send such a man to a damp wretched prison, for more than twelve years, because he dared not join in the worship established by law; and after all this, to hear his prayers and good wishes to his persecutors, ought to have cut them to the quick.Ed.

[16] Lord, what is man, to pretend to infallibility! His heart, be he pope or pagan, is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' Pope Sixtus V in 1589 issued his infallible Bible; but the edition of Clement VIII, in 1592, differs much from that of 1589. Infallibles ought never to differ with each other; but how often it has happened.Ed.

[17] These bloody massacres, to which Bunyan here alludes, were attended with atrocities at which nature shudders. In France, under a Bourbon and a Guise, the murder of hundreds of thousands of pious men and women, with helpless infants, threw down every barrier to the spread of infidelity, and a frightful reaction took place at the Revolution. In Ireland, under a Stuart and a Bourbon, still more frightful atrocities were perpetrated, and which were severely punished by Cromwell and his Roundheads. Under a second Stuart, awful wholesale murders were again committed, and punished by William III; and the voice of the blood that was shed by Antichrist, and the voices of people enslaved by prejudice, and vindictive, ferocious enmitythese voices cry for vengeance, and desolate that unhappy country.Ed.

[18] In the first examination of Lord Cobham (Fox, vi p. 732, edit. 1632) the gallant knight was asked by his bitter persecutor, what he meant by 'the venom shed over the church'; his reply was, 'Your possession and lordships.' For then cried an angel in the air'Wo! Wo! Wo! this day is venom shed into the church of God.Rome is the very

nest of Antichristprelates, priests and monks are the body; and these pild [bald, but query, pillaging] friars are the tail, which covereth his most filthy part.' How peaceful and blessed will be the church when ALL her ministers can glory with Paul, in Acts 20:33,34.Ed.

[19] The principal cry of the traveling peddlars was for broken or light money, to exchange for their wares: now obsolete.Ed.

[20] Such has been the tendency of the antichristian church in all ages; witness the cases of the Emperor Henry IV, Henry II of England, and many others. The spirit and precept of Christianity, on the contrary, is, while fearing God, to honour the king; and that we be subject to principalities and powers, Titus 3:1; see also Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1-7.Ed.

[21] See Fox's Martyr, folio, vol. i., last leaf.Ed.

[22] 'Paper-winkers, ' in every edition, except the first, which was from the author's manuscript, has been altered to 'paper-windows.' Bunyan's allusion is to the winkers, called by many 'blinkers,' put by the side of a horse's eyes, to keep him under the complete control of his driverand by 'paper-winkers' the flimsy attempt of Antichrist to hoodwink mankind by printed legends, miracles, and absurd assumptionsit is one of the almost innumerable sparks of wit, which render all the writings of Bunyan so entertaining and strikingly instructive.Ed.