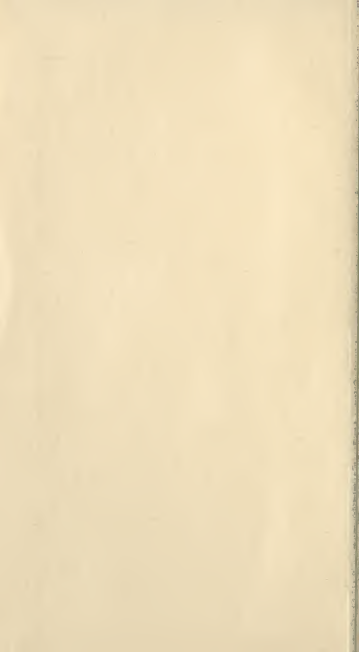


ABS. 1. 83. 2 (1-5)



The CHURCH's Extremity,
CHRIST's Opportunity.

A
SERMON

Preached upon *Monday*, immediately
after the Celebration of the Sacra-
ment of the Lord's Supper at *Aber-*
nethy, *July 17. 1738.*

*By the late REVEREND and LEARNED Mr. WILLIAM
WILSON Minister of the Gospel at Perth.*

Carefully revised by a reverend Member of the As-
sociate Synod.



E D I N B U R G H,

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MICAH IV. 10.

Be in Pain, and labour to bring forth, O Daughter of Zion, like a Woman in Travail, for now shalt thou go forth out of the City, thou shalt dwell in the Field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered, there the Lord shall redeem thee from the Hand of thine Enemies.

IT is in the middle Clause of the Verse I design to insist upon, *And thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered.*

My Friends, when we are met together about the solemn Worship of God, we are to remember it is a great Point in Worship, to have the solid Faith of the great Object of divine Worship. We are a worshipping Assembly, one of the Assemblies of Mount Zion; and, O that we had the lively Impression of that God whom we profess to worship: Without Faith it is impossible to please God; our Worship is but dead Worship without Faith; our Worship is but formal Worship without Faith; yea, let me tell you, our Worship is no Worship at all, in the Sight of God, without Faith. We are one of the Assemblies of Mount Zion, of the Gospel Church, met together upon a very solemn Occasion. Yesterday

we were commemorating the Death of Christ in the Sacrament of the Supper, and we are now assembled this Day to offer up the spiritual Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving unto him, to bless our God aloud. My Friends, have we not much Matter and Ground of Praise? I dare say, that those among you, who are in the darkest Case, in the dearest Case, under the heaviest Complaint with Reference to themselves, with Reference to their own spiritual Case and Condition, have yet Matter and Ground of Praise. Are you saying, *Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left Hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the Right Hand that I cannot see him.* Why, be it so, Sirs; you have yet Matter and Ground of Praise. Have you not Reason to say, *Thou art righteous when thou pleadest with me, when thou hidest thy Face from me, when thou coverest thyself with a Cloud.* Sirs, if there is a Frame of Spirit in you to justify God; and condemn yourselves, it is a good Disposition of Spirit, it is a Bow in your Cloud, when he is hiding his Face from you. Again, is it not Ground and Matter of Praise, that you are not in the bottomless Pit, that you are not in Hell? I am sure, if you are rightly exercised, you will reckon it a Mercy that ye have Access to look towards God's holy Temple, it is a Mercy that the Cup of vindictive Wrath is not put into your Hand. This indeed says, that he hath not dealt with you according to your Sins, nor rewarded you according to your Iniquities. Well, in your lowest Case, may it not be a Note of Praise to you, *He dealt not with us according to your Sins, &c.* In a Word, if you are complaining that you cannot find him in the Sacrament, nor in the Word, ye are just the worst in the World.

World, ye have the most unbelieving Heart, the most obstinate Heart, the most hard Heart, and the most atheistical Heart in the World; ye are saying, There is none like you; ye are saying, It may be there is something peculiar in your Case, that is not to be found in the Case of another, none like you, no Case like yours in this whole Assembly: Yet we tell you, there is still Matter and Ground of Praise, that there is Balm in *Gilead*, and that there is a Physician there. It is Matter and Ground of Praise to you, that Christ lives; that tho' he was dead, now he is alive again, and liveth for evermore, and hath the Keys of Hell and of Death. It is Matter and Ground of Praise, and that in the very worst Case amongst you, the most singular Case out of the bottomless Pit, that Christ is a Physician, that Christ is a Helper in the very greatest Extremity. Is thy Case a singular Case? Christ is a singular Physician, Christ is a singular Saviour, Christ is a singular Remedy, Christ is a singular Help, a matchless and a none-such Help, whatever your Case is. Here then is Matter and Ground of Praise, that the Lord hath visited *Adam's Family*. I remember to have read in the Diary of an eminent Christian, who, falling under a Cloud, called all in Question that ever God had done for him. He began to think God had visited *Adam's Family*. There is a Remnant of *Adam's Family* that he hath redeemed to himself: *I will try to bless him, (said he) that he hath redeemed a Company out of Adam's Family, tho' I cannot say I am among them.* The honest Man went about to mint at Praising, and when he is doing so, it pleased the Lord to make him apply and act Faith upon it as to himself, and made him say, *Thou wast slain and hast redeemed me to God by thy Blood.* Well, bless God that the Day-Spring
from

from on high hath visited our Tribe and Family, and perhaps he will lead you on to say he hath visited you, and redeemed you by his Blood. Bless God that he hath made the Light to shine, and sent his Son to bless us, in turning every one of us from our Iniquities. What say you, I cannot bless him, I have neither Heart for Prayer nor Praise? Why, then, you are in the best Tune to go to the Physician. It is best to go poor and empty-handed to Christ. Go, as you are poor and miserable, unable to do any Thing for Christ, or for God. Spread the Case out before him who is the Redeemer, come to turn away Ungodliness from *Jacob*. He is a wonderful and only Help, upon whom all our Help is laid. Well, let us have our Eyes to him, and let us essay to give Thanks to him on a Thanksgiving-Day, on a parting Day from this Place, sometimes such a Day has been found a good Day, a convincing Day, a converting Day, a confirming Day, a comforting Day. The Residue of the Spirit is with our Lord; let us have our Eyes to him, that he may send him to bless his own Word we are to deliver to you this Day.

In the first Part of this Chapter where our Text lies, the glorious Advancement and Enlargement of the Church, in New Testament Times, is foretold by the Prophet *Micah*, as in the first Verse, *But in the last Days it shall come to pass, that the Mountain of the House of the Lord shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and it shall be exalted above the Hills, and People shall flow unto it; and many Nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, &c.* It is a Prophecy of the Gathering of the Nations to *Shiloh*, of the Gathering of many Nations to the Lord Christ; that Nations shall stir

up one another to join themselves unto glorious Christ. Also, in the latter Part of the Chapter, particularly in the Verse that I have read, ye have the happy Issue of the Church's Trial, the Issue of the Trial of the Daughter of *Zion*; thro' she may be brought low, yet she shall have a glorious Issue to all her fore Conflicts and Trials. In the Words I have read, the fore Conflicts of the Church are compared to the Sorrow and Travail of a Woman in Child-bearing. Mark it, they are not like the Agonies of dying Men; but like the Pain and Travail of a Woman, which issues in a happy Birth. A Woman, when she is in Travail, she has Sorrow, because her Hour is come; but, as soon as she is delivered of the Child, she remembreth no more the Anguish, for Joy that a Man-Child is born into the World. But tho' the Church has her fore Conflicts and Pangs, yet they are promising Pangs and Throws, even as the Woman's. They are Pangs that have a promising and glorious Issue: Therefore, I say, the Church being in Pain, labours to bring forth, like a Woman in Travail. Again, in the following Verse, ye may observe, that the Church's Troubles may rise high, the Floods they may swell, the Lord's People (the Daughter of *Zion*) may have Trouble and Trial to the greatest Extremity measured out unto them: *Therefore, saith the Prophet, thou shalt go forth out of the City, and thou shalt dwell in the Field.* By these several Expressions the Church's extreme Troubles and Trials are held forth by the Prophet. There is a gradual Rise of her Trial; first, *Thou shalt go forth out of the City.* By the City we are to understand *Jerusalem*. *Jerusalem* was the Place of their sacred Solemnities, there was the Place of their publick Worship; also *Jerusalem* was the Seat of their publick

publick Courts of Justice ; for there are set Thrones of Judgment, the Thrones of the House of David, says the Psalmist, Psalm cxxii. 5. *Thou shalt dwell in the Field* ; that is, thou shalt be stript naked of all thy spiritual Privileges in this thy City, and shalt be even thrust out of thy City. But this is not all, *Thou shalt even go to Babylon* ; thou shalt fall under the Feet of thine Enemies, the Enemy shall for a Time get his Will of the Daughter of Zion ; *Thou shalt even go to Babylon*. Ye know, Sirs, what is intended by *Babylon*. That City, the Mistress of the then known World, famous for her Tyranny and Oppression, in oppressing the People of God. In the 17th Chapter of the Book of the *Revelation*, she is called, *Mystery, Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth*.

But again, in the next Place, as the Church is brought into these Straits, sent out of the City, made to dwell in the Field, brought under the Feet of her Enemies, so ye may observe the glorious Deliverance she meets with in this Extremity : *There shalt thou be delivered*. Ye would have thought it would been said, *There shalt thou be destroyed ; There a full End shall be made of thee*. But, instead of that, Deliverance is insured unto the Church ; it is insured in the Word of Grace and Promise, by the Promise of him who cannot lie. *There shalt thou be delivered*. Ye may notice that the Deliverance is to be given even from *Babylon* ; *There shalt thou be delivered*. The plain Meaning is, just when thou art brought to the greatest Pinch of Extremity, then in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen ; then the sacred Proverb shall be verified, **JEHOVAH-JIREH**, in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen. *Thou shalt go even to Babylon, and there shalt*

shalt thou be deliver'd. When, upon the Matter, all seems to be lost and gone, then Deliverance shall come unto thee; *there shalt thou be deliver'd*; there, in thy utmost Pinch and Strait, Sovereignty shall appear for thee for thy Delivery. Before I pass on to the Doctrine, I observe, by the Way, that the Deliverance from *Babylon*, it is held forth in Scripture under two Things.

1st. As a Type of the Redemption of the whole Church and People of God, from the Tyranny and Bondage of Sin and Satan, by the great Redeemer, the Lord Christ. The spiritual Redemption of his People is held forth by the Redemption given by *Joshua*; and by their Deliverance from the Captivity in *Babylon*, at the End of the threescore and ten Years in which he had Indignation. Again,

2^{dly}. This Deliverance from *Babylon* is held forth as a Type of that glorious Deliverance that the New Testament Church, in the latter Days, shall obtain from mystical *Babylon*, from Antichristian Tyranny and Idolatry. Hence, in the 18th Chapter of the Book of the *Revelation*, and 2^d Verse of that Chapter, *Babylon* the great is said to be fallen, and shall rise no more. - But I do not insist farther on any Explication of the Words.

I proceed to draw a plain doctrinal Proposition from them, and in the Prosecution of which I resolve to offer a very few Thoughts.

Doct. *That the greatest Extremity the Church and People of God may be brought into, makes Way for a glorious Deliverance unto her. Or thus, That the Church and People of God are sometimes brought into the greatest Extremity, that her Deliverance may be the more conspicuous and glorious.*

Thou shalt go even to Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered. The Lord brings his Church and People to very great Extremities, and then just steps in for their Relief and Deliverance, according to that sacred Proverb I cited already, *In the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen.* The Scripture is full of Instances of this Kind : As for Example, when the Church was in *Egypt*, what a great Extremity was she in ? She cries out under her Bondage, in that 3d Chapter of *Exodus* ; and behold, when she is brought into an Extremity, the Lord brings about a wonderful Deliverance for her. In like Manner also, in *Hezekiah's* Days, in the 37th Chapter of the Prophecies of the Prophet *Isaiah*, the Church, in his Time, is brought to such an Extremity, that he cries out, *This Day is a Day of Trouble, and of Rebuke, and of Blasphemy, for the Children are come to the Birth, and there is not Strength to bring forth.* So the Lord makes a surprising Appearance, and works a great Deliverance for his Church and People, even in the Days of this King, when she was so very low. Consider, my Friends what a low Pass the Church was in, when the Prince of Life was lying in the Grave. Then the Church was scattered, and brought to the lowest Extremity, yet this did issue in the most glorious Day that ever the Church of Christ did see. Then out of *Zion* came forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from *Jerusalem* ; then came the Fountain out from the House of the Lord, and watered the Valley of *Shittim* ; That glorious Deliverance is the Foundation of all the after Deliverances to the Church and People of God. But, not to insist, all I intend upon the Doctrine, is,

In the first Place, to offer some Remarks concerning those extreme Straits that the Church and
 People

People of God may be brought into before Deliverance come. *2dly.* Give the Reasons why the Church and People of God are brought into such extreme Straits. *3dly.* Observe some of the remarkable Deliverances the Lord gives to the Daughter of *Zion*, when she is brought to *Babylon*, or to those extreme Straits or Difficulties. And then, in the *4th* and *last* Place, make some practical Use and Improvement of the Subject.

I return then to the *first* of these, *namely*, to offer some Remarks concerning those extreme Straits that the Church and People of God may be brought into.

In the *first* Place, I remark, that as the Church may be brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance come, so all the Children that are brought forth in *Zion*, they are sometimes brought into extreme Straits; as, in the *first* Place, they are brought into extreme Straits at their Birth; *2dly.* Sometimes they are brought into extreme Straits after their Birth.

In the *first* Place, I say, they are brought to extreme Straits in their spiritual Birth. Those that are brought forth in *Zion*, the Lord makes a fearful Work in less or more in their Consciences; the Terror of the Lord takes hold on them; they are brought to the Foot of Mount *Sinai*; the awful Thunder of Mount *Sinai* thunders on their Hearts, and here some of them are kept under the Spirit of Bondage for a considerable Time. One of which the Apostle *Paul* seems to have been; he seems to have had something of this exemplified in himself, when the Lord appeared to him in his Way to *Damascus*. He was struck down to the Ground, struck blind for some Days, till *Ananias* came to him with a Message of Deliverance from God. It is ordinary that the Children of God, in such a

Case as this, are under extreme Fears with respect to the Issue of their Distress; they are under extreme Temptations; Satan is permitted to attack the Soul with his fiery Darts, and fiery Temptations, in so much that the Soul, in this, or such a Case as this, is brought to draw the Conclusion, as if their Case were desperate. Sometimes, before the Delivery, the Soul is brought to the very Borders of Desperation. Thus, I say, those who are the Children of *Zion* are brought to an Extremity in their spiritual Birth, before the Lord give a Delivery to them, before the Lord Christ be revealed in them, before the Gospel sound in their Hearts: They are brought to Mount *Sinai* before they are brought to Mount *Zion*; and when, in such a Case as this, the Lord is pleased sometimes to appear remarkably for them, in their Straits to scatter their Clouds, and to clear their Sky, by manifesting his Christ unto them, thus they are brought unto *Babylon*, and there they are delivered.

Again, 2dly. Those Children that are born in *Zion*, they may have extreme Straits after their spiritual Birth, after they are regenerated: They may fall under extreme Straits, sometimes of one Kind, and sometimes of another; they may, and often do fall into the extreme Strait of the Sense of Distance from God, the extreme Strait of the Fear of eternal Wrath; tho' this is their Sin. Legal Terrors may take hold on their Consciences, after Regeneration, as in the Instance of *Heman* in the 88th *Psalms* and 15th Verse, *I am afflicted, and ready to die from my Youth up: While I suffer thy Terrors I am distracted.* The Lord's People, after their spiritual Birth, may be brought under extreme Temptations. The Apostle, in writing to the believing *Ephesians*, exhorting them, Chapter 6th and Verse 11th, to *put on the whole Armour*
of

of God, that they may be able to stand against the Wiles of the Devil, gives us to understand, that even Believers themselves, Persons who are born again, may be attacked with the fiery Darts of the Devil. Farther, the Lord's People, after their spiritual Birth, may be brought to the extreme Strait of Desertion, and the hiding of God's Countenance. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself drank deep of this Cup, and that for the Sake of all his little Ones, *Psalms* xxii. 1. compared with *Matthew* xxvii. 46. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Again, the Lord's People, even after Regeneration, may bring themselves into extreme Straits by their Backsliding from the Lord, in so much that they may need a Sight of their first Conversion. Hence we find the Psalmist praying, *Psalms* li. 10. *Create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me.* They may be brought into such an extreme Strait, that they may be just withering and dying, just expiring; yea more, they may apprehend themselves dead, cut off for their Parts, as in that 37th Chapter of *Ezekiel*, and 11th Verse, *Behold they say, our Bones are dried, our Hope is lost, we are cut off for our Parts.* To these, and such like extreme Straits, I say, the Lord's People may be brought, even after they are born in Zion; and I am much afraid, my Friends, this is in a great Measure your Case. There is Ground to apprehend it is the Case of the Lord's Remnant at this Day, that they are brought to the extreme Strait of Distance from God, in their Apprehension; to the extreme Strait of a slavish and unwarrantable Fear of eternal Wrath; to the extreme Strait of Temptations and Attacks from Satan; to the extreme Strait of Desertion and the hiding of God's Countenance; and that they are in

many

many such like Cases. But is there not a Bow in the Cloud? Why, there is just Help in the Lord for such Extremities. When the Church in general, or a Soul in particular, is brought into the greatest Extremity, then, even then, he gives Enlargement to the Church or to the Soul: *Thou shalt go even to Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered.* To excite your Faith and Hope of this Deliverance, when ye are brought to cry, *Our Bones are dried, our Hope is lost, and we are cut off for our Parts,* consider what you heard on Saturday, namely, that Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, and so, of consequence, there is Redemption and Deliverance in him, and in him for you.

But then, again, in the *second Place*, upon this Head, I remark, that sometimes *Zion* has an easy and a gentle Labour, and yet brings forth a numerous and glorious Offspring; a Proof of which you have in the 66th Chapter of the Prophecies of the Prophet *Isaiah*, and the 8th Verse, *Who hath heard such a Thing? Who hath seen such Things? Shall the Earth be made to bring forth in one Day? Or shall a Nation be born at once? For, as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her Children.* Yea, not only as soon as *Zion* travails does she bring forth her Children, in such a Case as this, but even before Travail a numerous and glorious Offspring is produced from *Zion's* pregnant Womb, as in the 7th Verse of that same 66th of *Isaiah*, *Before she travailed she brought forth, before her Pain came she was delivered of a Man-Child.* This was immediately verified after the Resurrection of our Lord Christ, on the Day of *Pentecoste*; and I may say it has been verified in a particular Manner even in *Scotland*, our native Land, in her reforming Times, when the

Lord

Lord led our Forefathers by the Hand out of the *Egypt* of black Popery and Paganism, even to the Length of a solemn Avouching of him to be their God, and that with uplifted Hands to the most high God: Then, no sooner did *Zion* travail, but immediately she brought forth Children, a numerous and glorious Offspring to the Lord Christ.

But again, farther, in the *third* Place, upon this Head, we may remark, that, before *Zion* be delivered, she may have long Trouble and Pain, she may go forth out of the City, she may dwell in the Field; yea, more, she may go even to *Babylon*, before she be delivered. You that are Believers in Christ, true Church-Members, the genuine Sons and Daughters of *Zion*, you must be brought from one Strait to another, from one Difficulty to another, one Extremity to another, before you be delivered. *Thou shalt go forth out of the City, thou shalt dwell in the Field; yea, thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered.*

There are five Particulars with relation to the extreme Straits the Church and People of God may be brought into before Deliverance come, which I shall mention on this Remark. And, in the *first* Place, the Daughter of *Zion* may be brought to this Strait, of being stript of all her Beauty. You have a Word to this Purpose in the first Chapter of the Book of the *Lamentations of Jeremiab*, and there the 6th Verse, *From the Daughter of Zion all her Beauty is departed, All her Beauty is departed.* What think you is the Beauty of the Daughter of *Zion*, or the Church of Christ? Why, it consists chiefly in these two Things, 1st. In Purity; 2^{dly}. In the special Presence of God.

First, I say, the Beauty of the Daughter of *Zion* consisteth in the Purity of Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government. The Beauty of the Daughter

Daughter of *Zion*, I say, consisteth in the Purity of the Doctrines of the Gospel delivered from the Word of Truth in the Church of Christ, when nothing is taught therein, but what is exactly agreeable to his Mind and Will, and when the Discipline of his House is managed and dispensed according to the Rule laid down in the Law and Testimony, and the Government of his House doth exactly quadrate with the Pattern shewn in the Mount of divine Revelation. But then,

2dly. Not only does the Beauty of the Daughter of *Zion* consist in the Beauty of Purity, but also in the Beauty of Presence, in the special Presence of God in and with his Church and People. Remark it, Sirs, when the Beauty of Purity departs from *Zion*, from the Church, the Beauty of Presence does not readily continue in her. O what a Beauty is it to *Zion* the Presence of her God! When the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of *Zion*, is in the Midst of her, he is her Beauty and Glory; he himself is her Dignity and Excellency. To apply as we go along, we may see what a deplorable Case and Condition the Daughter of *Zion*, the New Testament Church, is in at this Day, when her spiritual Beauty is, in such a great Measure, departed from her. When God took her by the Hand; and led her out of *Babylon*, she was a noble Vine, wholly a right Seed; but, alas, the noble Vine is turped into the degenerate Plant of a strange Vine! The Beauty of Purity is in a great Measure defaced among all the Churches of Christ, and in the Church of *Scotland* amongst the rest: And as the Beauty is defaced, is not also the divine Presence departed in a great Measure, in so much that a Lamentation may be taken up over her, *How is thy Gold become dim! How is the most fine Gold changed!*

changed? How is Error mingled with the pure Doctrines of his Word in this Day of Degeneracy from the Lord! How is the Light of his Countenance withdrawn in a great Measure! He hath shut up himself in a Cloud, that we cannot perceive him; It is not with us, as in Months past, when the Lord made his Candle to shine upon our Head.

A 2^d Particular I shall mention on this Remark, is, That the Church of Christ, the Daughter of Zion, may be sent out of the City, to dwell in the Field, &c. before she be delivered; *that is*, The Church may be brought to a very great Strait, laid under the Feet of her Adversaries, under the Feet of her Enemies. Hence the Church cries out, because of Affliction, her Persecutors overtook her. Sometimes this is the Case, her Enemies they overtake her, she is carried Captive by them, carried even to *Babylon* by them, and troden under Foot by them for some Time.

But then, a 3^d Particular I mention, on this Remark, is, That the Church of Christ, before she be delivered, may be brought to this Strait, even, to be deprived of her sacred Solemnities. This we see was the Case of the Church here, as is plainly pointed out in the Words read, *Thou shalt go forth out of the City; that is*, Thou shalt be deprived of thy sacred Solemnities, thou shalt be deprived of thy solemn Feast-Days. Hence is that Word, *The Ways to Zion languish, the Gates of Zion languish, none come to her solemn Feasts.*

A 4th Particular I mention on this Remark, is, That the Church of Christ, the Daughter of Zion, before she be delivered, may be brought to this Strait, that there may be no publick Testimony lifted up for the Truth of God, for his declarative

Glory amongst them; as for Instance, this was the Case of the Church in the 74th *Psalms*, and there the 9th Verse, *We see not our Signs, there is no more any Prophet, neither is there any among us who knoweth how long.* You have also a Word in the 17th Chapter of the *Revelation*, and 8th Verse, which concerneth old *Babylon*, but is typical of the New Testament Church, *Their dead Bodies shall lie in the Street of the great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.* Whether this Prophecy is fulfilled or not, as yet, I shall not determine: But it speaks a Falling of the Testimony of Christ in the Church, and among the People of God, when the Beauty of the Daughter of *Zion* departs from her, and her Enemies have her under their Feet. O what an extreme Strait is she in when she comes to be stript of her Beauty, held under the Feet of her Adversaries, deprived of her Solemnities, and when all publick Testimony for the Glory of *Immanuel* falls to the Ground! These indeed are great Extremities; yet,

Lastly, Upon this Remark, we tell you, sometimes the Church and People of God, the Daughter of *Zion*, before Deliverance, may be brought to this Extremity, that there is no visible Outgate for her, no Help, no Deliverance, to any human Appearance. Thus you see it was with the Church and People of God in *Ezekiel's* Days. In the 37th Chapter of *Ezekiel*, and 11th Verse, the Church is spoken of after this Manner, *Then he said unto me, Son of Man, these Bones are the whole House of Israel: Behold, they say, Our Bones are dried, and our Hope is lost, we are cut off for our Parts.* Thus far may the Daughter of *Zion* be brought before Deliverance: But it is worthy of our Notice and Observation

Observation, that, when she is brought to this Pinch and Strait, just when she is saying her Bones are dried and her Hope lost, even then, in that Interim, behold Deliverance comes; as we may see in the Verses immediately following the Church's grievous Complaint, Verses 12th and 13th, *Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, behold, O my People, I will open your Graves, and cause you to come up out of your Graves, and bring you into the Land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your Graves, O my People, and brought you up out of your Graves!* Agreeable to this Purpose also, is what we have in the 11th of the Revelation, from the 8th to the 12th Verse of that Chapter. There we see the Witnesses are slain, their dead Bodies are laid on the Streets, all seems to be lost and gone; but even this Extremity just preceeds a glorious Delivery and Revival to his Church. *And their dead Bodies shall ly in the Streets of the great City, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified; and they of the People, and Kindred, and Tongues, and Nations, shall see their dead Bodies, three Days and an Half, and shall not suffer their dead Bodies to be put in Graves; (so great shall be their Tyranny and Cruelty) and they that dwell upon the Earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send Gifts one to another, because these two Prophets tormented them that dwell on the Earth.* Note what follows, *And after three Days and an Half, the Spirit of Life from God entred into them, and they stood upon their Feet, and great Fear fell upon them which saw them.* Here we see plainly, when all Hope seemed to be lost and gone, and the Babylonians seemed to have got all their Will of the Church of God, yet his Thoughts are not their

their Thoughts, for the Spirit of Life from God enters into them, and then they are set to their Feet again. This much for the extreme Straits that the Church and People of God may be brought unto before Deliverance come, and so I pass the Remarks, and go on to the

Second general Head which I proposed, *namely*, To give the Reasons why the Church and People of God are brought into such extreme Straits before Deliverance come.

There are only these few Reasons following which I shall assign for it at present. In the *first* Place, the Church and People of God are brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance, that the glorious Majesty of God may be proclaimed, that his infinite Holiness may be published and declared, that his Hatred and Detestation of Sin may be evidenced; for he is a God of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and cannot look upon Sin. All the Churches must know, that the Lord searcheth the Heart, and trieth the Reins; if there be any Sin latent there, behold he will find it out; and so, when his Church and People backslide from him, go a-whoring from him, then he will manifest his infinite Holiness and Hatred of Sin, in punishing them for their Iniquity, and, in so doing, he will bring them into extreme Straits, put them out of the City, make them dwell in the Field, yea, bring them even to *Babylon*: *For the Transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the Iniquity of the House of Israel.* But again, in the

2d Place, The Church and People of God are brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance. Why? For this End, that he may try the Faith and Patience of his People, that he may be glorified in and by the Faith and Patience of his People. Observe

the Expression you have in the 13th Chapter of the Revelation, and 10th Verse, *Here is the Faith and Patience of the Saints*; that is, Here the Faith and Patience of the Saints is tried; here the Faith and Patience of the Saints is kythed; here God is glorified in the Faith and Patience of the Saints; here the Truth and Reality of the true Religion of Jesus is vindicated and asserted by the Faith and Patience of the Saints. Again,

3dly. The Church and People of God are brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance, for this End also; that God's Hand may be seen in giving the Deliverance to his Church and People. *Thou shalt even go to Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the Hand of thine Enemies.* I say, the Church and People of God are brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance, just that God himself may be eminently and conspicuously seen, in giving the Deliverance; that the Love and Pity of God may be seen, in taking Care of his Church and People till the Deliverance be wrought; that the Power and Omnipotence of God may be eminently seen and displayed in giving the Deliverance; it is just, that *Jehovah* do appear like himself, in breaking the mighty Gates of Brass, and cutting the Bars of Iron asunder. It is he that speaks of *Cyrus* as a Type of Christ, in the 45th Chapter of *Isaiah's* Prophecies, and 2d Verse. When he is about to deliver *Zion*, he says; *I will go before thee, and make their crooked Places straight: I will break in Pieces the Gates of Brass, and cut in sunder the Bars of Iron: and I will give thee the Treasures of Darkness, and hidden Riches of secret Places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy Name, am the God of Israel.* Thus, I say, he allows

lows the Church and People of God to be brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance, that his Hand may be seen in giving the same, that his glorious Sovereignty may be known; that he may manifest to the World that he is *Israel's* own God, in raising them up when brought low; for, *when the Lord builds up Zion, he shall appear in his Glory.*

The 4th and last Reason I shall assign, why the Church and People of God are brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance, is, that he may purify and refine the Daughter of *Zion*. She must go even to *Babylon*. Why? It is just that she may be purified and refined in *Babylon*; that she may be purified in *Babylon*; that her Dross may be removed in *Babylon*. To this Purpose you have a remarkable Word in the 13th Chapter of the Prophecies of the Prophet *Zechariah*, and there the last Verse, *And I will bring the third Part through the Fire, and will refine them as Silver is refined, and will try them as Gold is tried. They shall call on my Name, and I will hear them. I will say, It is my People; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.* For this End and Purpose, I say, he sees meet to bring his People even to *Babylon*, that he may purify and refine them. Why, hereby his Church is reformed, and the Dross separated from the true Metal. The Lord makes such a Time, and such a Mean, a manifesting Time and Mean. My Friends, there are many of you, who are flocking to Communions now, who, if the Lord bring his Church into *Babylon*, I am afraid there will be sad Discoveries of you; Christ, it may be, will have a thin Backing then, in respect of what is now, tho' Christ will never want a Backing. For these and many such Reasons it is, that the Church and People of God, the Daughter of *Zion*,
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are ordinarily brought into extreme Straits before Deliverance come. But

I proceed to the 3^d general Head in the Method, which was, to observe some of the remarkable Deliverances which the Lord gives to the Daughter of Zion, when she is brought to *Babylon*, or to these extreme Straits and Difficulties.

I only offer these few Thoughts concerning this Deliverance. In the *first* Place, this Deliverance which he gives to the Daughter of Zion, his Church and People, as to its Nature, it is a spiritual Deliverance, such a Deliverance as all who have received the Spirit of Adoption, do look out for, and earnestly desire; and as it is a spiritual Deliverance as to the Nature of it, so it is a spiritual Deliverance in respect of the Means by which it is brought about. What then are the primary Means by which it is brought about, by which the Lord gives it? Why, it is by the Power and Spirit of Christ: *Not by Might nor by Power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.* When the Lord comes to deliver his Church and People from mystical *Babylon*, How shall the Deliverance be brought about? Why, you have the Answer, *2 Thess. ii. 8. The Lord shall consume him with the Spirit of his Mouth, and shall destroy him with the Brightness of his Coming. With the Spirit of his Mouth;* that is, just the Word of the Gospel accompanied with his holy Spirit, giving a glorious Manifestation of the Son of God in a Gospel Dispensation. *With the Brightness of his Coming,* that is, there shall be such a bright Manifestation of the wonderful Person of Christ in the Gospel-Dispensation, that the blinded Nations shall give over wondring after the Beast, and shall look upon this great Sight with Wonder and Praise. There is a Vail drawn over
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the Glory of the Person of Christ by *Babylon* at this Day, and so *Babylon* shall be destroyed, and the Church and People of God delivered, just by a bright supernatural Display of the Glory of the Person of Christ in the Dispensation of the Gospel carried home to Sinners by the holy Spirit. And thus, I say, it is a spiritual Deliverance, as to the Nature of it, and the Means by which it is brought about.

A 2^d Thought I offer concerning this Deliverance, which he gives his Church and People when brought to extreme Straits, is, That as it is, as to its Nature, a spiritual Deliverance, so the Way and Manner in which he brings about this Deliverance, is, by pouring out his Spirit upon his Church and People. If it be asked, How long is it till the Daughter of *Zion* be delivered? You have the Answer, which also points out the Manner of it, *Isa.* xxxii. 15. *Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the Wilderness be a fruitful Field, and the fruitful Field be counted for a Forest.* The Lord works Deliverance for his Church and People, when the Spirit comes down like Dew upon Mount *Zion*: when that Promise hath its Accomplishment, *Hosea* xiv. 5. *I will be as the Dew to Israel; he shall grow as the Lilly, and cast forth his Roots as Lebanon.* The Lord works Deliverance for his Church and People, when that Word of Grace, *Isa.* xlv. 3, 4, 5. is accomplished, *I will pour Water upon him that is thirsty, I will pour Floods upon the dry Ground, I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine Offspring.* What shall be the Effect? Why, it shall be Deliverance to the Daughter of *Zion*: For they shall spring up as among the Grass, as Willows by the Water-Courses. One shall say, *I am the Lord's*, and another shall call himself by the Name of *Jacob*, and another

another shall subscribe with his Hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the Name of Israel. O then, Sirs, when the Spirit is thus poured out from on high, they shall go to Zion, as it is said of the returning Captives, *Jer. l. 4, 5. In those Days, and in that Time, saith the Lord, the Children of Israel shall come, they and the Children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God; they shall ask the Way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward, &c.* The Time of the Church's Deliverance it is a weeping Time; a Time of weeping for the great Dishonours done to the Head of the Church, by the Sins of the Members of the Church; then they look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him; there is a Going, and a Weeping as they go: But as it is a weeping Time, so it is a rejoicing Time. These are not inconsistent; we see it was a rejoicing Time to the returning Captives, as well as a weeping Time to them, *Psalms cxxvi. 1, 2, 3. When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream: Then was our Mouth filled with Laughter, and our Tongue with Singing: Then said they among the Heathen, The Lord hath done great Things for them; the Lord hath done great Things for us, whereof we are glad.* But then, as it is a weeping Time, and a rejoicing Time, so a Time of Deliverance to the Daughter of Zion; it is a covenanting Time. When the Daughter of Zion is delivered from *Babylon* it is a covenanting Time, as in that forecited 50th of *Jeremiah*, and 5th Verse, *Come, (say Israel and Judah) and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, that shall never be forgotten.* It is a Time of taking hold of God's Covenant of Grace, of taking hold of the Head of the Covenant of Grace, of taking hold of him who is the All and in all of the Covenant of Grace, who is given to be the Covenant of the People, who is gi-

ven to be God's Salvation to the Ends of the Earth; and, in consequence of this taking hold of God's Covenant of Grace, of him who is the Head and Surety of the Covenant of Grace, there is a Joining themselves to the Lord in a Covenant of Duty, to keep his Judgments and Statutes, and to hearken to his Voice. It is a Time when they vow and swear Subjection to the King of *Zion*. I might tell you, upon this Head, were I to insist, how that, when the Lord, by Means of the Preaching of the Gospel, did deliver the Church of *Scotland* from Antichristian *Babylon*, when, by the Blowing of the Silver Trumpet of the glorious Gospel, he made the Walls of *Babylon* to fall in *Scotland*, just like the Walls of *Jericho* by the Sounding of Rams Horns, then he so remarkably appeared against Antichrist, that he led our Fathers the Length of a solemn Avouching of the Lord to be their God; so that that Time of Deliverance was a Time of solemn Covenanting. I might also shew that it has been the Practice of the Churches of *Germany*, *France*, and others, in such a Time, to devote themselves to the Lord in a Covenant of Duties. Such a Time has been a Time of these Nations saying, *Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant never to be forgotten*; wherein the Nations have said, *Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths*. But, not to insist,

In the 3^d Place, another Thought I offer, with reference to the Deliverance of his Church and People, when brought into extreme Straits, is, That he delivers her in a most surprising Way and Manner: *Thou shalt even go to Babylon*. Strange! What to do at *Babylon*? Why, *There shalt thou be delivered*. Who would expect Deliverance in *Babylon*? Well, but there thou shalt be delivered. This was surprising

prising to the Church of old, as is intimated in that forecited 126th *Psalms*, and 1st Verse, *When the Lord turned again the Captivity of Zion, we were like Men that dream.* We could not believe it; we were like to take it for a Dream. it came so surprisingly to Hand in such a surprising Place, even in *Babylon*. As the Lord delivers his Church and People in a surprising Way and Manner, even in *Babylon*, so we may notice here, that the Instruments the Lord gives the Deliverance by are also surprising. The Lord raised up *Cyrus* King of *Persia*, as an Instrument for the Deliverance of his Church, from *Babylon*. Who would have expected Deliverance from such an Aïgh? He casts down the *Babylonish* Empire, and sets up the *Persian*. Why is all this? Just for *Jacob* his Servant's Sake, and *Israel* his EleËt; just that *Cyrus* might be the Instrument of Deliverance to his People; both in an unlikely Season and by an unlikely Instrument, that the Work might be seen to be of God. I may tell you here, Sirs, that when God delivered his Church and People in these Lands out of Antichristian *Babylon*, he did it both in an unlikely Season, and by an unlikely Instrument. As to the Time and Season of it, it was just when Darkness and Tyranny were arrived at their greatest Height and Degree. As to the Instrument, why, it was just by opening the Eyes of a poor blind Fri-er, (*Luther*) in spiriting him to preach against *Babylon*; and so, by one Instrument after another, he carried on his Work in Spite of all Opposition from Hell or Earth. Some of you know what a great and extreme Strait this Church was brought into, when God appeared in the Year 1638. and how unexpected the Deliverance was, both as to the Season and Instruments, is very well known: By the Instrumentality of some poor Instruments he tum-
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bled down Antichristian Prelacy, turned us to himself, made us join ourselves to the Lord by solemn national Engagements, and made Persons of all Ranks say, *I am the Lord's*. Again, How surprising was the Deliverance God wrought for his Church and People in these Lands, when they were brought to the greatest Extremity in the Year 1688. fifty Years ago? If we consider the History of that Time we will find the Deliverance was most surprising, both as to the Season when, and Instrument by whom it was brought about. Why, it was in a Time when these Lands were threatned with a Deluge of Popery, when a Popish Sword was drawn, and ready to be sheathed in the Bowels of the Inhabitants of these Lands: And as to the Instrument of that Deliverance, Who would thought that God should have sent to another Land for an Instrument, by whom he would bring back our Captivity, as he then did, when he brought our late Sovereign King *William* from *Holland*, to banish a Popish Tyrant from the Throne of *Britain*? Was it not surprising? Thus, we say, God delivers his Church and People, when brought into extreme Straits, in a most surprising Way and Manner.

I shall only add, on this Head, in the 4th and last Place, that the Deliverance he gives to his Church and People, when brought into extreme Straits, it is in a Manner becoming the great Deliverer, becoming himself; it is in such a Manner as he himself will be seen in it. I shall not here enlarge, having hinted at this formerly, only, in a Word, when he delivers the Daughter of *Zion* from the Daughter of *Babylon*, it is in such a Way and Manner, as that it may be said, *That their Sword did not get them the Land, neither did their Arm save them, but his Right-Hand, and his holy Arm, and the Light of his*

his Countenance alone, that works the Salvation. It is in a Manner becoming himself.

I shall not insist farther on the doctrinal Part. I come to conclude the whole in an Use of Information, Consolation and Exhortation.

I shall be short, may the Lord assist us in the Use of this Doctrine: It was with Difficulty I entred upon this Subject, but another I could not think upon. Let us then have our Eyes to him in the Use and Improvement of this Doctrine.

Is it so, then, that the Church and People of God are brought into the greatest Extremity, that their Deliverance may be the more conspicuous and glorious? Then, 1st. for Information. In a short Word, be informed of the present Situation of the Church and People of God. I shall read you a Question upon this Use of the Doctrine, together with its Answer. You have it in the 21st of *Isaiab*, and 11th and 12th Verses of that Chapter, *The Burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, What of the Night? Watchmen, What of the Night? If you enquire at me, Watchman, What of the Night, I answer unto you just in the Words of the Spirit of God, The Morning cometh, and also the Night. The Morning of a Deliverance to his Church shall come, but yet, in the mean Time, know that the Night goes before the Morning. We have at this Day, in a great Measure, a Night of it, but the Night will be darker yet, before the Morning come; the Night goes before the Morning: Therefore the Prophet, in this Word, gives them to know, that tho' it was Night when the Call was given, What of the Night? Yet it should be darker, for some of it was to come: The Morning cometh, and also the Night. And, my Friends, tho' the Night is dark upon the Churches of Christ at present, tho' it be now a Night of*
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Withering, a Night of Error, a Night of Back-sliding, a Night of Falling away from the Lord, yet, Sirs, tho' the Night is dark, I am afraid the darkest of the Night is not yet come. Why, say you, Can the Night be darker? Can the Case of the Church be worse than it is just now, under the weary Scatterings there are among the People of God, under the Heart-overwhelming Breakings there are among the People of God, under the sad Witherings and Decays that take Place among the People of God? Yea, Sirs, the Night may be darker yet; the Daughter of *Zion* may not only go out of the City, but dwell in the Field, and go even to *Babylon*, before she be delivered. I think our Text is very expressive of our present Situation in this Land, *Thou shalt go forth out of the City, and thou shalt dwell in the Field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon, &c.* I say, our Text is much expressive of our Case; as for Instance, Are we not made to go out of the City? Are we not cast out of the Bosom of the present established Church by their iniquous Acts and Procedures? But then, tho' we are made to go forth out of the City, we are not yet wholly made to dwell in the Field, not yet deprived of our sacred Solemnities, for we have had Occasion to see, in this Place, the solemn sacred Symbols of our Lord's broken Body and shed Blood set before us; but as this Ordinance has been dispensed in a witnessing Congregation, in a Congregation who are by Profession gone forth out of the City, on their Way to dwell in the Field, why, in so far the Text is expressive of our present Situation; and, before the Deliverance come, we may be deprived of Occasions of this Nature, made to dwell in the Field, yea, brought even to *Babylon*. We are not yet
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under the Feet of an Antichristian Party in *Babylon*, but, ere all be done, we may even go to *Babylon*. We are as yet privileged with the Standard of a *publick Testimony* for the Doctrine, Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of *Scotland*: However weak and worthless some of us are to put our Hand to it, yet it is a standing Testimony for the Cause and Interest of Christ, whatever Way a corrupt Generation may look upon it: But, Sirs, before all be done, the Standard of a publick Testimony may altogether fall to the Ground in this Land. I shall not determine the Question anent that dismal Event we have in the 11th Chapter of the *Revelation*, concerning the Killing of the Witnesses, whether it be past, or to come. Great Men have differed in their Opinions. Some have thought that Event was brought about at the Reformation by *Luther*; they think the Killing of the Witnesses respected that Time. Others think it will fall in with the last fatal Stroke that shall be given unto an Antichristian Party, which shall usher in the Glory of the latter Times; and that, immediately before that, there shall be a Deluge of Popery, a general Killing of the Witnesses, a general Falling of a Testimony for Christ; I say, I shall not determine this Question; I shall only remark two or three Things farther upon this Use, for our Information with reference unto all the Churches of Christ at this Day, and particularly with reference unto the Church of *Scotland*, which gives Ground to think that we shall be sent even to *Babylon* before a Deliverance shall be given unto us.

First, I remark, That when an universal and general Apostasy and Tyranny doth prevail in any reformed Church, it threatens we shall go even to *Babylon*

Babylon before we be delivered : And how far this has been and is the Case with these Churches called *Reformed*, any who are acquainted with the History of them may judge. Why, the *Arian* and *Pelagian* Heresies have so raged in the Churches abroad, that they just paved a Way for the Man of Sin, and tended to make Antichrist mount the Throne ; and so much do these prevail in those Churches, which at least have the Name of Reformed and Protestant Churches, together with the prevailing of Antichristian Tyranny among them, that they bode fair for our going even unto *Babylon*, before a Deliverance come. If any ask the Reason why the reformed Churches are so dreadfully fallen under the Feet of Antichristian Tyranny, the Spirit of God gives the Answer of this Question, 2 *Thess.* ii. 10, 11, 12. *Because they received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved : For this Cause God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie ; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness.* This ushered in the Revelation of Antichrist, and this paved a Way for that dismal Apostasy from the Christian Faith and Profession, which takes Place at this Day in the Churches of Christ, and in *Scotland* in particular.

In the 2^d Place, I remark, That when an universal Degeneracy prevails among all the reformed Churches, in Practice as well as in Principle, it threatens that the Daughter of *Zion*, shall go even to *Babylon* before she be delivered. How far this is the Case with us, let any thinking Person judge ; the Truth is not received in the Love of it ; the Glory of Christ is darkned and veiled ; Men despise the Grace of God. I think there is nothing
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more threatens us than an Inundation of Popery at this Day ; why, already the Land is overspread with a fearful Overflow of Deism and Atheism, and of many corrupt Doctrines subversive of the pure Truths of the Gospel of Christ : And does not this bode an Inundation of Popish Darkness, that we shall be sent even to *Babylon* before we be delivered ? And withal it bodes very ill, that there is such a Fainting with respect unto a *publick Testimony* for Christ, and the Truths of Christ. Is it not lamentable and strange, we desire to speak it with Grief, that the present Church are so far from lifting up a particular Testimony for the particular Truths that are impugned and denied in the Day and Time wherein we live, that they are with Might and Main endeavouring to run down and oppose the Testimony that we have, under the good Conduct of our God, been directed to lift up for the Truth of Christ, and against a Deluge of Error and Defection from the Truth and Cause of God ? Yea, they are come the Length of slaying and running down such as are minding to own this Mite of a Testimony for Christ. But what is the Matter of running down us ? What tho' we be run down, providing the Truths of Christ, the Rights and Prerogatives of Christ, were maintained ? Let our Name and Reputation and all go, but let Christ's Name and Fame be exalted and set on high. Sirs, I know not if ever I had Occasion to speak in Christ's Name to so many of his scattered Flock at once ; allow me, for I must tell you, that the Daughter of *Zion*, the Church and People of God, ought not to neglect any publick free Testimony for the Truths of Christ, and against the Indignities done to him and his Cause. I think it is Matter of Lamentation, and it calls aloud

for Mourning at this Day, that, when the Banner of a Testimony is lifted up, so few gather to it, and so many are endeavouring to bear it down : It is Matter of Lamentation, and calls aloud for Mourning, Sirs, that the Sins of former Times must be extenuated, covered and palliated : It has a threatenng Aspect, that we will not lament our own nor our Fathers Iniquities, and return to the Lord. This would say that we shall go even to *Babylon* before we be delivered. I have observed likeways with Regret how many Professors, through the different Corners of *Scotland*, in the Year 1732. came with their Testimonies before the Church Judicatures of this Land, remonstrating and reclaiming against the violent Intrusions made upon the Heritage of God : They would have been then content to have seen a *publick Testimony* lifted up for Christ, and his Truth and Cause, but, alas, what is become of some of them now ! I fear, instead of that former Zeal whereby they were acted, a *Latitudinarian* Principle prevails with them, they have got over their former Strictness, and can fall in with a boundless Toleration for all Sorts of Religion, which will be introductive of of all Sorts of Looseness and Profanity : The Hedge of Government is taken down at this Day, and the Daughter of *Zion* lies open to the wild Boars of the Forest to devour her, and the wild Beast of the Field to waste her. I warn you, in the Name of the Lord, whoever you be that give Countenance and Assistance to the taking down this Hedge, tho' you were the Signet on his right Hand, you shall smart for it ; you shall smart for your opposing a Testimony for the Government of Christ's House in this covenanted Land : You are blinded as to the Cause of Christ at this Day ;

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and therefore it is, that you are like the Heath in the Desert, that does not see when Good comes, and you do not observe the Operation of his Hand. And is not this a threatening Sign we shall go even to *Babylon* before we be delivered? I shall not insist farther upon this Use;

But I come, 2^{dly}. To drop a few Words by Way of Consolation.

If it be so, as you have heard, that the greatest Extremity of the Church makes Way for a glorious Deliverance unto her, then hence see for our Comfort a Bow in the Church's darkeſt Cloud. Tho' the Daughter of *Zion* should go forth out of the City, tho' she should dwell in the Field, tho' she should go even to *Babylon*, yet there shall she be delivered, there the Lord shall redeem her from the Hands of her Enemies: Tho' she should be in Pain, and labour to bring forth, like a Woman in Travail, yet all her Pangs and sore Throws, they are all big with a glorious Deliverance, a glorious Deliverance will be the happy Issue of them all: *Therefore fear not, Worm Jacob, and fear not, Israel my Servant.* Let not the Lord's People be too much cast down, let them not mourn as those that have no Hope, saying, *Our Bones are dried, our Hope is lost, and we are cut off for our Parts.* Let Faith see Comfort to *Zion*, so long as *Zion's* King remains. Tho' she should be brought even to *Babylon*, yet there she shall be delivered; her greatest Extremity will make Way for a most glorious Delivery unto her. Thus we say there is a Bow in the Church's darkeſt Cloud. Hence we find the Prophet saying, in the 4th of *Micah*, from the 11th Verse to the Close of the Chapter, *Now also many Nations are gathered against thee, that say, Let her be defiled, and let our Eye look upon Zion; but they know not the Thoughts of the Lord.* These Enemies of *Zion*, they know
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not the Thoughts of the Lord, what Good the Lord intendeth to bring out of their Ill-will to *Zion*; they know not the Thoughts of the Lord, what the Lord is about to do with *Zion*. When *Zion* is brought even to *Babylon*, then *Zion* is looked upon by her Enemies as in a very desperate Case and Condition, then the Daughter of *Babylon* apprehends she hath got her Will of *Zion*. Why, they know not the Thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his Counsel: Their Design is the Destruction of *Zion*, but the Design of the Lord, in all this, is a most glorious Deliverance to *Zion*; and so it is added in this Place, *Therefore he shall gather them as the Sheaves into the Floor*, namely, the Enemies of *Zion*. What then, *Arise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will make thine Horn Iron, and I will make thy Hoofs Brass, and thou shalt beat in Pieces many People, and I will consecrate their Gain unto the Lord, and their Substance unto the Lord of the whole Earth.* Up your Hearts then, O Friends of *Zion*! Sirs, I must tell you, they have a terrible Party to deal with who meddle with the Daughter of *Zion* to her Hurt; for tho' her Husband frown upon her, yet he will return to her with loving Kindness; tho' *Zion's* God should give her the Brim of the Cup to drink, yet her Enemies shall be made to drink the bitter Dregs of that Cup before all be done; yea, I say, the Enemies of *Zion* shall drink the very bitter Dregs of the Cup ere all be done. Why then, *Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Zion. Rejoice in the Lord, ye Righteous; and again, I say, Rejoice.* Surely you have good Reason so to do. It is a noble Ground of Encouragement, that *Zion's* Extremity makes Way for her Delivery; the more her Trouble is increased, the more remarkable will her Deliverance be; the sharper the Shower is, it will be the shorter. *Zion*
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in this Land, when brought to *Babylon*, will have a sharp Hour, but a short Hour. *Thou shalt go even unto Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered.* Faint not, then, ye Friends of our glorious *Immanuel*, tho' you should go even to *Babylon*. Tho' *Zion*, the Daughter of *Zion*, should go even to *Babylon*, there she shall be delivered. Mourn not as those who have no Hope, for *Zion's God* reigneth: *Thy God, O Zion, reigneth to all Generations*; and thy God, *O Zion*, will give thee Deliverance when in *Babylon*. *Thou shalt go even to Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered.*

I come, 3dly. to conclude this Subject in a Word of Exhortation.

Is it so, as you have been hearing, that the Daughter of *Zion* shall even go to *Babylon*, that the State of the Church is like to be darker yet? Why, then, my first Exhortation to you is, when the Daughter of *Zion* is under a Cloud, and the Night like to be darker and darker, then let me exhort you all to make sure an Interest in Christ, and in that spiritual Redemption from the Tyranny of Sin, Satan and the World, that is purchased by the Lord Christ. This is the best Preparative for meeting with the dark and cloudy Day, an Interest in Christ, and the Redemption purchased by him from the Bondage and Tyranny of Sin and Satan; every one of us by Nature are under the Bondage and Tyranny of the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience. Ye are every one of you still under the Power of Sin, who are Strangers to Christ, and so consequently under the Curse of the Law, under the Sentence of a broken Covenant of Works. And I must tell you, Sirs, that, in this everlasting Gospel,

spel, Redemption is published, a purchased Redemption is published unto you. I publish and proclaim this Redemption, this spiritual Liberty and Freedom through the Blood of Christ, to every captive Sinner in all this vast Assembly. I publish and proclaim this Redemption and Freedom to every bound Captive hearing me this Day. I tell you, in his Name, it is a Redemption for you; if you be a Captive in Bonds, hear the Proclamation the Spirit of God makes of it in the 61st of *Isaiah*, and 1st Verse, *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good Tidings to the Meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim Liberty to the Captives, and the Opening of the Prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord, &c.* O, if the Lord Christ would be pleased to proclaim this Redemption among you this Day, not in Word only, but with Power, and in the holy Ghost, Liberty to the Captives! O captive Sinner, who ever thou art, in thy natural State thou art in Captivity and in Bonds, a Bond-Slave to Sin, a Bond-Slave to Satan! Why, we tell you good Tidings of great Joy, to you is proclaimed Liberty and Freedom, Redemption is proclaimed unto thee. Thus saith the Lord, To you, O Prisoner, to you, O dark and dead Sinner, go forth and shew yourselves; shew yourselves to be Sinners needing a Saviour; shew yourselves to the Saviour, to the Redeemer, to him who is the mighty God, mighty to save you, the Lord of Hosts able to save you, the merciful God willing to save you: *Thus saith the Lord, I that speak in Righteousness am mighty to save, Isa. lxiii. 1.* Mighty to save from the Tyranny and Power of Satan; mighty to save from the Tyranny and Power of Unbelief; mighty to
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save from the prevailing Evils in thy Heart, let them be never so great, never so strong; he is a mighty and strong Redeemer, a Redeemer not only by Price, but also by Power; he paid a Price of infinite Worth and Value for you, and will not you come and take Salvation from him? He is a powerful Redeemer, he hath an Arm that is full of Power, an omnipotent Arm, that can with one Stroke (so to speak) break asunder the strongest Gates of Brass, and cut in Pieces the strongest Bars of Iron. He is not only willing, but *able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them.* Behold, Sirs, on this last Day of the Feast, our Lord Jesus stands and cries, O Prisoners, go forth and shew yourselves! O Captives, go forth out of *Babylon!* Hasten, hasten, hasten; flee out of *Babylon*, escape for thy Life; flee out of the *Babylon* of a natural State, it is the City of Destruction; hasten, flee for your Lives, flee to a Saviour, flee to a Redemer; he is standing (so to speak) with Arms wide open to receive you; the Arms of his Love are wide open to receive you, the Arms of his Mercy and Grace are wide open to receive you; hasten, flee into the City of Refuge for thy Life: The Arms of the Saviour are stretched out to embrace you, with God's Welcome, with the Welcome of God, Father, Son and holy Ghost. O then, Child of the Devil, come and be the Child of God! O Swearer, come and speak the Language of *Canaan*, the heavenly Dialect, the pure Language of the City above! O Servant of Satan, come and be the Servant of the living God! Thou art yet out of Hell, and whilst thou art out of Hell, thou hast Access to a Saviour, Access to a Redeemer. O filthy Sinner, come and be washed from

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from all thine Idols; tho' thou hast lien among the Pots, and be as black as Hell with the Stain of Sin, yet come, thou shalt appear *as the Wings of a Dove, whose Wings are covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold.* What should hinder thy Coming to him, who is a Redeemer by Price and Power, one that hath infinite Power to bring thee, to draw thee, to lead thee, to guide thee? O who can speak forth the Glory of this Redeemer, the infinite Excellency of this Redeemer! O that some of this Company, that never yet knew this Redeemer, that are in the *Babylon* of a natural State, would this Day take hold of his Grace proclaimed in this Gospel, and would by Faith apprehend proclaimed Liberty, Liberty to Captives, and the Opening of the Prisons to them that are bound.

This Exhortation being to all in general; but to Strangers, to such as have no saving Interest in Christ in particular, I must therefore add a Word, by Way of Motive and Excitement, to fall in with the Word of Exhortation. Consider then, O Sinner, to stir you up to make sure an Interest in Christ, that the Lord is preaching now in a Word of Grace and Promise to you, but the Lord knows how soon he may send the Daughter of *Zion*, his Church and People, to *Babylon*, and give us a Famine, not of Bread nor of Water, but of the Word of God; and O what shall become of you, in the Day of Visitation, who have no Interest in Christ! O Sirs, we know not how soon the Lord may be provoked to say, *I will whet my glittering Sword, my Hand shall take hold of Vengeance, for the Lord hath a Sacrifice.* Where? Not in *Bozrah*, not in the Land of *Idumea*; but in the Church of *Scotland*, among all the Churches, for their woful Apostasy from God, and in treacherous

treacherous *Scotland* among the rest, Gospel-despising *Scotland*, sinning *Scotland*, Covenant-breaking *Scotland*, Christ-despising *Scotland*. O Sirs, how justly may he whet his glittering Sword amongst you, against you, for your Iniquity? And if he cause his Church and People in this Land to go forth out of the City, and to dwell in the Field, and send them even to *Babylon*, O how sad will thy Case be, thou who art a Stranger to Christ, to have an angry God, a God out of Christ meeting thee! O therefore accept of offered Liberty, of an offered Saviour, and offered Salvation through him, as ye were hearing on *Saturday*! *Now is the accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation: To-day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts:* For to you, even to you, O Sinner, is the Word of this Salvation sent. Receive it, Sirs, with particular Application, and Christ in it; and so you will have the best Preparative for, and the best Preservative in a stormy Day, in the dark and cloudy Day.

In the 2d Place, let me address myself in a Word of Exhortation, to you, in an especial Manner, who profess the Name of Christ, who profess to be the Friends and Witnesses of Christ. And

My Exhortation to you is, O see to it, and take care that you be well rooted in Christ Jesus. Is it a Time of Darkness with the Church? Is it Night with the Church and People of God? And have we Ground to apprehend that the Night may grow darker yet before the Morning come? Is the Church and People of God, the Daughter of *Zion*, made to go forth out of the City? Are we threatned to be made to dwell in the Field, and to be sent even to *Babylon* before Deliverance come? Why, then, O Professor, be concerned to be well rooted in Christ, well rooted in the Truths and

Cause of Christ. We find the Apostle exhorts to this Duty in the 2d Chapter of his Epistle to the *Colossians*, and there the 6th and 7th Verses of that Chapter, *As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the Faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving.* We exhort you, take home with you that Word of Exhortation, *Be rooted and built up in Christ.* It is a great Matter, Sirs, to be rooted in him; be rooted in Christ as the Branch in the Vine, as the Branch is in the Root. What is that Profession of yours, Man, Woman, without this, but an empty Profession, an empty Shell without a Kernel, an empty Shadow without a real Substance. What signifies all your publick and glaring Profession, if you be not rooted in Christ? What signifies your publick Religion, Professor, who are not rooted in Christ? Why, I tell you, it is but a gross Delusion if you are not rooted in Christ. I never like these Folks Religion, Sirs, that begins first with the Publick. Be concerned to be first rooted in Christ by Faith, and then a solid Concern for the declarative Glory of God, the Cause and Interest of Christ, will immediately follow in its due Order. That Concern for the Glory of God which flows not from Faith's Views of the Glory of *Immanuel's* Person, is not to be regarded. Those who are concerned in a right Way and Manner for the Publick; they are such Persons who have first come to the Lord Jesus, who have united with him by Faith, and so are rooted in him. Sirs, even tho' there be some amongst you who have come the Length of adhering to a publick Testimony for the born-down Cause of Christ at this Day, yet are you not rooted in Christ. Why, Sirs, What will this your Adherence signify if you
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be not rooted in Christ Jesus, by his Spirit taking hold of you, and drawing you to him, and Faith's Outgoing of the Soul from all Things in a World to him alone? My Friends, try the Matter, then; Faith in Christ, and a faithful Witnessing for Christ, go together: And if any please themselves with an Adherence to a Testimony for Christ and his Cause, without seeking to be rooted in him, and built up in him, their Naughtiness may be shortly discovered, for all the Length they have gone: You have but gone with the Footmen, how shall you contend with Horses? And what will you do in the Swellings of *Jordan*? Stay till you come there, which may be shortly, and then shall you be discovered who are not rooted in Christ. Let none think we speak this to discourage the exercised Believer, or to discourage the owning of a Testimony. This is a plain Duty, which the Lord is calling for at the Hands of all his Servants and People at this Day, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. But, Sirs, we want you to own a Testimony for Christ, from Faith's Views of the Glory of Christ. Seek then to be rooted in Christ. O it is a great Matter to be rooted in Christ, to be built up and established in Christ. There is a Gathering together among you in praying Societies at this Day; it is well it is so; it is good for the Lord's People to be thus employed in such a Time as this; it is good to be meeting for Prayer and Christian Conference; tho' it is a Practice that is run down by the polite Wits of the Age, yet it is a Duty warranted by the Lord, *Mal. iii. 16. They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkned and heard it, &c.* Thus the Duty is good, but, Sirs, we would have you to consider, that your being in
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a Society will not do the Business, unless you be rooted in Christ: *For in that Day many will say, Lord, Lord, we have eaten and drunk in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets; to whom he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are, depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.* No doubt these prayed and also conferred with others about the Matters of God; therefore Professors, Members of Christian Societies, study to be rooted in Christ; for Folks to meet together in Societies, and yet to be Strangers to Christ, is dangerous. Study above all to be rooted in Christ; do not sit down upon any profost Adherence unto a Testimony for Christ; do not sit down upon your praying and conversing one with another, seek to be rooted and built up in Christ, otherways, I testify unto you, ye have no Part in Christ, all will be useles to you if ye are not rooted in Christ: You will be taken by the great Husbandman and thrown into Hell-Fire, as Fuel to the Flame of vindictive Justice, unless you be rooted and built up in Christ.

I shall now conclude this Discourse with a few Directions by Way of Motive to excite you to fall in with the Word of Exhortation.

In the *first* Place, study a close, humble and needy Dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ. O be humble! A humble Christian is a rare Christian. Away with a proud Christian! Meekness is among the very first Lessons of Christianity. *If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me, saith our Lord.* O seek to be humble and self-denied! Sirs, it is just the Ornament of a Christian to be denied to himself. Again,

In the *2d* Place, If you would be rooted in Christ as ye should, study a close, humble and needy Dependence on him in whom all your Springs

are ; so let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly. Hear what he himself adviseth for your Encouragement, John v. 7. *If ye abide in me, and my Words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.* If ye ask, Where is the Word to be found which must abide in you ? I answer, It is to be found in the Bible which you have put in your Hands. In what Part of it ? say you. I answer, In every Part of it ; just in all the Bible. What think ye of the Scriptures of the Old Testament ? Why, they are just the Word of God, as well as those of the New. The whole Scriptures are given to be the Standard of Truth for the resolving of Controversies, to be the infallible Rule of Faith and Practice to his Church in all Ages and Periods of the same, until Time gives Place to Eternity ; when the Church shall be arrived at her triumphant State ; and then no more shall the Bible be needful. We advise you, then, to abide not only by the Word of the Prophets, but also by the Commandments of the Apostles, as you have it, 2 Pet. iii. 1, 2. *This second Epistle (Beloved) I now write unto you, in both which I stir up your pure Minds by Way of Remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour.* What are the Words ye are to be mindful of ? You have them in that 2d Verse the Words which were spoken by the holy Prophets under the Old Testament, and the Commandments of the Apostles of Christ under the New. These are the Words of Christ which we are called to lay up in our Hearts, that we may not sin against him.

3dly. If ye would be rooted in Christ, in a shaking Day and Time, I advise you, next to
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your Bibles, to make Use of our Confession of Faith. We have Reason, Sirs, to bless God who so remarkably directed the Compilers of our excellent Confession of Faith. What are Confessions of Faith; Sirs? Why, they are the publick Confessions of the Churches concerning the divine Truths they receive and believe, in Opposition to the gross Errors vented in these Dregs of Time, in Opposition to the Indignities done to the Truth of God contained in his Word. Read our Confession of Faith, and there you will see the Truths of God drawn out of the Word of God in an orderly and distinct Manner, for our Instruction, Edification and Establishment in the Truth. Likewise I recommend it to you to read and consider the Form of Presbyterial Church-Government, Directory for Family-Worship, Sum of saving Knowledge, and Books of Discipline; all which you have along with the said Confession of Faith. It hath been observed of this Country, they can generally speak less for their Principles than Papists can do for theirs. Why, the Reason is, they are not concerned to know them, and so it comes to pass that they are so easily beaten out of them. Again,

In the 4th Place, If you would be rooted in Christ and his Truths, O then pray much for the Spirit of Christ, that he may guide you into all Truth, and that ye may be kept in the High-Way. Ye know in a dark Night Men commonly lose their Way. If it is so dark a Night, O then pray for the Leader to break up your Way! Keep your Eye upon your Leader, look to him, that he may lead in a plain Path, because of your Observers.

I am afraid I have insisted too long. I shall only add another Advice, and conclude with it.

If it is so, that the Church's greatest Extre'mity makes Way for a glorious Deliverance unto her, and that, tho' she should go even to *Babylon*, yet there shall she be delivered, then I will advise you to live in the Faith and Hopes of a glorious Delivery to the Church and People of God. Wait and pray for her Delivery; you have good Ground to hope for that happy Time, because he that has said, *Thou shalt go even to Babylon*, has also said, *There shalt thou be delivered*. What you have so good Ground to hope for, ye should be waiting for, and praying for in a Way of Faith. O cry for his Coming! Lift up a Prayer for the Remnant that is left! O cry that he may return in Mercy to *Jerusalem*, that he may hasten a Deliverance to his Church and People, whatever Way he sees meet! O plead that the Wheel of Providence may move swiftly towards the favouring of *Zion*! Cry, cry, Let the Time to favour *Zion* come, even the Time that thou hast set! O cry for a returning God, and a returning Glory! O cry for his Return to *Scotland* our native Land, for his Return to every one of us! We are all under sad Symptoms of his Anger at this Day, therefore, O lift up a Prayer for his Return! For your Encouragement, Sirs, who are concerned for his Return, we tell you; you may die in the hopeful Prospect and Faith of it, tho' you should not live to see it, and it may be, Sirs, you may live to see it: But whether ye live to see it or not, die in the Faith that that Passage of Scripture shall be made out (in this Land) which you have in the 66th of *Isaiab*, from the 10th to the 15th Verse, *Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for Joy with her, all ye that mourn for her; that ye may suck and be satisfied*

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with the Breasts of her Consolations, that ye may milk out and be delighted with the Abundance of her Glory: For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend Peace to her like a River, and the Glory of the Gentiles like a flowing Stream. Then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon her Sides, and be dandled upon her Knees: As one whom his Mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. And when ye see this your Heart shall rejoice, and your Bones shall flourish like an Herb, and the Hand of the Lord shall be known towards his Servants, and his Indignation towards his Enemies.

Now, to conclude, O may the Time to favour Zion, the set Time come! May he build up Zion, and appear in his Glory! May all his Followers be confirmed and kept in the Way of Truth, led in a plain Path in a dark Day, because of their Enemies, and kept, by the Power of God, through Faith unto Salvation.

F I N I S.

