

T. H. E.

Support of the Faithful

I N

Times of Persecution,

O R, A

S E R M O N

Preach'd in the Wilderness

T O T H E

Poor Protestants in FRANCE.

By M. Brousson, an Eminent Minister, who was broke upon the Wheel at *Montpelier*, Nov. 6. N.S. 1698.

Faithfully Translated from the French.

L O N D O N:

Printed by Tho. Snowden, for Tho. Parkhurst, at the Bible and Three Crowns, the lower end of Cheapside, near Mercers-Chappel. 1699.

*See Sermon in
the Bible*

HENRY S. BAYNES,

AUTHOR OF THE 'LIFE OF CLAUDE BROUSSON, LL.D. AND ADVOCATE OF PARLIAMENT, AFTERWARDS EVANGELIST OF THE DESERT, AND MARTYR,' 1698.

It is hop'd the Reader will not be displeas'd with the following Passages, as not altogether unsuitable to this Discourse.

True Christianity is not only the best, but the best natur'd Infruition in the World; and so far as any Church is depart- ed from good Nature, and become Cruel and Barbarous, so far it is degenerated from Christianity. [A. B. Tillotson's Ser- mons, Vol. III. 2 Edit. p. 26.]

' I have learnt from the ancient Fathers of the Church, that
' nothing is more against Religion than to force Religion, and of
' St. Paul, The Weapons of the Christian Warfare are not Car-
' nal. And great reason; for humane Violence may make Men
' counterfeit, but cannot make them believe, and is therefore fit
' for nothing but to breed Form, without, and Atheism within.
' Besides, if this means of bringing Men to embrace any Re-
' ligious where generally used (as if it may be justly used in
' in any place by those that have power, and think they have
' Truth, certainly they cannot with Reason deny, but that
' it may be used in every place, by those that have power as
' well as they, and think they have truth as well as they) what
' could follow but the maintenance perhaps of Truth, but per-
' haps only of the Profession of it in one place, and the Op-
' pression of it in a hundred? What will follow from it, but
' the preservation peradventure of Unity, but peradventure
' only of Uniformity, in particular States and Churches; but
' the immortalizing the greater and more lamentable Divisions
' of Christendom and the World? And therefore what can fol-
' low from it, but perhaps in the Judgment of Carnal Policy,
' the Temporal Benefit and Tranquility of Temporal States and
' Kingdoms, but the infinite prejudice, if not the desolation
' of the Kingdom of Christ.

The Preface.

Reader,

THE Groans of our poor distress'd Brethren in France, have for several Tears past, reached our Ears, and toucht our Hearts, and I hope many pious Souls have not failed daily, and with fervor, to commit their sad case to God, and to beg of him Support and Consolation, for so many miserable People. Our Relation to them in the Profession of the same Reformed Religion, the common Tenderness of humane Nature, and the share that we ought to have in their Sorrows, by virtue of that Precept of St. Paul, To weep with them that weep, do all oblige us to think of them with the greatest Compassion, and to pray, that either the bitter Cup may pass from them, or be sweetned with the Love of God; and that when their Tryals are encreas'd, their Faith and Patience may be so too. For the Furnace is newly heated, and the Cloud over them more thick and dismal, as will appear to any one that reads the Declaration, given at Versailles the 13th of Decemb. 1698.

Tho' these blessed Servants of God are greatly afflicted, yet they are not forsaken. They have Manna in the Desert; of which the Reader has a taste in the following Sermon. The Honesty, and Sincerity, and Love to the Souls of Men, which appears in every part of it, will make a sufficient Apology for several things that a curious Reader might expect. There is in this Discourse a warm Zeal, and an Eloquence suited to the Condition of the Preacher and his Hearers. People in deep Mourning do not affect Finery, but wear a grave solemn Dress. The Wilderness has not those Varieties that are to be found in Cities and Courts; but the Faithful, that are to be found for Righteousness sake, find there sweet Refreshments and Convolations: And John the Baptist did not starve, when he fed upon Locusts and wild Honey. A. 2. This

The

The Preface.

This Sermon was preach'd in the Wilderness by M. Brousson, and taken out of a Volume of several Sermons, Printed in Holland, and approv'd by the French Synod, held at Haerlem, in the Year 1695.

How exemplary the Conversation of this blessed Man was, how convincing his Doctrine, and how suitable to minister Consolation to his poor Brethren, as also with what admirable Zeal and Constancy he triumph'd over all Dangers, and over Death its self, will appear when his Life is publish'd, which is promised to the Publick by those that were acquainted with him, & we expect with great earnestness, as knowing many remarkable and useful things, as well as extraordinary, must be in the Life of so great a Man; who, whilst he lived, preach'd under the Cross, and died with a Patience and Constancy, suited to the cheerful Hopes that he had of a glorious Eternity; where he now rests from his Labours and his Pains, and where all his Tears are wiped away.

If this Sermon, which was translated from the Original in French, meet with acceptance, the Reader may expect more in due time; and methinks such Sermons must come with a peculiar advantage, which were preach'd by such an one, as seal'd with his Blood, the Doctrine that he taught; He sat in brightness, and has left heat and warmth behind him.

That the Reading of this Discourse may do good to many Souls, is the Prayer of,

Wm. Rogers.

London

THE

[1]

THE

Support and Confidence

OF

BELIEVERS

IN

Times of Persecution

ISAIAH XLII. 14.

Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Mortal Men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

My Beloved Brethren in Christ,

IN the 7th Chapter of *The Book of Job*, * English that Holy Man says, * *That the State appointed for Mortals upon Earth, is a State appointed of Warfare, and that their Days, are as the time to Man days of a Hireling. And 'tis so in effect, for Men spend their Time in continual Labour, Trouble and Inquietude.*

Inquietude. But if that be true, with respect to all Men in general, 'tis more peculiarly so with respect to the Faithful: For their whole Life is but one continued Combat, against the Flesh, the World, and the Devil. God makes them very often undergo very rude and severe Tryals. *Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous, says David, Psalm 34. 19.* The Days of the Faithful are few and evil, as those of the Patriarch *Jacob* of old. The Faithful are in continual Troubles and Alarums. If they were of the World, the World would love them; but because they are not of the World, the World hates and persecutes them. They are generally weak and feeble, but their Enemies are powerful and terrible, after the Flesh; and thence 'tis that the Righteous are so often oppress'd.

And the God of infinite Wisdom thinks fit it should be so, *my beloved Brethren*, in order to humble us, to reduce us from our Wandrings, to disengage us from the World, to exercise our Faith and Patience, to force us to have recourse to him in our Afflictions, and to put our Confidence in him, to make us taste of the Consolations of his Spirit, and at the same time to convince us, that his good Providence takes care of his Children in their Streights and Necessities; and, in fine, to make us admire the wonderful Deliverances he vouchsafes to give them, when they have profited by his Chastisements, and have glorified him in the time of their Tryal. And therefore now he says in our Text, *Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.*

NOW

Now to understand well the Sense of these Words and of the other Prophecies of the old Testament, we are to observe, that since the Jewish Church was the Type of the Christian, and the same things that beset the Jewish Church were to beset the Christian; we must observe, I say, that though the literal Sense of the Prophecies of the Old Testament had respect to the Church of *Israel* after the Flesh; yet their Mystical Sense relates to the Christian Church, which is *Israel* after the Spirit; and moreover, that those ancient Prophecies have their chief and full Accomplishment no where but in the Christian Church. They that take this remark along with them, as they read these ancient Prophecies, will make wonderful Discoveries of what should fall out in the Christian Church: In the general, they'll find there, that the Christians would be corrupted by Prosperity as the Jews were before them. That they would plunge themselves even in the Idolatry of the Gentiles; and that afterwards these Idolatrous Christians would for a great while oppress the Faithful Servants of God that Worship him in Purity according to his Word; but that God would relieve them at last, and deliver them out of all their Troubles. And to this purpose God speaks to his destitute People in the Verses afore my Text: *Fear thou not, (says he) for I am with thee; be not dismay'd, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my Righteousness. Behold, all they that were incens'd against thee, shall be ashamed and confounded: They shall be as Nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee:* They

B 2

They that War against thee, shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. For I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Whereupon he adds the Words of my Text, Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel.

I shall confine my self to the Mystical Sense of these Words, and only examine them as they may relate to Christians. And with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, which I have already implor'd, and do still with all my Soul, I shall consider these two things.

1. The Name God calls his Distressed People by, *Thou Worm Jacob, Men of Israel.*

2. The Consolation he gives them in this their Destitute State; *Fear not, says he, I will help thee, and thy Redeemer is the Holy one of Israel.*

God grant, my Beloved, we may all meditate on these things with due attention; to the end we may receive that Instruction and Comfort which the Spirit of God holds forth to us in these Words, and is so necessary for us in this time of Distress; wherein all that will serve God with Purity according to his word, suffer a Cruel and Bloody Persecution.

I. God

I.

God calls his People here, *Thou Worm Jacob*; or, *Jacob* thou art but a Worm. Now,

1. When God calls his People, *Jacob*; he would have us consider them all but as one Man: And in effect, all the Faithful together compose but one mystical Body, whereof Christ is the Head. They are all united by the Holy Spirit, they are all Members of one another; therefore they ought to live in perfect unity, and (like the Primitive Christians) love one another so entirely as to be but one Heart and one Soul.

2. True Christians are called *Jacob*, because they are the Posterity of *Jacob* after the Spirit, and Heirs of his Faith and Piety, and of the Promises which God made to him of old. *Jacob* parted with the food that perisheth, that he might obtain the Blessing of his Father and that of his God, together with the Heavenly enjoyments thereto annex'd. In like manner the Faithful ought to abandon all Earthly Advantages, that they may have a share in the Glory and Felicity of Heaven.

3. Believers are call'd *Jacob*, because their condition in this Life is like that of *Jacobs*. For as *Jacob* who was born after the Spirit, was heretofore Persecuted by *Esaú* his Elder Brother that was born after the Flesh: So Faithful Christians that are Christians after the Spirit, are likewise persecuted by Antichristians who are Christians after the Flesh. These wicked false Christi-

ans

ans reproach us every now and then, that we are but of Yesterday. The truth is, more Ancient than they; But with respect to our Reformation, which is our Spiritual Birth, we grant they are in a sort older than we, as *Esau* was older than *Jacob*.

But then, as I told you before, they are born after the Flesh, as *Esau* was, and we after the Spirit, as *Jacob* was; and that is the reason they persecute us. And this is no new thing: *Abel* that was born after the Spirit, was persecuted to Death by his Elder Brother *Cain* who was born after the Flesh. The same may be said of *Isaac* the Heir of the Promise, who was likewise persecuted by his Elder Brother *Ismael*, that was born after the Flesh. So likewise the Prophets of old who serv'd God with purity according to his word were persecuted by the Jewish Church when it was fallen into Idolatry. We ought not therefore to be surprized that at this time we who adore God in Spirit and in Truth according to his Commandments are in like manner persecuted by a corrupted and Idolatrous Church.

Moreover, the People of God are not simply call'd *Jacob*, but *Thou Worm Jacob*. And in effect, my Friends, we are but Worms of the Earth in the presence of our God, whose greatness knows no bounds; for he fills the Heavens and the Earth. Heaven is his Throne, and the Earth is his Footstool. We are but dust and Ashes in comparison of our great God; nay, we are less than the small dust of the Ballance. Therefore he calls us Worms, that we may always remember our misery and nothingness, that we may always humble our selves in his sight, and never violate that respect which

is due to his Sovereign Majesty. But evermore be possessed with a Religious awe in his presence.

Further, we are but Worms in comparison of our Enemies: For generally the Faithful are weak and despicable in human appearance, whereas their Enemies are powerful and formidable in the esteem of the World.

Besides, God calls his People *Men of Israel*, or *Israel* that are but Men. *Israel* you know, my Brethren, is the name God himself gave *Jacob*, when he contended with him: This holy Man hearing his Brother *Esau* was coming out against him with four Hundred Men, was put into a great consternation; therefore he passed the whole Night in Supplications and Tears. As he was alone, the Son of God in the shape of Man strove with him till break of Day; and when this Divine Person saw that he could not prevail against him, he touched the hollow of his Thigh, so that the hollow of *Jacob*'s Thigh was out of joynt as he wrestled with him; and he said, *Let me go, for the Day breaketh*: But *Jacob* answered him, *I will not let thee go except thou bless me*: And he said unto him, *what is thy Name*: And he said *Jacob*; And he said, *thy Name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel*: For as a Prince hast thou power with God and Men and hast prevailed. As we read in the 32d of *Genesis*: So again in *Hosea*, chap. 12. We read that *By his power he prevailed with the Angel; he wept and made Supplication unto him; he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us*: That is to say, he contended all the Night with his God by his Prayers and Tears; and by that means he (as it were) conquered

quered the Almighty, and obtained his Favour, Blessing and Succour; so as that he was delivered out of the astonishing danger he was in: But God thought fit his Lameness should remain, to put him in mind that he ought to humble himself continually before God; in order to obtain mercy and relief in all his necessities. So God in my Text, when he calls his Afflicted People, *Israel*; 'tis that he might make us understand that when we are benighted in Affliction, as we are at this time, and when we fear the rage and fury of our Enemies; that then it is our Duty to humble our selves before God in an extraordinary manner; to repent of all our Sins, and entirely renounce them; and to have recourse to his Mercy and Grace alone for pardon: and that we ought to strive with him continually by our Prayers and Supplications, till we have disarmed (as it were) his Almighty Arm, and obtained his Blessing and Assistance; and that for the time to come we ought always to set his fear before our Eyes, and to walk humbly with our God all the days of our Life.

'Tis for this end likewise he calls us *Men*, ye Men of *Israel*. For thereby he designs to put us in mind of the frailty of our Nature, and to make us consider that since our life is in continual danger; either by the fury of our Enemies, or by Sicknes, or by a thousand other Accidents to which we are liable; we have reason to Pray without ceasing, and to throw our selves into the Arms of our God, who alone is able to conduct and preserve us in the midst of all the dangers our Life is continually expos'd to.

II. Now

I I.

Now we are to consider the Consolation he gives his People under their Sufferings: *Fear not*, says he, *thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel*. Believers, my Friends, have several Reasons to be afraid; but 'tis the Will of God, that they have recourse to him alone upon all occasions.

1. The Devil uses all his Efforts to tempt us with the Pleasures, Riches and Vanities of the World: But then we are to beg of God without ceasing, that he lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from the evil One. And at the same time we must take care our selves to avoid the Occasions of Sin, and separate our selves from the Places and Persons that might induce us to offend God. We must also renounce the World, and mortifie our Bodies by moderation and Sobriety, according to the Words of *St. Peter*, *1 Pet. 5. 8. Be sober, be vigilant; for your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the Faith.*

Moreover, we must read and meditate on the Word of God with continual Application of Mind, and constantly pray to God for the assistance of his Holy Spirit; for 'tis by his Word and Spirit he fortifies our Faith, and 'tis by Faith we are enabled to repel all the fiery Darts of the Devil.

2. If

C

2. If our Sins terrifie us, God commands us to have recourse to his Mercy and Grace. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live.* Ezek. 33. 11. In case we are sincerely converted, so as to conceive a sacred Honour for sin, and heartily renounce all our evil Habits, and cease to do evil, and learn to do good; then the promises in *Isa. i. 18. That though our sins, be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* To this end we must heartily embrace Jesus Christ, as our Saviour, by a firm and lively Faith; for 'tis he that suffered death for us upon Earth, and now intercedes in our behalf in Heaven; 'tis he that is the *Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the World,* John i. 29.

3. If Believers are at any time afflicted with bodily Diseases, 'tis the pleasure of God, that we apply ourselves to him as the Sovereign Physician of our Bodies as well as Souls; for 'tis he alone that is able to deliver us out of all our Troubles; and has promised that all things shall work together for our good, *if we do but fear him,* and profit by his Chastisements:

4. The faithful people of God have likewise reason to be afraid of the Cheats and Disguises of False Teachers: For, as *St. Paul* says, *2 Cor. 11. 13, 14, 15. These false Apostles are deceitful Workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel,* for

for Satan himself is transform'd into an Angel of Light; therefore it is no great thing if his Ministers also be transform'd as the Ministers of Righteousness. But if Believers constantly address themselves to God for the assistance of his Holy Spirit, God will deliver them out of the Snares of these false Teachers. *My Sheep,* says Christ, *John 10. 28, 29. shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my Hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's Hand.* For this end Believers must try the Spirits, to know if they are of God. They must (like the Antient Be-reans) examine the Doctrines that are preach'd to them, to know if they agree with the Holy Scriptures. For, as *St. Paul* says, *Rom. 2. 20. the Word of GOD is the Rule of Knowledge and Truth.*

5. In fine, Believers have cause to fear the Power and Cruelty of their Enemies. Jesus Christ says in the Gospel, That the Devil is a Murderer from the beginning. The Ministers of Satan are also Lyers and Murderers like himself. When they cannot seduce and wheedle a Man into an Error, they persecute him, and use their utmost endeavour to ruin him. We read in the Scripture, That the Devil makes use of two great means to endeavour to shake the Faith of the Elect. To some he offers the Glory and Advantages of the World, as he did to our Saviour before; others he spoils of their Goods, deprives of their Children, and loads with a thousand Evils, as he did *Job.* And his Ministers use just the very same Methods. But

But as God would not have us suffer our selves to be seduced by Errors and Lies, nor to be led aside by the Honours and Riches of the World; so on the other hand he would have us stand firm and impregnable against the Power, the Injustice and Cruelty of the Enemies of the truth. He requires of us to be always ready to suffer all sorts of Evils and Miseries for his Service. 'Tis he that has given us all the good things we enjoy in the World; and therefore he expects we should be always disposed to part with them for his Glory: 'Tis he that has given us our Children; and therefore he justly requires we should submit to his will when he permits the Enemies of his Kingdom to deprive us of them: He requires us to deliver them up to the care of his wise Providence, when they stand in competition with our Duty to God. In fine, 'tis he that has given us Being, Life and Motion; and therefore he expects we should be always prepared to suffer Death for his Service, whenever he thinks fit to call us to such a Tryal.

In a word, 'tis God that has given us all things; 'tis therefore very just that we should love him above all things. He has created us for his own Glory; 'tis therefore very reasonable we should glorify him both by our Life and Death. Jesus Christ has suffered Death for us; 'tis very just then that we suffer something for the advancement of his Kingdom. Our Sins deserved the Eternal Flames of Hell; 'tis then an act of singular favour that God is contented we should but suffer a little trouble in this World for his Holy Name sake. In fine, the Glory and Happiness

pinels that he prepares for us in Heaven, is it not a sufficient recompence for all that we can lose and suffer for his Service upon Earth? *All things duly weighed, says St. Paul, I reckon the Sufferings of this present time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall be revealed in us: For this light Affliction which is but for a season, worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

But although God many times permits his People to be oppressed by reason of their Sins, yet his design is not to abandon them entirely: He only designs to make them better by his Chastisements, and to cause them to return to their God with all their Heart, and put their whole confidence in him. For upon condition we turn to him, and repent of having offended him, he also repents of having Afflicted us, and Comforts and Delivers us out of all our Distresses.

Fear not, says he in my Text, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel: for I will help you, saith the Lord. Thy Redeemer, the Holy one of Israel. The God whose assistance we implore, my Beloved Brethren, is not as the Idols of the Gentiles that can neither see, nor hear, nor stir to deliver those that invoke them. No, 'tis the Lord of Hosts, the God of Heaven and Earth, the Great and Almighty God. He that is Infinitely Good, is surely good enough to have pity on our Sufferings: He that is Infinitely Wise, is Wise enough to provide for all our necessities: And he that is Almighty cannot want Power to deliver us out of all our troubles. He is called the *Holy one of Israel*, because he is

is Holiness it self; and requires us to be Holy as he is Holy: And certainly he that is so Holy and Just, will not let go unpunished all the injuries that are done to his Glory, all the Evils that his Children are made to suffer. He promises to help us; who is it then that can hurt us? *If God be for us, who'll be against us?* He tells us he is our Redeemer, viz. our Defender and Deliverer: what reason have we then to be afraid? *The Lord, says David, Psal. 27. 1, 3. is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my Life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though a Host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.* Idolaters indeed put their confidence in Creatures; but the faithful trust in their God; he is their only Protector and Refuge. And what comfort is it to the Faithful that they have him for their Redeemer, whose Power knows no bounds: *Blessed is the Nation, says David, Psal. 33. 12. whose God is the Lord; and the People whom he hath chosen for his own Inheritance. Call upon me in the day of trouble, says our Great God, Psal. 50. 15. I will Deliver thee, and thou shalt Glorify me. Fear not, says he again, Isa. 43: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy Name, thou art mine. When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy one of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee: That is to say, I have destroyed, and will again destroy thy Enemies for the love of thee. Then he adds, Since thou wast*

most precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore I will give Men for thee, and People for thy Life; Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy Seed from the East, and gather thee from the West. I will say to the North, Give up; and to the South, Keep not back: Bring my Sons from far, and my Daughters from the ends of the Earth. That is to say, I have suffered you to be oppress'd by your Enemies, because of your sins, and to be dispersed throughout all the Earth; but when you return to me with your whole Heart, I will, in great Compassion, return to you: I will bring you back from the Places of your Exile, and establish you in the Land of your Nativity.

In effect, my Friends, how many Examples have we before our Eyes in the Holy Scriptures of the care God has in all Ages taken of his Children, and of the wonderful deliverances he has vouchsafed to give them, to the end that we may put our Confidence in him?

Jacob, when he was but young, was forc'd to leave his Father's House, and to travel all alone into a very distant Country, to avoid the fury of his Brother *Esau*, that would take away his Life. But the first Night he lay on the Road, God appear'd to him in a Dream, and told him, *Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this Land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoke to thee of.* And indeed God was always with him; he conducted him safe in his

his Journey; he blessed Him; he blessed his Labour; he blessed his Family; he brought him again into his own Country, and appeas'd his Brother's Anger.

So *Joseph*, when he was but a Youth of Seventeen Years, became the Object of the Jealousie and Hatred of his Brethren. One day as he went to see them in the Wilderness, they plotted against him to put him to death. They threw him into a deep Pit, and afterwards took him up again to sell him to the *Ishmaelites*, who carried him to *Egypt*, and sold him there for a Slave. Sometime afterwards being falsely accus'd by his Mistress, he was put in Prison, and there he lay several Years. But God at last had pity on him, deliver'd him out of his Distress, and made him Governour of all *Egypt*, then a very powerful Kingdom.

Job, who was a Holy Man, and one of the greatest Men of the East, was spoil'd of all his Goods, depriv'd of all his Children, and cover'd all over with Ulcers from the Sole of his Foot, to the Crown of his Head, insomuch that he was forc'd to lie in the Dust. In this deplorable Condition he should have received (one would think) at least some comfort from his Wife and intimate Friends. But instead of that, they only encreas'd his Affliction: For his Wife tempted him to murmur against God, that he might put an end to his Life: And his intimate Friends told him, That he must have been a Hypocrite and a Wicked Man, since God had struck him

him in so terrible a manner. But at last God was mov'd with compassion towards him; he deliver'd him out of all his Sufferings and Misery, restor'd his Health, gave as many Children as he had lost, and Wealth twice as much as he had before, and made him live a hundred and forty Years after his Tryal.

David, who was a Man according to God's own Heart, was also persecuted for a great while together by King *Saul*. He was forc'd to leave his Wife and Home, and to seek for Refuge in Deserts and Caves, and even there he was still pursued by his Enemy. He often found himself reduc'd to such Extremities, and expos'd to such evident Dangers, that he thought it impossible for him to escape. But he had always recourse to his God, and God never forsook him. He did wonders to preserve him in the midst of so many Dangers, and at last deliver'd him out of all his Troubles, and exalted him to the Throne of *Israel*.

But above all, who would not admire that wonderful deliverance, which God wrought for the three young Hebrews, whose History we read in *Daniel*, chap. 3. These three faithful Servants of God, having refus'd to prostrate themselves before the Idol which King *Nebuchadnezzar* had made, this proud and mighty Prince, that had before destroy'd *Jerusalem*, told them, that if they would not fall down and worship this Idol, he would order them to be cast into a fiery Furnace. And he adds further, *Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?* And they answered him, *Our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us out of the burning fiery Furnace; and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King*

King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the Golden Image which thou hast set up. As if they had said, We know that our God is Almighty, and able to deliver us, if it seems good in his sight; but if he thinks fit we should die for his Glory, we are all ready to submit and die. Then this proud and cruel Prince, being full of Rage and Fury, commanded that they should heat the Furnace seven times more than it was wont to be heat; and order'd the most mighty Men that were in his Army, to bind them, and cast them into the burning fiery Furnace: Which accordingly they did; but the fire consum'd those that threw them in; and, on the contrary, these three faithful Servants of God fell in the midst of the Flames, without receiving the least damage; the fire did nothing else but burn their Bonds; so that they walk'd in the midst of the Flames, without being consumed. And besides, there appear'd with them a fourth Man, whose form was like the Son of God. Whereupon this Idolatrous King being amaz'd to see so great a Miracle, made them come forth out of the Furnace, and gave glory to the God of Heaven, who had so miraculously preserv'd them in the midst of the Flames, because they had chose to lose their Lives, rather than displease their God.

So *Daniel* himself, because he continu'd to pay to God the Homage due to him, when the King by his Edict had forbid it, was cast into the Den of Lyons: But God was always with him. He shut the Mouths of those ravenous Beasts, so that they did him no hurt. And the King seeing this Miracle, commanded him to be fetch'd out of the Den, and to throw in his Enemies that accus'd him.

him, and they were immediately devour'd by the Lions.

So when the people of God heretofore groan'd under the Oppression of the *Egyptians*, God smote *Egypt* with all his *Plagues*. Nay, he slew all their First-born; and every House in *Egypt* was in Mourning, and had one died out of it. So again, when the *Egyptian Army* was in pursuit of the people of God, as they were going out of *Egypt*, God covered his people with a Cloud, and divided the Red-sea to let 'em pass thro' it: But when the *Egyptians* pursu'd 'em into the middle of the Waters, God caus'd the Sea to return upon them, and so that great Army was all swallow'd up, and not one of them escap'd. In short, the Holy Scriptures are full of the great wonders that God wrought from time to time for the deliverance of those that fear, and put their whole confidence in him: Therefore says he in my Text, *Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel; for I will help thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.*

What we have said is enough for the Explication of the words; now let us apply what we have heard to our selves:

Here we see, my beloved Brethren, that all the Faithful are represented as one Man, and compose but one Mystical Body; therefore we ought to live together in Union, as being Members one of another. We are all animated by the same Spirit, to wit, the Spirit of Christ; and therefore we should be all joy'n'd together by the Bond of a fervent and unfeign'd Affection: *For by this* (says our Saviour, *Joh. 13. 35.*) *shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples, if you love one another.*

We may learn also hence, That in order to have a part in the promise which God has made, to assist us, and to be our Deliverer, we must be the Spiritual and Mystical *Jacob* and *Israel*; that is to say, we must imitate the Faith and Piety of the Patriarch *Jacob*, whom God himself calls

Israel The promises of God, my Brethren, were made to the Patriarchs and their Posterity; and tho' we are not their Posterity after the *Flesh*, yet we are their *Spiritual Possessors*, if we imitate their Faith and Piety.

Examine your selves therefore by this Rule, that you may know whether you are the Children of the Patriarchs, and can claim a Title in the favour of God, in his Deliverance and Salvation. If you bear the image of the Patriarchs, if you have their Faith and Piety, if you do their Works, you are their Children, and God will bless you, as he did them; he will deliver you out of the Hands of your Enemies; he will load you with his Favours and Benefits, and will one day make you partakers of a blessed Immortality. But if you imitate not their Example, you are not their Children, and have no share in the promises God made to them.

Abraham, when God commanded him to leave his Country, and part with his Relations, presently complied with the Will of his God, tho' he knew not where he was to go. And again, when God commanded him to sacrifice *Isaac* his beloved Son, he prepar'd himself without any more ado, to execute this dreadful command, having this confidence in God, that he could even restore his Son to him again, by raising him from the dead. And in effect, the Apostle takes notice, that he was indeed restor'd to him again by a kind of Resurrection. So *Isaac* himself submitted to the Will of his God, and put himself in a condition to die, as a Testimony of his Obedience to him. And *Jacob* was contented to deprive himself of the Food that perisheth, in order to obtain the Coelestial and Eternal Inheritance: And afterwards he left his Father's House, that he might avoid the violence of his Brother *Esau*, who design'd to have kill'd him. And so likewise all the Patriarchs did always glorify God by their Zeal, by their Piety, and

and by a Pure, Holy, and Unblameable Life.

God sets us these Examples, to the end we might square our Lives by them, if we would be the My- stical Posterity of these Holy Men, and would have a part in the Promises that were made to them. Now when God suffers his Church to be persecuted, he calls upon us to leave our Country and our Friends, to forsake our Goods, and renounce our ease and pleasures, to suffer the loss of our Children, and even to expose our Lives for his Glory and Service. Therefore, if we desire to obtain his Blessing, his Deliverance and Salvation, we must submit to his Will, as the Patriarchs did of old. We must also glorify him by a Holy Life, by our Justice, our Zeal, our Charity, and Piety: We must cause our Light to shine before Men, that they seeing our good Works, may together with us, give Glory to God. Otherwise we must expect to be treated, not as his Children, but as Bastards and Unbelievers.

What can you expect then, you miserable Worldlings, whose Heart is always bow'd down to the Earth like that of Beasts; you impenitent Sinners that always persist in your Vices and Disorders, Injustice and Frauds? You follow the multitude that is running in the broad way to Hell. Therefore if you repent not, you must expect to perish with this Reprobate Multitude. You are not the Children of the Patriarchs, since you do not their Works. You do the Works of the Devil, that impure Spirit, who is the Father of Lies and Impurity, of Fraud and Injustice; and what can you expect, you prophane and rebellious Souls! who, that you might live at your ease in your Houses, and might preserve your Goods, your Children and your Repose, are revolted from God,

God, and continue still in the same Spirit of Rebellion? Alas! you are not neither the Children of the Patriarchs, since you imitate not their Zeal and Piety, and are not ready to lose and suffer all things, as they were, for the Glory of your God. You do also the Works of the Devil, who was the first Apostate, the first Rebel against God. Therefore, if you repent not, you shall be condemn'd with him to the eternal Flames of Hell. For you are not willing to follow the Example of two or three hundred thousand Faithful Servants of God, who have abandon'd all for his Glory, have left their Country and their Kindred, and parted with their dearest Friends, and have likewise expos'd their Lives to great dangers, that they might comply with the Will of their God, and have an interest in his Favour and Comfort.

God has for a great while continued to send his Faithful Servants to you, to bring you back to your God, and a great many of them have already suffer'd death for your sakes. 'Tis true, you give them a Hearing; but a great many among you persist still in your Vices and Backslidings. Therefore as many faithful Ministers, as have preach'd, or do still preach Repentance to them without success, shall be so many Witnesses one day in Judgment against them, and shall condemn them.

Oh! wretched Sinners that you are! You would enjoy the Pleasures of the World, like prophane Esau: But you shall be depriv'd one day of the eternal Pleasures of Paradise. You would have your Portion in this Life, but one Day your Portion shall be in the Lake that burns with Fire and Brimstone. You would preserve your ease in this World, but you shall be eternally tormented with the Devils in Hell. There will

will be weeking and gnawing of Teeth: And these horrid Punishments shall never have an end.

But as for you, Believers, that desire to have a share in the promises of your God, be ye followers of the Faith, the Piety and Holiness of the Patriarchs; and you shall receive the Crown of Righteousness, which God has prepared for all them that fear him, and give glory to his Name. Let us not suffer our selves to be tempted, my beloved Brethren, by the Criminal Pleasures of Sin, nor by the Riches and Vanities of the VWorld. Let us pray to God without ceasing, that he would not lead us into Temptation, but deliver us from the wicked One: And at the same time let us disengage our Hearts from the VWorld, and separate our selves from the *Places* and *Persons* that may lead us into sin. Let us mortifie our Bodies by Moderation and Sobriety: Let us continually read and meditate on the VWord of God, that we may become strong in the Faith; and let us evermore beg of God the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that he may make us always walk in his Holy VVays.

Let us not suffer our selves to be surpriz'd by the specious pretences of false Teachers. They come to us in Sheeps Cloathing, but within they are Ravenous VVolves. At first fight one would think they had the Sweetness and Charity of Angels; but no sooner do the Faithful give them to understand that they will not defile themselves with Idolatry, and that they are resolved to serve God with purity, according to his Commandments; but these false Teachers discover a Cruelty not inferior to that of the most Savage Beasts. You will know them by their Fruits, says

says our Saviour. Examine well their Conduct, and you'll see that they bear the Image of the Devil. The Devil, as we said before, is a *Liar and a Murderer from the beginning*. Now these false Teachers, are not they *Liar-like* him? Do not they teach Errors and Lies? And do not they spread Abroad Fables and false Miracles, to seduce the Simple and the Ignorant? Have they not likewise violated Edicts, Treaties of Peace, and the most solemn Oaths, which are the Pledges and Seals of the Publick Faith? On the other hand, are not they *Cruel and Murderers*, as well as the Devil? Do not they every day make the Faithful suffer Torments, Marrydoms and horrible Massacres? Do not they likewise use, on all occasions, the two great means, which the Devil invented, to endeavour to shake the Faith of the Elect? Do not they offer to some the Riches and the Honours of this World? Do not they propose to them Penfions, Offices of the greatest Trust and Dignity, and other Worldly Advantages? And do not they spoil others of their Goods, take away their Children from them, and oppress them with a thousand Evils?

We must therefore, *my beloved Brethren*, refuse with horror to hold Communion with these Ministers of Satan; and if it be the Will of God that we suffer for the Interest of his Glory and Service, let us submit to his Sacred Disposal, and prepare our selves to lose and suffer all things, that we may give him a Testimony of our Obedience and Faithfulness. Let us remember that we were created for his Glory, and that we ought to glorifie him both in Life and Death. Let us remember that we ought to love him above all that is dearest to us in the

the World, more than Father, Mother, Wife, Children, Lands and Vineyards; nay, more than Life it self, if we would be his Children, and desire to partake of his Salvation.

Let us consider well, *my beloved Brethren*, that this Earth is not our Home; that 'tis a Valley of Tears, the place of our Sojourning, full of Misery and Trouble; and that our True Country is Heaven. The Patriarchs, whose Children we are, had not so much as where to set the Sole of their Feet; they were Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth; they sought a City that had solid Foundations, whose Builder and Founder is God. We must therefore renounce all earthly Things, and continually breathe after the Glory and Happiness of Heaven.

Let us consider again, that if God permits us to be persecuted, 'tis to the end that we may discover to the World our Faith, Piety and Constancy; and that this Tryal, by which God is glorified, may also turn to our own Glory, Salvation and Comfort. *Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation*, saith St. James, *ch. i. 12. for when he is tryed, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Blessed are they that are persecuted for Righteousness sake*, says our Saviour, *Mat. 5. 10. for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Now for a season we are in heaviness, through manifold Temptations: But, as St. Peter says, 1 Epist. i. 7, 8, 9. 'tis that the Tryal of our Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, may be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, we love in whom, tho' now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of our Faith, even the Salvation of our Souls.*

Nevertheless, *my Friends*, we must acknowledge that our sins are the cause of all the Evils we suffer. The Churches of *France* were abominably corrupted in their Manners. Therefore God has pour'd out his Judgments upon them and his Wrath is still burning against us, because our Repentance is not such as it ought to be. We must then, every one of us, turn himself from his evil Course; and those that have been so unhappy as to enter into the Communion of *Babylon*, must for ever renounce her Abominations for the time to come. We must be possess'd with a Sacred Horror for our Sins, and in a Holy Manner afflict our Souls, and humble our Selves at the Foot of the Throne of the Divine Majesty; we must have recourse to the Mercy and Grace of God in Jesus Christ, who has died for the remission of our Sins. We must strive continually with God by our Tears and Supplications; and not let him go till he has blessed us; and the good God will at last suffer himself to be overcome by our Cries and Supplications. *The' our sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow: tho' they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool.* Then will he be mov'd by our Misery to give us Succour and Relief: *He will bow down the Heavens, and come down, and deliver us out of the great Waters that surround us.*

Now good Men are oppress'd; *He that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey, Isa. 59. 15.* They that would be true to God, serve him with Purity, and sing Praises to his Holy Name, are afflicted and persecuted: whereas Idolaters, the perfidious *Judas's*, the Drunkards, the Lascivious, the Wicked, the Swearers and Blasphemers are tolerated and countenanc'd in the World. But these disorders shall not always last: *Set a little while, and he that is to come, shall come and will not tarry.* Let

Let's take courage then, *my Friends*, & not suffer our selves to be frighted with the Menaces of the Enemies of the *Truth*. Let us throw our selves into the Arms of our God; let us retire under the Shadow of his Wings; let us deliver our selves up to the conduct of his wise Providence, and put our confidence in him; he promises to be our Protector and Deliverer; *and he is faithful in all his Promises.* Let us have these comfortable words always in our Thoughts, *Fear not, thou Worm Jacob, and ye Men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.* We are but Worms of the Earth, in comparison of our Enemies; but let us remember, that the Lord of Hosts, the Great God, is our Strength. We are mortal Men, our Life is continually in danger; but let us remember, that he that has Life and Death in his Power, promises to assist and protect us. Let us not be afraid then, since he will be our Redeemer and Defender. He commands us to call upon him in our Distress, and promises to deliver us out of it, to the end that we may glorifie him; Let us then make him our Refuge; let us cry to him continually; and he'll come to our relief; that so we may bless him for it, all the days of our Life. God will do wonders for our sakes, as he has always done in favour of his Children. For, as *St. Paul* says, *Rom. 15. 4. what sever things were written afore time, were written for our Learning; that we thro' Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope;* that is to say, that we may have this confidence in God, that in case we imitate the Faith, the Piety, and the Fidelity of those ancient Servants of God, whom the Scriptures mention, God will vouchsafe to us the same Deliverances, and the same Comforts as he vouchsafed to them on the like occasions.

He'll restore our Children to us again, as he did to *Abraham* of old. He'll preserve our Lives, as he did *Isaac's*; He'll be always with us, as he was with *Jacob*; and give us.

us the same Protection that he gave him. He'll release us out of our Prisons, as he did *Joseph*. He'll deliver us out of all our Sufferings and Misery, as he did *Job*; and like him, will put us in a happier Condition than that we were in before our Tiral. He'll put an end to all our Troubles, as he did formerly to those of *David*. Now we are in the Furnace, as the three believing *Hebrews* were of old; but God will preserve us, as he did them, in the midst of the Flames. The fire of Persecution will only serve to purifie us, and to consume the Bonds of Sin within us; and he'll bring us out of the Furnace of Affliction, much brighter than we were before. Now we are in the midst of Lyons, as *Daniel* was of old: But God will shut the Mouth of these Savage Beasts; he'll repress the Violence of our Enemies, that encompass us about on all sides, and come not behind the very Tygers and Lyons in Cruelty. Now we groan under hard Bondage, as the People of God did heretofore in *Egypt*; but God will deliver us out of it with a strong Hand and stretched out Arm. Now we are terrified with the Power of our Enemies; But since 'tis against God they wage War, God tells us in his Word, *2 Chr. 20. 15. that the Battle is not Ours, but God's*; and that he'll fight for us himself, while we are singing, Praise to his Holy Name, as he fought heretofore for his People in the time of King *Jehoshaphat*. Now they that afflict us, laugh at us for putting our confidence in God, as if he was not strong enough to deliver us out of their Hands; But God will send an Angel to destroy them, as he did the Army of the King of the *Assyrians*, who blasphem'd the Lord and ridicul'd them that put their confidence in him, as we read *Jsa. 36*.

For this end, my beloved *Brethren*, let us live in the fear of the Lord; let us obey his Holy Commandments; be faithful to him, confess his Truth; and continually implore his Mercy, Favour and Relief; and this God will hear our Cries, will hearken to our Prayers, will plead our Cause, will help and deliver us, will fill us with his Graces and Comforts, will load us with his Benefits, and will one day take us up to Heaven, to make us happy for ever with himself. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant. Now to Him, Father, Son, and Spirit, one only God blessed for ever, be Honour and Glory, world without end. Amen.

Preach'd in several places in the Wilderness, July 23, and 31. 1692. and
Septemb. 14. 1693.

FINIS.