

became too faithful; his light burned and shone so brightly as to reprove, expose, and condemn the sins which they loved and would not confess; and hence they walked no longer in his light. And how often is it that men withdraw their esteem and attendance from that ministry which is plain and searching—the only one that from the nature of things, is likely to promote their salvation—and exchange it for another, or for none at all, that they may dwell at ease in their sins. Like the foul birds and reptiles of night, which cannot bear the light of day, and move abroad only in the darkness, they retreat from that light, and turn away from that ministry which reveals to their conscience their sins, and alarms them by the terrors of the LORD against the ungodly, that they may flee for refuge to the grace of GOD IN CHRIST JESUS. And thus it was in the case of our Saviour himself, whose words became “too hard”—whose ministry became too faithful for some, who “turned back, and walked no more with JESUS,” though he spoke the words of everlasting life.—“For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”—*John 3, 20.*

But the Jews rejoiced only for a season in the light of John, because he soon disappeared. His was “a burning and a shining light” whilst it continued, but it was only as that of a short moon, or a passing comet. His course was very brief, though brilliant, and his sweet and invaluable light was extinguished by the cruel hands of wicked men, for he died a martyr’s untimely death. Nor can the most able and useful ministry shine long on earth, however much it may be appreciated.