

is thus tried in 1 Peter i. 7. Let tried saints dwell on this scripture, and rejoice amid every trial.

In the account here given of Peter's prison, and the means used for his safe keeping, we may see that there were seven things to prevent his getting free; the number seven showing the completeness and perfection of the imprisoning, leaving no hope or possibility of his escape:

FIRST—*The Prison itself.* SECOND—*The Two Chains.* THIRD—*The Two Soldiers.* FOURTH—*The Keepers before the Door.* FIFTH—*The First Ward or Watch.* SIXTH—*The Second Ward.* SEVENTH—*The Iron Gate.*

*1st—The Prison.*—Peter in a dark prison, is the exact counterpart of the sinner's state by nature. Every soul born into the world is born in a prison of sin and death; we inherit such from Adam (*Romans v. 12, 17, 19, etc.*), and being as it were so accustomed to this state from our very birth, we cannot believe that our state is so bad; yet see what God says of man in *Genesis vi. 5*. Many people are offended at being told that they are captives of the power of darkness, and to the law of sin (*Ephesians ii. 1-3; Colossians i. 13; Romans vii. 23*). They refuse to credit that place where they have been bred and born, as otherwise than good; and no wonder at this, they cannot really see the prison walls, for we find from *verse 7* that the prison was without light, and so are all men blinded by the god of this world, lest they should see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ and be saved (*2 Corinthians iv. 3, 4*). Thus, with blinded eyes, and living in their very birthplace, it is not surprising that they remain content.

But further—Peter was sleeping. All men by nature are asleep in death, condemnation, and wrath (see the reference to this in *1 Thessalonians v. 5-9*). What a dangerous state is this! we might be sleep-