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**SERMON,**

PREACHED OCTOBER 20, 1813,

AT

SANDWICH, MASSACHUSETTS,

AT THE

**DEDICATION**

OF THE

**MEETING HOUSE,**

RECENTLY ERECTED FOR THE USE OF THE

**CALVINISTIC CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY**

IN THAT TOWN.

*K*

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## SERMON.

LUKE II. 34, 35.

AND SIMON BLESSED THEM, AND SAID UNTO MARY HIS MOTHER, BEHOLD THIS CHILD IS SET FOR THE FALL AND RISING AGAIN OF MANY IN ISRAEL, AND FOR A SIGN WHICH SHALL BE SPOKEN AGAINST; (YEA A SWORD SHALL PIERCE THROUGH THINE OWN SOUL ALSO;) THAT THE THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS MAY BE REVEALED.

SUCH was the prediction respecting Him whose Gospel is to be preached in this house. What distinguishes this from common edifices is, that here that Saviour is to be proclaimed whose advent and kingdom were to be attended with the consequences predicted in the text. What Christ and His Gospel are to the world at large, they are to every place where they are known. These words then, though they may carry us out at first to a more general view of the design and effects of Christian ministrations, will bring us back at last to an application which I hope will not be deemed unsuitable to the present occasion.

As a taper is wont to brighten just as it is extinguished, so good old Simeon was favoured with

a gleam of prophetic light as he stood on the verge of eternity. Well might that be an illumined moment when the Child of Bethlehem, the Light of the world, was born. It had been revealed to that aged saint, "that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ;" and being now led by the Spirit into the temple, where they were consecrating the divine Infant, he knew Him, and clasping Him to his heart, exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for my eyes have seen thy salvation!" The enraptured patriarch then proceeded to bless the parents and the Child; and at last turning to the virgin mother, who was destined to survive her husband and witness the sufferings and death of her Son, he addressed to her wondering ear the strange prediction, "Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." A part of this prediction related to the new-born Infant, and a part to the virgin mother. One part respected the malice which would assail Him, the salvation which He would accomplish for many, the developement of human characters, and the ruin of obstinate opposers, which His mission and Gospel would occasion; the other respected the agonies of the mother's heart in view of the persecutions and death of her Son. The latter being nowise connected with the present occasion, my attention

will be confined to the former. "Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against,—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In these words are manifestly contained the three following propositions:

I. That holy Child was destined to be the mark at which malice would point its shafts.

II. By the treatment to be rendered to Him and His Gospel, the secrets of many hearts were to be revealed.

III. He was set for the rising and fall of many to whom His Gospel should be preached.

I. That sacred Babe, though born without sin, though inoffensive as the gentlest lamb, though sent into the world on the kindest offices of love to men, was to be a mark for malice, the butt of spleen and rancour in all their horrid forms. Who would have thought that this heavenly Infant, whose birth transported angels celebrated in their songs, who drew the wise men from the East to lay their tribute at His feet, would be thus ignominiously treated by men? Who would have thought that those features on which the charms of celestial grace delighted to play, would be marred with grief and violence? that those eyes which were made only to weep for the miseries of men, would be forced to weep under injuries which men would inflict? Approach and

view Him as He is pressed in the arms of the venerable Simeon. What innocence ! What more than human beauty ! And is that blessed Infant to be the mark of envy ? the victim of hatred and revenge ? So the prediction of heaven has declared ; so the evolutions of succeeding years will show. Yes, I have only to follow Him from the temple, and I see Him sought by the persecuting sword of Herod ;—I see Him driven a wandering exile to Egypt. I follow Him a little further, and I behold Him insulted by the contemptuous reproaches of His own brethren, the object of the obloquy and spleen of the Jewish nation, the scribe and the priest, the sanhedrim and the mob. Now He is slandered as a profaner of the Sabbath, the enemy of Moses, the enemy of Cesar, a mere pretender to divine honours ; then again He has a devil, and casts out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Every degrading epithet is applied. The vocabulary of malice is exhausted. He is dragged before the Jewish council, and the Roman governour. The vociferating crowd demand His crucifixion. He is scourged, insulted, condemned, suspended between two malefactors. He is driven from the body and persecuted to heaven. Happy would it have been if persecution had here ended its bloody work. No, it pursued His followers. One only of His twelve disciples was suffered to die a natural death. All that dreadful scene was acted over which He Himself had foretold. “Think not,” said He, “that I am come to send peace on earth ; I came not to send



peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother :—and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of His household?" "The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." All this came to pass. The Jew and the heathen united to whet the sword and to kindle the faggots. Pagan Rome raised ten successive persecutions. Papal Rome prepared the rack and the heated irons. The subtle jesuit, the follower of Mahomet, the scoffing infidel, the man of pleasure, the ignorant, the gay, and the thoughtless, have all in their turn joined to reproach, to persecute, and to crush the religion of Christ. Not a revival of religion but is stigmatized as the workings of a disordered brain or a vicious heart. Not an instance of fervent experimental godliness, but is charged to the weakness of ignorance, or the devices of hypocrisy. Not a discriminating doctrine but is proscribed and hunted from the world. The whole of the natural heart, in whatever age or country it appears, is vehemently opposed to the precepts, the conditions, and the very promises of the Gospel. The sanctified spirit of the Christian religion, the construction, scope, and end of the Chris-

tian plan, find malignant and eternal resistance in the natural tempers of men. After all the light, and refinement, and prepossessions of conscience, (if I may so speak,) which Christianity has spread, it has not ceased to be true, that "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Not indeed all who *profess*, not all who exhibit in their lives the *outlines* of religion, not all who approach as near to the spirit of the world as can possibly consist with a Christian standing; but all who strictly and fervently live the religion and breathe the spirit of Christ. There are indeed communities of worldly men whose judgment and manners are so far refined by Christianity, that they will not take offence at the practice of Christian morality, nor at the preaching of the more general truths, nor at knowing that men hold in secret the distinguishing doctrines, and even practise the devotions of Christianity, if they will not bring religion into conversation, nor seem to frown at those who neglect it. Some of them will even allow you to preach the peculiar doctrines, provided you do not bring them home to their conscience, to disturb them in the pursuit of the world, and especially if you will conform to their rules of social intercourse in private. It is admitted also that many real Christians escape their resentment by living retired from public view, or by a general conformity in little things, or by neglecting to reprove them, in words or by the distinct expression of their manners, or by keeping out of sight the most offensive parts of divine

truth, or by exhibiting in their conduct and conversation much more of the mildness and beneficence of the divine nature, than of the holiness, justice, and strictness. But let any man continually carry about him a full and distinct image of God, exhibiting all the truths of His Word, all the strictness of His law, all the guilt and danger of sinners,—carrying reproof to every thing selfish, every thing proud, every thing vain, every thing that does not make God the supreme object, every thing bitter towards men, “every idle word,” every small neglect; and let his daily conversation be as full of eternal things as it ought; in a word, let him carry about him wherever he goes, a full, and not a partial image of God; and let him moreover be constituted by his age or office a reprover; and there is not a community of worldly men in Christendom who will not be offended; and if they persecute in no other way, they will at least smite with the tongue; unless indeed they are restrained by personal attachments, or by apparent interest brought to view by a conviction of truth. This *must* be true, or “the carnal mind” is no longer “enmity against God.”

This truth is written in characters of blood in the history of the Waldenses, the Huguenots, and the Puritans. This truth is read by all men in the lives of Paul, Luther, Leighton, Baxter, Whitefield, Edwards, and a host of others, who, beyond their contemporaries, taught and exemplified the real character

of God.—Thus that divine Personage was “set—for a sign” to “be spoken against.”

II. This was so appointed “that the thoughts of many hearts [might] be revealed.” He was manifested on earth, His kingdom was set up among men, to make a thorough experiment upon the human character. The Gospel plan as laid in the ages of eternity, among the vast objects which it embraced had this for one, to make a full developement of the secrets of men’s hearts. And it is admirably calculated for such a purpose. It is a great and luminous display of all those objects towards which men as moral beings exercise affections. It contains the fullest and clearest manifestation of God ever made to creatures. It was revealed “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” Hence the Church becomes “a spectacle—to angels;” and those blessed spirits “desire to look into” these things, because “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” is chiefly seen “in the face of Jesus Christ.” This then being the full orbéd glory of the eternal God, it is preeminently calculated to try the hearts of men towards all the objects in the universe which are fitted to draw forth the distinction between a selfish and holy temper. According to the inclinations of men’s hearts towards these objects, their moral character is infallibly determined. Let the presuming infidel set up other standards of merit;

let the Jew boast of the sanctity of his legal rites ; let charity in her dotage award a crown of glory to the sincerity which rejects a Saviour ; it is all in vain : by the treatment which men render to the Gospel of Christ, and by this alone, their moral character is decided. "He that believeth" is holy ; and "he that believeth not" after the Gospel is presented, is unholy. "He that believeth" is "saved," and "he that believeth not" is "damned."

Not only the *truths* but "the *afflictions* of the Gospel" are calculated to test the characters of men. Many when the Church is in prosperity are forward to join themselves to its communion, and to sing hosannas, who, like the stony ground hearers, "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by—are offended." "The preaching of the Gospel," said one of the old divines, with a simplicity and plainness peculiar to the age, "is the Lord's *fan* by which He purgeth His floor ; persecution is the Lord's *sieve* by which He winnoweth churches, and separateth the dirt, and darnel, and tares from the wheat. Gospel times, and times of persecution, are both of them times which make great discovery of men's spirits."

That divine Personage was set not only to make an open distinction between the clean and the unclean, but to disclose the *depths* of human depravity, which could not have been so fully revealed in any other way. The Son of God descended from hea-

ven bearing the impress of His Father's image, and became the point in which all the rays of divine glory centred, and from which they poured their splendours upon the world. He spread before the eyes of men the design and the testimonials of His mission. In one hand He bore the authority of the eternal God, with the other He tendered salvation to a dying world. He came to snatch them from eternal sorrows, and lift them to the throne of God. He came to accomplish this by His tears, His blood, His life. Could another circumstance be added to the preparation for a full experiment upon the human character? Now let us see how men will receive this heavenly Visitor. Will they not respect the dignity of His Person, and the majesty of His authority? Will they not be charmed with the glory of moral perfection which shines around Him? Will they not be melted by the ineffable love which His advent bespeaks? Will they not be crushed under obligation and lie overcome at His feet? Will not distant nations fly to hail their Deliverer? Yes, I see them crowding from the isles of Chittim, from Tarshish and Ophir. The joyful earth spreads a paradise to welcome Him wherever He treads. Ah it is a dream! I awake, and what do I behold? Not a nation in motion to receive the heavenly Stranger. Not even His own favoured people receive Him. His moral beauty offends them. His very love moves their envy. I see Him seized, with all the majesty of a God about Him, and dragged to crucifixion.

Those temples which wore the diadem of heaven, are mangled with a crown of thorns. They beat Him, they scourge Him, they spit upon Him. With eyes flashing with fury they pursue Him to Calvary,—they chase Him out of the world. *There* an eternal monument was erected, to notify to angels as they pass by to what extremes the wickedness of man can go. But the experiment was not ended here. His Church was yet left on earth. His Gospel, forcing its way against the spears of an embattled world, must travel through the nations, and renew the experiment upon men in every country and every age. And what does the experiment prove? That in every country and age the human heart is the same; that it is capable of resisting all the light and love, all the majesty, and holiness, and threatenings, and promises of the Gospel. The feeblest child is capable of all this. No solitary individual since the fall of Adam, has ever been conquered by the application of all these motives. None have yielded but whom almighty grace subdued; and many have resisted with a fury never directed against any other object. The many bloody persecutions which have been raised against this benevolent cause, the rancour and the railery, the contempt and the spite, which have been vomited against it in every age, tell what the heart of man can do. No other cause was ever so proscribed; none other ever produced such a disruption of all the ties of nature, stimulating the infuriate brother to deliver up the brother to death, and the father

the children, and the children the parents. The most jarring elements, that can unite in nothing else, can unite in this warfare. Here Herod and Pilate are made friends. The Jew and the heathen, the Mahometan and the infidel, men of all parties and sects, are firm allies in this crusade. Every inferior enmity is swallowed up in this governing enmity against God. The experiment then is complete. And now it is understood in heaven and earth, to a degree unknown before, what unfathomable depths of wickedness lay concealed in the heart of man.

As the Gospel was sent into the world, so it is sent into *every place* to make an experiment upon the hearts of the people. And it never fails, wherever it is faithfully preached, to draw forth to view the desperate wickedness of the human heart. By the opposition which it awakens to the God, the government, and the soul-humbling truths revealed, it not only manifests who are on the Lord's side and who are against Him, but lays open before heaven and earth the extreme depravity of a fallen nature. In the dark ages, when only its leading principles were known, and those strangely perverted, this opposition slept. But as the great system comes to be better understood, the enmity appears, and the human character is revealed. This discovery is not yet complete. Before the happy period of the Church arrives, the rage of men against the dis-



tinguishing doctrines will probably make disclosures which will astonish even the angels of God. In some parts of our country, where the Gospel has been long known and best understood, this hostility already appears, in a form sufficiently threatening, one would think, to break the slumbers of the Church, and sufficiently hideous to fill her with humility and tears.

For the same solemn purpose the Gospel has been sent to *you*. And now while weeks revolve, while Sabbath succeeds Sabbath, the great experiment is making, to decide what your characters are, and what they are eternally to be. Unless you are a people peculiarly distinguished, some of you, as the Gospel is faithfully preached within these walls, will betray your hearts to angels and men by taking offence at the most distinguishing and soul-humblng truths,—the truths in which the character of God and the great principles of His government are chiefly expressed. And after you have thus evinced to the universe your "*enmity against God,*" it will be found that you took offence at hearing that you were *totally depraved*, and at other truths necessarily connected with this! A leading end for which the Gospel was sent to you, was to show before the world which of you would love and submit to truths that exalt God and abase the pride of man, and which of you would hate and oppose them. O did men who vent their enmity against the Christian doctrines, know that this is the very proof against them which the Gospel

was sent to bring forth, they would stand appalled in the midst of their opposition, as at the Judgment of the Great Day.

In aid of this great design these walls were reared, and we are now assembled to dedicate this neat and commodious house to the service of God. As often as He whom Simeon pressed is brought in His Gospel into this temple, the great and solemn experiment will be renewed. As often as these doors are opened, God and holy angels will wait around to see what treatment the Gospel will receive from you. O could you be sensible of the fixed attention which is paid in heaven to your conduct from Sabbath to Sabbath, how every thing that escapes you under every sermon is noted down in the records of eternity, to constitute a mass of evidence that shall determine the secrets of your hearts, how tremblingly circumspect would you be at all times in the house of God. This day, this hour, your hearts are in a course of developement. This moment God is watching to see the disclosures which His Word will make, and the recording angel is taking down the account. What a solemn interval is this! What endless consequences are suspended on the present hour!

By the truths and ordinances to be administered within these walls, the great experiment will proceed with this people till you and all your chil-

dren shall have gone to your last account. Fifty years hence the eyes of God will pass through this place, to see what proofs the Gospel has found against probationers for eternity here.

III. That divine Personage was set for the rising and fall of many to whom His Gospel should be preached.

He came to be "a covenant of the people,—to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison." He came "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness;"—to stand between heaven and earth, and offer there a sacrifice which should reconcile heaven and earth together. Through Him thousands and millions have been delivered from sin, and sorrow, and eternal death, and raised to all the blessedness of an endless life.

He was also set for the *fall* of many in Israel. The prophet had foretold, "He shall be—for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." The Saviour Himself declared, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." And the apostle, severing the race of men into two classes, asserts that the

Gospel is to one "the savour of death unto death, and to the other, the savour of life unto life." This glorious Personage was revealed to discover a God and a system of truth which would exasperate and aggravate the corruptions of men, and give opportunity for their rancour to appear. He came to take away excuse, and to magnify the sin of rebellion, by the light He diffused. He came to lay the world under immense obligations by His dying love, by the privileges He bestowed, by the salvation He offered; and all to swell beyond calculation the guilt and punishment of unbelief. He was sent to pour a flood of light upon Capernaum and Jerusalem, and then to smite them with judicial blindness for not obeying the truth. He was set to raise Chorazin and Bethsaida to heaven in point of privileges, and to cast them down to hell for abusing His grace. He came to make a thorough experiment upon the Jewish nation, and after that to bring upon His murderers the Roman armies, to consume their temple and cities, to crush that wretched people with a ruin unparalleled in the history of human woes, and to scatter the miserable remnant through the earth to be the jest and proverb of the world. And the history of Christian countries, is a history of churches and nations which have fallen by crimes committed against Him whom Simeon blessed. Where are now the seven churches of Asia? Where are the once flourishing churches of Palestine, Syria, Africa, and Greece, planted and nurtured by the la-

hours of the apostles? Where is the Latin empire of Rome? Where the Greek empire? All, all the prey of barbarians, crushed by oppression, and buried in ignorance and ruin, because they abused the Gospel of the grace of God. See in the Revelation a description of the wrath still in reserve for the church of Rome. Behold the judgments which are now sweeping the nations which have sinned against the truth. An abused Gospel has occasioned all these desolations and woes. Though the kingdom of Christ is accounted weak and without influence, it is placed on earth to raise up or thrust down a world. It is the mighty engine which lifts nations to glory, or casts them down to destruction. It appears small, but it is animated with omnipotence. Arise and pass through the earth,—contemplate the nations of Christendom sunk in stupidity and vice, thrusting out the Redeemer's kingdom, or making it a mere handmaid of the state,—banishing religion from the palace to the cottage, or the wilderness. How little do they consider that the glorious Gospel which they despise, is placed on earth to raise nations to heaven, or to cast them down to hell! It was not for nothing that God laid Himself out to make this astonishing display of His perfections. It was not for nothing that He sent His beloved and infinite Son to die for a world, and to collect the tribute of homage from His creatures, and commanded them upon their utmost peril to acknowledge and obey Him.

He will hold no man guiltless who refuses allegiance to His Son. He will transfix them with eternal plagues who slight the Lord's anointed. Wo, wo to the wretch that can resist all the light and love, all the majesty and blessedness which the Gospel displays. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment. This shall be his eternal condemnation, that light is come into the world, and he has loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil.

The Gospel is set for the rising and fall of many in *every place* where it comes. Some by its influence are redeemed from bondage, and conducted to a kingdom; while others become more blind for the light rejected, more hardened by the love resisted, and plunged into double perdition by the grace abused. Every revival of religion is set for the rising and fall of some. Every Sabbath is set for the rising and fall of some. Every sermon, every sacrament, is set for the rising and fall of some. For the same solemn purpose the Gospel has come to reside among *you*. Beware how you treat it. Bow before the majesty of this divine system, and receive it with trembling and gratitude as God's best gift to man,—a gift which will not be abused. Never let the holy Sabbath return without bringing with it a deep and awful sense of the endless consequences of every Sabbath, of every sermon. Carry this sense with you through the week, and through the year. The sermons and

sacraments to be presented within these walls, will lift some of you to heaven, and probably cast some of you down to a deeper hell. This house is reared to be the gate of salvation, and the portal of perdition; to be remembered by some with eternal gratitude and delight, and by others, with everlasting remorse and anguish. This day, this Dedication, is probably to be connected with consequences, blessed and disastrous, that will run parallel with eternity, and compared with which all the joys and sorrows of a hundred generations disappear. While I rejoice with you, my beloved brethren, in the good hand of God upon you, in furnishing you once more with a convenient place for your devotions, I rejoice with trembling. Looking forward to the endless consequences which lie before me, I sink under the solemnity of the hour, and am constrained to cry, "How dreadful is this place!" Here infant angels will learn to sing, and learn to soar; and here—ah! if they break their way to hell through privileges like these, they will curse the day that ever this house was reared; they will wish ten thousand times that they had never heard a sermon, nor seen a Bible,—that they had lived and died in the recesses of pagan darkness. They will look back to the solemn assemblies in this house, the seasons of prayer, the calls of mercy, the motions of the Spirit, with recollections that a seraph could not describe. But I forbear.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that the Gospel may prove to you, my beloved brethren, and to your children, "a savour of life unto life." In this consecrated place may you see the power and glory of God as you have seen Him in the sanctuary; and may "the glory of this latter house—be greater than of the former." Of thousands may it be said, that this and that man was born here. May a long succession of happy Sabbaths dawn upon this sanctuary, bringing with them the dawn of heaven. May angels as they visit the churches, find here devout and happy assemblies met to praise the Lord. Here may you stand by twenties and by fifties to enter into covenant with God. Here for many generations may joyful parents devote their children to the honour and grace of the adorable Trinity. I anticipate the joy of those future years when a happier generation will sing within these walls, "Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!" And a full choir will answer, "Our fathers sowed in tears, and laboured in sorrow, and we have entered into their labours."

My brethren, it is too near the dawn of those happier times for your pious enterprise to fail. There is so much consolation in this thought that, considering your many trials and discouragements, I cannot leave



you without attempting to comfort your hearts by dwelling awhile on this animating truth.\*

As the rest of the Church approaches, the Christian world have been roused to an earnest attention to the prophecies, and have at length come to a remarkable agreement respecting the principal dates. It is now generally admitted that the grand period of 1260 "times" or years, assigned by Daniel and John for the continuance of the papal church, and papal kingdoms, and the Mahometan delusion, commenced in 606, (the year that the pastor of Rome was declared universal bishop, and the Arabian impostor retired to the cave of Hera to construct his

\* The trials of the Rev. Mr. Burr and the church in Sandwich are well known to many. As long as that amiable man leaned to the errors of Socinus, and preached an unknown Saviour, he was permitted to live in peace. But after the revolution in his views and feelings were known, and his labours had been signally blessed, his pulpit was forcibly shut against him, and his church, with the portion of the society which still adhered to him, were obliged to erect another house for public worship. It is stated "that the communion furniture, and all the church property, amounting to a considerable sum, is now held by only twelve male members, (eleven of whom have been regularly excluded from the church,) out of seventy-seven male members at the time the division took place." The retention of this property is understood to be connected with the claim of those twelve persons to be considered the *first church*. On this question the respectable council which convened at Sandwich, Feb. 17, 1813, recorded the following opinion: "Notwithstanding any transactions which have taken place in consequence of the unhappy divisions in Sandwich, we are decidedly of opinion that the Rev. Mr. Burr's pastoral relation to the first congregational church in Sandwich is not dissolved."

koran,) and that it will terminate in 1866, or if you reckon by Chaldaic years, in 1847 or 8.\*

\* It is undeniable that Daniel, who lived among the Chaldeans, and wrote a part of his book in the Chaldee language, reckoned by Chaldaic years, of 360 days, and was followed in this computation by John. The period assigned for the continuance of the papal power, and for the accomplishment of other great events, Daniel measures by three "times" and a half, that is, by as many "times" as there are days in three "times" and a half. (Dan. vii. 25. and xii. 7.) John repeatedly refers to the same period, and plainly tells you how many days were reckoned in three "times" and a half. In one breath he places the Church in the wilderness three "times" and a half, in the next, 1260 days; (Rev. xii. 6, 14) —thus limiting a "time" to 360 days, for three and a half times 360 are 1260. Again he measures the same period by forty-two Chaldaic months, of thirty days each. He makes the Roman empire after its division into ten kingdoms, continue forty-two months. (ch. xiii. 5.) He leaves the Church under oppression forty-two months; (ch. xi. 2.) and in the very next verse tells you that the witnesses will prophesy in sackcloth 1260 days; thus limiting the month to thirty days, for forty-two times thirty are 1260. Now forty-two months make three "times" and a half of twelve months each. Here then you have a "time" consisting of twelve months, of thirty days each, without any intercalation, and containing 360 days. By three and a half of *such* "times," and by forty-two of *such* months, and by the 1260 days contained in *such* months and "times," this period is measured. And now the question is, What portions of duration do those 1260 days stand for? Do they stand for such "times" as they are expressly said to be contained in, or for Gregorian years of three hundred and sixty-five days and a quarter? Why should they stand for Gregorian years more than for *centuries*? You find them inclosed in three and a half Chaldaic "times"; and if they are allowed to represent any longer duration than they express, they ought to represent those "times" to which they stand related as constituent parts. Later calculations have settled a different calendar; but the Holy Spirit, as might be shown in numerous instances, paid no regard to astronomical precision, but accommodated His expressions to the apprehensions of those whose language He employed. Now 1260 Chaldaic "times" amount to  $1241 \frac{88}{100}$  solar years, and form a period which will extend from A. D. 606 to A. D. 1847 or 8.

The revolutions which are taking place among the nations greatly confirm this construction. The papacy is nearly extinct. The papal kingdoms are expiring in convulsions.\* The population of the Mahometan world is melting away. Early in the last century, about the time that the career of infidelity began in Europe, a sect of free-thinkers, denominated Wahabees from Abdul Wahab their founder, arose in Arabia in opposition to the prevailing superstition, and by the rapidity of their increase, as well as by the determined character of their hostility, promise shortly to banish that imposture from Arabia, if not from the world. The Turkish empire is evidently on the eve of its dissolution. So exactly do the events of the present day accord with the predictions, both in their kind and order, that we are enabled, with some degree of certainty, to determine how far we are advanced under the seven vials. At least the accordance is so manifest that the most distinguished writers on the prophecies, though differing in other respects, have been constrained to agree

\* Let any person make himself acquainted with the present state of religion and morals, and with the judgments which are now endured, within the regions of the Romish church, and then direct a scrutinizing eye to the 18th chapter of Revelation, and he will see that spiritual Babylon already answers, with surprising exactness, to the description given of her under the operation of the last mortal blow. Every part of the picture may be distinctly traced, only the tints yet remain to be heightened. The completion of the destruction of that church, and of the kingdoms which support her, is all that remains, of the predictions of John, to be accomplished before the millennium.

in this opinion, that in 1792, the year that the great scene of carnage began in Europe, a new era opened on the world,—an era of wo to papal kingdoms, and to the countries included in the four great empires of antiquity, which is to continue till the dawn of the millennium. It appears from the last chapter of Daniel, that near the end of the 1260 years, and after the Jews are returned to their own land, “there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation ;” that after the termination of this grand period, two others, distinguished by some great events, will follow, one of thirty, the other of forty-five “times” or years : and the prophet pronounces, “Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the” end of the latter period. This is the last step in the progress towards the full introduction of the millennium that is noted in any part of the Scriptures, and is to fall, according to the calculation, in the year of the vulgar era 1941, or rather, (reckoning by Chaldaic years,) in 1921 or 2.\*

\* It appears from Dan. xii. 6, 7, that this time of trouble, occasioned by the interposition of Christ for the protection of the Jews, (verse 1) and involving the destruction of the power mentioned in the close of the last chapter, “between the seas in the glorious holy mountain,” (which all allow is to take place after the restoration of the Jews ; ) comprehending also the remarkable diffusion of knowledge, (verse 4) the great and successful efforts to convert the *Jews*, (for the vision chiefly respected them, ch. x. 14) and the figurative resurrection of that nation, some to life, and some to everlasting contempt, that is, some to the condition of believers who will be protected in their own land, and some to the condition of unbelievers who in their own land will perish ; (verses 2 and 3)

It would appear from this calculation that we have already seen twenty-one years of that period

will all take place before the expiration of the 1260 "times" or years. After all these events had been detailed in one short and unbroken series, the plain question was asked, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The answer was, "It shall be for a time, times, and a half," or 1260 "times." If then the answer met the question, the close of the 1260 "times" brings us to "the end of these wonders." But Mr. Faber has thrown all "these wonders" into the thirty years which follow this period; thus leaving the enemy triumphant on the ground twenty-nine years after the time fixed for his destruction, and leaving no important event to mark the close of the 1260 "times." The lapse of affairs on his plan will still proceed in an unbroken current, with no open demonstration to the world that the period is closed. The generation then living will be unable to discover why that year more than any other should be fixed upon as terminating the existence, or even the triumph of the beast. They will still behold the monster in full vigour, and in all the pride of victory bestriding Europe, Asia, and Africa, till towards the close of the thirtieth year. To say that at the expiration of the great period his destruction will begin, is not satisfactory; for not to insist on the manifest opposition between this and the hypothesis just stated, the destruction has already begun, both in papal and Mahometan countries. For the proof of this as it respects the Romish church, look at Spain, and France, and Italy, and even the territories of the Pope.

It is allowed on all hands that the power mentioned in the close of the 11th chapter, is one that will go against the Jews after their restoration, and is the last that will be destroyed before the millennium. It is therefore manifestly the Gog foretold by Ezekiel. (ch. 38 and 39.) What power this is to be, is not agreed. Latterly much ingenuity has been employed, (perhaps from the very natural propensity to magnify, and fill the eye with the events of our own age,) to prove that it is the French; but after all that has been said, the old opinion of Mede, Newton, Lowth, and many others, that it is the Turks, appears the more probable. The countries mentioned by Daniel as subject to this power, (to say nothing of the manifest agreement between the prophecy generally and the Ottoman empire,) are certainly those which are now under the dominion of the

of wo which is to extend to the morning of the millennium. It becomes then a question of great

Turks; and the nations enumerated by Ezekiel as constituting the armies of Gog, (I must believe, after paying considerable attention to the dispersion and settlement of the sons of Noah,) are precisely those which are now included in the Turkish empire, with the single addition of Persia. Now it is intimated that about the time, or immediately after the destruction of the Roman empire in its present divided form, all the countries comprehended in the four ancient empires will be desolated. (Dan. ii. 35, 45. and vii. 12.) Those countries, except what lie in the great field of battle now spread in Europe, are all included in the Turkish and Persian empires. Let then these two empires fall in the expedition of Gog, and let the Roman empire come to its end, (that is, *as the supporter of the Romish church,*) by the wars which are now desolating Europe, and you see the whole accomplished; you see "the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces *together*, and [become] like the chaff of the summer threshing floors." (Dan. ii. 35, 45.)

This opinion receives additional strength from another consideration. Mr. Faber has satisfactorily shown that Mahometanism, as it began with popery, will expire with that apostacy; both being appointed to continue 1260 "times." We ought therefore to expect some great event which will bring the Eastern imposture to a sudden and final destruction about the time that the papal kingdoms fall. It is remarkable that the Wahabees commenced their war upon this superstition in Arabia at the same moment that the infidels in Europe attacked the Romish church. As Arabia never belonged to either of the four empires, that country may probably be cleansed by the followers of Wahab without being swept by the besom of destruction. And Arabia out of the question, all the Mahometan powers on earth, except a few inconsiderable clans in Tartary and the interior of Africa, are comprehended in the Turkish and Persian empires; for since the overthrow of Tippoo Saib none remain in India. Nothing then is wanting, in addition to the causes now in operation, to banish the religion of Mahomet from the world, but for those two empires to be broken by a hand which in the very act should seal before the eyes of all nations the truth of the Christian religion. And this, as will be apparent to any eye that passes carefully over those two chapters of Ezekiel, is precisely what is to be done in the overthrow of Gog.

interest to us and our children, How is it to fare with the Church during this scene of destruc-

Let then the destruction of Catholic kingdoms and of the Catholic church proceed as it has begun till it is finished; let the Wahabees advance till they have expelled the koran and the mosque from Arabia; let the Jews be restored, (*which is the next new event to be expected*;) let then the Turkish and Persian empires marshal under their standard the combined forces of the Mahometan world, and perish in an assault upon the Jews on the mountains of Israel; and every prophecy relative to the four empires, and to the two great apostacies of the East and West, will be accomplished. All this, according to the computation, will take place in the course of thirty-four or thirty-five years. The grounds of this computation may be seen at one view. If the 1260 "times" began in 606, and are Chaldaic years; if it is declared in Dan. xii. 6, 7, that the restoration of the Jews and the overthrow of the power mentioned in the close of the preceding chapter, will both fall within the compass of the 1260 "times;" if that power is the Gog of Ezekiel, and the Ottoman empire; (for these are the only pivots on which the hypothesis turns;) then the 1260 "time" will end and all these events be accomplished by the year 1847 or 8, that is, within thirty-four or thirty-five years from the present time; and then the Jews must be restored at farthest in about thirty years.

The 1260 "times" are to be succeeded by a period of thirty, and by another of forty-five "times," which brings us to the complete establishment of the millennial kingdom. (Dan. xii. 11, 12.) Now the destruction of Gog is to be followed at once by the collection of "the whole house of Israel," (including the *ten tribes*), till "none of them" is left. (Ezek. xxxix. 25—29.) The work of collecting this remnant will be performed by the remains of the hostile army, (Isai. lxvi. 19, 20) now converted to Christianity by the wonders displayed in the destruction of their brethren. (Zech. xiv. 16.) These new missionaries will go forth to bring home *overland*, "upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts," (Isai. lxvi. 20) a people which at this day are to be found no where but in the Persian empire and in the regions which lie beyond it. And who so proper to be employed in this work as the Persians themselves?—a consideration which strengthens the probability

tion? The prophecies had taught us to believe that the deliverance of the Church and the destruc-

that the power mentioned in the 11th chapter of Daniel is the Gog of Ezekiel. When it is considered that these wretched pagans, (for such the ten tribes are,) must be converted before they can be brought home, it is easy to see that this mission may exhaust the thirty years. And when it is recollected that the vision related chiefly to the house of Israel, (Dan. 10. 14) it is natural to suppose that this was the very end for which the thirty years were set apart. The connexion and manner in which the period is mentioned help to confirm this opinion. The angel had gone over a long chain of events, extending from the days of Daniel to the restoration of his "people" and the destruction of their last enemy. There he paused. The question was then asked, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" that is, How long shall it be to the time when Daniel's "people" shall be restored and delivered from all their enemies? Now his "people" consisted of two classes; one more immediately, the other more remotely related to him. Accordingly the answer was two-fold: It shall be 1260 years; it shall be 1290 years. (Dan. xii. 7, 11.) The last answer, as it only mentions the *time* without specifying any event to take place in it, cannot apparently relate to a *new* subject, but must be regarded as a part of the answer to the question respecting Daniel's "people."

The conversion of the Gentiles will immediately follow that of the house of Israel, (Rom. xi. 12—15.) and will probably be accomplished, as in the first ages of Christianity, by their instrumentality. In this work, as bishop Newton supposes, the forty-five years will be consumed. This brings us, according to the calculation, to the year 1921 or 2, a hundred and eight or nine years from the present time.

It doubtless becomes us to speak with diffidence and modesty on these points; for the prophecies were not intended to make us prophets. But have we not some reason to hope for an order of events not materially different from the one here sketched? Have we not good grounds to believe that the restoration of the Jews is at hand? Is it not high time for Christians to turn their awakened attention to this long neglected people? Whose business is it first to move to bring the children of Abraham home?



tion of her enemies would be contemporaneous, as inseparable parts of the same work: but we have now the evidence of our senses. We have had the experience of twenty one years to cast light on this question. And what have we seen? What have we seen since the year 1792 in relation to those two countries to which the true Church is now almost entirely confined? *That very year introduced the grand era of Missions!* The first missionary society of modern origin was formed in England in 1792, and the next year commenced the far famed mission to India. Since that time the whole concourse of missionary and Bible societies, and other institutions in abundance for the diffusion of Christian knowledge, which now fill Great Britain and the United States, have come into existence. Within this period extensive and highly promising missions have been established in Asia and Africa, (to say nothing of America,) and a commencement has been made in translating the Scriptures into *thirty* pagan languages, including by far the most extensive languages upon earth. In a word, all those surprising exertions of Christian benevolence which have distinguished the present from all former ages since that of the apostles, have been called forth within the last twenty one years. It deserves also to be noted with devout wonder and gratitude, that precisely at the commencement of this interesting era, began, after a long drought, those heavenly showers

of grace which have ever since continued to fall upon Great Britain and the United States. In this country especially, not a day has passed since the era commenced which has not witnessed some revival of religion, and in several instances the Divine Conqueror has extended His triumphs through counties and states "with power and great glory." During the whole period the cause of evangelical truth and piety has been steadily advancing in both countries, and in several extensive portions of the American Church, advancing with great rapidity. Even in this commonwealth, which has been less favoured than some others, it is ascertained that sound orthodoxy and devotion have been sensibly gaining ground through the whole period. But within the last six years almost a new era has opened upon this district of the Church. Astonishing preparations have been made to stem the torrent of infidelity concealed under Christian names, to revive union and discipline in the churches, and especially to supply them with a succession of able, orthodox, and godly ministers. On the whole, as great as the revolution has been which has filled the papal kingdoms with darkness, to an eye that has examined the history of the twenty-one years it is apparent, that the revolution in favour of Zion has been still more amazing. And it ought by no means to be omitted, that while the judgments have been continually thickening upon the devoted nations, every part of this animating scene

has been brightening through the whole period, and still continues to brighten. May we not then yield ourselves to the confidence that Zion has seen her darkest hour, and that her light will henceforth continue to shine with increasing brightness to the perfect day?

Returning from this general survey to the commonwealth in which we live, may we not pronounce with strong assurance, that error and the irreligion which attends it have seen their best day on this ground? If the Church, now chiefly confined to two countries, is to rise from this day forth, where is it more likely to rise than in the United States, the most favoured spot on this continent which was discovered, as I may say, by the light of the Reformation? And if in the United States, where rather than in New-England? And if in New-England, where rather than in Massachusetts, which has been blessed by the prayers of so long a succession of godly ancestors? And if in Massachusetts, on what ground rather than this, which among the first received the footsteps of the pilgrims, and was early sprinkled with the tears of pious prayer? Thus the Word of God and the signs of the times join to confirm our hopes that twenty years hence religion will be in a far other state in this commonwealth than it now is; and that in less than a century this region and this town will be full of prayer and praise. And then the history of your

present struggles and embarrassments will be read by a holy posterity with the same interest with which you now read of the sufferings of the fathers of New-England. Yes, my beloved brethren, it is too near the dawn of those happier times for your pious enterprise to fail. This church will prosper; and these walls, unless destroyed by fire or violence, will resound with the songs of a better day. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." "Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees." "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, He will come and save you." "For the day of vengeance is in [His] heart, and the year of [His] redeemed is come." "Unto you that fear [His] name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Awake to vigorous and holy activity. The harvest time of the world is coming on; and "he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." Inconceivably more may be done by your prayers and exertions in this day, than could have been done by the same means in past ages. It is too late for one pious prayer for Zion to remain long unanswered. Up then, every man that has a heart and a tongue, and use them for God; "exhort-

ing one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."



