

SERMON IV.

THE TWO WITNESSES, THEIR TESTIMONY.

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses," &c. REV. xi. 3.

"AND I will give power unto my two witnesses;" that is, unto the inner court, and those that worship there, spoken of before. The whole church of God under the name of the temple, speaking in the Jewish language.

The whole church of God under the name of a temple is divided into the outer and the inner court. The inner court is measured, and the altar, and those that worship there, in verse 1.

The outward court is left out and given unto the gentiles, and they tread down the holy city forty and two months, verse 2. But, saith Christ, "I will give power unto my two witnesses:" that is, unto the inner court, and those that were measured, of which he had spoken before,

Called *witnesses*. No sooner is the holy city trodden under foot by the gentiles, but Christ's witnesses do begin to bear their testimony to Christ.

The witnessing time is divided into three parts: A prophesying time. The time of their prophecy from the 3rd verse unto the seventh.

The slaying time, from the 3rd verse unto the 11th.

The rising time and restoring time, from the 11th verse unto the 14th. So that in this scripture that I have now read, you have the state of the church prophesying, or witnessing in the days of antichrist, called witnesses: who are here described,

By their number *two*. "I will give power unto my two witnesses."

By their work and office: "And they shall prophesy."

By their mournful and sad habit and condition, and the time thereof, "They shall prophesy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth."

By their quality. "These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth," verse 4.

By their guard and by their defence. "And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies," verse 5.

By the great things that they shall do in the latter end of their prophecy. "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them into blood," &c. So that now from all this, I take up this one observation :

Though the saints and faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ must lie in sackcloth 1260 days, or years, yet in that time they shall be very fruitful, and prophesy, and do great things in the end of those days.

For the clearing whereof five or six things will fall under our consideration.

First, Why the saints and people of God are called witnesses.

Secondly, What these witnesses are ; more especially in respect of their number and quality.

Thirdly, How and in what respect they are clothed in sackcloth, and how long.

Fourthly, What this prophecy is, and how it comes to pass that they prophesy in the time of their sackcloth.

Fifthly, What is their defence and guard wherewith they are guarded and defended in the days of their prophecy.

Sixthly, What are the great things that they shall do in the latter end of their prophecy. I shall run through these particulars as briefly as I may, And,

First, If you ask why the saints and people of God are here called witnesses,

I answer, Because it is their work and business to bear witness to the truths and ways of Christ, in opposition to the ways of antichrist. If you look into this book of the Revelations, you will find they are so described, by bearing witness unto the ways and the truths of Christ, in opposition to the ways of antichrist. For look but a little into this book, and you shall find that there are two sorts of people that are marked. The followers of the beast are marked, and the followers of the Lamb are marked in their foreheads.

The followers of the beast are marked, in Rev. xiii. 16 : "And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor,

free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads."

The followers of the Lamb are marked in their foreheads too, chap. xiv. 1: "And I looked and lo a Lamb on the mount Zion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." But now though the followers of the Lamb are thus marked with their Father's name written in their foreheads, yet their mark doth not only consist in something that is positive, but in "refusing the mark of the beast," Rev. xx. Why, but to shew thus much, that they are witnesses upon this account, because they do bear witness unto Christ, the truth and ways of Christ, in opposition to the ways of antichrist. Thus they are conformed unto Jesus Christ, who is the "True and the faithful witness," Rev. iii. "Write, these things saith the Amen, the true and faithful witness." That is, Christ; Christ is the true and the faithful witness, and therefore those that are his, they must be witnesses too, that they may be conformed to him.

Thereby they also overcome, as you have it in Rev. xii. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." They overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, by witness-bearing. So then, the saints and people of God, they are Christ's witnesses. In anti-christian times they are Christ's witnesses; and if they be thus described, why then should not we look unto this work especially, bearing of witness to the truths and ways of Christ.

This is the work that we are born for: For this cause, saith Christ, was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I might bear witness unto the truth.

This is the work of our generation, witness-bearing to the truths of Christ in opposition to the ways of antichrist, in anti-christian times. This is the work of our generation.

This is the work which there is a thousand years of glory and comfort promised unto above other things, as you read in Rev. xx.

This is the work, witness-bearing to the truths of Christ in opposition to the ways of antichrist, this is the work that hath the crown and name of martyrdom. A martyr, what is that but a witness? Every witness more or less is a martyr.

We take the word only for them that die, but every witness is a martyr.

This is that work which sometimes is necessary to salvation. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation," Rom. x. 10. This is the work, I say, therefore, that sometimes is necessary unto salvation.

And this is that work which Jesus Christ will own and acknowledge before all the world. "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father and all the angels in heaven."

And if this be the great work, why should we not all of us look to this work especially, this witness-bearing?

You will say, What shall I do that I may be found faithful in this witness bearing; what shall I do that I may witness a good confession in these days of ours?

Something by way of rule; something by way of means: and yet not long, because I must pass on to other things.

Something by way of rule. Be sure that your testimonies do agree. Though there be a hundred witnesses about a business, if their witness does not agree it will be of little worth. And now so it is, Christ's witnesses this day are divided into many opinions and persuasions, but they may agree in the main for Christ, they may all agree in opposition unto antichrist. If that you would have your witness valid and good, labour, you that are the witnesses, for unity in your testimony. "There are three (saith the apostle John) that bear witness in heaven," speaking of God's testifying of the truth of grace: "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost:" these bear witness of Christ, and their witness is good. Why? "For these Three are One," 1 John v. 7. And saith he at verse 8, "There are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, and the water and the blood." The Spirit: I come to know that I am the child of God by the testimony of the Spirit bearing witness with my spirit that I am the child of God. And I come to know that I am the child of God by the witness of water, by the testimony of sanctification. And I come to know that I am the child of God by the testimony of blood, by the testimony of my faith relying upon the blood of Christ. And these three agree; and these three agree in one. The

testimony is good because they agree in one. So in our testifying of Christ, if our testimonies do agree, our testimony is good: that is the first thing. We have been too much divided, God knows we have, and he hath punished our divisions with divisions; it is time to unite our testimony: if you would bear witness unite your testimony.

Again, If you would witness a good confession in these days of ours, then you must be willing to own the truth of Christ, to own it whensoever you are called thereunto. It is said, our Saviour Christ he witnessed a good confession before Pontius Pilate. Pray what kind of witness was it? Was it any long confession, or large? No; but the manner of it was this: when they called him before them to give an account of any fact, he left them to prove it. When they called him to give an account of the doctrine that he held, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" then he owned it. He left them to prove the fact, and he owned the truth; so should we do. And, indeed, if that we be not willing for to own the truth when we are called thereunto, why, how can it be that the mark of the Father should be written upon our foreheads only. We read of the followers of the beast, that they received a mark in their right hands and in their foreheads both. Why in the forehead and why in the hand? In the forehead, sometimes to wear it openly; and in their right hands, to put it into their pockets, and to hide it. They can own it sometimes, and sometimes they can hide it; but the followers of the Lamb, they have the mark of their Father only in their forehead. Therefore, I say, if we would witness a good confession, we must be willing to own the truth whensoever we are called thereunto.

If you would witness a good confession in these days of ours, then you must be willing also for to suffer for the truth of Christ. Those that cannot suffer for the truth of Christ, and run the hazard of a suffering, they cannot bear their witness fully. See how they go together in Rev. xiii. 10. Here is the patience and faith of the saints. The faith of the saints and their patience do go together. So in Rev. xiv. 12. Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. Patience, and keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, they go together: and therefore that is another thing.

If you would witness a good confession, then take heed that when you have borne your testimony you may do nothing that may revoke the same, either directly or by consequence. Some bear a good testimony to the truths of Christ, but then they revoke their testimony by something that they do afterwards, either directly or by consequence. Mark what is said of John in John i. 20; it is said of him, "He confessed and denied not, but confessed, I am not the Christ." He confessed and did not revoke his testimony. "He confessed, and denied not, but confessed." I know there is an Hebraism in it, but there is more than so; "And he confessed and denied not:" he bare his testimony, and did nothing that might revoke that testimony, either directly or by consequence. And therefore if you would bear your testimony for the truth of Christ, take heed that when you have given in your testimony you do nothing that may revoke it, either directly or by consequence. Thus by way of rule.

And now by way of means. If you would be faithful in bearing your testimony, in bearing witness to the truths of Christ in opposition to the ways of antichrist; observe what the root is that a good confession grows upon, and labour for to strengthen that.

Now what is the root that a good confession grows upon, but faith working by love?

As for faith: "I believed, and therefore have I spoken."

And as for love: "Much water cannot quench love." Faith working by love is the root that a good confession grows upon, and therefore strengthen that.

Labour in the work of self-denial, and use yourself now to deny yourself. There are two denials that you read of in the gospel, one commanded and the other forbidden, directly contrary one to another.

Self-denial, and denial of Christ.

Self-denial is commanded: "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself."

Denying of Christ is forbidden: "He that denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven." The more you deny yourselves, the less you will deny Christ; and the more you deny Christ, the less you deny yourselves. Will you not deny Christ, but witness fully to Christ, and the truths and ways of Christ? labour now to

be found in the ways of self-denial, that you may be kept from Christ-denial.

In the next place, Take heed that you be not feared or scared too much with the scare-crows of the times, but go to God for boldness, that you may be emboldened with the boldness of the Holy Ghost. A timorous, fearful spirit, will shrink in witness-bearing, if God come not in with boldness. You may see how they would have made Nehemiah to have ceased from the work of God, even by scaring and fearing of him. In Neh. vi., Tobiah and Sanballat, they send unto him that they might make him cease from the work of God that was in his hand ; and they say unto him, It is reported that thou hast appointed to preach at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Jerusalem ; and now shall it be reported to the king, according to these words, verse 7 ; here they cry out, A plot, a plot ; but while they cry out a plot upon Nehemiah, the truth is, it was their own plot. " Then I sent unto them, (at verse 8,) saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them of thine own heart." They cry, A plot, and they made a plot.

Well, what was their plot ? It was to make him cease from the work of the Lord. And how did they lay the plot ? Say they, at verse 9, " For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work." They all made us afraid, verse 13, speaking of false prophets, " Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so and sin." And saith he, verse 14, " My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets that would have put me in fear." This was the way to make Nehemiah cease from the work of God that was in his hand, to put him to fear, to scare him. And therefore take heed of the scares of the time, but go to God for boldness, that you may be emboldened with the boldness of the Holy Ghost. And therefore do but read the ivth of the Acts, where you find, that when the apostles were threatened, they returned unto their own company, and fell to prayer, at verse 23. And being let go, they went to their own company, and there they fell to prayer ; and they lifted up their voice ; and what did they pray for ? the great thing that they prayed for in their prayer was, that God would give them boldness. " And

now Lord," say they, verse 29, "behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." And what was the answer? verse 31, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." This was the petition put up, "Behold, Lord, their threatenings, now give boldness to thy servants." Presently God answered, and they were filled with the boldness of the Holy Ghost, and so they bare their testimony. And so I say, if you would bear your testimony in these days of our's, take heed of being scared and feared with the scare-crows of the times: but rather go to God, and beg boldness of him, that you may be emboldened with the boldness of the Holy Ghost; and thus shall you do this great work, which is the work that we have to do in this day of our's, And so I have done with the first thing, why the saints and people of God are called witnesses; namely, because it is their work in anti-christian times to bear witness to the truths and ways of Christ, in opposition to the ways of antichrist.

Secondly, But then what are these witnesses more expressly in regard of their number, and in regard of their quality?

In regard of their number, they are two: "And I will give power unto my *two* witnesses."

Two is but a few, and yet it is enough to bear witness, for "out of the mouths of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

Two, a few, and yet enough. The note is this:

Christ will always have enough to bear witness to his truth in the darkest times. When the Gentiles tread under feet the holy city, yet here are two; it is but a few, and indeed Christ's witnesses they are not very many, they are but few.

In the Old Testament: "Unless the Lord had left us a remnant, a very little remnant."

And in the New Testament: "Nevertheless there are a *few* names in Sardis." Christ's witnesses are not very many, they are but few; two.

And yet they are enough. Two are enough to bear witness unto a thing, they are enough. Christ, though he have

but few to bear witness to his truth, he will always have enough to bear witness to his truth in the darkest times, in the darkest times of antichrist.

What then, though many fall off, and go over unto antichrist's colours, Christ will have enough to bear witness. In Matt. xxiv. it is said, "Many shall be offended, and many shall be deceived, and the love of many shall grow cold; but *he* that endures to the end." He doth not say, but *they* that endure to the end, but *he*. There is an *he* upon that. *Many* shall be deceived, and *many* shall be offended, and the love of *many* shall grow cold. But *he* that shall endure to the end; but yet an *he*.

Why should we be afraid and discouraged in reference to the cause of God, and the affairs of the church? It may be we think a few or none will stand in this dark and gloomy day, few or none will stand.

But I pray now, have you cast up the account, how many are wanting upon the muster? In Rev. vii. 14., the saints are mustered before they go into the times of antichrist, verse 4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand. And then in chap. viii. to xii. comes in the times of antichrist and bloody times. Now in chap. xiv. 1., they are accounted over after the times of antichrist; and how many are wanting: "And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." Here is not one wanting; Christ will lose not one; not one lost. By all the persecution of antichrist, the church shall not lose one. In the latter end, here is just as many to a one, as was in the beginning. We think few or none will stand in these days. So Elijah thought, "And I only am left alone," but he was deceived: there are seven thousand men that will not bow the knee to Baal. And so we may think few or none will stand, but we may be deceived, God hath his seven thousands that we know not of. Though but few, yet enough. Christ will always have enough to bear witness to his truth in the darkest times. Two Witnesses. This for their number.

But then as for their qualification.

For their quality: "These are the two olive trees," at verse 4. I shall speak to all these things within the compass

of my doctrine. "And the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth."

What is that? These are the olive trees. Why, if you look into Zechariah from whence this is taken, you will find the two olive trees are the godly magistrates and ministers, by whose assistance the golden oil is emptied into the candlesticks and lamps. Having spoken of the candlestick of gold at Zech. iv. 2, and of two olive trees by it, at verse 3; at verse 11: "Then answered I, and said unto him, what are these two olive trees upon the right side of the candlestick, and upon the left side thereof? And I answered again, and said unto him, what be these two olive branches which through the two golden pipes, empty the golden oil out of themselves? And he answered me, and said, knowest thou not what these be? And I said, No, my Lord: Then said he, These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." The two anointed ones; what is that? Why, the magistrates were anointed, and the high priests were anointed. Zerubbabel and Joshua were the two anointed ones.

"That stand by the Lord of the whole earth." What is that? that are public ministers. So then, these two olive trees are the godly magistrate and the godly minister.

But what are the two candlesticks? These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks.

Our Saviour tells you that "the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches." They were seven; now in anti-christian times reduced to a lesser company, two candlesticks. Though as I said before, Christ will lose none in the latter times, yet in anti-christian times reduced unto two.

These are the two candlesticks. Christ tells you the candlesticks are the churches; so then put this together. Would you know what these two olive trees are, and the two candlesticks? They are the godly magistrate and godly minister in conjunction with the saints of God and churches of Christ. The two olive trees are the godly magistrate and the ministry. The candlesticks are the churches and saints of God. The godly magistrate and minister, in conjunction with the churches and saints of God. The godly magistrate alone, is not it; nor the ministry alone, is not it; nor good people and saints alone, is not it; here are two olive trees

and two candlesticks. So that would you know what these are? They are the godly magistrate and minister in conjunction with the saints of God, and churches of Jesus Christ.

And then if so, that these be the witnesses,

Here we may see who those are that are fit to bear witness of Christ in anti-christian times, to bear their testimony. They are to be a fruitful, profitable people, and a lightsome people, that can hold forth light unto others in some measure. What more fruitful and profitable than the olive tree? There is nothing unprofitable; the bark oil, the leaf oil, the body oil, the fruit oil; nothing unprofitable. So the saints of God, they are the sons and daughters of oil, nothing but profit. The wicked indeed are compared to the green bay tree; barren, unprofitable. But the godly are compared in scripture to the olive tree, nothing not profitable. The wicked are compared to goats, the saints are compared to sheep: sheep, nothing not profitable; their wool profitable, their flesh profitable, their very dung profitable; nothing not profitable. And here, the witnesses of Christ, they are the olive tree; fruitful and a profitable people; and a people in some measure fit to give light to others, as the candlestick, to hold forth light unto others.

Beloved, truly every one is not fit to bear witness to the cause, and the truths, and the ways of Jesus Christ. A man may be a protestant, in opposition to the papists, and yet an ignorant man; a man may be a professor, in opposition unto others, and yet barren in his life. No, no; none are fit to bear testimony to the truths of Christ and to the ways of Christ, in opposition to the ways of antichrist, but the olive and the candlestick: the profitable man and the lightsome man; and therefore in evil times, that you may be fit to bear witness to the ways of Jesus Christ, in opposition to the ways of antichrist, labour to be sons and daughters of oil; labour to be more fruitful and profitable in your life; "And let your light so shine before men, that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven." And so now I have done with the second thing, What these witnesses are, more particularly in respect of their number, two: in respect of their quality, they are two olive-trees and two candlesticks.

Thirdly, But then it is here said that they shall prophesy

1260 days, clothed in sackcloth ; that they shall lie in sackcloth, and lie in sackcloth 1260 days.

In sackcloth ; what is that ? and how 1260 days ?

If you ask what this sackcloth means ; it represents the sad and afflicted and mournful condition, that the saints and people of God shall be in in anti-christian times. When the Jews of old mourned and were afflicted, they put on sackcloth : the princes put on sackcloth, and the priests put on sackcloth, and the people put on sackcloth. So here, the witnesses clothed in sackcloth ; what doth this mean, but their sad and afflicted and mournful condition ? Such it is and must be in anti-christian times.

For is it not a sad thing and mournful, for the holy city to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles ? so it shall be in anti-christian times.

Is it not a sad and mournful thing for the church of God to be hidden, the inner court to be hidden ? Indeed a hidden church is a true church ; a scattered flock is a true flock ; and a scattered church is a true church : but is it not a sad thing for churches to be hidden, the church of God to be hidden ? Why so it must be in anti-christian times. I remember Mr. Brightman saith, When the woman is in the wilderness, she must not think that there will be congregations so visible ; but in a wilderness here and there, or in a forest, here and there is a house, and here and there you meet with a man ; but you meet not with great towns and corporations in a wilderness, or in a forest : so when the church is in the wilderness, here and there a knot of saints, and here and there a knot of meeting ; but corporations and churches then are hidden. Is it not a sad thing now I say ? Yet thus it must be.

Is it not a sad thing for the vessels of the temple to be defiled ? So it must be in anti-christian times.

Is it not a sad thing for the solemn assemblies to lie under reproach ? So it is and must be in anti-christian times.

Is it not a sad thing for the saints and people of God, and the daughters and sons of Zion, to be persecuted to the very gates of Zion, yea, into the very gates of their trade ? So it is and must be in anti-christian times, and therefore no wonder that the witnesses lie in sackcloth.

But then they lie in sackcloth 1260 days ; what is that

That is 1260 years, a day being put for a year, as it is ordinary in Scripture.

And if you ask, When doth this time begin or end, that we may know where we are?

I answer; If you can find the beginning from whence this time doth commence, you will soon find the end. Now these 1260 days or years, are all one with the forty-two months spoken of before, that the Gentiles shall tread down the holy city. They are all one with the forty-two months of the beast. Take a day for a year, and forty-two months come to 1260 years; take a day for a month, and then 1260 days comes to forty-two months.

These forty-two months of the beast then, and the 1260 days or years that the witnesses are clothed in sackcloth are all one.

Now when did the forty-two months of the beast begin?

In likelihood about the year 400 or 406, 410 or thereabouts, for to speak to a year or so is not safe, chronologers have been deceived; I say in the year of our Lord 400 or thereabouts.

For look when that that hinders was taken away, then the man of sin was discovered. The mystery of iniquity did work in the apostle's time: in 2 Thess. ii. 7, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth, will let until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed." When is that? As Jerome and all agree, the Roman empire was the thing that let, and about those times was the Roman empire taken out of the way. In 410 the Goths and Vandals broke in upon Rome itself; about that time was that that let taken away.

And (I do but touch upon this, and touch I must upon it,) look when the Roman empire did fall asunder into ten kingdoms, then did the beast begin his forty-two months. "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast," Rev. xvii. 12.

But when did the Roman empire fall asunder into ten kingdoms? About the year 400. It is observed by good historians, and divers, that in the year 406, Brittany and these nations fell off from the Roman empire to be a kingdom standing by itself. Now, then, if the time did begin about

400, surely the end of the time we must needs be about. I confess, indeed, it is a sad thing for Christ's witnesses to lie in sackcloth, and to lie in sackcloth 1260 years; but so it must be, not a day abated, but to a year, to a day. Why should you be offended, friends, then, at the sackcloth and mourning condition of the church and saints and people of God? Why, is not this the habit of the witnesses, sackcloth; and will not you be content to be habited as they are habited, to wear the same clothes that Christ's witnesses do? And if Christ's witnesses shall lie in sackcloth 1260 years, will not you be contented to be in sackcloth three or four years? Christians, will not you be contented to be in sackcloth three or four years? Methinks we should rather look to the duty of a sackcloth condition; there should our hearts and our thoughts be. But we are very apt evermore, and consider what I say, not only in reference to this point but to others, we are very apt to mind God's work and neglect our own. It is God's work to fulfil the promise, it is our work to apply the promise; but we mind the fulfilling of it, and neglect the applying of it; mind God's work and neglect our own work.

It is God's work to deliver his people, it is their work to be humbled under the mighty hand of God. But we mind deliverance, which is God's work, and neglect our own work, humiliation under the mighty hand of God.

It is God's work, saith the martyr, to take care, it is our work to cast care: "Cast all your care upon God;" there is your work: "for he careth for you;" that is God's work. To take care is God's work, to cast care is our work; but we mind God's work, and are taking care, and neglect our own work, which is to cast all our care upon God.

It is God's work to take off our sackcloth, it is our work to wear it; but we mind God's work, the taking of it off. When shall this sackcloth be off? and neglect our own work, to wear it handsomely. Why should we not, I say, mind our business? What is the duty of a sackcloth condition more?

Why, then, when we are in sackcloth, surely then it is our duty for to lay by our ornaments: "Let the Bridegroom go out of his chamber," in the day of sackcloth; if any body may rejoice, the Bridegroom may; but let the Bridegroom go forth of his chamber in a sackcloth day. Lay aside your or-

naments, friends, lay aside your ornaments. It is the time of sackcloth, it is our duty, then, for to fast and pray and cry mightily unto the Lord.

Then it is our duty to put our mouths in the dust, if so be there may be hope.

Then it is our duty for to bear our testimony.

Then it is our duty for to wait on God; though the witnesses wear sackcloth for a time, yet there are white robes provided for them, and they come out with palms in their hands.

And the nearer the time of deliverance grows, the less time for waiting, the more we are engaged to wait. Why, now, according to the calculation there is not much of the time to come; there is but a little of the sackcloth time to come, shall we not watch with him one hour, and wear sackcloth with him one hour? Wait a while; he that shall come will come and will not tarry. And so I have done with the third thing, namely, What this sackcloth is, and their lying in sackcloth for 1260 years.

Fourthly. But then it is said here that these witnesses did prophesy: "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy." Prophecy; what is that; and how did it come to pass that they shall prophesy in the time of their sackcloth?

Prophecy: What is that?

Why prophesying is sometimes taken in Scripture for the revelation of the mind of God, whereby a man doth foretell things to come, and so Daniel and Ezekiel and others were called prophets.

Sometime prophesying is taken more largely in Scripture, for preaching the word of God in a way of office; preaching the word by office: and so the ministers and preachers of the word of God in office, they are called prophets in Scripture.

But yet, more largely, prophecy is taken for a declaring and making known of the mind and will of God; and so all those that do declare and make known the mind and will of Jesus Christ, they are said to be prophets, and so I take it here. For I pray do but mark, this their prophesying and witness-bearing seems to be all one: "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy." And when they shall have finished their testimony, their witness-bearing; he

should have said, When they have finished their prophesy. True, but he would shew that their witness-bearing and prophesy is all one; and so compare Rev. xix. and xxii. together, and you will find the same: "I fell at his feet and worshipped him; and he said unto me, See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus." And chap. xxii., "I fell at his feet; and he said unto me, See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets." "Of thy brethren the prophets," here, in chap. xxii., is all one with "thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus," in the xixth chapter; and saith he there, "Worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." It is the same word that is used when they had finished "their testimony, or witness-bearing;" "the witness of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." This bearing witness to the truths of Jesus, this is prophecy. And thus now the witnesses they are said to prophesy.

Well, but how came they to prophesy in the times of their sackcloth?

"Behold I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy 1260 days clothed in sackcloth." How comes it to pass that they shall prophesy in sackcloth?

It is clearly answered, "I will give power," saith Christ; "I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy in sackcloth." I will give power to them; they shall have their orders to preach from myself; they shall have power from me to preach, and to prophesy, and to bear their testimony. Some have their orders and their power to prophesy from men, from prelates, from the beast; but, saith he, "I will give power unto my two witnesses to prophesy." It is said of the beast, that "power was given him." It is said of the witnesses, "I will give power unto my two witnesses." They shall have their orders, they shall have their power of prophesy and witness-bearing from myself: "I will give power unto my two witnesses." Plainly then thus much.

There is none can bear witness to the truths of Jesus Christ but those that are empowered by Christ; and if that Jesus Christ will give power unto his two witnesses for to prophesy, and to bear their testimony, then why should we not depend on God; why should we not go unto Christ and

depend on Christ for our very power to bear witness to the truths of Christ.

It may be you are afraid, and you will say thus : I am a poor weak creature, man or woman, and I shall never be able for to bear a testimony in these witness-bearing times ?

Aye, but you know what the martyr, Alice Driver, said, I will set my foot against the foot of the proudest prelate of them all in the cause of Christ : but who gave power unto her ? Jesus Christ, that saith, I will give power unto my two witnesses, and he hath said so concerning all his witnesses : I will give power unto my two witnesses that they shall prophesy, and bear witness ; and he is faithful : and therefore why should you not go to Christ, and lay yourselves flat upon this promise, and say to him : O Lord, I am a poor weak creature ; I fear I shall never be able for to bear my testimony, but thou hast said, I will give power unto my two witnesses ; I am one of thy witnesses. Now then O Lord, give power to me, for I am poor ; oh, remember this promise, here is a gracious and a blessed promise : Christ saith himself, I will give power unto my two witnesses, and he is faithful, and will make it good. And so I have done with the fourth thing, namely what prophesying is, and how the witnesses come to prophesy, in the times of their sackcloth ; Christ gives them power.

Fifthly, But then what is the defence and guard that these witnesses have, whereby they are guarded and defended in their prophesy ?

The text saith, If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies. What is that ? Fire proceedeth out of their mouth ; it may relate unto Moses ; but especially it relates unto Elijah, a prophet, a minister, that when the captain and his fifty came to do him hurt, he called for fire from heaven, and destroyed the captain and his fifty ; fire came out of his mouth by his prayers : and when another captain came, and his fifty, Elijah prayed, and fire came down and destroyed him and his fifty : fire came out of his mouth ; plainly it relates to this of Elijah.

What then is this fire that proceeds out of the mouth of the witnesses, but the scorching and devouring judgments of God, whereby the enemies of God's people are blasted and

destroyed by the prayers and threatenings of the people of God, that come out of their mouth.

But if any man will hurt them, mind a little.

It seems then that there will be always be some in readiness to hurt the witnessing people of Christ, though they be impowered to witness from Christ himself. Though the saints and people of God be impowered by Christ himself for to bear their testimony. There will always be some or other to hurt the witnessing people of God. If any man will hurt them : them that are witnesses.

But though men do hurt the witnessing people of God, they shall not go unpunished : “ If any man will hurt them, fire proceeds out of their mouths, and devoureth their enemies : ” though the enemies may hurt the witnessing people of Christ, the enemies shall be hurt themselves, they shall not go unpunished.

But they shall not only be punished that hurt the witnessing people of God : but they shall be punished with a *so* ; he must in this manner, or so, he must *so* be punished : so, how so ? So, look in what way he thought to have hurt the witnessing people of God : so shall he be hurt, look by what means he sought to hurt the people of God, by the same hand and means shall he be hurt himself.

But *so*, so by fire coming out of their mouth ; by the prayers of the people of God, they shall be blasted and consumed ; not by sword, not by might, nor by strength, but by *fire* coming out of their mouth, *so*, so he shall not only be punished, but be punished with a *so*, that hurts the witnessing people of God.

Oh, my beloved friends, why do you shut your mouths ? why should you not be much in prayer ? what, doth fire come out of the mouth of the witnessing people of God to devour their enemies, and will you shut your mouth and not pray.

Oh, where will opposers appear ; what will become of those that hurt the witnessing people of God, oh, woe to them ?

Oh, what a dangerous thing is it to oppose the prayers of the people of God ? This is the fire that comes out of their mouth, whereby those that hurt them are scorched : and therefore let men take heed how they hurt any of the witnessing people of Christ ; and let all those that are witnesses

pray ; you that are witnesses now open your mouths, for fire proceedeth out of your mouths, to devour the enemies that hurt the witnessing people of God ; open your mouths wide. And so I have done with the fifth thing. The guard whereby the witnesses are guarded in the days of their prophecy.

Sixthly, The next thing remains, and that is what are the great things that these witnesses will do, in the end of the days of their prophecy, and of their sackcloth ?

Why briefly thus : in the general it is said ; “ These have power to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will : ” that is, as I humbly conceive, pouring out the seven vials, Rev. xvi., the seven vials are poured out upon the earth : and why is it spoken of here, that they have power to smite the earth with all plagues ? But to shew that at least some of the vials shall be poured out, before the witnesses are slain : but not to fix there more particularly.

These have a power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy. What is that ? Certainly it must relate unto Elijah : that Elijah prayed and by his prayer he shut the heavens that it rained not for three years and an half : plainly it relates unto Elijah as can be : Elijah prayed, and by his prayer he shut the heavens that it rained not for three years and a half.

Well, but what are the heavens here ?

Those cannot be understood literally, but spiritually : as it is said in verse 8., “ Their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt : ” the heavens here cannot be understood literally, but spiritually ; what then ; what are the heavens then, and what is the shutting of the heavens that it rain not ?

The heavens are the highest power, so that look when the witnesses have power to restrain the highest power in church and state from their wonted influence ; then is this word fulfilled, that they have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : I say the heavens are the highest powers : look when the witnesses do restrain the highest power in church and state from their wonted influence, then is this word fulfilled.

They have power also to turn water into blood. What is that ? plainly it must relate to Moses, who turned rivers, and turned waters into blood. What is that ? It cannot be understood

literally, but spiritually still. What is that then? Why thus: these waters are to be understood spiritually, and so you read in Rev. xvi., "The sea, and rivers were turned into blood." Look therefore when the witnesses shall have power to turn the still waters of a state or nation into war and blood; then is this word fulfilled.

But how came the witnesses to have power to do this?

It may be, not legally, for it is not said here, *And I will give power* unto them to shut the heavens; but these *have power* to shut the heavens, and these *have power* to turn waters into blood; it is not said here, *I will give* them power, as it is said before. It may be this may be done, and not legally.

But when shall this be done?

It must be done immediately before their slaying. I pray mark the coherence here. They shall have power to shut the heavens immediately before they are slain, and to turn water into blood immediately before they are slain, just before the three years and a half, that they lie dead upon the earth. For when did Elijah shut the heavens but immediately before the three years and a half of drought. When did Moses turn the waters into blood, but immediately before the coming out of the children of Israel out of Egypt. So here, immediately before the witnesses are slain, and they lie three years and a half as dead, immediately before, they have power to shut the heavens that it rain not, and to turn waters into blood.

Now therefore to draw to a conclusion; whensoever you see all these things come to pass; I will not apply them to times or places, this or that time or place; but when you see all these things come to pass, one treading upon the heel of another; when you shall see that the witnesses have power to shut the heavens that it rain not; to restrain the highest powers both in church and state from their wonted influence, and that they have power to turn water into blood, and turn still nations into war; and then immediately upon it they shall be slain, and so lie dead, deprived of their functions and vital operations, as if they lay dead; then lift up your heads and comfortably say, hopefully say, Now, now comes the three years and a half, which is the last time. Now is our salvation near, for God will bring near his righteous-

ness, and his salvation shall not tarry. And he will place salvation in Sion, for Israel his glory.

Only for the present, let me conclude and leave an exhortation with you, which I will draw up from all which hath been said.

The first part of it is this : The saints and people of God in anti-christian times, they are witnesses.

Therefore, be sure that you bear your testimony faithfully. Be faithful now in your witness-bearing, christians. Christ will pay all the charge that you are at in witness-bearing. If a man have a suit at law, and have five or six witnesses, and carry them a hundred miles, he bears all the charge of their witness-bearing. Saith Christ, I will give power to *my* witnesses, they are *my* witnesses. Ye are Christ's witnesses, and look whatsoever charge you are at, he will bear the charge, he will bear all the charge of your witness-bearing. And if your faith come not home enough, as it should be, yet Christ is faithful though we believe not, and therefore be faithful in your witness-bearing.

Though you be but few, be not afraid, be not discouraged, for Christ will always have enough to bear witness to his truth in the darkest times. Comfort ye one another with those words.

Be fruitful as the olive tree ; and be lightsome as the candlestick. Oh, that God would roll away the reproach of a barren heart from every one of you, and of a barren life. It is time now to be fruitful that you may be as the olive tree, and as the candlestick, to hold forth your light to others.

Pray now have a care that you wear your sackcloth handsomely. Truly these meetings that now we do enjoy, they have a sackcloth on them ; there is a sackcloth upon the loins of every such meeting as this. Christians, you have your sackcloth on, pray wear your sackcloth handsomely, for in due time you shall have robes, you shall come forth in white robes, having your palms in your hands, only for the present wear your sackcloth handsomely. I mean, carry your sad and mournful condition as you ought.

If you find that you be not able for to bear your testimony as you would and as you should, go then to Christ, and remember this promise, "I will give power unto my two

witnesses." Oh, plead this promise, christians, it is a great promise: "I will give power unto my two witnesses." Though men take away power from you for prophesy; they will not let you pray, nor prophesy, yet "I will give power." I will give power in opposition to your own weakness. And I will give power in opposition to men's malice. Therefore go to Christ and press this promise: Lord, I am one of thy poor witnesses, therefore give power according to thy word, for thou hast said, I will give power, and they shall prophesy.

Let not your mouth be shut, but open in prayer; for it is said here, If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of his mouth. That was the prayer of Elijah, it brought down fire, scorching and blasting judgments. Christians, is there a fire, a fire in your mouth? Oh, you that have any credit in heaven, pray now. If there were any here that I could speak to, I would say thus, You that never prayed, pray now. But I hope there is none such; but if there should be any such, I would say, You that never prayed, pray now; and you that have any credit in heaven, improve it in this day of trial for the poor witnesses.

And to conclude all: If that you should see that the witnesses shall have done such great things, that they have shut heaven that it rain not; that they have turned water into blood, and yet immediately upon it they have been slain, and lie dead; if you see all these things come to pass one after another, then lift up your heads, oh, ye saints, and wait, and wait; for he that doth come, will come, and will not tarry. And when he comes, he will not only pay you your principal money, but he will pay you all your forbearance money too. And therefore what I say to one I say unto you all, and to my own soul, Let us wait upon the Lord and keep his way. And thus now I have done with the first time of the witnesses, their prophesying time, their slaying time follows. But that you will conjecture at something by what hath been said.