

possessed great influence, "for all their brethren were at their commandment."

*The different ages of time are distinguished by peculiar marks and characteristics.* The characteristics of the age—those things wherein it is peculiar, or by which it is distinguished from other periods—may be regarded as the signs of the times. The men of Issachar had understanding of the times; they could discern its signs, and knew how to address themselves to its duties.

In the days of Our Lord, the Pharisees and Sadducees came to him, demanding a sign from Heaven. To those unacquainted with the hypocrisy of their hearts, nothing could appear more reasonable than such a request. Their object, however, was not to be convinced, but merely to have their curiosity gratified. He knew what was in them, and he, therefore, in addressing them as hypocrites, called them by their right name. Perhaps they had observed some remarkable appearances in the sky, which indicate an approach of a peculiar state of the weather, on which he remarked, "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

They did not understand the indications they witnessed in the history of their nation, and in the events which were passing over them, the departure of the Sceptre from Judah, the coming of the appointed messenger to prepare the way to the Lord, and the actual appearance among them, of one by whom the blind received their sight, the deaf ears were unstopped, the lame man leaped as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb was made to sing for joy. They were so blinded by prejudice that they could not see in these things, the clearly predicted indications of the Messiah's times. They wished a sign from Heaven, but Jesus referred them to the signs of the times, and if they had rightly understood the times, they would have been at no loss to know what Israel ought to do.

*Every age receives its impress from the hand of God.* The Father hath put the times and seasons in His own power. He upholds, moves, guides, controls, determines and works all things according to the counsel of his own will. The affairs and transactions of the times, although brought to pass by a vast number of agents, are made, nevertheless, to accomplish what God hath determined before to be done. Be the times therefore what they may, they are such as God has stamped with something pertaining to himself, and his wise and holy purposes. If so, surely they ought to be interesting to us. The features of the age in which we are permitted to pass through the scenes of life—the signs of the times which we behold—distinctly indicate what the Almighty and Supreme Ruler is doing, and about to do, in