

THE ETERNAL SETTING OF THE SUN  
IN HIS MERIDIAN,  
AND THE  
TOTAL AND ENDLESS ECLIPSE OF THE EARTH  
IN THE CLEAR DAY.

---

A S E R M O N,  
PREACHED AT  
PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD STREET,  
ON SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1807.

*By WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S.S.*

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL THERE, AND  
AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, GRAY'S-INN LANE.

---

“Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.”—1 THESS. v. 5.

---

SECOND EDITION, CORRECTED.

---

**London :**

Printed by T. BENSLEY, Crane Court, Fleet Street;

*Under the Directions contained in the Author's last Will.*

Sold by W. CLARKE, at Providence Chapel, Gray's-Inn Lane,  
and at No. 8, Silver Street, Bouverie Street, Fleet Street;

By JOHN EEDES, No. 2, Newgate Street;

R. BAYNES, 28, Paternoster Row;

S. HUNTINGTON, No. 25, Grafton Street East; at Salem Chapel, Leicester;  
by T. BARSTON, Grantham, Lincolnshire; at Providence Chapel,  
Cranbrook, Kent; and by J. ADE, Lewes, Sussex.

---

1824.



THE  
ETERNAL SETTING OF THE SUN,  
*&c. &c.*

---

“And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day.” Amos viii. 9.

WHATEVER this dark and ambiguous text may mean, it appears to me that it never had, nor will have, its accomplishment in a literal sense. The sun stood still in the days of Joshua: but standing still is not going down. “Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day,” Joshua x. 12, 13. In this passage we have an account of the sun and moon standing still; of the sun standing still in the midst of heaven, and hasting not to go down about a whole day. But the sun standing still a whole day, and then going down, cannot agree with my text, which is expressed not of his standing still in the midst of heaven, but of his going down, so as to rise no more.

We have an account of the sun going back in the

days of Hezekiah, to prop up his faith in the promise of God. And the sun went back ten degrees; "So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down," Isai. xxxviii 8. But the sun returning ten degrees backward. differs widely from the full expressions and meaning of my text, which is, that the sun shall go down at noon, and the earth shall be darkened in the clear day.

Moreover, we read of darkness overshadowing the land until the ninth hour, at our Lord's crucifixion; but then after the ninth hour matters returned again as they were before; for, although this darkness spread itself at twelve o'clock at noon, and continued three hours, which was a preternatural eclipse, the moon being at the same time at the full, as it always was at the passover feasts, yet this cannot be the meaning of my text; for, although the sun hid his face, and did not shine for three hours, yet he did not go down, but broke out again at three o'clock in the afternoon, and shone forth as before.

Nor can the darkening of the earth in the clear day be understood in a literal sense; seeing God hath said that, "while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease," Genesis viii. 22. And it is plain that this covenant of day and night stands as firm as the covenant of royalty with David, or the covenant of grace with God's elect; for so it is written, "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season; then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he

should not have a son to reign upon his throne; and with the Levites, my ministers," Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21. Phineas obtained the covenant of an endless priesthood, and David obtained the promise and covenant of an endless reign; both of which are now obtained by Christ, and sure to all his seed, we being made kings and priests unto God, and having the promise that we shall reign as such for ever and ever. But I will come to the words of my text; and shall consider,

1st. What we are to understand by the sun.

2d. What by the sun's going down.

3d. The time of his setting, namely at noon.

4th. What is meant by the earth.

5th. What by darkening the earth.

6th. What by this darkness coming on in the clear day.

And, lastly, treat of that day when all this is to be done.

1st. What we are to understand by the sun. It appears to me that the Lord God Almighty himself is meant by the sun; for he is the fountain of light, life, love and heat, to all his own people: "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Psalm lxxxiv. 11. This sun, and this only, was the glory of the Jewish nation. They had the glorious shekinah upon the mercy-seat, which was the throne of God: "A glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our sanctuary," Jer. xvii. 12. Again: "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it," Jer. iii. 17.

2dly. By the sun, in my text, we may understand our Lord Jesus Christ, who is sweetly held forth as the sun, and promised as such to them that fear the name of the Lord: "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall," Mal. iv. 2. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and, when God puts this fear into men's hearts, it brings them to stand in awe of him, and stops them in their evil course; and the good Spirit of God, breathing the breath of life into them, makes their souls tender, so that their old way becomes hedged up with thorns; and, if they persist in it, it often pierces them through with many sorrows. This fear, being a fruit of the Spirit, is filial, though slavish fear be not as yet cast out, because the sun is not yet risen; and it is said to have the name of the Lord for its object; that is, God's covenant name, the name which he proclaimed before Moses; "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin," &c. Exodus xxxi. 6, 7.

And we are further informed, that this name is in the messenger of the covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ; "Behold, I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him," Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. This is the sun of righteousness, which is to arise and shine upon those that fear this name. He shines into the soul with everlasting light, and his beams convey

healing to every power of the soul. Pardon~~ing~~ love heals the wounded conscience of its sting of death, and the troubled mind of her enmity and terrible meditations; sets the broken judgment to rights; cures the will of its stubbornness and inflexibility; purges the affections of all their false gods, and conveys an unctuous light to the understanding. Moreover, the lost image of God in man is restored, or reinstamped upon us, by the healing rays of this sun: "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Then, says God, "ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." They shall go forth from this world, and from the society of it; from the chains of sin and of legal bondage; from the prison-house, the strong holds of sin and Satan, and from the dark and dismal regions of the shadow of death. And they shall grow up to be men in understanding: they shall grow in faith, and in spiritual strength; they shall be edified and built up in love and in truth; they shall grow out of self and out of conceit of self, and into Christ Jesus, so as to be rooted and built up in him. Sucking calves, that are kept in stalls, are very thriving creatures; and so are young saints with the breasts of consolation in their mouths; they are earnest after the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.

Furthermore, the fructification of the earth, its choice fruits and all their delicious flavour, are chiefly owing to the beams of the sun. In Christ Jesus is all our fruit found; all grace is from his fulness, and they are his enlivening rays that give it all its activity;

he draws it forth, and upon him it exercises itself; he gives it all its sweetness; and upon these sweet and pleasant fruits he delights to feed. Add to this, the sun-beams have an attractive virtue in them, exhaling the moisture of the earth. And many vegetables, lay them, by a pressure of the earth, which way you will, the sun will draw them to bend towards him. So the Sun of righteousness draws the soul to confide in him for all sorts of righteousness. His obedience to the law, as our surety, is our righteousness by imputation. The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness, which righteousness is love, and this is from him. A good conscience, which is righteousness and peace at the bar of equity, is of Christ, and so is a loving heart and a liberal hand: both of which are the fulfilling of the law, which law is the rule of righteousness. Again, this sun shining upon us, healing us, and reflecting God's lost image upon us, puts a stop to that stinking savour, which is continually emitted from graceless hearts; I mean seeking the praise, the applause, and the honour, of men: "How can you believe, which receive honour one of another, and not the honour that cometh from God only?" John v. 44.

If this sun shines into us, it consumes and withers that corruption which cleaves to our affections, inflaming and raising them to God, and to his right hand, where Christ sitteth. "So let thine enemies perish, O Lord," says Deborah, "but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might," Judges v. 31. And such as love will not rob him; they are fully satisfied with his salvation, and far enough from rivalling God of the honour of it. The



unction that Christ conveys never breeds flies, nor sends forth a stinking savour ; but raises up a whole revenue of glory to God alone : “The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory,” Isaiah lx. 19. All ranks of human beings have something to boast of and glory in. The glory of children are their fathers ; the glory of young men is their strength, and the glory of old men is the grey head ; the glory of the rich is their wealth, and the glory of the wise is their wisdom : but the glory of the saints is their God.

Christ Jesus is to us the fountain of light, the morning star, which in our hearts is the first ray of eternal glory in heaven. He is the day-dawn and day-spring from on high, that guides our feet into the way of peace ; and he is also the rising sun, that shone with such splendour in the apostles, in all ministers of the Spirit, and in all the children of light ever since. “Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world : in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race,” Psalm xix. 4, 5. Compare Romans x. 18. Christ Jesus is the brightness of his Father’s glory, and the express image of his person ; and we are to have the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in his face. And this sun, rising and shining upon us, is nothing else but the Lord lifting up the light of his countenance upon us : “Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength,” Rev. i. 16. This is the sun that heals the soul of all its wounds, and the fallen countenance of

all its wrinkles: "The Lord is the health of my countenance, and my God," Psa. xlii. 11. But will this sun, where it thus rises and shines, ever go down over the children of light? No, it never will. The ministers of the Spirit, and the church of Christ, are nobly secured from the setting of this sun. The ministers of the gospel are a tabernacle for this sun, out of whom Christ shines upon poor elect sinners; and God's tabernacles shall not be taken down, nor shall the cords or stakes be loosed. All true believers put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in him; and such members compose the true church of Christ, which is "a woman clothed with the sun," Rev. xii. 1. And over such this sun will never go down: "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory: thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended," Isaiah lx. 19, 20. Again, "For, as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain," Isaiah lxvi. 22. But what would the new heavens and the new earth be without a sun to shine in them?

I come now to treat of the setting, or going down of this sun. The whole body of God's elect are called Zion. God hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation: "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it," Psalm cxxxii. 14. And "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined," Ps. l. 2. Here he shone from the mercy-seat upon the prophets of the Old Testament; and in the face of Zion's king he shines upon all his serv-

ants under the New Testament. And many false prophets, false apostles, and false teachers, have got their first beams of light from this quarter. We read of false prophets stealing the word of their neighbours; of many among the Jews rejoicing in John's light for a season; of others hearing the Saviour's word with joy, which is called light; and of false brethren coming in among the primitive saints to spy out their liberty, that they might abuse and pervert it. But this light shines only into the head, not into the heart: it gives them some light: hence they are said to be enlightened; and, having their natural passions stirred up and ravished with glee, they are said to taste of "the heavenly gift," Heb. vi. 4. And such soon spring up, because the plague of the heart is undiscovered, and there is nothing to keep them down. Light, knowledge, gifts, fluency of speech, a reformation, and fiery zeal, make a great blaze and noise in the world for a while; and, as our Lord says, upon sight they believe; but then their faith is but temporary: "They on the rock are they, which when they hear receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away," Luke viii. 13. Now these are called the rocky, or stony ground hearers, because the word never reaching their heart and conscience, the old veil remains upon the heart, and the strong man still keeps possession of the palace. And this I know, that if every faculty of the soul be instructed, reformed, and set to work, yet, if the conscience remain unpurged, and the affections are not set upon God, all such faith is vain, and those who possess it are yet in their sins: 1 Cor. xv. 17. Men may have

much understanding, and the will may be touched as well as the understanding.

We read of willing, and of will-worship; but "salvation is not of him that willeth." We also read of a fleshly mind being puffed up. But God's covenant regards the conscience and the affections; the first he cleanses from its filthiness, and the latter from its idols. This is called circumcising the heart to love him, that we may live; and it removes the stony heart: whereas our Lord himself calls those before described rocky and stony ground hearers, notwithstanding all their faith and joy.

Over all such prophets, such apostles, or such teachers, the sun is sure to go down; and daily observation confirms the same: and so it is written; nor can it be otherwise, for they are strangers to pardon, to peace, and to love. "Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him. Therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them. Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips, for there is no answer of God. But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin," Micah iii. 5—8.

Here we have an account of the sun setting, or going down, over all false prophets and letter ministers. These prophets are charged with causing God's peo-

ple to err, as all must do who are destitute of the faith of God's elect ; for the sin of unbelief is a perpetual erring in the heart ; and such, our Lord says, only believe for a while and then fall away. They either fall into damnable heresies, into open profanity, into apostasy, or else into the flesh. Their setting out with a ray of light is called beginning in the spirit, and sinking into self ending in the flesh. Their zeal is to be seen by their biting with their teeth, and snarling at the servants of God. Their cry is, Peace, which is the message of the ambassadors of the Lord of hosts. But, as these prophets are destitute of genuine faith, in an unpardoned state, and without an imputed righteousness, what have they to do with peace? Nothing at all. Their aim is to obscure the vileness of our nature, to stifle all convictions, to kill every quickening influence upon the mind, to set us down in carnal ease and insensibility, and to keep the devil in quiet and undisturbed possession of the heart. "And he that putteth not into their mouths they even prepare war against him," Micah iii. 5. Ahab's servants desired Micaiah to speak the same good things to the king as the prophets of the grove did ; and Zedekiah waged war with him, and smote him on the cheek, because he would not lie as well as himself ; 1 Kings xxii. 24. God says, " Night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision ; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine," Micah iii. 6 For, when once the devil, who deceives them, begins to stir with his temptations, and conscience to be disquieted ; when the lamp goes out for want of oil, and an angry God in a broken law reflects his displeasure ; how are they ashamed, when all their former sins, and

the hypocrisy of their profession and preaching, begin to stare them in the face, and when their temporary faith fails them! They are then confused and confounded.

And when once their lamp goes out their sun is set; and conscience is informed, and the mind assured, that it will rise upon them no more for ever. Such shall cover their lips, says the prophet, for there is no answer of God. As was the case with Saul, who thus complains: "I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams," 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

Thus we have seen how the sun goes down over the prophets; and the same sun shall set upon all the assemblies that are collected, united, daubed, and built up by such workmen. So it fared with the Jewish church of old, and so shall it fare with all congregations of hypocrites to the end of time; for false prophets were threatened to the Jews, and false teachers to us. And, as the sun went down over the false prophets, so it went down also over the false-hearted church of the Jews: "She that hath borne seven languisheth; she hath given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day," Jerem. xv. 9. She that has borne seven; that has borne so many eminent prophets, righteous kings, and choice saints, (even the Messiah himself was both in their loins and in their promises); even she languisheth, and fainteth away for the want of true faith, which always trusts on the Lord's arm for strength; and by his power through faith is every saint kept unto salvation. For the want of this she languished, having confided in the false prophets, hoping they would confirm their predictions;

whereas, instead thereof, "They have seen vanity, and lying divination, saying, The Lord saith; and the Lord hath not sent them: and they have made others to hope that they would confirm the word," Ezek. xiii.

6. But the cry of "Peace, peace," fell to the ground when the sword, pestilence, and famine, came pouring in like a flood; and for the want of faith she languished, and her hope in a lie gave up the ghost.

I come now to the third head, which is to consider the time of this sun setting. My text says it is at noon: God says, "I will cause the sun to go down at noon," Amos viii. 9. And this was the case with the Jewish church; "Prepare ye war against her: arise, and let us go up at noon. Wo unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out. Arise, and let us go by night, and let us destroy her palaces," Jer. vi. 4, 5. We read of her languishing and giving up the ghost before; but this "Wo unto us, for the day goeth away," was her last dying speech.

And it is true that her sun went down at noon. It shone in his meridian in the prophet Jeremiah, both in his soul and in his life; but, above all, it shone out in his heavenly doctrine. How many wonderful and precious prophecies did he deliver out concerning Christ! "How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." Jer. xxxi. 22. And again, "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch; and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safe-

ly: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord Our Righteousness." Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Again, "Thus saith the Lord, If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, and that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne. As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured; so will I multiply the seed of David my servant, and the Levites that minister unto me," Jer. xxxiii. 20—22. Here was the sun shining at noon day. And so it was also with those precious ones who believed in Jeremiah's message, and were separated from the vile, the wheat that was severed from the chaff: upon these God declared that he would set his eyes and his heart for good. "Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be unto them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come," Ezek. xi. 16. Here God promises to be a sanctuary to them; and it is well known that God's throne, and the shekinah, shone in the sanctuary. Thus it was high noon with the prophet Jeremiah, with Baruch, Ezekiel, and others, when the sun set upon the false prophets. And it was no less so with the children of faith, when the sun went down over the false church among the Jews; when the deceivers and the deceived both fell together, being false sons of a false mother. "Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother," Hosea iv. 5.

Noon is the time when the sun is at his height, a



a time of the greatest light and heat. Hence the prayer of the spouse, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon," Song i. 7. Here is resting in light and heat, in life and love, called noon. And so they promise Job, that, if he put away evil from him, he should lift up his face without spot: "Thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning," Job xi. 17. But when it was high noon with the prophets of God it was sunset upon the false prophets. And so when the sun was in his meridian upon the apostles it was midnight with the scribes and pharisees: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind," John ix. 39. And so it is to this day; when the path of the just shines more and more, letter-men and hypocrites get darker and darker. And what aggravates their misery and their condemnation is, that this darkness comes upon them at noon-day: but no wonder, for they hate the light, they rebel against it, and blaspheme it; therefore God gives them up to grope in darkness, when the sun shines in his full strength. Hence the prophet, personating them in his complaint, says, "Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men," Isaiah lix. 9, 10. Here is groping for the wall, and stumbling at noon-day; that is, when it is high noon with the saints it is dark night with the

blind guides and hypocrites in Zion; which is more fully confirmed in the latter part of my text, "I will darken the earth in the clear day."

I now proceed to shew that by the earth we are to understand carnal, earthly-minded men, such as are destitute of the Spirit and grace of God, whose souls are drudges to the works of the flesh, and who are buried in fleshly lusts, which corrupt nature relishes, desires, craves, and lusts after: "The first man is of the earth, earthy. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy," 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48: Again, "He that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is above all," John iii. 31. Again, "He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked," Isaiah xi. 4. In all these places it is apparent that by the earth, in my text, letter-ministers, false prophets, and carnal professors, are meant; for, "They are of the world," says John, "therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error," 1 John iv. 5, 6. So it was in the days of old, so it is now, and so it shall be. God will darken the earth in the clear day. And this you have from God's own mouth: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee," Isaiah lx. 1, 2. Here we have the shining of God upon his own elect: "Arise, shine; for thy light is

come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee; and again, "but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." With such souls it must be clear day. But at the same time his earth is darkened, and shall be dark; wherefore a 'Behold,' is affixed to it. "Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." And thus God darkens the earth, and spreads gross darkness upon the carnal professors, when the heirs of heaven shine in the clear day. Moreover, there is such a precious crop of fruits brought forth by the sun, Deut. xxxiii. 14, when he shines, as must be ripened; and upon these fruits the sun shall never go down, nor shall the grossest darkness ever overtop or over-spread them.

God's salvation is a lamp that burneth, and an everlasting salvation; and this is put forth at the rising of this sun. Nor shall this lamp ever be extinguished, go out, or cease to burn. The imputed righteousness of Christ goes forth to the soul as brightness, Isaiah lxii. 1; and this is Zion's beautiful garment, and her wedding robe, in which she is a branch or tree of righteousness, the right-hand planting of God, that he may be glorified. And, although it is true that every plant which our heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up, yet he will never pluck up the trees of righteousness, which he plants in his dear Son. The oil of joy, with which the elect of God are anointed, is the anointing of an everlasting priesthood, and such shall return to the holy of holies with everlasting joy upon their head, and there engage in the last branch of their priestly office, which is singing the praises of God and the Lamb for ever and ever. In

short, their blessing in Christ is everlasting life; their adoption is an everlasting name that shall not be cut off; they are redeemed with eternal redemption, and sanctified by the eternal Spirit; their kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and the grace of God in them shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life; and the Lord is their everlasting light, their God and their glory; and their sun shall no more go down. And all this appears in my text, which mentions noon, as well as the going down of the sun; so that it must be noon with some, while the sun sets over others. And the last branch of my text expresses the same thing; for the earth is to be darkened in the clear day; so that it must be clear day with the children of light, even when God darkens the earth; and both these families take their names from the day and night, which are expressed in my text, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness," 1 Thess. v. 5.

When God created man he created him in his own image; and the leading feature in that image was love; love to God, and to all mankind. Charity, or love, ever was, and ever will be, the more excellent way, 1 Cor. xii. 31; or that way that excels all others. But, when the devil had infused his enmity into the mind of man, he corrupted him with his own malice and enmity from this way. Hence God's complaint, wherein he calls men earth, because his spirit and his image were gone: "The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth," Gen. vi. 11, 12. This corruption of nature

has three branches in it : the first is called filthiness ; the second, idols, or idolatry ; and the third is called dross. Filthiness is the uncleanness, pollution and impurity of defiled nature, including all concupiscence lasciviousness, or lusting after evil things : “ From all your filthiness,” says God, “ will I cleanse you,” Ezek. xxxvi. 25. This is called purifying the flesh. Idols, or idolatry, are things loved, adored, and enshrined in our affections as rivals to God ; such as loving honour, pleasure, money, self, the world, images ; nay, sin and the devil himself, more than God : “ From all your idols will I cleanse you.” By dross I understand the light of nature or reason, thoughts and conscience accusing or excusing, natural and acquired abilities, human wisdom and knowledge, self-righteousness and outward decent deportment, common honesty in business, with natural affections and liberality, some reverence of the name of God, blind zeal for human traditions and human ceremonies, with constant bodily exercise in the duties of natural religion. And these things gain esteem and applause ; for our Lord says, that all this is done to be seen of men ; and this applause becomes a spur to them ; and by diligence, education, habit or custom, men improve in these things ; but, whatever use all this may be of among men, sure I am that it is far enough from the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. And true it is that the work of the ministry in the present day, which is what Paul calls the ministry of the letter, is calculated to polish and set off this dross and tin ; for if such characters get enlightened by the word, and receive it with joy and a temporary faith, this inflames the mind with zeal, and is often attended with gifts

and a great stir in religion ; and, to set all off, feigned humility, warm natural affections, and a pleasing glee, are put on: but, after all, this is but the sheep's clothing—a specious, an outward, and a gaudy shew at best.

God purges his children from all their dross, and from all their tin too, for he has no vessels of dross and tin. “God made man upright ;” and an upright man is a man justified by faith, and one that loves his God, Hab. ii. 4 ; Song i. 4. Charity is the more excellent way. God set man out on this way at first ; but he has sought out many inventions, and his inventions have corrupted this way ; and it is the determination of the Almighty to bring his creature, man, into this way again. Hence the gospel of Jesus Christ, “according to the commandment of the everlasting God, is made known to all nations for the obedience of faith,” Rom. xvi. 26. And God's aim in all this we have in a few words: “Now the end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned,” 1 Tim. i. 5. All preachers, all professors, and all men, that are destitute of this, are but earth and earthy ; and, let them shine as bright as they may, all their lustre shall end in obscurity ; “The light of the righteous rejoiceth: but the lamp of the wicked shall be put out,” Prov. xiii. 9. God darkens the earth in the clear day. The love of God shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, in a heart purged from idols, is charity out of a pure heart, or out of purified affections: a conscience purged from sin by the blood of Christ, and furnished with the testimony of God's Spirit witnessing to our adoption, is a good conscience: and faith unfeigned is

a faith that works by love, that prevails with God in prayer, and that overcomes the world. These are the old paths, this is the good way, and they that walk therein find rest for their souls, Jer. vi. 16. But what rest, what peace, what comfort, what satisfaction or establishment, can men find in a profession, while in full possession of all their sin, guilt, and filth? None at all; for, "Even in laughter the heart [of such] is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness," Prov. xiv. 13.

Forgiveness of sins is to be published to all the world: for, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," Luke xxiv. 46, 47. And the knowledge of God, as our God in covenant, is to be obtained by the remission of sins: "For they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more," Jer. xxxi. 34. The unpardoned sinner knows not God in a saving manner, only notionally; and our pardon is to be known,

1st. By believing. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," Acts x. 43.

2dly. It is God's usual way, when he searches the sinner and tries him, to call his sins to remembrance, and to set them in order before him. "My sin," says the Psalmist, "is ever before me:" But, when pardon comes, it is called blotting them out. David calls it a removal of our transgressions from us. But Isaiah calls it a blotting out: "I have blotted out as

a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins ; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee," Isaiah xliv. 22.

3rdly. When God discovers men's sins, and charges the sinner's crimes home to his mind and conscience, by an application of the law, sin becomes exceeding sinful and exceeding heavy : " Mine iniquities are gone over mine head : as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me," Psal. xxxviii. 4. Christ calls such persons to him, and describes them as labouring and heavy laden, and promises to give them rest, both from their labour and from their burden. Pardon therefore is giving rest to the soul : and there is no rest without it, for, " The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," Isaiah lvii. 20.

4thly. A guilty, conscious sinner, who is convinced and convicted, and quickened to feel his convictions, can lay no claim upon God, nor does he dare to look up to him : as our Lord says of the publican, who, " standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner," Luke xviii. 13. Pardon is called a lifting up of the head : " But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me ; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head," Psalm iii. 3.

5thly. A real sight and sense of sin is a dreadful mountain before the sinner's eyes, and Mount Sinai is another ; so that he sees no way of escape, and often despairs of surmounting these. And, being in the horrible pit, and in the dark valley of the shadow of death, these sink him still lower. But these vallies shall be exalted, and these mountains and hills shall be made



low, that sinners may see the salvation of God. And, when God visits the soul with pardoning mercy, these mountains all flow down at his presence, Isaiah lxiv. 1.

6thly. Forgiveness of sins is called curing of us, and restoring us to health: "Behold, I will bring it health and cure, and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth," Jer. xxxiii. 6. And where this is the case the cure is wrought, and such inhabitants of Zion "shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity," Isaiah xxxiii. 24. Without this health and cure, we may go to church all the year round, and tell God 'We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us;' but what do we gain by this?

7thly. We are informed, by the scriptures of truth, that it is sin, and nothing else, that has cut off all communion and intercourse between us and God; and those, who know the plague of their own heart, know this to be true by sad experience: "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear," Isai. lix. 2. Pardon removes this bar of separation, and makes us nigh again. "The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God," Heb. vii. 19. That is, the law and its sacrifices could not make the worshippers clean touching the conscience; but the better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God: "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Eph. ii. 13.

8thly. The unpardoned transgressor is a lover of himself, 2 Tim. iii. 2 ; and an enemy to God, Rom. viii. 7. He has much pity and compassion for sinful self, but the hardest thoughts and most rebellious heart-risings against the Almighty. But pardoning mercy turns things upside down ; it fills a man with indignation against himself, while he bemoans his suffering Saviour, and his long-suffering God and Father : " Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good ; and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities," Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Again, " That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," Ezek. xvi. 63.

9thly. It is impossible that a professor, who is dead in trespasses and sins, should have any real peace, either with God or with conscience : " Destruction and misery are in all their ways ;" and, " There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isa. lvii. 21. But pardoning mercy brings in the abundance of peace : " And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace," Luke viii. 48.

10thly. The unpardoned sinner never had any real love to God, nor ever will have ; but must remain an enemy to him, and a hater of him, if he remains and dies in his sin ; " Wherefore I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much ; but to whom little is forgiven the same loveth little," Luke vii. 47. This is the ground-work of the ministry. Isaiah, Joshua, and all the apostles, were

pronounced pardoned and clean before they were sent to preach to others. And, however the consciences of letter-men may be borne down by false zeal, or seared by a long practice of mocking God, sin is sure to rise up, and to find the sinner out, sooner or later; and, when sin and wrath meet, a horrible darkness is sure to follow. God gives them up to the god of this world, who blinds their eyes; and conscience, being unbridled and let loose, he drives them out of all their pretensions to a claim upon Christ, or a part and lot in his grace. A sense of God's wrath, working with the guilt of hypocrisy, undermines their presumptuous confidence, and then they fly for refuge to a broken law, and to universal redemption; and here the whole veil gathers thick upon them, till, being baffled, confused, and confounded, they turn aside to vain jangling, knowing neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. And this, as the prophet says, brings them into darkness, and their feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and, while they look for light, God turns it into the shadow of death, and makes it gross darkness, Jer. xiii. 16.

There are two strange provocations, which contribute not a little to this darkening of the earth. "Thus saith the Lord God, If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his son's; it shall be their possession by inheritance." This prince is Christ; the character of the receiver is that of a son; and the gift is life eternal, which is his portion: "But, if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince," Ezek. xlvi. 16, 17. All gifts, like that of the one talent, or that

part of the ministry which fell to Judäs, are of no use to the saints, only while they are in nonage, in bondage, darkness, and ignorance: but, when once the Comforter comes, and by his love enlarges the heart and sets the soul at liberty, the son can then see, hear, speak, and understand, better than the servant; he then casts off such tutors and governors. At this time of the son's liberty the servant's gift returns, and he rages not a little at the music and dancing which take place at the prodigal's embracement.

The next thing is, that the sun should set at noon, and that darkness should come upon the earth in the clear day. But we know that a heart not made honest cannot endure the light and glory of God. It was the good hand and presence of God with David that drove Saul into desperation, and into all his works of darkness. The growing and spreading fame of our blessed Saviour drove the scribes and pharisees into all their unpardonable crimes. The joy, light, and love of Sarah, at the sight of her favourite Isaac, drove Hagar and Ishmael into their scorning and deriding. God's acceptance of Abel set Cain upon his dark designs. The triumph of Hannah drove Peninnah from her false confidence and boasting. It is the sun at noon that discovers the hypocrisy and harrows up the enmity of the unrenewed heart; and the works of darkness are made manifest by the clear day. So it ever has been, so it is now, and so it will be at the end of the world. For, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the glory of their Father's kingdom for ever and ever, even then the wicked shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble, and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they

shall be driven to darkness, Isaiah viii. 22. When it is perfect day with the saints it will be utter darkness with the wicked, and the wicked shall see this. For so says the Saviour, "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out," Luke xiii. 28.

Reader, if thou art in good earnest about thy salvation, look well to the ground-work, which is sanctification and justification: "Jesus, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate," Heb. xiii. 12. By this his death he is made of God sanctification to us. But there must be an application of this, even to all the elect of God, whom he hath sanctified, or set apart, in his own purpose, and for whom sanctification is provided: "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. This is the ground-work. And the next branch of sanctification is our meetness for the inheritance above, by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost: "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost," Rom. xv. 16.

The next branch is our justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness: "That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life," Titus iii. 7. And of this be assured, that the most holy Spirit of God applies all these things to the elect. Hence you read of clean water being sprinkled upon us to cleanse us; of the washing of regeneration by the Spirit, and of being justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. vi. 11.

There are, reader, two seeds in the world; yea, and in the church too; the seed of the woman, which is Christ, and all the elect in him; and the seed of the serpent: and these are distinguished by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and in no other way. Christ the firstborn among many brethren, was discriminated by this to John, at the river Jordan; and all Christ's seed are distinguished the same way: "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring," Isaiah xlv. 3. This spirit never enters the hearts of any but the elect of God. The serpent is the god of this world, and all his seed are of the world, and into the heart of these the Holy Ghost never comes: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," John xiv. 16 17. Observe, reader, that the world, which is the serpent's seed, cannot receive this comforter; and the reason is, because there is enmity put between this seed and the elect, that cannot be removed: nor did Christ come to send peace here, but a sword and a fire. Our Lord further declares that, "The world seeth him not, neither knoweth him;" therefore whatever they say about him should have no weight with us, seeing they cannot receive him, they cannot see him, they cannot know him; which is a threefold assertion. And we have a threefold assertion also in our favour, which is as strong as the other: "But ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

1st. We know him as a spirit of revelation and

understanding; he is the unction and the eyesalve, which anoints our eyes that we may see, Rev. iii. 18.

2dly. He is the spirit of life from God, which enters into our dead souls, and animates them, and removes the vitiated appetite, giving us a hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life, and a spiritual palate to taste, relish, and savour, heavenly provision. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth."

3rdly. By these illuminating and quickening operations of the Holy Spirit, the sinner is convinced, convicted, judged, searched and tried. The spirit in the apostles was the candle of the Lord, that was set upon the candlestick, which is the church: and by these was Jerusalem searched, and by these were the twelve tribes of Israel judged: "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees," Zeph. i. 12.

4thly. The Spirit is known by the grace that he plants in the soul: he puts the law of faith in the mind, the law of love in the heart and affections, and the blessing of peace in the conscience, and raises the soul up by the comforts of a lively hope. Hence he is called, "The Spirit of grace."

5thly. He is known by the power, fervour, and energy, with which he furnisheth the soul at the throne of grace. He gives us a sense of our wants; he shews us the things which are freely given us of God; he dictates to the heart proper thoughts and conceptions, and puts our thoughts into words, teaching the lips and the mouth how to pronounce them. Hence he is called, "The Spirit of supplications,"

Zech. xii. 10. And he is said to create the fruit of the lips, Isaiah lvii. 19; which fruits are called, "The words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," 1 Cor. ii. 13. And they are spoken or expressed by the saints as the Spirit gives them utterance, Acts ii. 4.

6thly. The Holy Spirit is known by his application of the word and promises of God. To the way-side hearer the word came only to the ear, and Satan stole it away; to the thorny ground it came and moved the natural passions, and was received with joy; the novelty of it pleased the recipient for a while: to the stony ground it came with a temporary faith, and these for a while believed. To some it comes as the word of man; to others in word only: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," 1 Thess. i. 5.

7thly. The Spirit is known by his communications of divine love: which Paul calls, "The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," Rom. v. 5. And by this soul-dissolving influence is the heart enlarged, and all its native hardness melted and dissolved; slavish fear and torment are cast out, and glorious liberty succeeds. "Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," 2 Cor. iii. 17.

8thly. This comforter is known by the manifestation of our pre-adoption to sonship: they are sure to be Christ's seed and offspring upon whom this spirit comes; for he comes upon no other as the spirit of



adoption. "And, because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6.

9thly. The Spirit is known by the inward witness that he bears, both to our faith and to our conscience. To our faith, that it is genuine and justifying, by silencing all our accusers and condemners, and casting out every accusation, and all condemnation. And he bears witness in and with our own conscience also. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16.

10thly. The Spirit is known by the divine image with which he reimpreseth the soul, which image stands in knowledge, in life, light, righteousness, and true holiness. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18.

11thly. The Spirit's grace is the firstfruits of the future harvest, the beginning of the kingdom of glory. "Grace [shall] reign through righteousness unto eternal life," Rom. v. 21. There is no knowledge, joy, rest, peace, pleasure, light, love, comfort, holiness, or happiness, in heaven, the firstfruits of which are not known and enjoyed by the church of God upon earth. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him: but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit," 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. And these revealed things are called the firstfruits of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 23.

12thly. The Holy Spirit is the pledge and the earnest of heaven. It is he that cleanses us by an

application of the atonement, and by the washing of regeneration, and by renewing the faculties of our souls ; and as he quickens the soul in this life, so he shall quicken the body in the great day : the first is the pledge of the second. “ Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth : thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side,” Psalm lxxi. 20, 21. “ But, if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you,” Rom. viii. 11.

13thly. The Holy Spirit is our seal, by which we are known of God with a knowledge of love, of choice, and of approbation and delight ; and by which we shall be owned and honoured another day. The impression of this seal is the image of Christ ; the effect of the sealing is our assurance of heaven, both in the assurance of faith, the assurance of hope, and the assurance of understanding. “ Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,” Eph. iv. 30. In these rays of divine light is the Holy Spirit seen ; by his operations in planting these fruits is the Holy Spirit known ; and as he renews these works, and refreshes the soul with fresh life and love communicated to these his graces, so do we know that he dwells in us, because these fruits are kept alive : the cry of Abba, Father, continues, and his witness to our sonship still abides. Adoption is an everlasting name that shall not be cut off, Isaiah lvi. 5. Upon such souls the candle of God and the lamp of salvation both burn and shine ;

the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them. Upon such trees of righteousness the Sun of righteousness ever shines, not only to heal them at first, but to keep them whole for ever. "Thy sun shall no more go down." Upon such objects of love, and upon the inbeing of love in the heart, God the Father, from the glorious face of Jesus, shines with everlasting light as our God and our glory, Isaiah lx. 19. This, reader, is our sunshine, this is our eternal day.

But this sun never so shines, this day never so appears, nor will appear, to the serpent's seed ; for so it was long foretold, namely, that the greatest darkness should be upon some when the glorious day of the Lord should appear. "Wo unto you that desire the day of the Lord ! to what end is it for you ? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him ; or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the Lord be darkness, and not light ? even very dark, and no brightness in it ?" Amos v. 18—20.

In this gross darkness no divine person in God can be known ; neither Father, Son, nor Spirit : the serpent's seed are to be felt in their enmity, and all the righteous are to be hated of all this seed. And God cannot be known but by pardon and by love, both of which always come together. "He that loveth is born of God and knows God ; but he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." So also is the Son of God hid from all living, till God is pleased to make him known. "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me," Gal. i. 15, 16. And as the

Father reveals the Son, so the Son also reveals the Father. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," Matt. xi. 27. Thus, reader, are these things hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed to babes. Hence it is no matter to us what these children of darkness and of the night say about these things; for they are all hid from the wise men of this world. The church is "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit," Eph. ii. 22. And again, "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them," 2 Cor. vi. 16. This is God's testimony, which is believed, known, felt, and enjoyed, by all God's children: for our establishment, our anointing in Christ, and our sealing, are of God, 2 Cor. i. 21.

But the sons of worldly wisdom ask us how the Spirit, if he be a divine person, can dwell in us? Let them tell us how the devil dwells in them. They are men of learning, men of wisdom, and wise above what is written; for they can tell us in the Hebrew tongue the difference between perfection and uprightness; or between an upright man that loves God, Song i. 4; and a man made perfect in love, 1 John iv. 18; though in heaven it is one and the same thing, Isaiah lvii. 2; Heb. xii. 23. They can tell us the difference between decrees and laws; between statutes and judgments; and between precepts and testimonies; but we poor illiterate creatures cannot. They tell us that all expectation, whether in heaven or earth, is hope; and so make the sinner long, look, wait and hope for the damnation of hell; for, "The expectation of the wicked is wrath," Prov. xi. 23.

Paul says, "He that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man," 1 Cor. ii. 15. Our Lord, and his spiritual servants, who have informed us of the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the saints, have also informed us of the indwelling of Satan in all his seed; which none of Satan's family have been honest enough to describe.

1st. We are informed that Satan, by his indwelling in men, is called the strong man armed, who keepeth his palace and his goods in peace, Luke xi. 21. Here is the king of darkness in his own palace, the heart and affections of the sinner; his armour is enmity and hatred at God, at Christ, at the Spirit, at the Scriptures, and at all the saints of God; and keeping his goods in peace is no more than a seared conscience and a hardened mind. The devil's goods are the body and soul of the sinner, as may be seen in Judas; for, as soon as he received the sop, Satan entered into him, and took possession of him as his own property. Nay, we read of seven devils in Mary Magdalene, Luke viii. 2. And in the Gadarene we read of a legion, because many devils were entered into him, Luke viii. 30

If our opponents would describe the inhabitation of all this herd of devils in this man, the mystery would be almost as great as that of the Lord dwelling in Zion. Yea, we read of eight devils taking possession of one man at once, for good and all. "Then goeth he and taketh with himself seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first," Matt. xii. 45.

2dly. The indwelling of the devil may be known

by the sinner's hating the light and refusing to come to it ; by his rebellion against every appearance of it ; by his being willingly ignorant, 2 Peter iii. 5 ; and by his loving darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. All this is the devil's work. " If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not," 2 Cor. iv. 3.

3rdly. The devil's possession of the sinner is seen by his actuating of him to all evil, and that continually ; and by his captivating him at pleasure by every lie, error, snare, trap, and human invention that is contrived for him. To day he is an Arian, to morrow a Sabellian, next day a Socinian, then a deist, then an atheist, and always an Arminian in heart. " That they may," says Paul, " recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will," 2 Tim. ii. 26.

4thly. The children of darkness may be known by their constant engagement in their father's works, which has ever been that of murdering the souls and bodies of mankind. Hence we see that every impostor and deceiver that Satan sent among the Jews was received by the scribes, pharisees, and rulers ; as Judas of Galilee, Theudas, Bar-cocab, all of whom had their followers. " I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not ; if another shall come in his own name him ye will receive." And the false prophets were spoken well of. These deceivers and destroyers of souls always met with reception, applause, and encouragement ; but every prophet of God was sure to be persecuted, if not murdered ; and even the Lord himself, from the manger to the cross, was pursued by

murderers. These are the serpent's seed, the devil's own children; and they do his works, and his only. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44.

5thly. And why should these wise men think it enthusiasm for the Spirit of the Lord to influence the mind and speak by the mouth of an holy prophet, when the devil himself influences the mind and speaks by the mouth of all their brethren the false prophets? "Now therefore behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee," 1 Kings xxii. 23.

6thly. The subjects of Satan's kingdom are as manifest in the world as the subjects of the kingdom of Christ. And he is as much obeyed by his servants as Christ is by his, however hard the service; which may be seen in many instances. When the murder of David, conceived in the heart of Ahithophel, was restrained by the overruling providence of God, Ahithophel is ordered by the devil to go home and hang himself, which he immediately does. Balaam is sent for to curse Israel, and he comes. An evil spirit from God is upon Saul, and he is sent to the witch of Endor, and then to the point of his sword. Judas is ordered to hang himself; and Shimei to curse David, that God might curse him; which are immediately done. All Satan's works are in a straight line; that is to drive men to destruction as his captives, his trophies, and the spoils taken in his unholy war; and so it must be: for, if Satan be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? Matt. xii. 26.

7thly. The hardness of heart ; the stubbornness of man's will ; the alienation of the carnal mind from the life of God, and the enmity and rebellion of it against the Almighty ; the desperate rage, envy and indignation against Christ and his worship ; and against all that fear, love, obey, and worship him ; are such as are contrary to human nature, abstractedly considered ; and in all which men are no more than mere tools, instruments, or machines ; as may be seen in our Saviour's own words : " But this is your hour, and the power of darkness," Luke xxii. 53. The time, or hour, was theirs, and that was all. The murder conceived in their hearts, the fortitude of their hardened minds, and the rage and vengeance with which they were hurried on, were from another quarter ; the power was all of the prince of darkness : " The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph. ii. 2.

8thly. Nor need these wise men be so much offended at God's children talking of their having communion and fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ ; for all idolaters and false prophets, all that preach lies, and all that believe them and profess them, have union and fellowship with Satan. The Gentiles sacrificed to devils, and not to God, 1 Cor. x. 20. And all false prophets come forth under the same influence. Their " coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders ; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish," 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10. Against this bond of iniquity Paul cautions the Corinthians—" I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." 1 Cor. x. 20.



9thly. If we speak about the most Holy Spirit of God converting, renewing, furnishing, and equipping men for the work of the Lord ; making them apostles and prophets, enduing them with gifts, and sending them forth ; they are greatly disgusted. But I never heard them rage at Satan for attempting to counterfeit all this. Satan sends “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light ; therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works,” 2 Cor. xi. 13—15. The office and office characters of these men, their furniture and their labour, are all of Satan ; and their end is to be accordingly. They are to be heirs and joint heirs with the devil, when their work is done ; as our Lord hath foretold : “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,” Matt. xxv. 41.

10thly. Nor need it seem so offensive, our asserting the mystical union that subsists between Christ and his church ; and of being joined to the Lord, and made one spirit with him ; as bride and bridegroom are one in mutual love ; which bond with Christ and the church is the bond of charity. And there is something like this among the children of the night. I read of some who sacrificed to, and went a whoring after, devils, Levit. xvii. 7. Ananias and Sapphira are said to conceive by the devil, and that Satan filled their hearts when they lied to the Holy Ghost, Acts v. 4, 5. Now, if Paul’s assertion be true, “That he which is joined to an harlot is one body,” 1 Cor. vi. 16, so surely those souls that whore with Satan,

who conceive by the devil, and whose hearts the devil fills, must be one with him in the bond of iniquity, as Christ and his church are one in the bond of charity.

11thly. The grand scheme of heaven, in bringing Christ and his chosen family together, is by a covenant between God the Father and God the Son; which covenant was ratified and confirmed by the death of Christ; and into the bond of this covenant are all the elect brought, and are bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord our God. But then there are other agreements and covenants besides these; for I read of some who said, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement," Isaiah xxviii. 15. To be in covenant with death is to love sin and hate the Saviour: for so saith the Lord, "All they that hate me love death," Prov. viii. 36. And to be at agreement with hell is to be in union with the king of that place, which Paul calls fellowship with devils.

12thly. By the love of God shed abroad in the heart saints come to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; all of whom are in heaven, or of heavenly extraction, Heb. xii. And so sure do they that hate Christ and his saints; all false churches, false worshippers, and false hearted professors; come into unity with Satan and all his subjects. A spiritual whore has no union but with the dead, no guests but in the depths of hell. Prov. ix. 18.

13thly. Some shall stumble and take offence at the foundation of Zion; while others put their mouth

in the dust to obtain a hope in it. And all that take offence at Christ will ever hate and persecute his spiritual followers; which is a token upon all the serpent's seed. And to be hated, reproached, and persecuted, by such men for Christ's sake, is a sure token upon us also. "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you [an evident token] of salvation, and that of God," Philip. i. 28.

Thus, reader, I have shewn you the children of light, and the everlasting sun upon them; and the setting sun over the unbelieving; the clear day with the righteous, when the earth is darkened; the fountain of light, and the source of darkness; with the end of both.

FINIS.