

TWO SERMONS,

DELIVERED

IN

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF ALBANY,

ON THURSDAY, SEPT. 8, 1808;

BEING THE DAY RECOMMENDED

BY

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES,

FOR

FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

BY JOHN B. ROMEYN, A. M.

I believed, therefore have I spoken.

Ps. 116, 10.

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1808.

At a joint meeting of the members of the Session and Corporation of the Presbyterian Church in Albany, 24th Sept. 1808.

WHEREAS a considerable number of persons who attended divine worship in this Church, on the day last appointed by the General Assembly of our Church, to be observed as a day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, have expressed their wishes that application should be made to the Rev. Mr. Romeyn, for a copy of the Sermons preached by him, on that day, for publication—Thereupon,

Resolved, That Doct. *Willard* and Mr. *Beers*, be a committee to request the Rev. John B. Romeyn to furnish a copy of his Sermons, preached on the last fast day, for publication ; and, that the said committee cause the same to be published, in such a way as they may think proper.

ABRAHAM EIGHTS, *Moderator*.

PETER BOYD, *Clerk*.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Sermons do not appear in print, exactly as they were delivered. Indeed they could not; for a part of the second was not written at full length. No material alteration has, however, been made, either in the arrangement or sentiments. The latter, for the sake of perspicuity, have been enlarged in some parts. Could the author have finished his original design, he would have preached three discourses on the subject, but his health would not permit. This has rendered, in the publication of the two, an Appendix necessary, as well for the more full illustration of his sentiments, as for the quotation of his authorities. From several writers he has made large extracts for the sake of such of his readers as might not have them, or could not readily obtain them.

To the despisers of Prophecy, if any such should be tempted to turn over these pages, he is aware that what is advanced on this subject will appear ridiculous. To them, however, he would say, as Sir Isaac Newton did of Christianity to the celebrated Dr. Hally, the astronomer, who was an infidel: "You should not talk of PROPHECY, for you have not studied it. I have, and I am certain you know nothing of the matter."

Some who reverence prophecy are disposed to discourage every attempt to apply it to the times in which we live. Such may, perhaps, consider the present one, rash and unwarrantable; but they would do well to bear in mind what Bishop Hurd says on this very point:—"It being then necessary that prophecy should, from the first, convey some light to us, and

time having now very much increased that light, it follows that men may, excuseably, employ themselves in studying and contemplating even unfulfilled prophecies. They may conjecture, modestly, of points which time has not yet revealed ; but they should in no case pronounce confidently, or decide dogmatically upon them. It seems, therefore, to be going too far to pass an indiscriminate censure on all those who have proposed their thoughts on the sense of prophecies not yet completed, though it be ever so clear that a wrong construction has been made of them.”*

The description given of the Catholic Church, and the expressions used concerning her members, will, no doubt by many, be considered as illiberal, and the effusions of mere bigotry. The author, however, disclaims the charge totally. He has said NO MORE than what the best informed and most pious Protestant writers have advanced at different times since the reformation, and what the conduct of the Roman Catholics, at different times, completely proves. This will be seen in the Appendix.

The conjectures started concerning the revival of popery, and other subjects connected with it, may prove, in the issue, erroneous. The moral and religious truths, however, advanced and enforced, are those of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and deserve serious consideration in the present awful crisis.

The Sermons, such as they are, would not have seen the light, had it not been that the author is on the eve of leaving a congregation to which he feels warmly attached. Under such circumstances, the

* Hurd on Prophecy, Vol. 2, p. 70. 5th ed.

request made for publication, could not well be declined by him. To this congregation he inscribes these Sermons, as a small memorial of his respect and affection. He wishes it was one of more durable materials, for he has not the vanity to imagine this production will survive the moment which gave it birth. But, whatever may be its fate, whilst his heart beats, he will ever sympathize with the people to whom it is addressed, in all the varieties of their state, and warmly remember them in prayer to that glorious and holy being, who is their God and his God—their Father and his Father.

Albany, October 4th, 1808.

SERMON I.

ISAIAH xxvi. 20—21:

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast : for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.

THE government of God soothes the distress of all believers, and excites hope in their bosoms under the heaviest calamities. His throne is their refuge to which they fly in every dark season, secure of protection and assistance. “ Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground,”* but both happen by his appointment and are under his direction. He doeth all his pleasure in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, as Lord God Omnipotent, whose hand none can stay, and to whom none can say, what doest thou.† For this, the earth is called upon by the psalmist to rejoice, and the multitude of isles to be glad thereof.‡ His administration, though it may often appear exceptionable to our limited views, is worthy of himself. It is like his nature, holy, just and good ; void of defect—yea of the shadow of defect.

Over his church he exercises especial care, and to the promotion of her interest he bends the various movements of men and dispensations of his providence. Not but that he suffers her to be persecuted,

* Job v. 6.

† Dan. iv. 35.

‡ Ps. xcvi. 1.

and to undergo heavy calamities. From these, however, he eventually extricates her ; supporting her under them whilst they last, and enabling her to profit by them when they are over. On her enemies he looks with holy displeasure, and for their wickedness he will visit them most awfully. He may bear with them a while—permit them to oppress his heritage and triumph over his cause. But, they are only ripening for destruction—preparing for themselves the overflowing of his wrath. He will come in his own good season, out of his place, to punish them for their iniquity, and to make inquest for the blood they have shed unrighteously. At such times it is the duty of his people to retire from the storm, and flee to their hiding-place, their sanctuary, that they may be preserved from ruin. To this line of conduct they are directed, in the words of the text, which form the conclusion of a sublime song of praise to God, commemorative of his mercy and grace towards Zion, that strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation.

What subject, my hearers, can be more suitable for us than this, assembled as we are, “ to beseech the ruler of the universe that, for Christ’s sake, he would be pleased to avert the calamities with which we are threatened : that he would restore harmony to the contending nations of the world : that he would pour out his spirit on our own churches more generally and abundantly : bless the efforts that are making to christianize the heathen, and to extend the blessings of the gospel to the destitute inhabitants of our land.”*

* The words used by the General Assembly.

The crisis we have reached is awful. It involves in it every thing that can alarm our fears or excite our prayers. It becomes us steadily to view it ; to examine it, in its various aspects, with care ; not to shrink from it or drive it from our minds. Thus we shall be able to ascertain our duty, as christians, under present circumstances. Let us then,

I. Investigate the fact stated in the text, and ascertain how far it is applicable to the present times :

II. Illustrate the exhortation given ; and enforce it, by way of improvement, on the present solemn occasion.

The field of discussion before us is wide ; the subjects to be handled are various. Many of them have been brought into view, again and again, as matters of political speculation. My design is, to consider them in their connexion with religion, and, by the gospel, to examine them. Your patient and candid attention is solicited, to whatever may be offered.

I. The fact stated in the text is first expressed by one word, viz. “the indignation,” and then more fully explained by what follows : “the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.”* In these words, “there is an obvious allusion to a prince, “whose proper place of residence is his palace, from “whence, at certain times, he makes excursions, to

* This appears from the connexion, and the language used, to be more natural, than to make “the indignation” refer to the persecution of God’s people by tyrants, and “the Lord’s coming out of his place,” to his judgment on those tyrants. See Calvin on the text, and Poole in his Annotations.

“ inspect the state of his kingdom, to examine into
 “ the conduct of his subjects, and to dispense among
 “ them, rewards and punishments, according to their
 “ deserts. Thus the Lord is said to come forth
 “ from heaven, his holy place, to give glorious de-
 “ monstration of his mercy, in preserving and bles-
 “ sing his people, and rich displays of his righteous-
 “ ness when he proceeds to punish the inhabitants
 “ of the earth for their iniquity.”*

The persons here intended are, doubtless, the enemies of the Church; not so much individually, as in their collective capacity, consisting of private members and rulers of a nation. The iniquity to be punished, was their treachery and perfidy, their barbarity and cruelty, exercised towards his servants, whom they counted as sheep for the slaughter, and whose blood they shed in the most wanton manner. Such enormous transgressions—such outrages upon every principle of equity and humanity, must, sooner or later, meet with a righteous retribution. “ Tho’ hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished ;”† for, verily, there is a God who judgeth in the earth. He may, for a while, suspend their punishment ; but, in the end, will cause his vengeance to overwhelm them. They may, as individuals, indeed escape in this life, but in that which is to come they shall assuredly meet their doom. In their collective capacity, however, as public bodies, they will be visited with times of vengeance, in this world ; for, as such, they will not exist in eternity.

The history of mankind abundantly and irrefutably proves the truth of scripture, that no people who

* Macculloch on Isaiah.

† Prov. xi. 21.

exalted themselves against God, ever prospered. The cities of the plain he turned into ashes, “condemning them with an overthrow, making them an ensample to those that after should live ungodly.”* The Amorites, who inhabited the land of Canaan, when their iniquity was full, were cut off with an awful destruction ; so that but few were left to tell the tale of their calamity. Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, in their turn, persecuted his people to gratify their ambition, and blasphemed his name to exalt their idols ; and, in their turn, they have perished, as monuments of his indignation. In later times, how fearfully did he punish the Roman empire, and bring to an untimely end, with dreadful marks of his anger, the mad tyrants who oppressed his heritage ! “They who insulted over the Divinity,” says the eloquent Lactantius, “lie low ; they who cast down
 “ the holy temple are fallen with more tremendous
 “ ruin : and the tormentors of just men have poured
 “ out their guilty souls amidst plagues, inflicted by
 “ heaven, and amidst deserved tortures. For God
 “ delayed to punish them, that, by great and marvelous
 “ examples, he might teach posterity that he alone is God, and that, with fit vengeance, he executes judgments on the proud, the impious and
 “ the persecutors.”†

To a retribution more full than any that has yet happened, the text, from the strong expressions used, evidently refers. Such an one will take place when the vials of God’s wrath shall be poured out upon mystical Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abomi-

* 2 Pet. ii. 6.

† Lactantius de Mortibus Persecutorum.

nation of the earth. As she has been pre-eminent in her idolatries, her cruelties, her blasphemies, and her hatred against the saints of the Most High ; so her punishment will be proportionably exemplary. To the time of her visitation then, which will involve in it all who have been connected with her, we must look for the completion of that judgment, which is threatened in this prophecy, on the inhabitants of the earth.* Perhaps, indeed, she is here particularly meant ; as “ the earth,” in the book of Revelation, always means the Roman empire. Many circumstances conspire to render it probable that she has nearly finished her course of impiety, and is ripening fast for her final overthrow.

We are indubitably in that period which is called in Scripture, “ the last days,” and drawing near to the end thereof. The three great monarchies, the Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian, mentioned by Daniel, have, in succession, disappeared from the theatre of the world, and made way for the Roman, which is the fourth, and still exists, though broken, or divided into various parts, by the irruption and establishment of the northern barbarians within its extensive borders. These parts, or kingdoms, were originally ten, according to the prophecies of scripture and the particular account of historians.†— Without enumerating them, suffice it to say, they possessed that range of territory which now includes Spain, Portugal, France, Switzerland, Germany south of the Danube, Hungary, Italy, Britain, Belgium, and Holland. From amongst these ten king-

* See Note 1. † See Note 2.

doms, the spiritual empire of the church of Rome has arisen, which Daniel predicted under the emblem of the little horn of the fourth beast ;* and which John saw as a two horned beast rising out of the earth.† This grand apostacy, we are informed, is to last for a time, times, and the dividing of time ;‡ which is the same with forty-two prophetic months,|| or twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days,§ answering, according to common calculation, to so many years. If we date its commencement¶ from the year 606, when Phocas, emperor of Constantinople, constituted Boniface, the bishop of Rome, universal bishop, or supreme head in spiritual matters—Or from the year 756, when Pepin made a grant of the ~~LA~~ archate of Ravenna, and of a district of country along the Adriatic, called Pentapolis, to the Pope, by which he became a temporal prince, it is evident, that we are not far from the end of the whole period.

This grand apostacy—this spiritual empire of Rome, is pre-eminently infamous for the crimes it has originated—committed—defended—nay, in which it has gloried. The records of a brothel would be chaste, and the annals of robbers guiltless, when compared with the history of this pretended church of Jesus Christ. Her iniquity is displayed in her countless frauds ; her pilgrimages ; her worship of images and of saints ; her doctrine of transubstantiation ; her prayers for the dead ; her faithlessness to those who differ from her in faith ; her sale of indulgences ; her

* Dan. vii. 8. † Rev. xiii. 11. see Note 3. ‡ Dan. vii. 25.

|| Rev. xiii. 5. § Rev. xii. 6. ¶ See Note 3.

auricular confessions ; her licentious and immoral principles ; her absolutions for sin by her priests, and her thousand absurdities and impieties, too numerous to detail. And as for the blood she has shed, time would fail me to rehearse her numerous and relentless persecutions ; her barbarous and exterminating crusades against protestants, and the diabolical scenes of the inquisition, established under her auspices, and defended by her power. With her, “ the kings of the earth are said to have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth to have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” She, herself, is described as “ drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”* Her fate, then, will be awful. The strongest language is used, and the most striking figures adopted, to express it. The city of Rome itself, it is probable, will literally be burned with fire from the bowels of the earth, and sink, like a millstone, with all its inhabitants, never to rise.† The spiritual empire of the Pope will be destroyed with circumstances of uncommon violence ; for, saith the angel to John, “ the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire.”‡ She will be overtaken with the Lord’s indignation, in a time of carelessness, gaiety and security, as ancient Babylon was. Her followers will rejoice and be merry, and send gifts to each other, at the slaying of the witnesses, but in three days and a half, a short

* Rev. xvii. 2, 6. See Note 4.

† Rev. xviii. throughout. See Note 5. ‡ Rev. xvii. 16.

time, the witnesses will rise, and then the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. When she saith, I sit a Queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow, then shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning, and famine.

Though her final destruction shall thus be sudden, or in a very short time, yet preparations for it will be making many years previous. These seem to have begun ; for, if the time of her end cannot be far off, the causes to produce that end must be in existence. The prejudices of ages and generations cannot be eradicated in a moment ; though the spiritual power which originated these may be speedily destroyed. Indeed, when the former are done away, the latter must fall. And are there not indications of uncommon wrath against mystical Babylon, in the present day ? Does it not seem as if the Lord had come out of his place to visit the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity ? What a frightful scene does our age exhibit ! I might almost say, the world is in arms. History produces no parallel to the events now passing on the theatre of action. Never, since time began, have interests so immense been at stake. Revolution has succeeded revolution. We have heard the crash of one kingdom after another. Wars are carried on in quick succession, with awful slaughter, and consequences of the last importance to Europe. Every vessel which reaches our shores brings some news of fresh disasters in that part of our globe—of a battle fought—of a monarchy terminated, or a nation subdued. Are

not these events the judgments of God to impress upon the world the long forgotten lessons of righteousness? But where is their weight principally felt? On what countries have they been poured forth? Is it not on those which have been connected, and still are, with the Roman hierarchy? Is it not within the bounds of the territory of the fourth empire which Daniel saw? Cast your eye on the map of Europe, and you will find an answer. The indignation of the Lord began in France—it has marched, in awful majesty, over Germany—it has fallen with tremendous force on Northern Italy—it has overwhelmed Switzerland and Holland; and now, like a tempest, it is beating on Spain and Portugal. The seat of the wars, which have sprung from the French revolution, have been chiefly in Germany and Italy; and what places have been more devoted to the grand apostacy than these and France, if we except Spain and Portugal?

In France, what blood has been spilt, what massacres and cruelties perpetrated, for the interests of superstition! Nor has Germany or Italy been behind hand: and as for Spain, I need only remark, that there the merciless inquisition has reigned dominant for years. In all these nations the followers of Jesus have been persecuted; his heritage has been oppressed. And of the monarchs who engaged in this work, the family of Capet, especially that branch of it which is called the house of Bourbon, and the house of Austria, have been foremost. Tyrants they have been to the people of the most high, and scourges to the church of Jesus Christ. Now,

in their turn, they are made to eat the fruit of their doings, and taste some portion of that misery which they have brought, at different times, on the protestants. Now God is requiring at their hands the blood they have iniquitiously shed. One of these families is driven from both its thrones, and the other curtailed in its dominions, degraded in its character, and robbed of its title to the German empire. The retribution of God towards them is just ; for they have been “ bloody families ”—bitter enemies of the truth as it is in Jesus.*

Let none imagine that I justify the conduct of the revolutionary leaders of France, who beheaded their king, and drove his connexions from the country ; or of the scourge of God, who has crippled, by fraud and violence, the power of the house of Austria.—Like Sennacherib, they have been the rods of Jehovah’s anger : † but no thanks to them ; they meant not so. Because they are the instruments of God’s vengeance, we are not to defend them in their iniquity. As well might a Jew, in the days of Hezekiah, have said of Sennacherib, that it was in vain to oppose him, for he was raised up to punish the nations, as any one in the present day may say so of the furious, the insolent, the unprincipled oppressor of Europe. Nay more ; if it be correct to put no hindrances in his way, but on the contrary to favor his plans, because we think he is marching in a course prescribed by God, the witnesses to the truth, who opposed the grand apostacy, which they knew would last for 1260 years, were guilty of a crime. But no ;

* Note 6. † Isaiah x. 5.

they were right ; and so are they right, who now stand in the breach to defend their privileges, and their very existence against destruction. We know not the secret will of God, but must be guided by his revealed word. To say that this bids us to countenance fraud, robbery and murder, is blasphemy ; it is an outrage on the God of heaven. The iniquity of the offending nation does not justify the iniquity of the punishing instrument. Because England, or Spain, or other nations, may have transgressed the laws of righteousness, Napoleon is not innocent when he transgresses them. Jehu, specially commissioned to destroy the family of Ahab, offended God, by the ambition and resentment which influenced his conduct. Who then can defend his conduct, who, without a warrant, with no commission but his success, sports with the rights of independent sovereignties ; exacts tribute from nations not his own ; and says to this king, go, and he goeth ; and to that, come, and he cometh. It were madness to attempt it on religious or moral grounds.

But this modern Attila—this scourge of God, is permitted also to afflict the protestant countries of Switzerland, Holland, Prussia, and the protestant principalities of Germany.—Whence is this ? Have not these countries come out from the midst of mystical Babylon, by their reformation ? Yes, they have in part, but not entirely. Nominally, Holland, as a nation, was on the side of truth ; and her sons long displayed its purity, in theory and practice. But for years, the way has been preparing for her present state. Infidelity, error, and lukewarmness had crept into her borders, infected her great men, and poison-

ed the very springs of her religious existence. Pious and intelligent divines of her own have predicted, from the signs of the times near a century back, the very calamities which have befallen her, and still greater yet to come.* In the protestant cantons of Switzerland, the same causes prevailed, calculated to produce the same effect ; as also in protestant Germany. It is a fact but little known, that the society of Jesuits, though nominally suppressed, have still continued in being, and have been the great instruments of corrupting the protestant inhabitants of the latter places. It is astonishing to read the success they have met with by their secret machinations.† But more of this will be mentioned hereafter. Enough has been said to justify God's present dealings towards them. I will only farther remark, that in the indignation which God pours out upon the advocates of the grand apostacy, all must suffer, in a greater or less degree, who are connected with them. As individuals are involved in the fate of a nation, though clear of the guilt for which that nation is visited, so nations also, are involved in the fate of extensive empires, more or less, though no way accessory to the iniquity of those empires. The principles of the man of sin are so incorporated with the political institutions, the habits, the relations of the European world, that when he is punished, protestant nations cannot wholly escape. They, however, share in the general visitation, according to their righteousness or wickedness.

* Note 7. † Note 8.

These remarks partly account for the fall of Prussia. As a kingdom, she has never been subject to the court of Rome ; but as a kingdom she was founded upon the most abominable fraud and injustice. To her fairest provinces she had no right, but what the sword and political chicanery gave her. These have been taken from her ; and she is left much as she was, when a dukedom established by the Teutonic knights. In the hey-day of her glory, under her greatest monarch, his court was the seat of infidelity and the resort of impious scoffers. Here they were countenanced and supported ; for the monarch himself was a prince of scoffers,* and employed every insidious art to undermine or extinguish all religion in his kingdom. Here, perhaps, the foundation was laid for that moral tempest, which in France, overturned at once the altar and the throne, and has terminated in the establishment of a new dynasty, and the formation of a new empire, more formidable than any since that of Rome in its glory, whose head now rules Europe with a rod of iron. But one power opposes him, and that is Britain. He harasses her, vexes her, and disturbs her peace with other nations ; but he cannot, as yet, subdue her. Her government is indeed stained with crimes ; but I would say to those subjects of other governments who are continually clamoring against these crimes, as Christ said to the persons who brought the adulteress to him ; let that government which is innocent cast the first stone. If hers be bad—theirs are not better : Let others be condemned, as well as hers. She has to answer for much blood

* Note 9.

of protestants, unrighteously spilt, under the Stuart family ; but we hope the expulsion of that deluded family, and the establishment of a toleration since the revolution, have wiped away her guilt.

At present the nation exhibits a noble spectacle of christian magnanimity, and of the most diffusive benevolence.* I speak not now of her many charitable institutions, or of her incorporated societies for propagating the gospel, which have long existed ; but her exertions of late years :—exertions made amidst her wars and under the heavy expences of supporting them—for extending the blessed Redeemer's kingdom, and for ameliorating the distresses of suffering humanity : to these I refer. From her different missionary associations, messengers of the Cross have gone forth to Heathen lands ; so that at this time the offers of pardon are made to the stupid Hottentot, the credulous Hindu, and the wandering Tartar !—Yes, at this time, from the Cape of Good Hope, to where the Ganges rolls its waves, the prayers of those who were ready to perish, but for her aid, are ascending to the throne of mercy, supplicating blessings on all her borders. To her charities the poor Germans can certify, whose lands had been ravaged, whose substance had been taken away, and whose very food was exhausted by the legions of Bonaparte. For their assistance immense sums have been raised, from time to time, and distributed according to the best information. But the most magnificent display of her zeal for the cause of God, we behold in the Bible Society, composed of members from among her nobles, her prelates, her clergy, her

* Note 10.

citizens. By their means the word of life, the scriptures of the old and new testament, are circulating in different languages, throughout the different parts of the old world. Incalculable are the benefits which must ultimately flow to mankind from this admirable institution ; this institution, pre-eminent in the felicity of its design, and the grandeur of its measures ! Whilst it unites christians of all denominations, in the former, by the latter it aims, not at the temporal good of a few individuals, but at the eternal salvation of millions of the human race. Exertions of this kind will immortalize the memory of Britain, whilst it affords the strongest ground of confidence in her present safety. She has in the midst of her, thousands and ten thousands who fear God and keep his commandments. Hence, though the Almighty Governor of the world suffers her to be molested and tried, to be sifted and shaken, we have reason to believe she will not yet fall. It is not her fleets and her armies that will save her—not the wisdom of her counsellors and rulers, but the prayers of her pious sons. How long this godly race will last, we know not ; but whilst they do, her enemy cannot conquer her.

What a contrast is there between these two nations, in a moral and religious view ! The one protestant, the other catholic ; the one spreading the gospel, the other extending the ravages of war ; the one publicly recognizing the providence of God in all her successes, the other ascribing hers to the fortune of her emperor ; France renewing the abominable and nefarious slave-trade, Britain abolishing it for ever. I plead not for the crimes of the

one, nor do I wish to exaggerate those of the other. I examine them both, not by the light of political science, but by the principles of the gospel. The conclusion is clear and indubitable; that the crimes of the French government, to say the least of them, are not inferior to those of the British. In virtue, in integrity, in godliness, the British nation far, far surpasses her enemy. So long as she cherishes these virtues, she is invincible. In the present contest between them, as a minister of the Lord Jesus, as a professor of the truths advocated by the reformers against the catholic religion, I do not hesitate to say, I wish her success. I consider her as the only remaining national witness for the truth in Europe—as the last bulwark of the protestant interest there. When she falls, that falls with her.

Unhappily we are involved in difficulties with her, and her foe. Her conduct towards us has been ungenerous and unjustifiable; I mean not to defend it, for it cannot be defended. But this should not blind us as to the nature of her warfare with the French monarch. It is not merely a warfare for national aggrandizement, on her part; but the interests of pure religion and civilization are involved in the issue. Surely then, her success must, to every one who views the contest apart from political prejudices, be a desirable object.

Whatever may be the event, it is to be hoped that we shall not share in the calamities, which await the ten kingdoms included in mystical Babylon; for we have never, as a nation, been subject to her spiritual dominion. But the fate of Prussia ought to excite our most serious reflections. We have national sins

in abundance to draw down the indignation of God upon us. He is indeed visiting us with his judgments. We participate, in our degree, in the displays of his wrath. We feel the pressure of his hand, and the strokes of his rod, throughout our borders. The tempest of war, which has swept Europe, has reached our coast ; and though stayed for a moment, by the will of the Almighty, it hovers over us, threatening to burst on us in all its force. Already we have a foretaste of its horrors ; and if such be its beginnings, what must be its end ? He who cannot discern in our present state, marks of Jehovah's indignation, must be blind indeed. The improvement we ought to make of this state will be noticed when I come to speak of the crying sins of our land.

In the mean time I pass on to examine the question, what will be the probable issue of the present commotions in the world ?

Many augur favorably from the stand which the Spanish patriots are making, hoping that, through their means, liberty will once more be restored to the sovereignties of Europe. I most fervently wish them success ; but fear the issue. Let it be remembered, that Spain has been one of the nations most devoted and infatuated in its attachment to the man of sin ; and even now, she glories in his impious principles ; confidently appealing for success to a sinful worm of the earth, whom they worship as a goddess ; I mean the virgin Mary. It is here that the inquisition has reigned with unlimited power, since the year 1484, and the most degrading, anti-christian superstitions have been

pertinaciously cherished.* For her cruelties and blasphemies, this nation has never yet been visited. The blood of the Morescoes, perfidiously expelled and exposed to destruction, and of the protestants, murdered in hosts, with circumstances of uncommon barbarity, has never been avenged, by him whose province it is to execute vengeance. If she should succeed in her present warfare, it is more than probable she will be a prey to intestine commotions. She must be punished for her iniquity, and her very soil must disclose the innocent blood that has been shed. As Napoleon has scourged the other catholic countries, so, judging from the past we have reason to apprehend, he will this; and the very opposition now made, is the mean or cause which God will use, to produce immense slaughter among them; thus rewarding them for their crimes. If they are subdued, he who subdues them, with but few exceptions, perhaps only Africa and Great Britain, will be master of the same countries which formerly constituted the western Roman empire.† He may be considered, strictly, as the successor of Charlemagne, whose title and rank, as emperor of the west, has descended down through the emperors of Germany, by virtue of their title as king of the Romans, and their possessions in Italy, to the present emperor of Austria, who relinquished both. To him the French emperor has succeeded, as king of Italy; being crowned with the iron crown of Charlemagne. In this character, according to a modern writer on prophecy, whose opinion on this subject I cordially

* Note 11. † Note 12.

embrace,* we see in him the eighth head of the Roman beast, which is of the seven, and began with Charlemagne, whose patriciate was the seventh, and lasted but a short time, giving way to his imperial authority, which was the eighth. By one of the emperors of this line, it seems, the witnesses, of whom we shall presently speak, are to be slain, and the Roman hierarchy established with additional splendor and power, though only for a little while. Whether he who now fills the throne, or the dynasty he has placed on it, in one of its future members, will be the agent, we know not. Let us, for a moment, attend to the following particulars ; after which I shall offer a few explanatory remarks on the witnesses and their death, and then conclude this discourse.

1. The witnesses commenced their testimony with the rise of the grand apostacy. They are to be slain when their testimony is just finished ; which will be towards the end of 1260 years, the period of the grand apostacy. If that be near its close, their death cannot be far off. Either the present generation, or that which succeeds it, will probably see the doleful period.

2. The catholic superstition, in all its disgusting features, is restored in France by the emperor, and is intimately and inseparably connected with his authority. In a catechism published under the sanction of Napoleon, for the use of the churches in his dominions, it is said, he is become the anointed of the Lord, by the consecration which he has received from the chief pontiff, head of the universal church. In this same work, the doctrines of transubstantiation, purgatory,

* Note 13.

indulgences, and other absurdities and falsehoods are taught. Duty to the empire is placed along side of duty to the church ; and the deduction is, no one can be a good subject, who is not a good catholic. Every nerve is exerted to restore the popular reverence for relics, and all the mummary of the man of sin, among a people not long back professed atheists.*

3. A popish cardinal is appointed by Napoleon to be chief of the church over all the congregations in the Rhenish confederation, and he has actually been acknowledged as such by all the protestant princes. The protestant clergy are constrained to lay aside the dress they have hitherto worn, and adopt mass-weeds. A great number of catholic mass-books have been printed in the German language, which are divided into hours of prayer, and which are now actually read, before preaching at the altar, in the protestant churches on the frontiers. According to accounts from that quarter, the late apostacy of religion in France and elsewhere, is universally attributed to the want of respect for the pope. It must be re-established, say they, and the pope be viewed as the firstling of the kingdom of God.

4. Napoleon has constituted a professedly popish government over Holland, Switzerland, and the Rhenish confederation. The religion of Rome is the court religion of almost all the ancient ten kingdoms.†

These circumstances combined, strengthen the conjecture that the family now seated on the imperial throne, will be the agents for slaying the witness.

* Note 14. † Note 15.

ses, and re-establishing, in Europe, the grand apostacy. He who sways the sceptre, knows full well the importance of this religion, to answer his purposes. It is a fit instrument to rivet upon his subjects and vassals, the chains of absolute despotism ; and he will use it as such. The disregard he shews to the temporal rights of the pope, is not inconsistent with the above idea. The most superstitious monarchs of France have not scrupled to adopt a similar conduct. "It has been," says an able writer of the present day, "the ordinary tone of the Gallican church, even among its most pious and orthodox members, to limit the political power of their holy father however fully they admitted his supremacy in matters of faith."* Other sovereigns, subject to his spiritual authority, have gone farther than those of France. In the reign of Charles V. one of his generals stormed Rome, and the pontiff was taken prisoner and confined strictly, by order of the emperor, for a length of time.† And yet, that monarch, soon after, became the bigoted supporter of the Roman hierarchy, and a persecutor of the protestants. Such, we have reason to apprehend, will be the issue of the present indignity shewn to the pontiff. He will be forced by necessity to adopt the political measures demanded from him, for which the Roman See will be ultimately remunerated, by the slaying of the witnesses.

By the witnesses are meant, faithful christians in general ; all the true followers of Jesus Christ, as

* "Dangers of the Country ;" a pamphlet, said to be written by Mr. Stevens.

† Robertson's Charles V. Vol. 2d. p. 30.

distinct from apostates and false professors. This is evident, from the name given them of “the two candlesticks, and the two olive trees which stand before the God of the whole earth ;”* in which allusion is made to a prophetic vision of Zechariah. He saw a candlestick of gold, with two olive trees by it ; one on each side : which the angel explained to be the “two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.”† These were Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the high priest ; so called because they were set apart to their respective offices by the anointing of oil.‡ They had the superintendence and management of re-building the temple, and restoring the city of Jerusalem ; both which had been trodden under foot of the Gentiles. As such, they are symbols of all true believers, who are kings and priests unto God and his church, by the anointing of the holy ghost. In this character they are represented to us, as witnesses for the truth, who, by their exertions, seek to preserve the church of God, the spiritual temple, from utter destruction by her enemies. These are described as a new race of Gentiles, who had succeeded in gaining possession of the outer court, which they had trodden under foot. The witnesses are retired to the inner court in the temple, or “holy place,” as it was called ; which, under the Jewish œconomy, was typical of the true church on earth, under the new. Here they prophesy in sackcloth, not literally predict ; but full of the spirit of God, they preach God’s word, and bear witness to

* Rev. xi. 4. † Zechar. iv. throughout.

‡ Jehnston on the Rev. Vol. 1. p. 378.

the truth, against prevailing apostacy, under the greatest discouragements, and the heaviest persecutions of their enemies. They are said to be two in number, because that is the number required in the law, and approved by the gospel. Upon former occasions, two were joined together in commission ; as Moses and Aaron, in Egypt ; Elijah and Elisha, in the apostacy of the ten tribes ; Zerubbabel and Joshua, after the Babylonish captivity. “ As the testimony of the witnesses is to be of equal duration with the apostacy itself, it cannot well be meant of any two particular persons : nor is there any reason to understand it of any two particular churches, or bodies of men, in perpetual succession.”* “ The spirit of prophecy,” in the words of bishop Newton, “ teaches us, that certain persons should appear in every age, during the reign of Antichrist (the grand apostacy) few indeed, in number, but sufficient to establish the truth, and clearly attest the corruptions of the church of Rome, and the anti-christian supremacy of her head.”†—This appears to be the general opinion of the best writers upon the subject.

Neither my plan, nor my time will permit me to enter into further particulars concerning their character and work, as exhibited in prophecy. Their death and resurrection, by many worthy persons of former times, as well as present, are supposed to be past. Some refer these events to the murder of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, by order of the council

* Lowman, p. 109. Note 6.

† Vol. 3. p. 134. 3d ed. Lon. The bishop gives a very particular account of these witnesses in different periods ; so also does Lowman.

of Constance, and the subsequent triumph of their followers in Bohemia, over the imperial forces. Others, to the poor protestants in the valleys of Piedmont, who were expelled in 1686, at the instigation of the French, by the duke of Savoy; but who, afterwards regained possession of the same, sword in hand. Others, to the destruction of the league of Smalcald, by Charles V. and the restoration of their cause afterwards, by Maurice, elector of Saxony. Others again, to the revocation of the edict of Nantz, by Lewis XIV. and the French revolution, which introduced religious liberty in that country.* An attentive examination of the subject, however, has led me to conclude the event is still to come. For,

1. No calamity has yet befallen the true church by the hands of **THE MAN OF SIN, THE SON OF PERDITION**, which answers, in a satisfactory manner, to the symbolical representation of slaying the two witnesses. The faithful followers of Jesus, who are meant by them, have never yet generally, throughout the western empire, at any one period, ceased from their testimony against the grand apostacy. They have visibly existed, as witnesses for the truth, in one part, if they have been destroyed in another; as the history of their persecutions fully proves. And yet, a universal destruction of them seems to be meant. This cannot be a destruction of their civil privileges, nor a deprivation of the existence which they formerly had, as members of society: for their character of witnesses, and their work of prophesying relates, not to political, but spiritual mat-

* This latter is the opinion of Mr. Bicheno in his *Signs of the Times*.

ters. When they were butchered in scores before the reformation, in many parts of Europe, and treated like beasts of prey, they still prophesied—prophesied in spite of danger and death. As civil privileges, therefore, and the protection of the magistracy were not necessary for them to fulfil their work, the termination of that work by external violence, cannot be the destruction of these privileges. It must rather refer to some awful persecution of them—some universal slaughter, far exceeding any of former times; by which, within the bounds of the western empire, the church, to all human appearance, will be exterminated. Not that all true believers will be slain: many will yet remain; but they will be silent—they will not be known. They will sigh for abounding iniquity, but will not dare to appear as witnesses, and prophesy, even in sackcloth. In this character, they will cease to exist; and from this work, they will completely withdraw themselves. Thus, in the days of Ahab, Jezebel thought she had cut off all the true prophets of the Lord but Elijah. No more were publicly known, as witnesses for the truth; and yet there were seven thousand hidden ones, who had never bowed the knee to Baal.*

2. The witnesses still prophesy in sackcloth: that is, the true church is still in a suffering, depressed state. Even where protestant principles are professed, the ways of Zion mourn, through the universal prevalence of essential errors, of studied indifference to the truth as it is in Jesus, and of gross immorality. The very spirit of the man of sin too much pervades and animates the communities, which have visibly

* : Kings, xviii. and xix. chapters.

separated from him. Many of his superstitious rites are retained with pertinacity by some of them, and he himself is no longer viewed as the "SON OF PERDITION, even that WICKED ONE, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of his mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of his coming." He still reigns dominant over a great part of Europe, as the Vicar of God, and, until very recently, his followers oppressed and persecuted the protestants in Austria, Hungary, Poland, and Germany. In Spain, Portugal, and Naples, heresy, by which is meant protestant principles, is, by the laws, still punishable with death. Nay, the protestant countries of the Rhenish confederation, Holland and Switzerland, are subject to popish sovereigns, and at the mercy of a despot, from interest and design, a papist. The true church is evidently, therefore, still held in bondage; the witnesses still, therefore, prophesy in sackcloth. If they have been slain, they have not yet been raised; for their death will be, not only the last persecution of protestants, but the last stage of their depression, which will be followed by a glorious day for the true church. The spirit of life from God will enter into the witnesses, and they will stand upon their feet. They will be miraculously raised, in their character of witnesses, to the terror and confusion of their enemies. They will testify anew to the truth, but not in sackcloth: for they will ascend up to heaven in a cloud. The faithful followers of Christ—the true church, will become dominant over her adversaries throughout their own territories. The tenth part of the Roman city will fall by an earthquake, which will de-

stroy seven thousand men : and the remnant, being affrighted, will give glory to the God of heaven. Then will follow the proclamation of the angel, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

3. The witnesses, it is expressly said, will be slain, not when they shall have finished their testimony, as we read, but when they shall draw near the close of it.* As they commenced their testimony with the grand apostacy, so they run parallel to it, in time, and will be brought to a violent end, three prophetic days and a half before its termination. As many years, in all probability, will elapse before this—half a century at least—with moral certainty we may conclude that the witnesses are still prophesying in sackcloth. But as these years constitute a very small proportion of the whole number 1260, the witnesses are, strictly, drawing near the close of their testimony.

4. I add the opinion of the great archbishop Usher, and other eminent and godly men of an early day, who, on many occasions, displayed a spirit not unlike that of prophecy. These characters, from the predictions of scripture, especially that of the death of the witnesses, looked with certainty for the revival of popery at some future day. Usher, in particular, was deeply affected with the prospect before the church, and repeatedly made known his impressions. Other names might be mentioned, were it necessary, but time forbids.†

Such are the chief grounds on which the opinion rests, that the prophetic period of which we have

* Fraser's Key. † Note 16.

been speaking, is yet to come. It will be a period of calamity, distress, impiety, ferocity, tyranny, superstition, and gross ignorance : a period darker than the middle ages, for even then, the witnesses prophesied, though in sackcloth ; but now they will be dead, and their dead bodies will lie unburied, to feast the malice of their foes : a period in which the principles of civilization will be destroyed by those of barbarian rudeness. The state of society will be deplorable, both as it respects intercourse between man and man, and nation with nation. The bonds of union will be dissevered ; the foundations of order torn up ; and a lawless, unprincipled, and superstitious tyranny, in church and state, will prevail ; not in one nation, but throughout the spiritual Sodom and Egypt—the mystical Babylon, among all the ten kingdoms, which have given their power to the beast.

Such are the faint outlines of this state, merely sketched, from what is supposed to be the meaning of the symbolical language of scripture, used on this subject.

SERMON II.

ISAIAH xxvi. 20—21.

Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast ; for behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity : the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain.

THE causes to produce such an awful state of society, as was briefly sketched in the conclusion of the preceding discourse, must unquestionably be peculiarly powerful. Some of the leading ones, I think may be found in the existing circumstances of the world at this day. The age in which we live is called an age of superior information and improvement ; but its prominent features bespeak another character. In these features are seen the means by which the great moral change, of which we treat, will be effected.

1. Desolating wars constitute one feature of the times. Wars, carried on not merely between one nation and another, but which affect the vital interests of Europe, and all countries connected with it. When have such armies ever been called into the field, or such navies darkened the sea ? When have such battles been fought as those of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena ? When such engagements by sea as those of the Nile, of the Channel, of Trafalgar ? At no former period has so much blood been shed,

or such immense interests been staked. And when is this warfare to cease? In the present state of the old world, I see nothing but new causes for new wars. Peace appears impossible, unless all the nations there crouch under the rod of Napoleon, or till he fall. Permit me to mention an opinion of the late Dr. Edwards, president of Union College in Schenectady, concerning the peace of Amiens.* He did not believe it would continue long, for he thought we lived in that period of prophecy, when, in the figurative language of scripture, the blood came up to the horses' bridles.† The period to which he referred, is that which precedes the destruction of the grand apostacy. All the symbolical representations used to describe it, indicate a succession of bloody wars—of dreadful slaughters, to continue for some years, and finally, after a short, but bitter persecution of the church, to end in the total overthrow of the spiritual and temporal empire of the man of sin. What effect these wars will have on the morals of society, I leave you to judge. Large and ferocious armies, like the pestilence, bring in their train evils innumerable, all destructive of virtue, and order, and happiness. The consequence, then, of wars throughout Europe, must be awful. The cultivation of the mind will be neglected; manners will grow more and more dissolute; religion will lose her hold on the heart, and men will be prepared to obey the dictates of a vile superstition. This was the way the grand apostacy finally prevailed in Europe. Amidst

* This opinion was advanced in conversation to the late Rev. Doct. Romeyn of Schenectady.

† Rev. xiv. 20.

wars and commotions it rose into notice, and by ignorance and licentiousness gained its power. In the same way, we have reason to expect, it will re-establish itself at the time of the end, though its triumph will be short.

2. Skeptical philosophy, is another feature of the present times. Its advocates are to be found in various departments of literature, which they have polluted with its poison. Without agreeing in any one point of morality or religion, they are all united in the grand object of overthrowing christianity. They arrogate to themselves superior wisdom, and affect to despise all believers as credulous and superstitious persons. But in what, I ask, consists their wisdom? Have mankind been truly enlightened by their writings? Have their exertions been directed to the destruction of vice and the encouragement of virtue? Have they promoted the welfare and peace of society? No, by no means. They have rudely torn up the landmarks of order in society; they have borne down, by repeated assaults, the barriers of conscience in the human breast: they have said to the inflamed, corrupted passions of our nature, "go forth—indulge yourselves, free from restraint, even unto surfeiting." These things have they done, by banishing from the minds of men the fear of God, and delivering them from a sense of their responsibility to him. They have confounded the distinctions of right and wrong in their systems; calling good evil, and evil good. They pretend, indeed, to draw their theory of morals from the operations of our minds. But as we know little of these operations, except a

few simple ones, like the self-evident principles of a science, this mode of reasoning is necessarily involved in obscurity. Hence their fondness for it, and the use they make of it ; for they love darkness rather than light. By its subtleties they have unhinged all principles in their followers ; rendered every duty doubtful in their view, and led them to dispute the existence of every thing ; yea, of God himself : thus cherishing and promoting moral ignorance—a species of ignorance which the church of Rome inculcates as meritorious, whilst they profess to be wise, and to teach others.

As all men, however, even skeptics themselves, uncontrollably feel the necessity of being determined in their opinions upon some essential points of faith and duty, the very mode of reasoning which produces doubts, also produces credulity. By one of those strange inconsistencies, which we often find in human nature, they, who disbelieve revelation for want of evidence, receive for truth, such sentiments as exceed in incredibility and extravagance, the fables of Amadis de Gaul, or Don Quixotte de la Mancha. To be convinced of this, you need only look over the works of their “master spirits ;” especially their theories of man, and of the earth. In them, the wildest and most irrational conjectures are gravely proposed to our faith—conjectures totally destitute of the shadow of foundation. These conjectures are called ingenious, as if absurdity deserved that name.

But, not only in their writings are they chargeable with credulity ; they display it in their daily conduct. Let one or two instances suffice for proof.

D'Argens, a firm infidel in the court of Frederick of Prussia, shuddered when he counted the number thirteen round a table ! And wherefore, if he did not believe this common accident was ominous ? The princess Amelia, the favorite sister of Frederick, "almost as much a philosopher as he, and endowed with almost as strong an intellect as himself, was the dupe of fortune-tellers."*

After such specimens of criminal weakness in the advocates of skeptical philosophy, we need not wonder if we find them chargeable with superstition, or a false religion. Indeed, this philosophy as naturally produces superstition, as superstition does this philosophy. This will appear evident from the following considerations.

First, Atheism is repugnant to every principle of our constitution. It is committing violence on our nature to suppose, for a moment, that we are the creatures of chance, and have no maker, and governor in heaven. Equally unnatural is infidelity, or the rejection of a revelation from God. The existence of a Supreme Being, who made and governs all things, necessarily demands, and proves the existence of some revelation, by which he has made himself, and his will, known to his rational creatures. The very idea of such a relation as creator and created, involves in it the idea of another relation, that of sovereign and subject. They who are made and preserved by God, are bound to serve, as

* See "Thiebault's Anecdotes of Frederick," in which will be found a stronger instance of credulity. Reader, would you believe it ? Some of the great men in Frederick's court, and of his principles, joined in a league to raise the devil. See Vol. i. p. 336—339.

well as love him. These two relations, thus connected, as cause and effect, require a medium of intercourse between the parties related. Would we obey the will of him who created us? He must make that will known to us. This necessary connexion between the belief of the existence of God, and that of the revelation of his will, is engraven, in indelible characters, in the very constitution of man. Hence, in all ages, and by all classes of men, we find pretensions to revelation from above, made and defended. Such a revelation is congenial to all our feelings—to our hopes and our fears. To reject it is unnatural, and contradicts those ideas of right and wrong, which mankind universally, in every age, have entertained.

Hence, Secondly, where superstition has produced skeptical philosophy, as is the case in catholic countries, there the mind of man, like Noah's dove, seeks rest, but finds none, until it settles down in some system of religion, it believes to be from God. Not that he is naturally disposed to accept of the true one; for by sin he is the enemy of the true God, and not subject to his law. But he will embrace one, which, like the idea he has formed of God, while it appeases natural feeling, permits the indulgence of his lusts. Hence, he who has rejected all revelation, who has no religion at all, is more easily gained to a false one, unless God specially interpose by his grace, than to that which is of God. That same love of sin, which, after all that is said to the contrary, is the radical cause, the grand reason* why men disbelieve the Gospel, and become converts to a skeptical philosophy, naturally disposes them, when conscience

is disturbed at their present state, and future prospects, to flee to superstition of any kind, that by its opiates they may lull conscience asleep, and sin without interruption. Thus Voltaire, in his last sickness, sought relief from his awful fears in the ceremonies of the Romish church. Thus also Lamethrie, the apostle of universal materialism, in the court of Frederick of Prussia, made the sign of the cross when it thundered; and Maupertuis, who believed not in God, said his prayers every night when he went to bed.* More instances need not be adduced.

When the principles of skeptical philosophy, which are strictly libertine, infect a nation, it will not be difficult to reduce that nation to popery; for there is “no sufficient motive to stimulate them to unite, in steadily opposing the encroachments of civil or ecclesiastical despotism.” Besides, the miseries which such principles produce—the anarchy they occasion, prompt “the short sighted to welcome the appearance of relief, from those who, under a fair and specious disguise, recommend to them blind devotion, and submission to arbitrary power.”† Accordingly you find, that France, with facility, has vibrated from the extreme of irreligion, to that of superstition. A nation of atheists, has become a nation of papists. The illiterate among them have not alone embraced the grand apostacy, but many of the learned. Of these we have a striking example in La Harpe, who was once the favorite disciple, the in-

* Thiebault's Anecdotes of Frederick, Vol. 1. p. 339.

† Dr. Erskine's Thoughts on Popery and Infidelity.

imate friend of Voltaire, and consequently a zealous and remorseless infidel, but lately the most active defender, and professed champion of the catholic superstition. Indeed, infidels generally, though they declaim against superstition, as they call all religion, are yet strongly prepossessed in favor of the church of Rome, and against the principles of the protestants. Thus “ Hume is much more sparing than other historians of his censures on the persecuting bigots of the Roman church in the unhappy days of Mary. He is equally distinguished by his severity against the excesses of the reformers, in the following reigns ; and on the whole, is evidently partial to popery.*

“ Gibbon, both in literary and private character, manifested the affinity between Romish superstition, and philosophical skepticism. He was a convert to popery before he became an unbeliever : and though the question between catholic and protestant did not lie in his historical path, it is not difficult to perceive that he, like Hume, is jealous of all mediums between his own philosophy, and a blind devotion to the tenets of an infallible church.”†

Godwin, in a recent work,‡ has endeavored openly to defend the popish absurdities, of auricular con-

* This appears also in his very unfair representation of Luther, which is noticed and properly exposed, by the learned translator of Mosheim's History. See Mosh. Eccles. Hist. Vol. 4. p. 31. Note *h*. Lond. ed. 1782.

† See Dangers of the Country. This able pamphlet is worthy the serious attention of every reflecting man.

‡ The Life of Chaucer.

fession and prayers for the dead, against his protestant countrymen.

But I forbear enlarging on this subject. Enough has been said to prove the affinity between skeptical philosophy, and the Romish superstition. The prevalence of the former throughout Europe, has prepared the way there for the introduction of the latter. Infidels, by the bias of their minds, by their fondness for vice, by the moral ignorance they cherish, by the force of circumstances under which they may be placed, will gradually change their character, and, like dutiful children, sink into the arms of the mother of harlots. This event, which we have every reason, from past and present facts, to expect, must operate essentially against the interests of Christ and his church. In skeptical philosophy, then, which is still so fashionable, and has so many advocates in the world, we clearly discern a moral cause, sufficiently powerful to produce the awful calamity signified by the slaying of the witnesses.

3. The improper use which may be made of the art of printing, is another moral cause, calculated to produce the event, of which we have spoken. I know most persons, at first view, would be disposed to consider this art as the most effectual means to prevent such an event. “The press, however, without morals, will not preserve civilization; and immorality will make it the vehicle of barbarism. If the fashion or madness of the times produce a relish for corrupted food, we may be filled with writings, and yet swallow nothing but poison.”* That society at large may acquire such a relish, will

* Dr. A. Brown's Miscellaneous Sketches.

appear very obvious, if we only recollect, that the literary taste of mankind is constantly varying; so that what pleases in one age, is disliked in the next. The cause of these changes is chiefly to be sought for, in the changes of public manners; which, in their turn, are affected by the prevailing literary taste. Thus, where wealth originates habits of dissipation, these habits indispose men addicted to them, for study or reflection. Light reading—such as pleases the fancy and inflames the passions, suits them best. By this reading they are confirmed in their habits, and become more dissipated. Suppose a nation composed of such characters, how could the press correct their vices? As the taste was, so would the press necessarily be—a vehicle for promoting dissipation. If excellent works were printed, who would read them? And if the works were not read, the business of the press would cease. It is a fact too little realized, that the press receives its moral or immoral complexion, from the literary taste of the day; and that, again, is formed by public manners. If they are corrupted, the press will be, as to its general character, profligate, and will increase the corruption. Thus it was in France, previous to the revolution. From the court down to the peasantry, through the different ranks of society, not excluding the clergy, the greatest licentiousness and debauchery prevailed. Vice, from its being so general, had lost its deformity, and even, in many particulars, assumed the name, and claimed the respect of virtue. On this mass of corruption, Voltaire and his associates, poured forth their inflammable productions

from the press, so as to make it ferment, and finally burst into an awful conflagration, which tumbled into ruins both the altar and the throne, and threatened universal destruction. In the language of Condorcet, one of these associates,* “ They alternately employed all the arms, with which philosophy and learning—with which wit and the talent of writing could furnish them. Assuming every tone, taking every shape, from the ludicrous to the pathetic, from the most learned and extensive compilation, to the novel or the petty pamphlet of the day—covering truth with a veil which, sparing the eye that was too weak to bear it, left to the reader the pleasure of guessing it—insidiously caressing prejudices,† in order to strike at them with more certainty and effect—respecting despotism, when they combated religious absurdities ; and religion, when they attacked tyranny—combating these two pests in their very principles, though apparently inveighing against ridiculous and absurd abuses,” they finally gained their point. These precious confessions of a leader among infidels, whilst they illustrate the conscience, integrity, and veracity of these men, most strikingly prove how powerful an engine the press is, to ruin the order and happiness of society. It has been the principal means of enlightening the world in past ages ; it may be converted into a means of extinguishing that light, and restoring barbarism at some future period. What

* Outlines of an historical view of the progress of the human mind, p. 198. Phila. ed.

† By this, in the language of infidels, is meant religion, piety, chastity, virtue, gratitude, and the like.

is the tendency of one half of the newspapers, published in Europe and in this country, but to corrupt the very sources of information—to disseminate slander and lies, and prepare society for the usurpation of some demagogue, and the destruction of former barriers to vice? To these, I might add the lascivious poems, the licentious novels, and the profane plays, which daily issue from the press, and have a tendency equally dangerous. Public manners must have become more corrupted here and abroad, than we are aware, or these productions would not be so generally relished, nor so extensively circulated. When I realize this serious and alarming fact, I tremble for the future. The press will assuredly increase public profligacy, if God, by his grace, does not arrest it, till its issue be public misery. The scourge of God in Europe understands full well the importance of this engine, and will use it to answer his own views. In his hands, what have we not to fear from it? What has not the world to fear? I can hardly form a conception of a more powerful moral cause, to bring on the dark and dreadful period, which, from the prophecy of scripture, we have reason to expect.

4. A fourth feature of the times, and the last which will be mentioned, is, the lukewarmness of the protestants generally, as to the points of difference between them and the Roman catholics. These points are of essential importance, if the church of Rome be really, what we know she is, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ADORNATIONS OF THE EARTH. For a long time after the glorious reformation, they were considered

in this light, by our pious forefathers in Europe. Unhappily in our day, a false charity—an insidious liberality of sentiment, which confounds the eternal distinctions of truth and falsehood, has infected protestants. They no longer view with abhorrence, the blasphemy and idolatry of the papal hierarchy; but consider them trifling errors—mere venial mistakes. The cause of this is to be sought for, in that indifference to religion, which, although for years back it has stamped their conduct in Europe, was more especially conspicuous immediately before the French revolution. The political, commercial, and æconomical subjects of inquiry then universally fashionable, had almost entirely banished theology from the attention of all classes among them, except the clergy: and even they, in too many places, caught the infection of the times. Hence they adopted a philosophical mode of preaching, which, by keeping Christ out of view, increased the general indifference to the truth as it is in Jesus. A gross ignorance of the essential doctrines of the gospel, and even of the evidences on which its authenticity rests, began to prevail.* Errors of the most awful kind were embraced, and met with little opposition. The public and private worship of God was shamefully neglected, by vast multitudes; and a life of faith, in its native simplicity, was to be seen only here and there, emitting its light, like a solitary candle amidst a wide region of surrounding darkness. Piety was hardly visible in the courts of their princes, and met with a cold, inhospitable reception among their nobles. In

* Dr. Brown's Appendix to Leland's View of Deistical writers.

the middling classes of society, she was still to be found, and among the poor ; but her influence was declining fast, through the force of abounding iniquity. Like the blessed Redeemer, from whom she comes forth, she stood in the midst of her own people, a stranger, friendless and forlorn, whom they knew not.

This awful lethargy—this stupid indifference to religion, was sensibly aroused by the French revolution, and the calamities it occasioned. The real lovers of the Lord Jesus were awakened, and excited to uncommon exertions for the promotion of his cause. Their zeal has not abated ; their exertions still continue, and their numbers are increasing. But, alas ! how few are they, when compared to those who still sleep whilst God calls ; who are still insensible, though he visits the earth for its iniquity. On the continent of Europe, they constitute a mere handful, and are “ an afflicted and poor people.” The mass of protestants are sadly degenerated from their original principles, and display the most threatening laxity of practice and opinion.* They have not repented of their sins, nor given glory to God ; but are careless and secure—regardless of the interests of Christ, and totally engrossed with the concerns of the world. Their profession is a mere name, and their external adherence to it, the effect of habit and education. Their indifference to the discriminating tenets of their

* An account of the present state of protestants on the continent of Europe, is contained in the Scots Presbyterian Magazine, for 1803 ; as also in the correspondence of the Missionary Society in London, and the Biblical Society, with the religious societies on the continent.

religion, predisposes them to yield readily, to the arts and designs of the catholics. The catholics, on the contrary, amidst all the misfortunes of their church, have never lost sight of her interest. Their zeal, for the propagation of her faith and the enlargement of her borders, remains undiminished. Wherever they possess the civil power, they do not hesitate still to exercise it against protestants : and where they do not possess this power they consider every mean justifiable and meritorious, to convert protestants to their communion. The principles they profess, oblige them to this line of conduct ; for they believe salvation is not attainable out of the pale of their church. Hence they exert themselves to the utmost, by their societies and other means, to destroy the protestant heresy, and to bring the heretics themselves to the knowledge of, what they deem, essential truth. Unhappily, they have been hitherto but too successful : for they have evidently gained ground, in the last and present century, notwithstanding the abridgement of the pope's temporal authority. Many princes, of families which were once eminent in their attachment to the reformation, have apostatized. And states, by right of succession, have fallen into the hands of catholics. In Germany and in Holland, the faith of many protestants has been unhinged, by artifice and sophistry, so that they have fallen into the embraces of the Roman church.* In Great Britain, the catholics are striving to become eligible by law, to the higher offices of state, and to places of importance in the army and navy, from which they are now wisely excluded.† Their at-

* Note 18. † Note 19.

tempts are seconded by multitudes of protestants, upon principles merely political.* So great, indeed, is the indifference for the truth, which infects the latter, that there is reason to believe that the former will succeed. Their emancipation, as it is improperly called, will, I apprehend, be the death blow to the protestant interest in Britain. It will open the door for the re-establishment of that religion, against which they have so nobly fought, in times past; in which case they may expect awful calamities. “Where the catholic religion becomes powerful, it will shed the blood of its thoughtless protectors, and as a serpent, poison the bosom which cherished it.”† The fall of Britain, as a protestant state, will, perhaps, afford the true explanation to the slaying of the witnesses. Such an event, though at present unlikely from the religious complexion of that country, may happen through the lukewarmness of protestants, about those points in which they differ from the catholics. So great is this, that, amidst all their missionary exertions, they have never yet adopted a regular plan for propagating the pure gospel, among these deluded people. Many sincere followers of Christ err in this particular. Whilst they ardently desire the extension of the Redeemer’s kingdom, on grounds merely political, are they willing to give consequence and influence to the most bitter opposers of that kingdom. This lukewarmness, then, inasmuch as it exposes the protestants to their catholic enemies, who are ever watchful, is a moral cause sufficiently powerful to produce the sad period, of which we have already spoken. From its operation,

* Note 20. † Helvetius on Man, Sect. 4. Chapt. 21.

combined with that of the abuse of the art of printing—of the prevalence of skeptical philosophy—and of a long continued succession of desolating wars, each of which has been noticed in detail, we might expect some awful calamity awaited the church of Christ, even if we had no foundation, whatever, for believing the two witnesses were not slain, but were still prophesying in sackcloth. Sad as the times are at present, we have thus reason to fear, from existing circumstances, that they will grow worse and worse. The indignation of Jehovah, which he is now pouring out upon the ten kingdoms, will increase in violence, and spread wider and farther over the earth.

What ample matter for serious meditation, does the state of the world afford us ! The thoughtless multitude, however, view the passing scenes, portentous as they are, with feelings wholly political. Believers alone, recognize in them, the righteous judgments of Almighty God. Filled with anxious cares and solemn apprehensions, they tremblingly ask, what must we do in this trying season ? Where must we betake ourselves for refuge, from this storm of divine vengeance ? An answer to these questions will be found in the

II. Second general head of discourse ; which was—to illustrate the direction given in the text, and enforce it by an improvement, suitable to this solemn occasion. “ Come my people,” saith God by the prophet, “ enter thou into thy chambers and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself as it were for a little moment, ’till the indignation be overpast”—As if he had said ; “ You see the indignation poured forth ; stay not to encounter it, for it will overwhelm

you. Retire in season ; hasten to your hiding place ; flee to your refuge from the storm." That refuge is Jehovah, the all-sufficient, who in Christ Jesus, is the reconciled father, the covenanted protector of all his people. Before they can betake themselves by faith to him in this character, they must separate themselves from the world, which lieth in wickedness : and after they have fled to him, as a refuge, in a proper way, they must honor him in the exercises of religion. Thus, then, the idea suggested by the text is complex, presenting to our minds, chambers of distinction, into which they must retire—chambers of safety, in which they must be secured—and chambers of devotion, in which they must be suitably employed. Entering into these, by faith, they must shut the doors about them, and hide themselves : that is, they must exclude anxious cares and vain reasonings, about the issue of things, and be unmoved by the disasters which affright the world.

According to this view of the direction in the text, it includes the following particulars, each of which, in order, will be explained.

First. When God's judgments are abroad in the earth, his people must enter their chambers of distinction. They must separate themselves from the multitude who do evil, as a people who dwell alone, and are not reckoned among the nations.* By the spirit of God, they have, in their regeneration, been called to be saints, and may, therefore, at no time be conformed to this world,† which lieth in wickedness. Still, however, they remain *in* it, though they are no

* Numbers xxiii. 9. † Rom. xii. 2.

longer *of* it ; exposed to temptations from its corrupted manners, its vicious deeds, its evil communications. Hence, not a few of them, through the force of example, operating upon the body of sin in them, imbibe some portion of its spirit, and adopt many of its maxims. Gradually they remit watchfulness over their hearts, and grow careless about their spiritual state. Sin becomes familiar to them, so that they see it in others without disgust, and tamper with it themselves, without alarm. They lose their relish for communion with God, and delight themselves too much in the allowed indulgences of life. The inevitable consequence of this decline in religion, is, that their evidences of an interest in Christ, are obscured, the comforts of the Holy Ghost are taken from them, and they are exposed to the frowns of their offended father. How necessary then, since such is the influence of the world, that the people of God should always be separated from its principles, its morals, its customs, and its pleasures. Not that they must, like monks, seclude themselves in cloisters : No, by no means. They must mingle with the world, to perform their social duties, but this they must do in their character of a “peculiar people.” Their conduct, from the very nature of things, must be different from that of the multitude. They must manifest a moral loftiness, a heavenly sublimity in their lives ; so that all men may say of them, “these are not of the world.” To this, they are especially directed by God, in times like the present, when he has come forth out of his place, to execute judgment. With a finger, as it were, he points to the world, which has provoked his indignation, and

addresses his people, “ Arise ye, and depart ; for this is not your rest : because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.”* Es-cape, then, for your lives from it : delay not ; for its fashion passeth away : flee to your chambers of distinction. Live more “ holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.” Be crucified to the world more and more. Seek a “ city, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Secondly, When God’s judgments are abroad in the earth, his people must enter their chambers of safety. They must flee to him as their strong tower—their sure, their only refuge. This they do by faith, not merely an habitual belief of revealed truth, generally, but a vigorous apprehension of this truth in particular, that God is able and willing to support them, under all their troubles. They look to his wisdom, for guidance in their straits ; to his mercy, for relief under their afflictions ; to his power, for victory over their enemies ; to his faithfulness, for preservation amidst their dangers.† And they do it with certain expectation of receiving the assistance they need. All the perfections of God are engaged, by an oath, according to his word, for their security. On his veracity, they rely with unshaken firmness ; living upon his promises, which are suited to all the varieties of their state, and never fearing disappointment. In his providence, they have the fullest confidence, committing themselves, and all their concerns to his supreme will : satisfied that he will ever do

* Micah ii. 10.

† Flavel’s Righteous Man’s Refuge, Vol. 3, of his works.

what is right, at all times, whether prosperous or adverse, they trust, assuredly, that his eye is on them for good, and his arm stretched over them for protection. They regard Jehovah as their all-sufficient father, who “maketh all things work together for their good.” With such a faith, what can alarm them or destroy their peace of mind? Since God is for them, who can be against them? Truly they are “as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.”* Under every affliction, they are strengthened. They bear every bereavement with patience; are fearless of every event, however forbidding; and rejoice in hope of everlasting glory, when the world threatens. The more gloomy the day in which they live—the more awful the disasters which befall them, the closer they cling, by faith, to God as their friend; and the more steadfastly they rest on his promises, as Yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus. “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.† God is our refuge and strength,” they sing with exultation, “a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.”‡ Such is the triumph of a lively faith, even in the darkest seasons of adversity. It gives a present subsistence

* Ps. cxxv. 1.

† Rom. viii. 38, 39.

‡ Ps. xlvi. 1, 2, 3.

to things hoped for, and is the evidence of things not seen.* To the exercise of this faith, the people of God are directed, in the day when he pours out his indignation upon the earth.

Thirdly. When his judgments are abroad in the earth, his people must hasten to their chambers of devotion. They must engage in those exercises of religion, which are peculiarly suited to such a season of calamity. The ruler of the world is then contending with men for their sins, and calling them to repentance and reformation, by his awful terrors. His people, like Aaron of old, ought to stand between the living and the dead,† interceding for the transgressors. They must confess the crimes of their fellow-creatures, and their own, which have excited God's wrath. They must mourn over them, with a godly sorrow ; and must supplicate his mercy for the souls he has made. Their prayers must be fervent—earnest—effectual ; such as the spirit excites. They must beseech God, for the sake of Christ, that he would stay the progress of the destroying angel ; that he would pour out his spirit upon all flesh ; grant his grace unto the nations of the world ; bring order out of confusion, and light out of darkness ; protect them, and all his children ; build up Jerusalem in troublous times ; overturn every power which opposeth his cause ; and cause all men, every where, to offer incense, and a pure offering, to his great and glorious name.

Such is the direction given in the text, to the people of God, when he comes out of his place, to visit

* Heb. xi. 1. † Num. xvi. 48.

the inhabitants of the earth for the iniquity they have committed, and the blood they have shed.

The direction is suitable to you, believers, in this assembly, and to all our brethren in this land. The signs of the times portend evil, and the voice of our master bids us hasten to our chambers. I have already said, that God is angry with us; and I now ask, has he not cause for his anger? As a people, we have not, indeed, shed the blood of his saints. But have we not, like Israel, kicked back, and lightly esteemed the rock of our salvation? Prosperity has made us proud, luxurious, and immoral. We say unto God, by our conduct, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Every kind of iniquity prevails among us. We are guilty of numerous and aggravated NATIONAL SINS. Time will not permit a full detail of them. Permit me to mention a few, of the more prominent ones, to assist you in the humiliation of this day.

1. The prevalence of infidel principles, especially among our rulers, and leading men, is a striking national sin. These persons undoubtedly give a tone to our public manners, and the opinions of multitudes, in the midst of us. As far as their influence extends, so far our best interests suffer: for these interests are inseparably connected with true religion. Reject this, and you throw down the only effectual barrier against vice and ungodliness. In vain will you look for any other. Honor, reputation, the love of virtue, and such like, are utterly inefficient. Like the Philistines' withs, they are nothing before the Sampson of human corruption. Sad, then, is the state of a people, professedly christian, whose men

in authority do not believe in the Lord God who bought them, but throw aside the obligations of his revealed law. The magistracy among them, looses its dignity—the laws their energy—social order its comforts—nay, its very safety. Decay, sure, though slow, steals perceptibly upon the body politic, like the grey hairs which were sprinkled upon ungodly Ephraim ;* and destruction will not tarry long before it does its work. When the government of a nation is irreligious and immoral, God withdraws his protection, and they soon finish their career of folly. Thus it was with Israel, when impious men ruled over them ; and thus it will be with every christian country, under similar circumstances.

2. Neglect of religious ordinances, and consequent ignorance of gospel truth, is another of our national sins. We have line upon line, and precept upon precept ; here a little and there a little : but how few of the inhabitants of the land improve their privileges ! Here, there is none to molest, or make us afraid, in our worship of God : yet, how few conscientiously wait upon God, in his service ! How small is the proportion of those who are punctual attendants at the house of God, in comparison with those who absent themselves, in whole, or in part ! How many thousands never either look into the word of God, for instruction, or pray in their families ! What numbers of baptized children, are trained up by their parents, in the ways of folly and irreligion ! They are taught how to “ labor for the meat which perisheth,” but how to obtain that which perisheth not, they are unable to tell. How gross, how dreadful the ignorance

* Hosea vii. 9.

of vital christianity—of the essential doctrines of the gospel, under which multitudes labor—not merely of the lower classes, but of the higher ranks. They will embrace fundamental errors, with as much facility as fundamental truths ; not knowing the difference. Yea, and in this very ignorance, many glory. Truly, though God has blessed some parts of our country with times of refreshing from before his presence, yet the ways of Zion, throughout the nation at large, do mourn, because so few attend her solemn assemblies—so few do know, and serve her glorious Redeemer.

3. Inordinate cupidity after wealth, for its own sake, or for the gratification of sinful propensities, is another national sin. When God, in his providence, smiles upon an individual, or a people, he demands, and expects, a suitable return of gratitude. We have, however, in this country, richly as God has blessed us in our basket and store, exerted ourselves but little in his service. Immense sums of money are expended on schemes for the accumulation of property, but how small a portion of this world's goods, comparatively, is given for the promotion of Christ's cause ! By our prosperity, a taste for dissipation has been produced, among all classes of men. This is unfriendly to industry, and leads to extravagance. It is the enemy of virtue, and leads to immorality. Its effects among us are too obvious to be denied. It has introduced sinful modes of living. It has increased habits of intemperance, as well as the temptations and occasions to indulge in them. Under its influence, amusements have been multi-

plied, so as almost to make attendance on them, in many circles, the business of life. I might refer you also to dresses, especially among the female sex, which are indecorous. What evils has it not produced? How much distress in families! What profligacy in public manners! To it, most *real* failures may be traced as their cause; and by its spirit, fraudulent failures are fostered and multiplied. In a word; it corrupts the moral taste, debauches the chastity of the mind, and gives unbridled force to the passions.

4. Our political dissentions are a crying, national sin. To differ in opinion upon government, in its theory and administration, as upon other subjects, cannot be avoided, and is no crime. This very difference, as it exists between men of equal talents, equal information, and equal integrity, as well as standing, in life, calls for mutual forbearance, in those who differ. I blush for my country, I blush for my native state, when I call to mind the feuds, which this difference has produced. Inflamed by party spirit, which is the bane of virtue, our citizens have fallen out by the way. Our elections, and the time spent in preparing for them, are periods of aggravated national guilt. Men are drawn from their lawful occupations. They enter with heat into the merits of their side; regard with an evil eye, all those who oppose them; and engage with perseverance, in the work of diffusing publications, whose avowed object is, to ruin the reputation of their antagonists. The peace of families is invaded; the order of society disturbed; and God's most holy laws are broken.

We are almost constantly in a state of hostility against each other. The passions are excited ; animosity is cherished ; in a fatal moment, prudence is forgotten, and open violence ensues. If our liberty can be secured no other way, than by the commission of such crimes—and crimes they are of a black die—I do not hesitate to declare, in this sanctuary of God, and as a minister of the Lord Jesus, that our liberty is a curse. To it, we are sacrificing personal comfort, the obligations of morality, and the all-important truths of the gospel of our salvation. This is our national idol, whilst the living God is forgotten—nay, insulted. Surely, our conduct must offend him, and draw down his displeasure on us.

5. Election of men, avowedly immoral and irreligious, to office, is the last national sin I shall notice.* The fact is notorious, for it is defended as correct conduct. The conclusion arising from this fact, is obvious—that OUR MORAL STATE IS CORRUPTED : FOR IF WE DID NOT, AS A NATION, LOVE SIN, WE SHOULD NOT CHOOSE ACKNOWLEDGED TRANSGRESSORS FOR OUR RULERS. In one particular, this national crime has reached an alarming height : I mean in regard to duelling. That nefarious practice is forbidden in our laws, as well as those of God. Yet, in defiance of this, we find duellists in our courts of justice ! and in our halls of legislation ! They are caressed by the great ; they are admired by the vulgar ; they are noticed in our papers. Instead of the stamp of infamy being affixed to their name and memory until they repent, they

* Note 21.

are encircled, by public opinion, with a species of glory. This shews, that public opinion, with us, is enlisted on the side against God and virtue. Surely, no man, stained with a crime of this kind, ought to be countenanced or elected to an office ; nor ought any immoral and irreligious man : for eternal truth, Jehovah himself, hath said, “ When the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.”*

Think not that I desire the establishment of any particular denomination of christians, by law, or the introduction of a religious test. No ; by no means. Christians, your conscience is all the test I want. If that is alive, you dare not, as you value the presence of your God, countenance a man, who you know blasphemes your Redeemer ; and who, by his impiety, seeks the destruction of your fondest hopes. If the consciences of christians in this respect, throughout our land, had been ever thus alive, they would have paid more deference in time past, to the character, which God himself, by his servant, has drawn of a good magistrate. “ He that ruleth among men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.”†

When we call to mind these sins, which have thus been briefly noticed, who feels not that the words of the prophet are applicable to us ? “ Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters ! they have forsaken the Lord ; they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger ; they are gone away backward.”‡ Well may we say, “ Righteous art thou, oh Lord, and upright are thy judgments. || We lie down in

* Prov. xxix. 2. † II Sam. xxiii. 3. ‡ Isaiah l. 4.

|| Ps. cxix. 137.

our shame, and confusion covereth us : for we have sinned.* Surely, we ought to be humbled before God, for our national guilt, and supplicate him to pardon us for the sake of our blessed Redeemer. Nor ought we to forget our own sins, fellow-believers : for none of us but are guilty, in the various relations of life, as well as in the duties of our “ heavenly calling.” Our closets, our families, our friends, the public, all can testify against us before God, that we have not acted faithfully for him, nor served him with our whole heart.

Surely, then, we have abundant reason to hasten to the throne of grace, in our devotions, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help, in this time of need. We have abundant cause for hastening to our strong tower, our sure refuge, Jehovah, the all-sufficient, and hiding ourselves under his wings. We have abundant cause for hastening to our retirement, separating ourselves from an ungodly world. By a holy singularity ; by a vigorous faith in the perfections, promises, and providence of God ; by humiliation and prayer unto him who heareth prayer ; can we alone save ourselves, and be truly serviceable to our country, and to the world at large.

The prospect before us as christians, and as members of society, is, indeed, gloomy : but the period of retribution on the enemies of God, in the temporal effects of which his people are involved, though supported in their spiritual state, through its whole course, will be but short—only for a little moment, says God. The word cannot here be taken in its

* Jer. iii. 15.

literal sense, but must be understood with some latitude, as denoting a considerable, though comparatively, a short space of time.* Such it will be at least : for the 1260 years of the reign of the MAN OF SIN, must, in all probability, terminate at, or about the year 2000 of Christ, or 6000 of the world. The death of the witnesses, which he will consider as the final establishment of his kingdom, will be the great event that will produce his destruction.† The witnesses, at the expiration of three prophetic days and a half, that is, three years and a half, will suddenly be raised again, and stand on their feet. This will speedily be followed by the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world, on the ruins of the kingdom of darkness. The means by which this great conversion of nations will so soon be effected, it is probable, will be the gospel seed, which is now sowing in different parts of the earth, by missionary institutions. This seed will be silently and imperceptibly shooting up, till the time when the witnesses are raised, when it will spring forth to view, bearing fruit. Before that time comes, you and I, believers, will be gone down to the chambers of the grave, and securely hidden from all the troubles and calamities of life. May we be at rest then in the Lord, and stand in our lot, at the end of the days, before the bar of our glorious judge.

Brethren, I have finished the work which the business of this day required at my hands.

Entering these courts as mourners—treading these ways of Zion as suppliants before God, it was necessary

* Macculloch on Isaiah.

† Note 22.

that the causes of our sorrow and our tears, should be unfolded. You have heard the present calamities of the world traced back to moral and religious sources, and the dealings of God justified—You have heard the probable issue of these calamities unfolded, at some length—You have heard your duty, as christians, under these calamities, illustrated and enforced; I intreat you, most fervently, to realize the awful signs of the times—to examine, with care, into the unparalleled state of the world. This is not the exclusive work of the politician—it is your work believers: and, with the assistance of revelation, you can do it with advantage. The trumpet of alarm has been sounded by the watchman, so as to give a distinct sound, that the direction of God, by the prophet, might be suitably impressed on every heart. This sanctuary of God will bear me witness, that I have discharged, though imperfectly, yet faithfully, my duty. The voice that now warns, may not warn often: it will, ere long, be lost in death. But the truths it has uttered, will remain for your improvement. They are everlasting truths of the living God, which will never fail. Meditate upon them, seriously and habitually. Test yourselves by them, and let them regulate your lives. By your conversation and conduct, strive to promote the cause of Christ, and the best interests of your country.

On you, also, ye who live careless of eternity, and neglectful of your perishing souls, God has claims, and to you he is speaking. By his judgments, he is now teaching you the lessons of righteousness, to which, hitherto, ye have paid little or no attention.

“ The Lord’s voice is to the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name : hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.”* To-day, then, if ye will hearken to his voice, harden not your hearts, as the Israelites did, in the provocation in the wilderness. Reflect upon your past misconduct, your waste of time, your neglect of mercy, and the contempt you have cast, hitherto, upon the blood of the covenant. Presently the scenes which now please your fancy, and bewitch your hearts, will be no more. The world which you love, will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat. In that tremendous catastrophe of nature, perish your hopes and your happiness forever. Delay not then until it be too late : but now, in this accepted time, and in this day of salvation, hasten to Christ. Make your peace with God through them. Why will ye die, since life is offered to you ? Why will ye prefer everlasting destruction, to everlasting blessedness ? Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. In that retribution, which God now inflicts upon the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity, you see the certainty of that final retribution, which awaits the ungodly, on that day when God shall come to judgment. Scoffers may ask, “ where is the promise of his coming ? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. But the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness ; but is long suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all

* Micah vi. 9.

should come to repentance, and live. 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night ; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works which are therein, shall be burned up.'* What a day will that be ! how terrible ! If now, the hearts of men fail them for the calamities which are in the world, how much more then ! If God's vengeance now, be awful, how much more so then ! The Lord Jesus will descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. The dead will be raised, and the living caught up in the air. The books will be opened, and the fate of every man determined for eternity. What horror ! what alarm ! what convulsions among those who know not God ! Oh, be persuaded now, ye who are afar off, to cast down your weapons of rebellion, and make your calling and election sure. Be wise in season, and prepare to meet your God in judgment. AMEN.

* 11 Pet. iii. 4, 9, 10.

APPENDIX.

Note 1.

VITRINGA thinks, that the 24, 25, 26, and 27 chapters of Isaiah, were partly accomplished in the times of the Maccabees, in those of the Apostles, that of Constantine, and at the reformation from popery: but that they will be more amply fulfilled in the latter day glory, when antichrist shall be destroyed, Rome laid in ashes, and the Dragon cast into the bottomless pit. He considers the enemies of the church, in the times of the Maccabees, as typical of the popish adversaries; and that, therefore, her deliverance in the one period, was typical of her deliverance in the other. See Bell's "Spirit lifting up a Standard," p. 282.

Note 2.

Thus the angel told Daniel, chap. 7, v. 24; and one of the seven angels, John, Rev. 17, 2. Several interpreters have attempted a list of these kingdoms; for which, see Faber's dissertation, vol. 1, p. 179, and onward, 2d ed. Lond. In some of the catalogues, the dukedom of Ravenna is included. This, as it never was an independent kingdom, cannot be meant, as Faber shews in the place above quoted. In others, the Vandals, and in others, the Saracens of Africa, are mentioned; but neither of these supported the first beast, in its idolatry and persecution of the true church; and yet it is expressly said, the ten kings gave their power and strength to the beast. Rev. 17, 13. Lowman supposes, from the use which is made of *ten*, in prophetic language, to denote several, that there is no necessity for finding the precise number ten, of kingdoms, erected on the ruins of the Roman empire; but only of *several*, which is fact: and this fact is a memorable event of Providence, and a distinguishing mark of this period of prophecy. See his work on Revelation, note on the 13th verse of the 17th chapter.

Note 3.

Faber, in his dissertation on the prophecies, appears to me to have satisfactorily shewn, that the *two horned beast*, is the spiritual empire of Rome, as distinct from the *ten horned beast*, which is the temporal Roman empire, in its idolatrous and persecuting state. Vol. 2, p. 259, 2d ed. Lond. Bishop Newton supposes this spiritual empire commenced in the year 727, when the dukedom of Ravenna became the property of the Roman pontiff. He mentions other memorable æras in the 8th century. Vol. 3, p. 398, 399, 3d ed. Lond. The two æras mentioned in the discourse, are supported by the strongest arguments. Time alone can determine the true one.

Note 4.

The language here used may appear harsh : yet equally harsh language, if it is so, has been used by the most eminent, able, and humane protestants. I could quote Vitringa, Jurieu, Chandler, Jortin, Sherlock, and a host like them, in confirmation of this assertion, were it necessary. Whoever will read Mosheim's Eccles. History, Bishop Newton on the prophecies, or Lowman and Johnson on the Revelation, will find such a detail of iniquity and cruelties, committed by the church of Rome, as to justify all that the protestants have said of her. And if their view of her be right, as I believe, if she be truly *mystical Babylon*, the God of truth hath affixed on her the stamp of pre-eminent, everlasting infamy. See also, Memoirs of Pius VI. in which enough is said of the Roman hierarchy, to convince every unbiassed person of its monstrous pollution and iniquities.

Note 5.

“It is farther intimated,” says Bishop Newton, “that she, viz. Rome, shall be swallowed up by a subterraneous fire ; shall sink, like a great mill-stone, into the sea, and her smoke shall rise up for ever and ever : and the soil and situation of Rome, and the neighboring countries, greatly favor the supposition.” Vol. 3, p. 404. It is said, Rev. 19, 3, that her smoke rose up for ever and ever ; where there seems to be an allusion to what Isaiah said of Edom ; chap. 34, 9, 10. And by Edom, the Jews themselves understand, Rome. The genuine editions of the Chaldee paraphrase, run in the following manner : “And the rivers of Rome shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched day nor night, and the smoke thereof shall go up for ever.” Vitringa, on the passage. It is well known, that Italy, and the adjacent countries, are of a sulphureous, and bituminous soil. There have been, even at Rome, eruptions of subterraneous fire, which have consumed several buildings. The fuel seems to be prepared, and seems to wait only for the breath of the Lord to kindle it. Bell's “Spirit lifting up a Standard,” p. 29.

Note 6.

“It is computed, that in France were slain a million of Waldenses, in the thirteenth century. In 1572, on St. Bartholomew's day, were slain, in cold blood, 5000 protestants, in Paris, and 25,000 in the Provinces. It is reckoned that about this time, within thirty years, were martyred for the truth, 39 princes, 148 counts, 234 barons, 147,518 gentlemen, and 760,000 of the common people. These cruelties were committed previous to the accession of the house of Bourbon. By one of that house, the

edict of Nantz was revoked, and a scene, too horrible even to be sketched, commenced, of cruelties, massacres, and oppressions, in which 100,000 protestants were murdered, and which terminated in the banishment of 800,000 of them from the kingdom. For information, see Mosheim's Eccles. His. Faber's Diss. vol. 2, p. 241. The persecuting spirit of France, and of the house of Bourbon, however, did not spend its force in these dreadful efforts. As late as the year 1752, attending religious assemblies (of protestants) was punished with loss of nobility, banishment, imprisonment, scourging, the galleys, and death. Parties of soldiers, says Rabaut in his memorial, attack their defenceless meetings, and wound, maim, or kill, men, women, and children. Bibles, found in the possession of any, were burnt, and the possessors put to death. Husbands, wives, and children were torn from one another's arms, that the children might be re-baptized, and educated in popery, and the parents compelled to renounce their religion. By the violence of the soldiers, massacres were committed in private houses; and many whom they seized were hanged, and their carcasses cast on dung hills. All this happened in our enlightened century, in the most polite and civilized nation. It is no wonder that despair drove some to violent measures, in self-defence; and that many sought safety by flight. Their bowels were rent, by taking from them, what, in this world, was dearest to them. In the *most christian* kingdom, a dark dungeon, or the galleys, or death, was his reward, who would not live as an atheist, without worshipping God: and complaints of this barbarous treatment, were accounted crimes. See No. 6, vol. 2 of Dr. Erskine's Sketches and Hints of Church History; in which the state of the protestants in France, down to 1775, is exhibited, as abridged from continental writers.

Such has been the conduct of the Bourbon family in France. The first one on the throne, viz. Henry IV. notwithstanding his high reputation, was an apostate, who sacrificed his conscience for his crown; and his descendants have, to the protestants, been dreadful tyrants.

Not less cruel has been the house of Austria. Its career of persecution began with Charles V. who destroyed the celebrated league of Smalcald, and contemplated the total ruin of the protestant interest in Germany. His brother and successor to the empire, Ferdinand I. after he had overcome the German protestants in war, cruelly persecuted the Bohemian brethren; scourging some, beheading others, levying heavy fines upon others, and sequestering all the estates of others. Then he ordered all their ministers to be apprehended; and, in 1549, published a decree for extirpating them; in consequence of which, 200 ministers were banished the kingdom. By him also, many copies of Luther's translation of the bible were burnt. Rodolphus II. the second from him, destroyed all the protestant schools and

churches in Austria; and particularly, in 1601, violently took from them, and bestowed on the Jesuits, the churches in Lintz. Under the reign of Ferdinand of Gratz, the second from him, commenced the thirty years war, which threatened the extinction of the protestant interest, and would have accomplished it, had not the gallant and pious Gustavus Adolphus, king of Sweden, interposed and defended his brethren. The cruelties exercised, the blood shed, the iniquity committed, by the catholics in this war, exceed all belief. In a thousand different ways, worthy of fiends, did they oppress and destroy the protestants. The emperor himself, when told of the ruin and slaughter occasioned by this war, calmly answered, 'he had rather reign over a desolate than a damned kingdom.' Such was his bigotry—so dark—so unreasonable—so stupid. In Schiller's History, in Moshcim's Church History, and other writers, a particular account will be found: as also in Gillies' Historical Collection, vol. 1. This dreadful war terminated in the peace of Westphalia, which guaranteed security to the protestants. Against this peace, the Pope remonstrated; and it has never been recognized by his successors. Hence the grievances of protestants have not been ended: for as late as 1764, they presented a memorial to Joseph II. on his election to the empire.—Erskine's Sketches, vol. 2, No. 2. In Hungary, especially, they have been vexed and persecuted, in spite of treaties and promises, beyond all bounds. See the above work, No. 7. The empress, queen Maria Theresa, was an enemy to them; and the present emperor appears to be a determined supporter of the spiritual rights of the pontiff. The popish princes of the empire have not been backward in following the example of their sovereign. As late as the year 1632, the archbishop of Saltzburgh, Baron of Firmian, banished 30,000 protestants from his dominions, with circumstances of aggravated cruelty.—See Gillies' Historical Collections, vol. 2. for an account of this event.

Note 7.

When it is said, "the very calamities they now suffer in Holland has been predicted by some of their divines," it is not meant, that these divines predicted the establishment of a monarchy in Holland, and the subjection of that country to France; but only, that they foresaw calamities, such as they now suffer from war and oppression, which they expected would be inflicted on them, by papists, atheists, and time-servers. Among other instances, I shall mention Fruytier, who, in a work called "Sion's Wrestlings," published in 1715, declares his belief, that God was preparing heavy judgments for the Netherlands; and insinuates his apprehension, that the instruments would be such characters as have been just now mentioned. So great was the fear of the protestants, concerning the papists, that, in 1725, the deputies of

the General Synod, presented a remonstrance on the subject, to the States General, in which they mention, that the number of Catholics, since the year 1650, had increased 350,000. An account of this will be found in a work, ascribed to the Rev. Professor Bruce, of the Antiburgher Seceders, in Scotland, called "Free thoughts on the toleration," &c. by Calvinus Minor, p. 299. In 1746, Mr. Ravestyn, one of the respectable clergy of that day, published a tract called, "The necessity of watchfulness against the papists;" in which the danger of protestants in Holland, from them, is pointed out, and measures recommended for warding off the dangers. In a discourse on 2 Chronicles, 7, 13, 14, published in 1770, by Appelius, one of the most able defenders and expounders of evangelical truth, which that or any other country has ever produced, the moral and religious state of Holland, is represented as very deplorable.

The vicinity of this country to France, and the party in it who have ever been favorable to France, have caused much of the corruption which heretofore prevailed in it, and prepared the way for its present awful state.

Note 8.

The success of the catholics in Germany, and other places, is chiefly owing to the Jesuits. This order, though nominally suppressed, still exists. Indeed, its constitution is such, that no human power can destroy it. They are countenanced in Austria, and have the direction of the schools there. In many popish German courts, under the name of ex-jesuits, they are father-confessors and tutors, to young princes. In the Palatinate, especially the Dutchy of Juliers and Bergs, they are favorably received; teach schools, preach, hear confessions, and have a college more numerous than others. In Bavaria they have amazing influence. In Sweden and Denmark they have many adherents. In West Russia they have a religious establishment of their own. Like Proteus, they change themselves into every different shape. They travel as abbeyes, as secular clergymen, as bishops, as laymen, as merchants, as lovers of arts and sciences; and for the glory of God, as they deem it, they even appear in protestant churches, as protestants. Unwary protestants, they engage in plans of union with papists. They get them in secret societies, and make them promise subjection to unknown superiors. Protestants, through their means, recommend popish books, which are written with a professed view of lessening the differences between the two denominations. Of their arts and success, an account, abstracted from a German work, is given in Erskine's Sketches, vol. 1, No. 10.

Note 9.

Whoever will be at the trouble of reading the correspondence of this king with Voltaire, in his works, will be convinced of his

gross, his abominable infidelity. Of the infidelity of his court, and the number of scoffing sophists around him, Thiebault has given us a satisfactory account. To Silesia, he himself, indirectly, in one of his works, acknowledges he had no legal pretensions. And who can justify the partition of Poland, and the seizure of Hanover, by his successors? Indeed, the concern of Austria and Russia, in the business of Poland, if there was no other cause, satisfactorily vindicates the government of God, in suffering the former to be robbed of her German territories; and the latter to be baffled and defeated by France.

When it is said, that the foundation of the revolutions and convulsions, which have taken place in Europe, was, perhaps, laid here, it is not meant that a regular plan was concerted, or even imagined, by any of the infidel sophists of Frederick's court; but merely that the countenance they received from him, emboldened them, gave them reputation elsewhere, introduced them in the petty courts of Germany, made their writings popular, and made them exert themselves more for the extension of infidelity, than they could have done, or would have dared to do, without it. Let it be remembered, that these sophists were chiefly Frenchmen.

Note 10.

For an account of these missionary institutions and charitable associations, the reader is referred to any of the religious magazines of the day, published in this country or Britain: but especially to the "Christian Observer," published in London. In that work, will be seen the shocking distresses in Germany, occasioned by Bonaparte's march through it, in his last war with Austria, and the assistance contributed by the British nation, towards alleviating these distresses. The bible society has already expended between 5 and 6000 pounds sterling, in accomplishing its object. They have published three reports, from which it appears, that they have printed and circulated, at their expense—new testaments in the German language, 5000—in the Icelandic, 3000—in the Spanish, 5000—in the French, 7000 copies. They have given two separate sums, of 1000 pounds each, towards the translation of the scriptures, now going on in Bengal, into ten different languages, among which is the Chinese. They have made arrangements, by procuring types and paper, for printing 5000 copies of the new testament, in the Turkish language. They have printed 2000 copies of John's gospel, in the Mohawk language; and several thousand Welsh new testaments. A more minute detail will be found in the "Panoplist," published at Boston, vol. 3, p. 232.

Note 11.

The first grand inquisitor in Spain, Torquemada, in the space of 14 years, persecuted nearly 80,000 persons, of whom 6000

were condemned to the flames. D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature," vol. 1, p. 280, 5th ed. This is a sufficient specimen, of what that nation must be, in its moral character, which has so long suffered the inquisition among them.

Note 12.

Aggrandizement similar to this, appears to have been an object steadily pursued by the French government ever since the administration of Cardinal Richelieu. Perhaps the project of a confederated republic in Europe, which Henry the IV. had formed, first gave rise to their ambitious views. Lewis XIV. had nearly attained his wishes by force, to the destruction of the sovereignties of Europe. Under his successors, travellers have been sent forth, specially commissioned, into Turkey, Egypt, and other places, to bring information of the strength, resources, &c. of these places, so as to prepare for future attacks in defenceless parts. Every exertion has been made, to make the French language, the language of Europe, as also their modes; thus preparing the way for their future ascendancy. The papers and memorials of the different ministers, under the old monarchy, must contain a fund of information, concerning the means of increasing the splendor and authority of the nation abroad. Under it, diplomatic intrigue was brought to its present perfection. These papers, &c. are in Bonaparte's hands, and the diplomatic skill of the nation at his disposal. No prince is so well served, in this respect, as he is. By intrigue of his ministers, he effects almost as much as by the force of his armies. In every court on the continent, he has his spies, so that he can, and does anticipate every measure adopted against him.

Note 13.

The writer here meant is Faber, who, in vol. 2 of his work, 2d ed. p. 222, in a note, says, that the government of Bonaparte is now plainly the representative of the Carlovingian head of the beast. His remarks, on the patriciate and imperial authority of Charlemagne, commence at p. 214. He proves, to my full satisfaction, that one of the emperors of this line, was to slay the witnesses. The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, is the agent who does this, according to prophecy. This beast, according to Rev. 17, 8, is the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. He is the first beast John saw, and symbolizes with Daniel's fourth beast. By this the Roman empire is meant. Of course it must answer, in some respects, to the descriptions here given of it. A beast, in prophetic language, is an idolatrous, tyrannical empire. As such, the Roman empire ceased to be, under Constantine; and revived again, when it set up the tyrannical supremacy of the Pope, and supported the worship of saints and martyrs.

The existence, non-existence, and re-existence of the beast, were under its sixth head, or the imperial form of government. He appeared under his eighth head, which is of the seven, when John saw the harlot seated on him. This beast is distinct from the harlot, the spiritual empire of Rome. The hierarchy, then, does not slay the witnesses; but only excites to the measure. The eighth beast, or the eighth form of government, will be chargeable with it.

Note 14.

As a farther proof of what is here stated, let the reader observe the following. By a late decree of the French government, it is ordered, that no church book, psalm book, church music, catechism, or prayer book, shall for the future, be printed without the express permission of the bishop of the diocese, and this permission shall be affixed to each copy. All books, not licensed in this manner, shall be considered as pirated, and shall be seized and confiscated. Every proprietor, publisher, and author of such copies, shall be liable to a fine, amounting to the value of 3000 copies of the impression; and every purchaser of them, provided it be proved that he has no connection with the publisher, shall be liable to a fine amounting to the value of 500 copies.

Note 15.

By the constitution of Holland, the king and the law determine all that is judged necessary in the organization, the protection, and the exercise of all religious worship.

Note 16.

Usher, who foretold the calamity of Ireland and the commotions of England, forty years before they came to pass, used to affirm with confidence, "that a sad persecution would befall all the protestant churches in Europe, the most grievous of any which she had hitherto suffered: and that Rome should then suddenly fall, when most secure of all things, she should trust in her state: that the persecution should be raised by the popish party; and that hypocrites, and nominal christians, who constitute the outward court of the temple, should chiefly fall: that they who constituted the inner temple of God, should be saved; and that this last affliction should be followed with the glorious and wished for state of the church." I merely remark, as the witnesses are stationed in the inner temple in John's vision, from the allusion made to the golden candlestick, which stood in the holy place, it follows, that the persecution which Usher apprehended, must extend to the inner temple too, since the witnesses are slain. Such is Dr. Gill's opinion, expressed in a sermon preached in 1750. He supposes "the light of the gospel will be wholly withdrawn for a while; the outer court given to the gentiles, ere they can reach the inner

court, and slay the witnesses. The slaying of these witnesses, which is yet to come, will make a dismal night, and be accompanied with the universal spread of popery." The same sentiment is expressed by Professor Venema, of Leuwarden, Holland, in 1775, in his 4th academic oration; an abstract of which is given by Dr. Erskine, in his "Sketches," vol. 2, No. 8. Dr. Erskine himself, who died only a few years back, was of the same mind. See No. 9, of the above work.

In addition to these, I only add bishop Newton, who considers the slaying of the witnesses yet to come.

Note 17.

Infidels say, that in rejecting religion, they only act according to the dictates of reason. In answer to this, let it be remembered, that the vilest superstition, or false religion, embraces more essential principles of truth than the varied and studied systems of infidelity. In every superstition, the following truths are more or less distinctly recognized, viz.—the existence of a Supreme Being—the fact of his having revealed his will to mankind—the duty of worshipping him, in some public manner—and a future retribution. In the systems of infidelity, you find the three last excluded: and as for the first, the best of them, like stupid Pagans, seem to consider it a matter of indifference whether there is one God, or fifty: and the worst, reject his existence. Compare these systems with the works of creation—with facts in the world—with principles engraven indelibly on our frame—with the very throbbings of the human heart in every country; and you will find they are MORE IRRATIONAL—LESS CALCULATED FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT AND PERSONAL COMFORT, THAN THE VILEST SUPERSTITION. The reason why the tendency of these principles do not appear, in those countries where they exist, is, because they are controlled by the very superstition, (as they term religion) against which they fight. Remove the restraints of religion, and then you see what infidels are, and what is the tendency of their principles. In the reign of atheism in France, God has given the world a lesson on this subject, which ought never to be forgotten. The murders and excesses of that period, are a warning to all nations, NOT TO TRUST IN THE MEN WHO WOULD ROB THEM OF THEIR RELIGION, BECAUSE IT CONTRADICTS REASON AND ABRIDGES HUMAN HAPPINESS.

Note 18.

See Note 8, and the authority referred to there: as also the abstract of Venema's oration, given by Dr. Erskine, in vol. 2, No. 8, already quoted. I only add, that the Franciscans and Minorites are successful in making converts in Holland. As late as the year 1786, attempts were beginning by "the society for reli-

gious union," to make proselytes to the Roman faith. This society was under the influence of catholics; and its leader in Leipzig, boasted that he had gained 20,000 protestants to his plan. Whoever wishes more information on this subject, will find it in Erskine's Sketches, so frequently quoted. They contain the only English account of the state of the protestants in Europe, down to the year 1795.

Note 19.

The Roman Catholics now labor under no incapacities, in which all their fellow subjects, of whatever denomination, do not participate. Without taking the oath of supremacy, no protestant can be admitted into either house of Parliament. Without receiving the sacrament also, according to the rites of the church of England, no protestant can be admitted to those high offices of state, from which the Roman Catholics are excluded. By their refusal to take those tests, to which all their fellow subjects are obliged equally to submit, they do, therefore, exclude themselves from the situations to which they aspire. The canons and decrees of the Romish church in all ages shew, that the Pope is believed to possess, not only spiritual, but temporal dominion; they also breathe a spirit of rancorous hatred to protestants, and though in both these respects, some amelioration may have taken place of late, yet a considerable degree of hostility to protestantism still prevails; and however it may be disavowed in theory, yet in practice the spiritual dominion of the Pope really involves temporal power. It has been said, indeed, that the Pope possesses now no temporal power over Irish Roman Catholics; but can he not dissolve marriages at pleasure? Is he not the supreme judge in all questions of inheritance? Does he not also possess the formidable power of excommunication? Ought men, subject to a foreign jurisdiction so arbitrary and despotic, to be admitted to the possession of political power, in this free country? In various decrees and bulls it has also been stated distinctly, that oaths to heretics are nullities; and even in the present day, Dr. Milner, an apostolical Vicar, has declared, in a work written by him, that the performance of all engagements, however solemnly entered into, must turn on the question of prudence.—*Christian Observer*, vol. 4.

Note 20.

In the whole debate, on the catholic emancipation bill, in the British Parliament, the arguments for, and against it, were wholly of a political nature. On this subject the editors of the *Christian Observer*, for 1804, say, "We cannot contemplate, without a feeling of dismay, the possibility that a wider prevalence should be given to the anti-christian superstitions, the idolatrous worship, the fanatical bigotry, and the lax morality of the Romish

church." I concur with them in opinion, that this view of the subject deserves consideration—nay, it is the only view in which protestants ought to regard it. The spiritual authority of the Pope is still recognized, and the detestable principle, that no faith is to be kept with heretics, has never been disavowed by the head of the Romish church. To the danger arising from the prevalence and power of Roman Catholics, few protestants seem sensible. What D'Alembert said of them is but too true. As for the catholics, the Pope is regarded by them as the head of the church: by sage and moderate protestants, he is seen in the light of a sovereign prince, whom they respect, though they do not obey him: but in an age like this, he is no longer antichrist in the opinion of any body.—*Hurd on Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 39.

Note 21.

From this charge, the state of Connecticut must be exempted. Morality and religion, in the opinion of her sons, are essential qualifications for an office. The admirable order which prevails, with but few exceptions, throughout her borders, is a practical answer to all the theories of skeptical philosophers, on the subject of civil society. Her first founders were a godly race who, by their faith and prayers, secured a noble inheritance for their posterity. Verily righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin (in which is included infidelity and irreligion) is the reproach of any people.

Note 22.

The very triumph of mystical Babylon will constitute a part of her retribution. The disposition of mind which prompts her to slay the witnesses, is a righteous judgment. The act itself, being atrocious to an extreme, because indicating determined and persevering hostility against the saints of the Most High, will aggravate her guilt. By it she hastens her downfall, as it will be the consummation of her crimes; by it she seals her final and everlasting perdition.

POSTSCRIPT.

Since sending these sheets to press, the author has seen Van Mildert's sermons, delivered at Boyle's lecture, from 1802 to 1805, to which he refers the reader in confirmation of what he has advanced concerning popery.—See vol. 1, p. 312—314. This writer also considers the patronage which Frederick the Great of Prussia gave to the skeptical philosophers of the day, as the great cause of the prevalence of their principles, and the disasters flowing from such prevalence, in the world.—See vol. 1, p. 382—385. Moreover he considers the slaying of the witnesses yet to come, but hazards no opinion whether it will be effected by infidels or apostates.—Vol. 1, p. 452—454.

ERRATUM.—P. 30, in the reference to Lowman, for note 6, read note 7.