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M<sub>R</sub> J O H N G L A S.

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T H E S E C O N D E D I T I O N .

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V O L U M E I V .

P E R T H :

Printed and fold by R. MORISON and SON;  
J. GILLIES Perth, and G. MILNE Dundee.

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M, DCC, LXXXII.

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T H E

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A general View of the REVELATION.

[Written about the year 1733.]

I N T R O D U C T I O N.

**T**HERE is a blessing promised to him that readeth, and to them that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, chap. i. 3. The things written therein are, the things which John had seen, and the things that were present when he wrote, and the things that should be thereafter, chap. i. 19.; even all the great things concerning the kingdom of Christ on this earth, from the time of its first erection which John had seen, unto the times of restitution of all things, by the second coming of Christ, Acts iii. 21. who is said to be coming quickly, chap. i. and chap. ii. For all the things before that coming, which are foretold in this book, are necessary preparations for it, and are, one after another, making way for it with speed, under his conduct who is head over all things to his church, and is expecting till his enemies be made his footstool, Heb. x. 13. and is saying to his

Vol. IV. A church

church, *Surely I come quickly*, chap. xxii. 2. So that while his people long for his coming, they may be sure of this, that it will be as soon as it can be, with a consistency with his glory, and the real interest of the whole redeemed body; and that every event is hastening it forward.

This whole prophecy is directed to the seven churches in Asia, chap. i. and to the people of Christ in the churches, chap. xxii. 16. even as most part of the New-Testament scripture is expressly and immediately directed to the churches: for in the churches of the saints the word of Christ is to be kept, Acts xvi. 4. explained, 2 Theff. ii. 1. obeyed, chap. iv. and xxii. 16. and ii. 7. 11. 17. and 1 Cor. xi. 2. Phil. i. 27. chap. iii. 8. 10. and propagated in the world, 1 Theff. i. 7.; and therefore the knowledge of the mind of Christ in this prophecy is to be sought after in the churches of the saints; and there, if any where, may we expect to find it. And though Christians be much in the dark as to many things in this prophecy, and, because of the many mistakes that have been in the computation of the times, are much discouraged in their attempts to understand the mind of Christ in this book; yet it is not closed up and sealed, as was the revelation of the same things to Daniel, Dan. xii. 9. For since the writing of this book, the things foretold in it have been coming to pass, and the events explain the prophecy; and so, whereas it was said to Daniel, that it was *closed and sealed up till the time of the end*, it was said to John, *Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand*, chap. xxii. 10. and they are declared to be *blessed who read and hear this prophecy, and that keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book, because the time is at hand*, chap. i. 3. and they *must shortly be done*, and the Lord *comes quickly*, chap. xxii. 6. 7. It is true, that had the things contained in this book been clearly understood by Christians, Antichrist had never been revealed; and though any that could perceive

ceive him and avoid him in his rise, were blessed; yet till he came to his height, it was not easy to understand him as pointed out in this book. But from the beginning of his consumption by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, this prophecy came to be more clear; and as this consumption goes on by degrees, so will this book be more and more open to the Lord's people, especially when they are so far delivered from the Babylonish captivity, and Antichristian darknes, as to be gathered together in churches, according to the pattern of the first churches, to which this book is directed: for, in the conclusion of the book, they in the churches are pointed to as the persons that are made to know these things; and their Lord is set forth to them under the notion of the bright and morning star, as giving them light and certainty of his sudden coming the second time, wherein he will be as the rising sun that follows the morning-star.

## P A R T I.

### S E C T. I.

**I**N the beginning of this book of prophecy, according to the opinion of some of the learned\*, we have a general and typical representation of the state of Christianity in the world, from the beginning of Christ's kingdom, to his second coming, in the seven churches of Asia. There is no question that there were such churches, and such things in them as the Lord observes in his messages to them. But, besides the use of what is said to these churches as they then stood, if we look upon this part of the book as of a-piece with the rest, we must find in them the things that John had seen, the things that were when he wrote, and the things that should be hereafter.

A 2

And

\* See Pool's Synopsis Criticorum.

And so in the Ephesian church we have a representation of the churches of Christ, and the profession of his name in them, which were planted by the apostles; for these churches had to do with false apostles, and then with false scriptures, and tried them; yet soon decayed in that fervent charity that the apostle observes, and highly commends in his epistles to the Thessalonians, which are among the first of his epistles; and this decay of love issued at length in the undoing of that church-order that Christ settled by his apostles. What our Lord says in the conclusion of the epistle to this church, and of the epistles to all the rest, imports, that there is a mystery or a parable in the epistle, and that it has a farther meaning than appears at first, or that the things spoken of are significative of other things. For as, in the conclusion of the parables that our Lord spoke, he used to say, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*; so it is said here, *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches*,—the spirit of prophecy.

In the church in Smyrna we have a representation of the state and condition of the disciples of Christ, in the churches under the persecutions of the Heathen emperors, till Constantine's time, especially the ten years persecution of Dioclesian, *Ye shall have tribulation ten days*; and they were tried with blasphemous heretics, and many that called themselves Christians, and were not.

In the church in Pergamos, under the figure of Balaam teaching the king of Moab to cast a stumbling-block before Israel, to mingle them with the people, and lead them to false worship and idolatry, and of the Nicolaitans compared to him, we have a representation of a ministry grasping at worldly honour and riches, conspiring with the Roman emperor to mingle the people of Christ with his people in communion; which issued at length in defiling of the outer court of the Lord's house with the idolatry of the Gentiles, they being thus once brought into the out-  
er

er court of his house. And then persecution began, when they came to have the sword or secular power at their command. And they that withstood the mingling of the seed of Israel with strangers, which issued in the learning of their way, suffered grievously. And though persecution took place at first under the specious pretence of defending Christ's name against the Arians, yet it fell heaviest at length on them that held the truth, according to Matth. xiii. 29.

In the epistle to the church in Thyatira, we may see the great whore represented by Jezebel; and the abominable doctrine and worship of the society called the Roman church, typified by the doctrine and deeds of the Nicolaitans. The disciples of Christ that lived under the full prevalency of that state of things, had burden enough; and it was much if they held fast what they had, as the seven thousand hidden people in Jezebel's days, that did not bow the knee to Baal.

In the epistle to the church in Sardis, we have a representation of the state of Christianity in the national churches separated from the Roman church after the Reformation, or after the man of sin began to be consumed with the Spirit of the Lord's mouth. They have a name that they live; they have received and heard; they have a few names which have not defiled their garments; and these are the sufferers for the truth of the word of God, and the profession thereof as far as they know it\*. But though these societies have a name to live, they are declared to be dead; and they have but a remnant of the things of Christianity, which is ready to die away for the want of the rest; and through the negligence of observing all the things required in the word of God, and the not doing what he requires, because required by him, they satisfy themselves with receiving and hearing; and if they repent not, he threatens to come upon them as a thief, in a way they would not expect.

In

\* H. More thinks these are the seed of which comes the church of Philadelphia.



In the epistle to the church in Philadelphia, we have a representation of the condition of Christ's people under the revival of the ancient church-order instituted by Jesus Christ, and gathered together in churches after the example of the first churches recorded in the New Testament, and so delivered from their scattered condition and their bondage under Antichrist. There seems to be a mystery in the name *Philadelphia*, which signifies *brotherly-love*, and points out the revival of the ancient brotherly-love, by the decay of which the falling away from the primitive church-order took place. The titles that Christ takes to himself, carry an insinuation of their state. *He that is holy*: Their holy profession, and contention for the holiness of the Christian profession, however disagreeable to the world, is agreeable to him the high priest of that profession. *He that is true*: While they have his word alone for their rule in opposition to the word of man, and have all their dependence upon it, and are reckoned deceivers and deluded in following it, they have abundant ground for the course they take; for he is true. *He that hath the key of David, and openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth*, points to that state of things wherein it is only the key of David that opens and shuts the doors of God's house, as most agreeable to him, however disagreeable it be to the wisdom of man. They need not apply to, nor depend upon the powers of the earth for an open door to the gospel; for they have him that hath the key of David, that opens, and no man shuts, and that can shut the doors that men open. And they are encouraged to act confidently, in immediate dependence on him, in binding and loosing, however contemptible they may be in so doing; for they have him that hath the key of a David. And he says, he has *set before them an open door which no man can shut*. For, says he, *thou hast a little strength*. They have none of that which man's wisdom counts strength,

strength, and his strength is made perfect in weakness; but they have little strength in comparison of the first churches, as the Jews were feeble in building the second temple, and repairing the walls, in comparison of what they were before the captivity, and when the first temple was built. Yet as the reforming Jews held the written law of Moses as the rule of their reformation, and endeavoured conformity to it in all points, and followed not the course of their fathers, but that law; so these keep the word of Christ, professing entire subjection to his authority in the scriptures of truth, without adding to it, or taking from it: and however they may deny many things that men think they should hold, yet they deny not the name of Christ as manifested in his word; but in keeping his word, and holding his name, they meet with contradiction and manifold temptations, to move them to let it go. And so his word that they keep is the word of his patience, for which they suffer with him; even as it is the word of salvation through his sufferings. And those that oppose this word, as kept by them, are they that pretend to be Christians and right professors of Christianity; while, by their opposition to the word of Christ's patience, using Jewish weapons against it, and persecuting them that hold it, it is manifest their pretensions to Christianity in the true profession of it are false; and by their despising and persecuting Christ's word, and them that keep it, they appear as the synagogue of Satan. And there are encouraging promises here made to Christ's people against them, and suitable to their condition. Further, the reviving of the ancient hope of Christ's coming seems here to be insinuated: *Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast.* For indeed it can be no worldly encouragement that moves those in the condition represented in this epistle, to hold fast his word, but the hope of the crown at his coming.

In the epistle to the church of the Laodiceans, we have a representation of the condition of the professors of Christ's name in the churches near the time of his second coming, and when he is just about to appear. And therefore, as it was said to Philadelphia, *Behold, I come quickly*; so it is said to the Laodiceans, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock*. And what is said to the Laodiceans in the reproof the Lord gives them, agrees excellently with the parable of the ten virgins going out to meet the bridegroom, and falling asleep before he comes, so that his coming is a surprise upon them, Matth. xxv. and with that saying of our Lord, *When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?* Luke xviii. 8.

It is to be observed, that as, in the visions of this book, much use is made of the number seven in describing the order of events, and likewise of angels as ministering to the Lamb, in his providence, and under him influencing the several events in their proper order; so it is in this vision of the seven candlesticks. For as there are seven seals which none but the Lamb himself can open, and seven trumpets blown by seven angels, and seven vials poured out by seven angels; so there are seven churches, and seven angels; and hereby it seems manifest, that this part of the book is of the same kind with the rest, and is prophecy no less than the other parts of it.

## S E C T. II.

**A**FTER this general introduction, containing a short scheme of the order and different periods of things relating to the kingdom of Christ from the beginning to the end, all the events more particularly foretold in this book of prophecy, are contained in that book which we find in the hand of the Lamb, who alone can open it, and loose the seals, chap. v. When the Lamb takes the book to open it, and loose  
the

the seals, all the redeemed out of every nation are brought in as rejoicing in expectation of this, as the issue of his opening the seals, *viz.* That they shall reign on the earth, chap. v. 8. 9. 10. All the things revealed in this prophecy have their time and order of coming to pass, according to the order of his opening the seals represented in the vision. The first seal begins with the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world by the gospel immediately after his exaltation; and this John had seen, chap. vi. 12.

After the first six seals, chap. vi. all the rest of the events are contained under the seventh which we see opened, chap. viii. 1. And under this seventh seal we have seven trumpets blown one after another by seven angels, six of them, chap. viii. and ix. and the seventh which brings the end, chap. xi. from ver. 15. to the end of the chapter; where we have a short sum of the things to be done by the blowing of this trumpet, to be more fully displayed afterward. For under this trumpet we have seven vials poured out one after another by seven angels, chap. xv. and xvi.; upon the pouring out of the last of which we are told, *It is done*, chap. xvi. 17. So that it brings the reign of the saints and the times of restitution of all things, and fills up the wrath of God, chap. xv. 1.

Before this be, there come to pass great revolutions one after another, all contributing one way or other to the bringing about of that which was given in expectation to the redeemed at the Lamb's taking the book, and to the preparing of them for it. And we find three different remarkable states of things represented by three worlds succeeding one another, and the one arising through the ruin of the other; and upon the ruin of the last of these three, a fourth appears which cannot be defaced nor destroyed.

The first of these worlds is that state of things that was in being on the earth when the kingdom of Christ was first erected, and the gospel came first abroad through the earth. This world is consumed and de-

stroyed by the first six seals; and in the ruin of it there is a type of the day of judgment, chap. vi. 12.—17. and this we may call the Jewish and Heathenish world.

The second world raised by the seals is the outward profession of Christianity in the earth; and this world is marred and defaced by the trumpets, one after another, till the seventh. See the first four trumpets, chap. viii. The fifth and sixth finish what these first four began. The defacing of this world began with the holding of the four winds, chap. vii. 1. which seems to be the restraint or with-holding of the Spirit, whereby the lively profession of Christianity was raised at the first\*. And it likewise follows upon that silence of which we read, chap. viii. 1. which may be the freedom from persecution which the professors of Christianity enjoyed in the beginning of Constantine's government of the Roman empire, and before they began to employ the power of that empire in persecution. If we would rightly understand the first four trumpets, and the gradual marring of this world by them, we must consider the several notable degrees of corruption of Christianity, and of the dissolving of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms, and the several steps whereby the man of sin came to his height from the very first beginning of his being revealed.

The third world brought to its perfection by the fifth and sixth trumpets, chap. ix. is the Antichristian and Mahometan world; and is consumed and destroyed by the seven vials, under the seventh trumpet, chap. xvi.

After this world is brought to ruin, a fourth appears that cannot be destroyed. And this is the world that the saints look for, chap. xxi. 1. 2. &c. In the three last trumpets there are three woes, chap. viii. 13. chap. ix. 12. chap. xi. 14. The first of these woes is Antichrist and his kingdom in its perfection,  
set

\* Compare Ezek. xxxvii. 9. John iii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

set forth from the beginning of chap. ix. to ver. 12. ; and the second is Mahomet, and the four powers supporting his religion : A great plague upon the superstitious and idolatrous people called Christians, chap. ix. 26. And this is described from the 12th verse of the 9th chapter to the end. These two woes are in the prevalency and high exaltation of the enemies of Christ's kingdom ; but the third woe is upon them and in their destruction, whereby the kingdom of Christ is exalted, and the saints come to reign. This third woe comes by the seventh trumpet, which finishes the mystery of God, and brings the end of time, chap. x. 6. 7. For it is the time of the coming of the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, that is redeemed out of every kingdom of this world, and wherein he is to reign for ever, chap. xi. 15. ; and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that the Lord should reward his servants the prophets, and the saints, and them that fear his name, small and great, and should destroy them that destroy the earth, chap. xi. 18. And the whole wrath of God is comprehended in the seven last plagues, contained in the seven vials under this trumpet \*. Now, the first six of these vials answer unto the first six trumpets. Antichrist is gradually consumed by the first five vials, as he arose gradually by the first five trumpets ; and, as the fifth vial fills his kingdom with darkness, being poured on his seat ; so it was by the fifth trumpet, that he was set on his throne, and his kingdom came with power. And as this kingdom came by the fifth trumpet, as a great smoke out of the pit ; darkening the glory of the kingdom of Christ unto men ; so the fifth vial fills it again with darkness. And the Mahometan powers fall by the sixth vial, as they arose by the sixth trumpet †. Yet the Antichristian and Mahometan world is not utterly destroyed by the first six vials ; for, under the sixth vial, the unclean spirits

\* Compare chap. viii. 9. with chap. xvi.

† Compare chap. ix. 13. 14. 15. with chap. xvi. 12.

go out of the mouth of the beast and false prophet unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, chap. xvi. 13. 14. which is the day of the final destruction of the beast and false prophet, or of Antichrist, chap. xix. 19. 20. And while this preparation is making, and the seventh vial is ready to be poured out, warning is given of Christ's second coming, and they are pronounced *blessed that watch*, chap. xvi. 15. The Lord therefore comes the second time with the seventh vial, to destroy Antichrist with the brightness of that coming, and to destroy Satan's whole kingdom, to make the saints reign on the earth; to judge the dead, small and great, and to restore all things as God hath spoken by his prophets since the world began. For all that is said to be contained under the seventh trumpet in the 11th chapter, that is not found in the foregoing vials, is certainly contained in this. And so we have a more full description of what is contained in the seventh vial, from the 11th verse of chap. xix. to the 6th verse of chap. xxi. where we find the manner of Antichrist's destruction by the Lord's coming, the reign of the saints, the judgment of the dead, and the fourth world, the new Jerusalem, appearing, that can never be destroyed, because there is no more curse. And when this is declared, the same thing is repeated that was said upon the pouring out of the seventh vial, *It is done* \*. And this agrees with what was said in chap. x. ver. 7. that by the sounding of the seventh angel, or in the days of his voice, when he should begin to sound, or rather *when he should sound*, the mystery of God should be finished.

There are four earthquakes mentioned in the book of the Revelation; and these are emblems of great alterations in the state of things when Heathenism was demolished, and the Roman emperor Heathen was taken out of the way, and a Christian catechumen came to be at the head of that empire.

The

\* Compare chap. vi. 17. with chap. xxi. 6.

The second earthquake is chap. viii. 5. at the opening of the seventh seal. And this denotes that great change as to the profession of Christianity in the earth that was formerly persecuted, and now began to be attended with earthly prosperity and grandeur; and this produced the man of sin.

The third earthquake is at the revival of the witnesses, and about the beginning of the seventh trumpet, chap. xi. 13. which seems to denote that great change in the state of affairs at the Reformation.

And the fourth is found in that sum of the things that come to pass after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, chap. xi. 19. and it falls out under the seventh vial; compare chap. xvi. 18. 21. This earthquake is expressly declared to be the greatest of all that ever were: and it is no other but that glorious revolution at the second coming of Jesus Christ, which is with the seventh vial.

The first three of these earthquakes are past already, and the fourth is the next to be looked for; and it ought to be more in the hopes and desires of the remnant of the woman's seed, the nearer it draws. But when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

## P A R T II.

### S E C T. I.

**T**HE most part of this book of prophecy is taken up in describing the same thing that the apostle foretells in the second chapter of the second epistle to the Thessalonians, even the rise, reign, and ruin of Antichrist. There the apostle sets forth this thing under the notion of a man, even as the true church is set forth under the notion of a body, head, and members, animated by one spirit, Eph. iv. 4. 13. 15. 16. and called *one man*, Eph. ii. 15. and iv. 13. and *Christ*, 1 Cor. xii. 12. He calls Antichrist *the man*  
of



*of sin*, in opposition to the true Catholic church, which is holy, being animated by the Holy Ghost, having Jesus Christ the Holy One for its sanctifying head, and his Holy Father for its father, who is above it all as the Father, through it all in his Son, and in all the members of it by his Spirit; and when it is perfected, he will be all in all the members of this body, Eph. i. 6. And as he calls this matter of Christ and the church a *great mystery*, Eph. v. 32. so he calls the matter of Antichrist, *the mystery of iniquity*.

He gives a history of this man of sin from his conception to his death. And this history begins at the time when the apostle wrote, or the beginning of the Christian church, and ends at the second coming of Christ, which is the final end of the man of sin. He describes his conception when he says, *The mystery of iniquity doth already work*. And it was working in the churches of the saints: for it is that falling away that he says was working, against which he directs the Thessalonians to stand fast, and hold the traditions which they had been taught. He next points at the time of his nativity, and being brought forth, and the time of his coming to be a man, when he foretells, that *he shall be revealed then, when he that letteth is taken out of the way*. Now, that which hindered his being revealed, was the power of the Roman empire supporting Heathenish idolatry, and persecuting the churches of Christ, from out of which it behoved the man of sin to rise by means of worldly power: for his coming is with all power. He, therefore, that letteth, till he was taken out of the way, was the Roman emperor Heathen: and when the Roman emperor came to favour the profession of Christianity, and bring his empire under a form of Christianity, and raise up the bishops of the churches to worldly grandeur and riches, and maintain their authority by his power; then was the man of sin brought forth.

But he could not come to the stature of a perfect man, nor sit on his throne as the eighth head of the  
beast, —

beast, till the seventh head of the beast, the Christian emperor, was taken out of the way. So though he was born and nursed up by the Christian emperors, after the Heathen emperors were taken out of the way; yet he could not sit on his throne, nor his kingdom come in power, till the Roman emperor in the west was taken away, and the Roman empire issued in the ten kingdoms or kings that receive power one hour with him, or at the same time with him. Now, the Roman emperors in the west, where the man of sin especially prevailed, were taken out of the way about 176 years after the taking away of the Heathen emperors, and then was the man of sin enthroned. For the beginning of the reign of the man of sin can be brought no lower, according to the apostle's words, compared with Rev. chap. xiii. 3. and xvii. 10. 11. 12. than the time when the emperors failed in the west, and the Roman empire issued in the ten kingdoms.

The apostle describes his coming, that it will be after the working of Satan, and his influence upon the minds of men; and that it will be with *all power*; not only the powers of darkness and spiritual wickednesses, but secular power acting tyrannically in matters of religion; and that it will be with pretended miracles, signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness; and that it will be a strong delusion sent by God as a righteous judgment on men professing Christianity, and not receiving the love of the truth, nor believing it, so as to be ready to part with their all in the world for it; and it ruins such eternally: but it cannot destroy them that receive the love of the truth, being chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.

By all which it is manifest, that the man of sin has not merely secular power to influence men, but is a power acting upon the minds and consciences of men going under the Christian name. For the apostle says,

says, he sits in the temple of God, the outer court of the Lord's house, that is trodden under foot of the Gentiles the whole time of his reign, Rev. xi. 2. And there he opposes his power to God, shews himself that he is God, usurping the authority that belongs to God over his house, and as God sits in the temple of God. And he exalts himself above all that is called God, and worshipped. He shall not only have the dominion over the powers of the earth, but rather, he shall be the ruler of the worship of false gods or idols, and shall exalt himself above every object that he calls men to worship: and all that is worshipped under his dominion, shall be treated by him only as his servant to exalt himself.

Then the apostle represents this man of sin as falling into a consumption, and then perishing quite. He that brings him down and destroys him, is the Lord Christ, who will first consume him, wasting him by degrees, as he rose by degrees, dissolving and weakening the strength of his body step by step. And this he will do by *the spirit of his mouth*, by the gospel of his kingdom, the word of truth, accompanied with the power of his Spirit upon the minds of men, in opposition to the man of sin's deceivableness of unrighteousness, and all his power. For it is only this spirit of the Lord's mouth that can deliver men from the influence of strong delusion, and weaken the power of Antichrist, as he sits in the temple of God, and rules there as God: though, no doubt, his providence will work effectually to order outward circumstances in a subserviency to this instrument of the man of sin's consumption, the spirit of his mouth.

Then the apostle says, he will next destroy him; and this is to be by *the brightness of his coming*; which is not a bright coming in the preached gospel, for that is the spirit of his mouth; and this expression is too high to be understood of his acting against Antichrist by means of the powers of the earth. Wherefore

fore it is more agreeable to explain this by the context, where the apostle is speaking of Christ's second coming, and declaring that the day of his coming shall not be till Antichrist be revealed; and when he has first consumed him, he then declares he shall be destroyed by the brightness of that coming.

The apostle likewise gives the characters of Antichrist in the 4th chapter of 1st Timothy from the beginning; where he states this mystery of iniquity in opposition to the mystery of godliness, of which he had been speaking immediately before: for as the one is the sense of the dark prophecies and figures of the Old Testament, so is the other, and so both of them are mystery. The one is the mystery of faith held in a pure conscience in the true church of the living God. The other is the mystery of departing from that faith under some kind of profession of it, and giving heed to seducing spirits. And this is the same thing with the working of Satan, the deceivableness of unrighteousness, and the strong delusion sent on them that they should believe a lie, who received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, of which the apostle speaks to the Thessalonians.

He makes the doctrines of demons a character of this falling and departure from the faith. And this is manifest in the divine honour paid to departed saints, and in the worship of angels and souls of departed saints, in the Roman church, where they are used as the heathens used their demons. This worship of demons was introduced and established by fables and lies, and the whole apostasy of the latter times is attended and upheld with lies in hypocrisy.

He next makes forbidding to marry, a character of this apostasy from the faith. And this is manifest in the Roman church, where marriage is made so unclean that it is not lawful for their priests, and where they forbid marriage far beyond the degrees

of kindred and affinity wherein God's word forbids to marry.

Then he mentions abstinence from meats, and from the use of some creatures that God hath made to be eaten. And this is manifest in the abstinence of the Roman church from flesh on certain days and at certain seasons; while yet they allow the use of blood to Christians, which God forbade when he allowed to eat freely of every creature, Gen. ix. 4. Acts xv. 29.

We have another description of the Antichristian teachers and people in the 4th chapter of the second epistle to Timothy, ver. 3. and 4. and in the 3d. chapter from the beginning. In opposition to whom, the apostle commends the scriptures, and the doctrine of the necessary connection betwixt Christianity and the cross. For by departing from the doctrine of the cross, and endeavouring to set up a worldly kingdom to Christ, Antichrist came. The spirit of Antichrist speaks of the world, and the world hears it, that will not hear the pure word of the apostles of Jesus Christ, 1 John chap. iv.

## S E C T. II.

**T**HE description that the Revelation gives of the rise, reign, and ruin of Antichrist, is an explication of Daniel's prophecy on that subject. And there seems to be a reference to the sealing of the prophecy till the time of the end, spoken of in Daniel, chap. xii. 9. in the opening of the sealed book by the Lamb, Rev. chap. v. The time, times, and an half, Rev. xii. 14. is the same thing that we have, Dan. vii. 25. and xii. 7. And when the apostle says the Lord will consume the man of sin with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming, he is plainly explaining and applying these words in Daniel, chap. vii. 26. *But the judgment shall sit.*

*fit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume, and destroy it unto the end.* And we may also observe a plain reference in ver. 4. of chap. ii. of the 2d epistle to the Thessalonians, unto Dan. xi. 36. as there is also a plain reference to the treading under foot the sanctuary, Dan. viii. 13. and polluting the sanctuary, chap. xi. 31. in what is said, Rev. chap. xi. 2. of the giving the outer court of the temple to the Gentiles, and their treading under foot the holy city.

It is manifest, that Daniel prophesieth of the Roman empire, the fourth kingdom after that of Nebuchadnezzar, which was the first, and foretells the breaking down of that kingdom into ten kingdoms, under the notion of the feet and toes of the image, which are ten, and represents the kingdom of Christ as falling upon these ten kingdoms, smiting the image upon his feet; and so putting an end to all worldly kingdoms, chap. ii. from ver. 31. to ver. 45. And the same empire is foreshewed by the emblem of the fourth beast with ten horns, chap. vii.; and Antichrist is foreshewed by the little horn. For this is the explication of the vision of the fourth beast, and of the little horn, ver. 23. *Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. Ver. 24. And the ten horns out of this kingdom, are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings. Ver. 25. And he shall speak words against the Most High\*; and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, times, and the dividing of time. Ver. 26. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume, and to destroy it unto the end. Ver. 27. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the*

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\* Ex parte Altissimi. Arias.

*saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.*  
 Ver. 28. *Hitherto is the end of the matter.* It is easy to perceive the reference that is in the book of the Revelation to this prophecy, and that it is the same thing that is spoken of in both.

Daniel here speaks directly of the Roman empire, and of Antichrist as a little horn growing out of it. But in the 8th and 11th chapters, Antichrist is set forth under the figure and type of Antiochus Epiphanes, who is called the little horn, growing out of one of the four horns of the beast representing the Grecian empire, chap. viii. from ver. 8. to ver. 14. See the explication of the vision, from ver. 20. to ver. 26. whereby it is manifest, that Daniel speaks of the third monarchy, the Grecian, and of Antiochus, that took away the daily sacrifice, and profaned the temple in Jerusalem, and set up an idol in it. But under the figure of the mischief he did to the Jews, the evils that have come by Antichrist are pointed at. For when Daniel is commanded to shut up the vision, because it was for many days, ver. 26. it is plainly enough insinuated, that it speaks of a thing much farther off than Antiochus; especially if we compare chap. xii. ver. 9. The same thing is more largely described, chap. xi. where there is a large description of Antiochus Epiphanes, from the 21st verse downward, and of Antichrist as typified by him; as is manifest from the continuation of the story of him, unto the day of judgment, and the end of the world, (compare chap. xii. ver. 1. and downward) and from the application of the characters of Antiochus to Antichrist, by the apostle, as was before noticed; and from the application of the three years and an half to him, chap. xii. ver. 7. with chap. vii. 25. which were ascribed to the little horn of the fourth beast, or to Antichrist growing out of the Roman empire.

And here we must take care to distinguish the abomination that maketh desolate, spoken of in chap. xi.  
 ver.

ver. 31. and chap. viii. ver. 13. from that which is spoken of, chap. ix. ver. 27. where the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the final end of the sacrifices there, are foretold; to which last our Lord especially refers, when he foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, while yet he makes the one a figure of the other. All that Antiochus did to the temple at Jerusalem, is made use of in the prophecy to typify what has been done by Antichrist. And the time of the taking away of the daily sacrifice, and of the profanation of the temple by Antiochus, is a figure of the time of the treading of the outer court of the Lord's house under the feet of the Gentiles by Antichrist; every day of the profanation by Antiochus signifying a year of the profanation by Antichrist, Ezek. iv. 6. So, in the opinion of some, the daily sacrifice ceased by Antiochus 2300 evenings and mornings, *i. e.* 1150 days, chap. viii. 13. 14. From the profanation of the temple to its cleansing, were three years and an half, or 1260 days. And the time that was taken up in cleansing it, may have lengthened out these days to 1290, Dan. xii. 11. And the time from thence to its dedication with great solemnity, might have been 45 days; which, being added to the former, makes 1335, which is the utmost of Daniel's numbers.

In the book of the Revelation, the second of these numbers only is much insisted on, and applied to Antichrist, *viz.* the time, times, and an half, Rev. xii. 14. or 42 months, xi. 2. and xiii. 5. or 1260 days, xi. 3. There are several characters of Antichrist in the book of Daniel, in chap. vii. where he is directly spoken of. It is said, he shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws.

In chap. viii. where he is typified by Antiochus, it is said, that he is a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences; and that his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power, (compare Rev. xvii. 12. 13.) and that he shall destroy wonderfully,



wonderfully, or corrupt the marvellous things, and prosper, and practise, and destroy, and corrupt the mighty, and the holy people; that he shall magnify himself in his heart, and stand up against the prince of princes, or instead of the prince of princes, or upon the prince of princes, making him, as it were, a stepping stone, to raise himself; and that, through his policy, he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand, and by peace destroy many. He shall destroy both by force and fraud, war and peace. If he use open violence, it is to corrupt and destroy. If he be at peace, the end thereof is to corrupt and destroy the holy people, ver. 23. 24. 25.

His deceit and his violence both are also largely represented, chap. xi. For there, we see, he obtains the kingdom by flatteries, works deceitfully, corrupts by flatteries, &c. And then it is said, *Arms shall stand on his part; and they that understand among the people, and instruct many, shall fall by the sword, and by the flame, by captivity, and by spoil many days.* He is there likewise represented as having the command of worldly wealth and riches: *He shall scatter among them the prey, and spoil, and riches. And a god whom his father knew not, shall be honour with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pleasant things. Thus shall he do in the most strong holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory: and he shall cause them to rule over many, and shall divide the land for gain.* The division of the land for gain, looks very like the rise of parishes, and the use made of them. His pride and lordly dominion is also set forth, ver. 36. 37. and his idolatry, 38. 39. and his contempt of marriage, 37. But that which is mainly insisted on, is his taking away the daily sacrifice, and placing the abomination that maketh desolate, chap. viii. 13. and xi. 31. and scattering the power of the holy people, chap. xii. 7.

## S E C T. III.

THE same thing is represented more fully, and under several figures, in the book of the Revelation, where we have several descriptions of Antichrist. The first is in chap. ix. from the beginning to ver. 12. By comparing ver. 4. with chap. vii. 1. 2. 3. 4. we may see, that the holding of the four winds made way for the coming of this great evil; and that this is that evil against which God made provision for the safety of his servants in sealing them, that they might not be eternally ruined thereby, while others are left unto it. And if we consider how the first six vials answered to the first six trumpets, as has been already observed, and compare the 2d verse of this 9th chap. with chap. xvi. ver. 10. we may see, that it is the kingdom of the beast that is described here, even the beast with the ten horns, chap. xvii. the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit, chap. xi. 7. the beast to whom the dragon gave power, chap. xiii. 2. 4. compare chap. ix. ver. 7. 2. 11.

As the figures in the book of the Revelation are borrowed from the Old Testament, so this of crowned locusts seems to be taken from the prophet Nahum, who, speaking of the kings of Assyria and Nineveh, chap. iii. 17. says, *Thy crowned are as the locusts.* For there are types of Antichrist in the Old Testament, as well as of Christ. In the ruin of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian king, foretold by Nahum, the ruin of Antichrist is typified. The desolation that is brought upon the Christian profession by Antichrist, is represented by the desolation that is made by the locusts on the face of the earth; and several of the expressions here seem to be borrowed from the prophet Joel, speaking of the destruction of the fruits of the land, by the locusts, among other such destroying creatures, Joel, chap. i. ver. 4.

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*That which the palmer-worm hath left, hath the locust eaten. Ver. 6. For a nation is come up upon my land, strong and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek-teeth of a great lion. Compare ver. 8. And chap. ii. ver. 2. A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness. Ver. 10. The sun and the moon shall be dark. Compare ver. 2. 3. Ver. 4. 5. The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses, and as horsemen, so shall they run. Like the noise of chariots on the tops of mountains shall they leap, like the noise of a flame of fire that devoureth the stubble, as a strong people set in battle-array. Compare ver. 7. 9. Ver. 6. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. Ver. 11. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can abide it? Compare ver. 6.*

The kingdom of Antichrist, from its first erection, made such a desolation upon the profession of Christianity, as the locusts made on the face of the earth. And as the Roman empire was wasted by the nations that swarmed upon it about the beginning of Antichrist's reign, and when the ten kings received power one hour in it with the beast; so the outward profession of Christianity was wasted by the reign of Antichrist. Now, this cannot be better represented, than in the words of the prophet Joel, chap. i. from ver. 6. *For a nation is come up upon my land, strong and without number, whose teeth are as the teeth of a lion.—He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig-tree; he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away: the branches thereof are made white. The meat-offering and the drink-offering is cut off from the house of the Lord; the priests the Lord's ministers mourn. The field is wasted, the land mourneth, &c.*

This kingdom of Antichrist is designed only unto the hurt of those professors of Christianity that received not the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness; and it cannot ruin them that are  
 chosen

chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth. For the locusts are commanded *not to hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only those men that have not the seal of God in their foreheads.* So the true subjects of this kingdom, on whom it puts forth its whole power, are those that have a form of godliness, denying the power of it. And it does not utterly extinguish all the form of the Christian profession in them; but, by means of what remains of it, torments them, keeping them, as it were, betwixt death and life, in such pain as one has that is stung by a scorpion, ver. 5. 6.

This kingdom is a kingdom of darkness, and the power of it is the power of delusion, and the effectual working of Satan, ver. 1. 2. 3. This power acting upon the consciences of men, together with the secular power wherewith it is accompanied, is that which torments the subjects of the Antichristian kingdom. The power of this kingdom is represented by several seemingly inconsistent things; so that it appears as a monster with several heterogeneous properties; locusts having power as scorpions, and shaped like horses prepared unto battle, with crowns like gold; faces like men; hair as the hair of women; teeth like the teeth of lions, breastplates of iron; the sound of their wings as the sound of chariots of many horses rushing to battle; and tails like scorpions, with stings. Here is a composition of things terrifying and alluring, of deceit and violence, delusion and persecuting worldly power, hardness and softness, beauty and honour, deformity and baseness. Such is the kingdom of Antichrist that torments its true subjects, and hurts them as a scorpion when he striketh a man; and so holds them in unavoidable subjection. This torment, the effect of the Antichristian power upon the minds of men, was the spring of all the riches wherewith the Roman church is enriched, and of all the pilgrimages, penances,

penances, and monasteries of that church; and this superstitious fear of the Antichristian power keeps men in subjection to it every where, as far as it any way prevails, and makes them serve and live in obedience to it.

This kingdom of the locusts with crowns, must have its course, its season, represented by the time of the longest continuance of the locusts, when they come, which is five months. In the former four trumpets, we have a representation of several things whereby the Roman emperor was taken out of the way, and the several things that made way for Antichrist's coming to the throne; but here we have a representation of his kingdom.

#### S E C T. IV.

**W**E have the next description of Antichrist in the 11th chapter, where, by the references to Moses and Aaron, Elijah and Elisha, Zerobabel and Joshua, and to our Lord's ministry on earth, in the description of the witnesses, we may see that this evil was typified by the Egyptian bondage \*, by the apostasy of the ten tribes, and particularly in the time of Jezebel, ver. 6. by the Babylonish captivity, ver. 4. and by the Jews in the days of our Lord's ministry, and their joining with the Roman governor to crucify him, ver. 8. It is also pointed out as the anti-type of filthy Sodom, where Lot's righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, and which was destroyed with fire and brimstone after he was brought out of it, ver. 8. And in the killing of the witnesses, Antichrist is represented in his tyrannical persecuting power, as a beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit. But this is more fully set forth in the 13th and 17th chapters. That which is especially to be considered here, is, the

\* Compare ver. 6. and 8.

the treading of the outer-court of the temple of God under the feet of the Gentiles. And we may observe, that, in the measuring of the temple, there is a reference to the measure spoken of by Ezekiel; but in this measuring the reed is in the hand of John, and he is called to measure only the inner temple, and the altar, and them that worship therein, or the Holy Catholic church, and them that worship in spirit and in truth, drawing near to God in the heavenly sanctuary, through the veil of Christ's flesh. This could not be profaned by Antichrist; and he is forbidden to measure the outer-court and the holy city, as not answering to the word of the apostles, and not being any way capable to undergo the trial of God's word, the only rule for measuring the temple. And by this court of the temple without the temple, we are to understand the outward profession of Christianity in the world; and so this is an evil that sprang up under the outward profession of Christianity, and of the worship and service of Jesus Christ; according to what Paul says to the Thessalonians, of the mystery of iniquity already working in the churches of the saints. It is likewise manifest, that this evil must go under the name and outward shew of Christianity; for it is in the court of the temple and holy city, according to what the apostle says of the man of sin, his sitting in the temple of God. But this outward shew and profession of Christianity is such as cannot be measured by the rule of God's word; yea, it is such a profanation of the Christian profession as that profanation of the Jewish temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, which was such, as the Jews that adhered to the law of God, could not worship in it till it was cleansed. For there is a plain reference here unto what is said by the prophet Daniel, of that profanation as a type of this. By the treading of the outer-court of the temple, and the holy city, under the feet of the Gentiles, or nations, we are to understand.

1. The coming in of the nations under the Christian name, and into the communion of the Christian worship, without that influence of the gospel upon them that made men professors of Christianity before; but under the influence of such motives as influence worldly men. And though they were in name Christians, yet they remained truly Heathens, so answered not to the rule of the Christian profession laid down in the New Testament. Now, these are whole nations going under the Christian name, and having a form of Christian worship, a form of godliness, while they visibly deny the power of it, 2 Tim. iii. 5. These are the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, the many waters on which the whore sitteth\*. This had its beginning from the time of the taking away of the Roman emperor Heathen, in the days of Constantine the Great; and it was working before remarkably about the beginning of the third century, when Tertullian wrote of the multitude of Christians in the empire, and about the time of the separation of the Novatians; and the opposition to them made way for it. But this came to perfection when the empire was broken into ten kingdoms, and the Roman emperor was taken out of the way, and these kingdoms took on the Christian name, which is the time when Antichrist began to reign as the eight head of the beast.

2. This treading of the outer-court under the feet of the Gentiles or nations, imports the subjecting of that court unto an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, managed by church-rulers after the manner of the jurisdiction of the lords of the Gentiles; and the bringing in of the power of these nations going under the Christian name, and their kings into that outer-court, *i. e.* the magistrate's power *in sacris et circa sacra*. This was working in the first part of it in the churches of the saints in the days of the apostles, and more after their removal in the affair of one bishop in every church

\* Compare ver. 9. with chap. xvii. 15.

church, and after that in the matter of synods and councils ; but it came not to its height while the power of councils was not attended with secular power. As to the other part of it, it could not be before the Roman emperor Heathen was taken out of the way in the days of Constantine. Yet the disposition of churchmen toward this beforehand appeared, in their application even to the Heathen emperor Aurelian, and the assistance he gave them against the heretic Paulus Samosatenus ; for here it appeared they were pregnant with the conception of iniquity before it was brought forth. But in the days of Constantine it had its nativity, and was nursed up in the days of the Christian emperors, till it came to the stature of a perfect man, when the empire was broken into ten kingdoms, and these gave their power to the beast : for then the power of the holy people was utterly scattered by a pretended ecclesiastical power, and secular power joined with it in ruling the outer-court of the temple of God. And as the holy people were scattered by the mingling of the Gentiles with them in the communion of the visible Christian worship ; so their power was scattered by this foreign power brought in upon their inheritance. See Ezek. chap. xxxiv. 17.---23. Dan. vii. 25. and xii. 7.

3. This treading under foot of the outer-court and the holy city by the Gentiles, imports the bringing of the Gentile superstition and idolatry into that court, and the profanation of the Christian worship thereby. There were many superstitious practices in the church before Constantine : but after the Roman emperor Heathen was taken out of the way, the disposition towards superstition got vent, and the simplicity of the gospel-worship, according to the rule of the gospel, was no more regarded ; and religious honour or worship was paid to martyrs. And when the Gentiles began to enter into the outer-court, they brought their superstition with them ; only it

now



now ran in another channel ; and the Christian worship began to be adorned with worldly pomp and grandeur, more desirable to the Gentiles than the true glory of that worship which they could not perceive. But when Antichrist came to his throne, and the ten kings gave their power to the beast, as his kingdom grew, superstition and abominable idolatry grew with it, and Jesus Christ was honoured in pretence with gold, and silver, and precious things ; till at length all the abominable superstition and idolatry of the Gentiles came under the name of the Christian worship ; and thus the outer-court of the Lord's house was trodden under the feet of the Gentiles.

### S E C T. V.

**H**ERE we may take notice of the time allotted unto this evil, which is here said to be forty-two months. This is the time of the beast's making war after the healing of his deadly wound, chap. xiii. ver. 3. 4. 5. and the time of the woman's flying into the wilderness, and being nourished there, chap. xii. ver. 14. a time, times, and an half, or three years and an half, which is that spoken of by Daniel, chap. vii. and xii. And this is also the same number with the 1260 days, wherein the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, or in the garments of their captivity. Much has been said of these 1260 days wherein the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, taking each day for a year, Ezek. iv. 6. ; and it has been thought that this is the time that must run from the rise to the final ruin of Antichrist ; and in that case, the end of these 1260 years must be the time of the Lord's second coming. For it seems pretty clear, from 2 Thess. ii. that Antichrist's utter destruction will not be till he come. But Daniel has thirty and forty-five days after the 1260 days ; therefore we must either give over the inquiry about the beginning of these  
these

these forty-two months, or 1260 years, or else expect the end of them before the coming of Christ, and the final ruin of Antichrist. And if they end before that, it must be either at the beginning of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and when the vials that consume the man of sin begin to be poured out, or else at the time of the fifth vial, which is poured out on the seat of the beast, and fills his kingdom with darkness.

There have been several conjectures about the beginning of these 1260 prophetic days or years; but, if the scriptures do not fix the beginning of these years to us, all our opinions about it, however feasible they may seem to us, according to our notions of Antichrist, must be but vain guesses. If the following texts do not point out to us the beginning of these years, I see not how it can with any certainty be found out in the scriptures. 2 Thess. ii. 6. *And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time.* Ver. 7. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way.* Ver. 8. *And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.* Rev. xiii. 3. *And I saw one of his heads (the beast's heads) as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.* Ver. 5. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given to him to continue (or to make war) forty-two months.* Rev. xvii. 9. *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.* Ver. 10. *And there are seven kings, (seven forms of supreme government in the city or commonwealth of Rome): five are fallen, (1. kings, 2. consuls, 3. decemvirs, 4. tribunes of the soldiers, 5. dictators; these were no more ruling with sovereign power, or were no more the supreme government in the Ro-*

man commonwealth, as they all had been at times before the Revelation was written); *and one is, (viz. emperors Heathen; this head was when the Revelation was written, and is the sixth head), and the other is not yet come, (the emperors professing Christianity, and drawing a form of Christian religion over the empire; by whom the state of it was mightily changed and altered; so that they may well be called another head to it: and what else can the seventh head be but these emperors?) and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* This last head of the ancient Roman commonwealth did not last two ages by far: for the beast was wounded to death in the seventh head, when Augustulus was deposed, and Odoacer reigned in Italy, in the year of the common computation from the birth of our Lord 476. And though one reigned in Constantinople with the title of emperor till the year 1453, when Constantinople was taken by the Turks; yet, from the forementioned period 476, he could not be esteemed the head of the Roman commonwealth, but one of the ten kings, and his kingdom but a tenth part of the city. Neither did any of the kings that ruled from thenceforth in Italy, or in the western part of the Roman empire, wear the title of emperors till Charles the Great; and he received his crown and title from the bishop of Rome, and gave his power to him as remarkably as any of the ten kings. So that, after the year 476, the Roman empire being already divided into ten kingdoms, and wounded to death in its seventh head, remained united in nothing but the worldly profession of Christianity, and had no government to which it submitted, but the pretended ecclesiastic government of bishops and their councils, among whom the bishop of Rome had the pre-  
cedency. And though there were manifold quarrels and divisions among them, as there had been in the ancient Roman commonwealth before, yet they were one ecclesiastically secular empire still.

*And*

*And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, (even this of which I have been just now speaking, the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, ver. 8. the Roman empire that was before this, and is not, being wounded to death in the seventh head, and broken into ten kingdoms, and yet is, or still remains existing in that one Catholic visible church, whereof the Roman church and its bishop, or a Catholic council of bishops, no matter which, is the head, and to which the ten kings gave their power) and is of the seven, (was nursed up by the seventh head, and is indeed all the seven over again, under another name); and goeth into perdition; (for the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming.) Ver. 12. And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour (or about the same time) with the beast, even the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

These are the texts, if there be any, from which we must learn the beginning of the forty-two months. And from them we may learn, that the beginning of them could not be before the head of the sixth beast fell, and was taken out of the way, which was about the year of our Lord 325. If then we reckon, that the man of sin was then revealed, and that the 1260 years begin there, then they ended about the end of the sixteenth century; when the matter of the national Reformation was come to its height, and to a full settlement and a stand. And so from the time of his nativity, to the time of his falling into a consumption, or from the time of the first trumpet to the time of the first vial, we have the forty-two months, or 1260 prophetic days or years.

But the foresaid texts seem rather to point to the time when the beast was wounded to death in the seventh head, which continued a short space after the sixth fell; or when the Roman empire being broken

into ten kingdoms, yet remained united in that form of Christianity, and in that Catholic ecclesiastic government that took its rise under the Christian emperors; and, when they were taken out of the way, was supported and maintained by the power of the ten kings. And this, at furthest, was the time when the empire in the west ended in Augustulus in the year 476.

Hereabout then must be the beginning of Antichrist's reign, if it be to be found out by the scripture: and so the forty-two months or 1260 days, is the time that runs from thence unto the time of the vial that is poured out on the seat of the beast, and fills his kingdom with darkness; which, according to this reckoning, cannot be far off. For, from the year 476 to the year 1736, are 1260 years. And it will not be easy, according to the forecited texts, to fix the beginning of the 1260 days later than the 476th year of our Lord.

If we admit not the explication before hinted of the time spoken of by *Palmoni*, or the wonderful numberer in Daniel's vision, chap. viii. 13. 14. but chuse rather to understand 2300 prophetic days or years that begin when Daniel had that vision, and end at the cleansing of the outer-court of the Lord's house, from the profanation of it by the Gentiles; then, supposing, according to the common computation, that Daniel had that vision 553 years before Christ's nativity, these 2300 years end within this century, and this makes the time wherein we live to be the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

But when we consider, that the three years and an half are the same thing with forty-two months, and these the same with 1260 days, we find that these prophetic years are made up of months consisting precisely of thirty days, and so cannot answer exactly to our years. So that till the precise year of Daniel's vision, and of Christ's nativity, and of the beginning of Antichrist's reign can be condescended on, and  
the

the difference betwixt the prophetic years and ours be adjusted, (1260 of our years are about eighteen years more than 1260 prophetic years) no particular year can be condescended on; yea, and the nature of the thing perhaps may be found not to admit of such a particular condescension. For the filling of the Antichristian kingdom with darkness, is a work of Providence upon the minds of men, and of the spirit of the Lord's mouth upon the consciences of them that are subject to the word of God; and this is a work that is done with less observation, and takes up more time, than the fighting of a battle, or destroying of a city.

If Antichrist came to his throne in the fifth century, when the Roman empire was wounded to death in the seventh head, and broken into ten kingdoms, and yet remained united in the Catholic ecclesiastic body, supported by the power of the ten kings; then his kingdom must be filled with darkness in the eighteenth century, which is now running: and if we find not the end of the 1260 prophetic days in this age, it will be hard to shew that the scripture tells us where to find it, or at what time to expect it.

Now, though the Lord began to consume the man of sin, and break the strength of the great city, by the preaching of the everlasting gospel, and beginning that division of the city into three parts, or three communions, *i. e.* the Popish, Lutheran, Zuinglian or Calvinist, which division is to continue till the utter destruction of the whole city by the seventh vial, Rev. xvi. 19. yet the kingdom of the beast (which is the dominion of the clergy over the consciences of the men of the nations or kingdoms, whose power is given to them to keep the nations in subjection to them) was not much touched till this age. For even the nations that are in the Calvinist communion have been as much under the dominion of the national clergy, as the nations in the other communions have been

been under the dominion of their clergy; and they have had the power of the kingdoms, where they are keeping men in subjection to their authority, even as the other. And though the gospel has been more purely preached in these nations, and more of the Lord's people have been thereby in that part of the city; yet the main body of the nations in that communion, were still the Gentiles treading under foot the outer-court of the Lord's house; and the clergy ruled over the superstitious people as the lords of the Gentiles, and with the power of the lords of the Gentiles.

But now, in this age, the world (which is the world still, whether its course be in the channel of superstition or infidelity) seems to be taking a remarkable turn towards infidelity, such as never was before, since Antichrist came to his throne, and since the outer-court was given to the nations, *τοῖς ἔθνεσι*, to be trodden under foot of them forty-two months. This weakens the kingdom of the beast far more effectually, than if, by the armies of the ten kings, the Pope, and the place where he dwells, and the society of the Jesuits, were destroyed, in order to establish any one national uniformity and clergy in his stead. Now, this bias that the world is under at present, is very grievous to the clergy, so that they are gnawing their tongues for pain at it; and likewise at this, that they cannot have the concurrence of the secular power as formerly, to establish their uniformity and to persecute; which is another evidence of the falling of the Antichristian kingdom. Yet it is manifest, from their whole way that are vexed with this, that they repent not of their deeds. And from what they yet profess, and have power to do, it is very plain, that they would lord over mens consciences, and persecute with the power of the kings of the nations, as much as ever they did, if they had but opportunity: but, instead of that, they are losing ground every day, and this torments them.

Further,

Further, as the Lord has been by his word manifesting other national churches that are divided from the Roman church to be Antichristian; so, at this day, he is by his word bringing home the same charge on this national church, which of all others has been esteemed the purest, and has long boasted in its freedom from every thing Antichristian, while it has been charging other national churches with Antichristianism. And now their national covenants, and the constitution of their church, wherein they have gloried much in opposition to Antichrist and Babylon, appear, by the word, to be no more but a human invention, and an engine for mingling Christ's people and the world, or treading the outer-court under the feet of the nation, and for persecution, and establishing the dominion of the clergy over the nation; that, by the assistance of the secular power, they might rule like the lords of the Gentiles over all the people of a nation, having a form of godliness, and yet for the most part openly denying the power of it.

From such the Lord is now by his word persuading his people to turn away, and to separate themselves from the people of the nation, unto his law, to do what is found written therein, as the returning captives from typical Babylon did with respect to the law of Moses. And though they be but a weak and feeble people, yet they have the word of the Lord of hosts, and his spirit remaining among them, to consume the man of sin, and to repair the desolations of many generations. In this matter, the Lord is proceeding in his usual way, to stain the pride of man's glory, that he alone may be exalted; and answering the prayers of his own people in the nation by terrible things in righteousness, and not in the way they were expecting. For when they were praying for the bringing down of the Antichristian kingdom, they thought it would be by the sacking of Rome, the destruction of the Pope, and the exaltation



ation of their national church, and its order, as the Jews looked for the exaltation of their nation by the coming of the Messiah; but instead of that he is by his word, manifesting, that the very constitution and frame of their church is Antichristian, and calling his people to come out, while at the same time, he is, in his holy providence, filling that part of the Antichristian kingdom with darkness.

Moreover, the Lord is at this day striking at the root of all national churches, and overthrowing the principles upon which a worldly kingdom has been raised unto Christ by the kings of the earth, and a ministry minding earthly things; by shewing the nature of his kingdom as it is not of this world, and as it is distinguished from the typical kingdom of Israel, whereof it is the antitype. For by taking the kings of the earth instead of the kings of Judah, (who were types of Christ as well as the prophets and priests) and their kingdom instead of the kingdom of Judah, (which was a type of the church and heavenly kingdom of Christ) and explaining the Old-Testament prophecies in a private way, and without any foundation for such an interpretation in the New Testament, they have raised a worldly kingdom for Christ, by the assistance of the kings of the earth giving their power to the clergy. And this is the kingdom of Antichrist. Thus the Antichristian church had its birth in the days of Constantine; and thus Antichrist came to his throne when the ten kings gave him their power; and thus the nations that revolted from Rome became churches, as is manifest from their confessions of faith touching the magistrate, and his power about the worship of God, and matters of conscience and religion. But now the Lord is by his word manifesting the falsehood of these principles, and by bringing the nature of his kingdom further to light, filling the Antichristian kingdom with darkness; and thus the 1260 years are coming to an end.

## S E C T. VI.

**T**HE power that supports the Antichristian kingdom, is the power of the fourth beast in Daniel's vision, which is the Roman empire; as is manifest from the 13th and 17th chapters of this book. The woman, the false church, sits on this beast: but Antichrist reigns by this power after it is broken and healed again, and his dominion is an image of the Roman empire that was wounded to death in the seventh head.

The dominion of the clergy over the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, within the bounds of the Romish empire; and by virtue of the power of the ten kingdoms, into which that empire was broke, when it received the deadly wound, is set forth, chap. xvii. under the notion of an eighth head to the beast, and chap. xiii. under the notion of another beast having horns like a lamb, and speaking like a dragon, exercising all the power of the first beast; and by signs and wonders deceiving them that dwell on the earth, saying that they should make an image to the beast that was wounded to death, and did live; for he had power to give life to the image of the beast, that this image should speak, and cause them be killed that would not worship the image of the beast.

So that the power of the ten kingdoms, supporting the dominion of the clergy over the nations, within the bounds of the empire, is indeed the Roman empire; the beast with the ten horns, or a living image of the old empire, exercising all the power of it to keep the nations in subjection. For by the deceivableness of unrighteousness, and the superstitious fear of the authority of the clergy, begot upon mens minds, together with the fear of the power of the ten kings, the nations and multitudes of people in the bounds of the empire, have been as effectually enslaved, and in as great subjection to the dominion

nion of the clergy, and any that resisted it, suffered as effectually as those who were obnoxious to the old Roman empire before it was wounded to death. Yet it behoved all ranks of men in the nations, to give some token of their subjection to this dominion of the clergy, or otherwise be deprived of liberty of commerce, and the privileges of the nations. For no man might buy or sell without the mark of the beast, *i. e.* a sign of subjection to his authority, and some badge of their citizenship in that great city.

The number of the beast 666, opposed unto the Lamb's number, 144, is to be understood by man's way of numbering; and the conjecture that it arises out of 25, as the Lamb's number out of 12, as its square root, and that as the number 12 prevails in the true church, so does 25 in the Antichristian Roman church, the mother of harlots, is very ingenious, nor can it be easily shewed to be false. It is manifest, that the number of the beast is opposed to that of the Lamb, or the number of the persecuting to that of the patient society; and that the one exceeds the other vastly. It is likewise evident, that the number of the patient society that is with the Lamb, arises out of 12, as its square root, and that society has its foundation in the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. We see likewise the use of the number 144, with its square root, 12, in the description of the new Jerusalem, chap. xxi. It is also plain, that 666 has no other square root but 25, which is more than double the number 12. Now, as it is said the Roman church was at first divided into 25 parishes, after it departed from the apostolical institutions, of which parishes the 25 presbyters under the bishop of Rome were the first cardinals; so the author of this conjecture gives a great many instances of the prevalency of the number 25 in the Roman church, even as 12 prevails in the description of the new Jerusalem. Whatever society then under the name of a church has a broader founda-

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tion than the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, though it will certainly thereby be larger and more numerous than the true church, yet it so far has the number of the beast's name.

This second beast giving life to the image of the beast that was wounded to death, or this eighth head of the beast which is of the seven, seems to be the same thing with the little horn which Daniel speaks of, as coming up among the ten horns of the fourth beast. For these ten horns are said, in the Revelation, to be ten kings that receive power one hour with the beast, or Antichrist, which is the horn that makes war with the saints, and prevails against them. It is said of this horn, that he is diverse from the ten kings, and that he shall subdue three of these first horns; which may signify the rise of the Pope's temporal principality, by the fall of the kingdoms of the Goths, of the Greeks, and of the Lombards in Italy. But though these three first horns were plucked up to establish this horn diverse from the ten; yet the number of ten horns or kingdoms still remains, and the ten kings will give their power to the beast till the words of God be fulfilled. Therefore, though there have been great confusions among the nations within the bounds of the empire, yet the number of ten crowned heads and kingdoms remains unto this day, and shall remain in some shape or other, till the stone cut of the mount without hands smite the great city upon the ten toes. The tenth part of the great city fell when the kingdom of the Greeks in Constantinople was destroyed by the Turks, whose power then came to its height, and to a stand; and so the second wo past, Rev. xi. 13. 14. 15. compare chap. viii. 13. and chap. ix. 12. 13. 14. But still the number of ten kingdoms stands in the Antichristian world, and shall stand till the words of God be fulfilled.

The beast did not kill the saints for a long time after their power was scattered, and the outer-court

trodden under foot. Though the witnesses prophesied in sackcloth, *i. e.* in the garments of captivity, Zech. iii. 3. from the beginning of Antichrist's reign, and even of his appearance; yet the beast did not kill them, till their testimony was completed, or brought to some perfection. Now, their testimony was almost quite extinguished by the persecution of the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Bohemians; so that it lay dead for a short time before its resurrection at the time of the Reformation, when the seventh trumpet began to sound, and the vials began to be poured out upon the Antichristian world. However, as the beast is an emblem of tyrannical, persecuting, destroying power, so during the time of his reign, he holds the saints in captivity: and though he have not power utterly to destroy the testimony against him by persecution, as he did when he was in his full strength before the Reformation, and before the earth helped the woman; yet still, so far as his power takes place, he persecutes the remnant of the woman's seed: yea, even when his consumption by the vials comes the length to fill his kingdom with darkness, we are told, *they repented not of their deeds.* Yea, after that we find Antichrist gathering the kings of the earth and their armies unto the battle of the great day. So that even when his kingdom is filled with darkness, he will be endeavouring persecution, till he be fully destroyed by the seventh vial, and the brightness of the Lord's coming.

As patience is every where in the Revelation the character of the true church, so in all the representations of the false church, and the Antichristian kingdom, persecution appears especially; and the destroying beast is always the opposite of the meek and patient Lamb. As this character appears evidently in all the descriptions of Antichrist, so it is much insisted on in that most notable description that is given us of this evil in the 17th chapter, where the false church and the Antichristian kingdom is set forth

forth as the especial object of the Lord's vengeance, by one of the seven angels that had the seven vials that contained the wrath of God against Antichrist.

In that vision we have the false church represented under the emblem of a woman, as is also the true church, chap. xii. which is the antitype of the Old-Testament church, frequently represented under the notion of a woman that had the Lord for her husband; and the New-Testament church is frequently thus spoke of in the prophecies. The false church pretends to be the spouse of Christ: but is, indeed, the antitype of Babylon, that is frequently spoke of in the Old Testament as a woman.

The meaning of the word *mystery* throughout the New Testament seems to be the hidden sense of a figure; and particularly in this book, as appears from chap. i. 2. and from the 7th verse of this 17th chapter. According to this scriptural use of the word *mystery*, the church is the mystery of many figures and figurative prophecies of the Old Testament, and particularly of the old Zion. And the Antichristian church is also the mystery of many figures and figurative prophecies of the Old Testament, and so she is called MYSTERY. But especially she is the mystery of all that is said in the prophecies about Babylon; and so she is called *Babylon the Great*. The Old-Testament Babylon was but a poor figure of this Babylon. It is manifest from verse 9. and 18. that the Roman church is here intended.

This church is the head of the grand apostasy from Christ, and opposition to him. With respect to all other false churches to which the name of *Babylon* may be applied, according to the measure of their conformity to her, she is *Babylon the Great*. And whereas she calls herself the holy mother of God's children, and the holy mother church, on whom all churches should depend, as on the mother, and so would pass for the true spouse of the Lord Jesus Christ; she is declared in the vision to be *the great*

*whore, and the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth.* Babylon was remarkable for idolatry; so is there idolatry in mystical Babylon the Great, as may be gathered from chap. ix. 20. But Babylon was especially the type of the Antichristian kingdom, on account of the persecution of the people of God, the destruction of their temple, and on account of their captivity and bondage there; on which account also, the Antichristian society is also spiritually called *Egypt*.

It has been thought, that by the fornication of the whore, is to be understood, the idolatrous worship of saints and angels, and the image-worship of the Roman church, as the church of Israel was said to play the harlot, when she committed idolatry. But we find the fornication of the Antichristian society distinguished from their worship of demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, chap. ix. 20. 21. It is true, the fornication of the whore, the mother of harlots, is indeed idolatry, but of another kind, that answers full as well to what the Old Testament says of Israel's fornication. The whore pretends, that as the church of Israel was espoused to the Lord, so is she to the Lord Jesus Christ, and the mother of his seed, the children of God. On account of this great pretence, and her acting every way as inconsistent with it, as ever the church of Israel did when she took up with others in the place of her husband, the Lord; she is called the whore, and that in opposition to the bride the Lamb's wife. And the grand apostasy from the primitive Christian institution in the New Testament, and that under some form of Christianity, is very fitly compared to Israel's apostasy from the covenant of God.

Wherein then lies the fornication on account of which this great society is called the whore, and the lesser societies copying after her, are called harlots? Why, it is expressly said, chap. xvii. 2. *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication,*  
and

*and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. And chap. xviii. 3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacy. And ver. 9. And the kings of the earth who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her.*

This fornication, then, is with the kings of the earth. By virtue of this, she sits on many waters, peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. By virtue of this, she is arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls; and the merchants are enriched by her. And by virtue of this, she has the power of the kings to keep the nations in subjection to her, and to shed the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. And this great whore, the mother of harlots, (as imperious as ever Babylon the lady of kingdoms was) reigneth over the kings of the earth, with whom she commits fornication. For she sitteth on the beast having ten horns, which are ten kings.

Now, in what sense can she be said to commit fornication with them, but in being so joined with them, as the church of Christ ought only to be with him, and in taking them some way in his place, who is the only husband of the true church, or in giving to them what the church can only lawfully give to Jesus Christ? And all this must be done under a cover, as in the case of whoredom, or of a wife's treacherously departing from her husband, and admitting another in his room.

The first thing in this treacherous departure of Christian preachers and professors from Jesus Christ, as the alone husband of the true church, was their ascribing the throne of David, where Christ alone sits, unto the Roman emperor, and afterward unto the ten kings; and so they admitted them into the

room



room of Christ, as the antitypes of those that sat on the throne of David; and allowed them to act towards the church, and about the Christian worship, as the good kings under the Old Testament did about the temple of Jerusalem.

And as God, the Lord of all the world, separated the nation of Israel to be his own kingdom, and was the very king of that kingdom, whose judges and kings were not like the kings of the rest of the nations; but his lieutenants punishing prophets that led men to idolatry, as rebels against the King of the nation, whose government was a theocracy: so they made the kings of the nations in the same sense God's lieutenants, and so put them in the place that Jesus Christ has in the true Israel; to do every thing in the nations where they rule, that was proper for the kings of Judah to do in God's kingdom, and that is proper for Jesus Christ to do in the church, which is his kingdom.

The next thing that followed upon this, was, that as Christians were before made by the word and spirit of Christ, the rod of his strength, and thereby taken out of the nations as a people for his name; so now the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, became Christian by the influence of the powers of the earth, setting aside the old national forms of religion, and establishing a form of Christianity in their place. These are the multitudes and nations, on which the whore sitteth, and which tread under foot the outer-court of the Lord's house; and who were begotten by the powers of the earth, thus joined with the church, that appears hereby a whore, taking others in the room of her husband, to beget children.

The bringing in of the nations in this manner to the church, (and they could not otherwise be brought in; for, when the influence of the gospel was greater in the days of the apostles, and afterward, there were never so many converted) made a

remarkable

remarkable change in the profession of Christianity. For as the natural dread of a Deity makes it necessary that mankind should have some form of religion; so the nations can never be brought to submit to any form that is not consistent with the fulfilment of their worldly lusts, and the pursuit of their worldly interests. But the primitive Christian profession was a strait and narrow way, inconsistent with the fulfilment of mens lusts, and that could not subsist with that pursuit of mens worldly interests, without which the nations of the world could not easily subsist. Therefore they shaped the Christian profession for the nations; and thus they came to have a form of godliness, while they denied the power of it; a form well consistent with the denial of the power: and this is not the Christian, but Antichristian profession.

When the nations were thus brought under a form of Christianity, adapted to them, the kings of the earth became the supporters and defenders of that form, by their power, against all opposers. Thus, the whore came to sit on the scarlet-coloured beast, adorned with all the glory of the world, instead of the beauty of the Lord Christ that is upon the true church; and persecuting the saints and martyrs of Jesus, whose profession of keeping the commandments of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, is inconsistent with the national form of Christianity, whereof the kings of the earth, with whom the whore commits fornication, are defenders; even as Jesus Christ is the defender of the true church, and the true Christian profession.

John is represented as wondering with great admiration, when he saw a woman something like a church, a professed spouse of Christ, yet the antitype of Babylon, sitting so adorned with worldly ornaments on a scarlet-coloured beast, and drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. The inconsistency of these things with all the apprehensions he had of a church having a pretence of being the

the spouse of Christ, filled him with admiration. The vision of a persecuting church astonished him. When he saw the Roman church, that was once espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin, represented to him in this terrible shape, and called, *Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots*, he wondered with great admiration.

If the whore sit as a queen by the power of the kings of the earth that commit fornication with her, then, according to the measure of their ceasing to commit this fornication, and withdrawing their power from her, she must be desolate and naked, and her flesh eaten by them, and burnt in the fire. While they agreed, under the conduct of Holy Providence, to uphold and defend that form of Christianity, which is the Antichristian uniformity, *καὶ οὐκ ἔσονται ἑνωμένοι*, Rev. xvii. 17. And before that oneness of mind was broke, the whore sat in state. But so soon as the kings of the earth began in any measure to disagree about that profession or form of Christianity that they were to maintain and defend, and to take possession of the riches of the church for themselves, then they began to make her desolate, and to eat her flesh. But still their kingdom will not be utterly and in all respects withdrawn from the beast, till the word of God be fulfilled. Yea, even in the final overthrow of Babylon, they will be found lamenting for her. And when the Lord comes from heaven, he will find the kings of the earth and their armies, with the beast and the false prophet, gathered together against him and his kingdom, Rev. xvi. 13. 14. and xix. 19.

## S E C T. VII.

**T**HE ruin of Antichrist is contained under the seventh trumpet, which comprehends under it the seven vials, whereby the Antichristian world is consumed and destroyed to the end. In the conclu-  
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sion of the sixth trumpet, under which the witnesses were killed, and lay dead in the street of the great city, (and whose testimony revived in the preaching of Luther and Zuinglius) there were some things that made way for the consuming and destroying the man of sin, as the falling of the kingdom of the Greeks and the Greek church, by the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, who are represented as a plague upon the Antichristian world, chap. ix. 20. 21. The Greeks that fled into the west at the taking of Constantinople, brought with them the knowledge of the Greek Testament. The increase of knowledge by this, and the disputes that had been between the Greeks and the Latins, and among the Latins themselves, about the authority of their popes and general councils, and in their controversies with the Wickliffites and Bohemians, made way for the consuming of that kingdom of darkness, by the light of the gospel. The terrible convulsions of the Roman church by the schism of the different opposite popes, and the opposition betwixt popes and councils, did also make way for the sounding of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the vials on the Antichristian world.

In the 14th chapter we see that the fall of Babylon is declared to be the issue of the preaching of the everlasting gospel to the nations, and of the making it known to the nations, kindreds, and tongues. And upon the proclamation of the ruin of Babylon thereby pointed out, and devoted to destruction, and the denunciation of the wrath of God against the worshippers of the beast and his image, and those that receive his mark in their foreheads, or in their hand, we see them that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, represented, in consequence of this, as sufferers, and suffering unto death; and they are pronounced blessed. Then there are two remarkable periods of the ruin of Babylon; first, a harvest wherein the Son of man appears with his

crown, which perhaps may answer unto the fifth vial, that fills the kingdom of the beast with darkness; and then a vintage wherein the wine-press of the wrath of God is trod, which may answer unto the seventh vial, and the battle of the great day that finally ruins Antichrist. This similitude of the harvest and vintage, is taken from the prophet Joel, chap. iii. 13. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great.* And in that context the prophet seems to be speaking of the end of the world, and the judgment to come. The harvest is before the vintage; and so we have the harvest of Babylon before her vintage. There seems to be a reference in what is said, in the Revelation, of the harvest, to that which is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. li. 33. *The daughter of Babylon is like a threshing-floor, it is time to thresh her; yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come.*

In this harvest of mystical Babylon, Christ the Son of man appears with his golden crown, as the King of his church, in opposition to the dominion of the man of sin. And in the season here pointed at, the time of the harvest, the nature of his kingdom must be brought more clearly to light. And while the authority and dominion of the beast is failing, the authority of Zion's King, in his word, must be influencing his people to an open profession of subjection to his authority in his word. Thus he appears with his golden crown, when he fills the Antichristian kingdom with darkness. This is, as it were, a prelude to the glorious appearance of his kingdom at his second coming, spoken of by Daniel, chap. vii. 13. 14.

When he makes this appearance, and is going about the work of the harvest, he is represented as sitting on a cloud; which may import, that his conduct in this work will not be easily comprehended, and that he will set about it, so as not to be easily perceived

perceived by the observation of man's wisdom. Yea, his captives, whom he brings back, will, when he turns again their captivity, be like men that dream. Yet it is a white cloud, enlightened with the gospel of the kingdom, and bringing quiet and tranquillity to his subjects, while he is disquieting the inhabitants of Babylon, and making Babylon desolate. When he is setting about Babylon's harvest, he will regard his appointed dwelling-place, like a clear heat after rain, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest, *Is. xviii. 4.* And when he is filling the Antichristian kingdom with darkness, he sits on a white cloud, for direction, protection, and refreshment to his own subjects. His work in the harvest seems to consist in these two things.

*First,* The gathering together of his people that had been scattered in the Antichristian kingdom. Before the final ruin of that kingdom, he will have them all gathered to him, either by death, or into the churches of the saints, wherein the power of the holy people, that was scattered by Antichrist, is some way restored. His people must be brought out of her, that they share not of her plagues.

But, *next,* his work in Babylon's harvest, is to make her desolate, as a field of corn is by reaping. This is the thing chiefly intended: yet Babylon is not wholly desolate till the vintage, which makes it fully waste, and completes its desolation in a fearful manner.

The issue of the harvest is not represented in the vision, so terrible as the issue of the vintage, which brings the fearful end of Babylon. For in the end of the harvest it is only said, *And the earth was reaped,* *Rev. xiv. 16.;* but in the conclusion of the vintage, which is after the harvest, it is said, *And the wine-press was trodden without the the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs,* *ver. 20.*

As the harvest seems to answer to the time of the fifth vial, so the vintage answers to the time of the

seventh, under which the battle of the great day of God Almighty happens, which is described more particularly, chap. xix. 11. to the end; where Christ is represented, in his coming the second time from heaven, as treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, ver. 15. In the time of that seventh vial we are also told, that great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath, chap. xvi. 19. Thus the fearful final ruin of Antichrist is by the vintage, which coincides with the seventh vial that finishes the mystery of God.

The several steps of the gradual consumption of the man of sin, till he be finally destroyed, are pointed at in the vials which are contained in the seventh trumpet: and we find the things that are declared to belong to the seventh trumpet, chap. xi. 19. ascribed to the vials, chap. xv. 5. 6. and xvi. 18. 21. It was noticed before, that the six vials answer unto the six trumpets. It is likewise observable, that in the plagues contained in these vials, there seems to be a reference to the plagues of Egypt, when the Lord was about to deliver his people from their bondage there. So in the first vial there is a reference to the plague of the boil, Exod. ix. 8. 11.; and in the waters becoming blood, unto that plague of Egypt, Exod. vii. 19. 20. 21.; and in the filling of the beast's kingdom with darkness, unto the Egyptian plague of darkness, Exod. x. 21. 22. 23.; and the plague of hail was likewise one of the plagues of Egypt, Exod. ix. 22. 26.

When we consider how the six vials and six trumpets answer to one another, and find Mahomet, and the powers supporting him, in the sixth trumpet, it would seem that the drying up of the river Euphrates is the destruction of the Mahometan powers. But it likewise appears, that in the sixth vial there is an allusion to the preparing the way of Darius and Cyrus, the kings of the Medes and Persians, into old Babylon,

lon, by the drying up of the river; when, turning it out of its channel wherein it ran through the city for its defence, they marched into the city through that channel, and took it. It is certain this was the way that these kings of the east became masters of Babylon. It is also clear, from Is. xlv. 28. and chap. xlv. that Cyrus, that king of the east, was a type of Christ, in subduing Babylon, delivering the captive Jews, and building their temple. So we find the Lord speaking thus, Is. xlv. 27. 28. *That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: that saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd.*

But how the Mahometan affair, especially the kingdom of the Turks, that was at first a scourge upon the Antichristian world, Rev. ix. 20. is any way a strength to it, as Euphrates was to Babylon; or rather, how the ruin of it shall make way for the ruin of mystical Babylon, as the drying up of the great river Euphrates made way for the kings of the east, to take old Babylon, cannot be so well understood till the event manifest it.

They that have commented on the book of the Revelation, seem to be at a great loss in the explication and application of the vials. Some carry the first of them far back, and make them end in the preaching of the first reformers. But if the preaching of the reformers was the revival of the witnesses, which seems very probable, then that was immediately before the sounding of the seventh trumpet; and that trumpet brings the end of time, as is plainly declared. Now, the seven vials are comprehended in the seventh trumpet, as the seven trumpets are comprehended under the seventh seal; and the seventh vial has no other seven under it. But, as has been observed, there comes a voice when it is poured out, saying, *It is done.* And it is manifest, by comparing the latter end of chap. xi. with chap. xv. and xvi. that the things which fall out under the seventh trumpet, are brought to pass by the vials.



The first vial poured on the earth, whereby a noisome and grievous sore falls on the men that have the mark of the beast, seems to point at the breach of that uniformity that had been upheld by the united power of the kings of the earth. When the kings or powers began to divide about the form of Christianity they were to maintain and defend in their kingdoms, (and no other but an earthly form of it would be drawn over any whole earthly nation, and defended and supported by earthly power); this could not but occasion such a pain all over the Antichristian body, as such a solution of continuity (to speak in the old style of some physicians) makes in the natural body. When there came to be such a variation in the mark that they should wear, and the image of the beast, that was entire before, came to be thus mangled, it could not but be noisome and grievous to the wearers of the mark, and worshippers of the image of the beast, or the men whom it behoved to embrace that form of religion, and pay reverent submission and subjection to that authority of the clergy, that the king or power of the earth, under whom they lived, established, supported, and defended.

By this breaking of uniformity, and this division of the powers of the earth, about that one opinion or form of Christianity that they had supported and maintained before, there came to be three distinct stated communions, the Popish, the Lutheran, the Zuinglian or Calvinist. Other divisions there are in the great city; but these are the three communions, standing in the greatest opposition to one another, so as not to be united together.

This is the division of the city into three parts, not mentioned indeed till the seventh vial: but there it is spoke of as the state wherein that vial finds the great city; a state preceding the falling of the cities of the nations, by a great earthquake; even a state of the city Babylon, before the giving unto her the cup of the fierceness of God's wrath. This was be-  
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ginning to be the state of the city, from the time of the first vial, till the seventh finds it in this condition; and then, by the greatest of all earthquakes, makes the cities of the nations fall, and every island flee away.

This first plague upon the Antichristian world, followed upon the preaching of the everlasting gospel by Luther and others, and was a consequent upon it; as the plagues of Egypt began after Moses's message to Israel, and to Pharaoh, and his refusing to let Israel go. After this, the light of the gospel could not be so far extinguished, nor the testimony of the Lord's witnesses be again so laid dead, as it had been before, in the case of the Waldenses, Wickliffites, or Bohemians, Rev. xi. 7. 11. For by means of this division it had a more free course. Thus the kings of the earth, pursuing their own interest, and having their own earthly views, helped the woman, and so far swallowed up the flood of persecution, that the testimony of the gospel could not again be laid dead as before its resurrection, Rev. xii. 16.

Thus Babylon began to fall by the first vial after the preaching of the everlasting gospel to the nations, Rev. xiv. 6. 7. 8. : and that was not merely the preaching of Luther, but also the translation of the gospel into the languages of the nations, and thereby spreading the light of it among them. After this began, Babylon began to fall, by the first vial, and the division of the city into three parts, beside other lesser breaches of the one form of religion. From that time forward she falls more and more, and can never recover her primitive strength and glory, but must continue to waste, till she be utterly destroyed by the seventh vial.

The second and third vials are upon the waters, which, in this book, signify peoples, nations, multitudes, and tongues. These are the waters whereon the whore sitteth, Rev. xvii. 1. 15. The second vial is poured on the sea; which, according to this, must  
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be the main body of the Antichristian people, or subjects of Antichrist. Now, this vial turns the sea into blood, and makes it as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul dies in this sea. Blood denotes wars, fightings, strifes, of one kind or another. And this seems to denote that universal fret and rancour begot in the minds of the generality of the Antichristian people against one another, and that universal strife and contention throughout the extensive body of that people, about the mark they should wear, and the form of the image they should worship; which natively followed upon the disagreement of the powers about the form of Christianity they should support and defend.

Instead of that unity and regular motion it had before it was broke, it has now no regular course; but, being moved every way against itself, and obstructed, can have a lively thorough motion no way; so it becomes like the blood of a dead man. Thus in this sea, and in the body of the Antichristian people, there came to be such a difference about the form of Christianity, that every one wished universally to prevail, as while one party violently rushed one way, it was obstructed by another, as violently rushing the contrary, which last, in its turn, received the like obstruction from the former. So that, as the blood of a dead man, it could not have a regular course through the whole channel of the body wherein it ran: but, by the obstruction of the passages, stagnated; part of it in one vessel, part in another.

When the sea, or the main body of the Antichristian people becomes thus as the blood of a dead man, it is said, *every living soul dies in the sea*. This cannot be the life of Christianity extinguished by contention about forms. For it is not the Christian, but the Antichristian life, that is hurt by the vials, and this is a life that had been among the Antichristian people, not Christ's people, that is extinguished by discord among them. Life imports joy, satisfaction,  
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and pleasure; and we see much of this life among the Antichristian people, when the testimony against Antichrist was laid dead, Rev. xi. 10. But this vial that turns this sea into blood, puts an end to this life; so that in no one part of the Antichristian world, are any to be found rejoicing in the universal prevalency of any one party, but an universal grief throughout the whole, because of disappointment in this respect.

Again, life imports union and power of motion. Now, all endeavours of union among the three parts of the divided city became ineffectual. Nor was there any more in any one of the parts a power of action and motion through the whole; each part of the sea or main body of the Antichristian people remaining stagnated in its own vessel, as the blood of a dead man, without any union or power of communication and free passage among the parts of the Catholic body; so they that struggled to establish an union among any of the parts, and to make a communication among them in any shape, became as fishes attempting to swim in a sea of stagnated blood.

Thus the division of the great city that was begun when the powers of the earth began to disagree, as under the first vial, came to be established and confirmed by the second, the consequent of it, and will in all appearance stand till the seventh vial. And this work of the second vial, connected with, and following upon the first, could not well be without some war and bloodshed. But this seems to be specially pointed at under the third vial, though what is there said may refer to both.

The third vial is poured upon the rivers and fountains of waters. If the sea signify the main body of the Antichristian people, the rivers and fountains of waters must signify particular nations and kingdoms of such people, distinguished from one another by the nations of which they are, and where they are educated. Yea, by this time, these people were not only distinguished by their nations and tongues, but

now by the form of religion peculiar to every nation; and even the Popish kingdoms are distinguished some way by their forms of it, as France and Spain. The third vial makes these fountains and rivers of waters become blood; and this points to the wars and bloodsheddings within the bounds of those nations, about the particular form of church-government and worship that should be established in each particular nation; while there have been different sets of people in each nation, and parties of clergy, contending who should be uppermost and rule the nation. The civil wars, and murders, and public executions on all sides, all stirred up and animated by the clergy, either in power or grasping at it, have been a manifest fulfilment of this part of the prophecy; which plainly points at bloodshed upon contentions among the people of any of the nations about national forms of religion: and of this France and Britain, among others, have had their large share. No doubt, every party thought they were contending and fighting for the true religion and the kingdom of Christ, when they were by bloodshed, and war, and persecution, seeking to set up or maintain their own form, together with their worldly interest, unto the extirpation of all that was inconsistent with it. But nothing could be more Antichristian, or contrary to the Spirit of Christ, and the nature of his kingdom; accordingly it brought along with it the just punishment of Antichristian persecutions upon those who were filled with that same persecuting spirit, that had been always one of the marks of Antichrist, and had long before killed the witnesses.

The fourth vial is poured out upon the sun, which must be the light of the Antichristian world; and what should this be but one of these things, or all of them?

1/2, The wisdom of words, or the wisdom of the Scribe and disputer of this world, in opposition to Christ the wisdom of God, revealed in the scriptures,

not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words fit to make men wise to salvation through faith in Christ, and to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, which is the light of the true church.

*2dly*, That which we may call church-policy, or that fleshly wisdom and policy whereby any national form of a church is managed, in a conformity to the course of the world in the nation, or in a consistency with the power of the earth, whereby it is upheld or seeks to support itself. And this is opposite to the simplicity that is in Christ, and to that simplicity and godly sincerity wherein the first ministers of the gospel had their conversation in the world.

*3dly*, That which we may call church-authority, or the authority of any set of clergy over the consciences of the multitudes and people of any nation, by means of the power of any of the kings of the nations or powers of the earth: and this instead of, and in opposition to the authority of Christ and his word over the consciences of his willing people, whom his elders and under-shepherds are to feed and rule only by the authority of his word, and an example of subjection and obedience to his authority in his word.

These three are nearly connected together, and serve to support and maintain one another; and when we speak of the light of the Antichristian world, in opposition to the light of the kingdom of heaven, it must comprehend these three. The pouring out of the vial on this sun seems to have augmented its action and influence; but unto the hurt of the Antichristian world: for it is said power was given to this sun to scorch men with fire, and men were scorched with great heat.

The divisions about forms of religion produced by the three foregoing vials augmented the force of this sun; for these sharpened mens wit to dispute on all the parts of religion, and every thing that pertained to it, till men came to be overheated in all the dis-

putes that the wisdom of words could be exercised in about religion: and church-policy being opposed unto church-policy, grew to a height, to the great vexation of all the parties of church politicians, and of all the people influenced by them. Church-authority also grew more intense by opposition, while they that had been undermost, and felt the smart of it, as exercised by others, came to be uppermost, and obtaining power to exercise it, were no less fervent in the maintaining of it in their own hands. Thus, when it circulated, and met with opposition, it gave no small disquiet to all the slavish subjects of church-authority.

While men were thus scorched by the intense heat of the Antichristian sun, it is said, *they blasphemed the name of God that had power over this and the foregoing plagues.* For it seems the name of God was some way near them, or a profession of the wisdom of his word, and of the simplicity of his gospel, and of subjection to his authority in his word, in opposition to the wisdom of words, church-policy, and church-authority; but they blasphemed this, and poured all manner of spiteful reproach upon it. And further, observing that all this heat was about the Christian religion and the church, and that it came in consequence of the scriptures being laid open to the view of all; they even began to reproach Christianity itself, and the word of God, which is his name, as the cause of these evils. Yea, while each party pleaded something of the word of God, and something of it was opposed by all parties, the name of God was blasphemed among them, so far as it crossed their wisdom and church-authority. This was remarkable in the last age, about the middle, and towards the end; and it made way for the infidelity and disregard of church-authority and policy, as well as universal contempt of persecuting principles that prevails in this age, agreeably to the fifth vial which is now pouring out, and is breaking  
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the dominion of the clergy over the nations, which is the kingdom of the beast, as has been before declared.

Under the fifth vial, which has been some way before explained, Sect. V. it is said, *they blasphemed the God of heaven*, as it was said under the fourth vial, that *they blasphemed his name*. When God fills the Antichristian kingdom with darknes, he appears as the God of the kingdom of heaven, or the heavenly kingdom of Jesus Christ, in opposition to the worldly Antichristian kingdom; and he appears as the God of heaven, ready to set up a kingdom of his saints upon the eternal ruin of Antichrist's kingdom, as is said in Daniel. In this respect he is blasphemed, while his heavenly kingdom, and the appearance of it, are contemptuously spoke of by those who stand well affected to the kingdom of the beast, and, for the sake of that, reproach and blaspheme the kingdom of heaven, even as the Jews did before.

The sixth vial yet to be poured out, seems to intimate,

1<sup>st</sup>, A notable step toward the final ruin of Antichrist, in the drying up of the great river Euphrates, that the way of Christ, the antitype of Cyrus, may be prepared, to put a full end to the Babylonish kingdom, and fully to deliver his captives, and build his temple. Of this we have said something before.

2<sup>dly</sup>, The last effort or struggle of Antichrist, some way to unite the kings of the earth against Christ's kingdom and his people, by the power of delusion, false doctrine and signs; whereby they are prepared for the destruction which is brought by the seventh vial, and is described, chap. xix. from ver. 17. to the end. The call to watch, the promise of blessedness to them that watch and keep their garments, and the warning of Christ's coming as a thief, seem to import, that when Christ is just about to appear, there will be great security and hazard of pollution by the unclean spirits that go out of the mouth



mouth of the beast and false prophet; and that Christ will appear in a time when he is as little expected as in any time whatsoever.

The short account of the effects of the seventh vial in the end of chap. xvi. is more largely set forth afterward. For, after a more clear description of the false church, and the power that supports her, chap. xvii. and a description of her fearful fall, in the lamentation of all ranks of worldly men over her, and in the joy of the church of Christ over her, chap. xviii. and beginning of chap. xix. we have an account of all that is done by the seventh vial from the 11th verse of chap. xix. to the 6th verse of chap. xxi. where we have Christ's coming with all his saints and angels; the destruction of Antichrist by that coming; the reign of the saints; the fearful overthrow of Gog and Magog; the judgment of all the persons of the wicked dead, and their eternal destruction; the new heaven and earth, with the glory of the new Jerusalem, which is more fully described by one of the seven angels that had the vials, from the 9th verse of chap. xxi. to the 9th verse of chap. xxii.; and from thence to the end; lastly, the conclusion of the book and the scripture-prophecy.

### P A R T. III.

**A**S much of the book of the Revelation is taken up in the description of Antichrist, so we have likewise in this book several things said in the description of the true church of Christ, and its condition, from his first to his second coming, yea, and after that.

## S E C T. I.

**T**HERE is an opposition to be observed in the description of the true church and the false, and that in the things wherein they seem some way to agree. The beast, and the Lamb, who is the strength of the true church, are opposed; so are the horns of the beast and the horns of the Lamb; likewise the number of the beast, 666, and the number of the Lamb, 144, arising out of 12 as its square root, as has been before noticed.

In this opposition we are to notice, on the part of the beast, tyrannical persecuting worldly power; for of this that beast is an emblem: but on the part of the Lamb, patience in suffering, and power thereby to overcome. There is likewise a manifest opposition between the woman committing fornication with the kings of the earth, and adorned with such ornaments as they could furnish her with; and the woman *clothed with the Sun*, even the Sun of righteousness, Christ Jesus the glory of the true church; *and the moon under her feet*; having this world changeable as the moon under her feet, and likewise the carnal ordinances of Moses's law, regulated by the moon under her feet; *and upon her head a crown of twelve stars*; wearing the doctrine of the twelve apostles as her crown. This is the true New-Testament church thus distinguished from and opposed to the great whore that sits on many waters, or peoples and nations, and commits fornication with the kings of the earth. And here we may again notice, on the part of the whore, persecution; for she is drunk with the blood of the saints; but on the part of the woman that has the crown of twelve stars, and of her seed, sufferings.

There is also an opposition between the two cities, Rev. xvii. 18. and chap. xxi. 9. 10. We may likewise notice an opposition betwixt the mark of the beast,

beast, and the number of his name, without which no man had freedom of trade in that society; and the seal wherewith the servants of God are sealed, the Lamb's Father's name being writ in the foreheads of those that are with him, even those that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. They that have the mark of the beast and his name, whatever privileges they enjoy thereby in this world, are pointed out as the objects of the divine ruin, displeasure, and wrath. And they that are sealed as the servants of God, and have the Father's name written in their foreheads, are pointed out as the objects of the wrath of the beast, and of his worshippers, and as patient sufferers for the word of God and testimony of Jesus. And whatever losses they sustain in this world, they are blessed of God, and shall at last reign on the earth.

There is likewise an opposition betwixt the nations belonging to the false church, (the nations treading the outer-court under foot, the nations, peoples, and multitudes, which are the many waters whereon the whore sitteth, the nations over which power was given to the beast that makes war with the saints) and the nations belonging to the true church, even the nations of them that are saved, that walk in the light of the new Jerusalem, where none enter but they that are written in the Lamb's book of life, even the kingdoms of this world that become our Lord's, and his Christ's, who shall reign for ever and ever.

The nations of the beast and of the whore, that drink the wine of her fornication; are these worldly societies ruled by the kings of the earth that gave their power to the beast that persecutes the saints. The people of these nations see the dead bodies of the witnesses, and rejoice over them; and these are the nations that hate Christ's disciples, as he said, *Ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake*; for these nations are said to be angry at the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ. But the nations of the  
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true church are the redeemed out of every nation, Rev. v. 9. 10. even that multitude of all nations which come out of great tribulation, and wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 9. 10. 13. 14. &c. These are the nations of them that are saved, of which the prophets spoke, that they should be blessed in Christ, the people that God takes out of the nations for his name, Acts xv. 14. These, however contemptible in the eyes of worldly men, are yet, in God's account, the glory and honour of the kings of the earth, the glory and honour of the nations, Rev. xxi. 24. 26. And these are brought into the new Jerusalem, by means of all the commotions now taking place in the nations of this world, and even by means of all the opposition the nations and their kings make unto them, while they give their power and strength to the beast to persecute them: for they enter into the kingdom of God through much tribulation, Acts xiv. 22.; and they come out of great tribulation, and appear in white before the throne, Rev. vii. 14. and xxi. 24.

Thus after the book of the Revelation had pointed them out in low, humbled, suffering circumstances, following the Lamb that was slain; and the objects of the hatred, contempt, and disdain of the nations of this world and their rulers; they are at last declared to be the glory and honour of the nations: Even as Christ their head, while he was in the world, was by the nation of the Jews disallowed; and they hid their faces from him, as ashamed of him; and the Gentiles set him at nought, and mocked him, and poured all manner of contempt upon him; yet he was chosen of God and precious at the same time, even the most glorious person in the world in the eyes of God, Luke ii. 32. Now, whereas the book of the Revelation sets forth the opposition of the nations of this world and their kings unto the nations of them that are saved, and the bad treat-

ment these followers of the Lamb suffered from them all along ; we are at last told, that they were so far from being able to ruin them by all their power employed against them, that they were, under the conduct of Holy Providence, but serving to bring them into the new Jerufalem, and to everlasting rest and glory there.

By this opposition betwixt the nations that come into the new Jerufalem through much tribulation, and the nations with the power of their kings that belong to the beast and the whore, we may understand what to think of national churches of all sorts, and likewise how to explain all the prophecies of the Old Testament touching the nations, that are pleaded in favour of national churches ; contrary to the whole scope of the New Testament, which speaks very plainly in explication of those prophecies ; and contrary to what this mysterious book of the Revelation teaches us, when it shows us the nations and the power of their kings, and the body of their people on the side of the beast, and describes the nations of them that are saved, spoken of by the prophets, as following the Lamb, and coming out of great tribulation into the new Jerufalem, where those only enter that were from the foundation of the world written in the Lamb's book of life, and who worship not the beast.

It does not appear from the book of the Revelation, that the true church is to have any other kind of rest and prosperity in this world, than it had in the days of the apostles. But, in all that is said of it as distinguished from the Antichristian society, it appears in a low, humbled condition, like Christ in his humiliation ; and like the saints in the days of the apostles, though not in that primitive order that was destroyed by Antichrist. In this humbled condition it remains till Christ come, never rising above what it did in the apostles days ; and as to spiritual prosperity, scarce coming up to that, while the man of

sin remains, who is not finally destroyed till Christ come the second time. Worldly power, rest, and prosperity, are, throughout the book of the Revelation, ascribed to the Antichristian church; while tribulation and patience mark the character of the company that follow the Lamb.

As to the expected national conversion of the Jews, with a general conversion of the nations by the gospel, and a state of outward rest, and freedom from persecution, with power to bear down all false religion in the world, before the second coming of Christ; it will not be easy to find any such thing in the book of the Revelation. I know the 11th chapter of the epistle to the Romans is pleaded for a national conversion of the Jews; but, according to that passage, the nation of the Jews, at that time, must be all elected to eternal life, and they must be all believers, for it is by faith they must all be grafted in. Now, the apostle says only they shall be grafted in, with an *If they abide not still in unbelief.*

Further, he speaks of no other kind of ingrafting of the Jews, but such as that of the rest of the nations, which took place in the apostles days, and they were not ingrafted nationally. The Jews are not to grow naturally on that stock of which they sprang first, namely, the promise of Christ made to Abraham, or Christ in that promise. But these natural branches must be grafted in, if they abide not still in unbelief; and through the mercy of the Gentiles they must obtain mercy.

As we therefore believe the Old-Testament promises about the nations had certainly an accomplishment in the grafting in of the nations, according to the promise made to Abraham; and as it is manifest, no nation of the world, in a national capacity, was then grafted in; so no national ingrafting of the Jews can be there spoke of, but such an ingrafting as was of the nations in the days of the apostles.

The main scope of the apostle in that chapter is declared in the beginning, viz. *That God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.* And so he shews, *that even at that time there was a remnant according to the election of grace.* Agreeably to this scope, he tells the Gentiles, that when the fulness of the nations is come in, *i. e.* when the full number of the elect among all nations is brought unto Christ, then all Israel shall be saved, or, so all Israel shall be saved, *i. e.* all the true Israel; for the election, both Jews and Gentiles, are the true Israel. That this is the apostle's meaning, is evident from his calling what he says, *mystery*, or the hid sense of a figure: and all know that the true Israel is the mystery of Israel after the flesh.

It is also certain, that all that fleshly Israel to which blindness happened, till the fulness of the nations come in, shall not be saved. But the apostle shews the Gentiles this mystery, *That blindness in part is happened to Israel, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved.* To the same purpose he declares, *that God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all, even all the true Israel.*

While the apostle is describing the fearful judgment of Israel according to the flesh, in their rejection, and the advantage of the nations thereby, and is magnifying his office as the apostle of the nations, if by any means he might provoke the Jews, his flesh, to emulation, and save some of them, (which is all he proposes) he brings several things to stain the pride of the glorying of the nations over the Jews, who were rejected, that they might be grafted in. Now, the things he advances to this purpose are insisted on by many, as serving to shew, that the Jews shall be nationally brought in; but no such thing can appear by any of those arguments he draws for staining the pride of the nations, viz.

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1. From the advantages the Jews, the natural branches who were rejected, had beyond them, the wild olives who were ingrafted.

2. From the glory that might appear in grafting them in who were rejected, no less than in their rejection.

3. From the power of God to graft in the natural branches rejected, who grafted in the wild olive branches.

4. From his severity to the natural branches that believed not, which would be no less to the ingrafted branches if they continued not in the faith.

The apostle shews the believing nations, that, if they were to glory in themselves over the Jews that were rejected, these had far greater grounds for that kind of glorying than they, in as much as it was more natural for them to be ingrafted into Christ than they: and as they stood in the stock only by faith, while the natural branches were broken off because of unbelief; so if they continued not in the faith, they should be cut off, and the natural branches broken off through unbelief, should be grafted in, if they continued not still in unbelief.

So that he is neither asserting that the believing Gentiles or nations should be cut off, nor that the unbelieving Jews should be grafted in by faith; but shewing the Gentiles that they stood in the stock only by faith, through the power of divine grace, that was able to graft in the Jews; and therefore there was no reason for them to be high-minded, or to glory over the Jews. In all this there is nothing like a national conversion of the Jews, which some are so big with the hopes of; thereby putting the day of the Lord's coming far away, and expecting a temporal kingdom before he come the second time.

In all the periods of time that are pointed at in the Revelation, we find the members of the true church, that are on the earth, in a state of humiliation, till Christ appear the second time. This is their condi-



tion under the seals, where we find, Rev. vi. 9. 10. 11. the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, crying, *How long? O Lord! holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* The state of these separate souls is expressed by being *under the altar*. Jesus Christ is the New-Testament altar, by whom the church of the living God offers praise continually, Heb. x. 13. 15. This altar of the New-Testament church is set in the higher heavens: and there are the souls of departed saints, in the most intimate nearness with the Lord Jesus. They are under the altar, like the sparrows and swallows nesting about the altar spoken of by David, who envied them when he was kept at a distance.

These souls are employed in the most intimate worship and service of God. They that are on earth look thither by faith, so have access thither, as Israel worshipped from all parts of the land, towards the place where God chose to put his name, even the place where the altar stood. But these souls are under the altar, intimately present with the Lord, and worshipping in the most intimate manner. They are in a state of absolute safety and at rest. They rest from their labours who die in the Lord. As they are under the altar, it is said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season. These souls are perfectly holy; for this is also imported in their being under the altar, and white robes are said to be given them. But whatever be their happiness and glory in their separate state, they are still in a state of expectation, (as also Jesus Christ himself is expecting till his enemies be made his footstool) and are crying for the day of vengeance that God has promised, even the time of the redemption of the body, when all enemies, and death, the last enemy they had on earth, shall be destroyed. In answer to this their cry, it is said, *white robes are given them*; which may import their being cleared of all charges against

against them, and glorified; and possibly it may denote something that supplies the want of their bodies to them in that separate state, according to 2 Cor. v. 2. 3. 4.

Further, in our text, *It was said to them, that they should rest yet for a little season until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.* On which we may observe, that the followers of the Lamb on the earth are fellow-servants with the departed saints, and their brethren in the same family. They are of the same worshipping society, worshipping at that same altar, under which these blessed souls are at rest. They are likewise their companions in sufferings; they must all, in some degree or other, partake in the sufferings and tribulations out of which they have come. And we may plainly see, that this answer that is given them imports, that the day of judgment and vengeance will not come till the sufferings be fulfilled. Then it will come, when the trial of all the elect shall be completed, and all the followers of the Lamb conformed to him in his humiliation. From which we may infer, that the state of suffering and humiliation is to continue with the followers of the Lamb, the worshippers at the heavenly altar, till the day of judgment and vengeance, at the appearing of him that comes in flaming fire to take vengeance.

Under the first six trumpets, the saints are in a state of humiliation and suffering: for then is the rise and reign of Antichrist, when the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and the woman flies into the wilderness, and the nations tread under foot the outer-court of the Lord's house; and we need not seek the prosperity, but the safety of the Lamb's followers, in the time of the prosperity of Antichrist.

Under the vials, however much the Antichristian world be consumed by the first four vials, yet the throne of the beast is not touched, nor his kingdom filled with darkness till the fifth vial; and even then

we are told, they repented not of their deeds. And what are the peculiar deeds of the beast's kingdom, if they be not deeds of persecution? And then under the sixth vial, whereby the great river Euphrates is dried up, we find the three unclean spirits going out of the mouth of the beast and false prophet, to the kings of the earth, to gather them together to battle against Christ. So that until the seventh vial the followers of the Lamb are still under trial, and undermost in the world; and Christ comes with the seventh vial to judge and take vengeance; and then, and not till then, his saints shall reign with him on the earth. There is a time when the earth is said to help the woman, by swallowing up the flood that the dragon cast out of his mouth to carry her away; but even then the dragon is wroth with the woman, and goes to make war with the remnant of her seed, that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. In a word, patience is as much the character of the true church before the coming of Christ, as persecution is of the false.

## S E C T. II.

**W**E have the most remarkable description of the true church from the first to the second coming of Christ, in chap. xii. of the Revelation, which seems to be an explication of the first promise, Gen. iii. 15. For here is the woman and her seed, and the serpent or the dragon; here is the enmity between the woman and the serpent, the sufferings of the seed of the woman, and something of the victory of the woman's seed, as far as this passage carries the history of it: for the final ruin of the serpent and his seed is afterwards declared in the 19th and 20th chapters.

By the woman in that first promise, we are to understand Eve, not as the mother of all that should descend

descend from Adam by her : for in that capacity she had been drawn into friendship with the serpent, and thus all Adam's posterity were involved with him and her in sin and death. But in that first promise she stands in another capacity, in opposition to the serpent, *viz.* as the mother of that seed that should suffer from the serpent, and, by suffering, overcome him and his seed. The mother of that seed betwixt which and the serpent's seed there should be enmity. According to this promise, Christ descended from Eve, being born of a woman, a virgin. And he came not into the world by virtue of that word to Adam and Eve in innocence, *Be fruitful and multiply*, but by virtue of this word, *The seed of the woman shall bruise, &c.* The elect of Adam's race are the seed of the woman, by their being Christ's; even as they are said to be Abraham's seed, by their being Christ's. But we are likewise to consider, that as the elect come into the world, with the rest of mankind by virtue of that word, *Be fruitful and multiply*, they have no relation by flesh and blood to Jesus Christ, more than the rest of mankind. But as they come into the world, and descend from Eve, by virtue of this word, *The seed of the woman*, he is partaker with them in flesh and blood; and so he is related to them by this promise, as he is not to the rest of the world, from whom he and they are distinguished in the promise, as the seed of the woman, betwixt which and the seed of the serpent there is enmity. Adam looking upon Eve, as standing in this capacity in the promise, calls her *the mother of all living*; even all the seed of the woman, in opposition to the seed of the serpent, left under death, and appointed to destruction with the serpent. Thus he professes his faith in the first promise, in the name given to his wife; after she was set up in that promise, in opposition to the serpent, as the mother of that seed that should overcome the serpent and his seed. And as his primitive wisdom appeared in the

name he gave his wife, so his faith appears in the name he gives her; *the mother of all living.*

Further, Eve, in this promise, stands as a type of the church, the mother of God's children, Christ being the first-born among many brethren, the first begotten of the dead; and all his people raised from trespasses and sins, and to be raised from the dead at the last day, the remnant of her seed. This is the true mother of all living; Jerusalem, which is above, and is the mother of us all. Thus, as the apostle Paul expressly makes Hagar a type of the old covenant at Sinai, and the Old-Testament church, and Sarah the type of the New-Testament church and new covenant; so, in this vision that John had of the church as a woman with her seed, the church is set forth as the antitype of Eve, as she is spoke of in that first promise. Yea, we find Eve in another case expressly made a type of the New-testament church, Eph. v. 30. 31. 32. And why she may not be a type of the church considered as the mother of God's children, as well as of the church considered as the spouse of Christ, there is no good reason can be given. Nor is there any reason why the mystical book of the Revelation might not set her forth as the type of the new covenant and New-Testament church, as well as Paul's epistle to the Galatians sets forth Sarah as the type of that same covenant, and that same church.

The description of this woman, the mother of God's children, is very different from that of the whore that commits fornication with the kings of the earth; and the woman, the New-Testament church, is also, by this description, distinguished from the church of the Old-Testament. She appears *clothed with the sun.* She has no other covering, no other ornament, but Christ the Sun of righteousness. With this alone, she far outshines the whore clothed and adorned with the ornaments she has from the kings of the earth, with whom she commits fornication:

ation: for Christ only is the clothing and the glory of the true church. Being thus clothed, she shines as the sun in the eyes of all that behold his glory. Her God is her glory.

She appears with *the moon under her feet*. She is above all the worldly rudiments of Moses's law, tho' yet in some sense she stands on them; and she treads on all the worldly glory that the false church rejoices in. The New-Testament church is not a worldly society; she has this changeable world under her feet: for whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory over the world, even our faith.

She appears with *a crown of twelve stars on her head*. She is not subjected to the law of Moses as the church of the Jews, nor to the doctrines and commandments of men as the false church. She glories not in these: but she wears the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb as her crown. She is a queen; she wears a crown, and reigns as well as the whore. But she reigns only there, where the pure unmixed doctrine of the twelve apostles prevails; and where a subjection to that appears, there she appears reigning: whereas the great whore and the harlot's reign by the power of the kings of the earth, and by that one opinion, *μίαν ὑψάμεν*, which they make.

The first thing we are to notice in the history of this woman, is her *travailing in hard labour to bring forth a son*. This labour was in the death of Christ, and the product of it was Christ, as the first-born from the dead. Thus, he was born *to rule all nations with a rod of iron*. When we consider him as the first-born from the dead, and in that character representing the whole redeemed body, we are not to look upon him quite abstractly from that body whereof he is the head. For as he died to make *of these twain, (Jews and Gentiles) one new man in himself*; so this one new man is the *man-child*, brought forth

forth by the labour and travail that was in the satisfaction given to the law and justice of God in the death of Christ. - And this one new man is to rule the nations with a rod of iron : for Christ declares that his members are to have communion with him in this, Rev. ii. 27.

This *man-child* is said to have been *caught up unto God, and to his throne*, which signifies the exaltation of Christ, the first-born from the dead, and likewise the raising up of his people from trespasses and sins, to sit together in heavenly places, in him their head, the head of his body, the church, which is his fulness. Thus the new covenant and New-Testament church became a mother, when this man-child was brought forth, and caught up to God and his throne ; and then she appeared quite distinct from the Old-Testament church, as being now Jerusalem above, the mother of us all.

In opposition to her, when travailing to bring forth this man-child, and to this man-child, we see a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns on his heads. By which we are to understand, Satan, that old Serpent, directing the power of the Roman empire in the Jewish church, against Christ and his members, or against that one new man, the man-child brought forth by the woman in labour, to destroy him in his first appearance in the world. By the seven heads and ten horns, the power of the Roman empire is described in this book. And though the seventh head was not yet come, when the dragon first appeared against the man-child, and at the time of his birth ; and though the ten horns had not crowns as yet, (for these kings had then no kingdom) yet the power that was then exerted by Satan against the man-child, was the power of that same empire that ruled in the Jewish church, where the woman first appeared travailing to bring forth the man-child.

This power was not only exerted by Satan in the Jewish church against the woman and her man-child, but was engaged in support of the worship then prevailing throughout the empire; even the idolatrous Heathen worship which was in effect paid to Satan: and by this Christianity was opposed in the beginning. As to which idolatrous worship, on the one hand, the dragon and his angels are represented in the vision, as fighting to maintain and support it against the testimony of the woman's seed; and on the other hand, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon, to cast him down from that excellency, and that station which he maintained against the woman and her man-child. The issue of this war is, that the dragon did not prevail in that situation, and was not capable to maintain that high station wherein he was placed against the church, but was cast down from it; and this downfall took place in the demolishing of the church and nation of the Jews, and in the bringing down of the Heathenish religion of the Roman empire.

Herein the church observes and praises God's saving strength, and the power of Christ's kingdom, against that whereby the saints were so long tried, that matter of accusation might be furnished against them. In the war that had this issue, the part of the saints or children of the true church is represented in these words: *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death.* Hitherto, then, they are patient sufferers according to the first promise.

But the issue of this war is not the exaltation of the woman, nor the deliverance of her seed from the opposition of the dragon. For he goes to work another way, with great wrath, and persecutes the woman which brought forth the man-child. No sooner is the man-child brought forth, and the woman rid of the Jewish church, and the opposition from Heathenism,



thenism, than *she flies into the wilderness*. This is twice mentioned. First, verse '6. before the issue of the foresaid war; and it seems to be mentioned there, though it did not fully take place in that period, because, as the apostle said, the mystery of iniquity was then working; and it took place in the issue of the foresaid war which made way for it. The time, times, and half a time, or 1260 days, are the season of Antichrist's reign, as has been before noticed, which could not take place till Satan was cast down from his first station wherein he fought against the church; and thereby it took place, so that deliverance was an introduction of this evil to Christ's members on the earth. So the woman, the church of the New Testament, flies into the wilderness; and the time of her being in the wilderness, after she flies there, is 1260 days, or three years and a half.

In this representation of the woman's flying into the wilderness, there may be an allusion, as some think, unto Israel, in the waste howling wilderness, whom the Lord says he bare as on eagles wings, and who were sustained by him there in an extraordinary manner. But it seems rather to refer to Elijah in the wilderness in the days of Jezebel; and the nourishing of the woman in the wilderness, may refer to his being fed by the ravens; or rather, to his being fed with bread and water brought to him in an extraordinary manner in the wilderness, when he fled from Jezebel, 1 Kings chap. xix. And it is then that he says, ver. 14. *The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, I only am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.*

Some think, that by the two wings of a great eagle given to the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness, we are to understand the power of the two Christian emperors; for when the Roman empire got on the form of Christianity, it was divided under

two emperors. Now, it is true, these Christian emperors did pretend to support Christianity: but, as they cherished the man of sin from his birth, in the time of Constantine, and nourished him till he sat down on his throne; so these wings served for no other purpose to the woman, but to carry her with great speed to the wilderness.

From the time that Constantine began to employ his power in favour of Christianity, the Christian institution laid down by the apostles of Christ (from which Christians had begun to swerve before) was entirely marred and corrupted by the adapting of it to the Roman empire; so that the man of sin, being thus brought forth, grew apace. And in far less than two ages, he was mounting his throne, and the woman was in the wilderness. Therefore, if these be the two wings, the same that cherished Antichrist, they did indeed speedily carry the woman, but carried her into the wilderness, *i. e.* into such a state as that wherein Elijah was when he fled from Jezebel into the wilderness. And there she appeared, not in that order of divine institution wherein she appeared before her flight, and when she was persecuted by the dragon; she is now in the wilderness, and so hid from the face of the serpent. There is not now that visible appearance against him that was in the first churches of the saints. The outer-court of the temple is trodden under foot of the nations, and the woman is hid in the wilderness. There she is supported, not by the means of Christ's institutions in the churches of the saints, but in an extraordinary way, as Elijah was fed in the wilderness.

While the woman is thus away from the face of the serpent, she is not so far beyond his observation, but that he still pursues her with the effects of his wrath. For, though she no more appears openly before his face, as at the beginning in the churches of the saints; yet the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth, and the serpent sets himself utterly to swallow her up,  
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as to any the least appearance she is capable to make even in the wilderness. So he casts a flood of persecution after her, that she might be carried away of the flood. This may answer unto the time of the killing of the witnesses, and to the time of the opposition made to the knowledge of the scriptures, when they began to be brought forth into the languages of the nations.

But he prevailed not in this mischievous attempt. For it is said, *the earth helped the woman, and swallowed up this flood.* The powers of the earth, taking occasion from the bringing of the scriptures to light, to pursue their own interest, opposed the persecution that arose against the word of God; in so much that the scriptures came to light, in the languages of the nations, and continue so. The kings of the earth herein promoted their own ends. But it proved a help to the woman whatever they intended. For, in consequence of this, we have *the remnant of her seed keeping the commandments of God,* (in opposition to the commandments of men); and *having the testimony of Jesus Christ,* in opposition to the testimony of men. But they are still the objects of the serpent's wrath, and they are persecuted no less after the help the woman had from the earth in the preservation of the scriptures. For the dragon is wroth with the woman, and goes to make war with the remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Thus ends the history of the woman, who appears next in the conclusion of this prophecy, at the time of Christ's coming, even in the times of the restitution of all things, as a bride adorned for her husband.

But from this history of the church, from the first to the second coming of Christ, we may observe, that the true church is to be known by these two characters.

1. Faith and obedience to the word of God; in opposition to faith in Antichrist, and obedience to his commands.

commands. Thus we find, in this chapter, *They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.* And again, *The remnant of her seed that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* And chap. xiv. 12. *Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.*

2. Patience in suffering, for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; or for keeping the commandments of God, after the example of the Lamb that was slain. This is likewise manifest in this chapter. And in chap. xiv. 12. we have this also, *Here is the patience of the saints.*

When the woman was hid in the wilderness, these two characters did not appear so remarkably. But where-ever the church is visible, as it was at the beginning, so to the end of the world, these two marks will be visible. And where-ever these appear, there only appears the true church, in opposition to all who hold the doctrines and commands of men, all who maintain persecuting principles, and grasp at worldly dominion: for these are the marks of the false church.

### S E C T. III.

**T**HE two notes or marks of the true church did not so appear on the members of the body of Christ, under the reign of Antichrist, as when they walked in the order of visible churches, according to Christ's institution, before the nativity of the man of sin, and as they will appear when his kingdom is filled with darkness. Yet, even during his reign, these marks someway appeared on all those who suffered patiently from Antichrist, for any part of the word of God and testimony of Jesus Christ. Before Antichrist's nativity, they were very visible in the churches of the saints, as appears from chap. vi. 9. and from chap. xii. 10. 11. And after he begins to fall in consequence

sequence of the publishing of the everlasting gospel, we see them again remarkably, chap. xiv. 12. and from thence to the coming of Christ, chap. xii. 17.

We find two remarkable publications of the gospel in the book of the Revelation, in consequence of which the vengeance of God is executed on the enemies of the gospel, and the true church appears by the foresaid marks.

The first is under the first seal, chap. vi. 1. 2. where the wonderful success of the gospel of the kingdom is represented by *a white horse, and him that sat on him, who had a bow; and a crown was given to him; and he went forth conquering and to conquer.* This was the first publication of the gospel, by the preaching of the apostles, in the languages of the nations, by the gift of tongues. This was followed with vengeance on the prime opposers of the gospel, the Jews; who, after they had been joined with the Romans against the gospel, broke peace with them, and were destroyed by them, after an obstinate resistance: wherein also they killed one another, every man's sword being turned against his fellow, in such sort, that the preservation of any of them was owing to the taking of their city, and destroying their temple. This seems to be pointed at in the second seal, by *the red horse and him that sat on him, to whom it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another,* ver. 3. 4. And though the opening the third seal, ver. 5. 6. seems to represent a failure of the growth and multiplication of the word of God, and the consolations of the gospel, by mens beginning to make merchandise and gain of it; and the fourth seal, ver. 7. 8. seems to represent such a persecution of the professors of Christianity, and such temptations upon them, as tended to the apostasy and eternal ruin of many professors: yet the fifth seal, ver. 9. 10. 11. shews us the issue of it in the blood of many faithful martyrs, calling for vengeance on those who spilt it; as well as on those professors that joined the persecuting

cutting society, and betrayed the cause to them. The vengeance of God on the persecuting society, the Roman empire Heathen, as an answer so far to the cry of the martyrs blood, and as a type of the full answer, in the final vengeance on the persecuting world, is represented in the opening of the sixth seal, ver. 12. 17. And this is the same thing with the casting down of the dragon, chap. xii. 9. After which we are told, that the saints, in that open conflict they had hitherto had with him, and before the woman fled from his face, *had overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and loved not their lives unto the death.* Thus far, then, the two marks of the true church appeared visibly, in consequence of the first publication of the gospel; until the woman fled into the wilderness from the face of the serpent; and the gospel, that was preached by the apostles, and kept by the first churches in the scriptures of the apostles, was carried away in the true Babylonish captivity; where it remained very much hid, till

The second publication; of which we also read in the book of the Revelation, chap. xiv. 6. 7. where, after the Lamb's company, in the time of Antichrist's reign, had been represented to John, he says he *saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and language, and people.* And this was in the sixteenth century, when the holy scriptures were brought forth to the view of the nations and peoples that were worshipping the beast and his image.

There was a most remarkable providence about this, and several things contributed to it under the direction of admirable Providence. The taking of Constantinople by the Turks, and the flight of the Greeks from thence into Italy, and the western parts, brought the knowledge of the tongues wherein the

gospel was written into these parts; and translations of the scriptures commenced from thence.

The invention of the art of printing about that time, was a notable providence, and contributed much to the spreading of the scriptures among the nations. By means of this, the apostles again travelled through the nations in their writings, and prophesied again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, Rev. x. 11. And when the gospel was translated, by men raised up of God for that purpose, into the languages of the nations, and these translations spread every where, by means of the art of printing; this answered the end of the gift of tongues, that was useful in the first publication of the gospel, before it was committed to writing.

And when Luther and Zuinglius, in contending against indulgences, were obliged, in the issue of their contention, to have recourse to the holy scripture, and contend for it, as the only rule of Christianity; and these scriptures were not denied to be of divine inspiration by their adversaries, who had scarce another plausible answer to their scriptural arguments, but *the authority of the church*, which yet could have no authority without the scriptures: this turned the eyes of people to the scriptures; and the Roman church perceiving this, set themselves by all means to put a stop to this publication of the gospel, or to the spreading of the knowledge of the scriptures, by the translations, among the nations.

This second publication of the gospel is the same thing that seems to be pointed out by the resurrection of the witnesses, Rev. xi. 11. 12. And it was followed with vengeance on the opposers of it, as was the first. It was followed with the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the vials on the Antichristian world. And in that fourteenth chapter, where it is most expressly mentioned, we find it followed with a proclamation of the fall of Babylon; and with another proclamation after that of vengeance on them that wor-  
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ship the beast and his image, and receive his mark. In opposition to whom, we are called to take notice of *the patience of the saints, and of them that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

So that, in consequence of the second publication of the gospel, the two marks of the true church become more visible in the world. And as the work of consuming the man of sin by the spirit of the Lord's mouth goes forward, so will the marks of the true church be more visible; but whereas Antichrist will not be utterly destroyed till the Lord come the second time, the dragon will be making war with the remnant of the woman's seed that keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ till the Lord come. And thus shall the true church appear in conformity to Christ, in his humiliation, till he come.

But, from the nativity of Antichrist, till he begin to be consumed by the second publication of the gospel, these marks of the true church did not appear visibly to the world, in the order of visible churches according to Christ's institution: nor do they so clearly appear in that way, till his kingdom be filled with darkness. Yet we find the faith and the patience of the saints taken notice of, under the beast's reign, chap. xiii. 10. and in the period pointed at in the epistle to the church in Thyatira, Rev. ii. 18.—29.

In that epistle, the Lord complains of the members of the true church their suffering the great whore typified by Jezebel; yet we find him taking notice of their charity, service, faith, patience, and their works. All this he observes about them, though they were in such a case as they that did not bow the knee to Baal in the days of Jezebel, and as Elijah was in at that time. And he takes notice that their last charity, service, faith, patience, and works were more than the first. For they appeared more openly contending against Antichrist, and suffering from him for the word of God in the latter end of that period, than in the beginning of it. And this was  
observable



observable in the confession and sufferings of the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Bohemians, near the end of that period.

During the time of Antichrist's reign, the witnesses are said to prophesy and testify in sackcloth, *i. e.* in the garments of captivity. For here there is a plain reference to the filthy garments on Joshua, the son of Josedeck the high priest, or the garments of his captivity; and when these are taken away from him, it is said to him, *I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee; and will clothe thee with change of raiment*, Zech. iii. 4. So that this points out to us a state of captivity, and a sinful mournful state, rather than a state like that wherein the first Christians were walking in the gospel-order, and patiently bearing the cross after Christ. Yet, in this same state of captivity, they prophesy and testify against the corruption of Christianity, and the Antichristian abominations: though it would seem, that their testimony is not fully brought forth, or all published till after some time; even till then, when the beast is said to make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them.

In what is said of the two witnesses, there is a manifest reference to Moses and Aaron in Egypt; as when it is said, *They have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will*, chap. xi. 6. And likewise to Elijah, in the days of the apostasy of the ten tribes, and in the time of Jezebel; as when it is said, *If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy*, ver. 5. 6. Compare 1 Kings xvii. 1. and 2 Kings i. 2.—8.

There is further a reference here to the time of our Lord's ministry on the earth, in the church of the Jews. For the death of the witnesses and their resurrection bear a manifest allusion to the Lord's death and resurrection; and the bodies of the witnesses

nesses are said to *lie dead in the street of the great city, where our Lord was crucified.*

So that the state of the people of Christ, the members of his church, in the days of this prophesying of the witnesses, is like the state of Israel in Egypt, and of the 7000 that did not bow the knee to Baal in the time of Jezebel, and of the captive Jews, while their temple and the walls of the city lay in rubbish; and like the state of things in the days of our Lord's ministry among the Jews; and like the condition of Lot in Sodom. For the city wherein the witnesses lay dead, is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, as being the antitype of these.

Hence we see that the members of the true church in that state, are not in the visible church-order instituted for them by Christ. The outer-court of the Lord's house is then trodden under foot of the nations. Only the holy scriptures remained, and were preserved in this sad state of things by the wonderful providence of God, and were all the while exactly fulfilled; at the same time that opposition was made, less or more, by means of scripture-light, to several parts of the Antichristian corruption, till at last the scripture-testimony against the whole of it was brought forth, one way or other, by the Waldenses and Wickliffites; and then the beast made war with the witnesses.

The witnesses seem to be the Old Testament and the New. For as our Lord says of the Old-Testament scriptures, *These are they which testify of me*; so the New Testament concurring with the Old makes up his two witnesses. They are the *two anointed ones*, being given by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; and the *two candlesticks that stand before God*, and serve to enlighten the earth through that precious oil, the Holy Ghost, ver. 4. Compare Zech. chap. iv.

The conclusion of the New Testament forbids us to expect any new inspired prophet, or worker of miracles,

miracles, after the New-Testament prophecy was finished. And there is no other prophecy or infallible testimony belonging to the true church, but that of the Old Testament and the New. And the power of the true church is the power of the word of God, or of the Old and New Testament. According to the New Testament, we cannot look upon any two men as the Lord's witnesses, who come in any age after the apostles, prophesying with signs and wonders.

The great whore typified by Jezebel calleth herself a prophetess, and the coming of the man of sin is with signs and lying wonders. But the scripture-prophecy belongs to the true church, even that same prophecy and divine testimony that was attended, at its giving out, by all the signs and wonders recorded in the scriptures. All that happened in the 1260 days, was the effect of the word of scripture-prophecy. The opposition and vexation that the builders of the Antichristian kingdom received from time to time, in the several steps of their apostasy, arose by means of these scriptures; so that the Antichristian world might have said of these two witnesses, as Ahab said to Elijah, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*

The Lord makes these two, concurring together, his witnesses, and not separated from one another, in opposition to the Antichristian society that established itself by insisting on the Old-Testament prophecy separate from the New, and contrary to it; and thus it became the antitype of the city where our Lord was crucified. But, while they pretended to find a foundation for a worldly church and a hierarchy, a worldly kingdom to the Messiah, and persecution, and a worldly sanctuary in the Old Testament; the concurring testimony of the two witnesses, the Old and New Testament, still tormented them, till at length they brought the authority of these two witnesses in subjection to the authority of a general council, the representative of the catholic church militant, (as they call that which the scripture calls the man of

fin) and extirpated all profession of subjection to the authority of these two witnesses, as opposed to the authority of that church, was set above the scriptures.

Now, this seems to be the killing of the witnesses, who lay dead for a small time, in the final issue of the extirpation of the Bohemian profession of subjection to the authority of the scriptures as above the church.

The people of the nations rejoiced in this victory over the witnesses who had tormented them; but the bodies of the two witnesses in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament were not buried out of sight altogether. They would not suffer them to be buried, but they lay dead in the great city in the street; in a contemptible condition, trodden under foot, and exposed indeed to view, but without spirit and life, without their sense and meaning, or power to operate on the minds of the people of the nations. For they were exposed to the nations in an unknown tongue. And as to those who understood that tongue, whose interest was against the witnesses; the scriptures, the bodies of the witnesses, lay in subjection to the authority of the church. Thus they lay dead a short space, till the spirit of life entered into them. And this was when their authority and testimony began again to be acknowledged and insisted on, in opposition to the authority of the church, and pleaded first by the brethren of Bohemia, and then by Zuinglius and Luther, as above the authority of man's testimony, and against the pretended authority of the Roman church.

Thus the scriptures began to be laid open in their sense and meaning, and were no more as dead bodies without life; but began to operate again upon the minds of the people of the nations, and then they were exalted, in consequence of the spirit of life thus entering into them, by being translated into the languages of the nations.

This exaltation of the witnesses, wherein there is an allusion to our Lord's ascension, seems to be the same thing with the angels flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, of which before. Thereby the consumption of the man of sin began; for after this the seventh trumpet is blown, and under it the vials are poured out.

But however the witnesses were now above the reach of the Antichristian power, so that they could not be again overcome and killed; yet the members of the true church seem not to be brought so forth of their captive state, as to appear in the true primitive order of visible churches, according to the scripture-testimony, till the fifth vial. For till then the beast's kingdom is not filled with darkness, and the end of the beast's reign cannot be said to be before then, nor the end of the 1260 days, which is the time of that reign. But so far as any, during the whole time of that reign, confessed, and openly professed to receive the testimony of the two witnesses, and patiently suffered in so doing; so far the marks of the true church appeared during that reign. But, during the reign of Antichrist, the true church appears not visibly represented, in a regular visible church, every way conform to the gospel-institution; without which the church cannot be so visible as at the beginning, nor the marks of it so apparent. It is true, the members of the true church that are on earth in the reign of Antichrist, are said to be sealed or marked, with a reference to what is said in Ezekiel's prophecy, of setting a mark on the men that sigh and cry for the abominations done in the land, Ezek. ix. and to have the Father's name written in their foreheads. As, by this sealing or marking in their foreheads, they are secured from ruin, so they are likewise distinguished from the beast's company; but this seems chiefly to be in the sight of God, and not so openly in the sight of men. They stand thus  
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marked with the Lamb on Mount Zion; they are found adhering to him as the head of the church of the first-born written in heaven: and they are engaged in the worship of that invisible Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerufalem. For they sing a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures and elders, which none could learn, but those redeemed from the earth; and this can be no other but the worship of the invisible church. But they are not represented as standing with the Lamb, in any visible worshipping society, wherein that invisible catholic church with its worship is shewed forth, according to the scriptures. For, though the temple of God, and the altar, and they that worship there, be measured, during the reign of Antichrist; yet then the outer-court is left out, and not measured, as being given unto the nations, and trodden under foot of them forty-two months, which is the time of Antichrist's reign, Rev. xiv. 1. 2. 3. Compare chap. xi. 1. 2.

Therefore, during that reign we are not to look for any such representation of the true church, in any visible church, as should in all things answer to the gospel-rule; so as neither to exceed, nor fall short of that measure: nor are we in that time to look for any such order of a visible church, as is wholly regulated by the concurring testimony of the Lord's two witnesses, without the wisdom and testimony of man, or the dictates of any spirit speaking beside, or beyond the scriptures, or any rule that men walk by, beside the scriptures. But, after the forty-two months, or 1260 days, or time, times, and an half, the sanctuary is cleansed, and the daily sacrifice is restored, and the outer-court of the Lord's house may be measured by the rule of God's word. And then the dragon is found making war with the remnant of the woman's seed, that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. And so *the patience of the saints, and they that keep the com-*

*mandments of God and the faith of Jesus, are again to be observed, as before the man of sin was revealed.*

#### S E C T. IV.

**W**HEN the Lamb takes the sealed book out of the hand of him that sat on the throne, to open the seals thereof; we find the whole church of the redeemed emblematically represented in the four living creatures, and twenty-four elders brought in, expressing their hope of reigning on the earth, in the issue of the opening of this book, or of the fulfilling of the things that are written therein. For this is the song of the four living creatures, and the twenty-four elders, *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

If we enquire, what is meant by the sealed book? we cannot be better satisfied as to this, than by observing the reference that seems to be here to what is said, Dan. viii. 26. and xii. 4. 9. *Shut thou up the vision, for it is for many days.—Shut up the words, and seal the book to the time of the end. Go thy way, Daniel; for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.* If we are to understand by the written sealed book, the hidden counsels of God, and his purposes concerning his church under the New Testament; then it must be those counsels and purposes, as expressed in the dark prophecies of the Old Testament, and specially in the book of Daniel. The things written in this sealed book could not be laid open, till the time of their accomplishment, which is the time of the New-Testament church. So that the events must lay open the dark prophecies of the  
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Old Testament ; and particularly Daniel, according to the illustration it receives in the book of the Revelation, which John is forbidden to seal, chap. xxii. 10. ; for this reason, because the time is at hand. As none but the Lamb was worthy to give the dark sayings of the Old Testament that illustration they receive in the New-Testament scripture ; so none but he that redeemed the church was worthy to be set, *as head over all things to the church*, over that administration of providence, whereby all the dark sayings of the Old Testament are exactly accomplished, and the book of Daniel particularly fulfilled, according to the illustration of it in the book of the Revelation. As this high station required, in the person who should fill it, the worth that redeemed the church, and the love manifested therein ; so it required all that wisdom represented by the seven eyes of the Lamb, and all the power whereof his seven horns are an emblem, to lay open the sealed book, by the bringing to pass of all events, according to what is written in the book.

Having thus perceived what is intended by the opening of the sealed book, and that Daniel's prophecy is peculiarly pointed at here, though the rest of the prophets are not excluded, who all spake, one way or another, of the things as far off as the times of the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21. though not perhaps so fully and directly as Daniel. We may next observe, that there is nothing that the prophecy of Daniel declares more clearly and plainly than the reign of the faints, in the conclusion of all their troubles, at the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and after the destruction of the fourth beast with the ten horns, and of the little horn of that beast, that wears out the faints of the Most High, and when the dominion of the rest of the beasts is taken away, Dan. xi. 34. 35. 42. 43. 44. and vii. 11. 12. 13. 14. 25. 26. 27.

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It was therefore very proper, when John was seeing the Lamb take the sealed book and open it, to represent to him the church of the redeemed, expressing their joy, in the hope of this reign that should take place in the conclusion of all the dismal events that were to happen by the opening of the seals. And so we find, while the saints were persecuted before the reign of Antichrist, under the opening of the first six seals; though in that period they understood very little of the book of the Revelation; yet then they most firmly believed this reign of the saints, and encouraged themselves under their sufferings on the earth, while they were killed for the word of God, and the testimony which they held, with the hope of reigning on the earth, according to that saying of the Lord, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth*, Matth. v. 5. Compare Psal. xxxvii. 9. 10. 11.

That this was generally believed and hoped for among the first Christians, is manifest from the writings of the primitive fathers. This is not denied by those who account it an error. Yea, they acknowledge it to have begun very early; for they trace the origin of this error as far up as Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, the disciple of this same apostle John that wrote the book of the Revelation. And though they may imagine that they understand the Revelation in this point better than he; yet they must acknowledge, that the most probable account that can be given of the way he came to fall into this error, is, that he took the Revelation, that seems at first view to say the same thing, too literally. Neither can they say this error, that took so early, so universally, among the first Christians, is one of those deviations from the rule of faith, that grew from small beginnings to a height in Antichrist. For the revelation of the man of sin extinguished this opinion, this belief and hope that took place in the churches of the saints, who were suffering for the word of God and  
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the testimony of Jesus. And there was a very good reason for the decay of this supposed error among the professors of Christianity, when they began to separate between Christianity and the cross, and to set up a worldly kingdom to Christ.

But no sooner did the man of sin begin to be consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth, than something like this old opinion began to revive again; yet not as the first Christians seem to have held it, but more gross, and with more of an Antichristian and Jewish air about it. In this false dress it has been opposed under the name of the Millenarian error. But perhaps the charge of error against the modern Millenarians, will not hold against the opinion of the first Christians. It cannot be proved against them, that they expected any reign of the saints on earth, before the second coming of Christ, or before the coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven: no; they expected to be humbled in this world, in conformity to Christ in his humiliation; to suffer with him in this life, but to reign with him in the life to come, and to appear with him in glory when he appears. It is true they expected to reign a thousand years on the earth after the coming of Christ, and the destruction of the kingdoms of this world, and before the resurrection of the unjust, and the particular judgment of every one of the wicked. And no part of the Revelation, nor of the whole New Testament, can be said to contradict them in this; unless any would imagine that the times of the restitution of all things will not be so long as the gospel-day; or, that when the scripture speaks of the last day, it leads us to think of a time no longer than as it were a natural day; or, unless they should suppose, that when the scripture sets before us at once a short view of the several things that are to be done in the times of the restitution of all things, these things are all to be done

done at once, and not in the order wherein the book of the Revelation says they will come to pass.

It cannot be shown, that the first Christians believed, that the saints were to reign while the kingdoms of this world were standing. For, according to the prophecy of Daniel and the Revelation, the dominion under the whole heaven is not given to the saints of the Most High, till the fourth beast with the ten horns be destroyed, and given to the burning flame; and till the end, when the dominion of the beast, and of the little horn, is both consumed and destroyed, Dan. vii. 11. 26. 27. or till the beast, with the kings of the earth, and their armies, is totally overthrown by Christ's coming with the armies of heaven; and till the beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, Rev. xix. 11. 14. 19. 20. And Daniel says, *As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time*; which seems to be the season and time of the reign of the saints, and of Christ, over all people.

So far were the first Christians from imagining, that in any one time that can be thought of before Christ's coming, the Christians of that time should bear sway in the kingdoms of this world, or that the gospel, with the concurring power of the kings of the earth, should bring every nation under a right form of Christianity; that they believed, it was not the saints living in one season and time only, but all the redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and that it is not the dominion of any profession, or set of professors living this mortal life, but the reign of the elect only, the redeemed, and none else; and these alive again from the dead, all partaking of that first resurrection, over the partakers of which the second death hath no power. They did not imagine such a reign to the saints on the earth, as the Jews of old imagined to the Messiah, who thought of an earthly reign to him in this life,  
and

and did not dream that he was to be a humble sufferer in this life, and to rise from the dead and reign. The first Christians looked for a reign of saints raised from the dead, and for a heavenly reign on the earth, of all the saints that had been first humbled in this life; in conformity to Christ, who first suffered, and then entered into his glory. But, at the same time, it must be owned, that some of them imagined an earthly paradise; as to which, and the city, they indulged their fancy too much.

The book of the Revelation seems plainly to say the same thing that the first Christians believed and hoped for. But this is an objection against it: That it is not the manner of the book of the Revelation to declare things that are to come to pass so plainly; and for this very reason, that this opinion goes upon a literal interpretation of a part of this mystical book, it ought to be rejected. Yet it cannot be rejected on this account, if we consider, that this same thing was said the most clearly of any thing that is said in the book of Daniel, when the vision of the beasts, and of the kingdom of the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven, is explained to him, chap. vii. 16. 26. 27. and the book of the Revelation declares as plainly the manner and season of it, as the book of Daniel declared the thing itself. We must likewise bear in mind, that the reason why the book of the Revelation is for most part mystical, is, because it was to be fulfilled by men professing Christianity, and the belief of the scriptures; even as the prophecies of the Old Testament, touching what should happen at the first coming of the Messiah, were to be fulfilled by the Jews that professed to believe the Old Testament; and this could not have been, if the things had been plainly declared without any figure, in the very manner wherein they happened. But this part of the Revelation is to be fulfilled, not by the hand of men professing Christianity, but the Lord's immediate hand, or by the Lord himself coming with

the hosts of heaven. We must also reflect, that while the sufferings of the saints, in conformity to the slain Lamb, are clearly foretold, and their humiliation plainly declared in the book of the Revelation; it was very proper, that their hope of reigning on the earth should be as plainly declared, to encourage them under their sufferings.

All these things considered, we may see, that there is no reason for rejecting this sense of the prophecy, because it is too literal; especially if we take notice, that they who even go beyond mysticism itself in explaining the first part of the 20th chapter of the Revelation, explain the latter part of that same chapter, from the 11th verse to the end, as literally as the first Christians did the first part of that chapter. Only they pretend to find the second coming of Christ in the 11th and 12th verses of that chapter, which speak of Christ set on his throne at the second resurrection, the resurrection of the unjust, to judge and condemn every particular wicked person, after the judgment of Antichrist, with the kings of the earth, and the judgment of Gog and Magog, is over; but not a word of the coming of Christ with all his saints from heaven, which was described before, in the beginning of this whole scene, from chap. xix. 11.

But still this opinion of the first Christians is liable to this great objection, That, according to that way of understanding the 20th chapter of the Revelation, the saints in the state of the resurrection, wherein they are as the heavenly angels, and wherein they are delivered out of all trouble, are again exposed to an attack from people in all quarters of the world, over whom they had ruled a thousand years; and Satan gets power in a little season to deceive the nations Gog and Magog, and to gather them to war against the saints, not in their mortal humbled state as before, but now immortal and delivered from death; and the nations are deceived by him, to oppose the saints in their glory: all which is hard to conceive.

But

But when the Revelation says this, it says no more out what the prophecy of Ezekiel said before, concerning Gog and Magog, chap. xxxviii. 8. *In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them.* And verse 10. *The same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought.* (Here is Satan deceiving them, and they are deceived; for) ver. 11. *And thou shalt say, I will go up to the land of unwalled villages, I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and neither bars nor gates.* See likewise ver. 12. 14. 15. 16. And from the latter end of the chapter, compared with Rev. xx. 9. 10. it is manifest, that they do not hurt the people gathered out of the nations, and brought back from the sword, against whom they were gathered together; but they are fearfully destroyed by the immediate hand of God, who executes glorious and terrible judgments upon them.

As for the power of Satan to influence the world, and stir it up against the kingdom of Christ, and the blindness and madness of men deceived by him, the text shews, that he can go no further than his chains are loosed. And the greater power he shews in deceiving and stirring up the world against the kingdom of Christ, the more is the Lord Jesus glorified, in preserving and delivering his kingdom, and in the overthrow of Satan, and all that are under his command. Satan had exerted his power to deceive, and carried the matter to the greatest height against the kingdom of Christ, in its humbled estate, in the affair of Antichrist. And how much is the glory of the Lord declared in this book, in his work of consuming and destroying Antichrist? But he was capable yet to deceive the nations more than in the business of Antichrist itself, and make a greater and more bold at-

tempt against the kingdom of Christ. And it was proper that he should do his utmost against the woman's seed, before his final overthrow, that the glory of the Lord might appear the most remarkably in defeating his last, his utmost, his greatest attempt. And therefore, whereas he had before only attacked the woman's seed in their humbled condition, now he makes his greatest effort, and stirs up his seed against the seed of the woman in their glory.

Now, the Lord declares in that forecited prophecy of Ezekiel, that when he executes judgment in a fearful manner on the people thus gathered together against the faints, he will therein *magnify* himself and *sanctify* himself, Ezek. xxxviii. 16. 22. 23. And chap. xxxix. 21. he says, on this same subject of the overthrow of Gog and Magog, and the devil that deceived them, *I will set my glory among the Heathen, and all the Heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them.* And ver. 22. *So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward.*

If it seem strange to us, that the whole world, after they had been under the dominion of the faints, should be so far deceived, and made so blind, so mad, as to appear against the faints, in such a manner, after they are raised from the dead :

Let us, first, consider Pharaoh and his host, after all the wonders they had seen in Egypt, yet pursuing Israel into the sea, when they saw the sea dividing to make a way of escape for them, and when they saw the pillar of fire interposed between them and Israel.

Next, let us think on the rebellions of the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness against Moses and against God, in the face of daily miracles, and the most notable appearances of God, and evidences of his commission to Moses before their eyes, and even at the foot of the mount Sinai.

Further,

Further, let us think on the blind rage of the Jews, stirred up by Satan against their promised Messiah, notwithstanding all the manifest evidences they had of his being the Son of God before their eyes; when they put him to death, and the people that had been sometime crying Hosanna, cried, Crucify him. Consider the instance of Judas, and them that fell to the ground before our Lord, and yet went on against him.

Yea, we have something near akin to the gathering of the people of Gog and Magog against the glorified saints, in that strange action of the Jews against Stephen, which perhaps may be a figure or emblem of this: *All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel,* Acts vi. 15. Then his discourse had so far the ascendant over them, and had their consciences so in subjection, that it behoved them *to stop their ears*, when they *ran upon him with one accord*, chap. vii. 54.—57. As they saw a ray of the heavenly glory upon his face, so they could not suspect his report, when they beheld him thus *looking up stedfastly into heaven*, and saying, *Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God*, ver. 55. 56. While they were no longer able to withstand all this evidence for that which they hated, they *ran upon him* whom they saw so wonderfully countenanced of God, *with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him*.

Here then we have some representation beforehand, of that blind rage against the saints, wherewith Gog and Magog will be influenced when deceived by Satan, and gathered together against the raised saints. We will not easily believe the wickedness of our own hearts, till it be drawn forth by suitable temptations. All the power of Satan to deceive, in all ages of the world, that has served to discover the wickedness of man's heart, has not yet been able to draw it all forth to open view, or fully to discover that of which the Lord says,



says, *It is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* But as the thousand years reign will perhaps show how far the wickedness of man's heart may be restrained, when Satan is bound from tempting, and the saints reigning, and having such influence on all the people on earth, as Satan and his angels had before; so this last deceiving of the people in all quarters of the world, will bring forth the fullest proof of the wickedness of man's heart, in his open actions on the earth, that ever was, or ever will be, before the secrets of mens hearts are laid open, in the judgment of every particular wicked person at the second resurrection. And thus the saints will see what a change grace has made on them; and the justice of God's judgment in condemning men, after the most specious appearances they have made in this world, while their wickedness has been some way restrained, will fully appear.

It cannot be hard for those to conceive the saints remaining on the earth after their resurrection, who believe that the Lord remained on the earth so long after his resurrection: and what disparagement it is to his members, to pass through the several states that he passed through? And though, in the resurrection, they be as the heavenly angels, and beyond all the enjoyments of this life on the earth; yet this makes them no more incapable to command the world, than the devil, the prince of this world, and his angels, are incapable at present to exercise the dominion they have on the earth, by their being incapable of the enjoyments that men have of the things of this life on the earth under their dominion.

If it be inquired, How does this book of the Revelation unseal the prophecies of the Old Testament, and particularly Daniel on this subject, which seems to be almost plainly spoken of by that prophet? we shall find, that it was very fit to bring in the church of the redeemed, speaking of the reign on the earth, at the Lamb's taking the book to open the seals.

For by what is declared in the book of the Revelation, Daniel's prophecy is remarkably laid open on this very point, and as to that same thing that Daniel was in the dark about, when he was told *the words are closed up and sealed*.

In that 12th chapter of Daniel, after the question is proposed, *How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?* ver. 6. and the answer is given in a solemn manner, in his hearing, *That for a time, times, and an half,* ver. 7. (which is the time of the scattering of the power of the holy people by Antichrist, and of the giving of the faints, or of times and laws into his hands, chap. vii. 25. the same that the Revelation speaks of, and calls also forty-two months, and 1260 days) Daniel puts the question, *O my Lord, what the end of these?* and is told, that the words are closed up; only he is told of a further number, than the time, times, and a half; and that is, 1290 days, which is thirty days longer; and this is said to be from the taking away of the *daily* or *continual*, and of the setting up the abomination that maketh desolate, *i. e.* from the time that the outer-court was trodden under foot of the nations, to the time that it shall be again fully cleansed, the beginning of its cleansing being at the end of the 1260 days. Then he is told of a third number, which is 1335 days, which lengthens out the time 45 days more, or 75 days beyond the 1260 days: and it is said to him, *Go thy way till the end; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days,* even the days immediately before mentioned, *viz.* the 1335 days.

The book of the Revelation never mentions these two last numbers. But, by illustrating the first number, *the time, times, and an half,* reducing it to days, in conformity to the two last numbers, and fixing the beginning of it, and declaring what is the end of these; it lays open the whole, and clearly answers Daniel's question. And as the events lay open the book; so in the end of the time, times, and an half,

we have reason to think Daniel's secret will be open; for the book was closed up and sealed till the time of the end, Dan. xii. 4. And then inquiry is made, How long it shall be to the end? and the answer is, A time, times, and half, ver. 5. 6. 7. Then Daniel inquires what shall be the end? ver. 8. and he is told, that it is closed up and sealed till the time of the end, ver. 9. *i. e.* the end of the time, times, and half.

We read likewise of the shutting up of the vision of evening and morning, because it was for many days, chap. viii. 26. Now, the vision of evening and morning was told, ver. 13. 14. in answer to that question, *How long the vision, the daily, and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?* And it is said, *Unto evening, morning, 2300, i. e.* according to the style of Moses in the first chapter of Genesis, 2300 days. Now, reckoning these evenings, mornings, or these days in the prophetic sense, from the time wherein Daniel had that vision, the end of them, as was before noticed, falls in with the end of the time, times, and half; and when these many days are ended, the vision is no more shut up.

The book of the Revelation fixes the beginning of the time, times, and half, as was before observed, and explains them. It explains Daniel's fourth beast with the ten horns, points out the beginning of the kingdoms represented by the ten horns, at the wounding to death of the seventh head of that beast, and makes this the beginning of the time, times, and half. It makes the time, times, and half, to be forty-two months, which is three years and a half; and makes this to be 1260 days; and so makes it run on a foot with the other numbers of Daniel, which are numbers of days. According to the beginning that the Revelation fixes for the 1260 days, the end of them, as was said, falls in with the end of the 2300 days, counting them from the telling of that vision,

vision, or counting these many days from the time of shutting up the vision.

Thus, by the book of the Revelation, and the event together, we find the end of the time, times, and half, with the end of the 2300 days, evening, morning, which number goes a little further than the time, times, and half, and goes in so far with the 1290 days. And this time, wherein the end of the 2300 days falls, is declared in Daniel to be the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary, that was before trodden under foot, Dan. viii. 13. 14. And in the time of the end of time, times, and half, it is said, *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*, Dan. xii. 4. *And many shall be purified and made white and tried: but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand*, Dan. xii. 10. Thus we understand what takes up the thirty days more than 1260, which makes up 1290. For the end of the 2300 days falling in that time, makes that the time when the sanctuary is cleansed; and by reckoning from thence, the 45 days which carry up the number to 1335 days, we come to know the end of all Daniel's numbers.

But what does the stating the beginning of the time, times, and half, and knowing the end of it, signify as to the point of the reign of the saints? Answer, It signifies very much. For the end of the time, times, and half, or 1260 days, is the end of Antichrist's scattering the power (or the hands) of the holy people; and numbering as many days from thence as carry 1260 to 1290, we have the length of that season, wherein their power that was scattered is restored, and the outer-court, or visible representation of the Lord's house or true church, is cleansed, and restored to the holy people, while the wicked are doing wickedly. And, numbering as many days from thence, as carry the number 1290 up to 1335, we come to the very time of the reign

of the saints, which Daniel could not know; yea, and which could not be known till God gave to Jesus Christ the Revelation, which he sent and signified by his angel to his servant John; or till the Lamb that was slain, being alive again from the dead, took the sealed book, and opened the seals: nor indeed could it be perceived by us till the end of the time, times, and a half.

But even yet, the precise day or year, and time of the year, cannot be declared, till the event declare it. Yet that the end of the 1335 days, reckoned from the beginning of the time, times, and half, is the time of Christ's second coming, and the beginning of the saints reign, is manifest from what is said to Daniel of the end of these 1335 days: *Go thy way till the end: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.*

When these 1335 days are spoke of in Daniel, it is said, *Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to them.* And the Revelation declares what this blessedness is, when it is said, Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* And this text, at the same time that it declares the blessedness that Daniel spoke of, likewise declares the fulfilment of that which is represented as the hope of the redeemed, when the Lamb took the sealed book to open it, Rev. v. 9. 10.

Whereas Daniel speaks of the resurrection, or awaking of them that sleep in the dust, some to everlasting life, and (then) some to everlasting shame and contempt; the Revelation declares the resurrection of them that awake to everlasting life, and calls it the first resurrection, over the partakers whereof the second death hath no power; and places it a thousand years before the resurrection that Daniel spoke of, in the next place, (even the resurrection

of them whose names are not found written in the book) unto condemnation and the second death.

And whereas Daniel spoke of a time of great trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, and of the deliverance of every one found written in the book, in that time when Michael the great prince that standeth for the children of Israel shall stand up; the Revelation declares all this trouble and deliverance, in these several instances.

1. In the execution of judgment on Antichrist at the coming of Christ, chap. xix. from ver. 2. to the end. And in this time the saints are delivered, gathered out of the nations, and brought back from the sword, *i. e.* raised from the dead, and gathered unto Christ, to reign with him a thousand years on the earth.

2. In the yet more fearful and universal execution of judgment on Gog and Magog, and their company, whose number is as the sand of the sea; and this in the end of the thousand years, which gives the finishing stroke to Satan, and completes the victory of the saints. or of them that are written in the book, over him, chap. xx. 7. 8. 9. 10.

3. In the execution of judgment on every one of the wicked at the second resurrection, when the heavens and earth fly away from his face that sits on the throne of judgment. And then they that are found written in the book of life, in this third and most fearful period of trouble, shall be most highly exalted, sitting with him in the judgment, before whose face the heavens and the earth fly away. And, in the issue of that trouble, they shall with him possess the restored creation, the new heavens and new earth, after they are dissolved and changed, and suited unto the second Adam, the heavenly man, and them that are joint heirs with him, as they were at first suited unto the first Adam, the earthly man, chap. xx. from the 2d verse to the end, and chap. xxi. from the beginning to ver. 6.

Thus the Revelation opens Daniel's sealed book, and declares the times of the restitution of all things; of which God had spoken by the mouth of all his prophets since the world began. So we see the church rises by several steps unto that glory that is designed for her; and she rises upon the ruin of the wicked. Antichrist is destroyed at the beginning of the thousand years reign, and this is but the first step of the exaltation of the church. Gog and Magog, and their company, with Satan that deceived them, are destroyed next; and so the church is exalted with Christ in judging the dead. Then the wicked are all cast into the lake of fire; and the church is exalted to possess and reign over the new creation, according to the hope that is declared, Rom. viii. 7.—23.

Thus the kingdom of the saints does not end with the thousand years, which is but the beginning of it, but *it shall stand for ever*, as Daniel said. And who that indeed believes this, would not count all things loss to know Christ, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if they might attain to that first resurrection? And seeing this thousand years reign, that follows upon the destruction of Antichrist, is especially set before us, as a hope to encourage us against receiving the mark of the beast; how jealous should this make us of every thing like that mark, whatever advantages it may be attended with in this world? lest, by receiving it, or keeping it, we lose our part in the first resurrection. And however we may be brought under the world, by standing at the strictest distance from the mark of the beast, or by keeping the commandments of God, and testimony of Jesus, in opposition to the commandments and testimony of men; yet, if we have patience in suffering a while with the Lamb, we shall reign with him when Antichrist is destroyed, and the beast given to the burning flame.

The VISION of the SEALED BOOK, con-  
sidered in a Series of five Letters.

L E T T E R I.

S I R,

August 16. 1734.

**I**N the account we have of the sealed book, Rev. v. there is a plain reference to Daniel, chap. viii. 26. and chap. xii. 4. 9. The reason why it is sealed in Daniel, is, because it was not yet to be fulfilled, and so could not be understood till the time of the accomplishment; but in the Revelation, chap. xxii. 10. the vision is not sealed, for this reason, *Because the time is at hand.* The opening of the seals, then, is the bringing to pass of the events foretold in the dark prophecies of the Old Testament, and especially of Daniel, so as to fulfil the prophecies exactly. This is the proper work of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, the head of the church, and head over all things unto it; who is set forth under the emblem of a lamb, in opposition to Antichrist, whose emblem is a destroying beast. The use of the Revelation is to direct us into the understanding of the book that was sealed, by the events which open it up to us; and this it doth by references to the Old Testament, and especially to Daniel's visions; so that by comparing it with these and the events, we may certainly know that these are the events foretold in the Old Testament, and in Daniel: otherwise the Revelation is fully as dark as Daniel, or any other prophecy of the Old Testament.

Where the shutting up or sealing of the vision is mentioned in Daniel, there we have several numbers of time set down, as chap. viii. 2300 days, chap. xii. 1290 days, and 1335 days. But Daniel was most concerned to know the meaning of the *time, times,*  
*and*



*and the dividing of time*, mentioned chap. vii. 25. and again chap. xii. 7. upon which he says, *I heard, but I understood not; then said I, O my Lord, what the end of these? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end, i. e. till the end of the time, times, and an half.* The book of the Revelation speaks not of any of the rest of the numbers but this, and directs us to the understanding of it by reducing it to days, and so setting it on a footing with the rest of the numbers: for it makes the time, times, and an half, forty two months, or three years and an half, and makes that 1260 days: and then by pointing to the beginning of these days, Rev. xiii. 3. 4. 5. and xvii. 12. lets us know the end of them. And if the end of them coincide with the end of Daniel's 2300 days, counted from the time wherein Daniel had that vision, chap. viii. and the 1290 days be made up by adding 30 to 1260, and the 1335 days be made up by adding 45 to 1290; then we see there was no need to explain any other number in Daniel, but the time, times, and an half; and the direction the Revelation gives as to it, explains the whole. If it can appear from the Revelation, that the time, times, and an half, or forty-two months, or 1260 days, each day for a year, (according to prophetic style, Ezek. iv. 6.) began in the fifth century, when the beast with the seven heads, the Roman empire, was wounded to death in the seventh head, and when the ten horns or kings received power in it as kings; then the end of time, times, and an half, must be in this century that is now running, and that before the middle of it. This time then is the time of the end, when that which was a great secret, and hid from Daniel, must be understood.

I have given this as an instance of the manner wherein the book of the Revelation opens the prophecies of the Old Testament; by which we may see, that, however dark the Revelation seems at first view, it may well be called a revelation, with respect to the explanation

plication of the dark prophecies of the Old Testament, by the events.

The book is sealed with seven seals, under which are comprehended all the events foretold in the Old Testament, and especially Daniel, which come to pass successively according to the order of the opening of the seals, from the first erection of the Christian church, unto the end of the world. The seventh seal comprehends under it seven trumpets succeeding one another, according to the succession of events. The fifth trumpet brings the first wo, which is the kingdom of Antichrist. The sixth trumpet brings the second wo, which is the Mahometan powers. And the seventh trumpet brings the third wo, which is the ruin of both the former; as appears by comparing the first six trumpets and the first six vials. Then the seventh vial completes the destruction of the enemies of Christ's kingdom, and finishes the mystery of God. The seventh trumpet brings the end of time by several steps, represented by the pouring out of vials, one after another successively, according to the succession of the events; and upon pouring out of the last of them, we are told, *It is done*. In the seven trumpets, by the last of which the enemies of the church are destroyed, and the saints brought to their rest and their kingdom, there may be a reference to Joshua, chap. vi. And in the pouring out of the wrath of God, by the vials, under the seventh trumpet, on the enemies of the church, there may be a reference to Psal. lxxv. and Zeph. iii. 8. However, these are the heads to which every thing in the book of the Revelation must be referred; and the first trumpet succeeds the sixth seal, as likewise the first vial succeeds the sixth trumpet, making a continual succession of events from the beginning to the end; all connected, and making up the one complete vision of the sealed book. From this main vision we must distinguish the incidental particular visions that are explanatory; and every thing in them belongs to

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to one part or other of the main vision to which it is to be referred.

It is likewise to be remarked as to the main vision, that though it goes in a continued succession from the first seal to the last vial, which is under the seventh seal and under the seventh trumpet; yet there is a remarkable turn in the course of things, at the beginning of the seals, and of the trumpets, and of the vials. Thus we find the things that happen under the first six seals, issuing in the demolishing of a world chap. vi. And by the trumpets, again, we find another world wasted or defaced, chap. viii.; and another world is consumed and destroyed by the vials. An earthquake always denotes a great change in the state of things. And we find an earthquake under the sixth seal, another at the opening of the seventh, and beginning of the trumpets; another at the end of the sixth trumpet, and as an introduction to the seventh; and the greatest of all under the seventh vial. We may also take notice, that of all the seals the seventh is the most remarkable, and by far most comprehensive. For the first six seals carry us no further than the beginning of the fourth century; but the seventh comprehends the whole time from thence to the end of the world; so is the seventh trumpet the most remarkable of all the trumpets, and the seventh vial is the most notable and comprehensive vial.

The first six seals take up the time from the first publication of the gospel in the world, unto the demolishing of Heathenism in the Roman empire, which was about the beginning of the fourth century.

*Seal I.* chap. vi. 1. 2. Here is represented the glorious success of the gospel, and the erection of the kingdom of Christ thereby, when it began to be published throughout the world, by the preaching of the apostles, and people of all nations were by his glorious power brought in subjection to him. Here seems to be a reference to Gen. xlix. 24. 26.

and

and Psal. xlv. 4. 5. There is another publication of the gospel pointed at in the resurrection of the witnesses, in the conclusion of the sixth trumpet, chap. xi. The same thing is represented, chap. x. 10. 11. where it is signified, that the apostles who had preached or prophesied at first by word of mouth, should prophesy a second time to the nations by the little book, even the book that was written by them, the New Testament, when it should be translated into the languages of the nations; and that it should have such like effect on them who would embrace it, as the eating of that book in the vision had upon John. The same thing is also declared, chap. xiv. 6. 7. as the cause of the fall of Babylon; for this is the design of the second publication of the gospel by the book, even the consuming of the man of sin till he be destroyed. For he is consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth, or by the power of his word. But we have the first publication of the gospel at the opening of the first seal, as far excelling the second as the building of the first temple by Solomon exceeded the second building.

At the opening of the first seal, the first face in the cherubim, the face of the lion, cries, *Come and see*. The lion is the hieroglyphic of light, which is the emblem of the Son of God, the Sun of righteousness, the light of the world, who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah in the foregoing chapter: and he appeared remarkably as that lion, and as the light of the world, in that first publication of the gospel.

*Seal II. ver. 3. 4* Here is represented the breach of peace among them that had joined together against Christ and his gospel, even the Jews and the Romans; and the terrible overthrow of the Jews, by their strange divisions among themselves, and by the Roman armies; and this as the righteous judgment of God upon them for their employing the Roman power against Christ and the gospel. This work of the Fa-

ther's zeal for the kingdom of his Son against the opposers of it, followed hard upon the first publication of the gospel.

At the opening of this seal, the second face in the cherubim, cries, *Come and see.* And that is the face of a calf or ox, the hieroglyphic of fire sending forth rays of light. As the head of the calf or ox sends forth horns, and as the Son, the light of the world, is called the horn of our salvation, whom the Father hath raised up; so fire is the emblem of the Father in scripture, *a jealous God, a consuming fire.* And such he appeared at the opening of this second seal.

In this second seal there may be a reference to Zech. i. 8. II. lvii. 19. 20. 21. Deut. xxxii. 41. 42. Amos ix. 8. 10. 11. And this is what was foretold by Daniel, chap. ix. 26. 27.

*Seal III. ver. 5. 6.* The opening of this seal produces scarcity; spiritual famine, like that spoken of by Amos, chap. viii. 11. And here we have merchandise in that whereof there is a scarcity: *A measure (i. e. very little more than one English wine-quart) of wheat for a penny, (seven pence halfpenny) and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou deal not unjustly with the oil and the wine.* If the wheat and barley, oil and wine be the word of God, and the comforts of the gospel, and the scarcity of this signify a failure of that growth and multiplication of the word of God that was at first, and a scarcity of the fruits of the gospel among Christians; then this merchandise must be spiritual merchandise in a bad sense, *i. e.* the making a gain of the gospel, and endeavouring to make an interest in this life out of the gospel, contrary to the Lord's command of self-denial. Peter foretold this merchandise, 2 Pet. ii. 3. The first preachers of the gospel counted all loss for Christ, and counted not their lives dear in the fulfilling of their ministry; but even in their day they took notice of some that served their own temporal interest, by the gospel which they perverted, to shun the cross, minding earthly

earthly things. Yea, and Paul complains of most part of his companions in travel, that they sought their own things, not the things of Christ. John speaks of a Diotrephes in one of the churches, who loved to have the pre-eminence; and Paul takes notice of the beginning of the working of the mystery of iniquity in his time, which he says would come to a height, when the let was taken out of the way. Much more, after the Jews, the first enemies of the gospel, were broken, and all the apostles removed by death, did the mystery of iniquity work in the churches, especially among the ministers of the word. They began then more remarkably to make a gain of the gospel, and to seek to exalt themselves and their own worldly interest by it, and so became spiritual merchants, making their own advantage of the souls of men by the gospel. This came to a great head at last in the Antichristian church, or Babylon, in the 18th chapter. It is therefore the beginning of the corruption of Christianity after the days of the apostles that is intended in this seal.

At the opening of this seal, the third face in the cherubim, cries, *Come and see*; and that is the face of the man. The fourth chapter of the Revelation does no more but refer to the first and tenth chapters of Ezekiel, where we have the only full description of the appearance of the cherubim, that is to be found in the whole Bible. John, who had a vision of a temple, saw the same thing in it that Ezekiel saw, and refers to his description. Now, the likeness of the cherubim in Ezekiel, was the likeness of a man, with a man's face; and three other faces, joined to the man's face upon the appearance of a man. The Revelation tells us what this likeness of a man signifies, when it sets before us the cherubim singing this song, *Thou hast redeemed us out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*. It is therefore the church reconciled to God by the death of his Son, as one body, one new man, that is mainly intended in

the cherubim; and the union of the church with the three divine persons by Jesus Christ, is shewed forth by the joining of three faces to the face of a man upon the likeness of a man. So every church of the saints, wherein the catholic church is shewed forth, is said to be *in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Ezekiel speaks of Antichrist as an apostate church, when he calls him the anointed cherub that covereth, and that was set by God upon his holy mountain, and was perfect in his ways from the day that he was created, till iniquity was found in him, and he sinned by the multitude of his merchandise, and was filled with violence; and the Lord declares, that he will cast this cherub as profane out of the mountain of God, and destroy him who defiled his sanctuary by the iniquity of his traffic. It is true, the prophet is there speaking of the king of Tyre, who is there a type of Antichrist in pride, wicked wisdom, and the iniquity of traffic. For that it is not merely the king of Tyre that is there intended, is manifest from those things being said of him, that were never applicable to the king of Tyre, and applicable only to Antichrist, who was, in the foresaid things, typified by that Heathen king.

Now, when the third seal is opened, that merchandise and traffic through which the cherub, the church, was corrupted, and by which iniquity was found in it, is set forth. And unto this the face of a man in the cherub, cries, *Come and see.* Compare Ezek. xxvii. and xxviii. and chap. xxvi. from ver. 15. with Rev. xviii. and xi. 2. and 2 Thess. ii. 4. and with this the second seal.

*Seal. IV. ver. 7. 8.* Death with hell following is not mere natural death; nor can it be the death of them that were slain for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus: for hell follows with it to them that are here killed. But it seems to be spiritual death or apostasy. And men were thus killed, *1st,* With

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the sword. Persecution is one cause of apostasy, and there were many that apostatised under the Heathen persecutions. Or the sword may be here the sword that proceedeth out of the mouth of him that walks in the midst of the golden candelsticks, wherewith he threatens to fight against those with whom he found fault, chap. ii. 16. *2dly*, With hunger; through the foresaid famine of the word of God, and scarcity of the fruits of it, and through the foresaid merchandise. *3dly*, And with death; the giving them up to the lusts of their hearts, the lusts of this world: for to be carnally minded is death; and they that live in pleasure, are dead while they live. *4thly*, And with the beasts of the earth; false teachers, of whom Paul said to the Ephesian elders, *I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in, not sparing the flock.*

At the opening of this seal, the fourth face in the cherubim, says, *Come and see*; and that is the face of the eagle. The eagle is the hieroglyphic of air or wind, which is the emblem of the Holy Ghost, who has the same name with air in the Hebrew language, and is compared to the wind blowing where it listeth, John iii. and came on the disciples on the day of Pentecost with a mighty rushing wind. He descended on our Lord at his baptism in the likeness of a winged creature, a dove. And the eagle is his hieroglyphic in the Old Testament, as we may see by comparing the original text, Gen. i. 2. and Deut. xxxii. 11. That which came to pass under this seal is the greatest opposition unto the Spirit of God, and is the effect of hardening them judicially, and giving over striving with them who have always resisted him. For, because they received not the love of the truth, he sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, and be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

*Seal V.* ver. 9. 10. 11. As the issue of receiving the truth without the love thereof, or of hypocrisy in the



the Christian profession, among the Christians of the first ages, appeared by the foregoing seals; so, by the opening of this seal, we have set before us the end of that faith which is to the saving of the soul, among the Christians under the Heathenish persecutions. The last persecution of the church by Rome Heathen under Dioclesian was by far the greatest of all; and so the book of the Revelation takes notice of the sufferers under Heathenism, about the time when they were fulfilled; even as the things pointed at under the two foregoing seals, had some beginnings in the very time of the apostles, but they are pointed at in this prophecy as they came to a height. And that cry of the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, *How long dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?* seems to import, that these sufferings had begun long before, and were now come to a height. By the answer to the cry of the souls of them that were slain in the Heathenish persecution, it appears, that when these sufferings were fulfilled, the sufferings of Christ's people on the earth were not at an end, and that sufferings are to be measured out to the saints till the day of judgment, when all their blood will be fully avenged; and when the measure of all the sufferings of the whole kingdom of Christ, the whole family of God, is filled up, then that day of vengeance will be no longer delayed.

We find those that were slain for God's word and the testimony of Jesus, (the same that are here spoken of) together with their brethren and fellow-servants that succeeded them under the reign of Antichrist, and all who worshipped not the beast nor his image, nor received his mark, all rising and reigning together, after the destruction of that power that persecuted them, chap. xx. 4. The sufferers here spoke of before the rise and reign of Antichrist, are also the same that are spoke of, chap. xii. 11. While the Christians under Antichrist are represented by the woman in the wilderness, and the remnant of her seed,

seed, that keep God's commands, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, against whom the dragon makes war till the end of the world.

*Seal VI. ver. 12.—17.* Here, in answer to the cry of the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, we have vengeance executed for them, in the bringing down of the Heathenish power of the Roman empire, and the fall of the sixth head of that dreadful beast; wherein there is a pledge, an earnest, and type of the final destruction of all persecuting power in that great day of vengeance that is promised. And therefore the bringing down of Heathenism in the empire, with the main supports of it, is spoken of in terms that seem proper to the great day of judgment. For it cannot be that great day that is intended in the sixth seal: because it falls out under the seventh seal not yet opened, and it follows the blowing of seven trumpets successively; and when it comes by the seventh trumpet, six vials are successively poured out, and it is the seventh that brings it.

The bringing down of the Heathenish religion in the empire, and of Heathenish persecuting power, is set forth under the notion of the destruction of a world, in language borrowed from the prophets of the Old Testament, as from Is. xxxiv. 4. and chap. 19. The great earthquake, or terrible shaking of the earth, signifies a great change in the state of things: and this is the signification of an earthquake throughout the book of the Revelation. The sun that was made for the dominion of the day, and the moon and stars for dominion in the night, always signify in this book dominion and government, or governors and ruling powers. And the sun in the empire must be the chief ruler, of which there were more than one supporting Heathenism, when it fell down from being the religion of the empire. Therefore it is said, the kings of the earth sought to be hid from the wrath of the Lamb.

This fall of Heathenism, and the overthrow of the Heathenish power of the empire, whereby the church had been persecuted, is again pointed out in the history of the woman, chap. xii. where it is represented as the issue of a battle between Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels; and is set forth under the notion of the dragon's being cast down from heaven to the earth, *i. e.* from the high station wherein he at first fought against the church. But being brought down from that station, he went to work another way, wherein he yet did more mischief to the woman in the business of Antichrist; and this belongs to the seventh seal.

But it may be inquired, when six of the seals are opened, and but one remains, what appears in the opening of these six seals; that serves to unlock the shut-up vision, and unseal the sealed prophecy of Daniel, or any other prophet of the Old Testament?

To which we may answer, 1. As the things that come to pass at the opening of the six seals, were under Daniel's fourth beast or fourth kingdom, chap. vii. which can be no other but the Roman empire; so there are some things spoken of by Daniel in his prophecy fulfilled in them, as chap. ix. 26. 27. by the opening of the first and second seals; and in the account of things that fall out by the opening of the six seals, there are several references to the prophets.

2. The opening of these six seals made way for the coming up of Antichrist and the ten kingdoms in Daniel's fourth kingdom, which is the Roman empire; and the time, times, and a half, are the time of the reign of Antichrist by the power of the ten kings in that fourth kingdom; so the seal under which this great thing in Daniel was closed up, could not be opened without opening the six seals first, which one after another all made way for it; and the kingdom of the saints after the time, times, and a half, could not take place till after these were fulfilled. Before Antichrist could

come up and reign over the empire, it behoved the gospel of Christ first to be published through that empire, and a profession of Christianity, or of subjection to Jesus Christ, to take place in several places of that empire: for it behoved Antichrist to sit in the temple of God, and be in the outer-court of God's house, as well as rule in the empire; and it behoved him to spring out of the churches of the saints, where the mystery of iniquity was to begin to work. Now, the gospel of Christ was preached, and a profession of subjection to Christ raised throughout the empire by the opening of the first seal.

Next, if the Jewish church and nation had stood and remained as it was when the gospel was first published, that had been the only proper seat of Antichrist, and would have had a vast advantage over any form of religion that could have been opposed to Christ. But this was taken away by the power of that empire, wherein Antichrist was to rise according to Daniel; and this by the opening of the second seal.

Further, Antichrist could not take place, by virtue of the Christian profession, till the gospel was many ways perverted, and the profession of Christianity corrupted, by the pride, fleshly wisdom, and spiritual merchandise of the leaders of the churches especially, and by false teachers. It behoved the mystery of iniquity to work in the churches before the man of sin was brought forth; but this was done by the opening of the third and fourth seals.

Lastly, Antichrist could not arise to his kingdom in the empire, till the measure of the churches sufferings from the sixth head, or the Heathenish power in that empire was filled up, and till Heathenism was no more the religion of that empire. Now, this was done by the opening of the fifth and sixth seals. And when the empire got on a form of Christianity suited to such a body, as we may see at the beginning of the trumpets, then it was a fit kingdom for Antichrist,

christ, of whom Daniel speaks, and numbers his reign.

Supposing the vision of the seven candlesticks or churches to be prophetic, it may be inquired, which of the churches do the first six seals answer to? To this it may be replied, that the church of Ephesus answers to the time of the first four seals. The Ephesian church in its first and best state suits the time of the two first seals, and its latter and backsliding state represents the time of the third and fourth seals. And the fifth seal agrees to Smyrna, and perhaps somewhat of the fourth.—I am, &c.

## L E T T E R II.

S I R,

*September 4. 1734.*

**I** Said in my last, that the opening of the first six seals made way for the opening of the seventh, which is the main seal. Before it is opened, we have a preface in the 7th chapter, which serves for the encouragement of the people of God against all the evil that was to come to pass under it.

The fall of Heathenism, and the power that supported it in the empire, was attended with an evil that served very much to the hurt of the profession of Christianity in the world; and that was the holding of the four winds, which, by comparing Ezek. xxxvii. 9. 14. John iii. 8. Acts ii. 2. 1 Cor. xii. 3. we may take to signify the with-holding of the spiritual influences that give life to the Christian profession, and without which it can be nothing else but a form of godliness, denying the power of it. And by comparing Rev. vii. 1. 2. 3. with chap. viii. 7. and chap. ix. 4. we may perceive that this holding of the winds hath, as its consequence, that great evil, which took place by the first trumpet, and came to its height by the fifth.

Against

Against this desolation that was to come on the outward state of Christianity in the world, the servants of God have some comfort, in that which is said of their being sealed. And in this there is a reference to Ezek. ix. where we see, when the Lord is about to bring evil on Jerusalem, for the abominations done in the midst thereof, there is a mark set on the foreheads of the men that sigh and cry for these abominations. It was a temporal destruction, from which those that were marked were preserved in the common calamity of the captivity, as would seem from Jer. xxxix. 18. and xlv. 5. But that was a type of the eternal destruction that came on the professors of Christianity by the New-Testament captivity, or by Antichrist. The apostle foretells the coming of the man of sin, 2 Thess. ii. as a dreadful judgment from God upon the professors of Christianity, when he says,— *Whose coming is with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And 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.* The servants of God are sealed, to distinguish them from those that received not the love of the truth, but took pleasure in unrighteousness; and to secure and preserve them from this damnation, in the common calamity that was coming on the profession or outward state of Christianity in the world. Therefore the apostle says of them that have no pleasure in that unrighteousness, but groan under it, as in Ezekiel,— *But God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* And such are they who are here sealed; called the servants of God, in opposition to those whose consciences are subject to the doctrines and commandments of men, that give them ease in the service of their lusts, wherein they take pleasure.

We must notice here the number of those that are sealed, 144,000, which we see made up here by multiplying 12,000 by 12, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. As the Old-Testament church sprang from the twelve patriarchs, with respect to whom Rachael and Leah that bare them, are said to build the house of Israel, Ruth iv. 11.; so the new Jerusalem has twelve foundations of its wall, whereon are written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, Rev. xxi. 14. Thus the number twelve is much used in the description of the new Jerusalem, sometimes with, and often without the adjection of thousands. It had twelve gates, at which were twelve angels, with the names of the twelve tribes written on the gates. Its wall had twelve foundations, as has been said. The tree of life bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded fruit every month. And the measure of the whole city with the reed, was 12,000 furlongs. It seems to be for the sake of the number twelve, that Ezekiel's cubits, chap. xlviii. 35. are brought to furlongs. And if Ezekiel's measures of cubits come to the same with John's measure of furlongs, it will be an evidence, that John was under a wiser direction than his own in describing the new Jerusalem. We find likewise the number 144, which arises from twelve as its square root, mentioned in the description of the new Jerusalem, without the adjection of thousands; as where it is said, he measured the wall thereof 144 cubits; and this is the wall that stood on the twelve foundations; on which the names of the twelve apostles were writ. The reason of the adjection of the thousands to the numbers 12 and 44 in the numbering of the followers of the Lamb, from the coming of Antichrist, to the time of his final destruction, seems to be to denote a great multitude, a certain number being put for an uncertain; and therefore we find that sealed company represented as a great multitude which no man could number. But the number

number twelve is insisted on, Rev. chap. vii. and xxi. with a plain enough reference to the twelve patriarchs, of whom the twelve tribes of typical Israel, the Old-Testament church, sprang, and to the twelve apostles of the Lamb, on whose doctrine the New-Testament church is built. And the number 144 seems to be insisted on for no other reason, but because it arises from twelve multiplied by itself, or hath twelve precisely for its square root; whereby we are taught, that the true church of Christ, in opposition to Antichrist's company, is wholly founded on the doctrine of the twelve apostles, and depends every way upon it; and that the adjected thousands are no further useful in the description of the Lamb's company, than has been said. But that the number 144 is chiefly to be attended to, would seem from the opposition wherein it is stated to the number of the beast, which is mentioned without any adjected thousands, Rev. xiii. 18. and xiv. 1. The beast and the Lamb are opposed; so is the mark of the beast opposed to the Lamb's Father's name, written on the foreheads of the Lamb's company; and the name of the beast to the name that is on the Lamb's company. And so likewise the number of the beast, 666, and the number of the Lamb, 144, are opposed. As the Lamb's number is mentioned for the sake of its root, so likewise may the beast's number be; and so it is to be counted as the number 144 is, by extracting its square root. Now, the only entire number from which 666 can arise, as its square root, is twenty-five. And if we look to that same vision in Ezekiel, to which the reference is made in the marking or sealing of the Lamb's number, we shall find this very number twenty-five used in the description of the party that was opposite to them that were marked. See Ezek. viii. 16. 17. 18. and chap. xi.

2.  
The curious author of the method of counting the number of the beast, by extracting its root, has a great variety



variety of instances in his application of the number twenty-five to the Roman church; and this is one remarkable, that when that church departed from the apostolic institution altogether, and began to be at the head of the great apostasy, Rome was divided into twenty-five parishes, and had so many places for baptism, and for receiving people into the church, and over these were twenty-five presbyters under the Roman bishop, who were the first cardinals, the opposites of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. About that time it was, that these leaders of the church, that led the van in the great falling away, turned their backs on the order and worship of the church instituted by the apostles, and introduced the Heathenish superstition and idolatry, with a Heathenish people into the Christian profession; and these are they that devised mischief, and gave wicked counsel in the church, as Ezekiel speaks.

We may next observe, that in the measuring of the temple and city, &c. in Ezekiel, we have both these numbers, twelve and twenty-five, again and again made use of. We have the number twelve in Ezek. xlviii. 31.—34. expressly referred to in the description of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 12. 13. But as for the number twenty-five, it is not found in the description the Revelation gives us of the measuring the new Jerusalem; while at the same time we must carefully notice, that the measuring in Ezekiel, and that in the Revelation, chap. xi. differ expressly in this, that John is indeed called to measure the temple, Ezek. xli. 1. and them that worship therein, *i. e.* the Lamb's number, and the altar, which, by Ezek. xliii. 16. was twelve cubits long and twelve broad; but the court which is without the temple, is left out, and not measured; because it is given unto the nations, who tread the holy city under foot forty-two months. And Ezekiel takes notice, and reproves this abominable transgression of the law of the house among the children of Israel, chap. xlii.

5.—9. and chap. xliii. 7.—12. But the outer-court, and the whole portion of ground whereon the temple and city stood, are measured in Ezekiel; and in that measuring, which is not allowed, Rev. xi. we find the number twenty-five much insisted on, Ezek. xl. 21. 25. 29. 30. 33. 36. and xlv. 1. and xlviii. 15. 20. Yea, in these texts we also find the number five, which is again the square root of twenty-five; and even this number is someway applied to the kingdom of Antichrist, Rev. ix. 5. 10.

However, it is plain, that the number left out in measuring of the temple by John, and found most remarkably in Ezekiel, is the number twenty-five. And in the second measuring in the Revelation, after the destruction of Antichrist, there is no need of measuring the temple and its court: for John saw no temple in the new Jerusalem, but the Lord God and the Lamb. But seeing Ezekiel shews us the measure of the whole, while he complains of the transgression of the law of the house; and seeing John, during the time of the profanation of the holy place, and the city, measures only what can be measured by twelve, and leaves out that where the number twenty-five is used in Ezekiel; it would appear, that the number twenty-five is the number of the company that transgresses the law of the house, and profanes the holy place, in opposition to them that worship in the inner-temple, whom John is called to measure, and to whom the number twelve applies.

By this we may learn, that whatever it be in the profession of Christianity, and in the order and worship of the house of God, that cannot be measured by twelve, or by the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, that is not of Christ, but of Antichrist. And whatever profession of Christianity it be that arises not from the doctrine of the twelve apostles, but either a number reaching beyond twelve toward twenty-five, or falling short of it toward five, that is not the true Christian, but the Antichristian profession.

tion. And however few or many the professors be, whose profession arises not from the precise twelve, or who derive not their origin only from twelve, as do both the Old and New-Testament churches; these must be they who have so far the number of the beast's name. If therefore we would not be reckoned among the worshippers of the beast, let us cleave strictly to the New Testament, and to the plan of the church laid down by the twelve apostles of the Lamb, without the least addition thereto or diminution from it. And let us reckon upon no profession of Christianity in ourselves or others that is not produced by the gospel itself, and the influence of the words of the apostles of Christ upon our minds: for the outer-court is left out, and not measured, when it cannot be measured by the measure of the new Jerusalem during the time of the beast's reign; and then it is possessed by the beast and his company.

But, after all, the beast's number doth not arise from the number twenty-five as its square root, without an added fraction. And seeing twenty-five is the only entire number from whence it can arise, it may be inquired, Why is not the number of the beast said to be 625, which arises precisely from twenty-five as its square root? And why might not any other number that arises from twenty-five with a fraction, have been the number of the beast, as well as 666; or why is this fixed upon as the beast's number, rather than any other that arises from twenty-five, with a fraction?

To this it may be answered, 1. Here is indeed a palpable difference between the number of Christ and Antichrist: The Lamb's number arises from twelve by twelve precisely, without any borrowed help; but the number of the beast rises not from twenty-five without a borrowed fraction from another number. Which perhaps may denote the same thing that Daniel said of Antichrist, under the type of Antiochus Epiphanes,

Epiphanes, Dan. viii. 24. *And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power.* For Antichrist's number was not made up without the borrowed aid of the broken empire: the ten kings that arose in the broken empire, gave their power to the beast.

But, 2. Neither the number 625, nor any other number that arises from twenty-five with a fraction, was so capable to be expressed in a manner wherein there should be a description of the numbered company, as is the number 666. This number is not written full by the words that signify it according to the common use of the scriptures; but in the figures  $\chi, \xi, \varsigma$ . And these figures whereby the Greeks used to express the number 666, are the initials of three words that give a true description of all the followers of the beast, in opposition to the followers of the Lamb, and that make up a character which will agree to none but the beast and his followers; and these words are  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota \xi\nu\omicron\iota \varsigma\alpha\nu\upsilon\tau\epsilon$ , i. e. *Christians strangers to the cross.*

This description will not agree to any that make not some profession of being Christians, nor to any but Christians falsely so called. It cannot agree to them to whom the number one hundred forty-four is applied; for these are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; and if any man will come after him, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow him. This description of the beast and his company who go under the Christian name, is plainly contrary to the description of true Christianity and true Christians in the New Testament: as will easily appear by casting our eyes on these texts, Matth. xvi. 21.—26. 2 Tim. iii. 10.—13. Gal. vi. 12. 13. 14. Phil. iii. 8. 10. 11. 15. 17.—21. 1 Pet. iv. 1. 12. 13. &c. And in the book of the Revelation, patience is still the character of the Lamb's company, chap. vi. 9. 10. vii. 14. xii. 11. 17. xiii. 10. and xiv. 12. 13. So that if we would make up a character of the followers of Christ, in

opposition to Antichrist, from the New Testament, and from the book of the Revelation, they must be those that suffer patiently for keeping the commands of God, and the testimony of Jesus, as set forth in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, or in the writings of the New Testament. Therefore how can they who are against Christ and Christianity, and that under the Christian name, be better described and distinguished than by these words, *Christians strangers to the cross?* And is there any other description of Antichrist's whole company, both the persecutors and them that submit to Antichristian authority for fear of the cross, that can take them all in, with a plainer opposition to the slain Lamb's followers, than this, that they are strangers to the cross? None of Antichrist's company can thus count the number of the beast; for they are all one way or other persuaded by the power of strong delusion, that they may be Christians without the cross. And because it requires wisdom received from the word of God, to know this difference betwixt Christ and Antichrist, thus to count the beast's number, I doubt not, but to all them that have this wisdom, and to none else, this way of counting it will be agreeable. If God thought fit to make three words stand for three sentences, Dan. v. 25.—28. why may not the three initials be here put for three words, especially in a motto?

It is to be observed, that the mark set on the Lamb's company, during the time that Antichrist possesses the outer-court, is not visible in their outward order and worship, but only before the Lamb and his Father: for they worship in the inner-court, while the court without the temple is left out, and not measured, being given to the nations to tread it under foot, chap. xi. 1. 2. and xiv. 3. While the woman, the church, was in the wilderness hid from the face of the serpent, chap. xii. the servants of God were as the seven thousand in the midst of idolatrous Israel, whom the Lord reserved to himself,  
and

and kept from bowing the knee to Baal, who were not known to Elijah, and perhaps not to one another. Thus we are not to inquire for any true visible church that can be measured exactly by the word of God, during the reign of Antichrist, or till the end of the time, times, and a half.

And before we leave this subject, we must likewise observe, that the beast's number is by far greater than the Lamb's; and to this agree chap. xiii. 7. 8. xvii. 15. Against all discouragement that may arise from this, the people of God are comforted in the 7th chapter, with an account of the appearance that the Lamb's company will make at last, when Antichrist is fully destroyed, and they brought out of all their tribulations, and gathered together before the throne of God and the Lamb. By comparing chap. vii. 9.—17. with chap. xxi. 4. it may appear, that the last part of chap. vii. speaks of the saints in their glorified state.

And it was very proper, in the introduction to the prophecy concerning the coming of Antichrist, to comfort the church with an account of the glorious issue of that great evil that was to come over the church. But it is full time now to proceed to consider the opening of the seventh seal.

*Seal VII.* chap. viii. 1. The silence in heaven for the space of half an hour, comes after the disturbance given to the church by the Heathenish power of the empire, which had just passed away by the sixth seal, as a calm after a storm. This silence also respects what is immediatly to follow, *viz.* the blowing of the trumpets; for as it comes at the close of one scene, so at the opening of another we have this solemn attentive silence. If it be inquired, what event on the earth answers to this silence? we answer, silence signifies rather a forbearing of action; but perhaps the liberty of conscience at first allowed by Constantine throughout the empire, and the short season of rest after the end of Heathenish persecution,

tion, and before any Christian persecution by the power of the empire began, may be intended by this half-hour's silence. And this outward rest, together with the forementioned with-holding of the Spirit's influences, served to prepare the Christian ministers and people for what follows.

When the seven angels get the trumpets, there is an introduction to their sounding in the appearance of another angel, as a priest, offering much incense with the prayers of all saints, causing them to ascend before God, and then filling his censer with fire off the altar, and casting it into the earth; upon which followed voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

This can be no other than the Son of God, the uncreated angel of the covenant, the high priest of the church, who is frequently thus designed in the Old Testament. The prayers of all saints find acceptance and an answer only through his intercession; and here they are answered by terrible things in righteousness. All the Old-Testament saints prayed for the first coming of Christ, and these prayers were answered by terrible things in righteousness on the Jewish nation. In like manner, the prayers of all the New-Testament saints are for his coming again the second time; but that time could not come till there should be a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, 2 Thess. ii. So that the design of this appearance of the church's high priest, is to let the saints know, that whatever evil comes to pass by the opening of the seventh seal, and the blowing of the trumpets, yet there was nothing in it but the answer of their prayers, and all would end well to them, according to the prayers, not which any saint may take in his head to put up, but of all the saints.

John saw the vision of the sealed book, and the opening of the seventh seal, in the representation of a temple in heaven. And as it is said, Psal. lxxviii. 17. *The Lord is among the angels, as in Sinai in the holy place*; so here is a reference to the appearance

appearance on Sinai, with voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. We heard of an earthquake before, under the sixth seal; which seemed to denote that great change in the state of things that was in the passing away of the Heathenish power of the Roman empire. And now this earthquake that comes by the opening of the seventh seal, and by the blowing of the first of the trumpets, seems to be that notable change on the face of the Christian profession, and of the Roman empire, when that empire got on the form of Christianity, in the place of the religion it had before. And this appears to have been by the first five trumpets, as follows.

*Trumpet I.* chap. viii. 7. Here begins that hurt to the earth, against which the servants of God were secured by being sealed, chap. vii. 1. 3. And by the earth bringing forth grass and trees, (the hurt whereof puts the servants of God in danger) we may understand the primitive fruitful profession of Christianity, that depended on the influences of the Holy Ghost. Consider 1 Cor. iii. 9. Heb. vi. 7. Compare Psal. lxxii. 16. 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. Is. xlv. 3. 4. 5. The earth in the prophecies frequently signifies the land of Israel; and this hurting of the earth may be compared with that which is said, Is. xxiv. 5. 6. 7. This trumpet brings forth that evil which comes to its height by the fifth trumpet, chap. ix. 4.; where there is a reference to Joel, chap. i. and ii.: and this burning of the earth may be borrowed from Joel i. 19. The earth is hurt here by hail and fire mingled with blood.

*Hail* seems to signify the wrath of God; and here it may point out the strong delusion which he sent on them who received not the love of the truth, that they should believe a lie, 2 Thess. ii. And the lie they believed was, that they could serve God and Mammon; or seek the friendship of the world, and yet keep good friends with God; or, that they might be Christians without denying themselves, and taking up



up their crosses, and following the slain Lamb; or, that the Christian profession was a broad way, wherein the whole Roman empire might walk, as it had done in the Heathenish religion before. This lie came to be believed through many plausible reasonings, from a carnal sense of the Old-Testament prophecies, and a carnal application of passages in the Old Testament to the outward state of the New-Testament church, with relation to the Roman emperor, who favoured Christianity, and to the empire. And these reasonings were attended with divers signs, which in that time were more observed than the words of the apostles of Christ, and the signs wrought by them, whereby their words were fully confirmed, so as to need no further signs; but as Christ came with signs, so did Antichrist.

And *fire* signifies strife and contention. When the Christian profession, through the foresaid strong delusion, came to be changed into a form of godliness, denying the power, there was great strife and fierce contention about the words of that confession of Christianity, which should be the public authorized confession in the empire.

This fire was mingled with blood; for then it was that persecution took place among Christians, when the Christian leaders, having the emperor now on their side, began to make use of his power against them who would not agree to the words of their confession. The difference indeed, at first, was on a point of the greatest importance in Christianity; and considering the application they made of the practice of the good kings of Judah to Constantine, persecution came in at first with fair pretences; but here all the murders that Antichrist hath committed, by the power of the kings of the earth, had their beginning.

All this could not but affect the ancient profession of Christianity, as hail and burning fire affect the face of the earth, and the fruits of it, Exod. ix. 24.

25. ; yet it was not utterly destroyed, only the third part of the trees were burnt up.

*Trumpet II. ver. 8. 9.* This trumpet brings that hurt to the sea, which could not come upon it till the servants of God were first sealed, chap. vii. 1. 3. Waters in this book signify, peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues, chap. xvii. 15. ; and the gathering together of waters is sea. By the sea here, then, we may understand the multitude of Christians, or professors of Christianity, that were in the bounds of the Roman empire.

This sea was hurt by a great mountain cast into it. A mountain, in the prophecies, signifies a kingdom, Dan. ii. 35. and 44. Psal. lxxviii. 16. and lxxvi. 4. Thus the Babylonish empire was called the destroying mountain, which the Lord said he would make a burnt mountain, Jer. li. 25. And this great mountain, which is here cast into the sea, may be the Roman empire ; to which, though what is here said, seems not so much to intend hurt, as to the sea into which it is cast ; yet when the power, and grandeur, and wealth of the Roman empire, came into the hands of Christians, there was a vast change in its constitution, and from thenceforth it declined very fast till it was broken. But the hurt that the bulk of Christians and their leaders received from thence, (though they thought it a great advantage) was very great.

This great mountain was burning with fire when it was cast into the sea ; and, as has been said, fire is put for strife and contention, Luke xii. 49. 51. Judg. ix. 19. 20. Now, what should the fire here be, but that strife and contention among Christians, about who should possess most of the power, and wealth, and grandeur of the empire, when it came into their hands ? The Christian leaders had been contending long before about the pre-eminence in the church ; but now they began to contend about the pre-eminence in the empire ; and divisions about their

their elections among the people, especially in the most eminent places, came to a great height, even to the length of bloodshed. Something like this still continues where the profession of Christianity, and the ministry of the gospel, is attended with worldly advantages.

By this great mountain burning with fire, cast into the sea, the third part of the sea became blood, or was corrupted, as the waters of Egypt when turned into blood, the third part of living creatures in the sea died, and the third part of ships was destroyed. Communion in spiritual or church privileges, and in the profession of Christianity was marred and spoiled, by the access of multitudes to it, that sought only worldly privileges, and by strife and fierce contention about these.

*Trumpet III. ver. 10. 11.* This trumpet brings hurt to the rivers and fountains of waters, as the last did hurt to the sea. According to the notion already given of *waters*, rivers, and fountains of waters, must signify particular provinces and nations of men; and here the several provinces of the Roman empire, that were now for most part become Christians, seem to be intended.

A star is the sign of a rising kingdom, Numb. xxiv. 17. Matth. ii. 2. and its burning as a lamp denotes success and prosperity, Is. lxii. 1. Its falling from heaven, therefore, cannot, as sometimes it doth, signify its fall and ruin, but a removal from its native seat and habitation, and coming suddenly, surprisingly, and in such a manner as it cannot be well told how or whence it came. And this looks not unlike the irruption of those barbarous people, the Goths, Vandals, &c. into the provinces of the Roman empire. This made these waters bitter; and so the name of the star is called Wormwood, according to Jer. ix. 15. and xxiii. 15. Those barbarous people that broke in upon the provinces of the Christian empire, fought their way, and took possession  
where.

where-ever they came; and, being at their first entrance Heathen, they caused apostasy from such profession of Christianity as was then to be found where they came. Though yet afterward they themselves embraced the religion of the empire, which they subdued, as well as its laws; and when they got power as kings in it, and brought down its seventh head, they gave their power to the beast: for this same star that fell from Heaven, set Antichrist on his throne at the blowing of the fifth trumpet, as we may see afterward.

*Trumpet IV.* ver. 12. From the use of the sun, moon, and stars, Gen. i. 16. they are taken to signify rulers and governments. And the consequence of that which began by the former trumpet, was the breaking of the government of the empire, and weakening the power of the emperors at the head of it, (which was quite taken away by the next trumpet) and consequently of all that had dominion in it, under that head; yet the government of the empire was not fully destroyed, for to this day something of it remains in the several nations within the bounds of it.

These four trumpets take up the time of about an hundred and fifty years, from the beginning of the fourth century, which is the season pointed at by the church in Pergamus. And by them preparation was made for the evil that comes by the fifth, which is the first wo, the kingdom of Antichrist; for in order to that, it behoved the Christian profession to be changed, and fitted to the empire, and the Christian ministry and people corrupted by the wealth and grandeur of that empire, and the power of it weakened to make way for the ten kings that should give their power to Antichrist; whose kingdom we are to consider under the next trumpet. But here I break off, and am, &c.

## L E T T E R III.

S I R,

November 1. 1734.

**B**EFORE I enter upon the fifth trumpet, I hope it shall not be disagreeable to you, that I add somewhat to that which was said in my last of the number of the beast. I observed it is not usual in scripture to express numbers by figures, or letters that serve as figures; but I should have noticed, that, contrary to the constant use of the scripture in all other cases, not only the number of the beast, but also its opposite, the number of the Lamb, 144, and 12 its square root, are expressed in numeral letters, Rev. vii. where it is observable, that the thousands adjected to those numbers are not so expressed, but writ full; and this serves to strengthen what has been before alledged, *viz.* That it is the number 144, with twelve its root, that is chiefly intended; and that the thousands are adjected only to signify the multitude of the members of the true church that is built on the doctrine of the twelve apostles.

The number 144, that is full writ, Rev. xiv. 1. where it is opposed to the number of the beast, is set down, chap. vii. 4. in these letters, which signify that number among the Greeks, ρ μ δ. And these are the initial letters of three Greek words that make up a character and motto for the followers of the slain Lamb, directly opposite to the motto or description of the beast and his company. These words are, *ρηματος μαρτυρες διωκόμενοι*, i. e. *The persecuted witnesses of the word.*

The number 12 is set down, chap. vii. 5. 6. 7. 8. in these two Greek letters, ι β, which are the initials of two words that are the title or motto both of the typical church built on the twelve patriarchs, and of the

New-

Testament church built on the twelve apostles of the Lamb, 1 Pet. ii. 9. compared with Exod. xix. 6. And these words are, *κρατευμα βασιλειου*, i. e. *The royal priesthood*. The true church is oftener than once thus designed in the book of the Revelation, as chap. i. 6. v. 10. and xx. 6. And when the church is set forth in the vision by the twenty-four elders, (with a reference to the twenty-four governors of the sanctuary, over the twenty-four courses of the priests, and to the twenty-four courses of the sacred musicians) these elders appear as priests having crowns. We may likewise observe, that the true church of Christ is under this title opposed, by Peter, unto them who stumble at the word, being disobedient; by whom Christ is disallowed, as he is the corner-stone, and the head of the corner, and to whom he is a stumbling-stone. See 1 Pet. ii. 4.—9.

The opposite number 25, which appears frequently in Ezekiel, where the Revelation refers to that prophecy, yet doth not appear in the Revelation; but if we should express it in the proper letters, as the number twelve is expressed, the letters would be *κ ε*. And these again happen to be the initials of two words, which make a title or motto very proper for the Antichristian kingdom, as it is opposed to the royal priesthood. These words are, *κυριότης εθνικη*, i. e. *The Gentle lordship, or the lordship of the Gentiles*. Compare Rev. xi. 2. with Matth. xx. 25.—28. Mark x. 42. Luke xxii. 24.—27. and 1 Pet. v. 3.

By this time, I suppose, you will judge I have pursued this thought far enough; and it will be much if I come off without being laid up with the Jewish cabalists, which is the company I do not love. But if this should be my fate, I have at least room to plead that Irenæus with his *λατρευος*, and Grotius with his *ουλπιος*, should go before me. For as I have kept close by the proper letters wherein the numbers are set down in the book of the Revelation, without putting others in their place; so I have the

common practice of making the initials to stand for words, in titles and mottos, to support me in all the use I have made of those letters; neither have I drawn any thing from them, but what is clearly enough declared in the New Testament, and in the book of the Revelation.

When I consider the notice that Jesus Christ himself condescends to take of the very order wherein the Greek letters stand in the alphabet, in one of the titles he takes to himself in that book, I cannot say I have any reason to be ashamed of all the pains I have taken in this affair of letters.

But it is time to proceed to the consideration of the trumpets, beginning where we left off.

*Trumpet V.* chap. ix. 1.—12. The first of the three woes mentioned in the close of the foregoing chapter, comes by this trumpet. The instrument of this first wo, is that star which fell from heaven, chap. viii. 10. For these words, *εἶδον ἀστὴρα ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πεπτωκότα εἰς τὴν γῆν*, might have been rendered, *I saw the star which fell from heaven to the earth.* We saw before what were the effects of this star upon the several provinces of the empire, when it fell upon them at first by the third trumpet. We have likewise taken notice of the consequences of it, with respect to the government of the empire, and its rulers supreme and subordinate, by the fourth trumpet. And now when this fifth trumpet begins to sound, that same star gets the key of the pit of the abyss, and opens it; and when it is opened, there comes up smoke, whereby the sun and the air is darkened.

By the darkening of the sun and the air, we may understand the extinction of the supreme government, or ruling power that was in the Roman empire, or that fall of the seventh head that succeeded the sixth, which ruled when John had this vision. It behoved this seventh head, which was not yet come when John wrote, (*viz.* the Christian emperors) to continue a short space, and then give way to the eight, or

to the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, who ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, chap. xvii. 8. 10. 11. John saw the seventh head wounded to death, chap. xiii. 1. 3. and beheld all the world wondering after the beast, when that deadly wound was healed, and which had the wound by a sword, and did live, ver. 12. 14. This is that Antichrist to whom the ten kings gave their power, which had received no kingdom in the empire, when John wrote, but were to get power in it as kings one hour with the beast; or, at the same time with the eighth head, which is of the seven, and is the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, chap. xvii. 11. 12. 13. Now, in that which John saw at the blowing of the fifth trumpet, we have a representation of the fall of the seventh head, and of Antichrist's kingdom, arising, in place thereof, out of the bottomless pit, under the emblem of crowned locusts coming out of the smoke of the pit, whereby the sun and the air had been darkened.

As it behoved the Christian emperors, under whom Antichrist was born and bred, to fall, in order to his coming to be at the head of the empire, or mounting his throne; so when his kingdom was now coming in the full power of it, the glory of the kingdom of Christ and his government of his willing people, subjected by his power to his own authority in his word, must of course disappear quite among all the professors of Christianity that were to worship the beast or Antichrist. And I shall not deny that this may be also intended in the darkening of the sun and the air by the smoke of the pit, out of which came the crowned locusts.

That it is the kingdom of the beast, or of the clergy, supported with the power of the ten kings, (who gave them their power to make the broken empire subject to them) that is intended here by the crowned locusts coming out of the smoke of the pit, may appear, if we consider,

1. This



1. This is that evil come to its height, which began with the first trumpet, and against which the servants of God were sealed. Compare chap. vii. 3. and viii. 7. with chap. ix. 4.

2. When we consider the six vials before the seventh, and observe how they answer to these six trumpets, we see the fifth vial, which is the reverse of this fifth trumpet, is poured out on the throne of the beast, and fills his kingdom with darkness; from which we may infer, that the fifth trumpet, to which that vial is opposed, sets the beast on his throne, and brings his kingdom in the power of it.

3. When the beast is after this, once and again, called the beast that ascendeth out of the abyfs, chap. xi. 7. & xvii. 8. it seems to be with reference to what is here said of the darkening smoke ascending out of the pit of the abyfs, and of the locusts coming out of it, who have the angel of the abyfs for their king. This is that abyfs where Satan is shut up, and which is closed upon him at the final ruin of Antichrist, that he may not deceive the nations, and out of which he comes again to stir up Gog and Magog against the saints, chap. xx. 1. 2. 3. 7.

The clergy then, having the broken empire in subjection to them, by the power of the ten kings that arose in that empire, when the seventh head was wounded to death, are here represented by locusts having on their heads as it were crowns like gold. This is borrowed from the prophet Nahum, who, prophesying of the fall of the Assyrian empire, (which may be a type of the Antichristian) says, chap. iii. 17. *Thy crowned like the locusts, and thy princes like the locust of locusts, incamping in the hedges in the day of cold; the sun arose, and he is fled, and his place is not known; where they?*

The damage done to the Christian profession, and outward estate of the church, by these locusts, may be understood, by considering the desolation brought on the land of Israel by the locusts, and other such creatures

creatures mentioned by Joel, chap. i. and ii. for the images here, whereby the kingdom of the clergy is described, are taken from thence.

*Their shapes were like horses prepared to battle ; faces as men : hair as the hair of women ; teeth as of lions ; breast-plates as breast-plates of iron ; wings sounding as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle ; and tails like scorpions, with stings in their tails : for their torment is as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.*

This is a strange composition of the greatest violence and the greatest deceit ; of grandeur and baseness ; of effeminacy and obstinate hardness ; of tenderness and most terrible fierceness and cruelty. This monstrous composition of qualities so different, pointed out in the hieroglyphic of the locusts, is very observable in clergymen reigning in this world by the power of the kings of the earth.

The blending together of civil and ecclesiastic power in the Antichristian kingdom, with the manner of the exercise of these powers there, may be the great thing here intended.

The whole power of the Antichristian kingdom is represented to us, Rev. xiii. by two beasts ; because it could not be so fitly represented by one. That first beast with the ten horns, that had been wounded to death, and yet lived, is the concurring power of the ten kings that arise in the Roman empire, to make one opinion, (*μία εν γνώμην*, chap. xvii. 17.) or uniformity in religion, and to make the nations subject to the clergy.

The powers of the earth, whose employment is to punish all that work ill to their neighbour against the second table of the law, according to that ancient ordinance of God, Gen. ix. 6. are God's ministers in that matter, to whom he commands us to be subject, and to pay tribute, Rom. xiii. But the power of the kings of the earth, making uniformity, and supporting the clergy, and bringing the world in subjection,

to

to them, is the beast with the ten horns, the Anti-christian power ; to which only those are truly subject, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life. After this beast, the peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues do wonder, who yet shew no conscientious subjection to the powers that be, as they are the ordinance of God ; and they worship the beast that pushes with the ten horns, or the clergy, whom they take for Christ, at the head of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them ; and in so doing, they worship the dragon who gave the clergy this power. Compare Rev. xiii. 3. 4. with Math. iv. 8. 9.

The second beast that has horns like a lamb, and yet speaks as a dragon, who exerciseth all the power of the first beast in his presence, and causes worship be paid him, represents the ecclesiastic power of Antichrist, which the clergy will have to be very distinct from the civil power ; yet their church-government is nothing but an image of civil or secular government in the nations of this world ; and they have power to give life to this image of the beast, that it should both speak, and cause them that would not worship it be killed, or cut off from the profession of Christianity. By this we may understand, what to think of that ecclesiastic government, which is conformed to the civil, and is the image of secular power. *It shall not be so among you,* says our Lord.

But to return to the locusts : They are said to be a wo, as was noticed ; and the great evil that comes by them, must be that same from which the servants of God are preserved by being sealed, Rev. ix. 3. 4. which can be no other than eternal destruction on men having some form of Christianity. For the locusts do this hurt, not by divesting them who are subject to them of all professions of Christianity ; they do not kill them, as do those who are represented under the sixth trumpet. It would ease them who are subjected to the locusts, to be rid of all profession of Christianity,

Christianity, and the place of the locusts would no more be known where they were; so would it likewise ease them and rid them of the locusts, if they knew the power of Christianity: but the locusts, with all the subtilty and spite of the scorpion, deny and endeavour to extinguish the power of Christianity, and with all the violence of horses running to battle; and with the same deceit and violence they keep men under some form of Christianity, especially by violence. And thus their torment is as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man, and makes him as between death and life. By this pain the locusts live and reign; by this the clergy have their wealth and grandeur.

These locusts have a king over them, whose name is *Abaddon* in the Hebrew, and *Apollyon* in the Greek; even the dragon that gave power to the beast, chap. xiii. 4. His name signifies the *destroyer*; and it seems here to be opposed to the name *Jesus*, as this kingdom is opposed to the kingdom of Christ. Jesus signifies the Saviour; and the name of the Destroyer seems here to be opposed to what Jesus says of himself to his disciples, when they were wanting to have a city destroyed that refused to receive Christ, and pleading a precedent for this destruction in the Old Testament; he says, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save*, Luke ix. 52.—56.

Therefore, where-ever we see a clergyman preaching up persecution from the Old Testament, and stirring up the magistrate to serve him with his power, let his pretences be what they will, he is not the servant of Jesus in that matter, but is indeed a locust, having that king over him whose name is *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*. So that we cannot be at a loss to understand whose they are, who, under the most specious shews of religion, are either stirring up the magistrate, or spiring up the mob, to destroy the lives of them that differ from them in religion.

As I alledged that the secular and ecclesiastic powers of Antichrist are represented by two beasts, Rev. xiii. so I reckon the second beast the same with the whore or false church, and likewise the same with the false prophet that works miracles in presence of the beast. Compare Rev. xiii. 12. 13. &c. with Rev. xix. 20. And we may observe, this second beast, this false prophet, pretends to imitate Elias, in that same thing wherein the disciples were proposing to imitate him, when our Lord rebuked them. As for the ten horns which have been frequently mentioned, Sir Isaac Newton reckons them thus at their first rise in the fifth century, *Observations on Daniel*, chap. vi.

1. The kingdom of the Vandals and Allans in Spain and Africa.
2. The kingdom of the Suevians in Spain.
3. The kingdom of the Visigoths.
4. The kingdom of the Allans in Gallia.
5. The kingdom of the Burgundians.
6. The kingdom of the Franks.
7. The kingdom of the Britons.
8. The kingdom of the Hunns.
9. The kingdom of the Lombards.
10. The kingdom of [the Greeks] Ravenna.

Others have them thus :

1. The kingdom of the Britons.
2. The kingdom of the Saxons in Britain.
3. The kingdom of the Franks.
4. The kingdom of the Burgundians in Gaul.
5. The kingdom of the Visigoths in the south part of Gaul.
6. The kingdom of the Suevians and Allans in Galicia and Portugal.
7. The kingdom of the Vandals, first in Spain, then in Africa.

8. The

8. The kingdom of the Allemans in the country of the Grisons.

This kingdom was joined with the Heruli during their short reign in Italy.

9. The kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Hungary, and then in Italy, to whom succeeded the Lombards.

10. The kingdom of the Greeks in the rest of the empire.

Or thus, with the time when each kingdom began.

*A. D.*

1. Allemans, in the country of the Grisons and Hungary, which lasted about 139 years; but lest the number ten should not appear, the kings of the Lombards were by this time entered Hungary,	356
2. Ostrogoths, first in Hungry, then in Italy,	377
3. Visigoths in Hungary, then in Italy, next in Gaul, lastly in Spain,	378
4. Hunns in Hungary, and some time thro' all Europe,	378
5. Britons with Romans in Britain, and after that Saxons,	406
6. Suevians, first in Gaul, secondly in Spain,	407
7. Allans, first in Gaul, secondly in Spain,	407
8. Vandals, first in Gaul, secondly in Spain, thirdly in Africa,	407
9. Burgundians in Gaul,	407
10. Franks in Gaul,	410

But this seems rather an account of the time of these people their breaking in upon the several provinces of the empire, while they were moving up and down in it, and distressing the provinces and the government of the empire, before they got full power in it as kings, having put down the seventh head, which was not till near the end of the fifth century.

Others have the ten kingdoms thus, with the times of their rise, and the names of their kings; as,

		<i>A. D.</i>	
1.	The kingdom of the Greeks began	337	Marcianus their king.
2.	The Romans	422	Avitus their king.
3.	The Suevians	409	Riciarius their king.
4.	The Burgundians	413	Gundericus their king.
5.	The Visigoths	418	Theodoricus their king.
6.	The Vandals	435	Genfericus their king.
7.	The Britons	447	Vortimer their king.
8.	The Ostrogoths	454	Theodomerus their king.
9.	The Saxons	455	Hengiltus their king.
10.	The Franks	456	Childericus their king.

These barbarous people left their first habitations somewhere in the north, without the limits of the empire, and came in upon the empire in the fourth century; and towards the end of it they began to swarm in it, and then, and in the fifth century, fought under their several captains, sometimes against the Romans, sometimes against one another: and some of those called kingdoms in the foregoing lists were subdued before the emperor of the west was quite extinct; as the Suevians in Spain with Ricarius their captain, by the Visigoths, *A. D.* 456.

But when Odoacer (the captain of the Turcilingi, with the Scyri and Heruli, his auxiliaries) put a final end to the emperor in the west, and reigned as king in Rome and Italy for seventeen years after; there were, besides his kingdom at that time, *viz. A. D.* 476, these other kingdoms within the bounds of the empire. As,

2. The kingdom of the Ostrogoths, who had shaken off the yoke of the Hunns after Attila's death, and had Theodimir for their king; whose son Theodoric, by the persuasion of Zeno the Greek emperor, did after this attack Odoacer, overthrew his kingdom, and set up the kingdom of the Ostrogoths (*i. e.* the Eastern Goths) in Italy in place of his.

3. The

3. The kingdom of the Visigoths (or West Goths) in part of Galia and in Spain, whose king a little after this was Alaricus.

4. The kingdom of the Vandals in Africa, whose king at this time was Gensericus; and his son Hunericus succeeded him soon after this.

5. The kingdom of the Hunns in Hungary. This people had about twenty-four years before this overrun a great part of Europe under Attila.

6. The kingdom of the Burgundians, who seem at this time to have been under Gundobaldus, with his brethren the sons of Gundericus. Gundobald at last reigned alone, having killed his brethren; and his successor was Sigismund, who married the daughter of Theodoric king of the Ostrogoths; and Alaricus king of the Visigoths married the other.

7. The kingdom of the Franks, who at this time had Childericus for their king, whose son Chlodoveus succeeded him, *A. D.* 482. Theodoric king of the Ostrogoths married the sister of Chlodoveus; and he married the daughter of Childericus the Burgundian, the Brother of Gundobald. She dealt much with him to make him embrace Christianity, and at length in battle he prayed for the help of his wife's God, and got the victory, and so became a Christian before the end of this century. But if the Franks were behind with the Goths and Vandals in embracing Christianity (pardon me for calling the religion of those kings and their people by that name) they made it up afterwards: for the Goths and Vandals, though Christians long before, were of the Arian kind; but Chlodoveus, you must understand, was orthodox. After this the clergy were as much obliged to the Franks as to any of the kingdoms; especially the bishop of the church that led the van in the great apostasy. Pepin and Charlemagne did the bishop of Rome great service.

8. The Lombards came from the northern parts from whence came the Goths, Vandals, &c. and, under



under the conduct of their captains Iboreas and Aion, having beat the Vandals, *A. D.* 379, possessed themselves of divers places in the empire. At length, in the beginning of the sixth century, they invaded Hungary, under the conduct of Audoinus their king, who is said to have been their ninth king; so that we may well suppose they had a king in the year 476. Long after this, they, under Alduinus, subdued the Ostrogoths, and reigned in Italy in their stead; but were subdued at last by Charlemagne, at the intreaty of the bishop of Rome, to whom Charlemagne gave his temporal jurisdiction in Italy, after Odoacer's kingdom, the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, and the kingdom of the Lombards, had fallen to make way for his jurisdiction. See *Dan. vii. 8. 20. 24.*

9. The kingdom of the Saxons in Britain, of whom I need tell you nothing: Rapin will inform you.

10. The kingdom of the Greeks, whose king about this time was Zeno the emperor of the east; and that emperor could not now be reckoned the head of the empire, when the western emperor was put down, and there were so many sovereigns in it, besides him; his kingdom was now but a tenth part.

From what has been said, it may appear, that, at the wounding of the seventh head of the empire to death, these kings seem to have been about the number of ten within the then bounds of the empire. And though there have been many changes among them since, with the putting down and setting up of kings, yet they have continued to this day in and about that number.

And though the empire under Antichrist has lost much ground on the east and south, by the Saracens and the Turks, yet it has gained on the north and west: for the Swedes, Danes, and Scots, that were not brought under the old Roman yoke, were subdued by Antichrist, and gave him their power; and Muscovy that was beyond the limits of the empire,

is some way subject to the clergy too; and what shall we think of the Spanish conquest of the West Indies?

We may further take notice, from what has been said of the ten kingdoms at their first rise, what sort of Christians it behoved these kings and their people to be, who became Christians in the midst of war and bloodshed, while seeking habitations in the world by fire and sword, with insatiable avarice and ambition, and were not tamed by the Christianity that they embraced. These barbarous nations that seemed neither to fear God nor regard man for ordinary, yet paid no small respect to the clergy, and particularly to the bishop of Rome.

Attila the Hunn, that scourge of Europe, entered Italy, laid waste several cities, and was on his way to Rome; but yielded to the Roman bishop, who came to meet him, and returned home at his desire.

Genfericus the Vandal entered Rome with fire and sword, yet was mitigated by the bishop, and abstained from burning and slaying at his call.

Odoacer, who deposed the emperor, was so far from deposing the clergy or the bishop of Rome, that he made a law about his election, which law, it is true, provided, that the election of the bishop should be with the king's consent; but under Theodoric the Ostrogoth, when several synods were held on the schism about the election of Symmachus, Odoacer's law, by which that case was first brought before Theodoric, was repealed, so as the election of the bishop was from thence good without the king's consent.

Of this Theodoric, Petavius the Jesuit in his history says, "And though he was, after the manner of the Goths, of the Arian sect, he defended the right and liberty of the Roman church with great faithfulness."

Thus you have some short account, such as I can give you, of the people that tore the Roman empire in pieces, but left it united in the clergy, and became their first subjects when they arose, by their means

means, to reign in the broken empire, in room of the seventh head that was wounded to death by these people.—I am, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

S I R,

November 18. 1734.

**I**N my last you had an account of the fifth trumpet, and of the beginning of the kingdom of the clergy in the Roman empire, when the seventh head was wounded to death, and the ten horns or kings received power in it. This is the beginning of the 1260 days, which end at the pouring out of the fifth vial.

This beginning of the reign of the clergy over the empire is pointed out in the Revelation, as a very notable work of the holy, and wise, and all-powerful providence of God, Rev. xvii. 17. *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* It is also represented as a thing that took place by the remarkable working of Satan. The smoke and the locusts ascend out of the bottomless pit, and have Abaddon, the angel of that pit, for their king; and Rev. xiii. 2. 4. *The dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.— And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast.* The apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 9. 10. 11. 12. speaks both of the working of Satan, and of the work of the holy providence of God, in the coming of the man of sin. It was indeed very strange that the clergy rose to reign by the fall of the Christian emperors, who first raised them; and that they came to their kingdom, by means of those barbarians, who, at their first falling in upon the provinces of the empire, were Heathen; and that those people who tore the empire in pieces, those kings inde-  
pendent

pendent of one another, and engaged in bloody wars against one another, yea, and divided at first about the profession of Christianity, should all agree to give their power to the clergy, to make the broken empire subject to them, and at length to make one opinion or uniformity.

That you may see how far the clergy were from falling by means of the fall of the seventh head of the empire, and how far the people who broke the empire, were from breaking them; I shall give you some quotations from Dupin's Church-History, which you may add to the instances I gave in my last, of the respect paid to the clergy by the most dreadful kings of the people, who broke the empire.

Dupin, speaking of the doctrine, discipline, and morality of the fifth century, (when the emperor in the west fell) says, there was but little difference between the fourth and the fifth in that matter; and this same was much, considering the vast difference betwixt the two, as to the state of the empire. But before I tell you what he says on the fifth, I shall first give you some notes from him on the fourth, (when the man of sin came first into the world) in order to clear you further as to what was said on the first two trumpets.

On the fourth century, he says, "They made use of new terms for the defence of the truth, and clearly to distinguish it from error.—Some false opinions were rejected in this century, which were maintained by the authors of the preceding ages, such as the reign of Jesus Christ for a thousand years upon earth.—Discipline was brought to great perfection in this century, and ceremonies were carried to the highest point of splendour.—They were obliged to solemnize Sundays and holidays, and to abstain on these days from all manner of servile work, not only from a principle of religion, but also from authority of the laws.—They celebrated the feast of martyrs.—The churches were adorned, and the sacred vessels were

of gold and silver.—Then the dignity of bishops received a new lustre. The churches were distributed according to the disposition of the empire.—The ecclesiastical provinces were regulated according to the civil provinces.—The bishops had the liberty of assembling in councils; they held them every year in each province, and, in case of necessity, they assembled from several provinces, and even from both east and west.”

But on the first three centuries, he says, “We do not read, in any authors of credit, that councils were held to condemn most of the first heretics. They looked upon them as people excommunicated and separated from the church, without their being condemned in synods.—The first councils mentioned in ecclesiastic history,—were those that were held toward the end of the second century, upon occasion of the dispute among the churches about Easter.”

He says further on the fourth century, “It is in this age we must date the institution of a monastic state.—Some have traced it farther back, but the silence of the authors of the three first centuries about monks is very strong.—Morality was not attacked in this century by any error that tended to looseness; but because of the too great severity of the Novations, Encratites, Eustatians, and Luciferians, the church opposed that excess, in maintaining the evangelical liberty, and opening a way to sinners to be reconciled to the church by penance. They began in this age to prescribe maxims and particular rules for a more perfect life than that of common believers. Christianity becoming the common and almost general religion in the Roman empire, we must not be surpris'd, if there were abundance of persons who were only Christians in name, and who led a life almost Heathenish; and—there were some prelates who made use of the pretext of religion to satisfy their ambition.”

On the fifth century, he proposes to make some remarks on what was peculiar to it; and among other things, he says, “In that age they wore out the notions about the reign of Jesus Christ upon earth a thousand years; nor did they affirm that the last judgment was so near.—The monastic state spread more both in the east and west than it had done before; the number of virgins who consecrated themselves to God, was greater than formerly. The worship of martyrs and their relics was more solemn; the office of the church was celebrated with more splendour and magnificence. The wealth of churches was increased, and they began to make laws to hinder the dissipating and alienating of it. They made abundance of rules about clergymens lives, and ordinations, simony, usury, and several other points of discipline. The worship of saints was much heightened in this century. They kept their feasts with more solemnity, they discovered many of their relics, and there was a great concourse from all parts to visit them.”

By this you may perceive the clergy were far from falling when the seventh head of the empire was wounded to death; and that the breaking of the empire, where they had been well planted before, was so far from breaking them, that when it was torn in pieces in other respects, it remained the more firmly united in them, and in subjection to them. You see how far Christians had deviated from the rule of the gospel when the clergy came to their kingdoms; and the accounts we have of the ten kings and their people, who first gave their power to the clergy, in the histories of their wars and their manners, do manifest abundantly, that they were far from subjection to Jesus Christ and his law; but they who are least subject to the authority of Jesus Christ in his law, are the fittest slaves to the clergy.

The locusts that came out of the smoke of the pit, are the first of the woes, and it is said, *they torment*

men, and have power to hurt them five months. It is said, this is the time of the continuance of locusts, when they fall on a country to waste the fruits; and some think, that in this allusion to the time of the continuance of locusts, it may only be intended, that this evil must have its course as the locusts, and, however long it continue, it will come to its appointed end. We noticed before, that the number 5 is the root of 25, from whence the Beast's number arises; and whether any such thing be here intended, I leave you to consider. But five months, according to the prophetic way of counting time, (each day for a year, and forty-two months, 1260 years) make one hundred and fifty years, which is indeed far from the length of the time of Antichrist's reign; yet it happens to be much about the time that run from the putting down of the Roman emperor in the west, to the first beginnings of the Mahometan affair, which belongs to the next trumpet; and so the five months may denote the time from the fifth trumpet's beginning to blow, to the first rise of that evil, that came to its height by the sixth trumpet. Now, the first beginnings of the evil that comes to its perfection by the sixth trumpet, were about the year of our Lord 622; and in that space of one hundred and fifty years, Antichrist was settling himself on his throne; and when these five months, or one hundred and fifty years, are ended, and he is fully settled in his throne, the first wo is said to be past, *i. e.* come to its height, and fully established. I shall give you here again a few notes from Dupin, on the sixth and seventh centuries; for these hundred and fifty years run from toward the end of the fifth century, to pretty far on in the seventh.

On the sixth century, he says, "The doctrine of the church was explained in this age with all the exactness possible; but they began to debate about useless questions, to explain mysteries by the rules of logic, and to dispute with warmth about matters of

small consequence.—As to discipline, although the councils continually renewed the ancient laws; yet it began to be already relaxed, and the ancient rigour of penance was much abated. They settled the degrees of kindred in which it was unlawful to contract marriage; they extended them to first cousins; they made many regulations about ordinations.—The riches of the church began to be a burden to it, because its ministers looked upon them as their property; whereas formerly they were looked upon only as the patrimony of the poor.—The bishops of the west passed into a law, the custom of paying tithes to the curates. In the Latin church they extended the obligation of living in celibacy, even to subdeacons.—The bishops were yet elected by the clergy and people; but the favour of princes made them to be elected, who had neither learning, merit, nor capacity; they preserved to metropolitans the right of ordaining the bishops of their province; and the custom of celebrating provincial councils every year was settled in the west. The church of Rome was thrice vexed with the schism of Antipopes, and those of Alexandria and Antioch were often the prey of the ambitious.—Some popes pretended to rights and prerogatives, of which their predecessors never dreamed; and there were flatterers who were at great pains to make them believe, that they were independent of, and above councils. But the more holy rejected these false maxims, and made their greatest glory to consist in keeping up the laws of the church\*. The monastic order was perfected in the east,—and in the west.”

And on the seventh century, he says, “They began to reduce the doctrines of religion into a system; it was then that the first treatises appeared upon all the points of theology, and that they brought them to certain dogmatical questions. The discipline of the church, which was very much relaxed through the

\* Dupin is a French Popish Sorbonnist.



the looseness of most Christians, was kept up by several decrees of councils, particularly in France and Spain, where these laws were authorised by the edicts of princes. The penitentials which seemed to be made to preserve discipline and penance, corrupted the purity of them, and soon annihilated their severity. Public penance was become more rare, and private ones more common and ordinary. Private masses were more frequent. The popes acquired more authority in the west. In the east, the princes meddled much in the affairs of religion. The western bishops were very careful to preserve and increase ecclesiastical goods, which became more considerable than ever. The office of the church, and the number of its feasts were increased.—The fasts at the four seasons of the year, that were peculiar to the church of Rome, which they had practised from the fifth century, began to be established in other churches.—The Pantheon, which was dedicated by Boniface IV. in the year 613, under the name of the Virgin Mary, and all the saints, gave occasion to celebrate a feast by that title; to which did afterward succeed that of All-saints, in the eighth century. In fine, we may say, that it was in the seventh and eighth centuries of the church, that discipline began to take that form which it had ever since, and has to this day, as well in the Greek as in the Latin church.”

Thus we may reckon, that from the time that the first wo began to go forth, till it was fully gone out, there were about one hundred and fifty years; and when the first wo was fully gone out, and come to a settlement, the first beginnings of the second wo were working, which came at last to its height, and to a full stand, by the sixth trumpet.

*Trumpet VI.* chap. ix. 12.—21. and chap. xi. 14.

It is generally believed, that the evil intended here is the empire of the Turks, propagating and supporting the Mahometan religion. And indeed it would seem

seem that the emblems here used, do point out deadly error and delusion, and great imposture, propagated and maintained by the greatest violence and most formidable warlike power; which agree very well to the affair of Mahomet. This wo is intended against the Antichristian world, as appears from ver. 20. 21. even as the reign of Antichrist came as a wo upon the professors of Christianity that received not the love of the truth. But this second wo differs from the first in this, that, by the first, men were not killed, that is, divested of all profession of Christianity; but by this the third part of men are killed; the third part of the world called Christian, was divested of their Christianity; even that part of the empire that was in Africa, and in Asia, to the river Euphrates, the boundary of the empire on the east. And though there have been, and are still Christians in these parts and beyond them; yet the apostasy from the very Christian name, caused by the Mahometan successes, may very well be reckoned to have taken off a third part of them that went under the Christian name, allowing all that still go under that name in those parts where the Mahometan powers are.

Some have imagined Mahomet to be Antichrist; but the characters of Antichrist, in Daniel and the Revelation, and the other writings of the New Testament, will no way agree to him. He is not that eighth head of the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, which is of the seven. His chief seat is not in Rome, the city that was reigning over the kings of the earth when John wrote, and which was built on seven mountains. He came not with signs and wonders, pretends no miracles, rejects the Christian name, sits not in the temple of God, possesses not the outer-court of the Lords house, and has not the form of godliness, denying the power of it. He forbids not marriage, worships not dæmons, and idols of gold and silver; and though he arose against the empire, and distressed it sore on one side as an enemy,

my, yet he never subdued it; and the number and character of the beast cannot agree to him.

They who think the empire of the Turks is only intended by the second wo that falls out under the sixth trumpet, reckon its rise about the year of our Lord 1300. And some are so precise as to date its beginning from May 19. 1301; and counting from thence, an hour, *i. e.* in the prophetic style, fifteen days, a day, *i. e.* one year, a month, *i. e.* thirty years, and a prophetic year, *i. e.* thirty-six years, making in all three hundred and ninety-six years, and one hundred and six days; this brings them to September 1. 1697; on which very day, by a famous victory over the Turks, it seemed to them as if an end were put to the second wo; for it stopt the progress of their empire. But this calculation, that pretends to an exactness very extraordinary, seems at the same time very loose in this, that the time wherein our years exceed the prophetic, is not defalked; and when a month is understood to be thirty years precisely, (each day for a year) and an hour, fifteen days, a year cannot in this case be three hundred and sixty-five days, it must be only three hundred and sixty. And so the hour, day, month, and year, can be no more than three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. But these three hundred and ninety-one years, being years consisting only of three hundred and sixty days, are five days each year, and one day each fourth year, less than three hundred and ninety-one of our years; and so they will be but about three hundred and eighty-six of our years. Thus a calculation that pretends to be exact to a very day, falls wide no less than ten years.

It should likewise have been considered, that the time here pointed at, must be that which runs from the loosing of the four angels, under the sixth trumpet, to the drying up of the river Euphrates under the sixth vial. But there was no end put to the Turkish empire in the year 1686, nor in the year 1697  
either;

either; and therefore the loosing of the four angels could not be in the year 1300, or 1301.

It may perhaps be true, that the Turks, before the rise of their empire, were under four little heads which were reduced to one when their empire began; but it will not be so easy to make this the meaning of the loosing of the four angels that were prepared for so long a time after their loosing. For this loosing, in that case, would put an end to the four, which after the loosing are no more four, but one; while the text seems to say, that the four get liberty from thence to act and to continue till the end of the foresaid time, for which they all are prepared.

And they that would understand only the empire of the Turks supporting the Mahometan religion, do not consider, that Mahomet is not supported merely by the Turks; but there are other sovereign powers, though of different sects, yet all maintaining the Mahometan religion, as the emperor of Persia, the Mogul of India, and the emperor of Morocco. All these powers took not place before the year 1400, though some of them were a little before; and if we count from thence 391 at 360 days in a year, it will come to about the year 1786. And about that time these powers may come to an end.

Mahomet arose when the clergy were well settled on their thrones in the beginning of the seventh century; and from thence forward, the Saracens, the first propagators of his religion, distressed the Roman empire, with the people called Christians, and overran the empire in the east and south, long before the Turkish empire arose. Alstedius, in his Chronology, says, "*An. Christi. 731*, the Mahometans go into four sects. From this time the strength of the Saracens was much weakened.

The binding up of them for a time, till that religion came at last to be maintained by all the foresaid four powers, may be the thing intended in the loosing of the four angels that were bound in the river

**Euphrates.** This loosing of the four angels does not seem to be the beginning of this wo that comes by the sixth trumpet, but the time when it is come to its height: for it is not represented as falling out immediately upon the first blowing of the trumpet, but after the angel sounded, it is said to him, *Loose the four angels that are bound.* The wo had begun before at the blowing of the trumpet, but it had been restrained again; and the angel that blew the trumpet, is commanded to take off the restraint, and give it liberty to exert itself in four distinct powers.

Prideaux, in his life of Mahomet, speaking of him and the Saracens the first propagators of his religion, says, “From very mean beginnings he arose—to that height as to make one of the greatest revolutions that ever happened in the world, which immediately gave birth to an empire, which, in eighty years time, extended its dominions over more kingdoms and countries than ever the Roman could do in 800; and although it continued its strength not in much above 300 years, yet out of its ashes have sprung up many other kingdoms and empires, of which there are three at this day, the largest and most potent upon the face of the earth; I mean the empire of Turkey, the empire of Persia, and the empire of the Mogul of India; which God hath permitted of his all-wise providence, still to continue for a scourge unto us Christians, who having received so holy and so excellent a religion, through his mercy to us in Jesus Christ our Lord, will not yet conform ourselves to live worthy of it.”

I know not if there be any other kingdom or empire, besides the three of which he speaks, sprung out of the Saracen ashes, that is sovereign and altogether independent of the other three, but that of Morocco. So that this, with the other three, makes up the four powers that support Mahomet, which seem to be the four angels that are loosed. And what he says of these empires, arising out of the ashes  
of

of the empire of the Saracens, seems to be the thing intended by the loosing of them. And when he speaks of them as being a scourge to Christians living unworthy of their religion, this may serve as an explication of Rev. ix. 20. 21.

The sixth trumpet takes up much more time than any of the foregoing; for it comprehends all the time from 150 years after the fifth trumpet began, or from the seventh century, unto the sixteenth century, when the seventh trumpet began to be blown. But though we have only an account of the loosing of the four angels here; yet we must consider, that this trumpet comprehends under it the voices of the seven thunders, which John is forbidden to write, chap. x. 3. 4. And as the time of the seventh seal is divided by seven trumpets, and the time of the seventh trumpet by seven vials; so no doubt the time of the sixth trumpet is divided by those seven thunders that uttered their voices, before the seventh trumpet blew. But those things which the seven thunders uttered, are sealed.

Yet we have several hints concerning things that came to pass with respect to Christianity during the sixth trumpet, and concerning the Antichristian world.

In the Antichristian world, the kingdom of the clergy, they had been, before the loosing of the four angels, worshipping dæmons and images; they had revived the old Heathenish worship of dæmons under the name of angels and saints; and they worshipped images and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, as much as ever their predecessors in the Heathen empire did before them. They had been guilty of this before; and the four angels were loosed as a dreadful scourge on them for this: but after these got power to divest the third part of them of the Christian name, they who remained under that name, both in the countries where the clergy still reigned,

reigned, and even in the countries where these four prevailed, repented not of this gross idolatry.

*Neither repented they of their murders, i. e.* the wars stirred up by the clergy for the support of their authority, the religious wars, croisades, and especially the delivering over heretics and schismatics to the secular arm to be punished, and the persecutions of the Waldenses, Wickliffites, and Bohemians; all which was downright murder in his sight, who came not to destroy mens lives, but to save.

*Nor of their sorceries;* for the coming of the man of sin, was after the working of Satan, with signs and lying wonders; and those that dwell on the earth were deceived by those signs which the beast got power to do. Yea the clergy came the length, in many instances, of downright collusion with the devil; and the old sorceries of the Gentiles were practised again in the Antichristian world by the superstitious people under a shew of religion.

*Nor of their fornication;* even literal, by means of the prohibition of marriage. But that which is intended here, is the fornication that the false church commits with the kings of the earth, that adorn and protect her instead of Christ, and by whose means her children are brought forth, instead of the power of the word and Spirit of Christ, whereby the children of the true church are brought forth, Rev. xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. 9. For this fornication is here distinguished from the worship of images, and saints, and angels; and it is committed with the kings of the earth, by her that pretends to be the spouse of Christ, and takes them in his place.

*Nor of their thefts.* All the merchandise of Babylon, all the ways they had of enriching themselves, and all their worldly gains that arose to them from the superstitious world, and by the power of the kings of the earth, were no other in the sight of God, than downright thefts. It is prophesied of Antichrist under

der the type of Antiochus Epiphanes, Dan. xi. 39. That he shall divide the land for gain.

In all these they persevered under the second wo : and when it was come to its height, even when the four angels were loosed and slaying the third part of them, the rest, instead of repenting, abounded the more in them.

We see likewise, that, in the time of the sixth trumpet, the nations were still treading under foot the outer-court of the Lord's house. For this trumpet takes up a considerable part, yea the greatest part of the 1260 days, wherein the outer-court is trodden under foot, and not measured, because it is given to the nations. The Lord's two witnesses, in that time, were still witnessing against the transgressions of the law of the house, and tormenting the nations with their testimony ; till at length they were killed by the beast, when their testimony was perfected or fully brought forth ; and their resurrection and exaltation, in allusion to the resurrection and exaltation of our Lord, was at the end of the sixth trumpet, and when the seventh was about to be blown, chap. xi. 11.—15. I shall not repeat what I have said of the two witnesses in the *General View of the Revelation* ; only we see, by the reference to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, to Elijah, and to Zerubabel, and Joshua, with the garments of his captivity upon him, and to our Lord in his ministry among the Jews, that the Antichristian state was then the antitype of the Egyptian bondage, of Israel under Jezebel, of the Babylonish captivity, and of the state of the Jews when they persecuted our Lord, and put him to death ; and it is expressly said to be spiritually Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. Such was the kingdom of the clergy in its perfection during the time of the sixth trumpet.

The publishing of the gospel the second time among the nations, by the translations into their languages, is pointed out as having its beginnings under this sixth



sixth trumpet. This seems to be intended by the little book open in the hand of the angel, at whose call the seven thunders uttered their voices, and who foretold the end of time, when the seventh trumpet should blow; and when John takes the little book and eats it, that angel said unto him, *Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.* The apostles preached at first to the nations by word of mouth with the gift of tongues; but now they began to preach a second time by their writings in the languages of the nations, into which they were translated. And this was a preparation for the seventh trumpet, which followed immediately upon the scriptures their beginning to work again upon the minds of men, after they had been subdued by the beast; which may be the resurrection of the witnesses. About the time that the witnesses were killed and revived, *the tenth part of the city fell;* which may signify the fall of the kingdom of the Greeks, and the Greek church, at which the remnant were affrighted, and acknowledged the justice of God in his judgment. After this tenth part of the city fell by the Turks, the second wo came to its height; and the seventh trumpet, which brings the end of time, followed quickly. I shall say no more on the sixth trumpet; only the time of the fifth and the sixth trumpets seems to be the time pointed out in the vision of the candlesticks, by the church in Thyatira. And now I think it is time to put an end to this letter.—I am, &c.

## L E T T E R V.

S I R,

March 13. 1735.

**T**HE Apocalypse serves to open the prophecies of the Old Testament, as has been said; but especially the prophecy of Daniel; and there is nothing more

more manifestly foretold in Daniel, than the ruin of the enemies of the Messiah's kingdom, and the reign of the saints over the world.

This was expected by the church, when the Lamb took the sealed book to open it; and this is set forth in the song of his redeemed, as the issue of the loosing the seals thereof, chap. v. 8. 9. 10. and it comes out under the seventh seal, by the seventh trumpet, which lies now before us.

*Trumpet VII. chap. xi. 15.—19.*

The foregoing trumpets exalted the enemies of Christ's kingdom, and this trumpet destroys them, and exalts the kingdom of Christ and his servants, who were depressed by them. This accomplishment of Daniel's prophecy, concerning the kingdom of Christ, is here celebrated in the songs of the church, as the issue of the blowing of this trumpet, ver. 15. 16. 17. 18.; and it is further declared in the visions that serve to explain this trumpet, and particularly in the vision that explains the seventh vial.

Here we may take a view of Daniel and the Apocalypse together on this subject.

DANIEL, chap. ii.

Ver. 34. Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces.

35. And the stone that smote the image, became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.

36. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation.

40. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron.—

42. And as the toes of the feet, part of iron, and part of clay; the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken.

44. And in the days of these kings

APOCALYPSE, chap. xi.

Ver. 15. The kingdoms of this world are become our Lord's and his Christ's, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

17. Thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18. And the nations were angry, and thy anger is come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

Chap. xiii.

Ver. 1. I saw a beast rise up out of

of

kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, and it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

## Chap. vii.

Ver. 3. 4. Great beasts coming up from the sea.

7. Behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly.—And it had ten horns.

8. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up amongst them another little horn.—And behold, in this horn were eyes like a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

9. I beheld till the thrones were cast down (or elated) and the Ancient of days did sit.

10.—The judgment was set, and the books were opened.

11. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

12. As concerning the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.

13. And I saw—the likeness of the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

14. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting

of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns.

5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given to him to continue forty-two months.

6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name and tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7. And it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them,

## Chap. xvii.

Ver. 12. And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings.

13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast.

14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them.

## Chap. xvi.

Ver. 13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15. Behold, I come as a thief.—

16. And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

## Chap. xix.

Ver. 19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20. And

everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

17. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth.

18. But the saints of the most high ones shall take the dominion; and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

19. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast——.

23. The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth.

24. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall arise after them, and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

25. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and he shall wear out the saints of the most high ones, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time.

26. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume, and to destroy it unto the end.

27. And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high ones, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.

28. Hitherto the end of the matter, (or word.)

VOL. IV.

20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him.—These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Chap. xx.

Ver. 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them;—and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

6. Blessed and holy he that hath part in the first resurrection.—They shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened,—and the dead were judged——.

15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.

Chap. xxi.

Ver. 1. And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth.

5. Behold, I make all things new.

Chap. xxii. 5. And they shall reign for ever and ever.

Chap. x. 7. In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Chap. xvii. 17.—to give their kingdom to the beast till the words of God be fulfilled.

Chap. xvi. 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

Chap. xxi. 6. And he said unto me, it is done.

7. He that overcometh, shall inherit all things.

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From

From these texts compared, we may see that this kingdom will begin at the destruction of the beast with the ten horns; and when the stone falls on the feet and ten toes of the great image; and when the likeness of the Son of man comes with the clouds of heaven, and is brought near to the Ancient of days, according to Daniel; or, as in the Apocalypse, when God repays the wrath of the nations with his wrath, and destroyeth them who destroyed the earth; and when the Son of man, the Word of God, comes from heaven to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, against the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies; when the beast and the false prophet are taken, and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And this is the same of which the apostle speaks to the Thessalonians, when speaking of the Lord's second coming, he says, 2 Thess. ii. 8. *The Lord will destroy the man of sin with the brightness of his coming.* But there he tells us that the man of sin is to be first consumed by the spirit of the Lord's mouth. And these words of the apostle are taken from Daniel, chap. vii. 26. *They shall take away his dominion, to consume, and to destroy it unto the end.* This consuming of the beast, or of the man of sin, that goes before his final destruction, is more particularly declared in the Apocalypse, chap. xiv. from ver. 6. to the end; where the preaching of the everlasting gospel seems to be the same with the spirit of the Lord's mouth, whereby Paul says the man of sin is consumed. And the several steps of the consumption of the man of sin, in consequence of the publishing of the gospel in the languages of the nations, unto his total ruin, at the coming of Christ, are more particularly pointed out to us in the vials that are poured out under the seventh trumpet; for, by comparing Rev. xi. 19. with chap. xv. and chap. xvi. we see that the things which follow upon the blowing of the seventh trumpet, or fall out while it blows, are brought to pass by the vials.

*Vial I.* chap. xvi. ver. 2. answers to the first trumpet, and points at the time, when some of the ten kings, minding their own interest, stood up in defence of the publication of the scriptures against the Roman church; and when those kings, who had given their power to the beast, to maintain one confession and uniformity, began to break that uniformity, and to differ about the confession which they should support by their power.

*Vial II.* chap. xvi. ver. 3. answers to the second trumpet, and signifies the strife and discord that took place throughout the body of the Antichristian society, in consequence of the former vial, and the breaking of the communion of that society, in such a manner, as it could no more be maintained entire through it all. Hereby there came to be three stated communions; the Popish, Lutheran, and Calvinist, or rather Zuinglian; and so stated, that all attempts to reconcile any one of them with another, or to live in communion with them all, have been to no purpose. And this will continue to the end: for the finishing stroke on Babylon, when it comes, will find the great city divided in three parts.

*Vial III.* chap. xvi. ver. 4. 5. 6. 7. answers to the third trumpet, and points out the bloody divisions and strifes in particular nations and kingdoms, about the particular form of religion and church-government they should be under. And the blood shed in the Antichristian nations on this account, was the just judgment of God upon them, for their persecuting the patient sufferers for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, among whom those cannot well be reckoned who suffered for any national form of Christianity, in a strife for the public good of religion.

*Vial IV.* chap. xvi. ver. 8. 9. answers to the fourth trumpet, and signifies the raising of church-authority to an intolerable height, while it circulated from hand to hand among the contending parties, and ex-

erted itself with the greater vehemence, that it was opposed by those who were hoping to reign in their turn ; so that men began to be weary of it, and reproach the gospel and the publication of it, as the cause of all this mischief.

*Vial V.* chap. xvi. ver. 10. 11. answers to the fifth trumpet, and distresses the kingdom of the clergy, as at this day, when the world is going into a course of infidelity, persecuting principles wearing out, and the kingdom of heaven that was preached by Christ and his apostles, against the kingdom of this world which the Jews expected, is again discovered in opposition to church-authority, supported with secular power ; so that Christianity appears to be the reverse of a national religion ; and when church-authority is no more so capable, as it has been to exert itself thoroughly in any shape. This galls the clergy to the heart, and they reproach the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, as it stands against their kingdom, which is of this world, and they repent not of their deeds : for so far as they have power to persecute, they do it still ; and the spirit of ambition, or thirst after power, and the spirit of persecution, remain with them still.

*Vial VI.* chap. xvi. ver. 12.—16. answers to the sixth trumpet, and breaks the Mahometan powers, and so makes way for the coming of Christ, as the antitype of Cyrus, to destroy Babylon, and to deliver his people. Then the beast makes his last effort against Christ's kingdom, his last struggle for life ; and the kings of the earth, and their armies, are gathered together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and to their last overthrow, typified by the overthrow of Sisera and the host of Jabin at Megiddo. This comes by the seventh vial.

*Vial VII.* chap. xvi. ver. 17.—21. which brings to pass the great event of the seventh trumpet, gives the finishing stroke to Babylon, pours out all the wrath of God, and finishes the mystery of God.

Here is a reference to the terrible appearance of God on Mount Sinai, when he erected the kingdom of Israel, ver. 18.

And when the vengeance of God is represented as falling on the third part of the great city, there seems to be a reference to Ezek. v. 11. 12. 13. The ruin of national churches, and the fearful destruction of Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, is pointed out, ver. 19.

The putting down of all rule, and authority, and power, and the demolishing of all empires, kingdoms, and states, seems to be signified, ver. 20. Compare Dan. ii. 35. and vii. 12. And the fearful wrath to come on all that know not God, and obey not the gospel, is pointed out by the exceeding great hail, ver. 21.

Thus by the seventh vial comes all the wrath of God, and the destruction of them that destroyed the earth, when God comes to set up that kingdom which was foretold by Daniel.

In that more particular description of the events of the seventh vial which we have from chap. xix. 11. to chap. xxi. 6. 7. 8. we see how this kingdom comes, with the destruction of the wicked, by several steps. As,

1. The beast is destroyed, and given to the burning flame, or cast into the lake of fire at the coming of Christ; and this is the time of the resurrection of all the faints to reign over the world a thousand years, while Satan is restrained from tempting and deceiving the nations. This is that season and time for which the lives of the rest of the beasts are prolonged, when their dominion is taken away, Dan. vii. 12. Then it is, that the stone cut out of the mount fills the whole earth, having become a great mountain; and then dominion and glory is given to the likeness of the Son of man, or the church, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him, Dan. vii. 13. 14. 26. 27. And this is the time when the kingdoms



kingdoms of this world become our Lord's and his Christ's, Rev. xi. 15.

2. When Satan is loosed, and makes his last and his greatest and most desperate assault upon the church, in the glorious state of the resurrection, by Gog and Magog, according to Ezek. xxxviii. and when these are destroyed, and cast with Satan into the lake of fire and brimstone; then the kingdom of Christ and his saints are further exalted, in the judging of all the wicked raised from the dead, and brought before the Great Judge, and all the saints, his assessors, to be judged and condemned. And this is the time of the dead that they shall be judged.

3. When these are cast into the lake of fire, and the wrath of God has taken place fully on all the wicked, then the kingdom of Christ comes to its highest pitch of exaltation, viz. to reign over the restored creation, the new heavens and the new earth, and to inherit all things made new, and reign for ever and ever, Rev. xxi. 1. 5. 7. and chap. xxii. 5. Thus when the thousand years are finished, and when the judgment of the beast, and of Gog, and then of every particular wicked person, is over, the kingdom will not be left to other people, but shall stand for ever.

There is a twofold coming of the kingdom of Christ foretold in the Old Testament, and declared in the New. The first was after Christ's coming in the flesh, when he appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and it took place when he arose from the dead, and ascended to his throne on the right hand of God, and received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, and erected his general assembly and church of the first-born. Of this first coming of his kingdom, which followed upon his coming the first time, John Baptist, and he himself, in the days of his flesh, preached, saying, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And of this our Lord speaks when he says, *There be some standing here, who shall not taste death, till they see*  
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the Son of man coming in his kingdom, Matth. xvi. 28. And the apostle speaks of this, Heb. xii. 28. where he says, *We receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us hold the grace whereby we may serve God acceptably*; and Col. i. 13. *Who hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love*; and Rev. i. 9. *Your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ*. His kingdom, as it has come the first time, appears in the world, where he rules in the midst of his enemies, after the fashion of his first appearance in the world, in a humbled suffering state. So the Apocalypse represents his subjects in this world, as in a suffering state, and following him as the slain Lamb. And therefore, at best, the times of this first state of Christ's kingdom, are the times of refreshing, or of comfort in the midst of distress and affliction, Acts iii. 19. 20. *Repent ye therefore, and be converted---seeing the times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord, and he hath sent Jesus Christ, who before was preached unto you*. These times of refreshing are there distinguished from the times of restitution of all things, which were also foretold by the prophets, and are to take place when Jesus Christ returns from heaven, ver. 21.

As it behoved Jesus Christ himself, according to the prophecies, first to suffer, and then to enter into his glory, when he arose from the dead; so must it be with his kingdom, which, in its first coming, is conformed unto his coming the first time, and will be conformed to his glorious appearing when he comes the second time without sin unto salvation.

This second coming of the kingdom of Christ is declared by our Lord, when speaking of his second coming, Luke xxi. 31. *When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand*; and by the apostle, 2 Tim. iv. 1. *The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom*; and ver. 18. *The*

Lord

*Lord will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.* This is that which our Lord sets before his disciples as the gracious reward of their self-denial, and bearing the cross after him, Luke xxii. 28. 29. 30. *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Compare Matth. xix. 28. Rev. xx. 4.

Now, it is this coming of the kingdom of Christ, and not the first, that is spoken of by Daniel the prophet, chap. ii. and vii. and by John, in the Revelation, referring to Daniel. For, according to the foresaid texts in Daniel and the Apocalypse, it comes at the full end of that kingdom, which is the fourth from Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom; and, according to the description that is given of it, that fourth can be no other but the Roman empire. And this kingdom of Christ comes not till that empire be divided and broken: for the stone cut out without hands, smites the image upon the feet, and so becomes a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. This kingdom of the saints commences at the destruction of the beast with the ten horns, after the little horn came up among them, and wore out the saints of the Most High; and thought to change times and laws, and they were given unto his hand, until the time, times, and the dividing of time.

It is true, the Apocalypse, chap. xii. represents the power of this empire as exerted against the church by Satan at the first erection of the church; but then it is observable, the ten horns were not then crowned; they had received no kingdom as yet, when the power of the empire was at first employed against Christ's kingdom: for the crowns appear then upon the heads, ver. 3. Daniel, in describing the beast with the ten horns, makes no mention of the seven heads; but John is more particular

and makes the application of Daniel's fourth beast to the Roman empire more easy, and the knowledge of the times more distinct by the seven heads; which he makes to signify, first, the seven mountains on which Rome was built, chap. xvii. 9. and then seven kings, or seven different forms of supreme governing power, in the Roman city or commonwealth, succeeding one another; whereof five were fallen to make way for the sixth, which was in being when he wrote; and this was to give place to a seventh, (the Christian emperor) which was to continue but a short space in comparison with the sixth. And when the beast gets a deadly wound in this seventh head, then the ten kings receive power in the empire as kings; and the beast's deadly wound is healed in Antichrist, who is called the eighth, chap. xvii. 10. 11. 12. Then it is that the beast appears with the ten crowns upon his horns, and on his heads the name of blasphemy, and makes war with the saints from thence forty-two months, or 1260 days, or a time, times, and half a time. This is the beast of which Daniel speaks, and this is the time of his reign. And the kingdom of Christ which he foretells, does not come till this time, times, and a half be finished, or till 1260 years after the Roman empire was broken into ten kingdoms. And though the kingdom of the beast be greatly distressed at the end of these years, yet he is not fully destroyed till the end of the years which Daniel adds to the time, times, and an half, chap. xii. 11. 12. 13. And when the beast is fully destroyed, then is the beginning of that glorious kingdom of the saints foretold by Daniel.

Further, we may observe, that as this kingdom will come with the utter destruction of the enemies of Christ and his saints; so it will be the reward of all the saints, even that same recompense of which our Lord speaks, Luke xiv. 13. 14. *But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and*

*the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* This is that resurrection which is described, Rev. xx. and called the first resurrection, at the beginning of the saints reign: for by it we cannot understand, as some do, the resurrection from trespasses and sins which is spoke of Eph. ii. because it is expressly declared to be the resurrection of them who had been slain for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who had not worshipped the beast, nor his image, nor received his mark, &c. These are their characters before they arise and live to reign; but before men rise from trespasses and sins, they are dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past they walked after the course of this world, and the prince of the power of the air.

Neither can this resurrection be understood, as others incline to understand it, to be a remarkable revival of the testimony and cause of the martyrs of Christ: for this would turn only to the temporal advantage of some saints, living this mortal sinful life on the earth, while the departed sufferers in former ages are crying, *How long wilt thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* Neither is this opinion consistent with the answer given to that cry of the souls of the slain, wherein their hope is deferred only till the sufferings of their brethren should be fulfilled: for they must all in some shape or other suffer with Christ, who are to be glorified together with him at his appearing.

Further, this reign of Christ, unto which they rise, is that same which is set forth as the hope of the whole redeemed body, when the Lamb takes the book to open it, and loose the seals. Compare Rev. v. 9. 10. with chap. xx. 6. It is the reward of God's *servants the prophets, and the saints, and them that fear his name, small and great,* chap. xi. 18.; and chap. xx. 4. *John saw thrones, and them who sat on them,*

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(Compare Matth. xix. 28.) *and the souls of them who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,* (which is the designation the Apocalypse gives to them who suffered from the Jews, and from Rome Heathen, before Antichrist was revealed. See chap. vi. 9. and xii. 11.) *and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image; neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands,* (which comprehends all the saints that live under Antichrist, to the time of his final destruction); he saw that all these lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years before the resurrection of the rest of the dead. Now, these descriptions comprehend all the saints in all ages, and cannot be confined to them who live in any one period only.

And for this reason, this first resurrection and reign of the saints cannot be understood to be a resurrection only of some eminent sufferers unto death, while the rest of the elect remain in their graves, and those who are living this mortal life, are enjoying a prosperous outward state of Christ's kingdom. As this opinion cannot be reconciled with the forefaid texts; so it is not agreeable to the faith of the primitive Christians on this head, from which there was a remarkable departure when Antichrist's kingdom came: for they believed, that at the destruction of the empire, there would be a resurrection of all the just, and that all the elect should reign with Christ a thousand years before the judgment of the rest of the dead.

Thus when all the church of the redeemed are come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, they will have the dominion over the whole world, and the kingdom shall not be left to another people, but it shall stand for ever.

This is that likeness of the Son of man, which Daniel, in the vision, saw brought near before the Ancient of days, and unto whom dominion, glory,

and a kingdom was given, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. For it appears by the application of the description of the *Ancient of days* to Christ, Rev. i. 14. that Christ himself is that Ancient of days: and it was he that appeared of old to the prophets in human likeness, and not the Father. And the explication of the vision to Daniel, makes that *likeness of the Son of man*, to whom dominion is given, to be the people of the saints of the most high ones, Dan. vii. 14. 27. The Ancient of days then, in that vision, is Christ coming in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him. Their bringing of the *Like unto the son of man* near before him, is his sending his angels, and their gathering his elect together unto him from the four winds, Matth. xxiv. 31. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 52. And this is the state of the church, when dominion is given to it, at the destruction of the beast, and when all nations, people, and languages shall serve it. The likeness of a man, with a man's face, joined to the face of the lion, ox, and eagle, upon the body of a man, which is the cherub, is the hieroglyphic of the people of the saints of the most high ones. This man, united with the most high ones, appears to John at the Lamb's taking the book to open it, saying, *Thou hast redeemed us, and made us to our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* And this is fulfilled in agreeableness to Daniel's vision, Rev. xx. 6. Compare Dan. xii. 12. 13. That it may be given to you and me to have a part in that resurrection and kingdom, is the desire of, yours, &c.

**The Two WITNESSES PROPHECYING IN SACKCLOTH one thousand two hundred and sixty Days, overcome and killed by the Beast, and then reviving at the end of these Days, Rev. xi.**

[Written about the year 1737.]

S E C T. I.

IT has been observed, by the most noted interpreters of the Revelation, that the forty-two months of the nations treading under foot the holy city, and the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of the witnesses prophesying, clothed in sackcloth, Rev. xi. 2. 3. are the same number with the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of the feeding of the woman in the wilderness, Rev. xii. 6. and with the forty-two months of the beast's making war after his deadly wound was healed, Rev. xiii. 5. and with the time, and times, and half a time, of the nourishing the woman in the wilderness, when she fled from the face of the serpent, who persecuted her after he was cast down to the earth, Rev. xii. 13. 14. And thus the Revelation explains Daniel's *time, and times, and the dividing of time*, Dan. vii. 25. or *time, times, and an half*, Dan. xii. 7. and makes it to be the forty-two months, *i. e.* three years and an half; which, by reckoning thirty days precisely in the month, and three hundred and sixty days in the year, is exactly one thousand two hundred and sixty days. And by bringing the *time, times, and an half* to days, that number is set on a footing with the other two numbers that follow it, Dan. xii. 11. 12.

But it may be a question, If all the forementioned things to which this same number is applied, have their beginning and end exactly together?

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The reason of this question is, That *when the witnesses, who prophesying in sackcloth one thousand two hundred and sixty days, shall have finished their testimony, the beast shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them, Rev. xi. 3. 7.; and after they are killed, their dead bodies lie in the street of the great city,---three days and an half,---and they that dwell upon the earth rejoice over them, Rev. xi. 8. 9. 10.* All this, with their resurrection and exaltation, ver. 11. 12. is before the sounding of the seventh angel, about the end of the time of the sixth trumpet, which brought the second wo. But it is by the sounding of the seventh angel that the kingdom of the beast with ten horns (to which Daniel's time, times, and a half applies) is brought to its end. Yea, the kingdom of that beast who makes war by his ten horns forty-two months, is not filled with darkness till the fifth vial be poured out on his throne, Rev. xiii. 1. 5. and chap. xvi. 10.; and that vial appears to be in the days of the voice of the seventh angel.

This difficulty seems to have moved the learned and ingenious Joseph Mede, in his *Clavis Apocalyptica*, to place the end of the beast's forty-two months at the end of the sixth trumpet, and to place all the vials before the end of that trumpet, except the seventh, which he makes to coincide with the seventh trumpet. And so he seeks to find the end of the beast's reign in the *fall of the tenth part of the city*, Rev. xi. 13.

Yet we must rather take the fall of the Greek church and kingdom to be intended in the *falling of the tenth part of the city*, if we conceive this falling to have any relation to the business of the sixth trumpet; which Mr Mede confesses to be the affair of the Turks, by whose hand it is certain that church and kingdom fell, which was one of the ten kingdoms at the breaking of the empire. And though it had been some way divided from the Roman church, yet

yet there was not enough in that division to fhew that it was no part of the city; or if there had, it was fome way united to the Roman church, in the time of the council of Bafil, about fourteen years before it fell.

And if we understand the witnesses to be the Old and New Testaments, (which fhall be afterward confidered) the fall of the kingdom of the Greeks gave occasion to the tranflating and publifhing of the fcriptures in the languages of the nations, through the knowledge of the original languages brought into the weft by thofe who fled from that overthrow: fo that thefe witnesses were exalted beyond the power of the beaft to overcome them, as he had done before, when they were subdued under the authority of the church, and their testimony rendered utterly of none effect to the people of the nations in the council of Bafil. And fo we may perceive the connection of the exaltation of the witnesses with the work of the fixth trumpet, and the fall of the tenth part of the city. But the kingdom of the beaft was not brought down by the fixth trumpet, nor by the fall of the tenth part of the city; for what his kingdom loft on the eaft fide, it gained on the weft, by the conquest of America.

Mr Mede likewise makes the coming of Chrift, and the end to be at the beginning of the voice of the feventh angel, from Rev. x. 6. 7. But as *οταν μελλει οαλπίζειν*, is not fo properly rendered, *when he fhall begin to found*, as *when he fhall found*; fo we find *days* or different periods under the voice of that angel, which plainly fignifies, that his founding is to bring the end by feveral fucceffive fteps; as may be feen in the vials. For it may appear to any who will compare Rev. xi. 15. 19. with Rev. xv. 5. 6. and xvi. 18. 21. that the vials belong to the feventh trumpet, even as the trumpets are under the feventh feal.

Further, he pleads, Rev. x. 8. (inaking it refer to Rev. i. 10. and iv. 1.) for the beginning of another  
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general vision, like that of the candlesticks, and that of the seals, which he calls the vision or prophecy of the *βιβλαριδιον*, or *little book*, before the finishing of the vision of the sealed book, by the blowing of the seventh trumpet: though it is manifest, that the seventh trumpet belongs as much to the seventh seal as the first trumpet does. And thus he interrupts the vision of the sealed book, by another general vision, before it be finished, and so breaks the thread that serves to lead us through the book of the Revelation. But it is very evident, that these words, Rev. x. 8. *And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again*, do not refer to chap. i. 10. nor to chap. iv. 1. but to chap. x. 4.; where it is said, *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me.*

If the little book, that was open in the hand of the angel, who swore that the end was to come by the sounding of the seventh angel, and in the days of his voice, be not the same that was sealed; it can signify nothing more fitly than the New-Testament scripture, that began to be laid open to the view of all, immediately before the blowing of the seventh trumpet; and that, after it had been long hid from the people of the nations. For, after John had taken and eaten it, the angel says to him upon it, *Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues; and kings;* thereby signifying, that, as the apostles had at first preached the gospel by word of mouth to the nations in their several languages; so they should before the end preach to them again by the book which they wrote, laid open in the several languages by the translations of it. And since that time John prophesies again, by this same little book of the Revelation, which is not sealed, as Daniel's vision was, because the events which explain it were coming to pass from the time of his writing it; and in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, wherein the wo comes on the Antichristian world, and the mystery of God is finished, this same book

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of the Revelation will be clearly explained by the events. But whatever be in this, it plainly creates new difficulties, to feek the removal of the first, by placing all the vials, except the feventh, before the blowing of the feventh trumpet, as it alfo ftands on very difputable and far-fetched interpretations of the feveral texts where the foundation for it is fought. And it is a pity; for, had it not been for this, the *Clavis Apocalyptica* was the exacteft thing ever was done on the book of the Revelation.

## S E C T. II.

**N**OTHING could appear more plain than the fynchronifm of the treading under foot the holy city; the witneffes prophefying in sackcloth; the woman in the wildernefs; and the reign of the ten-horned beaft; to all which the fame very number is applied. For the forty-two months of the beaft's reign is the fame with the time, and times, and half a time of the woman's being nourifhed in the wildernefs, whither ſhe fled from the face of the ferpent; and the one thouſand two hundred and fixty days of the witneffes prophefying in sackcloth, is the fame with the forty-two months, wherein the outer-court is not meafured, but left out, and given to the nations who tread the holy city under foot. But, notwithstanding this, and all that is ſaid by Mr Mede to make up this fynchronifm, the book of the Revelation manifeftly directs us to make a twofold application of that ſelf-fame number. For in chap. xii. (from whence he endeavours to prove this fynchronifm) there is a twofold flight of the woman into the wildernefs expreffly mentioned.

The firſt is ver. 6. where it is ſaid, *And the woman fled into the wildernefs, where ſhe hath a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand two hundred and fixty days.* This is juſt after her manchild

*was caught up unto God and his throne; which child the red dragon sought to devour as soon as it was born; even that great dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his head, ver. 3. 4. 5. For the ten horns were not yet crowned, as we see them afterward, chap. xiii. 1. where the crowns are not said to be on their heads, one of which, viz. the seventh or last, is wounded to death, ver. 3. but upon the horns. And this flight of the woman is placed before the casting out of the great dragon, that old serpent, from heaven unto the earth, ver. 7. 8. 9.; or, (as it is commonly understood) before the fall of Heathenism in the empire.*

The second flight of the woman is thus expressed, ver. 14. *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, unto her place; where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. This comes after the dragon is cast down, as we may see by the connection of this verse with the 12th and 13th verses immediately foregoing, Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea; for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the male. And to the woman were given two wings, &c. This second flight then appears to answer to the time of the beast's living after his deadly wound, and having his ten horns crowned; who after that has power to make war, by these his horns, forty-two months, Rev. xiii. 1. 3. 5. with chap. xvii. 12. And as it is only to the ten-horned beast, wearing out the saints of the Most High, and thinking to change times and laws, that Daniel applies this number, Dan. vii. 25. which must end with his having accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, (Dan. xii. 7.) so we find the number set down to this second flight of the woman, just as it stands in Daniel, a time, times, and*

*an half, or the dividing of time.* And Daniel makes no mention of the seven heads of the beaft with ten horns; but the Revelation adds the heads for making the application clearer. There is therefore no foundation for applying this number, as it ftands in Daniel, -to any things that happened before the crowns were upon the ten horns. But the Revelation goes farther, and not only applies this number, as it ftands in Daniel, to the beaft making war by his ten horns, but alfo makes another application of the fame number to fomething that happened before the ten horns were crowned, and while the heads were yet crowned; and that is the firft flight of the woman; which feems to coincide with the witneffes prophefying in fackcloth, and the giving of the outer-court to the Gentiles.

If we will not own two flights of the woman, then we fhould think of a reafon why her flying into the wildernefs is mentioned before the cafting down of the ferpent, as well as after; and this muft be the reafon for it, that though the woman's flight did not happen fully and in form, till after the dragon was caft out into the earth: yet, whereas the firft beginnings of that evil happened before, therefore her flight is mentioned at the place where thefe beginnings happened. Now, when we admit this, the text ftill directs us to number one thoufand two hundred and fixty days from thefe beginnings, as well as *yer. 14.* directs us to number the *time, times, and a half,* from the flight there defcribed.

In the time of the prophet Elijah (to whom there is a plain reference in fome of the things faid of the two witneffes, *Rev. xi. 5. 6.*) *it rained not by the fpace of three years and fix months,* *Luke iv. 2. 5.* *James v. 17.*; and there is a twofold flight of that prophet into the wildernefs, where he was fed in an extraordinary manner, recorded in the books of the Kings, *1 Kings xvii. 3. 4.* and *chap. xix. 1.—8.* And there feems to be a reference to this twofold flight of

Elijah in what the Revelation says, first and last, of the woman flying into the wilderness.

The beginning of the *time, times, and an half*, of the ten-horned beast's scattering the power of the holy people, or of the forty-two months of his making war after the healing of his deadly wound, is fixed by what is said, Rev. xvii. 12. 13. 14. *And the ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength to the beast.*

This plainly fixes the beginning of the beast's reign at the time when the Roman empire was broken into ten kingdoms, or when ten independent kings began to rule in it, after it was wounded to death in its seventh head, *viz.* the Christian emperors, which succeeded the sixth, the Heathenish emperors. This was the head at the time of John's writing the Revelation, when five heads were fallen, *viz.* kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes of the soldiers, and dictators; all of them having had in their turns supreme sovereign power in the Roman city or commonwealth, the capital town whereof was built on seven hills, Rev. xvii. 9.—13.

Now, the Roman kingdom was wounded to death in its seventh head, and ten kings received power in it, not after the time when Augustulus was deposed by Odoacer, which happened in the year 476: for from that time, the kingdom of the Greeks was but one of ten that were then in the empire; it was now no more the city, but a *tenth part of it*.

The *time, times, and a half*, from the woman's second flight into the wilderness, or the forty-two months of the ten-horned beast's making war after his deadly wound, may be the time that runs from the blowing of the fifth trumpet, unto the pouring out of the fifth vial on the throne of the beast, whereby his kingdom is filled with darkness. For if we compare Rev. ix. 1. 2. 4. 11. with chap. xi. 7. and chap.

chap. xvi. 10. 11. and chap vii. 3. and chap. xiii. 2. 4. we may fee, that it is the kingdom of the beaft that is intended by the figures ufed chap. ix. 1.—12. and that the fifth trumpet brought him to his throne. And perhaps it will be found, that the five months there mentioned, is the time that runs from the beginning of that first wo by the blowing of the fifth trumpet, to the beginning of the fecond wo, by the blowing of the fixth trumpet, when it is faid, *One wo is past, i. e.* not ended, but fully gone forth.

Now, fupposing the forty-two months to be 1260 days (as we fee from Rev. xi. 2. 3.) and taking each of thefe days for a year, according to Numb. xiv. 34. Ezek. iv. 4. 6. and Dan. ix. 24. 25. 26. we fhall then fee, that, as the *time, times, and a half*, or forty-two months, began after the middle of the fifth century, they muft have their end before the middle of this century that is now running.

The vifion of Daniel, which was *fhut up*, becaufe it was *for many days*, Dan. viii. 26. points out 2300 days to the *cleansing of the sanctuary* that was *made defolate by transgression*, ver. 13. 14. And if thefe 2300 days be reckoned (each day for a year) from the time when Daniel had that vifion, the end of them, and the *cleansing of the sanctuary* from the *defolating transgression*, will be found to follow hard upon the end of the beaft's forty-two months, or 1260 days, reckoning from the time of the deadly wound, and of the rife of the ten kings.

This ferves not a little to confirm the opinion that the *time, times, and an half* began then; as does alfo the event. For in no time was the dominion of the clergy, in the nations called Christian, through the power of the kings, who once gave them their power, in greater darknefs and diftreffs, fince it had any beginning, than at this day. And if the beginning of the beaft's forty-two months be not thus certainly fixed by the rife of the ten kings *who received power*



as kings one hour with the beast, it seems impossible to fix it by the book of the Revelation.

And it is no novelty to place the beginning of Antichrist's reign at the breaking of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms. It is not an opinion taken up after the event happened. For it was held among Christians very long before\*, as we may see from a passage in Tertullian, who wrote at the end of the second century, or the very beginning of the third. He speaks to this purpose in his book of the Resurrection of the Flesh, quoting the second chapter of second Thessalonians. "*Let no man seduce you any way; because if there come not a departure first of this kingdom, to wit, and that man of sin be revealed, that is, Antichrist, the son of perdition, who is opposed, and highly extolled against all that is called God or religion, so that he may sit in the temple of God, affirming himself God. Do not ye remember, that while I was with you, I was saying these things to you? And now ye know what should detain unto his being revealed in his own time: for the secret of iniquity is already agitated; only he who now holds, should hold, till he be made out of the way. Who? but the Roman state, whose departure, dispersed into ten kings, shall bring on Antichrist. And then shall be revealed that wicked; whom the Lord Jesus shall slay by the spirit of his mouth, and evacuate by the appearance of his coming.*" What he there adds from the Revelation, is very remarkable. He says, "*Likewise in the Revelation of John, the order of the times is laid down, which the souls also of the martyrs under the altar, calling for vengeance and judgment, have learned to bear; that the world should first drink out its plagues from the bowls of the angels, likewise that city prostituted by ten kings, meet with her deserved end, and the beast, Antichrist, with his false prophet, give battle to the church; and so the devil being in the mean time confined to the abyss, the prerogative of the first resurrection should be ordained for them alone; after that,*

\* See Irenæus adv. hæres. lib. v. cap. 25. 26.

that, when he is also cast into the fire, the censure of the universal resurrection should be judged out of the books."

After the *time, times, and an half*, Daniel mentions 1290 days, to be reckoned *from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up*, Dan xii. 11. And this is thirty days added to the *time, times, and an half*; which the Revelation makes to be 1260 days. And the adding of forty-five days to the 1290 days, makes up the 1335 days, at the end of which Daniel was to stand in his lot; and he that waiteth and cometh to these, is blessed, ver. 12. 13.; even blessed, as we see from Rev. xx. 6. *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power; but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* The Revelation makes no mention of any of Daniel's numbers, but the *time, times, and an half*; and yet, by making that to be 1260 days, and fixing the beginning of them, it lays open the whole.

#### S E C T. IV.

**B**UT we must now see if any thing can be done toward fixing the beginning of the 1260 days, reckoned from the first flight of the woman into the wilderness, or from the witnesses being first clothed in sackcloth, which appears to be the time when *the court which is without the temple began to be left out, and not measured*, because it was given to the nations who shall tread the holy city under foot forty-two months, Rev. xi. 2. 3. with chap. xii. 6.

As we fixed the beginning of the beast's *time, times, and a half*, or forty-two months, by what is said of the ten kings their receiving power *one hour with the beast*; so we may now think, if we may receive any direction here from the fall of the tenth part of the city,

city, its being said to be *the same hour* with the exaltation of the witnesses, Rev. vi. 12. 13. *And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, (the witnesses now revived) Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell.* Though this *same hour* should not be allowed to respect the killing and revival of the witnesses, but only their ascension; yet that ascension cannot be supposed to be very long after the finishing of their testimony in sackcloth. And if we understand the fall of the tenth part of the city to be the fall of the church and kingdom of the Greeks, as was before said; this may direct us to not far from the end of the 1260 days of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. And by this means we may guess at their beginning. For if we number 1260 days, each day for a year, backward from the middle of the fifteenth century, when the tenth part of the city fell, (for it fell in the year 1453) we shall be brought back as far as the second century, and very near the end of it.

But, if it may appear by events about that time, and not long before, that the *court without the temple*, or the outward state and form of the Christian profession, began to be *left out*, as no more answering to the standard of God's word, the only rule for measuring the court of God's house, and the Lord's witnesses began then to be in sackcloth, and to prophesy in that cloathing, continuing so for the space of 1260 years; and if it can appear, that, at the end of these years, the court without the temple appeared any where measurable by the proper rule, so as it could not be at any time from the beginning of them, and that the witnesses could then be said to revive after being killed; then we may conclude, that we have found the time of the woman's first flight into the wilderness. And this may be made appear, after we have first seen what is to be understood by the

the two witneffes, of whom it is faid, Rev. xi. 3. *And I will give unto my two witneffes, and they fhall prophefy a thoufand two hundred and threescore days clothed in fackcloth.*

## S E C T. V.

**T**HERE has been nothing faid of thefe witneffes, by the interpreters of the Revelation, that is fo agreeable, as the opinion of thofe who hold them to be the Old Testament and the New, testifying of Chrift and his kingdom, in oppofition to Antichrift and his kingdom. For they who would have them to be a fucceffion of men, testifying in the feveral ages againft the corruptions of the profefion of Chriftianity, muft acknowledge, that thefe men witneffed for Chrift againft Antichrift, only in fo far as they brought the testimony of the Old and New-Testament fcriptures againft him. And even when fome of them, who are of this opinion, are giving the reafons why the witneffes are called two, they plainly tell us, it is becaufe their testimony is brought from the two Testaments, the Old and the New.

Thefe witneffes prophefied among the nations which trod the holy city under foot. And however bafe and mournful their appearance was in that ftate of prevailing corruption, as clothed in fackcloth; yet they ftill had fome place among the nations, and testified to them till they were killed by the beaft, who could not caft their testimony againft him, and therefore killed them. And when they were killed, the people of the nations would not fuffer their bodies to be put in graves: for however the beaft and his company treated the fcripture-testimony, they would never wholly give up with the writings of the Old and New Testament. They rendered them of none effect to themfelves, but they would never caft them off altogether. They extirpated the men who wit-

nessed against their corruptions; nor did they in any shape sustain them as witnesses; but they could not wholly cast the testimony of the Old and New Testament; nor was it in their power to alter or corrupt the scriptures, even when they corrupted the profession of Christianity to the utmost; for the Lord gave unto these his witnesses, and they prophesied even in sackcloth. And this tormented them that dwelt on the earth, so that they rejoiced at the killing of them; while yet they would not suffer them to be quite buried out of their sight.

As the Lord calls them his two witnesses, so we find Jesus Christ appealing to the Old-Testament scriptures, as testifying of him, John v. 39. 40. 41. And when the apostles foretel the corruption of Christianity, they call Christians to attend to the Old-Testament scriptures, together with the New Testament, which they preached, and to keep close by these as the great mean of preservation from that corruption, 2 Tim. iii. 2 Theff. ii. 15. 2 Peter iii. 2. 1 John iv. 6. And the Revelation describes the true church by the testimony of the scriptures which they believe, obey, and patiently suffer for, Rev. vi. 9. and xii. 1. and xiii. 10. and xiv. 12. and xviii. 20. and xxi. 14.

The concurring testimony of the prophets in whom the Spirit of Christ testified beforehand *the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*, and of the apostles who reported the same things, when they preached the gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, is full and strong against the worldly kingdom of Antichrist.

The plan of Moses's house in the Old Testament, that was built according to the pattern shewed in the mount, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after, and the plan of Christ's house, that appears in the New Testament, as the heavenly thing whereof the former was the example and shadow; these taken together testify, in the strongest manner,

manner, against the Antichristian church, as a pretended imitation of the Old-Testament church, whereby the great design of it is opposed, and Christ's coming in the flesh is in effect denied, and as the greatest corruption of the New-Testament church that can be thought of.

The kingdom of Christ, as foretold by the prophets, and clearly declared in the New Testament to be the *kingdom of heaven*, and *not of this world*, (though prefigured by the earthly kingdom of the Old Testament) manifestly shews the abomination of the kingdom of Antichrist, as it shews itself to be the kingdom of Christ, and is indeed the very opposite of it.

Thus the two churches, the old and the new, as appearing together in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, are standing witnesses against the Antichristian church in all its shapes, and against its whole constitution. It is true, they plead conformity to the Old-Testament church, as worldly, and with this view they would have the New-Testament church to be the same with the Old; but these two witnesses taken together, and concurring as they stand in the scriptures, confound them with their testimony. *These are the two olive-trees*; for the olive-tree is the emblem of the church, Rom xi. 17.; and the Spirit of Christ, that holy oil, is conveyed by the scriptures that were inspired by the Holy Ghost, who is the strength of the true church, as is said to Zechariah in the explication of the vision, with respect to the building of the house of God, Zech. iv. 1.—6. *This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, (or army) nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.* Compare 1 John iv. 5. Or, if the *two sons of oil* be the cherubs, which, in Solomon's temple, were of *olive-tree*, or trees of oil, 1 Kings vi. 23. a cherub was an emblem of the church, as we may see from Rev. v. 8. 9. *And these are the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.* The Revelation makes a golden candlestick an emblem

blem of the church, chap. i. 20. Zechariah mentions but one in his vision; but John speaks of two; for now both the churches, the old and the new, appear set forth in the Old and New Testament, testifying for Christ against Antichrist.

Both the Old-Testament scriptures and the New, which testify of Christ, prophesy much of Antichrist; and their prophesying is verified in him, even as the unbelieving Jews verified the prophecies, in the opposition they made to Christ in his ministry among them, and in their putting him to death. And from the time when this melancholy affair of Antichrist had any remarkable beginnings, till it came to its height, and till it came to do its utmost against Christ, and before any effectual opposition began to be made to it, the witnesses may be said to have been prophesying in sackcloth, as their words were verified in a grievous lamentable manner.

## S E C T. VI.

**N**OW let us see how these two witnesses came to be clothed in sackcloth, and to prophesy in sackcloth, from about the latter end of the second century.

1. About that time the gospel began to be taught *in the words which man's wisdom teacheth*. For then they began to explain the scripture-doctrine, according to the rules of the philosophy that was taught among the Gentiles. This came in form, first at Alexandria, where Pantænus, the Stoic philosopher, taught a Christian school of learning. His disciple and successor was Clemens of Alexandria, who, in the first and sixth books of his *Stromata*, sets forth the usefulness and advantage of philosophy, in the illustration and defence of the truth of the gospel, to which it paves the way, in opposition to some, whom he complains of as finding fault with it. And he tells them very wittily, that, if it be useful to demonstrate  
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the uselessness of philosophy, then certainly philosophy is useful; and that the philosophy of the Greeks must be demonstrated to be unprofitable, not by words only, but by the experience and knowledge of it. He uses strange allegories, to shew how it serves to make us wise; and he alledges it is useful to prove in divers ways what is advanced, and brings admiration to the catechumens, and deduces the chief doctrines, drawing along with it the persuasion of the hearers. And from its necessity in refuting the fallacious opinions of the sophists, philosophy appears to him to be the gift of God; not indeed the Stoic, nor Platonic, or Epicurean, and Aristotelian philosophy; but whatsoever thing was right said by these sects, teaching righteousness with pious knowledge; all this selected, he calls philosophy, and says, that the philosophy of the Greeks has extracted a portion of eternal truth from theology. And whatever was amiss among the Greek philosophers, yet true philosophy derived its truth from Christ himself. And to the objection from Paul's epistles, he answers, that Paul does not condemn philosophy; but only shews that he who is a partaker of the height of knowledge, needs not return any more to the Grecian philosophy, as being that which some way taught the elements, and a discipline going before the truth.

Thus did Clemens reconcile his philosophy to these words of Paul, Col. ii. 8. *Beware, lest any man spoil you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments (or elements) of the world, and not after Christ.* Now, we may see what account Paul makes of the wisdom of the disputer of this world; which the Greeks sought after, from the first and second chapters of his first epistle to the Corinthians, where he shews, from what had happened in the world, and was manifest from experience, how useless the wisdom, both of the Jewish scribe, and of the Grecian disputer, had been as to the true knowledge of God; and instead of its subserviency to



to the wisdom of God revealed in the gospel, he sets forth the opposition betwixt the two, and demonstrates it by experience, and by the nature of the thing.

And indeed this opposition shewed itself, as soon as they began to teach the gospel in the wisdom of words, or the words of man's wisdom; notwithstanding all the pains they took to reconcile them, and to shew the subserviency of the one to the other. For they darkened the glory of the person of Christ, the *λογος*, or *Word*, revealed in the gospel, by the maxims of the Platonic philosophy\*; and they made void the gospel-revelation of God's grace, by advancing human merit, and the power of man's will to do good. Something of this is to be seen in the writings of the first Christian philosopher, whose books have remained, *viz.* Justin Martyr, who wrote as far back as the middle of the second century. But it came in form, when a Christian philosophy began to be taught at Alexandria, in the end of that century. The famous Origen succeeded Clemens there, and the same school at length produced Arius, who gave occasion to the wisdom of the disputer of this world, the wisdom of words to display itself at large upon the deep things of God; and this came to an intolerable height at last in the scholastic divinity. It is remarkable, that in the disputes with the Hussites in the council of Basil, the wise doctors distinguished and argued till they brought forth this conclusion, *That the bishops decrees in councils are God's public inspired word*†. Thus was the gospel, which is declared in the scriptures, served at last by its pretended handmaid. This was no doubt far from the thoughts of Clemens, when he insisted on

\* The style of the Antenicene fathers, from the time of Justin Martyr, differs as much from the simple style of the scriptures, concerning the person of Christ, as it does from the metaphysical style of the Postnicene fathers.

† Baxter's History of Councils.

on the necessity of the philosophic art of arguing and refuting ; but here it landed at last.

These first Christian philosophers thought it was an advantage to the gospel to put it in the philosophic dress : for they found it recommended the scriptures to the world, to be thus defended and explained. But this was to clothe them in sackcloth, instead of the native and simple, but divine dress wherein the gospel appeared ; indeed *foolishness and weakness* to the unbelieving Greeks and Jews ; but unto them who were called, *both Jews and Greeks, Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God, whose foolishness is wiser than men.* What Clemens says of the usefulness of philosophy in bringing the admiration of the catechumens, may be understood of bringing them to admire their wise teachers ; but the gospel taught by the apostles, brought them to admire *Jesus Christ, who of God is made wisdom to the foolish things of this world, for the confounding of the wise ; that he that glorieth, might glory in the Lord.* And his saying, that philosophy draws along with it the persuasion of the hearers, while it deduces the doctrines of the gospel, may be compared with the apostle's words, *I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Christ, and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power ; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.*

Though this testimony of the apostle be clear, and very strong against a philosophical gospel, and a philosophical faith ; yet nothing will persuade men against their interest. For the ambitious teachers could not make their own gain of the gospel in the apostle's way of it, as they could do when they began to dispense it by the philosophical measure. For about this time began that merchandise that came to

its height in Babylon, but took place first by the opening of the third seal. This may also appear further by the instances that follow.

2. About this same time, tradition was set up as the rule of faith, together with the scriptures. We have an account of this, with some of the effects of it, from Tertullian, who wrote then, and pleaded for it. He says, in his book *De Corona Militis*, "Even in the plea of tradition, you will say written authority is to be demanded. Therefore let us inquire, if unwritten tradition be not to be received? We shall plainly deny that it is to be received; if our judgment be not already determined by the observation of other things, which, without any evidence of the scripture, we vindicate only by the title of tradition, and by the authority of custom. To begin then with baptisin, when going to the water, but also some time before in the church, under the hand of the priest, we confess, that we renounce the devil, and his pomp, and his angels; then we are thrice dipt, answering something more than the Lord hath determined in the gospel. Being taken from thence, we first taste the concord of milk and honey; and from that day we abstain from the daily bathing for a whole week. The sacrament of the eucharist which was appointed by the Lord, both in meal-time, (*i. e.* supper-time) and to all, we even take in our meetings before day-light, and from the hand of none but the presidents.—We make oblations on a set day, once a-year, for the dead, for the birthdays. On the Lord's day we hold it unlawful to fast, or worship kneeling. We enjoy the same immunity from the feast of Pasch to Pentecost. We are very careful that nothing of our cup or bread fall to the ground. At every progress and promotion, at every coming in and going out, at putting on our cloaths and shoes, at the baths, at the tables, at the lights, at beds, at seats, where ever our conversation exercises us, we wear our brow with the sign of the cross.

**cross.** If you demand a rule of the fcripture for thefe and other fuch like ufages, you fhall find none. Tradition will be given you for the author, custom the confirmer, and faith the obferver. You fhall either yourfelf fee the *reason* that will patronife *tradition, custom, faith*, or you fhall learn it from fome body that has feen it. Mean time you will believe there is fome tradition to which compliance is due.”

The true reason for fuch ufages coming in, and being obferved in the churches, feems to be the admiffion of the Gentiles, before they were fufficiently purged from the Heathenifh fuperftition; who, tho’ they renounced the Heathen deities, yet leavened the profefion of Chriftianity with the fuperftitious leaven of their education. Dupin, fpeaking of the difcipline before Constantine, would have us believe, “they prayed for the dead, and made oblations for them, and celebrated the facrifice of the mafs, in commemoration of them.” But if Tertullian’s “making oblations on a fet day, once a-year, for the dead, for the birthdays,” be taken to fignify their folemnifing the day of the death of the martyrs, as their birthday; then this, which it feems had come to fome head in Tertullian’s time, may be traced as far back as the martyrdom of Polycarp, which happened in the year 167, described in the epiftle of the church of Smyrna to thofe of Pontus; where, fpeaking of the Heathens, who would not fuffer the Chriftians to carry off his body entire, left they fhould adore it inftead of Jefus Chrift, they fay, “Fools as they were, they did not know that the Chriftians worship none but Jefus Chrift, becaufe he is the Son of God; and only honour the martyrs, who are his difciples and followers, becaufe of the love which they testify to have for their King and Master. The centurion having caufed the body of this martyr to be burnt, the Chriftians carried away his bones, being more valuable than the moft precious ftones, and more pure than gold; which they buried in a place, where

where they assembled together, to celebrate with joy and chearfulness the day of his martyrdom; thus honouring the memory of those that have *fought gloriously for the defence of their religion*, and to confirm and instruct others by such examples."

This, which began at that time to slip in with these pretences, was come a good length in Tertullian's time, when this egg was hatched, out of which came at last the whole superstition and idolatry of the Roman church. But they had not a thought yet of defending the Christian profession by the sword, for which some now plead scripture. They rather animated the disciples to the defence of their religion in the way of suffering unto death, by flattering their pride with the hope of an annual day to be observed to their honour. Though this was another kind of hope than that which Christ sets before his followers in the gospel, and indeed a worldly hope; yet it demonstrates, that they were very far from thinking, that the gospel enjoined them to sell their garments, and buy swords to defend Christ's kingdom. Far less did they imagine that it was any point of their religion *to force religion*; though they were a great body of men in Tertullian's time, who says, in his Apology against the Gentiles, "We have been but a little time in the world, yet we are to be met with in all places: you may find us in the cities, in the villages, in the armies, in the courts of justice, in the senate, and in the markets. We have left you only your temples to yourselves. What wars might not we be capable of undertaking? and with what resolution might not we carry them on, though we had not near so many troops as you, (we who die daily with so much joy) were it not a law amongst us, *To suffer ourselves rather to be killed, than to kill others.*"

From this it appears manifestly, that the beast's reign was not yet begun. But it is evident from Tertullian, that tradition was then tacked to the scriptures, as the rule of faith and religion: and thus

the witneſſes were in ſackcloth. We ſee from Acts chap. xv. how the Chriſtians of the Gentiles were like to be impoſed on by a pretended tradition from the apoſtles, while they were yet living. And this was the reaſon of their beginning to write the New Teſtament. But the joining of tradition with it, after it was completely written, ſerved at laſt to render it as much of none effect, as the Jews, in our Lord's time, made the Old-Teſtament ſcriptures of none effect to themſelves by their tradition. Tradition joined with the ſcriptures, debaſes them exceedingly; and, as it croſſes the end for which they were written, cannot but render them of none effect when it comes to its perfection, as it did at laſt when the beaſt overcame and killed the witneſſes.

3. About this time alſo the authority of ſynods and councils began to ſhew itſelf. Dupin's report concerning this may be credited. He ſays, "The firſt councils that are mentioned in antiquity, are thoſe which were held under the pontificate of Pope Victor, to adjust the celebrated controverſy about keeping Eaſter; and ſome others were aſſembled, almoſt at the ſame time, to ſuppreſs the growing faction of the Montaniſts. Eusebius mentions the laſt in the fifth book of his hiſtory, chap. 15.; and Tertullian aſſures us, that, in his time, the Montaniſts alſo met together for themſelves."

This Victor was biſhop of Rome, from the year 192 to 201. The ſynod called by him, excommunicated the biſhops of Aſia, becauſe they would not celebrate Eaſter on the ſame day with them. Here was a ſubject for the authority of ſynods and councils, which from henceforth pretended to determine the ſenſe of ſcripture, and to make deciſions and regulations, where the ſcripture made none. The churches, before the time of Victor, though peſtered with hereſies, did not think, it ſeems, of any warrant in the law of Chriſt for ſynods, which have been ſince that time judged ſo neceſſary a mean for

suppressing heresy. The argument for these conventions of the clergy from Acts xv. is an after-thought, that came in to excuse or justify them, when the evils occasioned by them might put men upon demanding their institution.

But it is strange, if the first Christians had apprehended any warrant there for synods; that, notwithstanding all the use they had for them, they never put them in practice from the year 51, (when the fact narrated Acts xv. is supposed to have happened) till Victor's time, *i. e.* for near an hundred and fifty years. Clemens Romanus wrote to the church of Corinth on a subject, whereon a synod in Achaia might have been supposed very necessary; yet there is no mention in all his epistles of any such thing. And, though he makes mention of the order of the church and its officers, the bishops or elders, and the deacons, and proposes remedies for the disorder made by the faction at Corinth, which had prevailed to the deposing of their elders, he never speaks of this remedy; yea, he does not so much as suppose, that the church of Corinth had not power to do what they did, provided they had done it upon sufficient grounds.

Ignatius indeed presses subjection and submission to the one bishop in every church, and the presbytery subordinated to him, as the apostles to Christ, in opposition to schism and heresy. And as Clemens speaks of a controversy about the name of the episcopacy, or bishop's office, in the foresight of which, he says, the apostles appointed the two orders of bishops and deacons, according to Is. lx. 17. Ignatius, on the other side, distinguishes the one bishop from the presbytery, as well as from the deacons, and he magnifies his office, and extols his authority very highly; but he is perfectly silent about the authority of bishops met in council; and his bishop's authority went not beyond a single congregation, coming together

together in one place to the Lord's fupper, according to that famous faying, *One bifhop, and one altar* \*.

If his epiftles be not interpolated, where they fpeak in fo high a ftain of the bifhop, and fo differently from the fcripture, without being backed by the authors of the fecond century, (except we would give credit to the romantic Hegefippus, and to lifts that place Clemens in a fucceffion of fuch bifhops, contrary to his own forefaid doctrine) we may fuppofe this to be the firft notable fruit of the *working* of the *mystery of iniquity* in the apoftolic churches. And it is eafy to perceive how it made way for fynods and councils of bifhops, of which Ignatius fpeaks nothing; nor Juftin Martyr, from whom we have very particular and circumftantiate information of the primitive church-order: nor can it be found in any credible authors, that the conventions called fynods, were held to condemn heretics before the time of Victor.

In his time, then, we may fix the beginning of that which had fome increafe after the middle of the third century, when the power even of a Heathen emperor (like a prelude) fomeway feconded the fentence of a fynod againft Paulus Samofatenus. But the authority of fynods and councils difplayed itfelf more fully under Conftantine, when fupported by his authority; and then they became more ftated, and duly fubordinate, according to the fituation of the empire and its provinces. Nor did the fynodical authority fail with the emperors, but grew, and prevailed †, till it came to its height in the councils of Conftance ‡ and Bafil.

S E C T.

\* It is acknowledged there were feveral churches under one bifhop in Alexandria and Rome, in the third century; and King makes them but like chapels of eafe. But from the beginning it was not fo: for no more can be inferred from Eufebius, faying, that Mark planted the churches of Alexandria, but that before the time of Eufebius there had been churches a long time in Alexandria, where Mark firft preached the gofpel.

† Prevailed to excommunicate kings.

‡ The council of Conftance confefled that communion in both kinds was both commanded by Chrift, and praftifed by the primitive church, but yet for all this forbade it. *Catal. Teft. verit.*



## S E C T. VII.

**N**OW, when philosophy and tradition, and the authority of synods and councils, came in to regulate the religion revealed in the scriptures, then the court which is without the temple, could no longer be measured by the word of God, the only rule of measuring his house; and then the woman first fled into the wilderness.

The twenty years of peace and freedom from open persecution in the reign of Commodus, and the first ten years of Severus, while the Christian leaders were endeavouring to adapt the Christian profession to the Gentiles, gave occasion to a prodigious multiplication of the professors of Christianity; so that in the third century, some say, more than one half of the Roman empire became Christians.

If this had been owing merely to the influence of the gospel itself, it was far greater now than in the time of the apostles. But there is some ground to suspect, that it was as much owing unto the accommodating of the gospel to the Gentiles, as to the bringing of them to conformity to Jesus Christ by the power of the gospel.

The wisdom of the disputer of this world, which the Greeks sought after, and could not find in the apostolic preaching, served now to recommend it to the philosophers, who could not bear the dash that was given to the pride of knowledge by the gospel, as preached by the apostles.

And Heathenish-like rites admitted into the Christian worship, to give it more solemnity, and turn it off from the primitive despised simplicity, may be supposed to have taken out of the way somewhat of the offence that the nations at first took at the Christian institution.

There was something very extraordinary in the sufferings of the first Christians, who followed Christ  
patiently

patiently and joyfully bearing his reproach, looking to the hope that he set before them; which was a great confirmation of the truth of the gospel: so that even some of the philosophers owned themselves overcome by it. But the religious honours now done to the martyrs after their death, as it served to weaken this evidence, so it could not miss to draw some to be confessors and sufferers who were not so much minding the honour that comes from God only.

And the liberal alms of the first Christians might draw some poor and desperate to the profession of Christianity, who were not seeking after the true riches; but when the Christians began to look like a rising party, that designed to make a figure in this world, many worldly men would look after it.

But that which we are especially to consider here, is, the doctrine of merit and the power of man's will to do good, that now came to be reckoned not inconsistent with the gospel of the grace of God; which, as it was preached by the apostles, and professed by the first Christians, was the most opposite doctrine to human merit that ever appeared in the world; so that nothing but the power of God could engage men, and especially these sons of pride the philosophers, to embrace it. The sense of the primitive and truly apostolic Roman church upon this great point, is thus expressed in the epistle to the Corinthians written by Clemens. "They all then [Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob] were glorified and magnified, not by themselves, or their works or their just actions which they did, but by his will. So likewise we, who are called by his will in Christ Jesus, are not made just \* by ourselves

\* To *justify* in scripture-style, and in the style of Clemens, is either to *make one just* who was unjust, or to *declare one just* who is so already. And so the epistles of Paul and James taken together teach us, *That a man who is made just by the faith without works, is by works declared to be just, and not by believing only.* So Clemens, in this same epistle, uses the word *justify* for *declaring us to be just*, where he says, "Being justified by works, and not by words." But here, in this passage, it must signify *to make us just.*

ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or piety, or works, which we have wrought in holiness of heart, but by the faith, by which the Almighty God hath made all those just who have been from the beginning; to whom be glory for ever and ever, *Amen*. What then shall we do, brethren? shall we cease from well-doing and forsake charity? May the Lord in no wise suffer this to be done by us; but let us study with diligence and alacrity of mind to perfect every good work.”

But when this grand stumbling-block began to be taken out of the way; we know that mankind will go into the strictest form of religion to establish their own righteousness. And when they found that Christianity admitted of glorying in their own merit, no wonder if they preferred the Christian institution to the common Heathenish ones.

The access to the churches was not yet so open and easy as it became afterward; but it seems now to have been turned somewhat off from the apostolic footing. It is true, they who were to be admitted to communion in the churches, passed through the state of catechumens, went through more forms, and gave more proofs of outward reformation of manners, before they were admitted, than in the time of the apostles, when they were received, upon the first appearance of the grace of God bringing them to submit to the righteousness of God, and to glory only in the cross of Christ, with brotherly love, and lively hope of eternal life through his resurrection from the dead. And this grace of God, upon its first appearance in them, shewed itself, teaching them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; but now they looked more after human merit and a good character in the world for church-members, than the appearance of the grace of God in them.

We have already seen what Tertullian says of the number of Christians in his days\*; and may now consider

\* That saying of Tertullian is famous, *O miseros nos qui Christiani dicimur hoc tempore: Gentes agimus sub nomine Christi.*

conſider what is ſaid by Dupin concerning Decius's perſecution in the middle of the third century, *i. e.* about fifty years after. "As there were," ſays he, "at that time, a great number of Chriſtians, and the church had gathered ſtrength during the peace; ſo there were abundance of martyrs: but that peace having likewiſe produced a great many bad Chriſtians\*, there were abundance of them who either voluntarily renounced the religion of Jeſus Chriſt, or funk under the apprehenſion of the rigour of their tortures."

The admitting of theſe again too eaſily, when they returned after the perſecution was over, occaſioned the ſchiſm or hereſy (as they call it) of Novatian; and the diſputes about this, with the length Novatian carried his ſide of the queſtion, ſerved to make the churches more and more acceſſible to the Gentiles, and upon eaſier terms.

But let us next hear Eufebius, ſpeaking in his hiſtory (book 8. *init.*) concerning the ſtate of the Chriſtian profeſſion before the perſecution of Diocleſian. The paſſage is thus in Hanmer's tranſlation.

"How great, and what manner of glory and liberty the doctrine of piety due unto Almighty God, preached in this world by Chriſt, hath obtained before the perſecution of our time, among all mortal men, both Grecians and Barbarians, it requireth a greater labour to declare, than eaſily for the worthineſs thereof may be accompliſhed of us. We have ſufficient tokens thereof, in that the clemency of the emperors towards the Chriſtians was ſo increaſed; to whom alſo they committed the government of the Gentiles; and for the great favour they bare to our doctrine, they granted liberty and ſecurity to the profeſſors of the Chriſtian religion. What ſhall I ſay of them, who in the very palace of the emperors, and

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\* *Disciplinam quam apoſtoli tradiderant, otium jam et pax longa corruerat: ſtudebant augendo patrimonio ſinguli, &c.* Cyprian de lapſis.

in the presence of princes, lived most familiarly? which esteemed of their ministers so highly, that they granted them in their presence freely to deal in matters of religion, both by word and deed, together with their wives, and children, and servants: and not only this, but also permitted them to glory and boast of the liberty of their faith; whom also they deemed worthy of more credit, and far better estimation, than their fellow-servants.—After which sort a man might then have seen the bishops of all churches in great reverence and favour among all sorts of men, and with all magistrates. Who can worthily describe those innumerable heaps and flocking multitudes throughout all cities and famous assemblies, frequenting the places dedicated unto prayer? because of which circumstances, they, not contented with the old and ancient buildings, (which could not receive them) have, throughout all cities, builded them from the foundation, wide and ample churches. These things thus prevailed in process of time, and daily increased far and nigh, so that no malice could intercept, no spiteful friend bewitch, no wight with subtil sleight hinder at all, as long as the divine and heavenly hand of God upheld and visited his people, whom as yet he worthily accepted. But after that our affairs, through too much liberty, ease, and security, degenerated from the natural rule of piety; and after that one pursued another with open calumny and hatred; and when that we impugned ourselves by no other than ourselves, with the armour of spite and sharp spears of opprobrious words; so that bishops against bishops, and people against people, raised sedition: last of all, when that cursed hypocrisy and dissimulation had swam even to the brim of malice, the heavy hand of God's high judgment, after his wonted manner, (whilst as yet the ecclesiastical companies assembled themselves nevertheless) began softly by little and little to visit us; so that the persecution that was raised against us,

took

took its firſt original from the brethren, which were under banner in the camp. Whereas we were touched with no ſenſe or feeling thereof, neither went about to pacify God; we heaped ſin upon ſin, thinking, like careleſs Epicures, that God neither cared nor would viſit our ſins. And they which ſeemed our ſhepherds, laying aſide the rule of piety, practiſed contention and ſchiſm among themſelves. And whiſt they aggravated theſe things, that is, contentions, threatening mutual hatred and enmity, and every one proceeded in ambition much like tyranny itſelf, then, I ſay, then the Lord, according to the ſaying of Jeremy, made the daughter of Zion obſcure.”

Was not the woman then fled into the wilderneſs, and the holy city trodden under foot of the nations, even before the time of Conſtantine, when it came in greater perfection? And, when the ſaints who ſuffered death for the word of God, and the teſtimony which they held under Diocleſian's perfecution, were taken from among them, were not the Chriſtian paſtors, and people very well prepared before Conſtantine, for the ſtate of Chriſtianity that took place in his day?

We have ſome view of Conſtantine, and likewise of the Novatians, from a ſtory that Socrates Scholaſticus tells of a converſation that happened between him and one Aceſius, thus: “Because he greatly reſpected the unity and concord in eccleſiaſtical affairs, he ſummoned Aceſius biſhop of the Novatian ſect to the council. And after the determination of the council touching the faith, was both laid down in writing, and ratified with the ſeveral ſubſcriptions of all their hands, the Emperor demanded of Aceſius, whether he would aſſent unto the ſame faith, and alſo unto the canon concluded upon touching the obſervation of the feaſt of Eaſter? who made answer, The council (O Emperor) hath concluded and declared no new thing: for I have learned of

old, that even from the beginning, and in the apostolic times themselves, the self-same faith was retained, and the same time for the celebration of Easter was observed. Again, when the Emperor demanded of him the cause, why he severed himself from the communion of the faithful, he alledged for himself, such things as had happened under the reign of Decius, and about the persecution of that time; as also he brought forth the precise observation of a certain severe canon, *viz.* That such as after baptism, through frailty of the flesh, had fallen into that kind of sin which holy scripture termeth the sin unto death, should not be partakers of the holy mysteries, but exhorted unto repentance, and that they should wait for the remission of sin, to proceed, not of the priests, but of God himself, who both can, and is of power sufficient to remit sin. The which when Acesius had uttered, the Emperor said unto him again, Provide thee a ladder, O Acesius, and climb alone into heaven.

### S E C T. VIII.

**I**F it may appear, from what has been said, that we may look as far back as the latter end of the second century, for the first flight of the woman into the wilderness, and the beginning of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; then we may proceed to look again toward the middle of the fifteenth century, and see what we can find there like the death and resurrection of the witnesses.

The issue of that great confusion occasioned by the condemnation of Wickliff's doctrine, and by the burning of John Hufs and Jerom of Prague, who were delivered over to the secular arm by the council of Constance, is thus narrated by Dupin.

“ The council (of Basil) sent deputies thither (to Bohemia), to try whether they might not be brought  
to

to an accommodation. They entered into negotiation with the nobility, which made the Taborites and Orphans suspect them. The nobility, on the other hand, being refolved to fhake off the yoke of Procopius and the Taborites, made war upon them. The Taborites and Orphans were defeated, Procopius killed, and Sigifmond acknowledged king of Bohemia. After this, the deputies of the council made a treaty with the Bohemians and Moravians, by which they agreed to unite to the church, and conform to its rites in every thing, except communion in both kinds; and agreed, that fuch as had been ufed to communicate fo, might continue. Rokfana, in the name of the clergy, promifed to obey the Pope, and received abfolution from the deputies of the council. After this the emperor Sigifmond made his entry into the city of Prague in September 1436, and the ceremonies of the church of Rome were again fet up in the churches.

“ The council of Bafil made a decree in the 30th feffion, which was held on the 22d of December 1437, touching communion in both kinds, by which they declared, *That believers who communicate, are not obliged by divine right to communicate in both kinds; and that it is the bufinefs of the church to determine in what manner the communion ought to be adminiftered; that Jefus Chrift is wholly in each kind; and that the cuftom of communicating in one kind cannot be condemned.*

“ However the Bohemians kept up the cuftom of communicating in both kinds. Rokfana, archbifhop of Prague, and Pogebrack, who had made himfelf mafter of the kingdom of Bohemia, kept it, at the fame time that they *exterminated* the Taborites.”

Thus ended that remarkable *torment* which *they who dwell on the earth* had by the fcriptures, the witneffes, who may be faid to have been killed by the beaft, in that decree of the council of Bafil, as being abfolutely fubdued under the authority of the church fupported with fecular perfecuting power. The con-  
tending



tending parties were reconciled, as Herod and Pontius Pilate at the death of Christ. They submitted to the church, at the same time that they *exterminated* such as were resolute to stand against the authority of the church, for the testimony of the witnesses. And the church in return complimented them with liberty to communicate in both kinds. Here was some shew of a regard to the witnesses, in their insisting on this, and persevering thus to communicate; but they took a licence for it from the church: so that, even in this, the authority of the witnesses was swallowed up by the church, or they lay killed by the beast. Though perhaps, in this also, we may perceive something of *the people of the nations not suffering their dead bodies to be put in graves, even while they were making merry and sending gifts one to another upon their death.* Thus ended the famous strife among *them that dwell upon the earth*, wherein the authority of the beast, and of the Lord in the testimony of his witnesses, was come to the most evident and highest competition. But let us here what follows in Dupin.

“ There remained however several persons tainted with their (the Taborites) maxims, who separated from the Calixtines, and made a new sect, which went by the name of the *brethren of Bohemia*. These did openly declare themselves, and were headed by a shoemaker called Kelesiski, who drew up a confession of faith for them; and their pastor was Matthias Convaldus. They rebaptized all who entered into their sect, and explained themselves obscurely upon the real presence, and refused to adore Jesus Christ in the eucharist, and were mortal enemies to the clergy and the church of Rome; so that afterwards they easily united with the Lutherans and Calvinists.”

He speaks of them again in the sixteenth century, thus :

“ The sect of the Hussites remained in Bohemia, and the Vaudois (*i. e.* Waldenses) had settled themselves

selves for near two hundred years in the valleys of Savoy, Provence, and Piemont. The former united with the Lutherans, and the latter with the Zuinglians. There were in Bohemia, three societies of Christians. The first was composed of Catholics, subject to the Pope, who followed entirely the doctrines and ceremonies of the church of Rome. The second were those whom they called *Calixtines*, who administered the eucharist in both kinds, and recited the epistles and gospels at mass in the vulgar tongue, without changing any thing in the other doctrines and ceremonies of the church. The third were those who called themselves *the brethren of Bohemia*, who also went by the name of *Vaudois*, and probably had their rise from the Taborites; for although Pogebrack and Rokfana utterly ruined the sect of the Taborites, yet there remained several of them behind, who formed a new sect, and were headed by a shoemaker, called *Kelesiski*. Afterwards they chose a pastor, called *Matthius Convaldus*; and, in 1467, they separated themselves from the Calixtines, and elected new ministers. They called the Pope, the cardinals, and the bishops, Antichrists; and the church of Rome, the whore of Babylon in the Revelation. They rejected the sacraments of the church. They were governed by simple laics, and held the scripture for the only rule of their faith. Their ministers observed none of the ceremonies of the church in the celebration of the mass; and made use of no other prayer but the Lord's prayer. They rebaptized those who entered into their sect; rejected the worship of saints and images, prayers for the dead, the law of celibacy, vows, fasts, and ceremonies of the church. This sect was very numerous in Bohemia and Moravia, in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Being accused both by the Catholics and the Calixtines before King Ladislaus, they drew up a confession of faith, which they presented to that prince in 1504, to justify themselves from the errors laid to their charge.

charge. In this confession they owned the seven sacraments, and the real presence. King Ladislaus published an edict against them, whereby he forbid their assemblies. The brethren of Bohemia made a second remonstrance; but Ladislaus declared to them, that he would not in the least relax the execution of his edicts, and caused an answer to be made to their two confessions, by a doctor called *Augustin*. The brethren of Bohemia replied to that answer, maintaining their errors plainly, and rejecting the real presence, and transubstantiation. When Luther declared himself against the church, they sent deputies to him, with an explication of their doctrine, which Luther approved, except the article of the eucharist, upon which he demanded of them a more ample explication, and that of Anabaptism\*, which he condemned. In order to please him, the brethren of Bohemia renounced Anabaptism, and drew up a confession of faith, in which they admitted but two sacraments, and agreed upon the other points with Luther, both as to doctrine and discipline. In consequence of this confession of faith, their union was concluded with the Lutherans, and afterwards with the Zuinglians, whose doctrine they followed about the eucharist. The Vaudois united themselves with these last."

We may take this for the most impartial account of those brethren of Bohemia that we can reasonably expect from one of the Popish sect, who indeed may be a pattern of candour to Protestant writers, in giving an account of those who separate from their churches. But let us next hear the Protestants, to whom Dupin says these brethren were united, waving the consideration of that important question, whether that union was to the advantage, or the hurt of their proper cause.

Luther

\* They never rejected infant-baptism, but only the baptism of the Antichristian church; and so they baptized all whom they received, holding them as not truly baptized before.

Luther himfelf, in his preface to the Confeflion of the Waldenfes, 1533, testifies thus of them: “But among thefe I obferved alfo thofe brethren whom they called *fratres Pighardi*, who are not now odious to me, as they were in the days of my Popery. In a word, I found among them, that one great and wonderful thing, fcarce ever fo much as heard of in the Pope’s church, *viz.* That, laying afide the doctrines of men, fo far as they were able, they meditated in the law of the Lord night and day; and that they were skilled and ready in the fcriptures: Whereas, in the Papacy, our mafters themfelves wholly neglected the fcriptures, with the name of which they were puffed up; but fome of them had not fo much as feen the Bible at any time. But yet it could not otherwife be, but that divers places muft needs remain obfeure to them (the brethren); becaufe, not only the Greek and Hebrew tongues, but the Latin alfo were in a manner loft. And that continued a fault among them, that while they endeavoured to avoid the briers and bogs wherein the fophifts and monks were entangled, they wholly abftained from all ftudy of the arts, being withal pinched by poverty, which they relieved by the labour of their hands.”

Luther was a fcribe and a difputer; but he did not, with all his Latin, Hebrew, and Greek, or his philofophy, outstrip the brethren of Bohemia in the true knowledge of the fcriptures, if he came their length. And it feems he was not very well pleafed with their poverty, to which their fuperior knowledge of the gofpel had reconciled them\*.

Philip Melancthon, in an epiftle of his to Mr Benedict, and the reft of the Waldenfian brethren in Bohemia, 1533, fays, “——Indeed, I do not diflike that feverer way of exercife or difcipline ufed in your

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churches;

\* *Quod plerique pauperes dicimur, non eft infamia noftra, fed gloria.—Magis pauper ille eft, qui, cum multa habeat, plura defiderat. Minut. Felix.*

churches ; I would to God it were a little more severely observed also in our churches." From this it would appear, that those brethren were not so closely united with the Lutherans, in their discipline, as Dupin imagines. And, pray, what hindered them to be as severe in their discipline as those brethren, if they intended not more than they, to form a worldly faction instead of a Christian church, and had no other rule of discipline but the scripture, the only rule of the brethren ?

David Chytræus speaks of them, as an eye-witness, in his oration made in the year 1569, concerning the state of the churches in his time. He says, " In Bohemia, through which I travelled twice in this journey, the churches are ordinarily distinguished by two designations : for some retaining every thing Popish, without any exception, are designed *sub una* ; others, having followed the doctrine of John Huss, and, in the time of the synod of Basil, joined again with the Papists, and with the Pope's permission, distributing the cup also to the people in the holy supper, but being conform to the Papists in doctrine, and almost all other rites, are called *sub utraque*. Separated from both, and excommunicated as offscourings and filth, were of old the brethren whom they commonly call the *Waldenses*, *Picardi*, and *Boleslavienses*, who profess themselves to be the true, and constant, and genuine disciples of John Huss, and faithful keepers of the doctrine received from him. But a printed confession of the faith, and an apology for the doctrine of the brethren, are extant ; and I and my colleague had a conference with two elders of their church at Vienna, concerning all the parts of the Christian religion in order ; and, both from their published writings, and from what they spake, we found, that, concerning almost every article, they piously embrace and confess the same persuasion, according to the foundation of the prophets and apostles, which our churches also profess, in one voice and one

one ſpirit with the catholic church of Chriſt; and that they abhor the moſt part of fanatical opinions, contrary to the rules of God's word, and condemned by the judgment of the true church. For whereas thoſe called *ſub utraque* and others object to them the error of the Donatiſts, *That they confine the church to their congregations*, and teach that the miniſtry of thoſe miniſters is null, who are vicious in their lives, they peremptorily deny it. Yet they are of opinion, that ſuch ought to be removed from the office and excommunicated. They forbid marriage to none; but they would have ſuch as are chaſte in an unmarried ſtate to be miniſters, that they may the more conveniently and readily ſerve the church, and *that the bearers, who ſuſtain the elders with their alms, may be the leſs burdened*. They explain their opinion concerning the eucharift agreeably enough, in the apology preſented George Marquis of Brandenburg; and likewise, in their publiſhed writings and ſongs, they openly profeſs, that the bread and wine of the Lord's ſupper is the true body and blood of Chriſt; yet they think that the diſpute about the general omnipreſence ought to have no place here. They omit the rebaptizing ſometime practiſed, and the communion of infants, yet every where practiſed in Bohemia by thoſe of the *ſub utraque* party. They manage diſcipline with the greateſt honeſty and ſeverity. In their worſhip they uſe no other tongue, but that which is known to the people; and though they have ſome men, ſkilled in the languages and learned, ſet over their congregations in our time, yet a little before, that they might appear as far as could be from the contagions of the ſophiſts and monks, they did not ſo much as ſtudy the languages and liberal arts. And in many places, even at this day, *miniſters, wholly ignorant of the Latin tongue, but of a very honeſt life, and moſt diligently exerciſed in the ſcriptures, are preſiding in their churches*. They have wholly exploded the Popiſh rites, either in themſelves impious, or elſe uſeleſs

useless to the edification of true piety and discipline; and they have reduced the whole order of the *sermons, readings, prayers, songs*, (which they lately dedicated to the Emperor, composed in most holy sentiments, choice words, and elegant numbers) and all other ceremonies, *to the simplicity and gravity of the first and apostolic church*. I saw a church of theirs at Trebiza in Moravia, most beautifully adorned, even by this, that *it had nothing of borrowed ornament.*"

And after he has given some account of the Waldenses, he says again of the brethren of Bohemia, "They wholly separated themselves from the Papists and the hearers of Rokfana joined to them, and having chosen ministers of the church out of their own company, they set up congregations of their own, which, in midst of various persecutions and manifold afflictions, are preserved to this day in Moravia, Bohemia, Poland, and other places, and are reproached every where by their adversaries, with the name of *Waldenses* and *Picardi.*"

We may take an account of a remarkable difference that happened betwixt them and the Waldenses in the year 1467, from a history of the Waldenses, intituled *Luther's Forerunners*, written by John Paul Perrin of Lyons. "The brethren of Bohemia visited, by letters, the Waldenses of Austria, giving them to understand, that they had received great comfort by their last communication they had with them; but yet, as they desired not to be flattered in any defect or fault whatsoever, so they could not dissemble, without some defect of charity, what they had found in them worthy reprehension; and that was, that they yielded too much to their infirmities; since that, having once known the truth, they nevertheless frequented Papistical churches, being present at those idolatries which they condemned, basely profaning and polluting themselves. That we are not only certainly to believe with the heart, but we must likewise make confession with our mouth to salvation. More

over,

over, they told them of another fault which they had taken notice of; and that was, that they were too careful in heaping up gold and silver: for though the end were good, that is, to help and comfort them in perfecution, yet for as much as every day brought with it affliction enough, and that fuch cares are not befitting thofe that are to look only before them, and to lay up treasure in heaven, they condemned that which was fuperabundant in them, and which in the end they would principally rely upon."

Moreover, we do not hear that ever the brethren of Bohemia thought of defending their religion by the fword, though they were numerous, before Luther, as did the Waldenfes.

## S E C T. IX.

**S**AY now, if the two witneffes were not again alive here, after they had been overcome and killed by the beaft, and after the contention, by war and bloodfhed, about their testimony, had iffued in the reconciliation of the contending parties, upon the making of the testimony utterly of none effect, and the extermination of the party that would not yield it?

And when thefe witneffes appeared again alive, after this death, we fee them testifying powerfully, without philofophy or human learning, without tradition, and without any dependence on the authority of the church, (as it is called) or connection with fynods and councils; which had not been the cafe before, for about one thousand two hundred and fixty years, even from the time when they firft appeared in fackcloth.

And now the fcripture, the only rule for meafuring the houfe of God, might be applied to the outward profefion of Chriftianity, by the people who have been defcribed, fo as it could not, for what we

hear



hear, be at any time applied to the open profession of any people called Christian, for more than forty-two months, *i. e.* one thousand two hundred and sixty years before.

After this, the testimony of the witnesses was never again, as it had been, under the power of the beast. For through the fall of the tenth part of the city, and by means of the art of printing, which was invented about that time, the scriptures came to be translated and published among the nations in their languages; and it was not in the power of the beast to hinder it: for in this *the earth* at length *helped the woman*; and so the little book was opened, and *the angel flying through the midst of heaven, preached the everlasting gospel to them that dwell on the earth*, Rev. xiv. 6. This made way for the ruin of the Antichristian state, which began by the blowing of the seventh trumpet, and the pouring out of the first vial in the seventeenth century, when that great breach of the uniformity of the Antichristian world happened, whereby the divided nations, that worship the clergy, have been pained ever since; desiring earnestly, but in vain, to be healed again, by a right uniformity, *i. e.* the uniformity that each of them thinks right. But the plague on the throne and kingdom of the beast with the ten horns comes not till the fifth vial, which must be one thousand two hundred and sixty years after the rise of the ten kings, and the healing of the deadly wound of the beast that had seven heads.

Grave **DIALOGUES** betwixt three **FREE-THINKERS**, *viz.* O, A, and X.

[First published in the year 1738.]

**DIALOGUE I.**

**O.** IT is great pity to see the extravagancies into which enthusiasm leads some of our species, and the affronts daily done to the dignity of our nature by that means.

**A.** Enthusiasm is a compliment that differing sects are always ready to pay to their opposites, upon their appearing heroic in the opposition, while none can be found ready to accept of it. But what is the folly, or even wickedness, that men have not been guilty of, under the pretext of conscience? Every one is very ready to assume this to himself, but not so willing to allow it to another that differs from him; which makes me fear it is but a pretence on all hands.

**X.** But this should persuade you, that all are agreed there is such a thing as conscience, and that it is a good thing, which, even they who ridicule the pretence to it in others, would be thought themselves to have.

There is a dread of the Deity, and of eternal judgment, which, however men may endeavour to divert, they cannot wholly extirpate out of their minds. This is supposed in all the tricks of politicians about religion. And it is not the easiest thing in the world to persuade the worst of men to practise what they firmly believe will expose them to the divine judgment, without any hope of impunity. But when we are so far imposed upon as to imagine actions that are most foolish, or even wicked, to be agreeable to the

the Deity, then we can be conscientiously foolish or wicked.

O. I shall not insist on the name *enthusiasm*, tho' I would think it well bestowed on any who should imagine that mankind can be without some religion or other. The most stupid of the race cannot look on this world, which they see with their eyes, without the idea of a great contrivance, which necessarily implies a contriver. And one needs no more but hear two of the basest of the croud scolding together, to convince him, that the very dregs of mankind are not destitute of all sense of the *turpe et honestum*.

A. Yes. And what is *turpe* in one country is *honestum* in another, or even in the same country at different times.

O. So it may be, as to some things, such as positive institutions, but not so with respect to all. And some things may be held lawful and allowable, and encouraged on some accounts, notwithstanding their turpitude; but they cannot appear comely and honest in the same view wherein their turpitude is seen. But, however mankind may differ as to particulars, it is enough to the point, that they all agree in the general sense of right and wrong, and that some characters must be approved, and some condemned everywhere. That mens consciences are miserably misguided in innumerable instances, I freely own; but still it is too manifest to be denied, that there is conscience in man.

A. You are so very abstract, and distinguish so nicely in defence of this great director and guide, that I would be content to hear you a little further on the subject of its being liable to be so much misguided.

O. That needs no more abstractness or niceness of distinction, but this, that men either mistake their own partial reasonings for the faithful verdict of their consciences, or subject their consciences to other guides that mislead them. But, as you like not my abstractne

abstractness, I would rather speak of a particular instance that I had in my eye when I was complaining of enthusiasm.

A. An instance of a misguided conscience! pray let us hear it.

O. You know the little sect that has appeared of late, which I would not think worth the noticing, but for the pity that is due to any of the human kind, when they run into such ways of superstition, as reflect on human nature, and create disturbance to themselves and all about them. This whimsical people stick at nothing, be it never so ridiculous or uneasy to themselves and others, in their way of religion; wherein they yet appear very conscientious.

A. They have been too much gratified by the notice that has been taken of them; for that is the very thing they want, as Erostratus when he burned Diana's temple. And the more contempt and opposition they meet with, they have the more honour among themselves: for, whether there by any such thing as conscience among men or not, it is always a great honour to be thought to act according to it; at least, by one's own club, if no more can be attained. But, seeing they do not aim at raising any commotions in the state, and have no power, tho' they had a mind, to alter the constitution and establishment of the church, I cannot but look on it as a great weakness in any to be disturbed or uneasy with a people who are, in all respects, so inconsiderable. For, though the resentment of a proud injured clergyman be, without doubt, at work in this case, yet it does not work here in the ways wherein it has given the greatest disturbances to the world; but in a way wherein it may be easily subdued by neglect.

O. What you say, has been, and may be again; but, as you cannot well deny that there is something odd in this matter, and out of the common ways wherein the resentment of ambitious clergymen works, I still insist, that a misguided conscience must be in

the case: for if the honour of being thought conscientious were the spring of all their peculiar motions, they would not take every step that procures the disesteem and hatred of the greatest pretenders to conscience among whom they live; they would shun all appearance of agreement with any who are reckoned malignants against the godly party, or loose in their principles; they would be less severe upon one another's faults than they seem to be; and, in short, their conduct would be more regulated by esteem than I can perceive it is.

X. I even suspect they give yourself some disquiet. But may you not account for this *phænomenon*, by a frightful *idea* they may have got of the state of mankind, with reference to the judgment of God, and of the course of the multitude, as displeasing to him, and inconsistent with the common pretence of love to him, and regard to his law; so that they cannot think themselves safe in the way of the multitude? Yea, and they may be persuaded, that the further they go from them, and the more they are condemned by them, they are the more approved of God.

O. It is possible; but if they be in the panic with the course of the multitude, so as to think they cannot fly too far from it, I should then expect to see them acting the reverse of the common actions of life.

X. It must be the rule by which they discover the corruption of the multitude, that directs their consciences in differing from them; and so they can go no further in opposition to the common course, or in receiving opposition from it, than that rule directs them, if they be acting conscientiously.

A. I never saw men pretend conscience and zeal for God uniformly; they always take care of some darling appetites to have them gratified, when their censures are most severe on others, and even when they are in some things most severe on themselves.

X. Let

X. Let it be true, that we are more readily severe on others than on ourselves; yea, and that we may be induced to severity on ourselves in some things, to quiet our minds in the remaining possession and enjoyment of our darling lusts; yet this discovers some action of conscience, though misguided, and shews that the worst of us are not wholly free from it. After all your insinuations against it, I persuade myself it can give you some uneasiness upon occasions. And if you shall trace your arguings against it to their proper source, I doubt not but you will find them to be the fruits of an effort in your mind to shake off that same dread of a Deity, and of eternal judgment, which yet forces itself in upon you at times, in spite of all your arguments.

O. How miserable and how inhumane must that mind be, that cannot be easy without a persuasion, that there is no conscience, no truth nor goodness to be found in man! But I was wanting to be informed of the rule that directs the consciences of that people, and how they are led into all the ridiculous practices and ways of thinking, that render them unfit for the society of mankind.

A. Whether man be naturally sociable or not, I shall never believe that to be conscience that disturbs society.

X. Wicked society, if you mean, you are at a contradiction. But you forget what I have been saying, that it is the conviction they may have of the judgment of God against the courses of the society which they withstand, that makes them differ, and so they act conscientiously in the difference.

O. I look on myself as a middle person betwixt you two, who cannot be soon brought together; and I must, in the mean time, have a satisfying answer to my question.

X. Suppose then, they had only nature's light for their rule, and it were possible for them to attempt to walk up to it in all things, would not this be an attempt

to differ from the bulk of mankind, yea, and even from those men who shew no small zeal for what they call the light of nature, as it were in opposition to the Christian revelation?

Tell me, do you not think that an endeavour after the strictest conformity to the law of nature, would make mankind uneasy? For, not to speak of envy, though men neglect their duty, and do wrong, they love not to have it told them that they are doing so? and a practical difference from us in being more conscientious than we, makes us uneasy; because it is the most effectual way of declaring us guilty before God in that wherein we imagined he would excuse us; much more will we be uneasy, when we see any, in the fear of God's displeasure, flying from that wherein we imagined he approved us; so that we are obliged, for our own ease, to persuade ourselves, that, however conscience be pretended in opposition to us, there is indeed no conscience in the case. And though the natural dread of a Deity makes some form of religion necessary, and there must be some restraint of vicious appetites in human society; yet the bulk of mankind never did, nor will, while this world stands, tamely suffer such thoughts of God and his judgment, to prevail and take place among them in practice, as leave no room for the fulfilment of their beloved lusts.

O. All this discourse goes on the supposition, that the law of nature is against nature, and a burden laid on the human constitution which it is not able to bear; and that the Deity is a malignant being, that delights in the uneasiness of his creatures, and cannot bear with their frailties: whereas, when we attempt to think of the Deity, we lose ourselves in the thoughts of infinite goodness, wherewith it is impossible to reconcile such frightful notions of him and his laws as I perceive you are insinuating.

X. I suppose no other notion of the Deity but that of *infinite goodness*, and let his law be the rule of our conformity

conformity to his goodness; but then, the least disconformity to that law must have a malignity in it; to which the Deity is as opposite as he is good. And seeing there is an infinite opposition betwixt the Deity and the least deviation from his law, I can far less imagine a possibility of a reconciliation betwixt him and the least sin, than I can think of a reconciliation of the purest light with darkness. And so I may also say, that the least true endeavour after conformity to the law of God, must be so far an attack upon all sin, and make a difference in the world, unless you will set all the world upon the same endeavour, even a difference as between light and darkness.

O. Metaphysics in perfection! and against plain fact! Does not God pour out the riches of his goodness on sinners every day?—If, as you are insinuating, he cannot but appear infinitely opposite to sin, how should then his goodness lead sinners to repentance, which, at this rate, would make him irreconcilable to sinners?

X. Let it pass for metaphysics, till you be willing to understand it, and able to answer it; but, as there is no reasoning against fact, it is likewise most plain fact, that all the common instances of the divine goodness toward man in this life, are working together to put an end to that same life which they seem to uphold, or they most certainly issue in a terrible stroke upon his constitution, carrying in it a fearful presage of future punishment on his immortal part, for his abuse of the goodness of God.

It is no less plain fact, that we do not walk up, in all things, and at all times, to what we ourselves must own to be right reason, or to the law of nature; which must therefore be a burden that our constitution, as it stands, cannot bear; or, if it can bear it, what must we be in the eye of infinite goodness, who can conform ourselves to the law that is the rule of conformity to that goodness, and yet will not?

And



And when I think of the law of the infinitely good Being, I must, of necessity, have some apprehension of the infinite majesty and authority of that Being, which must be acknowledged by me in all my obedience to his law, so far as it is obedience: What then must be the consequence of my entertaining light thoughts of the least transgression of his law, in whom I live, and move, and have my being?

The infinite opposition of the divine goodness to sin, which certainly is in the world, cannot appear but by punishing sin infinitely. But I know you will not easily admit the notion of infinite mercy to sinners, and the infinite opposition of the divine goodness to all sin, both displayed at once in the salvation of sinners by the death of Jesus Christ.

O. Because it strikes against his goodness in pardoning the penitent, and against his justice in punishing every one for his own fault.

X. As you must own the law knows no repentance, so, I fear, your way of arguing will set aside a providence, together with the Christian scheme: for where do you see repentance mend the matter with them who are reduced to worldly misery by their own fault? And do you not see them daily relieved at the expence and loss of others? But, if every one be punished for his own fault, I see not how any one can escape punishment.

O. It cannot appear, from any thing we see, that good does not prevail in the whole system of things; for there are the strongest presumptions that it does. And whatever you have to object from the dark side of things, may be abundantly answered in a future state, where all will be set to rights.

X. While you admit not revelation, borrow nothing from it, I beg of you. And now, that you are come to your suppositions, I will enter my dissent against your supposing any thing but what is evidently founded in what you see; and so you must shew me, that, as far as you see into the system of things, good pre-  
vails

vails in it, before you say any more of goodnes, against the Christian scheme, which displays the di-  
vine goodnes in an astonishing manner, and leads  
sinners effectually to repentance.

A. Allow me to say you are as far from your point  
as you were; but if you incline to spend your time  
on what now lies before you, I foresee the middle  
person must be engaged in difficulties that will oblige  
him to take to one of the sides.

O. I can be pressed with no such difficulties where  
I stand, as those I must be engaged in by taking my-  
self to either of the sides.

A. When you have once rid yourself of the diffi-  
culties of that ancient question, *Si Deus est, unde ma-  
lum?* you will be in no great pain with the difficulties  
of the Christian scheme.

O. But why should these grand subjects of dispute  
divert me from obtaining an answer to my plain que-  
stion? I am sure those things, whereby the people of  
whom we were speaking expose themselves, and of-  
fend their neighbours, cannot plead a foundation in  
nature's light, and every body sees them to be a sect  
of Christians.

X. And if I should tell you that the Bible is the  
rule that directs their consciences in their difference  
from the rest of Christians, would you not make  
your own advantage of this against Christianity? For  
you seem no less ready to improve the ways of that  
sect against the rule they pretend to walk by, than  
the practice of any other set of Christians.

O. I must own, the manners of Christians, espe-  
cially their leaders, say much to me against the truth  
of their profession.

X. Against their sincerity in their profession, per-  
haps you mean; but if you would have the conduct  
of the clergy and their followers, after the days of  
the apostles, to be a confutation of the truth of  
Christianity, I must own I so far differ from you,  
that

that it is to me a very strong argument for the truth of the scriptures.

O. That is surprising! Will you demonstrate the truth of Christianity from the lives of Christians, and the conduct of their leaders, since the days of the apostles! Pray let me hear how your argument proceeds?

X. You have nothing to say of the lives of Christians, or the management of their leaders, but what I find clearly enough foretold in the New Testament, by Jesus Christ and his apostles, who not only spake of the pernicious ways of the teachers that should come after them, but likewise foretold, that the way of truth should be evil spoken of by reason of them, and of the multitude following them. There is nothing more evident in the New Testament, than that there was to be a falling away from the primitive Christianity, and that under the Christian name; and that the beginnings of this were working in the very days of the apostles, which were to come to a head in due time. And this corruption of Christianity is so represented in the prophecies of the New Testament, and the conduct of the clergy is so set forth there, as I never saw it done so much to the life, by any who intended thereby to reflect on true Christianity. And hereby, I think, the truth of the New Testament, which is the rule and standard of Christianity, is confirmed to me. And still the more, when I consider, that this book, which was in the power of them who corrupted the Christian religion, and in their keeping for many ages, who stuck at no villany, has come forth again to public view from among them, clearly testifying against all their wickedness, declaring the righteous judgment of God against their ways, and calling men every where to repentance.

O. I cannot deny that this deserves some consideration; but all Christians do not agree, that the scripture is the sole rule of Christianity. And even they

who

who profess this, subject it to other rules in the interpretation of it. Yea, the scripture itself, and even the New Testament, is liable to a variety of glosses contradicting one another; so that it would cost the greatest labour, and most exquisite skill in the original language, and in antiquity, to fix the sense. And I do not know if it would be possible, either to fix the sense of the original as it now stands, or to come to any certainty, as to the purity of it, after all that has been said on this subject by the most learned critics.

X. The scriptures are so composed, that whatever doubt may arise about the purity of the text, or the sense of it, as to any point of the Christian faith or practice in one passage, satisfaction can arise, as to that same point, from a variety of other passages. The doubts moved, and questions agitated as to the purity of the original text, may pass for an evidence of the wickedness of the clergy seeking to establish their own authority and interest, by undermining the authority of the scriptures. But, after all the pains taken this way, all the different copies, and all the translations, concur to furnish abundant matter for the condemnation of the clergy and their followers. Any one of the translations contains the whole of the Christian faith and practice, so as it may be clearly enough seen in one place or other. And the whole corruption of the Christian religion that is to be seen in the Roman church, may be abundantly refuted by the very translation that is authorized by that church.

And as to the sense of the New Testament, I am of opinion, it would be a plain book to every one who should come to it as a *little child*, to learn the *words of eternal life*, and read it without the biases of self-interest, and the love of this present evil world, and without the wisdom of the Scribe and of the disputer of this world. These are the things that make the gospel, in its doctrine and precepts, unintelligible, or of doubtful interpretation to the most part

of men. The clergy take care to flatter the pride of the philosophers, as far as is consistent with their own authority, in their glosses, and never fail to give such senses of the rules of the gospel as shall be one way or other consistent with the worldly interest and lusts of their followers; while all the power of interpretation that they are masters of is exerted, to extract their own authority, and worldly interest out of the scripture, and make every thing inconsistent with the scripture that they can perceive to be against their interest. But, supposing self-denial, and setting aside worldly interest, the differences about the sense of the *words of eternal life* could not be so great, as are the differences about what is called *the light of nature*. We have had one difference about it pretty wide since our conversation began; and none of us are strangers to the differences about the principle of *moral virtue*. I was surpris'd with one of the disputants on that subject, telling me, "That I could not know what nature's light teaches without the help of revelation."—

O. I see I must go without an answer to my question. I only wanted to know how far men might be led into the peculiar practices of that sect, by following the scriptures as their guide; and you should be judge, how far their ways might be improved against that rule.

X. Seeing I find you are in good earnest on this subject, I shall do my best to satisfy you the first time we meet.

## D I A L O G U E II.

O. I Hope you have not forgot your promise.

X. To shew you that I have not, I thus begin to perform it.

In the first place, That people pretend to believe the scriptures upon the appearance of the divine glo-

ry to them in the scripture-scheme. They take this on trust from no man, or set of men. If they were not persuaded on this evidence, they might be infidels; for they look on all them who profess to believe the scriptures, without having this evidence, as no better than infidels. They pretend to believe no whisper of any private spirit in this matter; because all spirits must be tried by the scriptures. They reject all church-authority in this case; because all the authority that any church can lawfully pretend to, must be founded in the scriptures. They look on the scriptures as a revelation supposing nature's light, and supporting it, by the divine authority applied to the consciences of men, in opposition to all false reasonings; and not only so, but chiefly, making a new discovery of God, suitable to the condition of sinners, and furnishing us with a new set of principles, with respect to the salvation of sinners, that were not discoverable by the light of nature, and manifesting more of the divine glory than is to be seen in all his works beside, which he is pleased to make men of the meanest capacities to perceive. They see no method of attaining to eternal life, consistent with the judgment of GOD against our sin, which nature's light shews us, but only that method proposed in the scriptures. In short, they find the evidence against Atheism, in *the things that are made*, supported by the scriptures, against exceptions that are drawn from the appearance of sin, and its consequences in the world; so that they must either be Athiests or Christians.

A. Which is not an ill conclusion.

O. Well; it seems they believe upon the view they themselves have of the scripture-doctrine by illumination; and they look on it, not merely as a new edition of nature's light, corrected and amended from the corruptions of false reasoning, but especially as a new set of principles helping out sinners where the light of nature shews nothing, and

shewing itself to come from God. After this, I suppose they will not trouble themselves to shew the agreeableness of every thing in this revelation to the reason of mankind: scripture-testimony will be enough to them; and they will be independent of the authority of any set of priests, as to the true sense of scripture; they must still see with their own eyes. And so far I must own they are in the right, though I do not understand the evidence upon which they believe. But how come they by their sense of the scriptures, whereby they differ from other Christians?

X. They who admit the truth of the scriptures because they conceive them agreeable to their reason, will admit nothing in the interpretation that is above their reason; and so that reason of theirs is the true standard and rule of what they call their faith. And those that receive the truth of the scriptures by tradition, or church-authority, will receive no interpretation but what is agreeable to that tradition, and to the creeds and confessions of that church whose authority they depend on; and so that tradition, and these forms of faith, are indeed the rule and standard of their faith, and not the scriptures, whatever they may pretend. But this people of whom we are speaking, have not so received the truth of the scriptures.

A. But others profess to receive the scriptures as a revelation above reason, and to believe them by the help of illumination as well as they; and yet they walk by the rule of tradition, and human forms of faith, in the interpretation of the scripture, and contend earnestly for these forms.

X. And you may say too, That they pretend to follow the first separatists from the Roman church, who contended for the scripture as the interpreter of scripture; but in all this they act most inconsistently, as we have been hinting. Those who at first separated from the church of Rome, published confessions to clear themselves, and let all men know how they

understood

understood the scripture, taking it as its own interpreter; and withal shewed themselves ready, as to any points wherein they misunderstood the scripture, to change their mind, when-ever they should be corrected by the scripture; and this appeared evidently in the different confessions published by the brethren of Bohemia. But, in process of time, the Protestant confessions came to be fixed forms and standards of sound doctrine, and are held to be fitter to direct men to the true sense of the scripture, and to distinguish truth from error, and to guard against heresy, than the bare Bible, which is appealed to by all heretics. And now Protestants, who refuse the name of infallibility, have their tradition, fathers, councils, and standards of faith, from which they hold it as unlawful to depart, as the Romanists do from theirs. In opposition to this palpable apostasy from the profession of the scripture as its own interpreter, occasioned by the drawing up and publishing of these first confessions against the Roman church, the people of whom we are speaking, profess to hold fast *the form of sound words* that the first churches received from the apostles, which is only to be found in their writings.

O. Seeing they hold the scripture as its own interpreter, let me understand how they go to work to understand the scripture by itself.

X. Supposing the evidence upon which they believe the scripture to be the key that opens the scripture to them, they look on the New Testament as the only certain and true explication of the Old, and on them both as mutually illustrating one another; because the *apostles said none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come*; and, in all their writings, are continually referring, one way or other, to some passage of the Old-Testament scripture. And as they maintain, *That no prophecy of that old scripture is of any private interpretation*, or capable to be applied according to the mind and will of any  
but



but the author himself, they refuse to admit any interpretation of the Old Testament that has no foundation in the New Testament, which they firmly hold to be the whole of God's own explication and application of it. Thus they enter into the spirit of the apostolic contention against the Jews; they reject all the senses of the prophecies and applications of the Old Testament that smell of Judaism; they contend earnestly for the mystic sense of the Old Testament concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, and, in opposition to all notions of that kingdom that are any way like the Jewish notion, they lay great stress on these words, *the kingdom of heaven*, and on the Lord's dying testimony, the good confession that he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, which Paul recommends to Timothy in the most solemn manner, *viz. My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.*—*Thou sayest that I am a king: to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth, heareth my voice.*

O. They must be for the mystic sense of the prophecies, or renounce the most part of the New Testament, and see little of the Christian scheme in the Old. And it is very odd, that the Christian clergy have all along given so little heed to this dying testimony of Jesus Christ; but it seems, the account the New Testament gives of the Jews, puts this sect in the panic, as to every thing that looks like them; and, I suppose, their imagination will be very warm upon their *kingdom of heaven*.

X. That is to say, you would have them to be enthusiasts; yet, I dare say, they cannot be too much afraid of the spirit and temper of the Jews, as it is described in the New Testament; *and every one that is of the truth, and hears Christ's voice, will acknowledge, that the glory of his kingdom is too solid for*

an overheated fancy, and indeed surpasses all imagination.

O. I beg pardon for the provocation I have given to your zeal, and beseech you to go on, and inform me how far this principle of interpreting the Old Testament by the New, carries them in opposition to other zealous Christians.

X. It sets them in opposition to all the principles of national uniformity in religion, and of the extirpation of heretics and schismatics, which ordinarily plead a foundation in the Old Testament, and in the constitution of that earthly kingdom, because there is none for them in the New, which represents that earthly figure, as removed to give place to the truth of it, *the kingdom of heaven*. They hold the whole business of extirpation as one of the clearest marks of Antichrist, who, in effect, denies, *That Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*; and they call all them who preach, and study to practise perfection, *locusts*, that *have the king over them, whose name is Abaddon and Apollyon, i. e. the reverse and opposite of Jesus, who came not to destroy mens lives, but to save*.

A. Who is for perfection that has not power, nor hopes to have it? Do we not see all sects, when at under, complaining of persecution? And would you promise upon them, that they would not persecute, and justify themselves in so doing, if they had but power, and met with provocation?

X. I would not, when I consider how soon Christians began to persecute after they were eased of the cross by Constantine, and when I think of the spirit of persecution that was working among them before, even while they were sufferers themselves, notwithstanding all that they read in the New Testament to the contrary.

But the grand distinguishing principle of this sect, as to the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, and is not to be defended with the sword, is so inconsistent with *extirpation*, and with their laying hold on the

the means of it; that they must renounce their whole scheme, founded on this principle, the moment they think of grasping at worldly power, in any shape, to defend their religion, or to extirpate those who differ from them.

This principle of theirs, That Christianity cannot be a national religion, and that Christ's kingdom is not to be defended by secular power in the hands of his subjects, has not been maintained by any since the time of Constantine, at least in the way they maintain it. And as they find it very evident by Christ's dying testimony, and the whole scope of the New Testament, which is to them the only explication of the Old; so it, at once, shuts all the doors at which the principles of extirpation can enter into their profession; and still the more, that they hold and maintain the "inseparable connection betwixt the true profession of Christianity, and the cross in this life."

O. What do you say? Do they maintain, that there can be no right profession of Christianity in this world, without sufferings?

X. They judge, that the great scope of the whole Old-Testament prophecy, is *the salvation that is in the sufferings of Christ, and the following glory, which is reported in the gospel that was preached by the apostles, and that all who are appointed to share in that salvation are predestinated to be conformed to Jesus Christ, in his sufferings and the following glory, as joint heirs with him, if so be that they suffer with him, that they may be also glorified together.* And so they hold it as true as Christ's death and resurrection, that *if we be dead together, we shall also live together; if we suffer, we shall also reign together; if we deny, he will also deny us.*

They take very much notice of these words that Jesus Christ spake to his disciples, after his sharp rebuke to Peter's zeal against his sufferings, *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up*  
his

*to cross and follow me: for whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* And they build much on Paul's words to Timothy, when forewarning him of the *perilous times* that should come in the last days, and setting his own sufferings in opposition to those who have a form of godliness, denying the power of it, he says, *Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution; but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

They observe the warning Jesus Christ gives his disciples, that the keeping of his words will expose them to the same hatred wherewith he was hated in the world, especially their obedience to his new commandment. And they find by experience, that the least endeavour after the keeping of his words, and the open observance of his new commandment, by the ways and means enjoined in the New Testament, raises the hatred of the world called *Christian*, against them, and puts them upon *bearing his reproach*.

They consider the blessedness connected with the suffering of reproach and persecution for righteousness sake, and the promise of salvation to the faithful confessors of the gospel; and, on the other hand, the danger of being ashamed of Jesus Christ, and of his words. And as reproach and affliction is connected with the keeping of his words, without distinction of greater and lesser, they are persuaded that the least of his words cannot be denied, or any way dissembled in their practice, through the fear of that affliction or reproach, without a manifest disregard to his name, and a contempt of his promises, and defiance of his threatenings. They have nothing to do with any persecution that is not for his sake, and for his words; but they cannot persuade themselves that they love Jesus Christ, if they do not count it the greatest honour they can attain to in this world, to suffer shame for his name.

O. After this, I think we need not suspect them of self-interest in their interpretations of the scriptures.

A. Yet they speak of attaining to honour, and much self-interest lies there. As all sects profess the greatest veneration for their martyrs, so, suffering persecution for conscience sake, has a tendency to draw the esteem of mankind with so great strength, that I have often wondered at the dexterity of the priests, who have been capable to withdraw it, and even to restrain the pity of their people from them that suffer by the inquisition, yea, to turn it into joy, at their acts of faith.

X. They do indeed speak of honour, but not the honour of this world, which must be renounced by them who seek the honour that cometh from God only, in the way of suffering shame from the world for Christ's name sake. They speak of the honour of being conformed to the Son of God, and having fellowship with him who humbled himself and became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross, enduring it, and despising the shame; and this, as connected with the honour of being conformed to him, in his high exaltation on the right hand of God. The gospel does not propose to extirpate the sense of honour, and the desire of glory, out of human nature, which was originally framed for glory and for dominion; for it points out humiliation, reproach, and disgrace, as the hardest thing in suffering; and it calls us to seek after the honour that comes from God only, and his kingdom that he will give in the world to come, and to comfort ourselves with the hope of this honour and this dominion, while we deny ourselves as to the glory and dominion of this world, and follow Christ, bearing our cross. This is the grand interest, the true honour, subservient to the glory of God, and consistent with humble subjection to him. And this is the interest and the honour that the first Christians had respect unto  
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in their sufferings, denying themselves to every thing else: nor can it be well alledged that they had any thing else in view, till the time when something of the honour due to God began to be paid to martyrs, and annual days observed to their honour.

O. But this will make few sufferers for Christ, and as few Christians. The bulk of them that go under that name will never subscribe to this, till they find some method of explaining it away, or evading the force of it. Nor shall I easily believe that they themselves will come fully up to it; while at the same time I must own, it is pretty clear in the New Testament.

X. They are far from denying that there are few Christians; neither do they themselves pretend to have attained to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, being made conformable to his death: but this they constantly maintain, that they cannot look on themselves as Christians, except in so far as they are following after it. And when any of their own company fall openly short of this, they fall immediately under their discipline, which is according to their doctrine.

O. I reckon by this, we need not be afraid of a great following to them among Christians.

X. They themselves do not expect it. Yea, they would suspect themselves of too much conformity to this world, or the multitude of mistaking them very far, if they should come after them. The multitude that sought to make Jesus a king, left him when they perceived the drift of his doctrine.

A. They are indeed few; but it is a great question, if any two of them could stand together under the thorough exercise of such a discipline. And can any thing be more ridiculous than a grave pretence to the exercise of a discipline that it is manifest human nature could never bear?

X. It is above nature to be a Christian, as the practice of Christianity depends on the belief of supernatural principles. And, though human nature be greatly corrupted, I suppose you may see the necessity

cessity of a superior wicked influence to bear it out in the Spanish acts of faith. If this be not impossible, you cannot tell how far human nature may be determined to act to the contrary, by a superior good influence.

Hypocrites may lurk, for a while, under the severity of the Christian discipline, as they did from the beginning; but it would be very ridiculous to say, that, because there are many hypocrites, there is no body sincere. In other cases you would laugh at such an inference as this. Many are carried far in the pursuit of eternal life, who do not, at bottom, prefer it to the life that now is: therefore there are none pursuing it who are not determined to prefer it to this life.

O. But you have not yet told me what are those principles above nature, or that nature's light could not discover, that they pretend to see in the scriptures, while they interpret it only by itself.

X. They take the doctrines of the Trinity, incarnation, predestination, the imputation of Adam's sin and of Christ's righteousness, the mystical union of Christ and his church, the resurrection and reign of the just, the general resurrection and judgment of the unjust, and the restitution of all things; I say, they take these doctrines just as they stand in the scriptures, though I know not if they will use all the words wherein I have, for brevity, expressed them; because they are not all scripture-words: but they hold these doctrines to the full of what you can think the New Testament declares, while it testifies the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, as that wherein the truth of the whole is manifested.

O. To be plain with you, so would I, if I could believe the scripture. But these very doctrines so plainly delivered there, as influencing all truly Christian practice, which is made to depend necessarily on the faith of them, are still shocking to me. And I heartily despise the method of recommending the  
 scriptures

Scriptures to my belief, by smoothing these doctrines in such a manner, as to make the scriptures say other things than they really say. Yea, I doubt if these men be honest Christians, who would make us Christians at the rate of giving up to us, on the matter, the main distinguishing doctrines of Christianity. And I very much question, if they would have taken so much pains in the defence of Christianity, had not their interest lien in it one way or other.

X. Where is your charity! You cannot answer them, and that perhaps frets you.

O. Their own concessions go far to ruin their arguments; and the truth is, I do not see that I would differ so very much from what I now am, by becoming a Christian in their way of it, that the change should be worth the pains taken to make it. The Socinian and Arian Christians would only have me acknowledge a dignified and creature god, capable of divine worship. And the Arminian Christians would teach me some way to profess the merit and the grace of Jesus Christ, but leave me at last just where I am, as to human merit and the power of nature.

X. The people I am describing insist much on the corruption of human nature by Adam's sin; and they carry this far. Their account of mankind agrees pretty much with the author of the Fable of the Bees.

A. But, I suppose, they do not enter into his design, nor perceive the plain tendency.

O. I shall not doubt of the badness of the design; yet I reckon they agree with the author, as he appears to agree with the scripture. But what delight can men take in representing themselves, and their own species, in such a horrible shape?

X. Whatever designs men may have in representing human nature in that shape, the corruption of human nature is a sad truth, evident from the course of the world in all countries, and at all times, and every man may see it in himself, that has the courage to  
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bring his actions under a strict examination. And the Christian's delight lies not there, but in the appearance of the divine glory in our recovery from that corruption, and in the beautiful image of God in Jesus Christ, to which scripture-revelation, and the power that attends it conforms us, which appears the more glorious in restoring us. The plain design of the scripture-account of mankind, is the same with the design of a shade in a fine picture. The plain tendency is to go to the bottom of our wound, in order to heal it; and they who will not bear the first, have no mind to the last.

O. I am not now to dispute these things: but I perceive by this, they will not be easily taken with the most specious pretences of the religious of any party. And they must, of course, be very uncharitable both to themselves and others.

X. So they are in your sense of charity; but, at the same time, they make a deal of work about charity, in their own view of it.

O. And, pray, what is that?

X. Their charity is, *the love of the truth, as it is in Jesus*; it is love to the *just God the Saviour*, as manifested in that truth, in opposition to all idols; it is love to all the children of God, who are of the truth, for the truth's sake which dwelleth in them.

This charity, in the practice of it, must be precisely regulated by the New Testament. And as they know nothing that brought them together, or that keeps them together, but that word of the truth of the gospel written in the New Testament, they profess to follow after the gospel-charity among themselves, and to study the observation of Christ's new commandment of brotherly love, in all the outward expressions and means of it, that are pointed out in the New Testament, from the highest to the lowest. And so they observe the feasts of charity, the washing of one another's feet, and the Christian salutation, or kiss of charity, which, however ridiculous

it may be to many Christians, they find no less than five times expressly enjoined in the New Testament. As to offences arising among them, they profess the strict observation of this commandment of Jesus Christ, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Publican.* And, as *charity never faileth* while any thing of Christianity remains in the world, they maintain, that we ought never to fail in the observation of any deed of brotherly love that the New Testament points out to us, either by express precept, or the practice of all the first Christians.

They insist on forbearance in brotherly love among them in whom the scripture-character of a Christian appears in any tolerable measure. When they are once agreed in this, *viz. To count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that they may win him, and be found in him, having his righteousness; and that they may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means they may attain to that resurrection of the dead;* then they walk together in brotherly love, forbearing one another in many things wherein they may be differently minded, through different measures of the knowledge of the truth. And they hold themselves obliged to abstain from the use of indifferent things, for the offence of weak brethren. But to forbear any in a palpable transgression of the law of forbearance, and to indulge any one in the fulfilment of any of the lusts of this world, would be the very reverse of their brotherly love and charity, which *rejoiceth*

*rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth in the truth.*

As their charity delights in all them that *are of the truth, for the truth's sake*; so it works in a way of good-will toward all men, because of the unknown elect among all sorts of men, without distinction, whom God will have to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. And thus their charity is the image of the divine good-will to men, manifested in the word of the truth of the gospel, and the imitation of his long-suffering toward his elect in all generations, and among all sorts of mankind; therefore they profess long-suffering and kindness, not only towards the brethren, but even towards the enemies of the gospel; and their charity *is not provoked* \* to revenge by bad usage, nor can it consist with *devising harm* † to any. But, on the contrary, it prompts to the obedience of that command of Jesus Christ, *Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.*

They carry the matter of alms, *and doing good to all men, especially to the household of faith*, as high as John Baptist did in his doctrine, and as Jesus Christ did, when the Pharisees, who paid tithes of all, and gave alms upon honour, ridiculed him, and when his own disciples were astonished at his words. Instead of making rich, by laying up for ourselves treasures of corruptible things on the earth, they press making rich toward God, by laying up treasures in heaven, *i. e.* by almsgiving, and selling what we have to give alms. They charge them that are rich in this world, not to trust in uncertain riches, but, in opposition to that, to shew their trust in the living God, by doing good, becoming rich in good works, and by their readiness to distribute, and willingness to communicate; so laying up in store for themselves

\* ου παραξυνεται.

† ου λογιζεται το κακον.

a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. They put the poor in mind of the widow's mite, and set before them the example of the churches of Macedonia, whose joy, in a great trial of affliction and deep poverty, abounded to the riches of their liberality. In a word, they maintain, that both rich and poor are indispensably obliged, by the gospel-law of charity, not to do well to themselves only, but to deny themselves, in doing all good offices in their power to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.

And they are very positive in this, that true charity is distinguished by self-denial, after the example of Jesus Christ; and that it is utterly inconsistent with pride, which must be the principle that influences a man who has not charity, *to give all his goods to feed the poor. True charity envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, by exercising us in great matters, or in things too high for us, seeketh not her own.*

O. You have given me a long lecture on charity, and you have had my attention; yet I cannot profess myself a believer of this *self-denying gospel-charity*: for I own it is a little above my reach; only this much I perceive, that the notion you would give me of it, differs widely from my idea of *disinterested benevolence*.

X. I expected that their scripture-charity would find as little credit with you, as your natural disinterested benevolence has with them. Neither indeed can you believe it, far less feel any thing of it in yourself, without believing the gospel. And if you were blessed with this charity that *rejoiceth in the truth*, you would *bear all the things* said in the gospel, and count none of them hard sayings; yea, and take earnest heed to them, lest at any time you should let them slip; you would not be blinded with prejudice and disaffection, but gladly *believe all things* revealed in the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation;

you would *hope* for all things that are promised in the word of the truth of the gospel; and you would patiently *endure all* the afflictions of the gospel, reckoning yourself bound to lay down your life for the brethren, and to suffer all things for the elect's sakes.

O. Yes; And at the same time I would look on no man as a proper Christian, except such only as I could see following after this charity, in the observation of the Christian institutions; and I would no more look for, or expect to find any truly good disposition among men, but what proceeds from revelation; and thus I would be a fit member for their church, whatever should become of me as to the society of mankind.

X. They do indeed expect nothing from fallen mankind, without the grace of the gospel, but sinning, and coming short of the glory of God. As to the societies of this world, they stand by every one's seeking his own things, and the good of the whole only is as far as he finds his own interest in it. And it is very true, *charity that seeketh not her own*, cannot be the spirit that animates such a body as a kingdom of this world: but, at the same time, it cannot make a man an unfit member of such a society; for *charity worketh no ill to our neighbour*, but disposes us with cheerfulness to *render to all their dues*. And thus, while you were governed by the reigning principle in the kingdom that is not of this world, you would be an exceeding peaceable harmless member of a worldly kingdom or commonwealth; you would neither oppress when in power, nor raise any sedition or tumult when at under.

O. Excuse me from meddling with your odd notion of society. But as to what you said first, I must observe some difference betwixt this doctrine of that people, and the rule of their religion: for Paul either contradicts himself, or does not carry this point so far as it seems they do. He acknowledges, that  
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the Gentiles, which had not the law of Moses, *did by nature the things contained in the law*, while he affirms, that the doers of the law are justified before him with whom there is no respect of persons. And you know the instance of Cornelius, to whom Peter says, *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but, in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*

X. I may do much to satisfy you as to this, after I have revised some notes that I remember I have on these texts. And as I have undergone a long examination at this time, I find I need some relaxation: so I will crave leave to break off here, and leave the rest to next meeting.

O. And you may bring your notes with you.

### D I A L O G U E III.

X. I Have brought my notes, as you desired.

O. And I am ready to hear them.

X. I will begin with Cornelius, if you please.

O. As you will.

X. "Cornelius, though uncircumcised, was a worshipper of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as a profelyte of the gate; for he was *of good report among all the nation of the Jews, as one that feared God*; and therefore he cannot well be supposed wholly ignorant of that promise to Abraham, *In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed.* Yea, Peter says expressly to him and his company, *Ie know the word which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached.* So that Cornelius cannot be looked on as a stranger to revelation, or as an unbeliever. His knowledge of the true God, as revealed to the Jews, influenced him to *fear him, in praying to him alway, and to work righteousness, in giving much alms to the people.*

“ Peter perceiving, from what he had heard of this Cornelius, and from his own vision, that God was now cleansing the uncircumcised, and taking them into his church, as well as the circumcised, expresses himself in these remarkable words: *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him, according to the word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all.* Our translators have cut off the latter part of the sentence, from the first, in the middle of a very common Greek construction, and joined it to the following sentence, by the supplement (*I say*) without the least foundation for it in the Greek text, and thereby they have rendered the whole passage very involved, and broke the connection of Peter’s discourse: for Jesus Christ, his being *Lord of all*, manifestly respects God’s accepting them of every nation, without difference, that fear him, and work righteousness. But the supplement (*according to*) as it has a foundation in the Greek construction, makes the whole passage easy, and leaves no shadow of a foundation for any objection to be drawn from it, against the great scope of the whole scripture.”

O. You are acting the critic, I see; and correcting the translation; but it is a loss you have not noted down the words of the Greek text.

X. Here is a Greek Testament; you may read them yourself, and be satisfied.—

O. “ Αλλ’ εν παντι ἔδνει ο φοβημενος αυτον, και εργαζόμενος δικαιοσυνην δεκτος αυτω ἐστι. Τον λογον ου απεστειλε τοις υιοις Ισραηλ ευαγγελιζόμενος ειρηνην δια Ιησου Χριστου υιος ἐστι παντων Κυριος. υμεις οι δατε το γενομενον ρημα ———” You render *δεκτος τον λογον*, *accepted according to the word*, by supplying *κατα*. And indeed it cannot be denied there is such a Greek construction; yet it would seem the translators have been seeking a verb for the accusative *τον λογον* and could find none till they came down to *οι δατε* But *υμεις οι δατε*

*το ῥημα*. looks no way like the resuming of *ton logon* it seems plainly to be the beginning of a new sentence. The constructing of *ton logon* with *οι δε* has involved the discourse, and obliged them likewise to depart from the Greek, by saying, *the word which God sent*, instead of *the word which he sent*, as it is in the Greek, referring more to the foregoing words than the construction of the translators could well allow.

X. You shall be the critic and the translator; and I must own it is exceeding fair in you to give me so much help against yourself.

O. And you will not readily find fault when I speak for you; but I look not on the narrowness of the scripture-charity as any argument for the truth of the scripture against me. And to shew you that I am not unwilling to believe it to be as narrow as you would have it, I promise you as fair a hearing to your notes on the passage concerning the Gentiles their *doing by nature the things contained in the law*.

X. But you must not lay aside the Greek Testament. Turn over to the second chapter of the Romans, and look at the text while I read.

“ The phrase, *τα τη νομου*, as it is here translated, *the things contained in the law*, is capable to be improved against the main scope of the apostle’s whole discourse, and against the plain design of the text. But *τα τη νομου*, may be more agreeably rendered, *the offices of the law*, or, *the things that pertain to the law to do*. And this is supported by the words immediately following, *These having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which shew the work of the law written in their hearts*.

“ The apostle’s plain design is to shew, that the judgment of God against sin must be executed impartially, and without any respect to the Jews, who had the written law, above the Gentiles, who had also sinned, though they had not the written law, and could not be judged by it. And whereas the Jews gloried in the giving of the law to their nation,

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he tells them plainly, that the hearing of the law could not justify them, but the doing of it; and if they did not the law, they had no reason to glory over the Gentiles, by their having or hearing the law: for the Gentiles, who had not the law written to them in tables of stone, with the finger of God, and to whom he spoke it not as he did to them, yet wanted not a law. To shew this, and likewise to manifest the justice of the judgment of God against the Gentiles, who should perish without the law of Moses, he says, *For when the nations which have not the law, do by nature the offices of the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience witnessing together, and reasonings betwixt one another accusing or else apologising.* Thus he shews from the testimony of the conscience of the Gentiles, and from their reasonings among themselves, mutually accusing and defending in the way of excuse or apology, that the Gentiles, who had not the law of Moses, did naturally to themselves what belonged to the law to do; so that they were a law to themselves. From this no more can be inferred, but that, having a law as well as the Jews, they justly perished without the Jewish law; and, if the Jews obeyed not their law, they had no reason to glory over the Gentiles, who had not the law promulgated to them as they had it. Thus this passage is perfectly agreeable to the apostle's general scope, which is to manifest, that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin; and that every mouth must be stopped by God's law, which, whether written on tables of stone, or in the hearts of all, makes all the world subject unto his judgment against sin."

O. There is indeed a great difference betwixt obeying a law, and having a law made known to us, without which we could not be transgressors. For my part, I shall not doubt, that Christianity supposes the greatest corruption of human nature, and cannot  
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take place but in consequence of a dispiriting sense of our own unworthiness, and want of merit, and a fearful apprehension of judgment and wrath; but the moral virtue of the philosophers arises from a generous sense of the dignity of our nature, and of its fitness for good and praise-worthy actions, and from agreeable sentiments of the divine goodness.

X. There can be nothing more disagreeable to the infinitely good Being, than to harden ourselves against that shame and fear that nature's light serves to breed in us, when we have not glorified him as God, nor been thankful. And our hearts are thus darkened and hardened by those vain reasonings, that serve to beget and foster in us that sense of our merit, and the dignity of our nature, or that shameless pride, as I call it, which is the strongest bulwark in our minds against the gospel of the grace of God, and the source of all those high thoughts and reasonings against Christ, which nothing but the power of his resurrection can subdue. And as for the agreeable sentiments of divine goodness, connected with this, I cannot express them better than in the words of a late poet, reflecting on the religion of some females, whose sentiments of the Deity he represents thus:

*He's like themselves, or how could he be good?*

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*Devoutly thus JEHOVAH they depose,  
The pure, the just; and set up in his stead  
A deity that's perfectly well bred.*

Yet Christianity exalts human nature, and, in the issue, elevates us far beyond what any philosopher could imagine, and therein glorifies the divine goodness in such a manner, as could never enter into the heart of man to conceive. And here again we must begin where we broke off, on the subject of the goodness of God, and our obedience to the law of nature.

O. My

O. My comparison, I see, has warmed your blood from the coolness of criticism, roused your spirits, and made your words strong; and now you would dispute: but we have not yet broke off our main subject, and you must have patience with me till we pursue it a little further.

X. My blood and spirits, I dare say, owe no less to God our Saviour, than to a good friend: and however your pulse beat for the Deity, I could venture upon you, that an indignity offered to your dearest friend would make your blood boil; yea, I perceive it is not perfectly cool, upon my strong words against the dignity of human nature.

But now resume our subject, and I agree to pursue it calmly.

O. I am satisfied your charity, and the charity of that sect toward mankind, abstract from the influence of revelation upon them, is very agreeable to the scriptures. But seeing they look for no true goodness among men, except what flows from revelation, tell me, how much do they expect to find by means of revelation?

X. As you must own, philosophy has not produced abundance of *truth*, or of *disinterested benevolence*, or of *pure and well-regulated self-love* in the practice of mankind, and that *the ideas of beauty and virtue* could not arise from the practice of the most part of men, but by the rule of contraries; so I plainly tell you, that sect expects not much from the generality of mankind any where, by means of revelation.

They speak much, in the scripture style, concerning an elect remnant, and believe, that of the great numbers that hear the gospel-call, *few are chosen*. They reckon that saying of Jesus Christ will hold true in all ages to the end of the world, *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it*. And they hold them

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for false prophets, that would make the gate and way to life any way wider or broader than Christ has made it in his word.

They take great notice of that distinction betwixt the two seeds mentioned in the book of Genesis, immediately after the account of the fall of man, and observe the several instances of that distinction, from that of Cain and Abel still downward. And however great the number of the seed of the woman may appear at last, when they are all gathered out of every nation; yet in every age they are the fewest, in comparison with the seed of the serpent, who are the prevailing party, by whom the remnant of the woman's seed are afflicted and humbled in this world, in conformity to Christ their head, till Christ come again, and bring his people out of all tribulation, and destroy the serpent and his seed.

They observe how revelation, and religion depending on it, has been always corrupted by the wickedness of men professing to embrace it, and that in all its different periods from Adam downward. They speak of the corruption of religion as revealed to Adam, first by Cain, and then by the posterity of Seth, in mingling themselves with Cain's apostate race, till the flood, from which only Noah, who found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and his little family, were saved.

Next, they take notice of the corruption of Noah's religion among his posterity, and even the race of them, (who seem to have been also associated with Ham's children, in building that famous tower for the worship of the heavens) until Abram was called alone from the service of other gods, and all the nations suffered to walk in their own ways from thenceforth, till Christ that seed of Abraham came.

They likewise point out the corruption of the religion of Moses among the posterity of Jacob, till Christ came of them, when, though the Jews, the remnant of the tribes of Israel, were very numerous, a very

small remnant of them were saved according to eternal election.

And all this is an introduction to that which they never fail to enlarge on as they are able, *viz.* The corruption of the Christian religion by the wickedness of its professors, who received not the love of the truth, especially their leaders, after the days of the apostles, which they see clearly foretold in the New Testament. They describe the corruption of Christianity from its beginnings, of which Paul speaks, when he says, *The mystery of iniquity doth already work,* and trace it down to this day, when they say the Lord is consuming that evil, which they do not expect to see wholly destroyed till he come again to judgment; and they remark this saying, *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

They place much religion in abstaining from every part of that corruption, as far as they can find it out by the New Testament, where pure and entire Christianity is to be seen; and particularly, they fly from all appearance of subjection to “church-authority supported with secular power;” which they call Antichrist, *the man of sin, the beast, and the whore sitting on the scarlet-coloured beast.*

O. What would you have me say, or what do you really think yourself of a revelation, designed for the benefit and help of mankind, that was shut up from most part of men in a corner, and there covered with a vail for so many ages; and that, when published to the world, proves beneficial in the issue to so very few.

X. I suppose you reckon I should be against the use of the loadstone, and not take the Jesuits bark for the ague, because the use of these things remained so long hid from mankind; and you would not have me make use of an excellent medicine, because the most part of men slight or abuse it: but, as I believe all these will be benefited by this revelation for whose benefit it declares itself originally designed, I suppose

suppose your question will press you a little more, when you apply it to your *reason of mankind*, and *principle of moral virtue*, placed in man, to lead him to happiness in the way of the practice of that virtue, which, however finely it may be talked of, must be owned to be a very great rarity among men.

A. And what should I then think of this, that there is no true religion but the Christian; and if true Christianity be inquired for, it is to be found only pure and entire in books?

O. They seem to go a great length that way: they do indeed make it very rare, but, at the same time, risk something on the reality of it.

A. And much more has been ventured on the contrary.

O. So much the greater fools were they that did so, when they had no hope beyond this life: for what good can a man propose to himself or others, by giving up his life on this point, that there is no rule of right and wrong, and no hope beyond death?

X. Even the same thing those propose to themselves, who venture their lives and all their hopes to save their honour in duels.

A. And may not this be likewise suspected in those who pretend to suffer for conscience sake?

X. It is true, a man may give his body to be burned, and want charity; in which case it is only pride, in some shape or other, that moves him; and sufferers ought narrowly to examine themselves on this head: but there is no such room for others to question their sincerity, as in the case just now mentioned. We are even to think better of them who suffer on points of religion, as to which their consciences are misguided, than of others whose consciences are better informed, and yet shun suffering, as preferring their interests in this life to their eternal interest, and the friendship of this world to the friendship of God. But how can they be thought well of, that pretend to state their sufferings against the very being of religion?

A. At least this may be thought of them, that they are firmly persuaded there is none.

O. I may freely grant, that martyrdom should pass for a good proof of the persuasion of the sufferers; but, from what is said, it may be evident, that it cannot be admitted as any proof of the truth of that whereof they are firmly persuaded.

X. If you grant it a proof of the real persuasion of the sufferers, it will arise upon you, in some case or other, to a proof of the truth of that same thing they suffer for.

O. Cost what it will, I shall not retract my grant without a reason; but I will be glad to know in what case martyrdom comes to a proof of the truth of the cause.

X. In the case of a plain fact, whereof the martyrs cannot be ignorant. For instance, suppose a dozen of plain men, thorough martyrs on this point of fact, that they themselves, in presence of many others, did, with the greatest caution, and fear of being imposed on, evidently see with their eyes, an intimate acquaintance alive, handle him with their hands, eat and drink with him, and converse with him familiarly and frequently, for the space of forty days, and all this after he was notourly put to death by his enemies, who, having heard that he had said before his death, *After three days I will rise again*, took care to see him thoroughly dead, and to have him secured in his grave, as far as human security can go; and further, that, after all, while he was conversing with them, and appointing them his witnesses of what they had seen and heard, promising them assistance from heaven, (which they afterward received, to the conviction of thousands) they saw him evidently taken up from among them into heaven: if the martyrdom of those men who suffered upon this, be a proof that they really believed it, or were most firmly persuaded of it, it must be, at the same time, a proof that the fact is true, that the resurrection of Jesus  
Christ

Christ is true, and therefore that the whole of Christianity, imported in that fact, and wholly depending upon it, is true.

O. I confess this is what I did not expect, and I promise you I shall consider it. For you have told me already, that you will not admit “church-authority supported with secular power,” or any thing that pertains to that, as a proof against it, because you say it was expressly foretold by these martyrs for the truth of the resurrection.

X. There can be no greater enemies to the gospel than the Jews were from the beginning; and yet, by a very extraordinary providence, they continue in the same enmity to this day, ready to be martyrs for the Old Testament, upon which the New is grafted; and the more opposite that *church-authority supported with secular power* can be shewed to be unto the testimony of the martyrs for the truth of the resurrection, it was still the more fit a mean for handing that testimony to us.

A. As this sect of which you are speaking pretends to depend wholly on the scripture, I think this is a very remarkable benefit they owe to *church-authority supported with secular power*, which they certainly ought to acknowledge.

X. So they do; even as they also acknowledge what they owe to the Jews, while they reckon that *church-authority* as opposite to the design of the New Testament, as Judaism is to the scope of the Old: but in this they especially acknowledge, with thankfulness and adoration, the marvellous divine providence, in bringing so great a good to them out of so much evil.

O. Nothing can be more disagreeable to the description given of Christianity in the New Testament, than *church-authority supported with secular power*. This was to be seen in perfection in the church of Rome; and the Protestant clergy have copied after that church in this matter to their power, and fully



fully as far as the nature of their cause would allow. But do this people imagine, that a nation of this world will ever be governed without a public leading in religion, or without a national church of any kind?

X. They have no such imagination: for, from the rise of Nimrod's kingdom, which behoved to have its religion, as I hinted before, no kingdom of this world has wanted a public leading in religion.

When the Roman empire was stript of its old form of religion by Constantine, it put on in its stead that form of Christianity which ought to be called *Anti-christian*, i. e. a profession of the Christian religion fitted to a kingdom of this world, and made consistent with the pursuit of worldly honour, and wealth, and pleasure, and with all those practices without which no nation of this world can be powerful and flourishing; a Christianity consistent with all our worldly interests, and whereby we are Christians in one country, just as men are Heathens or Mahometans in another.

This is national Christianity, or, as the apostle calls it, *A form of godliness denying the power of it*; the very opposite to that profession of the name of Christ, which was the effect of *God's visiting the nations, to take out of them a people for his name*, agreeably to the words of the prophets about the nations.

This form of Christianity, separated from the cross, and stated in opposition to the ancient work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope, was the religion of the Roman empire, after it cast off its old religion. And when that empire was broke into several independent kingdoms, these (by a very strange providence) remained united, as one empire still, in that form of Christianity, and in the body of the clergy, who were the greatest gainers by it, and carried it to perfection, by the power of those kings who gave them their *strength and power to make uniformity*, till, at last, the Lord began to *consume this man of sin by the spirit of his mouth*; and though his consumption

consumption be still going on, yet there is reason to believe he will not be utterly destroyed, but *by the brightness of the Lord's coming* to judgment.

So that, till the nations be demolished, the national form of Christianity will remain in some shape or other.

O. You are going, I see; but I have not done yet. I must sometime examine you a little further, and particularly on these names and titles, *The beast*, and *the whore*, and *Antichrist*, and *the man of sin*, as importing the great evil against which they state their profession of Christianity; and I must hear you upon this consuming of the man of sin.

X. To-morrow, if you please; mean time farewell.

#### D I A L O G U E IV.

O. **N**OW you are come to be examined; and I suppose you are in readiness to answer my questions.

X. I have thought on the subject frequently, but cannot answer a question till I hear it.

O. In the first place, then I ask what the sect of which we have been speaking means by *the beast*, or how they apply this title to "church-authority supported with secular power?"

X. They think the beast stands in the prophecies, as an emblem of tyrannical power: and the clergy have exercised such a power in the world two ways.

1. They have ruled the world by the strength and authority of the ten kings who gave them their kingdom, *to make uniformity* \*. And this is the beast with ten horns.

2. They have also pretended spiritual, but really tyrannical power, which they exercise in the name of Christ, over the consciences of men. And this is the *beast with two horns as a lamb, but speaking as a dra-*

gon,

\* *πολιτεία μίαν ἑνωμένην.* Rev. xvii. 17.

gon, who exerciseth all the power of the first beast, in his presence. This is the same with the false prophet.

This pretended spiritual and ecclesiastical power or jurisdiction, is exercised by an ecclesiastical frame of government, made after the model of the secular or civil government, by a regular subordination of church-courts, or church-officers, or both together; though it be disputed whether a general council, or the highest bishop be the supreme. And this is the *image of the beast that has ten horns*.

O. I should think this makes your people (for so I may call them) rigidly tenacious of the precise plan of the order and government of the church that they see in the New Testament, lest they should lose their Christian liberty, and pay homage to this *image of the beast*.

X. Perfectly right! True Christian liberty cannot be enjoyed, nor can Christianity be truly professed, or outwardly practised, but in that very order which is laid down for it in the New Testament: and tho' there be no licence to fulfil the lusts of the flesh in that order, and it be attended with several hardships and inconveniencies, yet they think they ought to rejoice in the liberty to serve the Lord Jesus Christ, which they find in that order; and they pity the worshippers of the *image of the beast*, who are but poor slaves and *servants of corruption*, in midst of all their enjoyments and worldly ease.

O. But I am afraid their zeal against the beast with ten horns, and his image, may lead them, in some cases, to be obnoxious to the magistrate, even in this land of religious liberty.

X. Your suspicion may be not ill grounded, as to places where magistrates either account it their honour, or find it some way their interest to serve the clergy; especially seeing no man can be admitted burgeses or freeman in any corporation, without an oath to support the prevailing religion, and seeing all  
must

must make some shew of observing the holidays that the church pleases to appoint.

O. Doubtless it must be very refreshing to the clergy, under the contempt that now begins sensibly to afflict them, to consider the allegiance that is sworn to them in cities and corporations, and to see the whole nation bowing down to them on their appointed day.

But what becomes then of the Episcopal dissenters from the established church; I mean such as profess conscience in refusing to swear allegiance to the powers that be, and to pray for them? Do they swallow down this oath? Or, do they make any shew of observing the Presbyterian holidays, which possibly have been sometimes appointed by the clergy, even to shew their power?

X. If you consider the situation of these dissenters, with respect to the state, you will think their enemies would have a vast advantage against them, if they did not juggle a little in such things.

O. This is but a sorry excuse for perjury and hypocrisy in them who yet pretend to fear an oath.

X. And what will be your excuse for the pretence of a regard to Christianity and the scripture, in books written plainly against the Christian religion and the scriptures? What say you of the candour and ingenuity of the *Christian Deist*, as an interpreter of the scripture? Do you think he believes as he would have us believe, that Paul was such another as himself? And what is your vindication of the truth and sincerity of the silent submission to imposed public standards of faith, and decent conformity to the rules of the prevailing religion, recommended by a noble author?

O. I will make no excuse for it. It is not agreeable to truth, nor consistent with candour and ingenuity: and it cannot but be a strong prejudice in the minds of ingenuous men against the cause that is managed in such a manner: but the juggling way is

still more inexcusable in them who profess the simplicity and godly sincerity of Christians. And if the prevailing clergy had as much value for the souls of men as they pretend, would they not be concerned to have the temptations removed? But what do I say! Are the souls of men able to counterbalance their own authority in their own balance?

X. More charity, I beg of you! You seem to have a peculiar dislike of all sorts of the clergy: yet why should they be denied their share in your universal charity? Are they only destitute of the principle of disinterested benevolence? And doth that principle exert itself in all statesmen, lawyers, physicians, merchants, soldiers, and all sorts of mechanics? Or, why may you not expect to find as much of it among the clergy, with respect to our souls, as among the lawyers and physicians, with respect to our estates and the health of our bodies? Put yourself in their place, and you will not be highly offended that they refuse not the magistrate's support to their authority. And the removal of the temptations to hypocrisy from dissenters, would work no change on their souls to the better. Their Christianity would appear more evidently in resisting them.

O. Well, you are a fine advocate for clergymen! But, if your people find themselves obliged in conscience, against the least mark or sign of subjection to the authority of the clergy supported by the secular powers, will they not be charged, in some cases, with the crime of disobedience to the magistrate?

X. No doubt their enemies will raise a cry against disobedience to the magistrate, when his orders, in the execution of the commands of the clergy, are not obeyed; and they who make no scruple of being accessory to theft and perjury in the case of Cæsar's tribute, will join heartily in the religious cry; even as the Jews complained to Pilate of Jesus, and raised a cry against him, as opposite to Cæsar's kingdom; for though they spirit up mobs, and raise seditions themselves

themselves when at under, yet whoever contemns their authority when the magistrate supports it, must be, in their account, against Cæsar.

But the people I have been describing adhere to God's ordinance of magistracy, Gen. ix. 6. as it is illustrated, Rom. chap. xiii. where the evil, with respect to which the magistrate is a revenger, is only working ill to our neighbour, against the second table of the law. And those who are most forward in condemning them for refusing subjection to Antichristian power, are as ready to treat them with cruel mockings, for a strict observation of the Christian law, touching the magistrate. But they are subject to the powers that be, because they are so commanded by Jesus Christ their Lord, who forbids them, under the highest pains, to receive any mark of subjection to Antichristian power. And when they refuse the *mark of the beast*, they shew subjection to the magistrate, and to Jesus Christ, in patient sufferings; for they abhor mobs as much as they do a national church.

O. I do not see how this can hurt civil society, though, while there is any national church, it must expose themselves to some hardships.

X. And without these no man can live godly in Christ Jesus, amidst this present evil world.

O. There is one thing concerning the beast not yet mentioned, that has tormented the commentators, *viz.* his *number*, the *number of his name*. Have you any thing to say of that?

X. The *number* of the beast must some way carry in it his character, for it is the *number of his name*. The scripture uses to set down numbers in words, and not in letters or figures, except the number of the beast, and the opposite number of the Lamb. The beast's number stands in these three Greek letters,  $\chi$ .  $\xi$ .  $\varsigma$ , which happen to be the initials of the words,  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota$ ,  $\xi\epsilon\nu\omicron\iota$ ,  $\varsigma\alpha\upsilon\rho\upsilon$ , i. e. *Christians strangers to the cross*; a very proper motto for the beast's whole

company, and a character that, one way or other, fits them all, and none other but them, The opposite number of the Lamb (the emblem of Christ in his patient suffering, in opposition to the persecuting beast) stands in the seventh chapter of the Revelation, expressed in these three letters, ρ μ δ. And these again are the initials of these three words, *ρηνιατος, μαρτυρας, διωκομενοι*; i. e. *the persecuted witnesses of the word*; which is the very opposite of the former, and agrees exactly with the description the Revelation gives of the followers of the Lamb that was slain, in opposition to the worshippers of the beast. It has been observed, that the number of the Lamb's company, 144, is mentioned for the sake of 12, its square root, to give us a description of the true church, as wholly built on the doctrine of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, even as the church of the Old Testament sprang from the twelve patriarchs. And this number twelve is set down in these two letters, ι β. which may stand for *ιερατευμα βασιλειον, the royal priesthood*. And if the number 25 be the root of the beast's number, as Potter would have it, then that might be expressed by *κ. ε. κυριότης εθνων, the lordship of the nations*; of which the Lord speaks to his disciples in this manner, *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them; but it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

O. I suppose the Greeks and Romans used to express their mottos by the initial letters; and so I must own your account of the number of the beast's name is more plain and simple than any I have yet heard; and the opposite mottos of the two companies are exactly agreeable to the doctrine of that sect about suffering, and to the New Testament. But I am not

satisfied

satisfied with their building so much upon emblems and dark sayings, especially when most part of them are incapable to judge of them, as being unskilled in the original language.

X. There is no doctrine drawn from these figures, or dark sayings, but what is all clearly and plainly taught in the New Testament, to the meanest capacities; which, by the way, are more capable to receive instruction by figures and emblems, than by metaphysics, or mathematical reasoning. But they do not build on any thing whereof they are incapable to judge. They observe a most terrible proclamation of wrath and vengeance against all them *who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.* And when they inquire how they shall be free from this most dangerous thing that is expressed in these dark words, they find the opposite of it immediately set before them in the next words, that are very plain, *viz. Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.* Whereby they easily understand, that, if they have the patience of the saints, in opposition to persecuting, or yielding the truth for fear of suffering, and if they keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus, as set forth in the scriptures, in opposition to all the commandments and doctrines of men, and that with patience in suffering, then they are free from worshipping the beast and his image, and are not receiving the mark of his name.

O. So much for *the beast.* Let me next hear what your people have to say of *the whore.*

X. As the true church is set forth by the emblem of a woman, so is the false represented by a woman, a whore; that is, a society that pretends to be the spouse of Jesus Christ, and the mother of the children of God, and, under this pretext, *commits fornication with the kings of the earth.*

O. And how does she that?

X. They



X. They hold this as a strong presumption of it, That, not content with the protection and provision that Jesus Christ bestows on his church, she betakes herself to the kings of the earth, and is defended and provided for by them, and shews herself openly abroad in the ornaments they have bestowed on her.

And they look on this as a plain proof of it, That she boasts herself the mother of multitudes of children that appear manifestly never to have been begotten by the power of Jesus Christ, or by the incorruptible seed of the word that was preached by his apostles, but by the power of the kings of the earth. In opposition to this, they hold none for church-members, but such as appear to be *begotten by the word of truth*, and who are *keeping the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*. And, as a true visible church must be a *church of the saints*, they cannot look on that as a true church, that is made up of members who never appeared to believe on Christ, through the word of his apostles, who appear not to have the testimony of Jesus, nor to be keeping the commandments of God. And they maintain, that the people of God are called to *come out of such churches, and to turn away from them*, lest they partake of their *sins* and their *plagues*.

Further, they say this is one of the plain characters of the whore, That she persecutes the remnant of the woman's seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ, and that by the power of the kings that commit fornication with her. And so she appears *drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*.

O. But where shall the Christian church be found, that will take with this last thing that they make the character of the whore? Churches may own these facts, That they are defended and provided for by the kings of the earth, and that, as they stand defended by these kings, they have many children, or  
members,

members, that have not been begotten by the gospel, and cannot properly be called saints, and that had not been in the church without the favour and countenance of those secular powers, though they will stoutly deny the inference your people make from these facts (which yet wants not a fair appearance). But where is the church that will take with this fact, That she persecutes them who have the testimony of Jesus, and keep God's commands; or that she takes pleasure in shedding the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus? Even the Roman church herself only shews her zeal for Christ, in prosecuting them who deny and blaspheme the testimony, and disobey God's commands, *viz.* heretics and schismatics; and so far is she from delighting in blood, that the very inquisitors beg the secular powers to shew mercy to those wretched heretics and blasphemers whom they delivered over to them.

Now, if this character do not apply to the church of Rome, she cannot, on any account, be esteemed that whore in the Revelation, that is drunk with the blood of Christian saints and martyrs, far less can any other church.

X. If we take the account the Jews will give us of the death of Christ, they were far from persecuting the Messiah, or putting him to death; but, in their great zeal for the honour of the Deity, they were taking care to have a deceiver, a false prophet, taken out of the way, according to the law of Moses, as a blasphemer, who, by his doctrine, made himself God, to the great reproach of the Deity. And so far were they from approving of persecution, that they highly honoured the prophets, and righteous men who suffered in the days of their fathers, and declared that they would have had no part with their fathers in that matter. Yet they themselves were acted by the same spirit that persecuted the prophets in their fathers; and on this very account Jesus Christ says to them, *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape*

*escape the damnation of hell?* And when Jesus Christ was cleared by his resurrection, testified to all nations, and the Jews had also persecuted the witnesses of his resurrection in their zeal of God, and of his law given by Moses, then the vengeance of God came upon their nation, for all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel.

Neither will all the pretence that the false church makes of her zeal for the honour of Christ and his kingdom, vindicate her from the charge of the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, even though she do greater honour to the martyrs of former ages than did the Jews, while she prosecutes her heretics and schismatics, her false prophets, or teachers, and blasphemers, upon the same principles, in the same method, and with the same spirit and temper wherewith the martyrs of former ages were persecuted. Even that poor pretext, of praying the secular arm to pity and spare them that are delivered over to it, serves to condemn her, as it shews she is not wholly ignorant that the church of Christ ought to be of another *manner of spirit* than to *destroy mens lives*; while at the same time she has the people of the nations and the kings of the earth persuaded, that they *do God good service* in destroying them: for she has made them *drunk with the wine of her fornication*. And when the time of the resurrection of the just, and the day of vengeance shall come, then *in her* will be *found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth*. And all that partake with that pretended mother-church, (the true mother of harlots) in pursuing the principles of national uniformity and extirpation, partake with her in her sin, and must share in her plagues.

But certainly this character of the whore cannot apply to any church *that stoppeth her ears from hearing of blood*, or that concurs not, directly or indirectly, with the destroying of mens lives for Christ's sake, either

either by means of the magiſtrate, or by the hands of the mob.

O. The next queſtion is about Antichriſt, which, I would think, muſt denote oppoſition to Chriſt.

X. But that oppoſition muſt be under a ſhew of regard to him; for John, who ſpeaks of Antichriſt in his epiſtles, bids Chriſtians try the ſpirits, leſt they ſhould be impoſed on by the fair ſhews of falſe prophets, and take up with the ſpirit of Antichriſt, inſtead of the Spirit of Chriſt; and this exhortation had been perfectly needleſs, if the ſpirit of Antichriſt did no way pretend to be the true Spirit of Chriſt, but appear in open and undiſſembled oppoſition to it, as did the Jewish rabbies, and the Heathen philoſophers. Paul tells us, the man of ſin fits in the temple of God, and manages his oppoſition there; ſo that we may ſay, That “Antichriſt oppoſes himſelf to Chriſt in the name of Chriſt.”

O. At this rate, you would even comprehend our people under the designation of Antichriſt, as they make a ſort of pretence to Chriſtianity, and yield a decent obſervance to the rites of the Chriſtian religion prevailing in their country.

X. So I might, if the pretext were not too thin to deceive any body that is ſerious about the goſpel; but though they had all the grimace of the Quakers, who do not differ from them at bottom, they could not be called that Antichriſt. They rather ſeem to be pointed at in theſe words of Peter, *There ſhall come in the laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming?* And I would take them to be thoſe who ſpeak evil of the way of truth, by reaſon of the Antichriſtian falſe teachers, and of the multitudes following their pernicious ways.

O. And how then does Antichriſt *oppoſe himſelf to Chriſt in the name of Chriſt?*

X. John deſcribes the oppoſition of the grand Antichriſt by that of his little forerunners among the firſt Chriſtians. For, as Paul tells us, That the *my-*

*stery of iniquity*, which was at last to come to a great head, was *already working* among Christians; so John says, *As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists*; and again, *This is that spirit of Antichrist whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world*. He informs us, That these many Antichrists that were in his time, departed from the communion of saints, as it stood among the first Christians, who, under the direction of the apostles, walked together in brotherly love, in separation from the world, or in opposition to the love of the world, and of the things of the world, knowing the truth as it is in Jesus, through his Spirit, whereof they were partakers, and professing the hope of the promise of eternal life; so that there must be a departure from these things in the case of that great Antichrist, whereby his opposition to Christ may be manifest, notwithstanding all his pretences to an interest in him. Paul calls the same matter *an apostasy*, and says, *Men shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits*. Now, as the first perverters of the gospel departed from the faith, under a pretence to it, whereby they were fit to deceive and seduce Christians into a real opposition to the faith of Christ, so does that Antichrist depart from the faith of Jesus Christ, *as come in the flesh*, in turning back to that old fleshly and worldly state of the church that he came in the flesh to do away, and that he abolished in his death; and thus he is a liar, when he pretends to own that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. He departs from the faith of Jesus *as the Christ*, or the anointed prophet, priest, and king of the church, which partakes with him in *that anointing*, and so *knows the truth*, and is a *royal priesthood*; for he sets up his own testimony, and puts it upon the church, for the testimony of that Great Prophet, Jesus Christ. He establishes another priesthood in the church, and other intercessors with God, and exalts human merit, to the making of the merit and inter-

cession

cession of Jesus Christ of none effect; and he imposes his own authority upon the church, for the authority of the Lord Jesus, and exercises a lordly dominion over God's heritage. Thus he sits in the temple of God, exalting himself, and opposing himself to Christ in the name of Christ; and so he is a liar, when he pretends to own that Jesus is the Christ. Further, he departs from the faith and hope of the *promise of eternal life*, through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and cleaves to *the things that are in the world*, in opposition to the Father and the Son, as manifested in that promise of eternal life; he seduces men from the belief of this great truth, *That if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*; he departs from the new commandment of brotherly love, and from that order wherein the children of God walked together in that love from the beginning, in separation from the world; and in place of that *loves the world*, and is a *friend of the world*. And thus he is a liar, when he says he knows the Father and Jesus Christ, who was *declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*; for he denies the Father, *who hath begotten us to the lively hope of the heavenly inheritance, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*; and he denies the Son, *who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father*.

In a word, the spirit of Antichrist; that would pass for the Spirit of Christ, is known to be against Christ by these signs. 1. It confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. 2. It speaketh of the world, and is hearkened to by worldly men. 3. It draws men away from hearing the apostles of Christ, who preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and it seduces them to give more ear to the doctrines and commandments of men, than to the words of the Holy Ghost preached by the apostles, specially concerning the love of God, as

manifested in Christ, and our love to one another according to that.

O. All this is still very agreeable to the doctrine of that sect, and it looks very like the New Testament; but I should think it hard to prove against any Christian church, that they hear not the apostles of Christ. I know you will readily tell me what you have said before concerning the interpretation of scripture; but it will not be easy to convince them, who think they hold the true interpretation of the apostles against all errors and false glosses, or who hold their religion as received from the apostles, either by writing, or by unwritten tradition, that they are not hearing the apostles,

X. No less hard than it was to convince the Jews that they were not hearing Moses and the prophets; yet the thing is very clear in many instances. I shall condescend on a few. The council of Constance confessed, that communion in both kinds was both commanded by Christ, and practised by the primitive church, and yet forbade it. After this the council of Basil made a decree touching communion in both kinds, by which they declared, that believers who communicated are not obliged, by divine right, to communicate in both kinds, and that it is the business of the church to determine in what manner the communion ought to be administered. Is not this a strange way of hearing the apostles? as if these apostles had left the church possessed of a divine right to contradict the plainest things they have written! And may not this same instance serve to fix the character of *changing the times and laws*?

O. This is barefaced enough, I own; but have you no more instances?

X. It is as plain in the words of the apostles, that the disciples should assemble on the first day of the week to break bread, as it is that they should assemble for worship on that day; yet churches called Christian, who hold themselves indispensably obliged to  
assemble

assemble for worship on the first day of the week, find no such obligation on them to assemble then to break bread.

O. That is to say, they are not hearing the apostles, even in their assembling to worship on that day, but are obliged to it by some other authority.

X. I might observe to you further, that the church of Rome, and Protestant churches too, hold the eating of strangled and blood as *indifferent*, and as lawful as the eating of any of the meats forbidden in the law of Moses; though the apostles (in the same decrees that freed the Gentiles from the yoke of that law) expressly forbade it, as *necessary* to be abstained from, together with the eating of things sacrificed to idols, (a thing that Christ hates) and with fornication; and yet they have established a distinction of meats on their seasons and days of fasting, requiring *abstinence from meats that God hath created to be received with thanksgiving*.

The apostles gave commandment about church-officers, bishops, or elders, and deacons, and, in describing their character, expressly allow them to be *the husband of one wife*; but the church of Rome as expressly forbids them to marry at all.

O. You cannot say this of protestant churches, who allow them to marry as often as they please, providing they have but one at once.

X. But I have not sufficient ground to think they are hearing the apostles in that either; for, when I consider what is said of the ministering widow, that she is not to be *taken into the number, under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man*, and that in opposition to the younger widows, who are allowed to marry again rather than do worse; yea, in opposition to such as have been oftener than once married, after they professed the faith, before threescore years of age; I think I have reason to believe, that the apostles forbade church-officers to be married oftener than once: not that they forbade them to marry in  
 case



case of need, to prevent worse, but that they would have them refused as church-officers when so married.

O. If I be not misinformed, these instances will not touch the Greek church; for it is said, they neither eat blood, nor allow their priests to marry twice, though they permit them to marry once.

X. Yet this is far from being enough to clear that church, or the several sects of eastern Christians, of the charge of not hearing the apostles: yea, every church is liable to this charge, that is not holding the gospel just as the first churches received it from the apostles, nor walking in that same order to which the apostolic exhortations (especially concerning brotherly love, and the communion of the saints and faithful in the worship of God) are all adapted; so that they cannot be observed, as given by the apostles, but in that order to which they are suited.

It would require a great excess of charity to esteem them as hearers of the apostles, who contend earnestly for a church-order, and for modes and forms of church government and worship that are not to be seen in the apostles writings; and, at the same time that they are adhering obstinately to such usages, if they be put in mind of the neglect of some of the clearest plainest things that the apostles have written, will readily answer, that these things were written only for that time, and not for the time we live in; which is in plain terms to say, that the words of the apostles are to be regarded just as an old almanack.

Some traces of the apostolic institutions must be found in every church that is called Christian; and supposing these to be held by each church as its fundamentals, (for parties differ as much about this as any thing whatsoever) it is now become fashionable for men to excuse themselves, in their compliance with the deviations of the church where their interest lies, from the primitive order that appears in the apostolic writings, by this, *that they hold the fundamentals, and so are good catholic Christians*; and here-  
upon

upon they are ready to glory over those who would be tenacious of the words of the apostles, without adding or diminishing, as narrow souls and bigots, opposite to catholic Christianity; yet the writings of the apostles are the catholic rule of Christianity; and if so, every deviation from that must be out of the catholic way. But if we are not to hear the apostles further than what we judge fundamental and catholic, how come we to hear any church or religious party in any thing but what is catholic? Why do we go along with them in the practice of those peculiar things, whereby they stand not only distinguished, but opposed to one another? To be one with all them of every sect who believe on Christ, through the word of his apostles, as far as they appear so to believe, is a glorious thing, and is the necessary effect of one's being a believer himself; and the most effectual way of evidencing this, is to hearken to every word of the apostles. But these men must be self-condemned, who defend themselves in their attachment to a church-order not agreeable to that of the apostles, or in their compliance with the uninstituted peculiarities of any church, by this poor pretence, that it is enough if they hear the apostles in things that are fundamental and catholic. If they see not that the apostles have laid down any rule for the order wherein Christians are to walk, in the profession of the faith, and love and hope that is in Christ, why do they observe any? or, if the apostles have given such a rule, but they are not yet satisfied what it is, why do they proceed till they be cleared? Or, how come they to comply with any addition to the words of God, or diminution from them?

The apostolic or inspired writers were of God; he that knoweth God; heareth them; he that is not of God, heareth not them; hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error, the Spirit of Christ, and the spirit of Antichrist.

O. You

**O.** You carry this point of hearing the apostles very far. We have dwelt so long on this, that I see we cannot now overtake the rest of our subject. As it is not agreeable to our friend, who has therefore shunned us for this time; he will certainly be persuaded my head is turned, when he finds me still intent upon the unriddling of dark prophecies.

**X.** You must therefore study to make him easy, by beginning with something else that will be more agreeable to him; mean time, I, who am exceeding fond to gratify your curiosity in this matter, shall consider the rest of the subject.

## D I A L O G U E • V.

**O.** I Have been thinking on what you said of *hearing the apostles*; and I am afraid, you have drawn that cord straiter than did the apostles themselves, at least as to every case: For even Paul, the most noted writer among them, tells plainly, That he says some things, from his own judgment, which he had not from his Master, and speaks but doubtingly of his having the Spirit in some cases.

**X.** The Lord told his apostles, when he was about to leave them, that he had yet many things to say to them, which they could not then bear; but promised to send them the Spirit of truth to guide them, as it were step by step, into the whole truth.

The Corinthians had proposed questions to Paul touching marriage; and, in answer to their questions, he tells them what the Lord had commanded on the subject in the days of his flesh, to which he adds some things for the clearing of their difficulties, which the Lord himself had not spoken while he was on the earth, and which he speaks as *as one that had obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful* in the execution of the apostolic office that he had committed to him. And he is not doubting, but asserting that his judgment

ment was the judgment of the Spirit of God, when he says concerning the Virgin, *She is happier if she so abide, after my judgment, and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.* He would have the Corinthians to think, that what he was now saying further than the Lord had said on this subject while he was with his disciples, was the mind of the Spirit of God, which he had promised and given to his apostles; to reveal the whole of the truth that *began to be spoken by himself.*

But seeing there is a doctrine and laws made in the Antichristian nations, touching *wilful desertion*, founded on this same passage, they are certainly inexcusable, in not hearing the apostles as to every other thing they say.

O. Yet Paul forbids the Thessalonians to trouble themselves, by hearkening to what he had said in his first epistle, concerning the nearness of the day of judgment: for it is manifest he was mistaken in his judgment, which he had plainly enough declared, that the coming of the Lord would be in his lifetime.

X. This is that passage to which Peter especially refers, when warning Christians against *the scoffers* that should *come in the last days, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?* For he signifies, that Paul, speaking on the subject of Christ's coming, in his epistles, says some things *hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, or untaught of God, and unconfirmed in the true knowledge of the scriptures, wrest, as also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.* Thus Peter sets Paul's epistles on the same footing to us with the rest of the scriptures that were given by inspiration, and foretells the use that was making, and would be made of what Paul had said, *according to the wisdom given unto him, concerning the promise of the Lord's coming, and day of judgment, which he says would be wrested, even as the other scriptures, by the unlearned and*

unstable. And so, when I see this, or any other difficult passage of scripture wrested, or turned against the scope of the scripture, and improved against the authority of the scripture, and the truth of the promise, of Christ's coming, I am so far from being shaken with this, that I am rather confirmed by it, as I find the scripture therein verified. As Peter holds it of equal authority with the rest of the scripture, though hard to be understood; so Paul himself does not retract any thing he had writ in his first epistle to the Thessalonians, concerning the coming of the Lord, nor signify any change of his mind, as to what he said on that matter; but he guards the Thessalonians against the abuse of it, and corrects their mistake, by telling them what they had heard from his mouth while he was with them, concerning the man of sin, who behoved to be revealed in his time, and then consumed by the Spirit of the Lord's mouth, before the Lord's coming, by the brightness of which he was to be destroyed.

A. You would have Peter to be in better terms with Paul than James is. For, after all that has been said to reconcile them on the grand article of justification, they still differ, just as a Legalist and an Antinomian: yea, these two authors have laid the foundation of an everlasting division among Christians. Luther, that bold fellow, once rejected the epistle of James, in his great zeal for Paul's side of the question, till plain necessity, in disputing with more rigid Antinomians than himself, obliged him to take it up again, reconciling it the best way he could to his beloved Paul's doctrine. On the other hand, James's followers, when they have done their utmost in torturing Paul's writings touching predestination and justification, into an agreement with James, fly to this, as their last refuge, that Peter says, *There are some things in Paul's epistles hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest to their*

*non destruction.* But you give this another turn. I dare say you are a Paulite.

X. And no less a Jacobite. For I reckon it the great fault of the Legalists and Antinomians both, that they do not give an equal ear to Paul and James, and hear them both, as they stand in a beautiful agreement together.

A. And pray how would you reconcile them on the article of justification?

X. I think they need no reconciliation. For, if justice be done to their words, according to plain scripture-style, they were never at any such variance, as is among Christians, about justification.

To justify, in the scripture-style, is either to make one just who was before unjust, as to *justify the ungodly*; or to declare one just who is so already, and manifest him to be just, as when God is said to *be justified*.

Paul shews us, that we sinners are *made just* by faith, as it respects the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was delivered for the offences, and raised again for the justification of a multitude of all nations, without difference; and that we are thus *made just*, freely by the grace of God, that gave Christ to be the propitiation for the manifestation of the divine justice in intitling us to the acceptance, and to eternal life, who were ungodly; and this, without any respect to any work done by us, to make us just. And so he affirms, *That a man is justified by faith, without the deeds or works of the law*; and says, *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*

Now, whereas some inferred from this doctrine, as the Antinomians do still, that we are declared just, and assured of our justification, by faith, respecting its object, without the good works that are the proper fruits of that faith, James shews us, that we are *declared just* by faith, as it produces good works,

without which it can never *declare us just*, being alone.

Paul never said that our believing *declared us just*, without good works, which he always places as the necessary fruits and evidences of our being *made just* by the faith of Christ.

And James never said, that the good works which are the fruits of true faith, or that faith working in us to produce these works, *makes us sinners to be just* in the sight of God: For his words behoved to be tortured ere they could be applied to any thing else but the *declaration of our being just*. He plainly speaks of this, when he says, *What profit, my brethren, tho' a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Faith, if it hath not works, is dead being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.* And he can be understood to mean nothing else by *justification*, but the *declaration of our being righteous*, when he says, *Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: And he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.* We see, by the plain scripture-testimony, that Abraham was made just by faith, long before Isaac was born; when it was said, *He believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.* And we see, that, after he was just by faith, his faith wrought with his works, when he obeyed God, in offering his son Isaac upon the altar, whereby his faith appeared to be true and unfeigned; and when he had done that, his faith received a notable confirmation, by the oath of God, and he was solemnly *declared to be just*, by the works wherewith his faith had wrought; as it was said un-

to him, *By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, For because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee.* Thus his title to blessedness was made most sure to him, and his right to it fully declared by the works wherewith his faith wrought; and thus the scripture was verified, and manifested to be true, which had said, before his faith wrought that work, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.* And thus we see, from the instance of Abraham, *how that a man, who is made just by faith without works, is, by works, declared to be just, and not by faith only;* which is the sum of the doctrine of Paul and of James concerning justification.

Paul, the supposed author of the epistle to the Hebrews, (where he carries the point of acceptance with God, through the sacrifice of Christ alone, as high as he does any where) sets this same case of the confirmation of Abraham's faith, by the divine oath, before the Hebrews, as an argument to enforce his exhortation to them, to shew diligence in the work of faith, and labour of love shewed toward the Lord's name, in ministering to the faints, *to the full assurance of hope,* unto the end. And therefore, though there were men from the beginning that wrested the doctrine of Paul and of James, to make division among Christians, yet they are really as much at one in their writings, as they were in conversation when James gave Paul the right hand of fellowship, upon hearing that gospel which he preached among the Gentiles, and when Paul was as forward as he on the pressing of good works. And thus it may be manifest to any impartial reader of Paul and James, that James was not a Legalist, nor Paul an Antinomian.

O. Well done, by the help of a plain distinction, manifestly founded in the scripture-style! And this is not wrong Christian theory. But do your people pursue this to practice? Do they give an equal ear to Paul and to James?



X. I can say they do it, so far as to be reckoned Antinomians by the Legalists, and esteemed Legalists by the Antinomians.

O. Then, I dare say, they are hearing the apostles: and so let me part fair with this that has kept us so long, *The Antichristian world hears not the apostles. The man of sin comes now to be considered, with his consumption.*

A. I thought you had got enough of these mysteries at your last meeting.

O. We only left this: and if you will have a little patience, you may see us soon at an end with it.

A. I confess I admire your patience. You have got into a temper I never saw you in before.

O. You knew me always curious, and inquisitive, as well as simple and free. And there is something gratifying to curiosity, even in this subject.

A. What is your opinion then of the famous science of astrology? Or, did you ever study the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer?

O. These things cannot be ridiculed, nor can the justness of the ridicule be perceived, without some notion of the nature of them. But I have thought more of the knowledge of future events, by that which is called the second sight, that seems to be a thing pretty well attested. Such knowledge of future events affords an obvious argument for a providence. And I do not know but the certain knowledge of such events may be communicated in the hieroglyphical way, if we be furnished with the key, as well as the knowledge of present or past things. Bear with me then a little, till I see if the scripture gives any key to the understanding of its hieroglyphics.

Mean time, I shall confess to you one thing, that I begin to be weary of the metaphysical or mathematical way of knowing moral subjects. And indeed I am not sure but I, who have all my ideas by sensation and reflection, may have juster, and much more practical notions of divine and moral subjects, conveyed

to me in the emblematical way, than by all abstract reasoning.

A. You will allow me then to congratulate you upon your commencing mythologist, and to wish you success in the study of the prophetic figures.

O. You should rather compliment me upon my being happily delivered from a way wherein I have not found myself made wiser by the knowledge of any one thing, nor bettered, but tossed to and fro as an airy bubble, ready to burst with the pride of knowledge.

X. As there is an argument for the truth of Christianity that is drawn from the prophecies, I do not see how a man can well pretend to answer it, without making any inquiry into these.

O. Let me then, without more to do, inquire concerning the *man of sin*. Must he be a single man, as some would have it, or a succession of single men, like the Pope of Rome?

X. However great the Pope's part is in that *falling away*, which is perfected in the *man of sin*, as being at the head of that same church that has certainly led the van in that apostasy yet, when we consider the *man of sin*, as opposed to the true church, that is often represented in the New Testament by the figure of a *man*, we must take it to signify a body of men, an apostate church, opposed to the true church by the epithet of *sin*.

Thus, the *mystery of iniquity* is opposed to the *mystery of godliness*. For, as in the true church, whereof Christ is the head, the mystery, or hidden sense of the figures and types of the Old Testament, is laid open; so is the false church, the mystery of many Old-Testament figures, as the apostate ten tribes, Sodom and Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Antiochus Epiphanes, and the like.

O. But is the notion of a man, as representing the church, taken from the Old Testament? Or, was  
the

the church of which Christ is head, pointed at by this figure, any where in the old prophecies?

X. The most notable hieroglyphic of the Old Testament, was the *cherubim*, which appeared to Adam after he was cast out of Paradise, was drawn on the curtains of the tabernacle, and on the walls of the temple round about, and set on each side of the propitiation, or mercy-seat, in the most holy place; and about the time of the destruction of the first temple, represented to Ezekiel in a vision, and preserved to us in the book of his prophecy, where this hieroglyphic is very particularly described. Now, the first thing that offers in the description of the *cherubim*, is this, *And this was their appearance*, says the prophet, *they had the likeness of a man. And this likeness of a man had the face of a man*, and some other hieroglyphical figures joined to it.

The New Testament refers to this, when it speaks of the church as a man, and the body of a man: for, though the *cherubim* have been taken for angels, the book of the Revelation, referring to Ezekiel's *cherubim*, and Isaiah's *seraphim*, expressly distinguishes them from the angels, and makes the *cherub* say these words to the Lamb, *Thou hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

O. Have you seen Hutchinson's books, particularly that which bears the title of *Glory and Gravity*?

X. Yes, and have been delighted with his explication of the faces of the ox, the lion, and the eagle, which he makes the hieroglyphics of fire, light, and air, or wind, which appeared also with the *cherubim*, as the emblems of the divine Three. The face of a man, joined to the face of a lion on the *cherub*, might be put for the man Christ Jesus, as head of his body the church. But it seems to me very improper to make the *cherub* itself, as it had *the appearance of a man*, to be the hieroglyphic of a man: nor does it answer to the key that I have said the book of the Revelation

Revelation gives us for opening it, even in that same passage which confirms Mr Hutchinson's notion of the faces to me, by applying the figure of the lion to the Son of God.

Daniel also saw the *appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*, with *the wheels*, in that vision which we have in the 7th chapter of his book, where he that sits on the throne is called *the Ancient of days*, and *the hair of his head* is said to be *like the pure wool*; which is applied, in the first chapter of the Revelation, unto Christ, who seems to be represented in Daniel, as he will appear at the judgment and destruction of the beast with ten horns, *in the glory of the Father, with the holy angels*. Before this *Ancient of days*, the *likeness of the Son of man* is brought by the ministering angels, and there is *given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom*. And in the explication of the vision, this likeness of the Son of man, whom they brought near before the Ancient of days, and to whom dominion was given, is expressly declared to be *the people of the saints of the most high ones*.

The church therefore, as it stands united with the divine Three, in Christ Jesus its head, is the thing pointed at in the *cherubim*, rather than the human nature of the Son of God: for the church, whereof he is head, being *made one new man in himself*, is *one body*, all animated by his Spirit, according to his prayer to the Father, *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one*.

The whole church, with which the Son of God took part in flesh and blood to sanctify them, and deliver them from death, by destroying him that had the power of it, is the *seed of the woman*, opposed to the *seed of the serpent*, in the first revelation made to Adam: and after he heard of this, he had this seed of the woman very fitly represented to him in the *cherubim*, as *contending*; for *cherub* is from  $\kappa\epsilon\rho\upsilon\beta$ , *like unto*, and  $\alpha\gamma\omega$ , *to contend*.

And thus far I have presumed to correct the ingenious Mr Hutchinson, leaving you to judge.

O. I now want to know if there be any such representation of the *man of sin* in the Old Testament.

X. There is a manifest reference in the book of the Revelation to the merchandise of Tyre, as it is described in Ezekiel: and now hear what Ezekiel says of the king of Tyre, *Thou sealest up the full sum of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone thy covering.—Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people, shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.*

O. As the king of Tyre was never placed at Eden, nor set a cherub in the mountain of God, nor perfect in his first rise, there must be something else pointed at through him, to which these things may be more fitly applied. And if the cherub be the church, this is certainly the figure of a corrupted church, that has fallen away from its original constitution, and primitive purity, and is corrupted by pride and traffic with the kings of the earth, like that of Tyre.

And

And this leads me to think again of *church-authority supported with secular power*. Ezekiel seems to speak of the *consuming* and *destroying* of this corrupted cherub, this *man of iniquity*.

X. Paul's words, when he says, The Lord shall *consume* the man of sin, and *destroy* him, are taken from the 7th chapter of Daniel, where it is said concerning the *beast* with ten horns, *The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end*.

And now hear how he is consumed.

His constitution was sound, till the Lord, in his wonderful providence, brought the scriptures again to light in the languages of the nations where church-authority was supported with secular power, and that in spite of all the endeavours of the Roman church to the contrary. The Lord's word is the *Spirit of his mouth*. From the time when this began to blow upon the man of sin, he began to languish; and the first degree of his consumption was, when some of the powers of Europe, minding their own interests, stood up in defence of the publication of the scriptures against the church of Rome, and when these kings, who had given their power and strength to the beast to make uniformity, began to break that uniformity. Thus the man of sin first felt pain, and his health began to fail.

O. For it seems his health lay in the concurring power and strength of those kings; and this could not but be a very great affliction to them that *had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image*. But what next?

X. In consequence of this, strife and discord took place throughout the Antichristian body, to the great disturbance of its communion. There came to be three stated communions in the Lord's supper, the old Popish, the Lutheran, and the Zuinglian or Calvinist; and these so stated, that all attempts to reconcile any one of them with another, or to live in communion with them all, have been, and probably will be to the end, to no purpose.

O. This was indeed a great schism in the body, a very stoppage of the circulation, a deadly blow to the Catholic communion; but still, in all these different communions, church-authority stands supported with secular power.

X. So it will be, in some degree, till the very end, though, in due time, that part will be affected also before the end. Mean time, in the next place, particular nations and kingdoms were divided within themselves, as to their proper form of worship and church-government, as well as of doctrine. This has been the cause of civil wars and much bloodshed, as a just judgment from God, on the Antichristian nations, for their persecutions; and of this Britain has had its large share, where the spirit of contention, about what should be the prevailing form of national religion, remains to this day. In Scotland, there are no less than three great pretenders to it, beside the church as it is presently established, the Papists, the Episcopaliens, and the Cameronians, or Covenanters, and these are also subdivided.

O. Here is a *fire brought forth from the midst of him to devour him*. And what has been the consequence of this? For one would think, this breaking of the clergy into so many factions, should weaken their authority and influence on the minds of men.

X. While the heat of this contention lasted, and the disputes were warm, church-policy and church-authority grew to such a height among the contending parties, as was not easy to bear. When dominion circulated from hand to hand, it became more intense, and exerted itself with the greater vehemence that it was opposed by those who were hoping to reign in their turn. The leaders of each religious party thought of nothing but power, and the people devoted to their proper leaders, paid a religious obedience to them, and breathed out threatenings and slaughter against all that would not feign subjection to their authority? The authority of the clergy in general, was supposed as a thing unquestionable by any but Atheists: the question was only, in

in whose hands it should be lodged? This was remarkable in the last age; but it served, in the issue, to make men weary of church-authority, and let them see how little true religion there is in subjection to it; and the consequence of this is the heaviest stroke that has yet fallen on the kingdom of Antichrist.

O. And what is that?

X. The world seems now to be taking a more remarkable turn toward infidelity, than ever it did since the beginning of Antichrist's reign, and persecuting principles are wearing out of fashion; and, at the same time, the nature of Christ's kingdom, as it is not of this world, is brought to light by the scriptures, in opposition to the Jewish sense of the prophecies, and to church-authority supported with secular power. These things serve to sap the foundation of the dominion of the clergy; and for this reason they are very much afflicted with them, and every where raging, for that they cannot now exert the power that some time a-day they exercised in the world. And upon this I would say, That God, in his righteous judgment, is *filling their kingdom with darkness, and they gnaw their tongues for pain, and repent not of their deeds*; and, in their zeal for a worldly kingdom to Christ, *i. e.* to themselves, they *reproach* the kingdom that is not of this world, the kingdom of *heaven*, and therefore the *God* of that kingdom. This is the more remarkable, that it has happened at the time which the scripture-prophecies point at, as fatal to the kingdom of the beast with the ten horns.

A. You have been amusing yourselves with spying figures in the clouds; and now, I suppose, you are to set about the work of fixing and settling the prophetic times.

O. Nor will that be an ill amusement when we have leisure for it; at least, our time may be as well spent on this, as on building castles in the air, with the philosophers, who raise fine structures on their  
unproved



unproved suppositions ; and I dare say, we may come to a point about the times, before they settle a just notion of *gravity*, or fix the *longitude*. Mean time, I shall think on what has been said.

X. And I shall think on the times.

## D I A L O G U E VI.

O. I Have been thinking on the affliction of the clergy, through the darkness that fills their kingdom by the increase of knowledge ; and I am persuaded, they would be much more afflicted, if nobody professed Christianity but they who believe the scripture-testimony, and follow their teachers not a step further, than they follow the scriptures. But you say, this is not to be looked for in this world ; and as you signified, that the present distress is the more remarkable, that it has happened at the time which the prophets have set for evil to the kingdom of the beast, I am fond to understand how you make this appear.

X. The end of Daniel's *time, times, and an half*, must bring evil upon the kingdom of the beast, of whom it is said, *He shall wear out the saints of the most high ones, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand, until a time and times, and the dividing of time : but the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end.*

The Revelation makes this time, times, and an half ; (the time of the reign of the beast with ten horns) to be 42 months, that is, three years and an half. And again, it makes this 42 months to be 1260 days ; that is, by reckoning 30 days in each month, and 360 days precisely in each year.

If these forty-two months be reckoned as Daniel's weeks are, each day for a year, after the manner of the prophets, then the time, times, and an half, or  
forty-

forty-two months, are 1260 years. This is the time of the beast's reign; and when this time is run, Providence must be at work *to take away his dominion, to consume it.*

A. But I suppose, there may be as great difficulties about fixing the beginning of these forty-two months, as about the seventy weeks.

X. Ignorance and inattention, or prejudice, may move difficulties and disputes on subjects that are capable of demonstration; and when men indulge their own fancy on such a subject as this, there must be different opinions about it: but the book of the Revelation has not left us at an uncertainty about the beginning of the reign of the beast with ten horns: for it represents the Roman state, with its capital city set on seven mountains, having seven different forms of supreme power and government, five of which were fallen when John wrote, (*viz.* kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes of the soldiers, and dictators) one was at the time of his writing, (*viz.* the Heathen emperors) the other was not yet come (*i. e.* the Christian emperors) and when he comes, he must continue a short space, (*i. e.* in comparison with the foregoing sixth head; for he came not up till the fourth century, and fell at furthest in the year 476, when Augustulus was deposed by Odoacer) and the beast with ten horns succeeds, in whom the Roman empire, that was and now is not, being wounded to death in its seventh head, and dispersed into ten kingdoms, yet remains united as in an eighth head. Of this the book of the Revelation speaks expressly thus: *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast.—And power was given unto him to continue forty-two months. And again, The ten horns which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power, as kings, one hour with the beast.* This most plainly fixes the beginning of the reign of the beast with

with ten horns, who makes war forty-two months, at that same very time when ten kings received power in the broken empire. And this was so clear and evident long before the event happened, that Tertullian, who wrote about the end of the second century, or the very beginning of the third, tells us expressly, from the prophecies of the New Testament, "That the dispersion of the Roman state into ten kings should bring on Antichrist." Now, supposing there were any doubt if Daniel's fourth kingdom be the Roman, the Revelation points it out so exactly, and with such particular circumstances added to Daniel's description, that it is impossible to apply the description, in all its parts, to any thing else; and the figures hit with a marvellous exactness. And seeing the beginning of the reign of the beast with ten horns, whose time is forty-two months, is fixed by such a remarkable event, as the breaking of that empire into ten kingdoms, it is impossible that we can be very far mistaken in computing these forty-two months from that great event.

O. If that be the beginning of the time, times, and an half, it could not be after the deposing of Augustulus, nor very long before; and then you will say, we are now at the end of the time, times, and an half: for 1260, added to 476, make 1736. I could imagine, that the time mentioned by itself, or the first 360 years, makes a first period, from the beginning of this monstrous reign, till it came to its height and full power in the ninth century; and the times put together, or the next 720 years, make the next period, when he reigned in full power till the sixteenth century, when the Reformation happened; and the dividing of time, or the 180 years, makes a third period from thence to this time. But did not the kingdom of the clergy begin to be in the present distress before the year 1736?

X. You must notice, That 1260 years, of 365 days, and one day more each fourth year, are full  
eighteen

eighteen years longer than 1260 years of the prophetic sort, which have but 360 days precisely; and so the time, times, and an half, may have been at an end eighteen years before the year 1736; and thus it answers as well to the event.

And it is very remarkable, that the 2300 days, which are mentioned in that vision of Daniel, where the account of these days is *shut up*, because it is *for many days*, if they be numbered each day for a year, from the time when Daniel had that vision, then the end of them falls about the end of the time, times, and an half, as they have been numbered from the time of the breaking of the empire.

O. But must not the beast with ten horns be destroyed at the end of the time, times, and the dividing of time?

X. No: For Daniel places the end at which the beast is to be wholly destroyed, at some distance from the end of the time, times, and an half. He says, *From the time the daily shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, 1290 days.* This is thirty days more than the time, times, and an half. And then it is said, *Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the 1335 days.* But go thou away till the end; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. This is that end at which the beast will be destroyed, and the kingdom be given to the saints; and it is forty-five days more than the 1290 days, *i. e.* seventy-five days added to the time, times, and an half.

O. The Revelation meddles not with any of these numbers, except the time, times, and an half; but you will say, That, by unfolding that, it lays open the whole.

X. And thus you may see that the Revelation, which is commonly esteemed full as dark as Daniel, or any prophecy of the Old Testament, may well be called a revelation, as it lays open the sealed visions of Daniel.

O. But if Antichrist was come, and church-authority supported with secular power, long before the breaking of the empire, may we not suspect some mistake in the fixing of the beginning of time, times, and an half, by that event? especially seeing the Revelation seems to place the end of the forty-two months, or 1260 days, long before the filling of the beast's kingdom with darkness.

X. You have hit upon the only considerable difficulty in this whole matter; but the book of the Revelation itself sufficiently clears it; for, in that vision, where the whole opposition of Satan to the church, by the power of the empire, from first to last, is represented, with a plain reference to the old prophecy concerning the *enmity betwixt the serpent and the woman*, we are directed to a twofold reckoning of this same number. There is a twofold flight of the woman into the wilderness, there mentioned, perhaps with a reference to Elijah's flying twice, and being fed in an extraordinary manner. The first flight is placed just after the seed of the woman is brought forth, and before the fall of Heathenism in the empire, which is represented by the dragon's being *cast down from heaven unto the earth*; and there must be 1260 days numbered from the time of this first flight. This 1260 days is the same with the forty-two months of *the treading of the holy city under foot of the Gentiles*, or the 1260 days of *the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, who have power to shut heaven that it rain not in the days of their prophecy*; even as Elijah had power to shut heaven that it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months, at the time of his first flying. These 1260 days are finished under the sixth trumpet, and before the blowing of the seventh, and therefore long before the filling of the beast's kingdom with darkness, which comes not till the fifth vial under the seventh trumpet: so that these 1260 days must have been begun long before the beginning of the reign of Daniel's

niel's beast with the ten horns: and they must be reckoned from the time of the first flight of the woman into the wilderness.

The second flight of the woman into the wilderness, *where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent*, is placed after the fall of Heathenism in the empire; and it answers to the time of the healing of the beast's *deadly wound*, from which there was *power given him to continue forty-two months*. This last is the time, and times, and an half of the beast's reign, spoken of by Daniel, who mentions not the first, no more than he does the seven heads of the beast; but the Revelation adds the first reckoning of this self-same number, even as it adds the seven-heads to Daniel's description of the beast with ten horns, to open the vision, and make the application of it to the events more plain.

O. And when should that first reckoning begin?

X. Toward the end of the second century, when tradition came to be established as the rule of faith together with the scriptures; when the authority of synods and councils was brought in upon the churches, and began first to be exerted in the controversy about Easter, and when the philosophy of the Gentiles was admitted to illustrate the Christian doctrine; by means of which the Son of God, the *λογος* came to be talked of in the Platonic manner, and the power of nature, and human merit was magnified. About this time the Gentiles, coming into the Christian profession, without being sufficiently purged from the superstitions of their education, brought in with them their native superstition, under the Christian name; and from this time the professors of Christianity began to be looked on as a rising party or faction that meant to make a figure in this world. By these means Christianity was corrupted, and the professors of it grew to a considerable party in the empire, till the beginning of the fourth century, well

prepared to receive the support of the secular power from the hand of Constantine, especially when the most faithful were taken away from among them, by the severe and long persecution of Diocletian. It was toward the end of the second century that Christians began to *leave their first love*, and the Christian leaders to corrupt Christianity by merchandise, making a gain of it; dispensing it by the measure of philosophy and tradition, and the authority of synods and councils; and then was the first flight of the woman into the wilderness; then the witnesses began to prophesy in sackcloth, and the outer courts of God's house was given unto the Gentiles, who did from thence tread the holy city under foot forty-two months: so that the outer court, or outward profession of Christianity, could no more be any where measured by the word of God, the only rule for measuring his house, till the end of these months.

O. But does the Revelation point to this beginning of that forty-two months, any otherwise than by placing it after the erection of the Christian church, and before the fall of Heathenism in the empire?

X. It places the end of this forty-two months, or 1260 days, about the end of the events that belong to the sixth trumpet, and, as I said, before the blowing of the seventh trumpet; and therefore before the pouring out of the vials: For we must hold the seven vials under the seventh trumpet, even as the seven trumpets are under the seventh seal, if we would not break the thread that serves to lead us through the book of the Revelation. Now, it points to a great event at the end of the time of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, whereby we may be directed to the beginning of it: for, when they are killed by the beast, at the end of their testimony in sackcloth, and are alive again after three days and an half, it is said, *They ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them; and the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell.* If this

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fall of the tenth part of the city be the fall of the Greek church and kingdom, which, from the time of the breaking of the empire, was no more the city, but a tenth part of it, and which fell by the hand of the Turks, the great event of the sixth trumpet, in the year 1453: Then, if we count 1260 years backward from thence, the beginning of them will be near the end of the second century.

O. As this fall of the tenth part of the city is said to be at the time of the exaltation of the witnesses, after their resurrection, what event happened, not long before that, like the killing of the witnesses?

X. If these two witnesses be the Old Testament and the New, there was a famous contention with the church about their testimony, carried on by war and much bloodshed in Bohemia, from the time of the council of Constance, till it issued in the reconciliation of the contending parties, upon the extermination of the Taborites, who obstinately maintained the testimony of the witnesses against the church, and in that notable decree of the council of Basil, about communion in both kinds, whereby these witnesses were plainly sacrificed to the authority of the church, subdued under it, and their testimony rendered utterly of none effect to the people of the nations. This was in the year 1437.

O. And what shall be the event for their resurrection and exaltation?

X. The revival of the ancient scripture-profession of Christianity, in the brethren of Bohemia, who being animated by the spirit of the scriptures, wholly separated themselves from the Papists and from the Calixtines, now joined to them, and having chose ministers of the church of their own company, without regard to human learning, or any other teaching, but what the Spirit of God gave them by a translation of the scriptures, they set up congregations of their own, which, in midst of various persecutions, and manifold afflictions, were preserved in Moravia, Bohemia,



Bohemia, Poland, and other places, till the Reformation from Popery came to take place in the several Protestant nations. Thus the witnesses appeared alive again, and exalted above philosophy, tradition, and all dependence upon the authority of the church, or of synods and councils; which was no where the case, for about 1260 years before this notable event happened.

O. Were not these bold fellows, who separated from the church at that time of day, the Waldenses?

X. The Waldenses had been long before this notable separation of the brethren of Bohemia. They differed from the Waldenses; and found fault with them on two points, pretty remarkable; in a letter to them of Austria, *A. D.* 1467. 1. They were much offended with them for dissembling their principles at any time, and attending the worship of the Roman church, which they themselves condemned in their hearts; thus basely profaning and polluting themselves, and not confessing with their mouth as they believed in their heart. 2. They condemned the Waldenses for the care in heaping up gold and silver that they observed about them, though the end of it was to help them in time of persecution: for they judged it inconsistent with laying up our treasure in heaven, and with thinking that the evil of the present day is sufficient to it; and they reckoned, according to our Lord's saying, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*, that, in the end, they would principally rely on that which they had spared, and laid up for themselves on the earth. Luther says of the brethren of Bohemia, "That they were pinched by poverty, which they relieved by the labour of their hands." And indeed it was no small evidence of the power of the gospel upon them, that it reconciled them to poverty, and taught them to bear their cross patiently, without ever thinking of defending their religion by the sword, as did the Waldenses and Albigenses.

O. I dare say, this is as like the spirit that breathes in the New Testament, as any thing that could be seen among Christians, since the time when Christianity began to be corrupted. And certainly, it was no less proper for the scripture-prophecy to take notice of this, than of many other events to which interpreters have applied it. This was indeed a remarkable event relating to Christianity and the scriptures, after the corruption of that religion had come to its height, and the authority of the church had triumphed over the scriptures. And so you make this the end of the first reckoning of the 1260 days, or 42 months.

But you hold the time we now live in, as the end of the 42 months applied to the beast with ten horns, or of Daniel's time, times, and an half. And indeed I must own this is a time of darkness to the kingdom of the clergy. I am not surpris'd to find them apprehensive of the danger of their church, by that polite Christianity which comes apace in the room of the superstitious Christianity which has been so long beneficial to them. And indeed, if it go and gain ground as fast as it has been doing for some time past, even among those who are gainers by the national religion, nothing can tend more to the ruin of their kingdom; especially if it shall appear, at the same time, that true Christianity is the reverse of a national religion.

A. Thus you have fixed the prophetic times! And now, if the true profession of Christianity remain only with such a people as those who are pretending to it, in opposition to the national religion, I must say it is at a far lower pass than is the kingdom of Antichrist. It is said, that Christianity, in its first and lowest condition, was supported by signs and wonders that rais'd attention, and awed the multitude; and when these failed, it would have certainly sunk, if it had not got the support of the secular power: but, as the world is not now to be impos'd on with signs and miracles, nothing of this kind can be pretended to: And  
how

how then can any profession of the primitive Christianity stand or subsist long against national Christianity?

X. There were Epicureans as well as Sadducees in the world, when the testimony concerning Christ's resurrection came first abroad in it, attended with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and these were as witty satirical fellows, and laughed as much at every thing above their reach, as our Athiests or Deists do now. These men who have the front to resist the truth of the resurrection, considering how it is attested, would have treated it in the same manner, if it had happened in their day, as did the Sadducees at Jerusalem, and the philosophers at Athens: yea, the multitude was not so much awed by the miracles, but that they were easily instigated by the Pharisaical Jews, in most places, and by the craftsmen at Ephesus, and by those who made a gain of the devil's prophets at Philippi, to mob the very apostles. And the miracles wrought by the apostles, with the same design, would not hinder our multitude from behaving in the same manner, in favour of the religion of their nation, against that same very Christianity that was taught and instituted by the apostles, or against the apostles themselves, if now alive, and working miracles; for, if they will not hear the scriptures, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

But if any should now pretend to any thing like the apostolic miracles, they would, by that very pretence, declare that the revelation already made in the scriptures is not complete, or not yet sufficiently documented to have come from God; and therefore would be justly suspected of making themselves liable to the curse pronounced in the end of the New Testament.

There were signs and wonders accompanying Antichrist; and all the Antichristian world boasts, one way

way or other, of signs and wonders wrought in confirmation of the religion of their nation. But these are no more equal to the signs and miracles that attended the giving out of the New-Testament revelation, than those things done by the magicians of Egypt came the full length of the signs and wonders that the Lord wrought by Moses. And of this sort are all the signs that have no other use in the minds of men, but to seduce them from the kingdom that is not of this world, and to confirm them in subjection to church-authority supported with secular power.

The New Testament declares, that when the Christian revelation should be perfect, or completely given out, the extraordinary things that accompanied it while it was in coming forth, should vanish away and cease, for then the use and end of them ceased: And, instead of any other thing coming in place of them, to make the gospel regarded, we are told, there remain *faith, hope, and charity* the greatest of these three, which excel all the extraordinary gifts. Where-ever these are produced by the gospel, and appear in the profession or outward practice of them, there is Christianity in its power; there it shews itself in its proper glory, and will raise attention, and be opposed by the Antichristian world, that has the form of godliness, denying the power of it, yea, and be hated by the polite Christians, as well as the superstitious. Nevertheless, faith will be very rare on the earth when Christ comes.

A. And must not they pretend to something extraordinary, who set up illiterate tradesmen to preach, and submit to them as their teachers? Must they not hold them as inspired?

X. I do not hear that the Waldenses, the followers of Peter Valdo, pretended to any signs or wonders; yet Dupin gives this account of them: “Valdo being a person of some learning, explained the New Testament to them in the vulgar tongue; he

instructed them so well, that they took a fancy—to preach and teach, although they were but laics, and without mission. The clergy of Lyons having rebuked them, they began to declaim against ecclesiastics.” And again he says of them, “Being desirous to make up a society of persons that should practise the precepts of the gospel, according to the letter, and renew the apostles manner of life, they embraced several superstitious practices; afterward they assumed to themselves the power of preaching, although laics, and without mission. The clergy opposing their preaching, they stood up against the prelates, and shook off the yoke of obedience.” Nor did the brethren of Bohemia pretend to any signs or wonders, but rested in those wrought by the prophets and apostles, whom alone they held as inspired by the Spirit of God, to make the revelation of his mind and will to men; yet; for a long time, they had none but illiterate teachers; for, as Luther says of them, while they endeavoured to avoid the briers and bogs wherein the sophisters and monks were intangled, they wholly abstained from all study of the arts, being withal pinched by poverty, which they relieved by the labour of their hands. And while he commends them highly for their wonderful skill and readiness in the scriptures, he at the same time complains, that not only the Greek and Hebrew tongues, but the Latin also, were in a manner lost to them. So that it is no new thing, you see, among the practical believers of the gospel, to set up illiterate tradesmen to preach, and submit to them as their teachers, without holding them as inspired.

So likewise this people deny inspiration to ordinary teachers, who have no commission to make any new revelation, as the apostles and prophets had; but to teach, exhort, and guide the church, in the observation of all things whatsoever Christ commanded the apostles, as they are written in the scriptures, and were observed by the first Christians, under the direction

direction of the apostles, who have recorded their practice, and the things they taught them to observe, in the New Testament, to be followed by Christians to the end of the world: therefore this people regard the reading of the inspired writings in their churches more than the teaching of any man whatsoever; and all that their pastors and teachers have to say, must be examined by the scriptures: for they can only explain the scriptures to them by the scriptures, and they guide them as a people shewing themselves willing to obey the words of Jesus Christ, who speaks to them in the scriptures, and not the words of men; and because they are the disciples of Jesus Christ, they should call no man master on the earth.

A. But how can illiterate men excel in the knowledge of the scriptures, if there be not something extraordinary in the case?

X. Though the critics and metaphysical doctors have turned the gospel into a sort of science, to be taught and learned as other sciences are, by men who propose to make a gain of it in the world, as it now stands; yet indeed it is not a science, or human art, but, as it calls itself, a *word of faith*, and that not human, but divine. The apostles opposed the wisdom of God in this word of faith which they preached, unto the wisdom of the scribe and the disputer of this world; and if you consider their writings, I reckon you will not think they favour of our schools. As a man may excel in science who has no taste of the word of faith, so may one excel in the knowledge of the word of faith, who is a great stranger to what we call science. It is not criticism or philosophy that brings men to the faith, nor can it build them up in it. I was once commending our friend here as a critic upon the New Testament; but what sort of a Christian teacher, or guide, do you think would he make?

And you may as well say, how can an illiterate man excel in faith, hope, and charity? for these depend wholly on a true knowledge of the scripture; or how can one excel in prayer? wherein I have seen a cow-

herd excelling learned divines : for, whatever difference be thought of betwixt the gifts of prayer and of preaching, yet both are the gifts of Jesus Christ, who gives pastors and teachers to his church ; and, though these may be some way aped, they can never be truly attained by all human art or learning.

O. I own the same things may be said against all supernatural illumination, and faith itself, and especially against your supernatural charity, which is declared to excel the knowledge of all mysteries. And if no supernatural endowment, no gift of God in religion, carrying men further than the force of nature and art, shall be admitted, there is an end of the Christian religion.

Thus far I have enquired into the principles and way of your sect ; if I should inquire more particularly into their church-order and worship, I suppose you would refer me to the New Testament, as their only directory, and perhaps suspect me of intending to join them.

X. And when you condescended to examine their order and manner of worship by the New Testament, you will find them ready to drop every thing that you can shew them not to be founded there, and as ready to hearken to you pointing out any thing in that book, that is yet overlooked by them ; and for this they are willing to bear the reproach of changeableness and instability. And indeed I wish you never do worse than become one of them.

O. Upon the whole, I must acknowledge, if there be any true Christianity in the world, this must be the profession of it.

A. But it is a whim at best, that cannot subsist long, and I cannot vindicate you from being whimsical, in troubling your head so much about it as you have done.

O. If they pursue these principles, and stand to them, they will put me to think.

X. I wish they may, for your sake.

**A L I T E R A L T R A N S L A T I O N** of the **T R U E**  
**D I S C O U R S E** of **C E L S U S**, as far as it can  
be gathered out of **O R I G E N**'s eight **B o o k s**  
against him.

[Translated about the year 1753.]

**T O M E I.** From **O R I G E N**, **B o o k I.**

**I N T R O D U C T I O N.**

**T H E** Christians make conventions amongst themselves secretly against the things by law established: for of conventions some are manifest, as many as take place according to laws; but the secret are as many as are done against the things established by law.

Their opinion is of barbarian original. And the barbarians are sufficient to find out opinions; but the Greeks are better to judge, and confirm, and exercise to virtue, the inventions of the barbarians.

They do and teach secretly the things that please themselves. And they do not this in vain, to wit, keeping off the judgment of death impending to them. This danger is like the dangers that happened in philosophy, as to Socrates. This being common to other philosophers, is not any grand or new instruction.

They think not those, gods, that are made with hands, for this: because it is not agreeable to reason, that those are gods, which are wrought by most vicious artificers and wicked in their manners, and that are often prepared by unjust men. Nor is this opinion peculiar to them.

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They seem to have power with the names of some demons and with soothing incantations. Theirs is a hidden opinion.

I do not say this, that he who holds a good opinion, if he shall for it be in danger from men, ought to forsake or feign that he has forsaken, or become a denier of the opinion. There is something better than the earthly in man, near of kin to God. In whom this is well, *i. e.* the soul, it wholly affects its relation, I say, God; and they always desire to hear something to be remembered concerning him. But opinions ought to be received following reason and with a rational guide; as deceit comes always to him that does not in this manner give assent to some. And they that believe without reason, are like to the gatherers of tribute to the mother of the gods, and to the observers of wonders, and to the celebrators of the rites of Mithra, and of Bacchus, and to any whom one meets with apparitions of Hecate, or another demon or demons. For as in these things often wicked men, taking advantage of the ignorance of those that are easily deceived, lead them to what they will; so likewise is done among the Christians. Some of them neither willing to give or receive a reason about the things they believe, use this, Do not examine, but believe, and thy faith shall save thee. And they say the wisdom that is in the world is evil; but the folly good.

If they would answer me, not as seeking information, for I know all, but as having equal care of all; it should be well. And if they will not, but shall after their custom say, Do not examine, &c. it is necessary to teach them what sort of things those are which they say, and from whence they have flowed. This same Word has an affinity with many of the nations, who began such an opinion. The Word is highly ancient, about which certainly both the wisest nations and cities and wise men have always been conversant. The Egyptians, and Assyrians, and Indians,

dians, and Persians, and Odryfians, and Samothracians, and Elufinians, and Hyperboreans, and Homer's Galactophagi, and the Druids of the Gauls, and the Getæ, these most wise and ancient nations have treated of things akin to these. And ancient and wise men, who have benefited them that were with them, and by their writings those that came after them, as Linus, and Musæus, and Orpheus, and Pherecydes, and the Persian Zoroastres, and Pythagoras, have treated of these; and their opinions are inserted in their books, and they are kept to this time.

Moses, therefore, having learned this Word from wise nations, and rational men, hath obtained a divine name. The Jews borrowed circumcision from the Egyptians. These goatherds and shepherds, following Moses their leader, being enticed by rustic frauds, esteemed God to be one. This one God they thought to be either the Most High or Adonai, or the Heavenly or Sabaoth, or howsoever they delight to name this very world; and nothing more knew they. It differs nothing to call the God over all, either by the name current among the Greeks, *Jupiter*, or by this (say) among the Indians, or that among the Egyptians. The Jews worship angels, and give themselves to enchantment, of which Moses was to them the interpreter. I shall teach afterward, how the Jews also were deceived through ignorance, being seduced.

But I will first speak of the leader of this generation, as far as they are Christians. He, before a very few years, led the way of this doctrine, being esteemed by Christians to be the Son of God.

## S E C T. I.

A Jew would say to this Jesus, who feigned his nativity to be of a virgin, (borrowing from the Grecian fables of Danaë, and Melanippe, and Auge, and Antiope) that he sprung from a Jewish village,  
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and from a woman of the place, poor and working for her bread, who was put away by her espoused husband, by trade a carpenter; convicted of having committed adultery, being deflowered by some soldier, whose name was *Panthera*; and having been put away by her husband, and wandering about ignominiously, she privately brought forth Jesus; and that he, being obliged through poverty to serve for hire in Egypt, and there having had experience of certain powers, wherein the Egyptians boast themselves, returned highly conceited of these powers, and for them proclaimed himself God. Was the mother of Jesus beautiful? and did God, whose nature admits not the love of a corruptible body, mix with her as beautiful? Nor was it probable, that God should be in love with her, who was neither a woman of fortune, nor of royal descent; seeing she was scarce known to her neighbours. And when she was hated by the carpenter, and cast out, neither did the divine power save her; nor the faithful Word. These things therefore are nothing to the kingdom of God.

When thou wast washed with John, the apparition of a fowl from the air, thou sayest, flew upon thee. What witness worthy of credit saw this vision? or who heard the voice from heaven adopting thee Son to God; but that thou sayest, and adducest some one of those punished with thee?

But my prophet in Jèrusalem sometime said, that the Son of God will come the judge of the pious, and the punisher of the unjust. What more thou than innumerable others, who came after this prophecy, are they of whom he prophesied these things? Some enthusiasts and some impostors have said, that the Son of God hath come from above. If thou sayest this, that every man, according to divine providence, becomes the Son of God; wherein then art thou different from another? Multitudes will reprove Jesus, affirming that those things are said of themselves, which were prophesied of him.

The Chaldeans were said by Jesus to have been moved to come to his birth, worshipping him, yet a babe, as God; and that they shewed this to Herod the tetrarch, and that he sent to kill them that were born at the same time, thinking to take him off together with them, lest, living to a sufficient time, he should reign. If it was lest, being grown up, thou shouldst reign in his place; why, after thou art indeed grown up, dost thou not reign? But thou, the child of God, gatherest so ignobly, hiding for fear, and going up and down to misery. Jesus having got to himself ten or eleven infamous men, publicans and most wicked sailors, withdrew himself with these hither and thither, gathering victuals basely and fordidly.

But what need was there to transport thee, yet an infant, into Egypt, lest thou shouldst be killed? for it was not like God to be fearful about death. And an angel indeed came from heaven, bidding thee and those of thy family flee, lest, being apprehended, ye should be slain. But was not that great God able to preserve thee, his own Son, in that same place, who had already sent two angels on thy account?

The ancient fables, attributing divine generation to Perseus, and Amphion, and Æacus, and Minos, (to which we give no credit) at the same time shewed their great and marvellous deeds and truly above man; that they might not seem improbable. But thou truly, what hast thou shewed us egregious or wonderful in word or deed; though called upon in the temple to shew thyself the child of God by some manifest sign? Supposing to be true, as many things as are written concerning healings and the resurrection, or concerning a few loaves feeding many, of which many fragments were left, or as many other things as the disciples, speaking marvelously, have narrated; come let us believe these to be wrought by thee: they are of the same nature with the works of inchanters, as promising more wonder-  
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ful things; and with the things performed by them that have learned from the Egyptians, giving for a little money, in the midst of the markets, the grand things they have learned, and expelling demons from men, and blowing off diseases, and calling up the souls of heroes, yea shewing sumptuous suppers and tables, and meats differently dressed, that are not; and as animals moving, not being truly animals, but to the fancy appearing such. Because they do these things, are we therefore to believe them to be sons of God? or should it not rather be said, that these are the arts of wicked and unhappy men?

The body of God would not be such an one as thine. The body of God would not have been so begot, as thou, O Jesus, was begot; nor would God's body eat such meats as thou: but neither would the body of God use such a voice, nor such a persuasion.

These were the things of one hated of God, and of a wretched impostor.

## S E C T. II.

From ORIGEN, Book II.

**T**HE Jew may also say to the Jewish followers of Jesus, What ailed you, O countrymen, that you leave the law of your country, and being enticed by him, with whom we have been now discoursing, have been most ridiculously deceived, and become fugitives from us to another name, and to another manner of life? Yesterday, and the day before, and when we punished him that led you as cattle, you made defection from the law of your country. Or how do you begin at your sacred things, but in your progress despise them, not having another beginning of doctrine to speak of than our law? For if any foretold to you, that the child of God would come to  
men,

men, that was our prophet, and the prophet of our God,

Justice was done by the Jews upon Jesus, who had done wickedly, boasting, deceiving, and lying. Many others might have appeared, such as was Jesus, to them that would be deceived.

And how should we, who have shewed to all men, that one would come from God, punishing the unjust, treat him ignominiously, when he came? Why did we despise him, whom we have foretold? Was it that we should be punished more than others?

But how were we to esteem him God, who (beside other things, as has been heard) shewed the performance of nothing that he promised; and after we, convicting and condemning him, counted him worthy to be punished, he was taken hiding, and most basely flying, and was betrayed by those whom he called his disciples. And truly, it neither suits with him that is God, to fly, nor be led away bound; and yet less to be deserted and betrayed by his familiars, and them that partook with him in all things, and that used him as their teacher, and accounted him the favour, and the child and messenger of the greatest God. No good general and captain of many myriads was ever betrayed: yea, neither a wicked chief robber, and commanding those more wicked than himself, if he appeared useful to his companions. But he that was betrayed by those who were under him, neither commanded like a good general; nor did that deceiver procure from the deceived that benevolence, so to speak, which robbers have to their chief. Having many true things to say concerning the affairs of Jesus, and not agreeable to those that are written by the disciples of Jesus, I willingly pass them.

His disciples feigned that he foreknew and foretold all things whatsoever happened to him. In a manifest matter, having no evasion, they devised this, that he said and foreknew all. The disciples

said these things to excuse their master; as if one, saying that one is just, should point him out doing unjustly; and calling him pious, shew him committing murder; and calling him immortal, set him forth dead; prefacing to all these, that they came to pass as he foretold. For ye do not say this, that he appeared indeed to ungodly men to suffer these things, yet did not suffer; but you confess that he suffered openly. How is it credible that he foretold? and how is the dead immortal?

Who, either god or demon, or wise man, foreseeing such things coming upon him, would not shun them if he could, but would fall into the things he certainly knew before? How, if he foretold both him that betrayed him, and him that denied him, did they not fear him as God, so as the one should not betray, nor the other deny? but they betrayed and denied, making no account of him. For certainly even a man conspired against and foreknowing, if he forewarn the conspirators, they will turn away, and take care of themselves. These things therefore came not to pass in consequence of being foretold; for that is impossible. But in consequence of their coming to pass, their being foretold is found a lie: for it is altogether inconsistent, that they who heard before, should yet betray and deny.

Being God he foretold these things; and what was foretold, it behoved by all means to come to pass: God therefore led about his own disciples and prophets, with whom he eat and drank, unto this, that they should be ungodly and impious; whom it especially behoved to do good to all men, but in a distinguishing manner to his own companions! A man was never yet conspired against by his table-companion, but he that eat with God became a conspirator! and, which is yet more absurd, God himself conspired against his table-companions, making them betrayers and impious!

If these things seemed good to him, and he was punished obeying his Father; it is manifest, that to him, being God, and also willing, these usages, according to his mind, were neither troublesome nor grievous. Why then does he lament, and grieve, and pray, that the fear of destruction may pass away, saying thus, O Father, if it be possible for this cup to pass. Neither, lying, could you set forth your fictions with a shew of probability. Some of them that believe, as being intoxicate, come the length to allow themselves to change the gospel from the first writing, three ways, and four, and more, and to transform, that they may be capable to deny to them that confute them.

Christians make use of the prophets as preaching before the things concerning Jesus. But the sayings of the prophets can be applied to innumerable others, much more probably than to Jesus. The prophets say, that he that is to come is a great and mighty Lord of the whole earth, and of all nations and armies. But they did not hold forth such a pestilent fellow. None would commend God and the Son of God from such signs and rumours, nor from so ignoble marks. For as the sun, enlightening all other things, first shews himself, so it behoved the Son of God to do.

Ye are sophistical in saying, that the Son is *αυτολογος*, the very *Logos*. If indeed the *Logos* is to you the Son of God, we also applaud. But after promising the *Logos* to be the Son of God, ye shew us not a pure and holy *Logos*, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified.

Ye please yourselves too much, making the genealogy from the first-born, and from the kings that were among the Jews. Surely the wife of the carpenter did not know that she had got such a kindred.

And what noble thing did Jesus as God, despising men, and ridiculing and mocking what befel him? He said not, as the Bacchus of Euripides,

The



The demon himself shall loose me when I will. But neither did he that condemned him, suffer any thing like Pentheus, going mad and torn. When he wore the purple robe, and the crown of thorns, and the reed in his hand, why did he not, if not before, yet now at least, manifest something divine, and deliver himself from that shame, and treat them that reproached both him and his Father, as they deserved? What! and is the gore from the body of him that was crucified, such as that which flows from the blessed gods? He greedily swallowed the gall and vinegar, impatient of thirst. Do ye thus accuse us, O most believing! for that we do not account him God, nor agree with you, that he suffered these things for the help of men, and that we might despise punishments? He that persuaded no body while he lived, not even his own disciples, was punished and suffered such things, as not having shewed himself pure from all evils; nor was he irreprehensible. Surely ye will not say of him, that, not having persuaded those who are here, he withdrew to Hades, persuading them that are there. If, finding out absurd apologies, wherein you are ridiculously imposed on, ye think ye make a true defence; what hinders others also to account as many, as being condemned have perished miserably, to be these great and divine angels? One could, with the like impudence, also say of a punished robber and murderer, that this was not indeed a robber, but God; for he said before to his fellow-robbers, that he would suffer such things as he suffered. Then they that were with him while living, and heard his voice, and used him as their teacher, seeing him punished and dying, neither suffered with him, nor suffered for him, nor were persuaded to despise punishments; but they even denied that they were disciples. Yet now ye die with him. When he came, he drew no more than ten most profligate sailors and publicans; neither did he persuade all these. If living indeed he persuaded none, but,  
when

when he is dead, they that please persuade so many; how is not this most absurd?

By what reasoning were ye induced to esteem him the Son of God? We were induced by this, that we know his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness. What then? Have not many others also suffered punishment, and no less ignobly? We esteem him to be the Son of God, seeing he cured the lame and the blind, and (as ye say) raised the dead. O light and truth! With his own voice he hath expressly confessed, according as ye also have written, Wherefore there shall come to you others also using the like powers, wicked men and impostors: and he names one Satan the worker of these things. So that he denies not, that these things are indeed nothing divine, but the works of the wicked. And being forced by the truth, he hath at once revealed the things of others, and reprov'd his own things. How is it not then miserable, from the same works to reckon one God, and others impostors? For why from these things should we rather think others evil than him, using his own testimony? For he himself hath indeed confessed these things not of a divine nature, but to be the marks of deceivers and very wicked men. By what then were ye induced? Was it because he foretold, how, being dead, he would rise again? Come, and let us believe indeed that he said this. But how many others have dealt in such wondrous to persuade the simple hearers, studying to deceive them? as Zamolxis among the Scythians, called the servant of Pythagoras, and Pythagoras in Italy, and Rampfinitus in Egypt, who played at dice with Ceres in Hades, and brought away a golden basin as a gift from her; Orpheus also among the Odrysians, and Protefilaus in Thessaly, and Hercules in Tenænis, and Theseus. But this is to be considered, if any being truly dead, arose at any time with the same body. Or do ye think that those of others are and appear to be fables? But to  
you

you his voice, when he expired on the cross, and the earthquake, and the darkness, is found a beautiful and credible catastrophe of the drama! Yea, that living indeed, he could not help himself, but being dead, he arose and shewed the marks of punishment, and his hands as they had been pierced! Who saw this? A mad woman, as ye say, and if there was any other of the same magical gang, either in some sort dreaming and disposed to be deceived, by fancying an apparition, (which has often happened to very many) or rather inclining to astonish the rest by such a wonder, and by such a lie to give occasion to the other impostors.

If Jesus would really declare his divine power, it behoved him to be seen to them that used him ill, and to him that condemned him, and indeed unto all. For surely he no more feared any man, being dead, and, as ye say, being God: nor was he for this sent from the beginning, that he should abscond. But if so, then he ought, for the manifestation of his godhead, to have at least disappeared directly from the cross. Who hides himself, that is sent a messenger at any time, when he ought to report the things given him in commission? When he was disbelieved in the body, he preached to all freely; but when he was exhibiting strong faith, being risen from the dead, he appears in private, to a single woman, and to his intimate companions. When he suffered punishment, he was indeed seen to all; but, rising, to one; whereof the contrary ought to have been.

If he wanted to be hid, why was the voice heard from heaven, proclaiming him the Son of God? But if he would not be hid, why was he crucified, or why did he die?

From your own scriptures then ye have these things, for which we make use of no other witnesses: for ye fall in your own snare.

O most high and heavenly! what God coming to men was disbelieved, and appeared to them that  
 hoped

hoped for these things? Or why indeed was he not known to them that long expected him?

He threatens and reproaches without gravity, when he says, *Wo unto you, and, I tell you before*: for in these he openly confesses, that he cannot persuade; which neither indeed suits with God, nor yet with a prudent man.

We hope surely to rise in the body, and to have eternal life, and that the Sent unto us will be the pattern and first leader of this; shewing that it is not impossible with God to raise any man with the body. Where is he then, that we may see and believe? Or did he descend for this, that we might not believe?

He indeed was therefore a man; and such an one as the truth manifests, and what is said shews.

### S E C T. III.

From ORIGEN, Book III.

THE Christians and the Jews contend with one another most foolishly; and their dispute about Christ differs nothing from that, called, A fight about the shadow of an ass, according to the proverb. There is nothing grave in the question betwixt the Jews and the Christians; both believing it to be foretold by the divine Spirit, that one should come a Saviour to mankind, but not yet agreeing, whether he that is foretold be come or not.

What the Jews did to the Egyptians, they themselves suffered from those that were added to Jesus, and believed him to be the Christ; and the cause of new religion to both, was sedition against the commonwealth. The Hebrews, being Egyptians, took their beginning from sedition; and the others, being Jews, about the time of Jesus, became seditious against the commonwealth of the Jews, and followed Jesus.

If all men would be Christians, they would not yet allow of it. In their beginning, indeed, they were few, and were of one mind; but being sown into a multitude, they are again and again cut and divided; and each of them will have their own parties; for this they wanted from the beginning. And being again divided through multitude, these reprove those, yet partaking, if yet they partake, so to speak, of one name; and they are together ashamed that this alone is left: but all beside they dispose, some one way, some another. Their connection indeed is the more wonderful, the more it is demonstrated to be established on no available principle. But the available principle is the sedition, and the advantage of it, and the fear of them that are without: these establish the faith to them.

They use every artifice, and forge together objects of terror. May neither they, nor I, nor any other man, reject the old opinion of punishing the unjust, and rewarding the righteous.

They forging together the misapprehensions of an ancient word, prepossess men with the play and sound of these, as they who dun with noise those who are initiated to the mysteries of Ceres.

The matters of their faith may be compared to the practices of the Egyptians, with whom splendid sacred places with groves and temples, with vestibles and porches, to be admired for extraordinary grandeur and beauty, and ceremonies, very religious and mystical, will offer to the view of one that comes; but when he enters, he will see the object of worship a cat, or ape, or crocodile, a goat, or dog. These venerable things of the Egyptians, affirming that there is in these brutes, either some symbol of divinity, or whatever other name the prophets please to give them, have a certain appearance of no vain mysteries to them that are skilled in such things. The Egyptians are laughed at by them, though they set forth many, and not foolish riddles, seeing they teach,  
that

that these are the honours of eternal ideas, and not (as many think) of animals that soon perish. But they are fools, bringing in nothing more venerable than the goats and dogs of the Egyptians, in their narrations concerning Jesus. They will not bear, that we should think Castor, and Pollux, and Hercules, and Æsculapius, and Bacchus, gods; because they were men, though the chief, and certainly shewing many and excellent deeds for the sake of men; but they say, that Jesus when dead was seen by his own companions; they say, he was seen, and that a shade. After Aristeas the Proconnesian had disappeared so divinely from among men, and again shewed himself manifestly, and many ages afterward, had travelled through many places of the world, and reported wonderful things; and Apollo had chosen Aristeas to the Metapontins, to abide in the lot of the gods; no body yet esteems him a god. No body esteems Abaris the Hyperborean a god, who had such power as to be carried with a shot arrow. It is said of Clazomenius, that his soul, often leaving the body, went about without the body, and neither have men esteemed him a god. nor Cleomedes the Astopalaian, who, entering into an ark, and taken from within it, was not found within, but flew out by a certain divine fate, when some brake the ark to take him. And any one may tell of many others such like.

They who worship him that was taken and put to death, do much the same with the Gætæ, worshipping Zamolxis; and the Cilicians, Mopsus; and the Acarnans, Amphiloclus; and the Thebans, Amphiaraus; and the Lebadians, Trophonius. Nor do the honours paid to Adrian's beloved youth Antinous, in Antinoupolis of Egypt, differ any thing from the honour they give to Jesus. If you would compare Apollo or Jupiter to him, they would not bear it.

Faith, prepossessing their soul, makes this sort of an assent concerning Jesus. Him, being of a mortal body, they esteem God; and in this they think they do piety.—But putting off the impure infirmitities of flesh, he will then be God. Why then not rather Æsculapius and Bacchus, and Hercules? They laugh at the worshippers of Jupiter, seeing his sepulchre is shown in Crete; and nevertheless worship him who is of the sepulchre, not knowing how and for what the Cretians do that.

Such things are commanded by some esteemed Christians, not the most prudent, but most unlearned, Let none come, who is learned, none wise, none prudent: for these things are esteemed evil among us. But if any be unlearned, if any foolish, if any be a child, let him come boldly. Hence, confessing that these are worthy of their God, they are manifest, that they neither will nor can persuade any other but the foolish, and ignoble, and stupid, and slaves, and girls, and boys.

Otherwise, what is evil in being learned, and having carefully studied the best reasons, and in being, and appearing to be prudent? and what hinderance is this to the knowledge of God? yea doth it not rather conduce to it? and by this rather one may be enabled to come to the truth. But we see indeed those also who are shewing infamous tricks and juggling in the market-places, never coming to a company of prudent men, nor daring to shew their tricks among them; but where they see young people, and a croud of slaves and of foolish men, there thrusting in and making a fine show. And we likewise see in their houses, wool-dressers, and leather-cutters, and fullers, and the most illiterate and most rustic, not daring indeed to say any thing before the more aged and more prudent masters; but when they take the boys aside, and some foolish girls with them, telling some wonderful things, as that they ought not to take heed to the father and to the teachers, but believe

lieve them, because these are delirious and beside themselves, and neither see nor can do any thing truly good, being prepossessed with vain trifles; but that they alone know how it is necessary to live; and if the boys hearken to them, they will be blessed, and the house appear happy; and withal saying, (if they see any of the teachers, and more prudent or even the father coming, the more modest indeed of them are scared, but the more bold encourage the boys to throw off the reins) whispering such things, as, when the father is present and the teachers, they will not, nor can explain any thing good to the boys, for they are afraid of the folly and cruelty of those who are altogether corrupted, and have gone to the utmost length of wickedness, and punish them; but if they would, they ought, leaving the father and the teachers, to go with the girls, and the boys, their playfellows, to the womens apartment, or to the leather shop, or fuller's shop, that they may attain perfection; even saying these things they persuade.

But, that I may accuse no more bitterly than as far as truth constrains, let any one observe these also. For they who call to other mysteries, proclaim before these things, Whoever is pure in hands and prudent in speech; again others, Whoever is pure from every crime, and whose soul is not conscious of any evil, and whose lived well and justly; and these things they proclaim before, who promise the purgations of sins. But let us hear now whom these call: Whoever, they say, is a sinner, whoever is without understanding; whoever is childish, and, to say plainly, whoever is wretched, the kingdom of God will receive him. The sinner then, do ye not say that he is the unjust, and the thief, and the breaker through of walls, and the poisoner, and the committer of sacrilege, and the breaker into tombs? Whom else would one proclaiming before, call to be robbers?

They



They say that God is sent to sinners. But why was he not sent to them that are without sin? What evil is there in not having sinned? They dictate, that God will receive an unjust man, if he humble himself under his wretchedness; but the just, if he look up to him with virtue from the beginning, him he will not receive. Men presiding rightly in judgment, make them that wail for injuries to cease from piteous moans, that they may not be judged by mercy rather than by truth; but God, then, judges not by truth, but by flattery! This indeed is very true, that mankind is some way naturally disposed to sin. It was necessary, then, simply to call all, seeing all sin. What then is this prerogative of sinners? And truly it is every way manifest, that none can, not even punishing, much less shewing mercy, wholly change them that are disposed by nature, and accustomed to sin. For to change nature perfectly, is the most difficult of all things. But they that are without sin, are partakers of a better life. They commonly say that God can do all things. But he will not do any thing unjust. So then, like unto them that are subject to compassion, God being subject to commiseration of those that plead pity, relieves the bad, and the good doing no such thing he rejects!

A teacher among Christians will say,—The wise shun the things said by us, being made to err, and intangled by wisdom:—The Christian preacher tells ridiculous things.—No prudent man gives ear to the word, being scared by the multitude of them that come to it.—The teacher seeks after fools.—The teacher of the things of Christianism does much like one, promising indeed to heal bodies, but dissuading from attending to learned physicians, by whom his unskilfulness might be reproved.—I alone will save you.—They that are truly physicians, corrupt those whom they promise to heal.—A teacher among them does like, as if one drunk, coming to them that are drunk, should accuse the sober

sober as drunk; or like one that sees ill, accusing to the ill-sighted, those who see clearly, as blind.

I indeed blame these things and such like, that I may not enumerate all. And I say they trespass wickedly; being contumelious to God, that they may allure evil men with vain hopes, and persuade to despise the better things, as if they should abstain from them, it would be better for them.

#### S E C T. IV.

FROM ORIGEN, Book IV.

**S**OME Christians and the Jews, the one saying there has descended; the other there is to descend to the earth some God or Son of God, the justifier of them that are here; this is most base; and the confutation needs not many words. What did God mean by such a descent? Was it that he might learn the affairs of men? for did he not know all? he knew then indeed, but he did not rectify, nor was it possible for him, by divine power to rectify, if some one were not sent, that should be born to this purpose!

If God himself shall descend to men, this will be the consequence, that he must desert his own throne. For if you should change any one thing, even the least here, all things, overturned would go upon you to ruin. For surely God being unknown amongst men, and thinking himself at a loss upon this, would wish to be known, and make trial of believers and unbelievers, even as men newly enriched, shewing a manifold and altogether mortal ambition, testify against God.—Not needing to be known for himself, but for our salvation, he will give us the knowledge of himself, that they who receive it, becoming good, might be saved; but they who receive it not, being demonstrated evil, might be punished. Now, therefore, after so long a course of time, God re-  
membered

membered to justify the life of men, but before he minded it not! It is manifest therefore, that they murmur these things concerning God neither holily nor purely. And they feign these things to the terror of the vulgar; neither say they true things concerning necessary punishments to them that have sinned. So that they are like those who bring forth spectres and fearful sights in the mysteries of Bacchus.

It has come to them also, mistaking these things of Greek and barbarian authors, that certainly according to the revolutions of far distant times, and the recessions and conjunctions of the stars, conflagrations and deluges will happen, and after that last deluge in the time of Deucalion, the period according to the retribution of the whole requires a conflagration. These things have made them, by an erroneous opinion, to say, that God will descend after the manner of a tormentor bringing fire.

Yet now let us resume the discourse from above with more arguments. Now I say nothing but things established of old. God is good, and beautiful, and happy, and in the most comely and the best. If indeed he descend to men, there must be a change upon him, even a change from good to bad, and from comely to vile, and from happiness to misery, and from the best to the worst. Who then would chuse such a change? And certainly it is natural indeed to that which is mortal to be altered and transformed; but to the immortal to be still the same thing, and in the same manner. By no means therefore would God admit of this change. Either God is truly changed, as they say, into a mortal body, and that is before said to be impossible; or he is not indeed changed, but makes the beholders think so, and deceives and lies. But deceit and a lie are otherwise indeed evil, but only if, as in the part of poison, one should use them, either to sick and distracted friends, curing them, or to enemies, taking care to escape danger. But neither is any sick or mad a friend to  
 God,

God, nor is God afraid of any, that deceiving he should escape danger.

The Jews on their part say, that, life being filled with all wickedness, one should be sent from God, that the unrighteous may be punished, and all things purged, analogous to what came to pass by the first deluge. The ruin of the tower is like to that deluge purifying the earth. What Moses writes of the tower, and confusion of dialects, is a corruption of the story of the Alodiæ. And what he tells of Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed by fire for sin, is like the story of Phaeton. And the Christians again adding some words to those said by the Jews, say that the Son of God is already sent for the sins of the Jews; and that the Jews, punishing Jesus, and giving him gall to drink, drew gall from God upon themselves.

The Jews and the Christians are like a company of bats or ants coming forth from their holes, or frogs gathered in council about the ditch, or worms assembled in a corner of the clay, and contending with one another, which of them should be the greatest sinners. And they say that God foreshewed and foretold all things to us; and leaving the whole world and the heavenly motion, and overlooking the wide earth, manages the government amongst us only, and with us alone he corresponds, and ceases not to send and seek how we should be ever with him. As worms they say that God is, then after him we made by him altogether like God; and all things are subjected to us, the earth, and water, and air, and the stars; and all things are for our sakes, and ordained to serve us. Now, because some among us have done wickedly, God will come to us, or send his Son, that he may burn up the unjust, and that we, who remain, may have eternal life with him. These things are more tolerable, said by worms or frogs, than declared by Jews or Christians contending against one another.

The Jews were fugitives from Egypt. These men, God's friends, never did any thing worth the speaking of; nor were they ever held in esteem, nor in any account. They took in hand to draw the genealogy from the first seed of magicians, and men that were deceivers, bringing for witness obscure and ambiguous sayings, hid some where in darknes, and explaining them to those that are unlearned and without understanding. There was never any controversy in the great time that was before concerning such names; but now the Jews dispute about them with some others.

Severals have laid claim to antiquity, as the Athenians, and Egyptians, and Arcadians, and Phrygians, saying, that some with them sprang from the earth, and each of them bringing evidences of these; but the Jews in some corner of Palestine conspiring, wholly unlearned, and not having heard before those things sung of old by Hesiod and innumerable other divinely inspired men, have composed, most improbably and most inelegantly, a certain man formed by the hands of God, and inspired, and a girl from his side, and commandments of God, and a serpent opposing these, and the serpent getting the better of God's commands; such a fable as is told by old wives: and they most impiously make God straight from the beginning weak, and not able to persuade one man, whom he had formed. Then a deluge, and monstrous ark having all things within it, and a dove and a crow messengers; adulterating and falsifying Deucalion: for I reckon they had no forethought of these things coming to light, but were plainly telling a fable to infant-boys.

The begetting of children out of time—the treacheries of brethren—the father's grief—the wiles of mothers—the wealth acquired by Jacob with Laban—that God gave his sons asses, and sheep, and camels—that God also gave wells to the just—the things concerning Lot and his daughters, more un-

lawful

lawful than the Thyestian evils—the hatred of Esau to Jacob—Simeon and Levi going upon the injury of their sister forced by the son of the king of Shechem—the brothers selling the son of Jacob, and the brother sold, Joseph, and the father deceived, Jacob, seeing he had no suspicion of his sons shewing Joseph's coat of many colours, but believing them, lamented as lost Joseph serving in Egypt—the dreams of the chief butler and of the chief baker, and of Pharaoh, and the interpretation of them; consequently Joseph was led forth from the prison, that he might be intrusted by Pharaoh with the second throne among the Egyptians—and the sold made beneficent to the selling brothers famished, and sent to market with asses—and made known again to them—Joseph, who was sold for a slave, made free, and with pomp returning to his father's funeral, by whom that illustrious and divine generation of the Jews, sown into a multitude in Egypt, was commanded to sojourn somewhere without, and feed cattle in vile places—till their flight: the more moderate both of the Jews and Christians allegorize these things, and being ashamed of them, fly to the allegory; yet these are not such things as admit an allegory, but are manifestly told as the merest fables. The allegories therefore that appear to have been writ concerning them, are much more shameful and absurd than the fables, by a marvellous and altogether shameless folly putting things together, that can no where no way be fitly connected. I knew of that sort a dispute of one Papiscus and Jason, not worthy of laughter, but rather of pity and hatred. I do not therefore set myself to confute them; for they are every way manifest, and especially if one would have patience and bear to give attention to the writings themselves.

But I would rather teach this, according to nature, that God made nothing mortal; but whatsoever things are immortal, these indeed are the works of God, but the mortal of others. And the soul truly

is the work of God, but the nature of the body is different. And in this respect the body of a bat, or worm, or frog, or man differs nothing: for the matter is the same, and the corruptible of them alike. The nature of all the foresaid bodies is common, and, being one, goes and returns into reiterating change. And nothing begotten of matter is immortal. So much suffices concerning this. If any could hear and inquire after more, he shall know.

Evils in beings, neither before, nor now, nor afterward, are less and more: for the nature of all things is one and the same; and the generation of evils still the same. The world is unbegotten and incorruptible, and only the things on earth suffer deluges and conflagrations, and these things do not befall all at once. What should be the nature of evils, is not indeed easy to be known to one that does not philosophize. But it is enough to be said to the multitude, that evils are not indeed from God, but cleave to matter, and govern them that are evil. Now, the circuit of mortal things is alike from beginning to end, and, according to the established revolutions, there is a necessity; that the same things always both have been, and are, and shall be; nor are these things given to man, but each of them comes into being, and perishes for the sake of the safety of the whole, according to the foresaid change from others to others. If any thing seem evil to thee, it is not yet manifest if it be evil: for thou knowest not that it is useful either to thee, or to another, or to the whole.

Their writings ascribe human passions to God, speaking of his wrath against the ungodly, and threatenings against sinners. For is it not ridiculous, if a man indeed, being angry at the Jews, should destroy them all to a man, and burn the city, they were so naughty; but the greatest God, as they say, being angry, and enraged, and threatening, sends his Son, and he suffers such things?

But

But that the discourse may not be concerning the Jews only (for that is not what I say) but concerning all nature, which I promised, I will more manifestly shew the things before said.

They say that God made all things for man. Thunders, and lightnings, and rains are not the works of God. And if one should grant these to be the works of God, they are no more for nourishment to us men, than to the plants, and trees, and herbs, and thorns. And if you should say, that these grow to men, *viz.* the plants, and trees, and herbs, and thorns; what more will ye say they grow to men than to brute animals the most wild? We indeed, working hard and wretched, are scarcely and laboriously nourished, but all things grow to them unfown and untilled. But if you shall say this of Euripides, That the sun and night serve mortal men; what more us than the ants and flies? for to them also the night is for rest, and the day for seeing and working. If any should say, that we are the princes of animals, because we hunt other animals and feast on them; we shall say, Have not we rather been made for them, because they hunt and eat us? But also, we have need of nets, and arms, and many men assisting, and dogs against the hunted beasts. But nature hath furnished them readily with arms of their own, which easily subdue us to them. To what you say, that God has granted you to be able to take and kill the wild beasts, we answer, that (as it seems) before there were cities, and arts, and such commerce, and armour, and nets, men were caught and eaten by the wild beasts; but the wild beasts were not taken by men. And in this respect God has rather subjected men to the wild beasts. If for this men seem to excel the brutes, because they inhabit cities, and use the commonwealth, and magistracies, and governments, this is nothing to the purpose; for the ants and bees do the same. The bees then have a ruler, have a following, and service, and battles, and victories, and destructions



tions of the vanquished, and cities, and precincts, and succession of works, and judgments executed upon the idle and the evil; then they expel and punish the drones. And the ants are most industrious in providing for the winter;—they help one another with their burdens, when they see any one fatigued;—to the dead ants the living set apart some proper place, and this is to them the monuments of their fathers. Yea, and meeting one another they discourse, so that they do not wander from the ways. Is not therefore the completeness of reason with them, and common notices of certain universals, and a voice both occasional and significant? Now then, if one were to look down from heaven upon the earth, which would he think to excel, the things done by us, or those by the ants and bees? But if men value themselves somewhat also by magic, yet now, even according to this, serpents and eagles are wiser, seeing they know many antidotes against poison, and remedies of evils, yea, and the powers also of certain stones for the preservation of their young, which if men obtain, they think they have a possession worthy of admiration. But if man be thought to excel other animals, because he apprehends the divine notice, let them that say this know, that even in this many other animals will be opposed; and very likely: for what would one call more divine than to know and foreshew things to come? Now, men learn this from other animals, and chiefly from birds. And as many as perceive the indication of these, they are prophets. But now, if birds and prophetic animals whatsoever teach us by symbols things foreknown from God, these seem to be so much the nearer to the divine conversation, and to be wiser and most beloved of God. And intelligent men say, that they also hold conferences, manifestly holier than ours; and that they understand the things said, and in fact shew, that they understand them, when telling before, that the birds said how they would go somewhere, and would

would do this or that; they shew them going there, and doing the things that they already foretold. But nothing appears to be more observant of an oath, nor more faithful toward divine things, than the elephants; most certainly; for that they have the knowledge of him. The storks are more pious than men, requiting, and bringing nourishments to their parents; and that Arabian bird the Phoenix, after many years coming into Egypt, and carrying its dead father, and burying him in a globe of myrrh, and putting him in the temple of the sun.

These things therefore are not made to man, as neither to the lion, nor the eagle, nor the dolphin; but that this world as the work of God might be entire and perfect out of all things. For the sake of this all things have been measured, not of one another, but, if not every work, yet of the whole. And the whole is God's care; and Providence at no time forsakes this, nor does it become worse; nor does God, through time, turn to it; nor is he angry because of men, as neither of apes nor mice; each of whom, in part, has received a portion of it.

## S E C T. I.

### TOME II. FROM ORIGEN, Book V.

**G**OD indeed, O Jews and Christians, and no child of God, neither descended nor would descend. But if ye speak of certain angels, say who these are, gods? or some other kind? Some other, as it seems, demons.

First, then, the Jews may be justly wondered at, if indeed they worship the heaven and angels that are there; but the most venerable and most powerful parts of it, the sun and moon, and the other stars, both fixed and planets, these they despise; as if it were possible that the whole indeed should be God, but the  
parts

parts of it not divine; or it were very well indeed to worship them that are said to approach any where in darkness to those that are blinded by wrong magic, or that dream by obscure apparitions; but to make no account of those, which prophesy so clearly and splendidly to all, by which are brought forth rains, and heats, and clouds, and thunders, (which they worship) and lightnings, and fruits, and every production, by which God is revealed to them, the most conspicuous preachers of those that are above, the truly heavenly angels. This also is their folly, to think, that after God, like a cook, has brought in fire, the whole other kind will be boiled away; but that they alone will remain, not only the living, but also they who are some time of old dead, emerging from the earth with their same flesh; plainly the hope of worms! For what sort of soul of man would desire yet the body putrified? When neither is this your doctrine common even to some of Christians, and they shew it to be very impure, and abominable withal, and impossible: for what sort of body altogether corrupted, can return to the nature it had from the beginning, and the very same first constitution from which it was dissolved? Having nothing to answer, they fly to the most absurd recess; That every thing is possible to God. But neither indeed can God do dirty things, nor wills he things contrary to nature; nor if thou shouldst desire, according to thy wretchedness, any thing abominable; could God do this? and ought it to be believed directly that it shall be? for God is not the patron of vicious appetite, nor of erroneous indecency, but of right and just nature. And he could indeed give eternal life to the soul; but carcases, says Heraclitus, are more fit to be thrown out than dung. Surely God neither would nor could unreasonably exhibit the flesh eternal, full of things not fit to be mentioned: for he is the reason of all beings; he can therefore work nothing unreasonable nor against himself.

The Jews then beginning a proper nation, and making laws according to the country, and observing these diligently yet now amongst themselves, and keeping a religion such as they ought, seeing it is that of their country, do like things to other men; because all of them follow the customs of their country, how ever it be. Now, it appears so also to be useful, not only because it came into mind to different persons to make laws differently, and the things publicly enacted ought to be kept; but also, because, it seems, the different parts of the earth, having from the beginning been distributed to different inspectors, and divided according to certain limits of jurisdiction, by that same are also separately inhabited. And certainly the things done by this with each of them, would be rightly practised, where it pleased those; but it would not be holy to dissolve the laws enacted from the beginning in respect of places.

But in the second place, I will now ask these, whence they came? Or what law of the country have they leading them? They will say none. Truly they themselves both proceeded from thence, and bring their teacher and prelate from no where else. But yet they have made defection from the Jews.

One might use for this a witness, Herodotus saying thus: For truly the inhabitants of the city Marea and Apis of Egypt, on the confines of Lybia, they thinking to be Lybians and not Egyptians, and not being able to endure the religion, desiring not to be restrained from cows, sent to Ammon, saying, There was nothing common to them and the Egyptians: for they dwelt without the Delta, and did not consent to them, and they desired that it might be lawful for themselves to eat without restriction. But the god did not suffer them to do so, saying, That is Egypt which is watered by the Nile, and the Egyptians are those, who, dwelling below the Elephantine city, drink of that river. Herodotus narrates these things. But Ammon is nothing worse for admini-

steering the affairs of demons, than the angels of the Jews : so that it is far from being unjust, that each people should religiously observe their own institutions. To be sure we shall find the greatest difference of these according to the nations ; and yet they think each of them that they especially have good laws ; the Egyptians inhabiting Meroe, worshipping Jupiter and Bacchus only ; but the Arabians Ourania and Bacchus, these alone ; and all the Egyptians indeed both Osiris and Isis ; but the Saitæ, Minerva ; but the Naucratiæ not long ago have named Serapis ; and the rest according to the provinces, so each of them. And some abstain from sheep, reverencing them as sacred, some from goats, some from crocodiles, some from cows ; but they abstain from swine, abominating them. To the Scythians truly it is comely to feast even upon men. Yea there are some of the Indians, who, even eating their fathers, think they are doing funeral piety ; and Herodotus himself somewhere says it. But I will again use his own words, for the sake of belief. Now, this he narrates. For if any would propose to all men, bidding them chuse the best laws out of all the laws ; having looked through them, certainly each of them would chuse their own ; so much do every one of them think their own laws to be the best. It is not indeed likely ; that any other than a madman would set such things to the ridicule. But that all men think in this manner concerning the laws, with many and other evidences, this also may now be considered. Darius having called the Greeks that were in his dominion, asked, for what reward would they eat their dead fathers ? But they said, they would not do it for any thing : but Darius after this having called the Indians, named *Callatians*, who eat their parents, asked, (the Greeks being present, and learning the things said by an interpreter) for what reward would they admit the burning of their defunct fathers with fire ? But they being greatly astonished, bade give them

them good words. So indeed now these things are in custom. And Pindar seems to me to do rightly, saying, that the law is the king of all. If truly, according to these things, the Jews would diligently observe their own law, this were not blameable in them, but rather in those who leave their own things, and pretend to those of the Jews. But if, as knowing something more wise, they boast and turn away from the communion of others not equally pure; they have already heard, that they do not say a peculiar opinion concerning heaven; but, that I may pass all, what was held of old also by the Persians, as Herodotus likewise somewhere shews. For he says, It is their custom, going up to the greatest heights of mountains, to make sacrifices to Jupiter; calling all the circle of heaven, Jupiter. I reckon then it differs nothing to call the Most High, Diespiter, or Jupiter, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Ammon, (as the Egyptians) or Pappai, (as the Scythians). Neither truly, according to these, would they be holier than others, that they are circumcised; for so were the Egyptians and Colchians before: nor that they abstain from wine; for so likewise the Egyptians, and further from goats, and sheep, and oxen, and fishes; and Pythagoras and his disciples from beans and all animals. Neither indeed is it at all like, that they are well esteemed with God, and beloved any thing differently from others, and that angels should be sent from thence to them alone, as indeed having obtained some region of the blessed: for we see both them and their region, of what things they should be worthy. Let that company therefore, go bearing the just punishment of vain boasting; not knowing the great God, but seduced and deceived by the magic of Moses, and having learned that, not to a good end.

And indeed let us pass by whatsoever things are confuted concerning the teacher, and let him be thought of as truly some angel; but whether came

he first and alone, or others also before? If they would say alone, they would then be convicted speaking falsely things contrary to themselves: for they say that others also came often, yea, and together sixty or seventy, who truly became evil, and were punished with chains, being cast down below in the earth, from whence also their tears are warm fountains; and that indeed there came also to his own sepulchre an angel, some say one and others two, answering the women, that he was risen, (for the child of God, it seems, was not able to open the sepulchre, but needed another to remove the stone); further, an angel came also to the carpenter for Mary's being pregnant; and for the infant's being snatched away to fly, another angel; and what need exactly to speak of all, and enumerate those said to be sent, both to Moses and to others of them? But he alone is not storied to have come among the human kind, as also they, who, by the pretence of the name of the doctrine of Jesus, have turned away from the maker of the world, as from the lesser, and have come, as to a greater, unto a certain God and Father of him that came, say, that also before him there came some from the maker of the world to mankind.

Is not then the same God both to the Jews and to them? those who are of the great church, manifestly confessing this, and admitting as true, the things of that generation of the world adduced by the Jews concerning the six days and the seventh. They say, that the first man is the same as also the Jews say, and draw the genealogy of succession from him just as they. And they tell the same story with the Jews, of the conspiracies of brethren against one another, and of the going down to Egypt, and the flight from thence. Let none think me ignorant, that some of them indeed consent, that they have the same God with the Jews; but some, another, to whom he is contrary, and that the Son came from him; and a third kind of them that name, some the  
natural,

natural, and the rest the spiritual, and some professing to be Gnostics, and some receiving Jesus, so for this boasting themselves Christians, but yet willing to live according to the law of the Jews, as the multitude of the Jews; and some are Sybilists; I know also some Simonians worshipping Helena, or a teacher Helenus; and the Marcellianites from Marcellina, and Harpocratians from Salome, and others from Mariamne, and others from Martha, and the Marcionites having Marcion for their leader; some one teacher and demon and some another, wickedly erring and turning about in much darkness, more unlawfully and more filthily than the companions of Antinous in Egypt. And these reproach one another, with the most grievous things to be uttered and not to be uttered. And they would not yield, not in any respect to unanimity, being utterly disaffected to one another. Some are named by Christians, feared of the ear, some are called Riddles. But you will hear all these, who differ so much and confute their own selves most shamefully by contentions, saying this, The world is crucified to me, and I to the world.

## S E C T. II.

From ORIGEN, Book VI.

**T**HOSE Christians who have made progress in learning, say, that they know more than the Jews. Come then, though they have no principle of their opinion; let us examine the doctrine itself. Now, we must first speak of such things as they have corrupted, misunderstanding them through stupidity; foolishly in the beginnings directly boasting themselves of things they do not understand: and they are these——

These things are better said by the Greeks, and without that commination and denunciation from  
God



God or the Son of God. Plato says in some of his epistles, The first good is altogether inexpressible, but by having much familiarity about that matter, and by living with it, suddenly as from flaming fire, light being kindled in the soul, it now nourishes itself; and in the same epistle, If it appeared to me that these things, both written sufficiently and spoken, are for the multitude, how could we be better employed in life than to write what is of great benefit to men, and bring forth nature to light unto all?

Plato's writings declare, that the Good is known to few. There are many, with wrong placed contempt, being filled with a high and not solid hope, as having learned some grand things, that say some things as true; because Plato, who had said these things before, does not withal speak of prodigies, nor silence those who would inquire what it is that is proposed, nor does he of himself require before-hand to believe, that such is God, and he has such a Son, and he descending hath discoursed with me. Plato speaks in this manner. It has come into my mind, yet to speak at greater length of these things: for perhaps if I speak of them, somewhat of the things said would be more manifest. For there is a certain true reason, contrary to any that dared to write of such things, and which therefore has been often and before spoke of by me, but it seems that it should now also be said. There are three that belong to each of these things by which it is necessary to acquire science, and itself is the fourth; but that must be placed the fifth, which indeed is knowable and also true, of which one is the name, and the second the reason, and the third the image, and the fourth science.

You see how Plato, though he had asserted, that it cannot be explained, at the same time, that he may not seem to retreat to inconvincibility, gives a reason of that difficulty: for perhaps not one thing may be explicable. Plato does not vaunt and lie, saying,

saying, that he has found some new thing, or that he is come sent from heaven, but confesses from whence these things are. But they say, Believe him whom I sent forth to you, that he is the Son of God, though he was bound most ignominiously, or punished most shamefully, though yesterday and the day before, in the eyes of all, treated most reproachfully; yea, believe thee rather for this.

If some set forth him, and others another, and yet this be common to all and at hand, Believe if you will be saved, or be gone; what shall they do who are truly willing to be saved? Are they throwing the dice, to divine where they should turn, and to whom they should join? They say, the wisdom that is in men is foolishness with God. The cause of this was told long before, *viz.* that they would by this saying draw to them only the unlearned and foolish. But this also was taken from the wise Greeks, who said, that human wisdom is one thing, and the divine another. Heráclitus says, For the human practice hath not maxims, but the divine has. And again, A foolish man hearkens to a demon, like as a boy to a man. And Socrates in Plato's apology: For I, O Athenian men, for nothing else than for wisdom have obtained this name; but what sort of wisdom is this? It is like, it is indeed human wisdom: for in very deed according to this I appear to be wise.

These impostors fly precipitantly from the more polite as not ready to be deceived, but they insnare the more rustic. Their humility comes of a misunderstanding of Plato's words, who says somewhere in the laws; Truly God, according to the ancient word, holding the beginning, and the end, and the middle of all beings, perfects rectitude according to nature, pervading all round: but he is always followed by justice, the punisher of them that forsake the divine law. He truly that will be happy, cleaving to her, follows humble and modest. That it is easier for a camel

camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, is manifestly said from Plato, by Jesus corrupting this saying of Plato, That it is impossible for one who is egregiously good to be also egregiously rich.

Plato says, All things are about the king of all, and all things are for his sake; and this is the cause of all good things; but the second about second things, and the third about the third things. The human soul therefore desires to learn about these things, of what sort they are, looking to the things that are akin to her, of which she comprehends nothing fully. Surely there is nothing such concerning the king, and these things I said. Some Christians, misunderstanding the sayings of Plato, boast of a super-celestial God transcending the heaven of the Jews.

The way for souls to the earth and from the earth, according to Plato, is through the planets. The doctrine of the Persians also obscurely signifies the same, and with them is the mystery of Mithra: for in it there is a certain symbol of two revolutions, which are in heaven, both that for the fixed stars, and that again which is for the planets; and of the passage of the soul through these. Now, such is the symbol; A ladder highly ported, and over it the eight port; the first of the ports of lead; the second of tin; the third of brass; the fourth of iron; the fifth of mixed money; the sixth of silver; but the seventh of gold. They put the first for Saturn, by the lead signifying the slowness of that star; the second for Venus, transferring to her the splendor and softness of the tin; the third for Jupiter, stable and firm; the fourth for Mercury, for patient of all works, and a maker of money, and celebrated, is both iron and Mercury; the fifth for Mars, from the mixture irregular and various; the sixth for the moon, the silver; the seventh for the sun, the gold; imitating their colours. And there is also some instruction concerning music in this symbol.

One that would examine a certain mystery of Christians, together with the foresaid mystery of the Persians, comparing them one with another, and laying open also the things of the Christians, should so see the difference of them. They have a figure, in which were drawn ten circles included by one another, but encompassed by one circle, which is said to be the soul of all, and is named Leviathan. This figure is divided by a black thick draught, and that is called Gehenna, which is also Tartarus. They have mutual voices about a seal, as of one putting about the seal, called Father; and of one sealed, called New and Son, and answering, I am anointed with white oil from the tree of life. Then also a number called, by angels delivering the seal, seven, on each side set over the soul departing from the body, some indeed of light, but the rest named *Principals*, and the prince of those named *Principals*, is called the *Execrated God*.

The God of the Jews raining and thundering, and the maker of this world, the God of Moses, and the world-making which is according to him, is worthy even of the curse, according to those who think so concerning him, because he cursed the serpent, who introduced the knowledge of good and evil to the first men. What would be more foolish or more mad than this stupid wisdom? For wherein did the lawgiver of the Jews err? And how do you take his cosmogony or the law of the Jews to yourself, as you say, by a certain typical allegory? But against your will, O most impious, you praise the maker of the world, promising them all things, promising increase of their kind to the ends of the earth, and the resurrection from the dead with the same flesh and blood, and inspiring the prophets! And again you revile him! But when indeed you are forced by these, you profess to worship that same God; yet, when your teacher Jesus gives contrary laws to what Moses gave the Jews, you seek another God against him,

even the Father. Of the foresaid seven ruling demons, the first is formed to the idea of a lion, the second is a bull, the third a certain amphibious and hissing horribly, the fourth has the form of an eagle, the fifth has the face of a bear, the sixth is described by them to have the face of a dog, the seventh has the face of an ass, and is named Thaphabaoth or Onoel. There are some coming again into the principal forms, so that some animate lions, others bulls, and others dragons, or eagles, or bears, or dogs. And there is a quadrangular figure at the gates of Paradise. But they yet heap things upon other things, the words of prophets, and circles upon circles, and offlowings of the church on earth, and of the circumcision, and the flowing power of a certain swift virgin, and a living soul, and heaven killed that it might live, and the earth killed with a sword, and many killed that they might live, and death ceasing in the world, when the sin of the world shall die, and again a strait descent, and gates opening of their own accord. But every where there is the tree of life, and the resurrection of the flesh from the tree; because, I suppose, their teacher was nailed to a cross, and was a carpenter to his trade; who, if he had happened to be thrown from a precipice, or cast into a gulf, or strangled with a rope, or a leather-cutter, or stone-polisher, or worker of iron; there would have been above the heavens, the precipice of life, or gulf of resurrection, or rope of immortality; or there is the blessed stone, or iron of love, or holy skin. Is there any old wife, telling a fable to sooth a child, that would not be ashamed to whisper such things?

But this is not the least wonder of them: for they set forth certain inscriptions in midst of the above supercelestial circles, besides others, these two, a greater and a lesser of a Son and of a Father. They who use a certain magic and incantation, and who call such barbarous names of certain demons, do the like to those, who, to them that are subject to them, speak  
religious

religious words for them who know not that the names are different with the Greeks, and with the Sythians, as Herodotus tells, the Scythians call Apollo Oitofyrus, and Neptune Thamimafades, and Venus Artimpasa, and Vesta Tabiti. What need I enumerate how many have taught lustrations or expiatory songs, or ill-averting voices or noises, or happy vestments of sensible things, or of numbers, or of stones, or of plants, or of roots, and in sum, of every kind of things that may be used, all manner of amulets? I have seen with some presbyters who are of their opinion, barbarous books having names of demons and prodigious words. Certainly these presbyters of their opinion promise nothing beneficial, but all things for the hurt of men. One Dionysius, an Egyptian musician of my acquaintance, said of those that deal in magic, that it avails indeed to the unlearned, and to them that are of corrupt manners; but to them that philosophize it can have no such effect, seeing they are provided of a sound regulation of life.

They are deceived most impiously, and by the greatest ignorance that likely errs from the divine riddles, making one contrary to God, naming him the devil, and in the Hebrew tongue Satan. It is rash, therefore wholly mortal—and not holy, to say these things, that the great God truly, being willing to do any good to men, hath one working against him, and is not able: the child of God then is put to the worse by the devil, and being punished by him, teaches us also to despise punishments, foretelling that Satan himself also in like manner appearing shall shew great works and wonders, usurping to himself the glory of God, to which they must not give heed, who would avoid him, but believe himself alone. These indeed belong manifestly to a man that is an impostor setting to work, and before-hand guarding against them that maintain the contrary opinion, and are the opposite gatherers of the mob.

The ancients set forth as a riddle, a certain divine war, as Heraclitus saying this, But if it should be said that war is common and customary, even all things are, and are used according to contention: but Pherecydes being much more ancient than Heraclitus, setting in order a fabulous army against another, also gives Saturn the commander of the one, and Ophioneus of the other, narrates their provocations and battles, and that pactions were made by them, that whichsoever of them should fall into the ocean, these should be the vanquished; but they that drove them out and overcame them, they should hold heaven. The same meaning have also the mysteries concerning the Titans and giants reported to fight with God; and these things with the Egyptians concerning Typhon, and Horus, and Osiris. These are the things misunderstood by them. Are not these like the things concerning a devil, a demon, or (which is more true) a man an impostor maintaining a contrary opinion? Homer also may be so understood as saying like things to Heraclitus and Pherecydes, and to them who bring in the mysteries of the Titans and giants, in these words of Vulcan, speaking a riddle to Juno;

*For me ere now, once aiming aid to shew,  
Caught by the foot, from heaven's high porch he threw.*

And these of Jupiter to Juno thus:

*Hast thou forgot? when thou didst hang on high,  
And to thy feet two anvils I did tie,  
Thy hands with golden chain past yielding strong  
I bound; and thus in air and clouds you hung.  
The gods through wide Olympus then did rage,  
Yet, crouding round, thee could not disengage.  
I, whom I seiz'd, did from the threshold hurl,  
Till earth they reach'd scarce breathing with the whirl.*

These

These words of Jupiter to Juno are the words of God to matter; now, the words to matter obscurely signify, that God, from the beginning, finding it vitiously disposed, bound it together by certain proportions, and adorned it; and that the demons which were about it, as many as were hurtful, these he threw away, punishing them, the way hither. Phecydes thus understanding these verses of Homer, said this: Below that portion is the Tartarian portion, and the daughters of Boreas, Harpies and Thyella keep it; when any of the gods is injurious, Jupiter casts them out thither. And such sentiments also hath the brodered figured cloth about Minerva, in the pomp of Panathenians seen by all; for by it is manifested, that a certain demon, without a mother and unpolluted, quells the audacious sons of earth.

But they say, that the Son of God is punished by the devil, and he punishes them, so that, being punished by him, they become hardy. And these things are altogether ridiculous: for I think the devil ought to be punished; but the men that are calumniated by him, ought not to be threatened.

But I signify whence this fame came to them, to call the Son of God: ancient men called the very world as made of God both his child and God. Altogether like certainly is this and that child of God.

The generation of the world described by Moses is very foolish, and the generation of men. They who have left their scriptures, not knowing what is the nature of the world and of men, have composed a profound idle tale. Some of the days of that world-making were passed before light and heaven was made, and the sun, and moon, and stars, and some passed after the making of these.—For certainly the maker of the world did not borrow light from above, even as they that kindle lamps among neighbours. If there was opposite to the great God a certain execrated god, who was doing these things against his mind, why did he lend him light? But concerning  
the



the making and corruption of the world, whether as unmade and incorruptible, or as made indeed but incorruptible, or as the reverse, I say nothing about this at present. They say, the spirit of the God over all intruded upon the works of another, and that he prayed destruction, some things being wickedly contrived, as by another world-maker beside the great God, against his Spirit, the God above bearing this; and that the great God having given his spirit to the world-maker, asked it again. What god gives any thing so as to ask it again? for asking again is proper to him that needs; but God needs nothing. For what, when he lent, was he ignorant that he was lending to him that was evil? Why overlooks he the evil world-maker working against himself? Why does he secretly send and destroy his works? Why does he break in privily, and sabborn and deceive? Why does he entice the souls of them that are condemned and accursed by him, and after the manner of some man-stealer draw them away? Why does he teach them to runaway from their Lord? why to fly their father? Why adopts he them without the Father's consent? Why promises he to be father of aliens? A solemn God truly; desiring to be Father of sinners condemned by another, and of exiles, and, as they say, of excrements; and not able to take and punish him whom he indeed sent, who had withdrawn himself!

But if these are his works, how does God make evils? And how is he not able to persuade and admonish? How does he repent over them, becoming ungrateful and wicked, and despise and hate his own workmanship, and threaten and destroy his proper progeny? Or whether at length does he withdraw, whom he made, from this same world?

But this is extremely foolish also, to attribute some days to the making of the world, before there were days: for how were there days, the heaven being

no way made, nor the earth any way established, nor the sun any way brought hither?

Yet resuming, let us consider how the first and greatest God would not be absurd, commanding, Let this be, and another, This or that; and one day framing such a thing, the second day again so much more, and the third, and fourth, and fifth, and sixth, and resting the seventh day; plainly like some ill workmen being wearied out, and needing relaxation for rest. It is neither just that the first God should be weary, nor work with his hands, nor give orders, nor has he a mouth, nor a voice, nor has he any other of these things which they know; nor did he make man his image: for God is not such, nor is he like to any other similitude. What sort of thing is it to think, that what is according to the image of God, is in that part of compounded man, which is worse, that is to say, the body? God partakes not of figure or colour, but neither partakes he of motion, nor does God partake of substance. All things are of him; neither is God comprehensible by reason; nor is he nameable: for he suffers nothing that can be apprehended by a name.

How then, may some say, shall I know God? and shall I learn the way to him? And how do you shew him to me, as now you cast darkness before my eyes, and I see nothing clearly? Those whom one sheweth bring forth of darkness into splendid light, not being able to bear the bright rays, would be punished in the sight, and hurt, and think to be blind.

But Christians would give these questions, How shall we think to know God? and, How shall we be saved with him? this answer; Because God is great and hard to be beheld, he, throwing his own spirit into a body like us; hath sent him hither, that so we might be able to hear from him and learn. When they say that God is spirit, they differ nothing in that from the Stoics among the Greeks, saying, That  
God

God is the Spirit pervading all things, and comprehending all things in himself.

Seeing the Son is spirit from God, born in a human body, the Son of God himself would not be immortal: for there is no such nature of spirit as to endure always, as it is not the nature of fire to continue for ever. Then it would be necessary for God to take breath; and the consequence from this is, that Jesus cannot rise with the body; for God would not receive up the spirit which he gave, being polluted with the nature of the body. But if he would send the spirit out of himself, what was the need to inspire it into the womb of a woman? for he could, already knowing to form men, frame a body to him also, and not throw his own spirit into so great pollution; so indeed he would not have been disbelieved, if he had been sown directly from above.

Whence should he be demonstrated the child of God, who suffered such punishments, if it had not been foretold concerning him?

There are two sons of God, one of the maker of the world, and the other of the God according to Marcion; and their single combats are like the divine fights of the quails and their fathers, or they being useless through old age and doting, do not indeed attack one another, but suffer their children to fight.

Seeing the divine spirit was in a body, it altogether behoved it somewhat to excel the rest in greatness, or beauty, or strength, or voice, or awfulness, or eloquence: for it is unaccountable that what had something divine more than others, should differ nothing from another; yet this differed nothing from another; but as ye say, was little, and hard favoured, and ignoble. Further, if God would, like Jupiter with the comedian, waking out of a long sleep deliver mankind from evils, why at length did he send into one corner that spirit, as you say, when many bodies ought to have been inspired in like manner.

ner, and sent over the whole inhabited earth? But the comedian in the theatre making laughter, wrote that Jupiter being awakened sent Mercury to the Athenians and Lacedæmonians; yet you do not think it ridiculous to make the Son of God sent to the Jews. These were most divine nations from the beginning, the Chaldeans, the Magi, the Egyptians, the Persians, and the Indians; but the Jews, to whom he is sent, are presently to perish! He that knew all things did not understand that he sends his Son to evil men, and that would sin and punish him. But it is said by them in excuse, that these things had been long ago foretold.

### S E C T. III.

FROM ORIGEN, Book VII.

**L**ET us see where they will find an excuse. They indeed who bring in another God, none; but they, who the same, will again say the same; this truly wise; that it behoved so to be; and the evidence; for the things were of old foretold.

The things that were foretold of Pythia or the Dodonean women, or Clarius, or in the oracle of the Branchidæ, or in that of Ammon, and by innumerable other prophets, by which the whole earth has been equitably inhabited, these are placed to no account; but the things said of those in Judea, after their manner, or not said, and as they about Phœnicia and Palestine have used to this day, these truly are accounted wonderful and unalterable! There are many sorts of prophecies, but this is the most perfect with the men that are there.

Many, and of no name, easily, from any cause that happened, both in temples and without temples; some also gathering the croud, and intruding into cities or armies, are agitated, to wit, as they that

prophecy; but it is at hand to each of them and their custom to say, I am God or the child of God, or divine Spirit, but I am come; for now the world perishes, and ye, O men, for unrighteousness are gone, but I will save, and ye shall see me again with heavenly power returning; blessed is he who now worships me, for upon all others I will cast eternal fire, and on cities and countries. And the men who knew not their own punishments, shall repent in vain and groan; but them that believe me, I will preserve eternal. Setting off these things, then they add unknowable, and startling, and every way obscure things, of which no man of understanding could find the meaning: for they are dark and nothing; but to every fool or impostor they give occasion to apply what is said, to himself how he pleases. These prophets, to wit, of whom I myself was a hearer, being by me reprov'd, confessed to me wherein they were deficient, and forged, speaking backward and forward.

They who from the prophets make excuse concerning the things of Christ, can indeed say nothing to the purpose, when any thing wicked, or shameful, or impure appears said of the Divinity or abominable. For what other was it to God to eat mutton and gall, or drink vinegar, than to eat turds?

Come then, if the prophets should have foretold, that the great God (to say no other thing more intolerable) would serve, or be sick, or die; it behoved God to die, or serve, or be sick, seeing it was foretold; that, dying, it might be believed that he is God! But prophets would never have foretold this: for it is evil and unholy. Therefore it is not to be considered whether it be foretold or not foretold, but if it be a work worthy of God and good. But for the shameful and evil, though all madmen should appear to foretel it, it is incredible. How then are the things holy that were done about him as about God?

If these things were prophesied of God over all, must then such things be believed of God, seeing they are foretold?

But this again they will not mind, if the prophets of the God of the Jews foretold that he would be his child; how indeed did he by Moses give law, to become rich and to become powerful, and to replenish the earth, and to cut off the enemies in war from the youth up, and to kill them every kind, which also he does in the eyes of the Jews as Moses says; and if they should not obey these, he expressly threatens to treat them as enemies in war? But now his Son, the Nazarene man, gives opposite law, that there is no access to the Father for one making rich, or loving power, or striving for wisdom or glory; and that there must be no more care had, than have the crows, of provisions and the storehouse, and of raiment less than the lilies; and it must be permitted to him that strikes once, also to strike again. Whether does Moses or Jesus lie? Or did the Father sending him forget what things he discoursed to Moses? Or disapproving of his own laws, did he change his mind? and sends he the messenger to contrary purposes?—They speak of God as being of the nature of body, and a body of human likeness.—If they be asked, Whither will they go, and what hope have they? They will answer, To another earth better than this. Divine ancient men have given account of a happy life to happy souls, and some have named it, The islands of the blessed, others, The Elysian field, from their being loosed from evils, who are there, as also Homer,

*Thee, to the Elysian field, and where extend  
The bounds of earth, th' immortal gods will send;  
—————Where life most easy flows.*

But Plato thinking the soul immortal, manifestly calls that place where it is sent the earth; saying,

that it is every way large, and that we who are from Phasis to the Pillars of Hercules dwell in a certain little spot like ants about a hollow place, or frogs dwelling about the sea; and many others elsewhere dwell in many other such places: for there are every where about the earth many cavities, and of every kind both as to form and bulk, into which the water, and the darkness, and the air flow together; but the earth itself lies pure in the pure heaven. But what is shewed by these is not easy for every one to know, unless any were able to hear what is this that he says; for weakness and slowness it is not possible to penetrate to the utmost air; and if nature were sufficient to bear contemplating, it would then know, that this is truly heaven and the true light.—The things they say of the resurrection are from their misunderstanding the transmigration.—Surely when they are every way repressed and confuted, again, as having heard nothing, they return to the same question, How then shall we know and see God? and how shall we come to him? They expect with eyes of the body to see God, and with ears to hear his voice, and with sensible hands to handle him. They that in this manner seek God, should go to the oracle of Trophonius, and that of Amphiareos, and to that of Mopsus, where are beheld gods of human likeness, and not lying, but even manifest: because one will see, not once slipping by, like him that deceived them, but always conversing familiarly with them that will.

But they will also say again, How shall they know God not apprehending him by sense? What can possibly be learned without sense? The voice indeed not of man, nor of the soul, but of the flesh? But yet then let them hear, if they can even hear any thing, as a fearful and body-loving generation; if, winking with sense, you would look up with the mind, and turning away the eye of the flesh, you would raise up that of the soul; only thus shall you see God. And  
if

If ye seek a leader of this way, you must fly from impostors, and jugglers, and such as court idols for you, that ye may not be altogether ridiculous, blaspheming others, demonstrated to be gods, as idols; but worshipping him who is truly more miserable than idols themselves, and not yet an idol, but verily dead, and seeking a Father like unto him.

Truly for such deceit, and these wonderful counsellors, and the demoniac words to the lion, and the amphibious, and the likeness of an ass, and the others, and to the prophetic porters, whose names miserably learning, wretched ye are tortured and crucified. But follow divinely-inspired poets, and the wise, and philosophers, and they will lead you.

Follow Plato, who is a more effectual teacher of the matters of theology. He says, "It is indeed then a labour to find, and impossible for one that finds to declare unto all the Maker and Father of this universe." You see how the way of truth is sought by prophets, and how Plato knew that it is impossible for every one to go in it. But since, for the sake of this, it is found out by wise men, that so we might get some perception of the unnameable, and first, manifesting him, either by the composition which is into other things, or by resolution from these, or willing to teach, by proportion, what is otherwise inexpressible; I would wonder if ye could follow, altogether bound up by flesh, and seeing nothing pure.

*Substance and generation,—intelligible,—visible :—  
with substance, truth,—but with generation, error.—  
About truth then science ;—but about either, opinion.  
—And understanding is of the intelligible,—but sight  
of the visible :—for the mind knows the intelligible, but  
the eye the visible ; what therefore, in the visibles, is the  
sun, being neither eye nor sight ; but to the eye the cause  
of seeing ; to the sight, of consisting by him ; and to vi-  
sibles, of being seen ; to all sensibles, of being ; and not  
he, to himself, of being seen ; that, in the intelligibles  
is he, who is neither mind nor understanding, nor sci-  
ence ;*



*ence ; but to the mind the cause of understanding ; and to the understanding, of being by him ; and to science, of knowing by him, and to all intelligibles, and to the truth itself, and to substance itself, of being beyond all things ; he-being intelligible by a certain ineffable power.*

These things are said by men having understanding. But if ye also understand any thing of these, it holds in us. And if ye think of any spirit descending from God to tell forth divine things, this would be the spirit that preaches these things ; of whom ancient men being indeed filled, have told many and good things, which if ye cannot hear, hold your peace, and hide your own ignorance, and do not say, that those are blind who see, and that those are lame who run ; being yourselves wholly lamed in your souls and mutilated, and living to body, that is, to a dead one.

How much better would it have been for you, since ye desired to make some innovation, to study concerning some other of them who died nobly, and are capable to admit of a divine fable ? Come, if Hercules did not please, and Æsculapius, and those who were of old glorified ; ye had Orpheus, a man that, without controversy, received the holy spirit to be used, and him violently dead ; but yet perhaps he was pre-occupied by others ; at least Anaxarchus, who being cast into a mortar, and most unconscionably pounded, very well despised the punishment, saying, Bray, bray the husk of Anaxarchus, for you bray not him : the voice of some truly divine spirit ! But some naturalists also preventing have followed him : Had ye not then Epictetus ? who, when his master was twisting his leg, smiling composedly said, You will break it ; and when he had broke it, said, Did not I say you would break it ? But what did your God utter like this when he was punished ? Ye also might have more likely set up as the child of God, the Sybil whom some of you use ; but now ye could  
indeed

indeed insert rashly many and blasphemous verses into hers, but place him God, who had indeed a most infamous life, but a most pitiful death. How much more fit for you, than him, was Jonas under the gourd, or Daniel who escaped from the wild beasts, or they that are yet more marvellous than these!

They have also such a precept, not to repel him that injures, and if he should strike, says he, the one cheek, yet offer thou also the other. This also is ancient, very well said before, but it is more rudely commemorated. For Socrates also is introduced by Plato discoursing with Crito these things :

“ Must then an injury in no wise be done? No certainly. Nor must the injured repay the injury, as many think, seeing any injury must in no wise be done? It does not appear. But, what, should hurt be done, Crito, or not? Certain it ought not, Socrates. But what, should he that suffers hurt, repay the hurt, as many say; is it just or unjust? In no wise: for hurting men differs nothing from injuring. You say truly: neither then ought injury to be done, nor any of men be hurt, not, whatever be suffered from them.”

These things says Plato, and again these: “ Observe thou also then very well, whether thou partakest, and it appear together to thee. And let us begin from hence, consulting, as never being right neither to injure nor to repay an injury, nor for the harmed to repel them that repay harm or turn away. And partakest thou not of this principle? For indeed both long ago and yet now it appears so to me.” So then indeed it seemed good to Plato, but these things appeared also yet before to divine men. But concerning these and other things as many as they corrupt, let the things said suffice, and any that desires to inquire further into any of these, shall know. But let us stand from thence.

They

They do not bear to see temples, and altars, and statues; for neither do the Schythians bear this, nor the Nomades of the Libyans, nor these Atheists the Seres, nor other nations that are the most unholy, and the most lawless. But that the Persians also so profess, Herodotus tells in these words: "But I have known the Persians using these laws; they do not dedicate statues, and altars, and temples, but they also impute folly to them that do; as it appears to me; because they esteem not the gods to be sprung of men, as do the Greeks." But Heraclitus also declares so: "And they pray to these statues like as if one would talk to houses, neither knowing gods nor heroes, who they are." What then do they teach us, that is more wise than Heraclitus? He indeed very expressly signifies, that "it is foolish to pray to statues, if one know not gods and heroes who they are." Thus Heraclitus. But they manifestly contemn the statues: if indeed, because stone, or wood, or brass, or gold, which this one or that one hath wrought, would not be God; ridiculous wisdom! For what other than a mere fool would esteem these gods? but the consecrated gifts and statues of gods. But, if because it is not to be thought, that they are divine images; for the form of God is different, as appears also to the Persians; they have forgot confuting their own selves, when they say, that God made man his own image, and the form like himself.

But they will consent indeed that these are a form to the honour of some, that are either like or unlike; yet that they are not gods, to whom these are applied, but demons, and that whosoever worships God ought not to serve demons. Truly they are manifestly convicted that they worship not God but neither demons, but one that is dead.

## S E C T. IV.

From ORIGEN, Book VIII.

**B**UT first I will ask, for what are not demons to be served? Are not all things dispensed according to the mind of God, and every providence from himself? And whatsoever work be in the whole, either of God or of angels, or of other demons, or of heroes, all these things have law from the greatest God; but whoever was worthy was set over each, receiving power. Does not the worshipper of God, therefore, justly serve him who hath thence obtained authority? For it is not possible, say they, that the same one should serve many lords.

But this is the voice of the sedition of those that inclose themselves, and that break off from the rest of men. They that say this, as much as in them is, translate their own passion to God. Wherefore also it hath indeed place amongst men, that he who serves any man should not unreasonably also serve another, as the other is hurt by the different service; nor should he that happens to be associated by oath with one, be so associated with another, as hurting, it hath reason, not to serve together different heroes and such demons; but in respect of God, to whom neither any hurt nor grief appears, it is unreasonable to shun, like these concerning men and heroes and such demons, serving many gods.

And he that serves many gods, serves one of those that belong to the great God, and in this does a friendly thing to him. It is not lawful to honour any to whom that is not given from him: wherefore any that honours and worships all that are his, grieves not God whose they all are. And indeed he who says, that one is called Lord, speaking of God, does impiously, dividing the kingdom of God, and making

sedition as if there were a faction, and there were some other head of the sedition against him.

If truly these served no other but one God, they would perhaps have some strong reason against others; but now they worship excessively him that lately appeared, and withal think that nothing is done wickedly about God, if also his servant be served. If you should teach them that this is not his child, but that he is indeed the Father of all, who alone truly ought to be worshipped, they yet would not without him also, who is their leader of sedition. And truly they have called him the Son of God; not because they worship God exceedingly, but because they magnify him exceedingly. But that I think not these things beside the scope, I will use their own voices: for somewhere in that heavenly dialogue, they say in so many words, "If the Son of God is stronger, and the son of man is his lord, and who other shall lord over the ruling God? How are many about the pit, and none into the pit? For what, having made so much way are you afraid? You forget; for I have courage and a sword."

Thus, this is not what they propose: for they substitute another supercelestial God his Father, concerning whom they have consented to worship; that, under pretence of the great God, they may worship him alone, whom they set up the Son of man, whom they declare stronger and lord of the ruling God. Hence they have this commandment not to serve two lords, that sedition about this one might be guarded against.

They flee from dedicating altars, and statues, and temples, seeing it is to them the faithful token of hidden and secret communion.

Certainly God is common to all, good and standing in need of nothing, and without envy; what then hinders them who are especially consecrated to him, to partake of the public festivals? If these idols be nothing, what is grievous in partaking of the so-

lean feast? But if they are some demōns, doubtless these also belong to God, who are also to be believed in and sacrificed to according to the laws, and prayed to that they may be benevolent. If truly according to some custom of their country they abstain from some such victims, they should also wholly abstain from the eating of all animals; which is likewise the opinion of Pythagoras, honouring the soul and its organs; but if (what they say) that they may not eat with demōns, I pronounce them blessed for wisdom, because they slowly perceive themselves to be always eating with demōns, and then indeed only guard against this, when they see the victim sacrificed. But whenever they eat bread, and drink wine, and taste the fruits of trees, and draw in the very water and the very air with their breath; do they not certainly receive each of these from some demōns, to each of whom the care is in particular committed?

Either, therefore, there is no living any where any way, nor coming hither, or he that comes into life on these terms, must give thanks to the demōns that are set over the earth, and offer first-fruits and prayers while we live, that so we may have them lovers of men. Could a lieutenant and president of the king of the Persians, or Romans, or general, or procurator, and further they that have lesser governments, or cares, or ministries, being neglected do much hurt; but the governors and ministers, in the air, and upon the earth, would do little hurt if they were injured?—If truly any name them barbarously, they will have power; but if in Greek and Roman manner, not yet.—

The Christians say, Behold, I, standing by the statue of Jupiter or Apollo, or whatever god at any time, reproach and strike, and he does not at all repel me. Dost thou not behold then, O thou best, that any standing by thy own demon, not only reproaches, but also proclaims out of the whole earth and sea, and binding, leads away and crucifies thee,

consecrated to him as a statue; and the demon, of (as thou sayest) the child of God doth not at all repel him?—The priest of Apollo or of Jupiter says, The mills of the gods grind late—and to childrens children, and who should be born afterward.

Thou indeed, railing, laughest at their statues, who, if thou hadst railed at Bacchus himself, or Hercules being present, thou wouldst not perhaps have been dismissed rejoicing; but they who stretched out and punished thy God being present, they who did these things suffered nothing. But neither after these things in so long a life, was there any new thing from him to any who might be believing that he was not a man an impostor, but the child of God. And he, to wit, that sent the Son for the sake of some statues, in such manner, withal, punished as to be destroyed together and the statues neglected, and so much time being past, is not turned again. What father is so impious? He indeed then was willing perhaps, as thou sayest, for this he was most injuriously treated. But those whom thou reproachest, I can indeed say, that they are willing. For it is best to add like to like. But they also very much repel the reproacher, who either flies for this and is hid, or is taken and destroyed.

What need to alledge how many things, this, prophets and prophetesses, and that, others who were possessed, both men and women, have foretold from the oracles by a divinely-inspired voice; yea how many wonderful things have been heard from their innermost temples; yea how many things have been manifested from the victims and sacrifices to those consulting them; yea how many things from other marvellous symbols? yea to some evident apparitions have been exhibited.

All life is full of these. How many cities have been set in order from oracles, and freed from diseases and famines; and how many that neglected or forgot these, have perished miserably; yea how many have been sent into colony, and following the orders  
have

become happy; how many rulers, yea, how many private persons have been by this dismissed better or worse; how many, hardly bearing the want of children, have obtained their desires; how many have escaped the wrath of demons; how many have been healed of the mutilations of their bodies? On the other hand, how many that have violated the sacred things have been instantly seized? Some held there beside themselves thus, some declaring the things they had done; and some also not declaring the things they had done, and some making away with themselves; yea, some smitten with incurable diseases; yea, I have also known them destroyed by a grievous voice from their innermost temples.

Especially, O thou best, (who art forward in striving to death) as thou establishest eternal punishments, so also the interpreters of these sacred things, and they that initiate, and they who have the leading in religious rites, what punishments thou dost threaten to others, these threaten to thee: for it may be considered which of them are most true or most firm: for indeed each of them confirm to themselves by word equally concerning their own. But if evidences should be needed, these also shew many and manifest works, both of certain demoniac powers and of responses, and bringing them from oracles of all places.

But how are not these things of yours absurd? To desire and hope that this same body shall rise again, as there is nothing better for us nor more honourable; but again, to throw it into punishments, as dishonoured! But it is not fit to discourse this with them that believe this, and who melt with the body: for these are also otherwise rustic, and impure, and without reason diseased with sedition.

I will discourse this with those indeed who hope to have the soul of the mind eternal with God, whether they will call it spiritual or intelligent, spirit holy and blessed, or a living soul, or a supercelestial progeny



geny of a divine and incorporeal nature and incorruptible; or however they rejoice to name it: indeed they establish this rightly, that they who have lived well shall be happy; but the unjust shall be wholly held with eternal evils: and may neither they, nor any other of men, at any time, go back from maintaining this opinion.

But seeing men are born connected with body, either for the sake of the œconomy of the whole, or bearing the punishments of sin, or that the soul is burdened by certain passions until it be purged in the appointed periods: for it must, according to Empedocles, thirty thousand times be made to wander from the blessed, being made for the time, every form of mortals; it is credible therefore that it is delivered over to certain keepers of the same prison.

— Their purpose of dying is like the disposition of robbers suffering for robbery. —

Reason chuses either of two. If indeed they should disdain to serve seemly things, and them that are set over these, neither to come to manhood, nor to take a wife, nor to beget children, nor to do any other thing in life, but to remove hence wholly leaving no seed; so would such a kind be altogether desolated in the earth. But if they shall both take wives, and beget children, and taste fruits, and partake of the things in life; they shall also bear the appointed evils: for this is nature, that all men should have the experience of evils: for it is necessary that evils should be, nor have they another place. Certainly the convenient honours ought to be rendered to them to whom these things are committed, and the things becoming life ought to be served, until they be loosed from the bonds, lest they should appear also to be useless to these: for it is also unjust, that they who partake of the things which these have, should contribute nothing to them. Therefore they should be grateful to the demons that are here, and they owe them sacrifices of thanksgiving.

But that there is some to whom authority is given in things even to the least, one may learn from what the Egyptians say; that six and thirty demons, or some ethereal gods have distinguished the body of man, distributed into so many parts, but some also say many more are ordered to govern some one part of it, and some another: and they know the names of the demons in the language of the country, as Chnumen, and Knat, and Sikat, and Biu, and Eni, and Eribin, and Ramanor, and Rejanoor, and as many other as they name in their own tongue; and indeed they who call on them, are healed in the parts affected.

What therefore forbids one's courting both these and others by gifts, if one would be whole rather than be sick, and be happy rather than be unhappy, and be freed from places of torture and places of punishment, as they are reputed? Yet this is to be guarded against, lest any familiar with these should be melted with the service which is about these same things, and having loved the body, and being turned away from the better things, be held in forgetfulness of them. For probably wise men must not be disbelieved, who indeed say; for that the most part of terrestrial demons, being melted with generation, and strongly attached to blood, and knit to the steam of burning fat, and to melodies, and to some other such like things, could do nothing better, than heal the body, and foretel future fortune to man and to city; and as many things as are about mortal practices, these they both know and can do. But it is rather to be thought, that the demons need nothing nor want any thing; but rejoice with those that do piety toward them.

God is not to be forsaken in any wise neither by day nor night, neither in public nor private, both in every word and work; but both with these and without, let the soul be always intent to God.

If this were the case, what is grievous in the rulers that are here being pleased, both others and the potentates and kings among men, as they were not possessed of these dignities here without demoniac power? Yet if any perhaps should command a worshipper of God, either to do impiously or to say any other filthy thing, it is not on any account to be obeyed, but, rather than these, all torments are to be endured, and all deaths suffered, before any thing unholy concerning God be, not only said, but, even studied. But if one should command to praise the sun or Minerva, you ought to praise them most forwardly with a good pœan; so indeed you shall appear the more to worship the great God, if you also celebrate these in hymns; for piety passing through all becomes more perfect.

And if any should command you to swear by a king among men, neither is this grievous: for the things on earth are given to him, and whatsoever you may receive in life, you receive from him.

The ancient man ought not to be disbelieved, saying this before of old, *There is one king to whom the child of crafty Saturn gave it.* So if you would loose this opinion, likely the king will repel you: for if all should do the same with you, nothing indeed would hinder him to be left alone and desolate, and the things on earth would become the possession of the most lawless and the most rustic barbarians; and neither of thy religion, nor of the true wisdom would the glory be yet left amongst men.

Surely you will not say this, That if the Romans, believing you, and neglecting the things established by law to them, both toward gods and men, should call upon your Most High, or whomsoever you wilt; he coming down would fight for them, and they would have need of no other strength. For even the same God, before having promised to them that cleaved to him, both these things and much greater than these, as you say; you see how much he has

profited

profited both with them and you : to them indeed, in place of their being lords of the whole earth, there is neither left any such clod nor house ; but if any of you wander still hiding, yet he is sought to the judgment of death.

Neither is this indeed at all to be borne, when you say, that if they who at present reign over us, persuaded by you, should be taken, you would persuade them that again reigned. But if they also should take others, and others upon others, until all persuaded by you should be taken ; withal some principality, prudent and foreseeing what would happen, would utterly exterminate you all before its own destruction. For if it were indeed possible that they of Asia, and Europe, and Lybia, both Greeks and Barbarians, distributed into the ends of the earth, could consent to one law !——He that thinks this knows nothing.

You ought to assist the King with all your strength, and labour with him just things, and fight for him, and go with him to war, if he urge also to command in the army with him ; and you should likewise exercise the magistrate's office in your country, if this need to be done for the safety of the laws and of piety.

# NOTES on the true Discourse of CELSUS.

## On his INTRODUCTION.

### NOTE I.

Page 305. *The judgment of death impending to them.*

CELSUS wrote against the Christian religion after Marcion had published his heresy; for he mentions him and his followers, and reproaches Christians with that heresy: and Christians, when he wrote, were holding their meetings secretly, in the fear of death, wherewith they were punished when they could be apprehended; as appears from this and several other passages in his book; so that it behoved to be before the reign of Commodus, when the churches had rest. Therefore it would appear, that this philosopher wrote his book, the first, against Christianity, sometime betwixt *A. D.* 163 and 181, in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, another philosopher, held in great esteem by some Christians now, on account of his book, wherein he writes thus of the Christians in his time \*: “What sort of soul is that, which is ready now to be loosed from the body, if it be necessary, and either to be extinguished, or to be dissipated, or to abide? But this readiness—that it should come from special judgment, not according to fool-hardiness, as the Christians, but prudently, and decently, and, so as also to persuade another, not tragically.”

The philosopher did well to distinguish this readiness he here talks of, not only from that of Peregrianus, of which Lucian wrote, but especially from the forwardness of Christians, in suffering death for their faith.

\* Των εις αυτον βιβλιον ια.

**faith.** The Christian revelation, bringing life and immortality to light, and giving everlasting consolation against death, could not furnish them with any thoughts, that such a judgment as this could proceed upon. The philosopher tells not how the special judgment should be formed that may produce this readiness in a soul. And what could he imagine that any human soul had to think upon, in forming the judgment that must produce this prudent, decent, and every way composed readiness, instantly to be or not to be, as well as to leave the body? Or what is in it to persuade another, so as many others were persuaded, observing how the persecuted Christians died; some even offering themselves to death with them? In place of its being the effect of thought and judgment, if such a thing as this readiness of indifference, about dying and about being or not being after death, could take place in the human soul, it behoved it to be the consequent of no thought or judgment upon the matter at all. And so he says well, "What sort of soul is this?" A rare soul truly! not easily to be imagined, let be to be found out among the vast multitudes of souls that must all leave their bodies; at least we may say, the Christians souls were not of this sort, facing death as much without this great preparation, as men standing naked in battle-array.

The Christians were ready to die, it is true; but they were so when they ought to die, or it behoved them to leave their bodies: for Celsus represents them, not only as forward to die, but also as flying, and hiding, and assembling secretly about the business of their religion, to shun the death due to their profession, by the laws that were executed in the name and by the authority of this same virtuous and philosophical emperor. They found themselves obliged by the law of that Lord who, they believed, had brought life and immortality to light to them, and could destroy both soul and body in hell, to assemble them-

selves together in the confession of his name, forsaking the religions established by the laws of those lords who could only kill the body, and from whom they had nothing to hope for after death. And by the same law they were allowed to fly when persecuted, even as Celsus represents them doing. But when they were apprehended by their pursuers, it behoved them then to leave the body; and it was necessary for them to die, not only by the law of Marcus Antoninus the philosopher, but by his law whose authority was to them far greater, and who commanded them to die, after his own example, rather than deny, or seem to deny their faith. And then they were found, to the observation, not only of Celsus, but even of this emperor, surprisngly, and, to them, some way unaccountably ready to die. Even the Stoic philosopher appears, in this same passage of his book, somewhat disturbed with this readiness of the Christians to be loosed from the body. And Celsus the Epicurean, or rather Platonic philosopher, talks of it in this manner, (*p.* 314.) “ They that were with him while living, and heard his voice, and used him as their teacher, seeing him punished and dying, neither suffered with him, nor suffered for him, nor were persuaded to despise punishments; but they even denied that they were disciples. *Yet now ye die with him!* When he came, he drew no more than ten most profligate failors and publicans; neither did he persuade all these. If living indeed he persuaded none, but, when he is dead, they that please persuade so many; how is not this most absurd?” And (*p.* 361.) “ O thou best, who art forward in striving to death—thou establishest eternal punishments.” And (*p.* 361.) “ But how are not these things of yours absurd? To desire and hope, that this same body shall rise again, as there is nothing better for us nor more honourable, but again to throw it into punishments as dishonoured!” And (*p.* 362.) “ Their purpose of dying, is like the disposition of robbers suffering

suffering for robbery." He has recourse to this at last, though at first he was fain to compare their death to the death of Socrates, to ward off the force of the testimony it gave to the doctrine that produced it as extraordinary, and far excelling any instruction that had been amongst the nations before. Now, we may very well admit these two men as witnesses, after Pliny and Arrian, testifying the notour readiness of Christians in laying down their lives upon their faith: and indeed they testify the fact plainly; but to account for it, lay altogether out of the road of philosophers, for it was truly above nature.

However ready the Christians were to die, yet they were not prepared for it as the philosopher would have them.

Their souls were not at all ready to be extinguished, leaving their bodies, nor to be dispersed. For they died most firmly persuaded in this judgment, that they would abide.

Nor were they in readiness to abide in a worse situation than in the body they were leaving, or to abide in a miserable state: for their readiness came from their judgment concerning the fear of this at last, in case of their shunning present death by seeming to deny the faith; as it came at the same time from their judgment concerning the hope of a proper happiness for them upon the dissolution of the body: for they knew, that when they left the body, they would have a mansion in heaven, in the bodily presence of their Lord, beholding his glory, and sharing with him in the life he lives there; of which having some foretaste, in the joyful sense of the divine favour, by faith in him who suffered death for their offences, and rose again for their justification, they were confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with him.

Nor yet were they in readiness to abide always without this same body, from which they were now, when it was necessary, so ready to be loosed. For their  
readiness



readiness came from a judgment they formed upon his promise of coming again from heaven, raising them from the dead and changing their vile bodies, fashioning them like his glorified body, to live for ever with him, and with him to reign and to inherit all things, in the body. And being most firmly persuaded in this judgment, they were ready to leave this mortal corruptible body, hoping to meet with it again incorruptible and immortal. Thus Lucian, (*De Morte Peregrini*,) giving a more true account of them than the other philosophers, says, "These wretches have persuaded themselves, that they shall be in whole immortal, and live to eternity; wherefore also they contemn death, and many willingly deliver up themselves."

The philosopher, who gave no credit to those things that, being believed by Christians, made them so ready to die, was obliged to take notice of their extraordinary readiness, and to fortify himself against any impression it might make upon him, by thinking of it as some sort of madness, and by setting in opposition to it, a readiness to die that he imagined the soul might be furnished with from within itself by philosophising, a readiness to be instantly either extinguished, if of the nature of fire, or to be dissipated into air, if aerial, or to abide philosophising at freedom, being loosed from the body.

The opposition betwixt philosophy, and the word of faith that was preached by Jesus and his apostles, appears most manifestly in the case of death, but greatly to the advantage of the faith. Philosophy leading men to happiness, following nature, and avoiding the perturbations arising from unbridled passions, having rubbed through, as it could, the various situations of life, when it comes to death, loses the scent, we see, and is altogether at fault; and being at a stand on the utmost verge of its sphere, can yield no happiness to any soul there, if there be not such a soul as can find it within itself, in its readiness,  
neither

neither to be, nor not to be, nor how to be, but of indifferency to either. We may say with the philosopher, What sort of soul is that which is thus ready? or did ever any soul find itself happy in this same readiness?

Here where, philosophy appeared so manifestly at a miserable stand, the faith, bringing life and immortality to light, offered itself as a guide to happiness. Multitudes followed it, and found themselves happy in death; dying with unspeakable joy in the certain prospect of that same supreme happiness, whereof they had presently the most comfortable foretaste. The philosophical emperor, in whose name and authority they were cruelly put to death, as the greatest hurt he could do them, for all his fine talk about following nature to death as no evil to be feared, and this learned philosopher Celsus, who could reproach them and their leader with being ignominiously put to death, both of them saw the experiment made, which they most inhumanly helped to make, the one with his sword, and the other with his pen, like true sons of him that was a murderer from the beginning, and a greater philosopher than any of them. When they made the experiment, they could not help seeing the fact come out, That the followers of the faith against philosophy, found themselves happy in death. Yet they would not humble themselves to follow that guide, nor lay aside their cruel spite and malice against it, but cleaved the closer to their philosophy, scorning the death of the persecuted Christians, and vainly boasting against them, in a more excellent readiness to die, whereof they imagined their great souls capable, but whereof neither they, nor any other soul of man, ever had, or can have any comfortable experience.

The philosophers, though they laboured hard to no effect, by their reasonings and imaginations, to find a cure for the great distress the human soul is subject to from the fear of death and dread of divine judgment,

judgment, yet hardened themselves against the faith, the only remedy for this evil, by representing that amazing effect of it in the death of the Christian martyrs, as a peculiar kind of madness. Arrian (upon Epictetus, book 4. c. 7.) derives this disposition of the Galileans (as he calls them) toward death, from custom, and sorts it with madness; to which he opposes what he calls reason and demonstration disposing us, as parts of the universe, to die for the good of the whole, by teaching "the rational animal both that it is a part, and what sort of a part, and that it is comely for the parts to yield to the whole." And Pliny (epist. 97. book 10.) says, "It is not to be doubted, whatever it might be they confessed, that surely their stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished;" and he also called it madness. If such obstinacy as this had been the effect of philosophy, they would have extolled it as the highest virtue. But as it came from the faith, and appeared in dying for the faith, it was in their account madness; and at the same time they wisely thought it well deserved punishment. Celsus would not blame Christians for not forsaking or feigning to forsake an opinion that he thought a good one to shun any danger from men. But he finds great fault with them for being deceived, by not following reason and a rational guide, in receiving their opinion. They were guilty of believing without reason, and of saying that the wisdom of this world is evil. Thus they despised philosophy; and their faith was deceit. And for this deceit, it was not disagreeable to Celsus that they were tortured and crucified. In this manner was the faith treated by philosophy when it was reigning. The same sort of men talk much now against persecution; but, though circumstances be altered, and they would not suffer for their own Atheistical opinions, yet, against the same old Christian faith, they appear still possessed with the same spite and spirit of persecution that possessed the throne of the empire, when

when their most highly respected and dearly beloved Marcus Aurelius sat there, and murdered the Christians, and among the rest Justin Martyr, and Polycarp, and the martyrs of Vienne and Lyons.

## N O T E II.

*They seem to have power with the names of some demons, and with soothing incantations, (p. 305.) And (p. 307.) he says also of the Jews, they give themselves to enchantment, of which Moses was to them the interpreter.*

Every thing of this kind was expressly forbid to the Jews by the law of Moses: for that law said, *There shall not be found among you—an user of divination, an observer of times, or an inchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer: for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them (these nations) out from before thee, Deut. xviii. 9.—13. And again, A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them, Lev. xx. 27.*

And the effect of the gospel, on them that believed it, among the nations, who had been learned in that sort of arts, was to make them burn all their books that treated of such things.

Elymas the forcerer opposed the gospel; but his attempts were baffled by the superior power that attended it, punishing him as a child of the devil.

Demons sometimes offered their testimony to Jesus Christ, and to his apostles, but it was rejected; as was that of the Pythonic prophets, saying, “These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.”

Simon the magician, beholding the power that attended the word of faith, far beyond all the power of

his magic, professed to believe the gospel. But when he supposed it to be only much greater in the same kind, and so wanted to purchase of the apostles, with money, the power of conveying the Holy Ghost, by the laying on of his hands, he was rejected, as having neither part nor lot in that word, or in the matter of the Holy Ghost; because, by this, he shewed himself heartily wicked. The fathers testify that several heretics after him dealt in magic; but in this they are testifying of their wickedness: for still they held it in the same abhorrence, as those did who burned their magical books, when they believed the gospel from the apostles. And therefore what Celsus says here of Christians having power with the names of certain demons, and what he says afterwards of such use of barbarous words, and names, and of books, they had concerning these, must be true only of those heretics with whose principles and practices he all alongst his book reproaches Christianity; though they were rather philosophers, and had no part in Christianity but the name. For Celsus could not but know that there were several philosophers learned in magic, though the Epicureans perhaps ridiculed it. But surely he would not, for this, lay the evil or the deceit of magic to the charge of philosophy.

It is very true that some Jews, in the time of Jesus Christ and his apostles, did cast out demons. And whatever name they used in doing this, we see they had no power with the name of Jesus, but were baffled by the demons, when they took upon them to use it against them. And it is also true, that the fathers testify, that Christians, in the time of Celsus, and afterward, expelled demons by the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate. But they deny that they used any other name than his, or that they sought to make any gain by it, when they healed, or when they cast out demons by that name.

After

After the apostles had left the world, and left to the churches the New-Testament revelation, perfected in their scriptures; it is hard to tell for what end miraculous powers should remain in the churches, and not be continued to the end of the world. The apostle Paul plainly signifies, that when New-Testament revelation should be perfected, then *knowledge* by revelation, *tongues*, and *prophecy* would cease: and any reason that can be given for the continuance of miracles after that, must as well shew the continuance of them to the world's end. And therefore the signs and wonders after that, must be of that sort which the Lord and his apostles foretold, as accompanying the corruption of the Christian religion. Paul observed, that this corruption was beginning to take place even in his time, and foretold, that it would come at last to a great head in that Antichrist, whose coming, he said, would be *after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie*. And as the corruption of the Christian profession had gone some length against the end of the second century; it is agreeable to suppose, they might then have some signs and wonders to boast of; though, as the apostle also foretells, these, and all the other boasted miracles of Antichrist after these, no more came the length of the signs and wonders that attended the giving out of the New-Testament revelation, than the signs of Jannes and Jambres in Egypt came the length of those wrought by Moses. And any one that has given due attention to the scripture-account of the miracles wrought by Jesus, or by the apostles in his name, must have a very high notion of the deceits of jugglers, the mighty arts of magicians, and of the power of Satan in the signs and wonders of Antichrist, if he be able to compare all that ever was done in that way, or to equalize it in his own mind, with the signs and wonders of the gospel.

Irenæus speaks of the miracles that were in the apostolic churches, and boasts in them against the

heretics ; but, in doing this, he takes in all that were wrought by the apostles and others in the churches from the beginning ; so that it is hard to tell from him what were those miracles wrought in his own time ; or if they were any other, than some healings and castings out of demons, and some sort of prophesying : for, as to the raising of the dead, he speaks of that expressly, as a thing that had been long before his time, when he says, that they who had been so raised had lived several years with the churches after that resurrection. And this he seems to have taken from Quadratus, whom we have in Eusebius, hist. book 4. chap. 3.

But as to the expelling of demons and prophesying in the name of Christ, Jesus foretold, that there would be men, whom he would never acknowledge as his, being workers of iniquity, that would prophesy in his name, and in his name cast out devils, and in his name do many wonderful works. And when it is foretold, that the coming of Antichrist would be with signs and wonders countenancing the changing the truth of the gospel into a lie ; we may suppose that what Jesus said of these men doing wonders in his name belongs to that. But it behoved all these wonders to be as far inferior to the miracles wrought by the apostles, as the casting out of devils by the Jewish exorcists was inferior to the casting them out by Jesus, as he said, *with the finger of God*, alluding to what was said of the power that far outdid the magicians of Egypt.

### N O T E III.

*Opinions ought to be received following reason, and with a rational guide.—Some Christians, neither willing to give or receive a reason about the things they believe, use this, Do not examine, but believe, and thy faith will save thee, p. 306.*

The mind of man has other ways of knowing things besides that which is properly called reasoning. We must have principles to reason from; and whether these be many or reducible to one, it must be first known before we can draw any inference from it: and surely then it is not received following reason, and with a rational guide. Thus the mind of man is possessed of several truths, and knows them previously to all reasoning, and with greater certainty than they can be known by any philosophical argument.

And such is that ancient word, about which so many different, ancient, wise nations, and wise men have been always conversant, which Celsus thinks Moses learned from them. Certainly this cannot be any of those opinions wherein he differed from Moses; but must be such as wherein he appeared to Celsus to agree with all these wise nations, and wise men: and that was always known by the whole human kind, the most foolish, as well as those accounted the most wise. The sum of the law given by Moses, as it is declared by Jesus Christ, to *love God with all the heart, soul, and mind; and to love our neighbour as ourselves*, must be assented to, upon the hearing of it, as right and good; and the opposite of it stand condemned, in the conscience of every man, as evil, and rendering us disagreeable to God.

What Moses taught of one Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, and Maker of this world in six days, resting the seventh; and of the character of this one God, as opposite to sin, as he is good; and yet shewing mercy to thousands of sinners, by means of that sovereign substitution, prefigured in the sacrifices, of a spotless sufferer in their stead, for the manifestation of the divine displeasure against sin, in the salvation of sinners, was not indeed known nor acknowledged by these wise nations, and wise men. But all nations of men, wise or unwise, having something of that dread of divine displeasure, which distinguishes men from brutes, and which was awakened in them, by  
their



their falling into grievous crimes, or great calamities, entertained an opinion, that the Deity was placable by sacrifice. And so all nations, in all parts of the globe, even those most lately found out, have worshipped by sacrifice almost in the same manner as Moses prescribed to the Jews. But surely this universal opinion and practice was not the effect of reasoning: for the mind of man is not naturally furnished with any principle from which this opinion about sacrifice could be inferred; and yet it has prevailed universally among the nations of mankind: so that no account that is probable can be made of it, but that the first men had it from divine revelation, and that it came down from them by tradition.

Faith is a way we have of knowing things, different from the way of knowing the principles from which we reason, which is called intuitive knowledge by instinct or inward sense, different from the knowledge we come to by reasoning, which may be called *science*, and different from the knowledge we take in by our senses, which may be called *experience*. This knowledge of things by testimony, which, in distinction from the other ways of knowing, is called faith or belief, takes place only where other ways of knowing fail. Here testimony supplies the want of experience, fills up the empty place of a third idea to shew the agreement or disagreement of two ideas, as in science; and where that agreement or disagreement is clearly perceived without any medium, there is as little place for reasoning as for faith.

We may be deceived in believing; and so are we often in our reasoning, and in our experience: but we are as certain of some things known only by faith, as of any thing we know by reasoning and experience; and in our daily practice we proceed upon faith as confidently as upon any of the other two, and with as good success. It would therefore be most ridiculous to deny, that faith is a way of knowing competent to the mind of man. And it is no less  
absurd

absurd to demand reasoning in the place of faith; even as absurd as to require hearing from the eye, or sight from the ear. Such is the demand of the philosopher, to admit of no knowledge but what is properly called science, and his complaint of Christians as not willing to know the things of faith by reasoning; as if he had found fault with them because they would not hear with their eyes. The Christians then were perfectly in the right, not to give or take a reason for the things to be known by faith; and as to these things they said truly and most justly, Do not examine, but believe.

As faith is the credit we give to testimony, the knowledge we have of things by it, must be according to the testimony. We are used from our infancy to the knowledge of many things by the testimony of men; and we know some things this way with great certainty. But as the testimony of God must be greater than man's; so must our faith of his testimony, when we hear him, be greater than our belief of the testimony of men. And if men can testify to us, and make things known in the way of belief which otherwise we know not, it cannot be thought impossible for God, who made us capable of this way of knowing, to testify to us, and so make us know things by hearing his testimony, that could not be known otherwise; or, in the apostle's style, *to reveal things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man.* That man is capable of this sort of correspondence with God, is evident from the knowledge he has in his conscience, of the divine judgment against sin, by an instinct of inward sense proper to him, in distinction from the brutes. For if the moral sense in man go upon what is agreeable or disagreeable to society, and the remorse of conscience be only upon what is hurtful to society; it will be hard to distinguish him from other animals that live in society, as the ants and the bees. This verdict of his conscience is indeed the voice of God.

And

And when he hears the judgment of God against him as a sinner testified in his conscience; it fills him with that sense of divine displeasure that is the true misery of man, whose proper happiness and life lies in the sense of the divine favour. From this misery God alone is able to relieve sinful men, who have no other way of knowing that the offended Deity is reconcileable to them, no other way of knowing how to be restored to his favour, and so relieved from the misery of the consciousness of being disagreeable to him; but, if God be pleased to shew them how to be reconciled, by testifying to the conscience wherein his displeasure was before notified. The prophets and apostles declared this testimony of God to the consciences of men. And it is set forth in their scriptures, in an agreeableness to the tradition that prevailed universally among mankind concerning God's being reconcileable to men by sacrifice. This testimony of God, declared by the prophets and apostles, is, that God is well pleased in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ his beloved Son, delivered to death for the offences of all sorts of sinners, and raised again for their justification. And every one that believes this, hears, in his conscience, the voice of the same God, whose wrath was known there, declaring himself well pleased; and so is saved from his misery, and becomes happy in peace with God. As this that is believed, was not knowable by any reasoning or argumentation from any principle of reasoning that the mind of man was possessed of; nor by any experience that sinful mortals could pretend to; it was very proper for them, who found themselves saved in believing it, to say to reasoners against it, Do not examine, but believe, and thy faith will save thee.

#### N O T E . I V .

“ The Jews following Moses—esteemed God to be one. This one God they thought to be either the  
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Most High, or Adonai, or the Heavenly, or Sabaoth, or howsoever they delight to name this very World, and nothing more knew they. It differs nothing to call the God over all, either by the name current among the Greeks, Jupiter, or this (say) among the Indians, or that among the Egyptians," p. 307. Connect with this what he says afterward, p. 335. "If—the Jews would diligently observe their own law, this were not blameable in them, but rather in those who leave their own things, and pretend to those of the Jews. But if, as knowing something more wise, they boast and turn away from the communion of others not equally pure; they have already heard, that they do not say a peculiar opinion concerning heaven; but that I may pass all, what was held of old also by the Persians, as Herodotus likewise somewhere shews; for he says, It is their custom, going up to the greatest height of mountains, to make sacrifices to Jupiter, calling all the circle of heaven Jupiter. I reckon then it differs nothing to call the Most High, Diespiter, or Jupiter, or Adonai, or Sabaoth, or Ammon, as the Egyptians, or Pappai, as the Scythians."

It is surprising how Celsus, who had read Moses, whom the Jews followed in their opinion of one God, came to say so confidently, that they knew no other for that one God, to whom they gave various names, but this very World; when he could not but know, that they distinguished their one God from all other, as the Creator and Maker of the world, and that they believed him to be the infinitely wise and powerful author and cause of nature, and the absolute commander of its whole course, even as he manifestly shewed himself, by reversing it at his pleasure, in all those miracles by which they became a nation, and with which their settlement in their country and their very constitution as a nation had a necessary connection.

He says afterward, p. 331. "The Jews may justly be wondered at, if indeed they worship the heaven, and angels that are there; but the most venerable and powerful parts of it, the sun, and moon, and the other stars, both fixed and planets, these they despise, as if it were possible, that the whole indeed should be God, but the parts of it not divine!"

Yet it is manifest, that the Jews, following Moses, could not worship heaven, nor any thing else but the Creator of heaven and earth, whom they believed to be omnipresent, filling heaven and earth; but the place where he shewed himself especially present, or the residence of the glory of the divine Majesty, they believed to be, not the visible heavens, but the heaven of heavens, or third heaven, where is the throne of his glory, and where innumerable angels stand before him, and minister to him.

Nor did they worship angels, as Celsus says. They worshipped him that appeared to the fathers and to Moses in human likeness, who, because he was, in the fulness of time, to be sent forth from his Father, made of a woman, to redeem mankind, was called the Angel Redeemer, the Angel God's face, and in whom is the name of God. But they looked on him as the Most High God, and not another God than the same one God that created and made the heavens and the earth, and all things in them. And when they beheld his appearance, they called it the similitude of Jehovah, and the likeness of the glory of Jehovah. But there is no other foundation in the Jewish scriptures for saying, that the Jews worshipped the heavenly angels, or, as he says elsewhere, that they thought of God as a man: for, according to their law, they worshipped neither heaven, the dwelling place of the divine Majesty, nor the angels that worship God there, nor indeed any thing in heaven or earth, beside the one God, the Creator and Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, who shewed himself

self to be so when he condescended to appear to them, and shew himself present in human likeness.

But while Celsus imputes this opinion to the Jews, that there is no other God but the world, it may be considered what he himself and some other philosophers thought of God; for it is possible, that, saying this, he may mean, that neither Jews nor Persians, nor any other men could know any God above this very world; because something like this may be inferred from his own words before noted. But let us hear him further.

He says, (*p.* 328.) "The world is unbegotten and incorruptible." The Jews had no such thought of the world. And, speaking against the resurrection of the dead as possible to God, he says, (*p.* 332.) "God wills not things contrary to nature. — God is—the patron—of right and just nature. — Surely God neither would nor could unreasonably exhibit the flesh eternal;—for he is the reason of all beings; he can therefore work nothing unreasonable nor against himself." Surely this is not the miracle-working God of the Jews. And it might with better reason be said upon this, that Celsus knew nothing else for God but nature, or this same unbegotten and incorruptible world. Is it then his own opinion that he imputes to the Jews \* ?

But let us take together in one view all the instruction he has to give us from philosophy about God; that we may behold the contrast between the God of the philosophers, and the God of the Jews and Christians; even as we have before seen the contrast betwixt philosophy and the faith in the affair of death.

He says. (*p.* 323.) "If God himself shall descend to men, this will be the consequence, that he must desert his own throne: for if you should change any one thing, even the least here, all things overturned would

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\* All who hold miracles utterly impossible, and contrary to the unchangeableness of God, may be justly suspected of owning no God above nature, or of being Atheists.

would go upon you to ruin?" And (p. 324.) "Now I say, nothing but things established of old. God is good, and beautiful, and happy, and in the most comely and the best. If indeed he descend to men, there must be a change upon him, even a change from good to bad, and from comely to vile, and from happiness to misery, and from the best to the worst. Who then would chuse such a change? And certainly it is natural indeed to that which is mortal to be altered and transformed; but to the immortal, to be still the same thing, and in the same manner. By no means therefore would God admit of this change. Either God is truly changed, as they say, into a mortal body, and that is before said to be impossible; or he is not indeed changed, but makes the beholders think so, and deceives and lies. But deceit and a lie are otherwise indeed evil, but only if, as in the part of poison, one should use them, either to sick and distracted friends, curing them, or to enemies, taking care to escape danger. But neither is any sick or mad a friend to God, nor is God afraid of any, that deceiving he should escape danger."

P. 327. "But I would rather teach this, according to nature, that God made nothing mortal; but whatsoever things are immortal, these indeed are the works of God, but the mortal, of others. And the soul truly is the work of God; but the nature of the body is different. And in this respect the body of a bat, or worm, or frog, or man, differs nothing: for the matter is the same, and the corruptible of them alike. The nature of all the foresaid bodies is common, and, being one, goes and returns into reiterating change. And nothing begotten of matter is immortal.—Evils in beings, neither before, nor now, nor afterward, are less and more: for the nature of all things is one and the same; and the generation of evils still the same. The world is unbegotten and incorruptible; and only the things on earth suffer deluges and conflagrations.—What should be the nature

ture of evils, is not indeed easy to be known to one that does not philosophize. But it is enough to be said to the multitude, that evils are not indeed from God, but cleave to matter, and govern them that are evil. Now, the circuit of mortal things is alike from beginning to end; and, according to the established revolutions, there is a necessity, that the same things always both have been, and are, and shall be.~ Nor are these things given to man; but each of them comes into being, and perishes for the sake of the safety of the whole, according to the forefaid change from others to others. If any thing seem evil to thee, it is not yet manifest, if it be evil: for thou knowest not, that it is useful, either to thee, or to another, or to the whole.---(P. 329.) They say, that God made all things for man. Thunders, and lightnings, and rains, are not the works of God\*. And if one should grant these to be the works of God."---(P. 331.) "These things therefore are not made to man, as neither to the lion, nor the eagle, nor the dolphin; but that this world, as the work of God, might be entire, and perfect out of all things. For the sake of this, all things have been measured, not of one another, but, if not every work, yet of the whole. And the whole is God's care; and Providence at no time forsakes this; nor does it become worse; nor does God, through time, turn to it; nor is he angry because of men, as neither of apes, nor mice, each of whom in part has received a portion of it."

Then he instructs us from Plato. (p. 338. and 339.) "Plato says in some of his epistles, The first good is altogether inexpressible; but, by having much familiarity about that matter, and by living with it, suddenly, as from flaming fire, light being kindled in the soul, it now nourishes itself. And in the same epistle, If it appeared to me, that these things,

\* He says elsewhere, (p. 216.) "These are brought forth by the sun, and moon, and the other stars."



things, both written sufficiently, and spoken, are for the multitude; how could we be better employed in life, than to write what is of great benefit to men, and bring forth \* nature to light unto all.—Plato's writings declare, that the good is known to few.—Plato—says somewhere in the laws, truly God, according to ancient word, holding the beginning, and the end, and the middle of all beings, perfects rectitude according to nature, pervading all round. But he is always followed by justice, the punisher of them that forsake the divine law. He truly that will be happy, cleaving to her, follows humble and modest †.—Plato says, All things are about the king of all, and all things are for his sake; and this is the cause of all good things; but the second about second things, and the third about the third things ‡. The human soul therefore desires to learn about these things, of what sort they are, looking to the things that are akin to her, of which she comprehends nothing fully. Surely there is nothing such concerning the king, and those things I said. Some Christians, misunderstanding the sayings of Plato, boast of a supercelestial God, transcending the heaven of the Jews.”

Celsus

\* This is that inexpressible first good which the light kindled in Plato's soul discovered to him. And this same is his God whom he durst not declare to the multitude.

† His way to happiness is humbly to follow nature, and he that forsakes it must suffer for it.

‡ Plato, it seems, imagined a sort of trinity of nature in the whole of things distributed into first, second, and third things. And some Christian philosophers have imagined that he knew and taught their trinity. Yea Origen finds fault with Celsus for shunning to mention what Plato said of the Son of God in the epistle to Hermias and Coriscus, and gives his saying thus, “obtelting the God of all, the commander both of the things that are and shall be, and the father and lord of that commander and cause, whom, if we truly philosophize, we shall all know clearly to the power of happy men.” *Origen. con. Cels. lib. 6. p. 280.* It may be true that Celsus says of some Christians, misunderstanding these sayings of Plato, applying them to their God. Justin Martyr had then wrote.

Celsus proceeds, and ridiculing the style of Moses writing of the making of the world, says (p. 347.) "It is neither just, that the first God should be weary, nor work with his hands, nor give orders, nor has he a mouth, nor a voice, nor has he any other of these things which they know; nor did he make man his image: for God is not such, nor is he like to any other similitude. What sort of thing is it to think, that what is according to the image of God, is in that part of compounded man which is worse, *i. e.* the body! God partakes not of figure or colour: but neither partakes he of motion, nor does God partake of substance. All things are of him. Neither is God comprehensible by reason; nor is he nameable: for he suffers nothing that can be apprehended by a name. How then, may some say, shall I know God? And how shall I learn the way to him? And how do you shew him to me, As now you cast darknes before my eyes, and I see nothing clearly? Those whom one should bring forth of darknes into splendid light, not being able to bear the bright rays, would be punished in the sight, and hurt, and think to be blind. But Christians would give these questions, How shall we think to know God? and, How shall we be saved with him? this answer, Because God is great and hard to be beheld, he, throwing his own spirit into a body like us, hath sent him hither, that so we might be able to hear from him and learn. When they say, that God is spirit, they differ nothing in that from the Stoics among the Greeks, saying, that God is a spirit pervading all things, and comprehending all things in himself. Seeing the Son is spirit from God, born in a human body, the Son of God himself would not be immortal: for there is no such nature of spirit, as to endure always; as it is not the nature of fire to continue for ever."

P. 352. 353. 354. He says further, "But they will also say again, How shall they know God, not apprehending him by sense? What can possibly be learned without

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without sense? The voice indeed, not of man, nor of the soul, but of the flesh! But yet let them hear, if they can even hear any thing, as a fearful and body-loving generation; if, winking with sense, you would look up with the mind, and turning away the eye of the flesh, you would raise up that of the soul; only thus shall ye see God. And if ye seek a leader in this way, you must fly from impostors and jugglers. — But follow divinely-inspired poets, and the wise, and philosophers, and they will lead you. Follow Plato, who is a more effectual teacher of the matters of theology. He says, *It is indeed then a labour to find, and impossible for one that finds to declare unto all the Maker and Father of this universe.* You see how the way of truth is sought by prophets, and how Plato knew that it is impossible for every one to go in it. But since, for the sake of this, it is found out by wise men, that so we might get some perception of the unnameable, and first, manifesting him, either by the composition which is into other things, or by resolution from these, or willing to teach, by proportion, what is otherwise inexpressible; I would wonder if ye could follow, altogether bound up by flesh, and seeing nothing pure. *Substance and generation; intelligible, visible: with substance, truth; but with generation, error.* About truth then science; but about either, opinion. And understanding is of the intelligible, but sight of the visible. For the mind knows the intelligible, but the eye the visible. What therefore, in the visibles, is the sun, being neither eye nor sight; but to the eye the cause of seeing; to the sight, of consisting by him; and to visibles, of being seen; to all sensibles, of being; and not he, to himself, of being seen; that in the intelligibles is he, who is neither mind, nor understanding, nor science; but to the mind the cause of understanding; and to the understanding, of being by him; and to science, of knowing by him, and to all intelligibles, and to the truth itself, and to substance itself, of being

ing beyond all things ; he being intelligible by a certain ineffable power. These things are said by men having understanding. But if ye also understand any thing of these, it holds in us. And if ye think of any spirit descending from God to tell forth divine things, this would be the spirit that preaches these things ; of whom ancient men being indeed filled, have told many and good things, which if you cannot hear, hold your peace, and hide your own ignorance, and do not say, that those are blind who see, and that those are lame who run ; being yourselves wholly lamed in your souls and mutilated, and living to body, that is, to a dead one.”

Now, this is all the God that Celsus has to oppose to the God of the Jews and Christians. And after all he has said for their instruction, from men of understanding, filled with the divine spirit, concerning this unnameable and first, which is neither spirit, nor substance, nor mind, nor understanding, and surely not body ; may it not be, after all, inquired, What is it that he and these men saw for God, winking with sense, and looking up with the mind, and turning away the eye of the flesh, and lifting up that of the soul ? Did they behold the cause of knowledge, not knowing, and the cause of understanding, not understanding, and the cause of all things, nothing different from them, that can be named ? Yet who can call them blind ? For they see what neither Jew nor Christian can see !

We may here also observe what is said by Marcus Antoninus on this subject, because he does not seem to differ at bottom from Celsus and his ancient wise men. He says, (book 9.) “ He that acts unjustly, acts impiously : for the nature of the whole having framed rational animals, for the sake of one another, so as to help indeed one another according to fitness, but in no wise to hurt ; it is manifest, that the transgressor of her decree acts impiously against the eldest of the gods : for the nature of the whole is the na-

ture of beings. But all beings hold fitly together. But yet the same is also named the truth, and is the first cause of all true things. He indeed, therefore, that lies wittingly, does impiously, in as much as, deceiving, he acts unjustly; but he that lies unwittingly, in as much as he acts discordant to the nature of the whole, and in as much as he acts disorderly, fighting against the nature of the world." Sometimes this philosopher hesitates betwixt this nature of the whole, before which he knew no God, and the atoms of Epicurus; as when he says, (book 10. 6.) "Whether atoms or nature, let this be first laid down, that I am a part of the whole administered by nature." But whether they spake of no first cause beside atoms, or spake high swelling words that had no meaning beyond this nature of the whole, they were all Atheists; and they were conscious of this, dissembling it, and fearing to be discovered by the multitude.

### N O T E V.

*The leader of this generation;—he before a very few years led the way of this doctrine, being esteemed by Christians to be the Son of God. P. 307.*

We may here take together in one view all that Celsus says on this subject, if thereby we may understand what was known to be the faith of Christians in his time concerning the person of Jesus Christ.

*P. 307. "Jesus—returned (from Egypt) highly conceited of these powers, and for them proclaimed himself God."*

*P. 309. "The Chaldeans were said by Jesus to have been moved to come to his birth, worshipping him, yet a babe, as God.—But what need was there to transport thee, yet an infant, into Egypt, lest thou shouldst be killed? for it was not like God to be fearful about death."*

*P. 310.*

P. 310. "The body of God would not be such an one as thine."

P. 311. "But how were we to esteem him God who — shewed the performance of nothing that he promised. — And truly, it neither suits with him that is God, to fly, nor to be led away bound; and yet less to be deserted and betrayed by his familiars, and them that partook with him in all things, and that used him as their teacher, and accounted him the Saviour, and the child and messenger of the greatest God."

P. 312. 313. "How, if he foretold both him that betrayed him, and him that denied him, did they not fear him as God, so as the one should not yet betray, nor the other deny? — Being God he foretold these things; and what was foretold, it behoved by all means to come to pass. God therefore led about his own disciples and prophets, with whom he eat and drank, unto this, that they should be ungodly and impious. — But he that eat with God became a conspirator! And which is yet more absurd, God himself conspired against his table companions, making them betrayers and impious! — If these things seemed good to him, and he was punished obeying his Father, it is manifest, that to him, being God, and also willing, these usages, according to his mind, were neither troublesome nor grievous. Why then does he lament, and grieve, and pray, that the fear of destruction may pass away? — None would commend God and the Son of God from such signs. — For as the sun, enlightening all other things, first shews himself, so it behoved the Son of God to do."

P. 313. 314. "Ye are sophistical, in saying, that the Son is the very Logos, *αυτολογος*. — But after promising the Word to be the Son of God, ye shew us not a pure and holy Word, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified. — And what noble thing did Jesus as God, despising men, and ridiculing and mocking what befel him? — Why did he

not, if not before, yet now at least, manifest something divine, and deliver himself from that shame, and treat them that reproached both him and his Father, as they deserved.—Do ye thus accuse us, O most believing! for that we do not account him God, nor agree with you, that he suffered these things for the help of men, and that we might despise punishments?”

*P.* 315. 316. 317. “By what reasoning were ye induced to esteem him the Son of God? We were induced by this, that we know his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness.—We esteem him to be the Son of God, seeing he cured the lame and the blind, and (as ye say) raised the dead.—How is it not then miserable, from the same works, to reckon one God, and others impostors?—By what then were ye induced? Was it because he foretold, how, being dead, he would rise again?—But how many others have dealt in such wonders?—Or do ye think that those of others are and appear to be fables? But to you, his voice when he expired on the cross, and the earthquake, and the darkness, is found a beautiful and credible catastrophe of the drama? Yea, that living indeed, he could not help himself; but being dead, he arose and shewed the marks of punishment, and his hands as they had been pierced.-----If Jesus would really declare his divine power, it behoved him to be seen to them that used him ill, and to him that condemned him, and indeed to all. For surely he no more feared any man, being dead, and, as ye say, being God.-----He ought, for the manifestation of his Godhead, to have, at least, disappeared directly from the cross.-----If he wanted to be hid, why was the voice heard from heaven, proclaiming him the Son of God? But if he would not be hid, why was he crucified, or why did he die?-----O most high and heavenly! What God coming to men was disbelieved, and appeared to them that hoped for these things?

For in these he openly confesses, that he cannot persuade; which neither indeed suits with God, nor yet with a prudent man."

P. 319. 320. "They who worship him that was taken and put to death, do much the same with the Getæ, worshipping Zamolxis.—If you would compare Apollo or Jupiter to him, they would not bear it. Faith, prepossessing their soul, makes this sort of an assent concerning Jesus. Him, being of a mortal body, they esteem God; and in this they think they do piety. But putting off the impure infirmities of the flesh, he will then be God. Why then not Æsculapius, and Bacchus, and Hercules? They laugh at the worshippers of Jupiter, seeing his sepulchre is shown in Crete; and nevertheless worship him who is of the sepulchre."

P. 322. "They say that God is sent to sinners."

P. 323. 324. 325. "What did God mean by such a descent? Was it that he might learn the affairs of men? for did he not know all? he knew then indeed; but he did not rectify, nor was it possible for him by divine power to rectify, if some one were not sent that should be born to this purpose! If God himself shall descend to men, this will be the consequence, that he must desert his own throne. For if you would change any one thing, even the least here; all things overturned would go upon you to ruin.—Not needing to be known for himself, but for our salvation.—If indeed he descend to men, there must be a change upon him.—And certainly it is natural to that which is mortal, to be altered and transformed; but to the immortal, to be still the same, and in the same manner. By no means, therefore, would God admit of this change. Either God is truly changed (as they say) into a mortal body; or he is not indeed changed, but makes beholders think so.—The Jews on their part say, that life being filled with all wickedness, one should be sent from God, that the unrighteous may be punished,  
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ed, and all things purged.---And the Christians again, adding some words to those said by the Jews, say that the Son of God is already sent for the sins of the Jews; and that the Jews, punishing Jesus, and giving him gall to drink, drew gall from God upon themselves."

*P.* 331. "God indeed, O Jews and Christians, and no child of God, neither descended, nor would descend. But ye speak of certain angels, say who these are, gods? or some other kind? Some other, as it seems, demons.----(*P.* 336.) And that indeed there came also to his own sepulchre an angel, some say one, and others two, answering the women, that he was risen: for the child of God, it seems, was not able to open the sepulchre, but needed another to remove the stone."

*P.* 343. "Not holy to say, That the great God truly, being willing to do any good to men, hath one working against him, and is not able. The child of God then is put to the worse by the devil, and, being punished by him, teaches us all to despise punishments! foretelling, that Satan himself also, in like manner appearing, shall shew great works and wonders, usurping to himself the glory of God, to which they must not give heed who would avoid him, but believe himself alone.----(*P.* 345.) But they say that the Son of God is punished by the devil, and he punishes them."

*P.* 345. "But I signify whence this came to them, to call the Son of God. Ancient men called the very world, as made of God, both his child and God. Altogether like, certainly, is this and that child of God!"

*P.* 348. "Whence should he be demonstrated the child of God who suffered such punishments, if it had not been foretold concerning him!---Seeing the divine spirit was in a body; it altogether behoved it somewhat to excel the rest, in greatness, or beauty, or strength, or voice, or awfulness, or eloquence:  
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for it is unaccountable, that what had something divine more than others, should differ nothing from another; but (as ye say) was little, and hard favoured, and ignoble.”

P. 350. 351. “If the prophets should have foretold, that the great God---would serve, or be sick, or die; it behoved God to die, or serve, or be sick; seeing it was foretold; that, dying, it might be believed that he is God. But prophets would never have foretold this; for it is evil and unholy. Therefore it is not to be considered, whether it be foretold or not foretold, but if it be a work worthy of God and good? But for the shameful and evil, tho’ all madmen should appear to foretel it, it is incredible. How then are the things holy that were done about him, as about God! If these things were prophesied of the God over all, must then such things be believed of God, seeing they are foretold?”

P. 353. “Blaspheming others demonstrated to be gods, as idols; but worshipping him who is truly more miserable than even idols themselves, and not yet an idol, but verily dead, and seeking a father like unto him. Truly for such deceit---wretched ye are tortured, and crucified. (P. 356. 358.)---Truly they are manifestly convicted, that they worship not God, but neither demons, but one that is dead.---If truly these served no other but one God, they would perhaps have some strong reason against others; but now they worship excessively him that lately appeared, and withal think that nothing is done wickedly about God, if also his servant be served. If you should teach them, that this is not his child; but that he is indeed the Father of all, who alone truly ought to be worshipped; they yet would not, without him also, who is their leader of sedition. And truly they have called him the Son of God; not because they worship God exceedingly, but because they magnify him exceedingly.---They substitute another supercelestial God his Father, concerning

cerning whom they have consented to worship; that, under pretence of the great God; they may worship him alone, whom they set up the Son of man, whom they declare stronger and lord of the ruling God; hence they have this commandment, Not to serve two lords."

From all this that Celsus says of the belief of Christians concerning Jesus, and of the worship they paid to him, as the Son of God, and from all his reasonings against it, we may easily see what was the faith of Christians in his time concerning the person of Jesus Christ. It is manifest they distinguished him from all other men, calling him the Son of God: for Celsus makes his Jew address him thus, (p. 308.) "If thou sayest this, that every man, according to divine providence, becomes the Son of God; wherein, then, art thou different from another?" They distinguished him personally from all other men by his name; esteeming him the Son of God, or child of God, in this way peculiar and proper to himself, that though he is really man, yet he is not a human, but a divine person descending from the Father, and sent by him, taking that flesh and blood, or that human soul and body, born of Mary, to be his own soul, and his own body; so that this holy thing born of her, is no other person but the Son of God; and therefore is called the Son of God. On account of his being sent forth in this manner from the Father, and being thus made of a woman, he was called the Angel, when he appeared of old to the fathers in human likeness, and was worshipped by them; and was said by Christians, according to their scriptures, to have descended, and to have been sent. When Celsus thinks he has demonstrated, that neither God nor child of God, could descend, he supposes his adversaries in this question, being thus confuted, as to the descent of God, or the Son of God into man, might talk of the descent of some angels, whom he considers as demons, as that which they meant by  
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the descent of the Son of God ; and he guards against this supposed evasion, by putting them in mind of manifold descents of such angels mentioned in their scriptures, and of their being sent, severals of them, about Jesus : so that, if this was their meaning, they could not speak consistently with themselves, of any sending or descent peculiar and proper to him.

His reasoning against Christians calling Jesus the Son of God, represents them to us as making him as much, and as truly God, as the Son of man is man ; even the great God, the God over all, and so worshipping him, as they would not do any thing but God ! for he reasons against his descent into man, as inconsistent with the immutability of God, and against the appearance of the man Jesus, especially as crucified, as utterly incompatible with the greatness and majesty of the God over all. And thus Celsus plainly makes the same very account of the Christians, calling Jesus the Son of God, that the Jews made of Jesus, calling himself so, when they said unto him, “ Thou being a man makest thyself God.” But neither he, nor the Jews charged this with the making of more gods than one. Celsus speaks also of the spirit of God sent into that human body ; perhaps taking occasion from what used to be said by Christians, of the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost being united with the man who is the Son of God, and dwelling eminently in him. Yet he does not attempt, upon this, to represent them as holding three gods. Their known doctrine about the time when Celsus wrote, is plainly set forth by another adversary cotemporary with Celsus. Lucian, in his

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\* If Lucian be not the author of the PHILOPATRIS, it must be more ancient. For it seems to have been written in the time of Trajan's wars ; if it was not writ by Lucian in the time of Marcus Antoninus, when Cassius overthrew the Parthians.

and three of one; esteem thou these to be Jove! think this to be God!"

If Celsus had not this view that Christians had from the gospel, that the Son of God took that holy thing conceived by the Virgin to be his own soul and his own body, so that the man Jesus was no human person, nor any other divine person but the Son of God; we need not be surpris'd at his ignorance of that personal union, when we see what view Origen, the Christian philosopher, would give us of it, when he explains it in answer to Celsus. He says, (*Book 2. p. 62. 63. 64.*) "Neither do we conceive the body of Jesus, then seen and felt, to be God; and what say I the body! but neither the soul of which this is said, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.* But likeas, according to the word of the Jews, he that says, *I am the Lord, the God of all flesh;* and this, *Before me there was no other God, and there shall not be after me,* is believed to be God, using as an organ the soul and the body of the prophet: yea, according to the Greeks, he that says, *I know the number of the sand, and the measure of the sea, I understand the dumb, and hear him that speaks not,* is esteemed God, speaking and being heard through Pythia! In like manner, according to us, God the Word, and Son of the God of all things, said in Jesus, this, *I am the way, the truth, and the life;* and this, *I am the door;* and this, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven;* and if there be any other thing like these."

According to this account he gives of the thing, Jesus is no otherwise the Word or Son of God, than as any of the inspired prophets was God, or than as the Pythia was he that spake through her, whom the Greeks esteemed God. But surely Celsus could not perceive this to be the sense that Christians in his time had of the matter: else he would not have charged them as he does, with esteeming Jesus himself to be the Son of God, and to be God, and with worshipping

worshipping him as God, while they confessed him a crucified man.

Origen proceeds thus: "But that the gospels know not him that says this in Jesus, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life*, to be any thing circumscribed, as to be no way without the soul and body of Jesus, is manifest, both from many, and from the few that we subjoin, which are thus." Then, after quoting to this purpose, John i. 20. and Matth. xviii. 20. and Matth. xxviii. 20. he says,---"But we say these things not separating the Son of God from Jesus: for the soul and the body of Jesus is one with the Word of God, especially after the œconomy: for if according to the doctrine of Paul, saying, *He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit*; whoever understands what it is to be joined to the Lord, and he that is joined to him is one spirit with the Lord; how is not that, when united, much more divinely and grandly one with the Word of God?"

It seems Origen did not mind this, that, beside the oneness of the Son of God with the Father, as one and the same God with him, and beside the personal union of that soul and body with the Son of God, by virtue of which it is called the Son of God; the gospel also teaches us, that the Son of God is united likewise with the Father in his human soul and body, by the Holy Ghost inhabiting that soul and body in the most eminent manner. And like unto this union of the man Christ Jesus with the Father, is the union of his church with him; even as he, by the Spirit of the Father, eminently inhabiting, and as possessing his soul and body, is one with the Father. But for this union with the Father, Jesus cannot be called the Father, as he is called the Son of God, nor can he for this be called the Holy Ghost, as he is, and must, according to the gospel, be called the Son of God, and the Word of God. Even as he that is joined to the Lord, and is one spirit with him, is not for this, the Lord, and can-

not, on this account, be called the Lord; yea, nor the Spirit of the Lord; as the gospel taught Christians to call; and as Celsus found them calling Jesus the Son of God, and the Word of God, whom they accounted a divine person, and therefore called him God. If, therefore, the union of that soul and body with the Word of God be of the same kind with the union of him with the Lord, who is joined to him, and is one spirit with him, (though much more grand in the same kind); this will never justify calling it the Word of God, or the Son of God, and so God. For a Christian, according to this, had only such like reason for calling Jesus the Lord, as he had for calling himself the Lord.

And this brings to mind the answer that Origen gives to what Celsus made his Jew say to Jesus, (*book 1. p. 44.*) "If thou sayest this, that every man according to divine providence, becomes the Son of God, what then dost thou differ from another?" His answer to this is, "That every one indeed, who, as Paul names it, is no more tutored by fear, but who chuses honesty for itself, is the Son of God; but he differs much and far from every one that is called the Son of God for virtue, who is as some fountain and beginning of them that are such. This is what Paul says, *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, in which we cry Abba, Father.*"

Though Origen was a great student of the scriptures, yet it seems his philosophy could not let him understand the New Testament, plainly shewing, that we become the sons of God through the relation the Son of God condescended to with us, in becoming partaker with us in flesh and blood, so that he is not ashamed to call us brethren; and being restored to the favour of God by the righteousness his Son wrought for us, we are reconciled to him as our Father; and the confidence his Spirit gives us of our acceptance with him through his Son's righteousness,

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sets us above that bondage and fear they were in, who lived under the law not yet fulfilled by the Son of God. How much and far does this differ from what the philosopher says of Jesus being the spring and beginning of such as chuse virtue, not from fear, but for itself, for which he and they are called sons of God, he differing from them as the original of this!

But neither does the Christian philosopher seem to understand what Christians, in the time of Celsus, believed of the oneness of the Son with the Father as God, when they looked on him as sent forth from the Father, made of a woman, made under the law, and as serving him in his soul and body, and yet worshipped him as not another God, but as one and the same God with him: for they would not serve two gods. For he says, upon this oneness with the Father, (book 8. p. 385. 386.) “If Celsus had understood this, *I and the Father are one*; and that said in prayer by the Son of God, in this, *As I and thou are one*, he would not have thought that we serve also another besides the God over all; for he says, *The Father is in me, and I in the Father*. But if any should be disturbed by these things, lest perhaps we go over to them who deny the Father, and the Son to be two persons\*, let him know this, *There was one heart and soul of all them that believed*, that he may behold this, *I and the Father are one*. We therefore serve one God, as we have interpreted, the Father and the Son; and the word that is against others, abides firm to us: and we do not excessively worship him that lately appeared as not being before; for we believe him saying, *Before Abraham was I am*, and saying, *I am the truth*. And none of us is so stupid as to think, that the substance of the truth was not before the times of the appearance of Christ. Therefore we worship the Father of the truth, and the  
Son

\* *ὑποστάσεις*.—It is hard to tell whether Origen, in this passage, means by this word persons or substances.



Son the truth; being two things in subsistence, but one in sameness of mind, and in symphony, and in identity of will, so that he who hath seen the Son, (*being the brightness of the glory and express image of the person of God*), hath seen God in him, being the *image of God.*"

Thus he makes the oneness of the Father and the Son, as the object of worship, to be of the same kind with the oneness among them that believe, being of one heart and of one soul; which, though it be in the highest degree, can never make them one God, can never make them the object of their worship who worship none but one God. And so he makes void the true oneness of the Son with the Father, as well as the oneness of Jesus with the Son, studying to illustrate, by other things, those to which there is nothing that can be compared or be any way equal.

Nor is his account of the worship paid to the Son of God disagreeable to this explication of his oneness with the Father: for he goes on, in the same passage, to answer Celsus in this manner, "Then he thinks it follows to us, from our serving with God his Son, that, according to us also, not God only, but also his servants should be served. If indeed then he understands them that are truly servants of God, after the only begotten of God, Gabriel and Michael, and the rest of the angels, archangels, and had said that these should be served; perhaps purging what he signifies concerning serving and the actions of the server, we would say on the head, as discoursing of such, what things we have attained to understand of them. But now esteeming the demons worshipped by the nations, servants; he draws not us by the consequence which is concerning the serving of such whom the word manifests the servants of the wicked, and the prince of this world, drawing away from God whom he can. So then we decline not to worship and serve all servants whom other men worship; for if we had learned them to be servants of the  
God

God over all, we would not say they are demons. But we worship one God and his one Son, and Word, and Image, with supplications and praises, as we are able, offering prayers to the God of all things, through his only begotten, to whom we first offer them, counting him worthy, being the propitiation for our sins, to offer, as high priest, both our prayers and sacrifices and intercessions to the God over all. Our faith therefore is concerning God, by his Son confirming it in us; and Celsus has not any sedition of ours to shew concerning the Son of God. And indeed we worship the Father, admiring his Son, the *Word*, and *Wisdom*, and *Truth*, and *Righteousness*, and all things which we have learned the Son of God to be, even so, and the begotten of such a Father.”

What sort of worship and service may this be that Origen would allow to archangels, the servants of God in order after the only begotten of God? Is it the same kind of service that he would do first to him, the chief servant, and to them next servants after him? The Son of God was made a little lower than the angels, in becoming the Son of man to serve. For he that was in the form of God took on him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to the death of the cross. This is the service he did in his soul and body, wherein being gloriously rewarded for his service, he is demonstrated to be the Son of God, appearing no more in the weakness of the flesh, but in the power of an endless life; and so is worshipped as God by angels and men. But Origen makes him a servant as he was before the archangels, and so to be worshipped, as they perhaps may also be after him. And the worship he allows to him is the offering of our prayers to him first, as the high priest, that he may offer them to the God over all; which is his sense of our access to the Father through him. But

as there is no instance in the New Testament of any such address to him, (though we have several instances of solemn prayer to him, as Acts vii. 59. 60. and 2 Cor. xii. 8. 9. and a representation of solemn worship and adoration paid to him, the propitiation for our sins, by angels and men, Rev. v. 8.—13.); so neither does Celsus take any notice of this way of addressing him in prayers among the Christians in his time, for he reasons against them, as honouring him even as they honoured the Father which sent him; for this they did, according to the scripture, when they asked the Father in his name.—Celsus, charging them with worshipping him even as the Father, tacitly acknowledges, that so they might, if he were the Son of God as they believed him to be, when he says, “If you would teach them, that this is not his child, but that he is indeed the Father of all, who alone truly ought to be worshipped; they yet would not, without him also, who is their leader of sedition. And indeed they have named him God’s Son, not because they worship God exceedingly, but because they magnify him exceedingly.”

To this Origen, applying to him the words of Heb. i. 3. and Wisd. vii. 26. gives this reply,—“We know, that he is Son from him, and he is his Father. And there is nothing improper in the word, nor incongruous to God, substituting such an only begotten son. And none could persuade us, that such an one is not the Son of the unbegotten God and Father.”

This is new style\*. This distinction, of a begotten and an unbegotten God, is foreign to the scripture. And we cannot learn, from what Celsus writes, that the Christians in his time knew any thing of it; for, according to him and Lucian, they believed the Father and the Son, though the one was not the other, yet to be one and the same Most High God.

Origen

\* *New* with respect to the scripture; for Justin Martyr used it before, and perhaps Origen borrowed it from him.

Origen proceeds: "And we say, that he is the Son of God; but of God whom (if the sayings of Celsus must be followed) we worship exceedingly, and we acknowledge his Son exceedingly magnified by the Father. But let it be, that some, as among the multitude of believers, and taking a different way of speaking for rashness, suppose that the Saviour is the God over all; but surely nothing such, we who believe him, saying, The Father, who sent me, is greater than I."

Following the sayings of Celsus, he changes them: for whereas Celsus had said, they magnified him exceedingly, Origen says, they acknowledged him exceedingly magnified by the Father. And differing from those, among the multitude of believers, whom he accuses of rashness (not heresy) for calling the Saviour God over all; he differs as much from Paul's way of speaking, as from theirs who believed him, saying, *Christ is God over all, blessed for ever*. They who followed Paul in this way of speaking, believed (as well as Origen) him who took the form of a servant, saying of himself, as in that form serving the Father, and receiving of him the reward of that service, *My Father is greater than I*; but this did not hinder them (as it did Origen) from believing his being in the form of God, and, in that form, his being no less than the Father, as having the same Godhead with him: for thus did they understand him saying, *My Father and I are one*; even as did the Jews, to whom he spake it, saying to him upon it, *Thou being a man makest thyself God*. And the great fault that Celsus finds with the Christians in his time, is their believing this. But Origen did not believe him, even as in the form of God, to be equal with the Father, or that *he called God his Father, making himself equal with God*: for in the highest respect he has to him, as one with the Father, he accounts him a lesser than the Father, and will not allow him to be called *God over all*. Arius, therefore, was not the

first that broached this doctrine that now goes under his name. The school of Alexandria produced it; and it came of philosophy, pretending to explain the word of faith; not of the scriptures setting forth that word in the most simple manner. And such was the effect of philosophy and school-learning in the profession of Christianity, from the beginning of its connection with it. Yea, even they who sought to explain and defend the apostolic doctrine philosophically, lost the primitive simplicity and power of it, turning aside to vain jangling and strifes of words. The ancient faith of the Son of God and philosophy may be better viewed, in their proper native opposition, from the writings of Celsus, than from any theological disputes, where they are confounded and blended together.

NOTES on the true Discourse of Celsus,  
Tome 1. sect. 1.

N O T E I.

P. 308.-----*Put away by her husband, by trade a carpenter, convicted of having committed adultery, being deflowered by some soldier whose name was Panthera.*

Celsus makes his Jew tell this story. But the Jews had nothing like this to tell in the time of Jesus, when they said, *Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James, and Joses, and Simeon, and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence hath this man all these things? and they were offended in him; and when they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? At that time they were firmly persuaded he was begotten by Joseph the carpenter, the husband of Mary; but, in express contradiction to that ground of offence at his high pretences,*  
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it seems they had framed this story, and published it about the time when Celsus wrote: for Justin Martyr, who wrote his dialogue with the Jews not long before, had heard nothing of it. Celsus gives no voucher for this story, but his Jew whom he personates, and makes say many things he did not believe, and some things not very consistently with himself. The story of the carpenter putting away the mother of Jesus, and of his serving and learning magic in Egypt, will not agree with "transporting him yet an infant into Egypt, whither the angel bade him and those of his family flee." Nor will this story tell consistently with what is said by this Jew in the conclusion of his discourse to the followers of Jesus: "From your own scriptures then ye have these things, for which we make use of no other witness: for your own snare." Surely the story of Panthera came not from their own scriptures. But it appears to have been forged after the New Testament was written, and read by the Jews: for it proceeds upon what is written in the gospel, of Mary's espousal to the carpenter, and of his being minded to put her away privily, when she was found with child, before they came together; even as what is told of Jesus serving for hire in Egypt, and there learning magic, is built upon the gospel-history, of the flight into Egypt, cutting off his return from thence to Nazareth, yet a child. And such likewise is that Jewish fable, in their book called *The generation of Jesus*, where this story of Panthera is told, and the miracles of Jesus imputed to some mighty power in the name *Jehovah*, which he stole out of the temple. The name *Panthera*, in this Jewish fiction, is not a Hebrew or Syriac word, but the Greek *Panther*; and from it some Rabbi took occasion to compare Jesus to a leopard begot betwixt a panther and a lioness, as being begot by a Greek soldier on a Hebrew woman. In making this fiction, they might possibly have coined a name to this imaginary adulterer out

of *Parthenos*, the Greek word for a virgin used in the gospels. It was easy to turn this word into *Panthera*; and so they could tell the name of their deflowerer of the virgin. But they also tell his occupation: He was a soldier; for what they make him do was not improper for one of that calling.

## N O T E II.

P. 308.—*What witness worthy of credit saw this vision? or who heard the voice from heaven adopting thee the Son of God, but that thou sayest, and adducest some one of those punished with thee?*

When Celsus made his Jew talk thus of John Baptist, and his testimony to Jesus, he was not reflecting, that this same witness was one held in the greatest veneration by the Jews. Priests and Levites were sent to him from Jerusalem, to inquire at him if he was the Messiah, or that great prophet foretold by Moses. And the chief priests and elders durst not deny to Jesus, that his baptism was from heaven, for fear of being stoned by the people, who were all persuaded that he was a prophet indeed. Yea, the esteem that the Jews had of him, is attested by Josephus the Jewish historian, in this manner, (*Antiq. book 18. chap. 5.*): “Now, many of the Jews were of opinion, that Herod had met with this defeat, as a just judgment of God for having slain John, surnamed *the Baptist*: for he had put this good man to death, who only excited the Jews to the practice of virtue, admonishing them to live just towards one another, pious towards God, and to be baptized; telling them, that baptism would be acceptable to God, not by abstaining from this or that particular sin, but by an habitual purity of mind, as well as of body. Great numbers flocked from every where to him, greatly delighted with his discourses; which made Herod afraid, lest the great authority of this man should draw his subjects to a revolt: for he

saw,

law, that they all implicitly did what he commanded them: therefore he thought it more safe to prevent a growing mischief, by putting him to death, than to allow him opportunity to raise any commotion of which he might afterwards repent. On this suspicion Herod sent him away bound to the castle of Macheron, whereof we have spoken heretofore, and there he was put to death. And the Jews remained persuaded, that Herod's army received this defeat, for the destruction of this just man." If Celsus had considered this, he would never have made his Jew speak of John as a man worthy of no credit, and as one justly put to death; whose testimony therefore was not to be regarded.

But while Celsus makes so little of John's testimony to Jesus, and turns off this evidence so very lightly; we may yet find something about this same John Baptist and his ministry worthy of our attention. The good news of the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah in Jesus, began to be told in the preaching of John, who said, the design of his coming baptizing with water, was *that he should be made manifest to Israel*. He testified of Jesus, saying, *I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God*. The ministry of John was foretold by the prophets; and the prophecies concerning him, as the messenger sent before the face of the Messiah, and the preparer of his way, set forth the Messiah as the Lord God, even as John testified of him. And as the evidence of Jesus being the Christ, and the Son of God, began at the baptism of John, he prophesied that it should be completed by his baptizing with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. And when Jesus fulfilled this prophecy on the day of Pentecost, pouring down the Holy Ghost with fire on his disciples, as he promised to them



them before his ascension, according to the prediction of John; he then finished the proof of his being the same that John testified of him according to the prophets; and this to the conviction of thousands of those same Jews that had thought him worthy of death for calling himself the Son of God.

When John Baptist testified of Jesus, as the Messiah foretold by the prophets, he set that Messiah in a view very opposite to the expectation of the Jews that had been raised by a false interpretation of the prophecies prevailing amongst them at that time.

For, 1<sup>st</sup>, Though Celsus supposes the Jews believing that their Messiah, yet to come, was to be the Son of God descending into man; yet it cannot appear that they looked on their Messiah as God. But John, pointing out Jesus as the Messiah, bare testimony that *this is the Son of God*, saying, he was not worthy to unloose his shoes latchet, who, coming after him, is preferred before him, because he was before him; and that he came from above, and was above all, &c.

2<sup>d</sup>. The Jews, as Celsus observed, were looking for the Messiah foretold by the prophets, as a great earthly monarch, or, in his words, “a great and mighty Lord of the whole earth, and of all nations and armies;” but in opposition to this, John declared his kingdom to be *the kingdom of heaven*, according to the prophets, saying, the kingdom of that *son of David* would be established for ever before him, after his days on earth were fulfilled; that he would be enthroned on the right hand of God, to rule in the midst of his enemies, by his power from thence, in the day of his grace; till his enemies should be made his footstool, in the day of his wrath. And whereas the Jews expected a Jewish kingdom and empire, John proclaimed access to the Messiah’s kingdom, by repentance and remission, for any sort of men, even those accounted the most unfit for it, and no admittance into that kingdom otherwise, even  
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for those accounted the most fit for it, and the most worthy of the Jewish nation.

3d. The Messiah expected by the Jews might be a great prophet teaching them how to make themselves righteous by the deeds of the law, and promoting the righteousness of the law, by all the power of his kingdom; as we see the multitude fed with the loaves, accounting Jesus that great prophet that should come into the world, and ready to take him by force to make him king, when he spake to them of eternal life, asking him, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?* And Celsus makes his Jew say, "He will come the judge of the pious, and the punisher of the unjust." But, as Jesus told the multitude, that he came down from heaven to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world; so John the Baptist, pointing out Jesus as the man, who, coming after him, is preferred before him, because he was before him, said, *Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world;* and this he said according to that prophecy of Abraham, the father of the faithful, *God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.* The Messiah of John Baptist, far from being a great earthly prince, and mighty patron of self-righteousness, was a man, no less a person indeed than the Son of God, but sent to bear the punishment of sin for sinners, and so to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and in place of the deliverances the Jews expected by their Messiah, the deliverance that comes by the Messiah of John Baptist, is eternal *salvation by the remission of sins.* Nor is this benefit of the Messiah any way confined to the Jewish nation, but it extends to the whole world; for this Lamb redeems his church, his kingdom, by his own blood, *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,* without difference; and so the blessing promised to Abraham comes upon all nations through his seed, redeeming them from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them.

## N O T E III.

P. 309. 310. — *What hast thou shewed us egregious or wonderful in word or deed, though called upon in the temple to shew thyself the child of God by some manifest sign? Supposing to be true as many things as are written concerning healings and the resurrection, or concerning a few loaves feeding many, of which many fragments were left; or as many other things as the disciples, speaking marvellously have narrated; come, let us believe these to be wrought by thee; they are of the same kind with the works of inchanters, as promising more wonderful things, and with the things performed by them that have learned from the Egyptians, giving for a little money, in the midst of the markets, the grand things they have learned, and expelling demons from men, and blowing off diseases, and calling up the souls of heroes, yea, shewing sumptuous suppers and tables, and meats differently dressed, that are not; and as animals moving, not being truly animals, but to the fancy appearing such. Because they do these things, are we therefore to believe them to be the sons of God? or should it not rather be said, that these are the arts of wicked and unhappy men?*

Here Celsus makes his Jew treat the divine works wrought by Jesus, much the same way as he did the testimony of John Baptist, comparing the healings to the work of charms; the raising of the dead, to calling up the ghosts of heroes; and the feeding of thousands with a few loaves, to the making appearances of feasts, and of moving animals to the fancy only; as if it were possible for one, supposing what the disciples write of the works of Jesus to be true, to believe them to be of the same nature with these. The account of these works given by the disciples, manifestly excludes all suspicion of charming, or juggling, or magical arts whatsoever. And the miracles of Jesus were so manifest to the Jewish nation, that they have not been able to this day to deny them;

them; for even in their fable, published under the title of *The book of the generation of Jesus*, ascribing his miracles to some great efficacy in the name Jehovah, as a most powerful amulet stolen by him out of the temple, they plainly acknowledge his working miracles, and particularly his raising one from the dead, and curing a leper. Nor could Celsus venture to make his Jew deny the works of Jesus, narrated by his disciples, when he imputed them to the arts that were learned from the Egyptians. But, shewing the utmost effects of these arts, and comparing them with the works of Jesus, even what he says in the comparison, evidently shews them to be of a quite different nature.

Jesus refused the Jews asking of him some miraculous sign of that temporal deliverance and kingdom of this world which they were expecting by the Messiah, like the signs wrought at their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, and settlement as a free nation in Canaan's land, by cutting off the Canaanites. He would shew them no such signs; but he manifested himself the Son of God by works no less divine, miraculous signs of his heavenly kingdom, and of that eternal salvation which he called sinners to expect from him. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, and the dead were raised up by him, even as the prophets had foretold of him. And the Jew of Celsus would make all this, and every other miracle he did, pass for cures wrought by charms, and for representations made to the fancy only of ghosts, and feasts, and moving animals. But, if he could have said any thing more feasible against the divine works of Jesus, and the signs of that eternal salvation in the remission of sins through him, he would most certainly have said it. And thus the Jews, assisted by a great philosopher, in accounting for the miracles of Jesus, come as poorly off as they did, who, against the conviction of their own consciences, that they could

not be done without God, imputed them to the prince of the devils.

#### N O T E   I V .

P. 310. *The body of God would not be such an one as thine,—nor would God's body eat such meats as thou: but neither would the body of God use such a voice, nor such a persuasion.*

That living body born of Mary, was believed by Christians to be the soul and body of that divine person, the Son of God; and so he expresses the sense of Christians in his time, when he calls that body the body of God. But they believed, that the Son of God, assuming that animated body as his own, did not cease to be what he always was before, his Godhead being incapable of any change; nor did he endow his human soul and body with any properties of Godhead, whereof, being man, it was incapable; for, otherwise, he would neither have been truly God, nor truly man. But they believed him to be verily both.

The Jew, supposing God to assume a body as his own, contends that it could not be such an one as that of Jesus. And Celsus afterward tells us why, p. 348. “Seeing the divine spirit was in a body, it altogether behoved it somewhat to excel the rest in greatness, or beauty, or strength, or voice, or awfulness, or eloquence: for it is unaccountable, that what had something divine more than others, should differ nothing from another; yet this differed nothing from another; but, as ye say, was little, and hard favoured, and ignoble.” The body of the Son of God, though inhabited also by the Holy Ghost, did not excel other men in any of these, was not by these distinguished from the rest of men, nor was it distinguishable from them by any of the opposite deformities. It is true, and Christians said this, that Jesus had none of that *form or comeliness* which  
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the Jews desired to see in their Messiah, and for the want of which their prophet foretold they would despise and reject them. But, at the same time, he was, according to their prophecies, *fairer than the sons of men*, in that which God regards in man, and is most valuable in his sight: for this is that wherein the man Christ Jesus excelled all mankind, *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity*. And by this he answered that great and God-becoming purpose for which that body was assumed by the Son of God, as he said to his Father when he came into the world, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt-offerings and sin-offerings thou wast not well pleased: Then said I, Lo, I come, (in the volume of the book it is written of me), to do thy will, O God! By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once* says the apostle. What did all the excellencies of body that Celsus talks of, signify to this great purpose? And have not such excellencies been found with the most atheistical and most wicked men? Jesus excelled all other men in all those graces that were suitable to the great service he was doing, fulfilling all righteousness for sinners, fulfilling the divine law that they had broke, glorifying the Father on earth, by finishing the work he gave him to do, in giving himself a sacrifice for the sins of men, to redeem them from all iniquity, and purging their sins by the sacrifice of himself. And when he was rewarded for this great service in his human soul and body, wherein he had humbled himself unto death, then was his body distinguished, as the body of the Son of God, not by any earthly and mortal excellency, but by heavenly and immortal glory, even that same supercelestial glory wherein the divine majesty is displayed. And though that body could not be endowed with any property of the eternal and unchangeable Godhead; yet it is exalted far above angels, and every name that is named, and, as the

beginning of the new creation, excels all the bodily creation in every thing becoming the body of God.

In the days of his flesh, while his body was mortal, he eat and drank as other mortals, and had no taste for the fabulous nectar and ambrosia; nor was the gore from his dead body such as that which Homer feigned to flow from his blessed gods. But the Jew of Celsus says, "That God's body would not eat such meats as did Jesus." And this is explained afterward by Celsus, p. 350. "They who from the prophets make excuse concerning the things of Christ, can indeed say nothing to the purpose, when any thing wicked, or shameful, or impure appears said of the Divinity, or abominable. For what other was it to God to eat mutton and gall, or drink vinegar, then to eat turds? Come then, if the prophets should have foretold, that the great God would serve, or be sick or die; it behoved God to die, or serve, or be sick; seeing it was foretold; that, dying, it might be believed that he is God. But prophets would never have foretold this; for it is evil and unholy. Therefore it is not to be considered whether it be foretold or not foretold, but if it be a work worthy of God and good. But for the shameful and evil, though all madmen should appear to foretel it, it is incredible." What was wicked, or shameful, or impure, and abominable in God's body eating such meats as did Jesus? There was a figurative fleshly purity enjoined to the Jews, and several sorts of meats pronounced unclean to them in their law. But when the word was made flesh, his body was pure, even with that same purity of the carnal law. And surely the Jew of Celsus, supposing God to assume a body, could not make the eating of any meat that the divine law made pure and clean, impure, unholy, and unbecoming that body. We hear nothing from the scriptures of Jesus being sick; only that he can be *touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities*, having been *in all points tempted like us we are, yet without sin.*

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And being without that, there was nothing wicked, or shameful, or impure, and abominable about his body; but when he died a sacrifice for sin, holy, harmless, and undefiled, he was not suffered to see corruption, because he was the Holy One of God. As to the service he did in the flesh, humbling himself, and becoming obedient to death, even the death of the cross, it was most holy, and made the brightest discovery of the divine holiness that ever was in the world. But that wherein Christians from the beginning beheld the divine goodness and holiness with adoration and the highest praise, worshipping the Lamb that was slain, is by Celsus called evil and unholy. So different are the views that men always had, and still have of Christ crucified! It is utterly incredible with Celsus, (however foretold by prophets) that God should take to himself a human body; and what is said of the human soul that animated it, *growing in wisdom, and sorrowful unto death*, must be as incredible. But when he makes his Jew suppose God taking a body, agreeably to the belief of his appearing to Abraham as a man eating and drinking with him, yea, agreeably to the belief of the Gentiles also, concerning their gods coming down to them in the likeness of men, even as they believed the divine generation of several men; should he not have considered, how such a thing as this (that the prophets foretold as really to come to pass) came to be so universally credited among mankind, so contrary to his philosophy, that makes it absolutely incredible and impossible to be foretold but by madmen?

The Jew of Celsus would have the body of God talk as a Jewish scribe, or Celsus would hear from it the language of a sublime orator, or of a subtile philosopher; for he says, *p. 348.* "It altogether behoved it to excel the rest—in eloquence." And he makes his Jew say of Jesus, *p. 317.* "He threatens and reproaches without gravity when he says, *Wo unto you, and I tell you before*: for in these he openly confesses



confesses, that he cannot persuade; which neither indeed suits with God, nor yet with a prudent man." But these things wanted by Celsus and his Jew, were indeed below the dignity of the body of God, and most contemptible in his sight, (even as are all the objects of mortal ambition) as being qualifications wherein the most impious and vicious of mankind have excelled, and wherein they may be again excelled by the most wicked demons. But Jesus, to the observation of the multitude, *spoke as one having authority, and not as the scribes*; he spoke as they had never heard man speak. And, while he condescended not to orations nor philosophical discourses, *they wondered at all the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth*. It became him to speak thus, *Wo unto you, and, I tell you before, who could say, Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*. And the destruction of Jerusalem demonstrated a gravity and efficacy in these his words, infinitely transcending that of oratory, criticism, and philosophical argument. Were not those persuaded, who, upon hearing him say, *Follow me*, left all and followed him? And was not that a voice becoming the body of God, that commanded demons out of the possessed, the winds and raging sea to be still, the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to leap and walk, the infirm and sick of the palsy to take up their beds and walk, and the dead to live?

## NOTES on the true Discourse of Celsus, Tome 1. sect. 2.

### N O T E I.

P. 310. 311.—*What ailed you, O countrymen, that you leave the law of your country? —You made defection from the law of your country. Or how do you begin at our sacred things, but in your progress despise them,*

*them, not having another beginning of doctrine to speak of than our law? For if any foretold to you, that the child of God would come to men, that was our prophet, and the prophet of our God.——Many others might have appeared, such as was Jesus, to them that would be deceived. And how should we, who have shewed to all men, that one would come from God, punishing the unjust, treat him ignominiously when he came?——Was it that we should be punished more than others?*

This, that Celsus makes his Jew say to the Jewish followers of Jesus, is very true, that they had no other beginning of doctrine but the Jewish law. For Jesus and his apostles testified, saying none other things, but those that Moses and the Prophets did say should come, that the Christ should be a sufferer, that he should be the first of the resurrection of the dead, and that he so would shew light to the people, and to the Gentiles. But all that believed Jesus, to be that Christ foretold by the prophets, far from despising the law given by Moses, looked on him as the end of that law for righteousness to every believer. Yea, when the Jews that believed left the peculiar covenant God made with their nation, with its precepts and ordinances of worship in the worldly sanctuary; they did this in the view of that covenant being abolished by the death of Christ, confirming another new covenant of God with the true Israel of all nations, which had now come in place of it according to the prophecies, expressly foretelling, that God would make a new covenant with his true Israel, not according to that. For this was set before them in that part of the gospel-revelation, that called the Jews off from the Jewish law, and the service of the tabernacle. See Heb. viii. 6.—13. with Jer. xxxi. 31.—34. And this was what ailed them to leave the law of their country, when God was, according to the prophecies, taking away their country, and causing the whole service of the tabernacle to cease by the destruction of their city and temple. The law

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of their country, being divine, in distinction from all the peculiar laws of other countries, was not to be forsaken by them till they were loosed from the obligation of it by the divine authority, in a new revelation calling them to forsake it. And this new revelation, when it came attended with the taking away of their place and nation, appeared manifestly to have been promised and foretold by Moses the lawgiver, and by the prophets of that same country; so that the believing Jews, in leaving the peculiar precepts of the Jewish law, shewed a regard to the law of their country; hearing the words of the great prophet foretold in that law, which commanded them to hear him under the pain of cutting off. If the bulk of the Jewish nation did not hearken to this new revelation, nor embrace the new covenant foretold by their prophet; even this was the accomplishment of the prophecies concerning them with respect to the promised Messiah: and so their opposition to the truth was rather a confirmation of it: for if Jesus had not been despised and rejected by the Jews, he could not, according to the prophecies, have appeared to be the promised Messiah. Their unbelief, therefore, could not make the faith of God of none effect, as Celsus would make his Jew insinuate, saying, "Why did we despise him whom we have foretold?" For as to the salvation promised to come by their Messiah; their prophet, and the prophet of their God, said expressly, *Though the number of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved.* And the consequence of their despising and treating ignominiously the Messiah, whose coming they had foretold to all men, was certainly this, that they were punished more than others, and this also according to plain predictions of Moses and the prophets. In place of "many others appearing, such as Jesus;" where could Celsus or his Jew find any one coming to the Jewish nation according to all these prophecies, as did Jesus?

## N O T E II.

P. 311. 312.—*His disciples feigned, that he foreknew and foretold all things whatsoever happened to him.— These things therefore came not to pass in consequence of being foretold; for that is impossible: but in consequence of their coming to pass, their being foretold is found a lie.*

The great pains that Celsus takes to prove the falsehood of this, would import a tacit acknowledgment, that, if it be true that Jesus foreknew and foretold all, as his disciples said, it says something for his Divinity, notwithstanding his being condemned by the Jews, betrayed and denied by his disciples, and led away bound and crucified. The distress this gives him, appears in his turning himself every way, and catching at every shadow, for a proof of the impossibility, and so of the falsehood of it.

He would prove this, first, by the inconsistency he finds in the thing foretold. He says, “How is it credible that he foretold? and how is the dead immortal?” The business of Celsus here was to demonstrate it impossible for him that was the immortal God, and so incapable of death, to take part with us in mortal flesh and blood, or to take to himself a human soul and body, capable of dying, and so to become capable of death in that which is immortal. For supposing it possible for him to assume humanity; there can, then, be no difficulty in telling how he might be mortal in that mortal nature, without ceasing to be immortal in his eternal and unchangeable Divinity. The disciples beheld several evidences of Divinity about this mortal man, particularly his knowledge of the hearts of men, and his foreknowledge of all that befel him; and thereby understood him to be more than man, and acknowledged him to be no less a person than the Son of God, who had condescended to take part with them of flesh and blood, according to the prediction of the prophets,

the Father's testimony of him at John's baptism, and the transfiguration, and the works he wrought to shew himself the Son of God. This is far from being like "as if one saying that one is just, should point him out doing unjustly, and calling him pious, shew him committing murder, and calling him immortal, set him forth dead, prefacing to all these that they came to pass as he foretold." For the disciples never said that what died was immortal; they never said that the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, was immortal in his human soul and body; but they said, the immortal Son of God took to himself a mortal life, which he had power to lay down, and to take again from the dead, that he might give everlasting life from the dead to mortals. Celsus and his Jew have not brought any thing like a proof of the impossibility of this; but, on the contrary, have rather established the possibility of it, when (agreeably to the prevailing notion among both Jews and Gentiles, that God might come down to them in the likeness of man) they suppose that God might appear as a man suffering these things; saying, "For ye do not say this, that he appeared indeed to ungodly men to suffer these things, yet did not suffer; but you confess that he suffered openly." With respect to this supposition, might it not be said, How is the invisible, visible? how doth immensity appear circumscribed, and the omnipotent weak? and how doth the immortal appear dead? If this prove not the impossibility of the appearance, how shall it demonstrate the impossibility of the reality?

By the way, here we may observe, that Celsus, who had such a particular knowledge of the heretics that went under the Christian name, and their tenets, knew nothing of any who asserted, that Christ suffered only in appearance. And so we may reckon that certain heretic, who, as Origen says, asserted this, to have come after the time when Celsus wrote. The author of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius, shews  
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much zeal against this heresy : and therefore it might have been broached toward the end of the second century, when it is probable these epistles were forged. Again, the Jew of Celsus would prove the falsehood of his foreknowing and foretelling all, as being impossible, especially that of his disciples betraying and denying him, by such assertions as these, "No good general and captain of many myriads was ever betrayed; yea, neither a wicked chief robber, and commanding those more wicked than himself, if he appeared useful to his companions.—A man was never yet conspired against by his table-companion. But he that eat with God became a conspirator." Though Jesus appeared neither like a captain and commander of any army, as the Jews would have their Messiah, nor like a chief robber; yet his disciples, remaining tainted with the Jewish prejudice of a secular Messiah, had some expectation of temporal advantage by him, wherein they were disappointed by his death. But the traitor, who was a thief, and kept the bag, and bare what was put therein, not minding eternal life, as did the rest, when he found that Jesus was not like to be *useful* to him in the gratification of his prevailing passion for money, betrayed him to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver; and so fulfilled what the prophet foretold of the price he would be valued at. Suppose Celsus had never heard of any great and good captain or chief robber betrayed, that was useful to his companions; and therefore thought it impossible; yet how could his Jew say, a man was never conspired against by his table-companion? Was he ignorant of these words of his psalms? *Yea mine own familiar friend which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me.* An assertion too loose for one that knew the world, is put in the mouth of a Jew that had divine authority to the contrary! Could not Celsus make his Jew charge a lie on the apostles, without flatly contradicting his own scriptures?

Another proof of this impossibility is this. "What God, or demon, or wise man, foreseeing such things coming upon him, would not shun them if he could, but would fall into the things he certainly knew before?" This is strongly said; but how falsely? For did never any wise man, philosopher, or hero, venture upon certainly foreknown death, when he could shun it? Yet none of those who so submitted to sufferings and death, could propose to themselves such a glorious end as the eternal salvation and redemption of their people from sin and death: for this is what Jesus had in view; as he said, *I am the good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*—*Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*—*And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish.* The story of the disciples, telling he foreknew all these things coming upon him, tells further, that, though he easily could, yet he would by no means shun them. He checked his disciples offering to defend him, when he surrendered himself into the hands of his enemies. And even then he shewed such signs of his power, making those who came to take him fall back to the ground by a word said to them, and healing the ear of one of them that had been cut off, as manifested, it was in his power to shun the things coming on him; yet he would not; but said to the disciple defending him with the sword, (the same who afterward denied him) *Put up again thy sword into his place.*—*Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* And so it was true, as Celsus, it seems, had heard the Christians of his time saying, that "it seemed good to him to suffer these things, and he was punished obeying his Father." But how then shall

shall the impossibility of his foreknowing and foretelling what came upon him appear?

It would next appear from this: "It is altogether inconsistent, that they who heard before, should yet betray and deny." And this inconsistency is demonstrated thus, "How, if he foretold, did they not fear him as God, so as the one should not yet betray, nor the other deny? But they betrayed and denied, making no account of him." And thus, "For certainly, even a man conspired against and foreknowing, if he forewarn the conspirators, they will turn away, and take care of themselves." He that denied, was very confident that though he should die with him, he would not deny him, and this when he was forewarned; yea, he ventured his life for him; yet afterward, surpris'd and overcome with fear, he did it, even as it was foretold. And he that betrayed, not conspiring with any other disciples, but with the chief priests, as soon as he was discovered, immediately set about delivering him to them in the absence of the multitude. And this he did, as the disciples say, being possessed by the devil for the purpose. It is manifest, he was then neither fearing Jesus as God, nor taking the warning of eternal danger set before him; and he had no temporal danger to fear from Jesus. Now, where is the inconsistency in all this? Is it impossible for one that sees the better things and approves them, yet to follow the worse, blinded by his passions? Doubtless the fear of him, as God, did not influence them to betray and deny. But is it impossible for men, notwithstanding their natural dread of a Deity, to cast off that fear in many instances of their practice? Or is there any thing extraordinary and marvellous in mens acting inconsistently with their own principles? Was no such thing as this ever heard of among the Jews or the philosophers?

Here again we may, by the way, consider this, If Judas the traitor had known any thing of imposture  
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in Jesus, or could have discovered any cheat about the works he wrought to prove himself the Son of God, and he himself had from Jesus the power of working such works; why did he not discover it when he betrayed him? And why did not the chief priests, who got him engaged to guide their guards to take him, make some discovery out of this same Judas, when bringing Jesus before them to be judged and condemned as an impostor? Yea, why did this Judas, after they had condemned Jesus, confess to them, that he had betrayed innocent blood, and in the agony of remorse kill himself?

The last argument to prove the impossibility of this prediction, is, "Being God, he foretold these things: and what was foretold, it behoved by all means to come to pass: God therefore led about his own disciples and prophets, with whom he eat and drank, unto this, that they should be ungodly and impious. — God himself conspired against his table-companions, making them betrayers and impious."

Such an inference as this hath been often made from the divine predetermination of sinful actions. But this argument, making God the author of sin from his foreknowledge, is a curiosity, to be well observed by them who own the foreknowledge, while they charge this evil upon the decree. Some have been so straitened in reconciling their freedom of will and human merit with the divine prescience, that they have found themselves obliged even to deny that prescience; though the truth of the scripture must go with it, and not that only, but also the perfection of the Deity. And in this, these philosophers under the Christian name, do but follow Celsus, making God the author of sin by his foreknowledge, appearing in foretelling the wicked actions of men. But this, as well as all his other arguments on this head, shews how much he was straitened with that evidence of divinity in Jesus, his foreknowing and foretelling all that befel him. Could not he, with all his philosophy,

ply, overthrow this without undoing the divine providence? Could he not deny the divinity of Jesus, without making it impossible for the Deity to foreknow and foretel the wicked actions of the creatures? For he says, if it were so, God would lead about men to be wicked. Jesus intended by this prediction, that, when it should be fulfilled, his disciples might have a sign of his divinity for the support of their faith against the shock it would receive from his sufferings and death. And so he said to them, when foretelling his being betrayed by one of them, *Now, I tell you before it come to pass, that when it cometh to pass, ye may believe that I am.* Accordingly we see the remembrance of the prediction, as to Peter, revived the faith in him after he had denied his Lord, even as he had foretold. Yea, it fixed conviction upon Judas when he saw him condemned to death, in consequence of his betraying him, according to his prediction: for he was obliged to acknowledge to the chief priests, that he was innocent of the crime of blasphemy for which they condemned him to death, or that it was no blasphemy in him to call himself the Son of God. And this same sign of the divinity of Jesus under his sufferings so embarrasses Celsus, that, to get clear of it, he must reason himself out of the divine providence.

There is something in the fact here very opposite to his reasoning against divine providence about sinful actions. The disciples that betrayed and denied Jesus, were not led about, as he says, by the divine prescience and prediction, to do what was foretold. They were neither constrained and forced, nor tempted and drawn away and enticed, either by the infallible foreknowledge, or by the sure decree declared in the prediction; for they were not at all moved to what they did by any consideration arising from that prediction. Judas was far from minding the fulfilment of it in betraying Jesus, whose divinity appeared again to him, by its being so fulfilled, in such a manner as  
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made him see himself an egregious sinner in what he had done. And Peter, who denied him, was very confident, when he heard the prediction, that it would never be fulfilled by him; and he persisted in his resolution to stand by his master, setting himself to defend him at the hazard of his life, till he was at last surprised and overcome by his fear; so that he was not thinking of the prediction, nor at all influenced by any respect to it in denying his Lord: for after he had done it, then, remembering the words of Jesus foretelling it, and seeing them verified in what he had now done, he went out, and wept bitterly. In all other cases wherein there is no prediction, it is certain, that no man can be either constrained or enticed to sin by that which he cannot have in any view to influence his choice in sinning; for till the event come out, there can be no view of what God foreknew about it; and till the fact be done, the counsel and purpose of providence cannot appear.

As the disciples did not determine themselves, in their choice to betray and to deny, by any respect to the divine counsel and purpose declared in the prediction; so neither when they had fulfilled it by doing wickedly, did they find fault with the divine providence; but, on the contrary, they took the whole blame to themselves. Judas did not excuse himself nor extenuate his guilt, by the necessity imported in the prediction which he had now fulfilled. And though he found himself cut off from all hope of pardon by these words of the Lord, *The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him, but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been good for that man if he had not been born:* yet we do not find him saying any thing like this, How did the good God allow me to be born? or, why finds he fault with me, who could not resist his will?

These disciples could not in any such manner reply against the humanity of the Son of God, where

in he was under the law with them : for, by the fulfilled prediction, they perceived his divinity, wherein he was above all law : so that they had no rule to apply to him whereby they could blame him ; so the providence of the Creator cannot possibly be subject to any rule for judging the conduct of the creatures. When we transgress the divine law, we therein act, as if we were not subject to it, but above it, as God, and so would be as God, and not as creatures ; like what the prophet says of the king of Tyre, setting his heart as the heart of God. And, seeing this is the very nature of sin, non-subjection to the divine law, with what sense would men call him the author of sin ? or how shall he be subject to any blame who is under no law ? It is adding sin to our sin, for us to presume to judge of his conduct by any rule for us, as if he were subject to the same law with us, and to judge what he should do, from what we his creatures ought to do. We are bound to love him with all our heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. And every action a man doth, that can be called a sin, is, one way or other, a transgression of this divine law, to which the human conscience bears witness. But how shall this law, so proper for creatures, apply to God ? Can it, with any possible consistency, be said to him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,—and—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ? If men would find fault with him, they must find something for a God above him ; they must find neighbours to him.

Peter and Judas had both grievously transgressed this law, and acknowledging themselves sinners, owned that punishment was due to them, notwithstanding the necessity imported in the prediction of their sin. And, as to the conduct of divine providence about this matter, their own consciences, that condemned them as sinners, could tell them, *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to the former, Why hast thou made me thus ?*

So, in these two sinning disciples, as ensamples, we may see, that no such replies as men would now make against God, shall find any place at last either among the saved or the damned.

However wickedly Judas did in betraying Jesus, and the Jews in murdering him; yet no Christian from the beginning ever thought of finding fault with God, for delivering him by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge to be so betrayed and murdered. And is not the brightest display of the divine holiness and justice, as well as mercy and grace, still to be beheld in that same matter?

### N O T E III.

P. 313. *If these things seemed good to him, and he was, punished obeying his Father; it is manifest, that to him, being God, and also willing, these usages, according to his mind, were neither troublesome nor grievous. Why then doth he lament, and grieve, and pray, that the fear of destruction may pass away, saying thus, O Father, if it be possible for this cup to pass?*

He, being God, could not suffer in his Godhead; but he suffered in his human soul, saying, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death.*

He was willing, but willing to suffer punishment obeying his Father; and that could not be without grief and trouble.

The usages that Celsus speaks of, were not the cause of his lamenting and grieving: *For he endured the cross, despising the shame, for the joy that was set before him.* And many of his followers have suffered more grievous tortures of body, in their death, than did Jesus, as did also they who believed in him to come under the Old Testament: But they were sustained under these torments with the joyful sense of the divine favour, and with the light of God's countenance, which is the true and proper happiness and life of man, even as the opposite of it is his

and proper misery. For a *man's spirit will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?* However mens spirits have sustained the most grievous tortures of body; yet no man's spirit can bear up wounded with a quick sense of divine displeasure and wrath.

It was for this that Jesus lamented and grieved. It was this that made his soul exceeding sorrowful unto death; and it was his agony through this, and not so much the pains inflicted on his body, that killed him. He pointed to his chief pain and the main cause of his death in that complaint on the cross, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And so it was observed, that his death came sooner than it could be expected by the cross, as it was before that of the malefactors crucified with him: *And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead.*

When we suppose a soul loving God, we must think of it as desiring above all things the light of his countenance, and as having its chief joy and delight in the sense of his favour; and so the sense of divine displeasure and wrath must give such a soul the greatest pain: this cup therefore that the Father gave Jesus to drink, when he was made a curse for sinners, could not but be exceedingly troublesome and extremely grievous to his soul that loved God perfectly; and the great abhorrence he expressed to the hiding of God's face from his soul, was nothing else but the fervency of his love to God. The reason of his lamenting and grieving, was because he loved God with all his heart, soul, and strength.

This gave occasion to that submission to the will of the Father, in the drinking of that cup, which was the perfection of his obedience. For this is the *obedience* that the apostle says, *he learned from the things that he suffered.* He had come to do the will of the Father, making him, who knew no sin, to be a sin-offering for sinners. He had condescended to be wounded for their transgressions; and had received

from the Father that commandment, to lay down his life for them. And having received this commandment from him, when his piety now filled him with the greatest aversion to the killing sense of the divine wrath, and the curse of the law seizing on his soul, then he gave the highest instance, the unparallellable instance of submission to the Father, saying, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt*; and, *If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.*

He knew the cup, that was so troublesome and grievous to him; would pass away from him, if he should drink it; and not from him alone, but from all those for whom he drank it; and so he did not fear to remain always under his sufferings. He did not put up this prayer in the fear of destruction. He knew himself to be the Son of God, having power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. He knew that his Father was hiding his face from his soul *for a moment*, for the sins of those whom he had given him, that *with everlasting loving-kindness he might have mercy on them*; and, that, through his *tasting death for them*, he would become their *perfect Saviour* from death. It was not possible that the Son of God, submitting to death, should be holden of it. The divine justice found an infinite satisfaction in his death, from the infinite dignity of the person dying; and therefore Jesus, in that prayer to his Father, presents himself before him as his Son, saying, *O my Father*; and, prayed to him as *able to save him from death*, because he was his Son. Therefore he had no fear of destruction; but, according to the prophecy, he could say, *My flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in the separate state, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* And even on the cross, where he cried, lamenting and grieving, *My God, why hast thou forsaken me?* he could promise to the thief, that trusted in him, the happiness of the heavenly Paradise, with him.

him, in the separate state, that same day. So far was he from the fear of destruction.

#### N O T E IV.

*P. 313. Ye are sophistical, in saying, that the Son of God is the very Logos. If indeed the Logos is to you the Son of God, we also applaud. But after promising the Logos to be the Son of God, ye shew us not a pure and holy Logos, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified.*

If some Christian philosophers, in the time of Celsus, would have the apostle John's Logos, or Word, to be no other than the Logos of Plato, and said their Son of God was the very same with the Logos of that philosopher; Celsus might well call them sophistical in saying so, when he thought of them as studying, by that artifice, to catch the philosophers. But they deceived themselves; taking up with Plato's Logos in place of the Logos of the scriptures, they lost the true knowledge of the Son of God.

As to what he says of the Jews agreeing with Christians, that the Son of God is the Logos, or Word; he had some foundation for this in the writings of Philo the Jew, which probably he might have read. But if he had been acquainted with the use and application of the Memra or Word in the Chaldee paraphrase, well known to those Jews who heard it read in their synagogues, with whom Celsus might have conversed about Phenice and Palestine, *p. 394.* he would then have had sufficient ground for saying, in the name of his Jew, We agree that the Word is the Son of God.

The disciples shewed a man for the Logos or Word, that was in the beginning with God, and was God, that Word by whom all things were made; but a man, who, by speaking a word, calmed the winds and the sea, and raised the dead to life. And they  
believed



believed this man to be no other person but he whose working in the creation Moses had represented, by speaking in this manner, *God said, Let there be light, and there was light*; the same who *upholds, by the word of his power, all things*, even as they came into being at first by his word; whose name is therefore called *the Word of God*. The disciples set forth this man as that same Word made flesh, and said, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*.

But when Celsus makes his Jew say to the disciples of Jesus, “Ye shew us, not a pure and holy Word, but a most ignominious man, scourged and crucified;” however he keep up to the character of his Jew, yet he quite forgets the philosopher representing him: for might he have been that pure and holy Word, if he had been a most noble and highly honoured man, and placed in a situation among men, the most opposite to contempt and affliction? and is this the philosopher’s purity and holiness?

#### N O T E V.

P. 314. *Do ye thus accuse us, O most believing! for that we do not account him God, nor agree with you, that he suffered these things for the help of men, and that we might despise punishments?*

What is here said of his suffering these things for the help of men, is all the notice Celsus takes of the great salvation that the Christians of his time ascribed to the death of Christ. Their account of the help that men have from Christ’s sufferings, is more fully set forth in the epistle to Diognetus, by some Christian who wrote in that second century, and expressed the common sense Christians then had of that matter, in this manner:—“That, in that time, being demonstrated, from our own works, unworthy of eternal life, we might now be made wor-  
thy

thy by the benignity of God; and being manifested in ourselves incapable to enter into the kingdom of God, we might be made capable by the power of God. Now, when our iniquity was fulfilled, and it had been fully manifested, that punishment is the wages of sin, and death was expected,—he gave his own Son a price of redemption for us, the Holy One for transgressors of the law, the innocent for the evil, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal: for what else than his righteousness was able to cover our sins? In whom is it possible for us the transgressors and ungodly to be justified, but in the Son of God alone? O the sweet exchange! O the unsearchable device! O the unexpected benefits! that the disobedience of many should be covered in a righteous one; and the righteousness of one should justify many transgressors! Having therefore in the former time proved the incapacity of our nature to attain life, and now having shewed the Saviour able to save even the incapable; from both he would have us to believe his goodness.”

As Celsus had no view of our need of this help, he makes nothing of it, nor of what he reports from the Christians of his time, when he introduces them speaking thus, “We were induced (to esteem him the Son of God) by this, that we know his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness.” They learned to say this from their scriptures, teaching them in this manner, *Forasmuch then as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And again, —Sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. —The devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he*

*might*

*might destroy the works of the devil.* These things are said of him according to that most ancient oracle, setting him forth as *the seed of the woman bruising the head of the serpent, bruising his heel,* which was delivered in consequence of the devil's tempting the first man to sin by the woman whom he seduced, using the serpent as his instrument, and so bringing sin and death into the world of mankind. Now, though Celsus makes no more of Christ suffering for this great purpose, of which he had heard, than of any other suffering punishment, or of a punished robber and murderer; yet Christians found in themselves the help to men that is in his sufferings, and knew that his passion was for the destruction of the father of wickedness: for they found their consciences purged from the guilt of their sins, and themselves freed from slavery to their ungodly lusts, and delivered from the fear of death, the wages of sin, by what they believed of the Son of God suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, and dying that we might live through him.

And it was in this same view of his sufferings, that they learned from them to despise punishments. For so did they learn by their scriptures, saying to them, *If when ye do well and suffer, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God: for even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin,—who his own self bare our own sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed.* And, *It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing: for Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* And again, *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind.* And indeed no other men can be ambitious to be made conformable to Christ's death, if by any means they may attain the resur-  
rection

rection of the dead, but they only who count all things loss to be found in Christ, not having their own righteousness, but that which is by the faith of him. Before the disciples had Christ's sufferings in this view, and while they did not yet know this design of his passion, it is no wonder if, as Celsus observes, they, "seeing him punished and dying, neither suffered with him, nor suffered for him, nor were persuaded to despise punishments, but even denied that they were disciples." But when they came to know that he had destroyed him who had the power of death, and were delivered from bondage through the fear of death, by his dying, and hoped for eternal life through his death; then, to the astonishment of Celsus, multitudes were persuaded to die with him, as he says, "Yet now ye die with him.—If living he persuaded none, but when he is dead, they that please persuade so many; how is not this most absurd!"

N O T E VI.

P. 314. *Surely ye will not say of him, that, not having persuaded those who are here, he withdrew to Hades, persuading them that are there.*

If Celsus could not perceive, at the time of his writing, that Christians would say this, and was confident they would not say it; they came to say it not very long after, when Irenæus wrote: for he imagined, and wrote somethings to this purpose \*, That our Saviour descended into Hades to preach the faith there unto the patriarchs, and to the ancient just men, as well Jews as Gentiles, and that they that believed at his preaching, should be reckoned in the number of the saints. If Celsus had been to write after this, when it came to be commonly said, even as Origen affirms it against him; he could not have been so positive, that they would not say it.

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\* Irenæus adv. heres. lib. 4. cap. 39. and 45.

## NOTE VII.

P. 315. *By what reasoning were ye induced to esteem him the Son of God?—We esteem him to be the Son of God, seeing he cured the lame and the blind, and (as ye say) raised the dead. O light and truth! With his own voice he hath expressly confessed, according as ye also have written, Wherefore there shall come to you others also using the like powers, wicked men and impostors: and he names one Satan the worker of these things. So that he denies not, that these things are indeed nothing divine, but the works of the wicked. And being forced by the truth, he hath at once revealed the things of others, and reproved his own things. How is it not then miserable, from the same works to reckon one God, and others impostors? For why from these things should we rather think others evil than him, using his own testimony? For he himself hath indeed confessed these things not of a divine nature, but to be the marks of deceivers and very wicked men.*

If there be any of this light and truth, so surprisingly discovered by Celsus and his Jew, to be seen here; it must appear only from this assertion, that Jesus expressly confessed, that wicked men, impostors, and Satan, would come using the like powers, and working the same works with those whereby he proved himself the Son of God; and that these same works are the marks of deceivers and very wicked men. And, as there is no ground for this assertion, but only in what the disciples of Jesus had written, if no such express confession of his can be found in their scriptures; then we must cry out in the surprise of disappointment, O darkness and falsehood! for is it any where written in the Christian scriptures, that Jesus said there would come impostors curing the lame and blind, as he did, and raising the dead? These are the works of which Celsus is speaking, as inducing Christians to esteem him the Son of God. Did Jesus say, Satan would be the worker of these

even

even as he was? On the contrary, it is written, that he said to the Jews, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not*; and that he said of the unbelieving Jews, to his disciples, *If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin.*

It is indeed truth that he hath expressly foretold, *There shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect.* Even as Moses signified to the Jews in their law, there would arise prophets, or dreamers of dreams, giving them signs or wonders, that might come to pass, to lead them after other gods, by which their God would prove them whether they loved him, Deut. xiii. 1.—5. But, as Moses did not foretel that these false prophets would use the like powers, and do the same works by which God manifested and distinguished himself when he brought them from Egypt; so neither did Jesus foretel that these false christs and prophets, shewing great signs and wonders to deceive, would use the like powers and do the same works that he did to manifest himself the Son of God, particularly in empowering the lame to walk, giving eyes to the born blind, as he did, and restoring the dead to life. And as those works he did among the Jews were such as no other man did; so it cannot be found, that any false christ or false prophet hath arisen after him doing the same works. Did any false prophet or false christ ever shew a man fixed to his bed by infirmity for thirty-eight years, such an impotent man, rising instantly at his call, taking up his bed, and walking under it? Or hath any such shewer of signs and wonders imitated that notable miracle wrought in the name of Jesus, by the witnesses of his resurrection, upon the man born lame, to the conviction of all that dwelt in Jerusalem, so that the council of the Jewish nation could not deny it? Acts iii. and iv. though they would not admit the truth of his resurrection,

rection, and the power of his name to save, evidently therein manifested. Hath any come after Jesus, making eyes of clay to one born blind, and causing him see with these, (shewing himself the same that formed man's body at first from the ground, and inspired him with life) as Jesus did to that blind man, (John ix.) in whom the truth of this divine work was demonstrated before the rulers of the Jewish synagogue, who could not deny the work of God, but cast out the poor man for maintaining, that Jesus, who gave him eyes to see, was of God? And did ever any false christ or false prophet come shewing the manifestly dead, evidently called back to life by his word, as Jesus did the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son of Nain, and Lazarus?

Neither Moses nor Jesus denied the power of magicians and demons to shew signs and wonders, tho' they denied them the power of working the works of God, who raiseth the dead, and calleth the things that be not as though they were. Celsus, who knew no God above nature, could not acknowledge the works of this God before whom Abraham believed, and whom the scriptures of the Jews and Christians set forth as the Creator, calling beings out of nothing, and making the dead alive; and therefore looked on all pretences to any such works, as imposition, deceit, and juggling. But, as no Jew, speaking in character, is like Josephus, Vespasian's prophet, who believed the foretold Messiah of the Jews to be the Roman emperor, that came to take away their place and nation, and who dissembled the miracles of Moses, even the dividing of the Red sea, making Moses such another lawgiver, as Minos, and other wise politicians among the Greeks; it was not at all proper for Celsus to put his boast of light and truth in the mouth of a Jew, who must be supposed to believe the signs and wonders wrought by Moses to be the works of the true God, clearly manifested and distinguished by them, notwithstanding the Egyptian

tian magicians doing the like to some of these works, and notwithstanding false prophets arising in the nation of the Jews, shewing signs and wonders to draw them away from their wonder-working God. The scriptures of the Jews, as well as those of the Christians, setting forth the true God as above nature, controlling it at his pleasure, making the dead alive, and calling nothings as beings, do, at the same time, plainly allow the power of demons, and their magicians to shew signs and wonders above human power, above all merely human arts of juggling, and even like some of those wonders whereby the true God manifests himself; as in the case of the magicians of Egypt, doing things with their enchantments like those done by Moses in the name of God. But they did not go the full length, and were obliged to own themselves far outdone by the divine power evidently manifested. Even so demons, in opposition to the gospel, might shew signs and wonders, like some of those done by Jesus and the apostles in his name; but they were also outdone, even in those things which they did; and the difference betwixt the works of divine power, and of their power, is manifest. Demons might see farther than the wisest of the Jewish nation could see into the prophecies of the Old Testament, and so, perceiving clearly the divine works of Jesus, know him to be the Christ the Son of God, which the Jews could not know, as the soothsaying woman of Philippi knew the apostles serving God, in shewing the way of salvation; but even in giving out this with a malicious design they were quelled by the power of Jesus. They, by long experience, and knowledge of the course of the world, having understandings as much superior to men as their power is, may see much farther into futurity than men can do, (tho' they know not what God will do any further than he has declared) and they may communicate such foreknowledge to their servants, and make them like prophets; but what



what is all such prophesying to the prophecies of Jesus concerning all things that befel him, and his disciples after him, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and concerning the coming of Antichrist? The servants of demons in collusion might cast them out, or demons of superior power might command their inferiors to depart, as the Jews, observing a manifest superiority of power in Jesus ejecting them, would ascribe it to the prince of demons. There were exorcists among the Jews who cast them out, and some of these attempted to do this in the name of Jesus. But he cast them out, as no other could do, as he said, *with the finger of God*; referring to what the magicians of Egypt were obliged to own, as to the miracles of Moses which they had been labouring to imitate.

It is also truth, that the apostle of Jesus foretold, as we have it written, that the coming of Antichrist would be *with all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie, after the working of Satan*, and that by men opposing the truth, as the magicians of Egypt withstood Moses. But he also foretold, that they would reach no further, and proceed to no more, with respect to the miracles wrought in confirmation of the gospel, than the Egyptian magicians, Jannes and Jambres, did with respect to the miracles of Moses: He says, *They shall not proceed to more: for their folly shall be manifest to all, as theirs also was*. So far is it from being written, that Jesus, or his apostles in his name, ever confessed that the power of Satan would work the same works that Jesus wrought to shew himself the Son of God. And now, after what was foretold of the signs and wonders of Antichrist hath come to pass, it appears manifestly, they no more came up to the signs and wonders of the gospel, than those things done by the enchantments of the Egyptian magicians came up to the signs and wonders of Moses.

## N O T E VIII.

P. 315. 316.—*But to you his voice, when he expired on the cross, and the earthquake, and the darkness, is found a beautiful and credible catastrophe of the drama.*

His loud voice when he expired on the cross was extraordinary; especially his saying with that voice, *It is finished*, as one shouting for victory, and with that voice confidently commending his spirit into the hands of God, as his Father. This, together with the earthquake, when he expired, rending the veil of the temple and the rocks, and opening the tombs, and the darkening of the sun, at full moon for three hours, when he was pining to death on the cross, so affected the centurion, and them that were with him watching Jesus, that they were obliged to acknowledge him a righteous man, or that he had done nothing unrighteous in calling himself the Son of God. And the multitude that came together to that sight, were so impressed with this same catastrophe, that they returned from it smiting their breasts. Thus his loud voice expiring, and the earthquake, and the darkness, forced a conviction upon both Jews and Gentiles, and drew a confession from them of his being unjustly condemned for calling himself the Son of God, as he had done, and as he now did, with a loud voice expiring. But the penitent thief confessed him in another manner: and what passed betwixt him and Jesus, could not but make a great impression on the minds of the spectators, as well as the expiring loud voice, the earthquake, and the darkness. While they beheld Jesus crucified in weakness, they saw the crucified malefactor supplicating him as the Lord on the way to his kingdom beyond death, and confiding in him as able to save him eternally, and make him happy in that kingdom after death. And they saw Jesus answering him in the language of the sovereign disposer of the state of men after death, and assuring him of happiness with him immediately in the separate

rate state. And this may serve as an answer to Celsus's question, "What noble thing did Jesus as God, despising men, and ridiculing and mocking what befel him? He said not as the Bacchus of Euripedes, The demon himself shall loose me when I will." He said nothing like this, but he said what was much more grand, and more becoming God. Even on the cross, and dying, he shewed himself to the malefactor crucified with him, as the Lord on his way to his heavenly kingdom, wherein he was able to make him eternally happy, and brought his mind to rest on his promise to take him with him. He spoke as the Lord of the dead and living, as having death and the separate state at his disposal.

### N O T E IX.

P. 316. *Yea, that living indeed he could not help himself, but being dead he arose, and shewed the marks of punishment, and his hands as they had been pierced. Who saw this? A mad woman, as ye say; and if there was any other of that same magical gang, either in some sort dreaming, and disposed to be deceived, by fancying an apparition (which has often happened to very many) or rather inclining to astonish the rest by such a wonder; and, by such a lie, to give occasion to other impostors. —When he was disbelieved in the body, he preached to all freely; but when he was exhibiting strong faith, being risen from the dead, he appears in private to a single woman, and to his intimate companions. When he suffered punishment, he was indeed seen to all; but rising, to one; whereof the contrary ought to have been.*

Whoever has given any attention to the evidence of Christ's resurrection plainly set forth in the New Testament, must be surpris'd at a philosopher like Celsus, juggling and trifling in this manner, upon the very hinge on which his whole controversy with the Christians should have turned. For if he could have  
disproved

disproved this fact, he had no more to do in the confutation of Christianity; and while the truth of it stands, nothing can be said to any purpose against the Christian religion. It is true he could not put his Atheistical thoughts of the impossibility of the resurrection in the mouth of his Jew, whom he makes confess the possibility of it in this manner, "We hope surely to rise in the body, and to have eternal life, and that the Sent unto us will be the pattern and first leader of this; shewing, that it is not impossible with God to raise any man with the body. Where is he then, that we may see and believe?" And it was to no purpose to talk of the incredibility of God's raising the dead to Christians, who believed in the same God before whom Abraham believed, as "making the dead alive, and calling those things which be not, as though they were," even the Creator of the world from nothing, and the former of man from the dust of the ground, inspiring it with a living soul. His business therefore was to overthrow the evidence for the fact, as it lay before him in the apostolic writings, from which he proposes to confute Christians in this manner, "From your own scriptures then ye have these things, for which we make use of no other witnesses; for ye fall in your own snare."

But, in place of this, he appears here as afraid to look that evidence full in the face. Yea, he is careful to hide it, drawing a vail over it, while he represents the truth of the resurrection as standing on the testimony of a mad woman, and of somebody dreaming and disposed to be deceived by an apparition. As to the chosen witnesses, who appear evidently very far from being disposed to be imposed on, or to impose on others, who testified none other things but what Moses and the Prophets did say should come, and to whom God bare witness with divers signs, and miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; Celsus would have their testimony pass, with them that are disposed

to take his word upon it, for a lie, contrived and propagated by magicians or jugglers. But the evidence of Christ's resurrection has been so clearly set forth and defended against all the cavils of modern infidels in the *Trial of the Witnesses*, and the *Defence of it*, and by *West on the Resurrection*, and others, that to any who may read these, it would be quite superfluous to say any thing about it.

### N O T E X.

P. 316. 317. *If Jesus would really declare his divine power, it behoved him to be seen to them that used him ill, and to him that condemned him, and indeed unto all.—Where is he then, that we may see and believe? Or, did he descend for this, that we might not believe?*

It was never the design of his coming to the Jews, that he should be acknowledged by that nation; for their prophets foretold the contrary. His resurrection, designed for the eternal salvation of finners out of every nation, was shewed, by many infallible proofs, to witnesses chosen of God to testify it every where, for the salvation of all that should believe that testimony throughout the world. And they were ordered to begin at Jerusalem, where it was made notour, 1. By the descent of the Holy Ghost concurring with their testimony, to the conviction of thousands of the Jews, on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 2. By the manifest miracle of healing, wrought in the name of Jesus by these witnesses converting more thousands, and their bold testimony before the grand council of the Jewish nation, Acts iii. iv. and v. 3. By the appearance of Stephen before the council, beholding his face as the face of an angel, and hearing him declare his seeing heaven opened, and Jesus the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, and confidently commend his departing spirit into his hands, Acts vii.

## NOTE I. on Sect. III. Tome I.

P. 321. *They who call to other mysteries, proclaim before these things, Whoever is pure in hands and prudent in speech; and again others, Whoever is pure from every crime, and whose soul is not conscious of any evil, and whose lived well and justly: and these things they proclaim before, who promise the purgations of sins. But let us hear now whom these call: Whoever, they say, is a sinner, whoever is without understanding, whoever is childish, and, to say plainly, whoever is wretched, the kingdom of God will receive him. The sinner then, do ye not say, that he is the unjust, and the thief, and the breaker through of walls, and the prisoner, and the committer of sacrilege, and the breaker into tombs? whom else would one, proclaiming before, call to be robbers?*

It is surprising, that the philosopher did not advert to the absurdity of calling none to the purgations of sins, but those who have no use for them, and debarring those who alone are fit for them. For who but sinners are capable of purgations of sins? And is not this like calling the whole, not the sick, to come to the physician and be cured? The Christian preachers in his time, whom he would ridicule, and who, by his testimony, seem to have been very different from most preachers now, were far more consistent, giving the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins to sinful, ignorant, wretched men.

The Jews, expecting the kingdom of God, looked for Messiah the King, as Celsus says for them, "the judge of the pious, and the punisher of the unjust;" and supposed they would be received into his kingdom according to their own righteousness, on which they valued themselves above others not so fit for it, as being greater sinners. But Christ's forerunner, who began the preaching of that kingdom, came to them preaching repentance and remission of their sins, and thereby shewing them, that the kingdom of God would

receive none but sinners needing that repentance and remission. And Jesus told them who had the best character among the Jews, *The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you; and, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

For he came not to direct and assist them to work out a righteousness for themselves by any obedience they might give to the divine law; but, supposing them sinners already condemned by that law for every transgression, even in the thoughts and intents of their hearts, he said he came to give his life a ransom, his flesh and blood a sacrifice for such, and to make them righteous, by fulfilling the law, by fulfilling all righteousness for them. And he shewed them, that they were not to have eternal life by their working, but by believing this, by believing on him the Son of God, sent by the Father, to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world. He came not to slacken the demand of the perfect law, requiring love to God with all the heart, soul, and strength, and love to our neighbour as ourselves, or to make less than that perfection accepted as a man's righteousness, nor to loose the just connection betwixt every short coming of that perfection, and the curse of God. But he came to fulfil that law for sinners, and thereby to manifest the divine justice in forgiving and justifying them. The Son of God glorified the Father's name by finishing the work he gave him to do, and fulfilling the commandment he received from him, to lay down his life for sinners, and to take it again. He thereby declared his name as righteous, punishing every transgression of his righteous law, and gloriously rewarding perfect obedience; and at the same time he declared his name as merciful and gracious, manifesting God to be love, in giving the Son to be the propitiation for sins, and thereby having mercy on whom he will of the guilty and the wretched, the only proper and meet objects for mercy and grace.

The gospel calls all sorts of sinners, without distinction, to repent, or turn to this God, whom they knew not, believing in the blood of his Son shed for the purgation of all sins. And so Jesus, sending his apostles to testify his resurrection, ordered them to preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. When they began there, they preached this repentance and this remission, first, to them, whom they convicted of the greatest wickedness, taking, and by wicked hands crucifying and slaying the Messiah. And they set him forth as exalted by the right hand of God, a Prince and Saviour to give them repentance and remission of sins. Then among the Gentiles, the apostle makes this account of those who were called to the kingdom of God, and who were received into it: *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Though such be thus purged from their sins, and so received into the kingdom of God, they are not yet innocent, their souls are still conscious of many evils; and so they yet need the purgations of sins in all their approaches to their God in his worship: for now looking into his perfect law, they find themselves coming far short of the required perfection, and offending in many things; and so needing, as the Lord directs them, to ask daily of his Father the remission of their sins. And for this every one that is godly, or that serves the living and true God, prays to him. But the pure in their own eyes, who approach trusting in themselves that they are righteous and despising others, even such as those whom Celsus holds only for sinners, are not worshipping the true God, but  
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an idol. And the God of this world seeketh such worshippers.

## N O T E II.

P. 322. *They dictate, that God will receive an unjust man, if he humble himself under his wretchedness; but the just, if he look up to him with virtue from the beginning, him he will not receive.*—*They commonly say, that God can do all things; but he will not do any thing unjust. So then, like unto them that are subject to compassion, God, being subject to commiseration of those that plead pity, relieves the bad, and the good, doing no such thing, he rejects.*

Though Celsus cannot get it denied, that mankind is someway naturally disposed to sin, and that all sin; yet, at the same time, he would say, that some are just and without sin. But the Christian doctrine, to which he objects from this presumption, supposes that the law of God being the only rule of righteousness before him, there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not. The man that doth these things shall live in them. But there is none that doth good, no not one: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And there is no plea upon the distinction of more and less sinners before God, with whom he that offends in one point, is guilty of all, and whose curse is upon every one that continues not in all things commanded, to do them. Before him then a man cannot be justified by pleading, that he is not so bad as other men, or that he humbles himself under his wretchedness more than they, or by his pleading pity while others do no such thing. Yea, it is a great affront offered to his justice and righteous law, to propose to be accepted as righteous in his sight without perfect righteousness, or to be received into favour with him passing any sin unpunished.

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Though the Son of God, by becoming man, became subject to the human passion of pity, (weeping over Jerusalem) yet he doth not at all judge by that, nor is the Deity subject to commiseration of those that plead pity. But God is no less merciful than just. He is the God of all grace, according to the gospel, that declares him to be love manifested in sending the Son, the propitiation for sin. The Son of God was sent forth, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the curse of the law, by being made a curse for them, and to fulfil all righteousness for them, as their representative before his Father, that, by his righteousness imputed to them, as their sins were to him, they might be accepted and taken into favour as God's children, being accepted in the beloved Son, in whom they have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Agreeably to this, all sorts of sinners, without any difference, find acceptance with the infinitely merciful and just, pleading guilty, and asking forgiveness and acceptance through the propitiation that mercy provided for declaring the divine justice in the justification of sinners. Thus the Publican is represented as addressing God, and so received into his favour rather than the Pharisee, who pleaded his own fitness for acceptance rather than the Publican; though he was thankful to God for the difference.

This is that against which Celsus would here object, as a remarkable tenet of the Christians in his time. And however it be misunderstood or misrepresented by him to fit out his objection against them; yet, from what he here says, we may easily perceive what was the general and notour sense of Christians in his time about justification and acceptance with God. And though this doctrine of acceptance with God, not proceeding on any thing in one man that distinguishes him from another as more acceptable, be full as disagreeable to the generality of our Christian

stian world as it was to Celsus; yet it is very agreeable to the apostolic account of the matter, Rom. iii. 19.—31. Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it speaketh to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Wherefore of the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now, without the law, the righteousness of God is manifested, being witnessed from the law and the prophets; but the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being freely justified in his grace, by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God proposed a propitiation by the faith in his blood, unto the manifestation of his justice, for the passing over of the sins that were before in the forbearance of God, toward the manifestation of his justice in the time that is now; that he might be just, and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only; but not also of the nations? Yes, of the nations also; seeing God is one, who shall justify the circumcision of faith, and uncircumcision by the faith. Do we then make void the law by the faith? Far be it! but we establish the law.

# A View of the HERESY OF AERIUS.

Consisting of the following Articles.

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| I. That a presbyter differs not in order and degree from a bishop.                  | III. That fasts ought not to be prefixed to certain and stated annual days. |
| II. That there is no Pasch remaining to be observed or celebrated among Christians. | IV. That prayers are not to be poured out and made for the dead.            |

*Non scripta negabo.*

[First published in the year 1745.]

PREFACE ; or, Advertisement concerning the Author.

THE author of this little book can never pass either for a good man, or a wise man, in the place where he lives ; nor indeed in any other place where riches are esteemed goodness, and where cunning, and sacrificing all things to the love of gain, are thought wisdom.

He has no connection with any party of clergy striving about the public leading in religion, having no interest in this world to pursue or contend for in connection with his religion ; though, as a human creature, he must have some religion, and, as an animal, he must subsist and live on the earth.

Most of his study, for he is a sort of student, has been spent in comparing Christianity, in all the shapes wherein he could observe it appearing in the world, with the original draught of it in the scriptures : and, as he evidently sees the scriptures fulfilled in a general falling away from that, under the Christian name, this serves much to confirm him in the truth of these scriptures of the apostles and prophets, on which the only true church is built, and which he can never enough value and regard, for the glorious character

of God, the divine contrivance of salvation through the death and resurrection of the Son of God, the excellent character of Jesus Christ, and of his true followers in the faith, and the agreeable order wherein he would have them to follow him unto eternal life, as the Captain of their salvation made perfect through sufferings.

He has conceived an unconquerable aversion to the character of all the sorts of those men whose business it is to adapt this glorious revelation to their interests in this life, and especially to make it subservient to their honour and glory in this present world. He sees them led by a principle, which, while it governs them, must form them into a desperate aversion from being as low and contemptible in this world, as Jesus Christ, his true gospel, and his kingdom, always was, and ever will be, to the end of the world.

While he laughs at all the pretences whereby these impose, perhaps, on themselves, and, most certainly, on the Christian world that follows their ways; he laughs no less at those merry fellows, who can gravely think that they are ridiculing true Christianity, when they ridicule the clergy. The attentive narrow observation he takes of the clergy under their mask, cannot hinder him from taking notice of the pitiful grimace of those fine gentlemen who, neglecting altogether that proper instinct of man by which alone he is capable of corresponding with his Maker, are strutting in the airs of masters and patrons of a reason and virtue whereby it is impossible to distinguish them from the brutes. And, whereas they pretend to be the votaries of right reason and true virtue, in a grinning sneer at the word of faith which the apostles preached, he has been forced to see them, by several instances, the most unreasonable and the most vicious of mankind.

The following lucubrations on Acrius shew that he reads a little; and it cannot be denied, that he puts pen to paper too. But, as he is far from doing  
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this to please, or to make himself agreeable to any party of men in the world, he is ready also to laugh even at his friend, that would advise him to spare his pains in a way wherein he loses himself, and wherein he is not capable to recommend himself to any sort of men of sense or taste ; for it is very ridiculous, to tell one that labours to please himself, and is accordingly pleased, that he loses his labour : and, if he be much diverted with the fault that all sorts of men find, in their turn, with what he writes, and, when that cannot be handsomely gainsaid, with his manner of writing, he thinks it not quite friendly to grudge him this same diversion.

# A View of the HERESY of AERIUS.

## INTRODUCTION.

*Giving a short history of Aerius, and a large account of the use of the word heresy, in order to see how it should be applied to his way.*

**E**PIPHANIUS, bishop in Cyprus, who died in the year 402 or 403, is reckoned among the writers of the fourth century. He wrote a history of all heresies, with a large confutation of them, to the number of eighty. And, in this long list of heresies, that of Aerius stands the 75th in number. This great work of Epiphanius seems to have been begun in the year 374, and ended about the year 376.

Aerius, whose name distinguishes this 75th heresy, had been a companion, in the monastic way, to one Eustathius; who, upon his being made bishop of Sebastia in Pontus, made Aerius a presbyter, and gave him the charge of a house there, for receiving and entertaining poor strangers. This Eustathius, having at first adhered to the Nicene faith, became afterward an Arian and Macedonian heretic. And Aerius, after very sharp contentions with him, separated from him; accusing him, to all, of covetously usurping to himself the whole dispensation of the church's money. Having in this manner given up with his old comrade and his bishop, he drew a great multitude of men and women after him, and obstinately maintained four great errors, as Epiphanius accounts them, which make up the whole Aerial heresy.

Before we enter upon a particular consideration of these, it will not be improper to inquire a little into the sense and meaning of the word *heresy*; that, if possible, we may have a just notion of the character *heretic*, as it has been fixed upon this Aerius. And, because

because this word is used in scripture, and taken from thence, it cannot be thought amiss to observe, in the first place, how it is applied there.

In the New Testament, the word *sect* stands frequently, in our translation, for *heresy*. And some are of opinion, that it is a word used indifferently, sometimes in a good sense, and sometimes in a bad. But, whereas the apostle places *heresies* simply among *the works of the flesh*, in opposition to *the fruit of the Spirit*, it may be observed, that the word *heresy* is not applied in the scripture to signify a thing esteemed good by them who use it; for, whatever sort of men be there found using it, they always apply it to what is evil in their account: as, when a writer of the New Testament mentions *the heresy of the Pharisees*, and *the heresy of the Sadducees*, we may know he looked on both these as ways of the Jewish religion, contrary to the doctrine of Moses and the prophets, and opposite to the spirit of their writings, which the apostles constantly appealed to, against them, as the true standard of their religion; even as the Lord bade his disciples *beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees*. And, when Paul commends his testimony concerning Jesus to King Agrippa, from his known character amongst the Jews, as having been very opposite to the truth that he now testified, and as shewing that his testimony was far from being influenced by any preconceived prejudice at the Jews or their religion, even in that way of it that was most opposite to Christ; and therefore says, *After the most straitest heresy of our religion, I lived a Pharisee*; it is manifest, he then had such a view of a Pharisee, as a thorough Protestant has of a Jesuit.

And, on the other hand, when the Jews applied the name *heresy* to the Christian way of religion, they looked on that way as very odious: for we must know, that Christianity itself passed under this name by the authority of the Jewish church. The high priest, and the presbyters of that church, called Paul



*a ringleader of the heresy of the Nazarenes, by the mouth of their orator, accusing him before the Roman Governor. And, in his answer, it is plain, he takes not with the name heresy, which they fastened upon his way of religion, while he takes with the way which they called heresy, and vindicates himself, in these words, to the governor, before whom they accused him: But this I confess unto thee that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets: and have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. Though all this that he said in his own vindication was true, it did not in the least clear him, to the rulers of the Jewish church, of the charge of heresy, so justly due, in their account, to the way wherein he worshipped the God of his and their fathers. And so the way of Christianity passed currently under that same name, that Paul publicly refused, among all the Jews throughout the world. For, when he came to Rome, he found himself also a heretic there; where the Jews said to him, We desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for, as concerning this heresy, we know that every where it is spoken against. The Jews throughout the world looked on Christianity as a way of religion established on principles contrary to the universal tradition of the only church of God upon the earth, which he had avouched in the most solemn manner to be his church, in distinction from the rest of mankind, and to which he had committed his oracles; as the Christians themselves also allowed, while they opposed a tradition handed down to them, together with these oracles, by that same church; a tradition as ancient at least as the completing of the scripture-canon, or they could not tell when or how it commenced: and,*

at the same time that they received the scriptures of Moses and the prophets from the church, they rejected the church's interpretation, and followed a new gloss of these scriptures, concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, contrary to their common sense, established by the authority of all the holy and learned rabbies and fathers of the church; a gloss that led them, in opposition to this, to acknowledge a crucified man as the great Messiah, and to worship him as God, glorying in his cross, as the end of the law for righteousness to every sort of men that believed in him; and, being but a few of the most ignorant and contemptible of the Jewish people, associated with as many of the uncircumcised nations, even the vilest of them, as they could persuade to believe, as they did, in the crucified Jesus, and obey his precepts, they called themselves the church of God, the kingdom of the Messiah, and fellow-citizens, in a heavenly Jerusalem, with all the saints who, they said, died of old in the faith of their Christ to come; and, at the same time, pronounced the Jewish church and nation, with all who would not be persuaded to believe as they did, slaves of Satan, enemies to God, and objects of his wrath. This was the view the Jews had of Paul's way of religion, when they called it heresy; not doubting but it was good service done to God, not only to excommunicate, but also to kill him: and therefore, when he was rescued from the mob, the high priest and the presbyters, the rulers of the church, came down to Cesarea to seek his death from the Roman Governor, before whom they accused him as *a ringleader of the heresy of the Nazarenes.*

Again, we shall find the apostles, who were themselves called heretics by the Jewish church, applying the name *heresy* to any way of the Christian profession that men chose to themselves, opposite to the doctrine which they taught by commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, and calling them heretics, who,  
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under the Christian name, caused divisions and offences among Christians, contrary to the apostolic doctrine, chusing to themselves ways of Christianity that were opposite to *the unity of the faith*, or to that unity which Jesus would have to lie in *believing on him through the word of his apostles*. And so Paul places heresies amongst *the works of the flesh*; and speaks of heresies to the Corinthians, some of whom were beginning to say, *That there is no resurrection of the dead*, contrary to the gospel which he delivered to them and they received. He says to them, *When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be schisms among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, it is not to eat the Lord's supper.*

As we see the famous word *schism* here used to signify an evil, not the very same with that which is intended by *heresy*, it will be easy to observe, that it has happened to the word *schism*, as to most other scripture-names which are not applied, in common use now, to point out the same things to which the scripture applied them: for *schisms* here cannot be taken to signify separations of communion, but divisions in the same communion, factions and parties among them who were coming together in one place to the Lord's supper; by which they were rendered unfit to eat it, and by reason of which their coming together was unto condemnation. And any man may perceive this to be a quite different thing from separate communions.

But, as to the apostolic use of the word *heresy*, we may have some notion of it from a direction that Paul gave to his minister the evangelist Titus, while he was executing a commission for him in Crete. After he had given him a short sum of the doctrine of faith, which he would have him to affirm constantly, commending it to him as the source and spring of *good works*, and as *good and profitable to men*, bidding

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him, at the same time, *avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, as unprofitable and vain*; he then says to him, *An heretical man, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.* By what he was just saying of questions and strivings, about the law, in opposition to *the faithful word* which he had been commending to Titus; we may understand him to be here pointing at the Judaisers, or *them of the circumcision*, (as he had called them) who, under a profession of Christianity, gave so much disturbance to the apostle's ministry every where, causing divisions and offences among Christians, contrary to *the word of faith* which he preached. And so it is a man of this sort that he here calls *heretical*, giving order for his *rejection* from the Christian communion, *after the first and second admonition*; with this reason for it, That it is manifest, such a man is *subverted*, or turned off the hinge of Christianity, off the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and turned out of that one way wherein all those walk who believe in Christ through the word of his apostles; and that *he sinneth*, or trespasses upon the divine authority in the Christian revelation, to which he professes subjection, and so *is self-condemned*: for there is a chain of Christian truth, a connection in the words of faith; so that he who, under a profession of the faith, sets himself against any of these words, may be condemned out of his own mouth. He may be condemned, in going about to deny a part of the truth, by the part of it that he confesses; in like manner as those in Corinth, denying the resurrection of the dead, stand condemned in that denial, by their own confession of Christ's resurrection, without which they could have no pretence to the Christian name. And further, a man that would pervert the gospel, must have his mind corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ, and cannot have his own conscience testifying of that simpli-

city and godly sincerity in him wherewith the apostles preached the gospel, and true Christians professed it from the beginning; and so, under a profession of faith and of charity, or the love of the truth, he must be conscious of a dislike of the truth which he labours to pervert, and of a disaffection to them who are of that truth. Therefore Paul sets our being *carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive, in opposition to speaking the truth in love.* And Peter speaks of *false teachers among Christians, who privily shall bring in, or silyly introduce, heresies of destruction.*

The apostles plainly foretold a general apostasy among Christians from the doctrine which they taught, and from the Spirit of Christianity, under a form of it, conducted by false teachers, much like those causers of divisions among Christians, contrary to their doctrine, in their own time, who adulterated the word of faith, by mixtures of the Jewish tradition, and of the philosophy of the Greeks; and so, professing to believe the gospel, perverted it, and made it as another gospel. This was changing the truth of God into a lie: and therefore the apostles called these first perverters of the gospel, *liars* and *Antichrists*, as opposing Christ in the name of Christ. And they pointed out these liars and Antichrists, as the forefathers of *that grand Antichrist* to come after them, whom they called *a liar*; because, *having a form of Christianity denying the power of it, is the most damnable of all lies.* Therefore Paul represents that man of sin as opposing God, sitting in his temple, where he exalts himself; and he says, *his coming is with all power, and signs, and wonders of a lie, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* And for this God shall send them *the energy of error, that they may believe a lie, i. e. believe a perverted gospel, suited to their taste who received the truth without the love of it.* In  
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the view of this great perversion of the gospel, the apostles wrote their gospel to them *who know the truth, and that no lie is of the truth*; and commend their inspired writings, together with the prophetic word of the Old Testament, whereof these writings are the only public authentic interpretation, to their most careful study and observation, as the only rule and standard of Christian religion; by cleaving to which, they should be kept from the general seduction that was to prevail upon all those who receive not the love of that truth, which is only to be found pure and entire in these writings. The apostle Peter writes plainly to this purpose in words that may be here read.

*I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.—Moreover, I will endeavour, that you may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance. For we have not followed cunningly-devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the Holy Mount. And we have the prophetic word the more firm; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any \* private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake moved by the Holy Ghost. But there were false prophets also*

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\* Such an interpretation as the Jewish church gave the word of prophecy by their own will, is here called *private*, in opposition to the public authentic interpretation that the Holy Ghost gives that prophetic word in the New-Testament revelation, which confirms it. And so the scripture interprets itself.

among the people; even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in heresies of destruction, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bringing on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their destructions, for whom the way of the truth shall be reproached. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.—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.—As our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

When we read this, it may put us in mind of the words of Moses, when he made an end of writing the words of the law in a book. He commanded the Levites, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death?—For I know, that after my death ye will utterly corrupt and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you.

The scriptures of the Old Testament, containing the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, were the only rule of religion for the Jews in the time of our Lord, when he came to give them a new revelation; according to these scriptures, to which he constantly appealed from their tradition. The Holy Ghost interprets these scriptures in the new revelation,

revelation, that is contained in the scriptures of the New Testament, setting forth the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour. And these scriptures of the Old and New Testament, thus taken together, are, according to the apostle Peter, the only rule of Christian religion, after the decease of the apostles. And in like manner as the scriptures of Moses and the prophets were kept among the Jews amidst all their corruptions, and appealed to by the Lord and his apostles, just as the Jews then had them, in opposition to their corrupt interpretation, which they had by tradition from their fathers; even so what Peter says, most plainly supposes, that the apostolic scriptures would be kept after their death always among Christians, in midst of all their corruptions, as a witness against them: and that supposition is now manifest in fact. And, though he says, some things in these scriptures are hard to be understood, and liable to be wrested by those who are not taught of God, nor established in the faith; yet he gives these same scriptures, in place of the deceased apostles, to preserve true Christians from being led away with the error of the wicked, and to guard them against the generally prevailing seduction of false teachers, privily bringing in heresies of destruction; which he foretells would take place after their decease.

The heresies therefore of which the apostles spake among Christians, must be those ways, in the profession of Christianity, wherein they have deviated from the way of truth, as it is set forth in the apostolic scriptures, following teachers perverting the gospel. And, to cause divisions among Christians, contrary to the apostolic doctrine, as they delivered it to the first Christians while they lived, or as it is left written in their scriptures after their decease, is to be a heretic in the apostolical sense: and this makes men liable to the destruction that they have connected with *heresy* in their writings.

But



But it is quite a different use of the word *heresy*, to apply it to deviations from any forms or standards of Christian doctrine composed by uninspired men, according to the most prevailing and universal tradition, and according to the art of the disputers of this world, in their oppositions of science, and established by the authority of the church as tests of truth and error. Those forms of faith, contrary to their professed design, have served to lead men away from attending, as they ought, to the scriptures of the apostles, and have caused manifold divisions and offences among Christians; who will never be united in any one of them; while all true Christians, who believe in Christ through the word of his apostles, must only be united, as Christ would have them, by means of that word; which is not to be found pure and entire but in their writings. The apostles could have no regard to these uninspired forms of faith and standards of Christian religion, when they gave their own writings as the standard, in opposition to all the heresies of destruction that should be sily introduced after their decease. And, if we would fasten the name of heresy upon a deviation from any other form of sound words or standard of Christianity, but what we have in their scriptures, we shall not find any such use of the word *heresy* in the scripture, except that same use which the Jews made of it, when they applied it to Christianity, and called the way of Christ a heresy.

After the death of the apostles, the name *heretic*, among Christians, in the second century, was applied, much in the same way as the apostles had applied it, to those who corrupted the doctrine of the gospel by the Jewish tradition, and by the philosophy of the Gentiles: and they were rejected by the Christian churches, and confuted from the scriptures of the apostles and prophets, which they kept, and from tradition, among those who had seen the apostles, only in so far as agreeing with these scriptures; while

while heretics, in place of the false apostles that troubled Christians in the apostle's time, were troubling them with false gospels, acts, epistles, and apocalypses, forged and vented by them as apostolic scripture. And, even in that second century, some philosophers, becoming Christians, began to use their philosophy in the explication and defence of the gospel, studying to adorn it with the spoils of the Heathen philosophers, and to set it off to the world in that dress; which served at last to turn the simple word of faith into a science, and the plain form of sound words, that was taught by the apostles, and left in their writings, into a system suited to the oppositions of science falsely so called: so that, however well it might be intended at first, it really tended to corrupt the minds of Christians from the simplicity that is in Christ; and so it did at last.

But, when tradition came to be joined with the acknowledged scriptures of the apostles and prophets, as the rule of Christian religion, as it was in the end of that second century, when another generation arose, that knew not the apostles, when they had long quiet in the reign of Commodus (by means of his whore Marcia) and in the first ten years of Severus, and when they grew to a considerable party of men in the world; then, whoever opposed and rejected the prevailing tradition, came at length to be rejected as a heretic, as they who caused divisions contrary to the apostolic doctrine in the scriptures. And then it was, that the use of the word *heresy* among the Jews, as it had been by them applied to Christianity, took place again among Christians; so that any who took a different way, in the profession of Christian religion, from the established interpretation of scripture, or from the prevailing tradition, came at last to be rejected as a heretic. Even in that time, Victor bishop of Rome, with a synod of western bishops, resolved to reject the Asian bishops, for keeping Pasch on the 14th day of the moon of March,

March, contrary to a tradition that he pretended to have handed down to him from Peter and Paul, by a lineal succession of Roman bishops keeping Pasch always on the Lord's day; while the Asian bishops persevered obstinately in their practice, pleading as strongly a tradition they pretended to have from the apostle John, who died amongst them long after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. It is true, this is commonly called but a *schism*; yet, when tradition was thus joined to the scripture, by the consent of contending parties, as the rule of the Christian religion, it begat the Jewish use of the word *heresy* among Christians: and, in this sense, the church of Rome applies it to all Protestants to this day.

Now, to put an end to this tedious history of the name *heresy*, and apply what has been said of the uses of that word to our purpose, we shall soon see, that Acrius must be looked on as a heretic, only in this last use and application of that name. He seems indeed to have been obstinate in his way; and, as Epiphanius informs us, multitudes both of men and women followed it; and if there were no bishops in his train, we may come to find a reason for that. But his errors cannot be traced up to these old springs of heresy, philosophy and tradition. Nor will it be easy, without the help of tradition, to fix upon him the charge of departing, in any one of his four points, from the scriptures of the apostles. He became a heretic, by deviating from the statutes of the church: For Epiphanius convicts him of heresy, even where he says with the scripture, by his forsaking the law of his mother the church. For, in the fourth century, when Acrius lived, there happened a vast alteration in the state of the church; Christianity then becoming (against its genius) the religion of the Roman empire, and, as much as was then possible, adapted to the state of that grand kingdom of this world. The church, being animated by its genius, had many statutes that could not be seen in the apostolic scriptures,

scriptures, which were calculated for strangers and pilgrims on the earth; though not a few of these statutes pleaded a foundation in oral tradition from the apostles: for many things had concurred to pave the way for this great alteration, and to prepare the church for it, long before it came. Now, Acrius appeared to Euphrosynus pleading the instruction of his father in the scriptures, against the laws of his mother the church, handed to him by old tradition, and contained in the canons of her synods; and so he fell into a heresy; which is wholly summed up in the four following heads.

The Four Errors laid to the charge of Acrius by Euphrosynus, who entered him into the list of Heretics.

I. *A presbyter differs not in order and degree from a bishop; but he who is a presbyter, is called a bishop; in as far as, in any one act, wherein he is chosen by the presbytery, he presides in the congregation; because, in the church, nothing should be done or carried on confusedly.*

II. *There is no Pasch remaining to be observed or celebrated among Christians.*

III. *Fasts ought not to be prefixed to certain and stated annual days and solemnities; such as, the fast of Lent, and of the week before Pasch.*

IV. *Prayers are not to be poured out and made for the dead.*

For these four negatives offered by Acrius to the prevailing religion of his time, he has been spoken against as a heretic; and some who have happened, in later ages, not to differ from him in these, have been reproached with him as their only forefather among the ancients: yet this shall not hinder us from inquiring what we should think of them, any more

than the name of *heresy*, and common bad fame, frightened the Jews at Rome from inquiring what should be thought of Christianity. Let us then view them in the order wherein they have been laid down; and they naturally cast our thoughts into the four following chapters.

## C H A P. I.

### Of the sameness of BISHOP and PRESBYTER.

#### S E C T. I.

*Shewing what might move Acrius to this way of thinking, in the time when he lived.*

**W**HEN the difference of the bishop in order and degree from the presbyter, established by long custom among suffering Christians, was found so very agreeable to the change, in the situation of Christianity, that happened in the time of Acrius, to the great joy and satisfaction of all that wished its prosperity in the world; it may be considered how Acrius could be led into his way of thinking against it, and what should move him to oppose it with so much zeal even in that time.

Heretics, we know, if nothing else can be laid to their charge, are always suspected of pride and ambition in some shape or other. And it is very true, that Acrius was but a presbyter; and no more was Jerom, who, in the following century, talked a little in the same way. It is very possible, they might both have thought and spoke otherwise, if they themselves had been bishops. Yea, it has been insinuated, that this branch of the heresy of Acrius did spring out of a disappointment of his hopes of being made bishop of Sebastia, in the room of the deposed Eustathius;

thus; with whom, Epiphanius informs us, he had contended very sharply.

But it was very possible for Acrius, without this ambition, to have fallen into that same odd way of thinking in the very time when he lived, by comparing the state of Christianity which was before his eyes, with the original draught of it in the apostolic scriptures; for which he seems to have had a very great regard. And this is what any man may do at any time. But the difference of bishop and presbyter appeared, in the time of Acrius, with so much of another face from what it did before Constantine, as was sufficient to awaken his attention to that same subject particularly. Indeed that difference had been made long before; and, in the time of Cyprian, if we may judge of the common practice by his writings, it was carried pretty far. But, even then, it lay under several limitations; which, being set aside in the fourth century, made it have a quite different appearance: so that one who could have borne with it before, might now declaim against it, as did Acrius; and get a hearing too, as he did, among Christians.

For, in Cyprian's time, the bishop's charge was a flock, only, of Christians made so by teaching, called out from the world, and called together by the gospel, to profess the faith and hope that is in Christ Jesus, and to keep his new commandment, of love to one another as disciples, whereby all men should know them to be his disciples, and for that hated and persecuted by the world. They then baptized none but disciples, reckoning their infants with them: for it had not yet come into their heads, to pervert the Lord's commission to his apostles, to make disciples of all nations by teaching, and to baptize the disciples, by turning it into a commission to make disciples by baptism.

And the whole flock, whereof the one bishop was then pastor, was but one congregation of Christians, using one and the same eucharist, or coming together

in one place to eat the Lord's supper; because then it was as irregular to have what they called more than one altar in one church, as to have more than one bishop. And, by the same rule whereby we shall be able to conceive many altars in one church to be yet but one altar, we shall conceive many bishops in one church to be no more but one bishop.

Again, this one bishop, however distinguished from the presbyters of this flock, did not then administer the government and discipline without the counsel of the presbyters, yea, nor without the consent of the whole people, the whole church. For Cyprian, the most zealous man in his age for the Episcopal dignity and authority, who speaks of it in the most high swelling words, says fully as much, as has been just now said, concerning his own conduct and practice in that office from the beginning. This, with what he says of the suffrage of the whole people in peace, and of the majesty of the Christian people, alluding to the majesty of the Roman people, plainly shews, that he looked on himself, in the highest dignity of his Episcopal office, as no more but the president of that great court, the whole church, and upon his presbyters, as assessors to him, who presided in that august assembly.

And further, in Cyprian's time, there was nothing like a difference of station in the world attending upon the different stations of bishop and presbyter in the church; only the bishop, being considered as the leading man among the Christian people by their Heathen neighbours, was the most exposed to sufferings on the account of Christianity.

While the pre-eminence of the bishop in order and degree, continued limited in this manner, by these remains of the apostolic institution, it was far more tolerable, than in the time of Acrius, who saw a great change in the state of this matter, by the removal of all these old bounds.

For, now that Christianity became the established religion of the empire, after the most zealous Christians had been taken off in the ten years of Dioclesian's persecution, there were multitudes of Christians, not made by the influence of the gospel, but by the influence of the Roman Emperor, and power of that empire; who, under the Christian name, leading a life almost Heathenish, gave abundant cause for that new distinction, betwixt Christians and saints, which remains ever since every where well founded in the Christian world. And thus the bishop's charge came to be a confused multitude (for a great part of it) of such Christians as were not disciples of Christ, nor capable to love one another as such; and who, in place of professing the faith that is in Christ through the word of his apostles, were associated in the profession of faith, in the forms and standards of faith that were established to them by the authority by which they could be influenced.

And now the one bishop's flock became many congregations of such Christians united in him, as one flock compounded of many: for that ancient mean or sign of union in a church, the same eucharist, was now set aside, as it had begun to be in some of the largest cities in the end of the third century. And the one bishop, having got rid of his one altar, appeared now in a higher sphere, with many altars, and priests serving under him at these altars, as their high priest.

This bishop and his presbytery lorded over this multitude of people; whose worldly interest brought them in subjection, and whose religion lay chiefly in a blind obedience, being unwilling and unable to judge for themselves, and having their minds strongly possessed with the fear of disobedience, and of separation from this one visible head of their church, as the greatest impiety. And so the bishop and his presbytery were eased of the labour of conducting a flock of Christ's willing people, by persuasion and example,



example, in the observation of all his commands, who was the only Lord of their consciences.

And such bishops, having the Christian empire parcelled out among them in districts, had revenues suitable to their station out of the spoils of the Heathen temples and priests; and it behoved their share of the tithes to be proportionable to the difference of their station in the church or the world, (now materially the same) from that of a mere presbyter.

But this was not all that Acrius had to look to about bishops in his day. He saw a difference again among them. He beheld the bishops of each province, (the civil provinces forming the body of the ecclesiastical) dependent on their metropolitan, the bishop of the civil metropolis; who called together, ordinarily twice a-year, and presided over a synod or council of the bishops of his province. And, as many civil provinces made one district, which was called a *diocese*, so many ecclesiastical provinces made one ecclesiastical diocese; of which Acrius saw the bishop of the principal city to be the head, having the rights, prerogatives, privileges of honour, and jurisdiction over the whole diocese, and enjoying the right of ordaining metropolitans. By this subordination of bishops to metropolitans, and of those again to capital bishops, the ecclesiastical government of the empire, now made Christian, and called the *Catholic Church*, became conformed to its civil government, according to the new distribution of its provinces. But the clergy were not yet the head of this Christian empire. The Christian emperors ruled it, till it was broken by barbarous Heathen nations from the north, into about ten independent kingdoms; which, submitting to the religion of the broken empire, and being made Christians by baptism, became unanimously subject to the clergy; and remained united in nothing else but their religion, which they supported by their power. This was the work of the following century, when *the man of*  
sit,

*sin*, conceived in the first churches, brought forth by the aid of Constantine, and nursed up and educated by the Christian emperors, was enthroned, and exalted to reign as the eighth head of that beast having ten horns; whom the Lord has been for some time consuming with the spirit of his mouth, and will soon destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Aerius, who lived an age before this great event came out, could not see it; but he saw the foundation of it laid in the work of this fourth century wherein he lived. And it was easy for him to perceive, that all the subordinations of the clergy established in his time, and making way for their kingdom in this world, had a foundation in the subordination of the presbyters to a bishop, that had been established in the churches long before his day, and yet had no foundation, that he could see, in the scriptures. Now, if the church had power, in any time after the apostles, upon any emergency, to establish that first subordination, and make that difference of order and degree betwixt bishop and presbyter; then certainly, upon occasion of further exigencies, she might make further subordinations, and establish new different orders of ecclesiastic officers. But Aerius was not satisfied that she had such a power; and therefore contended, that the bishop and presbyter did not differ in order and degree.

## S E C T. II.

*Setting forth the first argument of Aerius for the sameness, with the answer of Epiphanius shewing the difference.*

**A**ERIUS, to shew, that bishop and presbyter differ not in order and degree, pleaded, in the first place, that their office is the same, by their both doing the same things, so that whatsoever the bishop does, the presbyter does likewise; as, laying on hands,

## A View of the Heresy of Acrius.

hands, baptizing, dispensing the divine worship, and sitting in the \* throne; which, it seems, the presbyters did in his time. Now, if they did all the same offices, if their employment was the same, he supposed their character the same; and so could not see how they differed in order and degree, unless he could see the one employed in any work that the other could not be employed in.

In answer to this, Epiphanius denies not that the presbyter did the same offices which the bishop did; but he charges madness or folly upon this argument of his, because he should have added, that the effects of these offices or works are the same; which his wisdom clearly discerns to be vastly different: for he pleads, that the bishop begets the fathers of the church; but the presbyters beget not fathers or teachers; they beget only the sons of the church. And, by this difference of the effects, he shews the difference of the order and degree.

It is not quite certain, whether the assertion of Acrius, That the presbyter did the same offices with the bishop, was wholly founded in the practice of his time, from which he enumerates the actions of the bishop; or whether (because we shall see he mainly pleads scripture) it might not be also taken from Peter's exhortation to the presbyters among Christians in his time, and so to all presbyters in all times, in that remarkable passage, where he calls himself also a presbyter; as having, with the other apostles, exercised that office in the church at Jerusalem, before any other presbyters were ordained there, even as they also exercised the deacons office before the ordination of the deacons; for which reason, John also calls himself a presbyter. In that passage, Peter sets himself above the presbyters in nothing, but that wherein he was  
never

\* *Sitting in the throne.*] In the time of Acrius, the bishop's seat in the church had come to be called the throne, and the presbyters were said to be *κυριεποροι* and *κυριεπειραι*.

never succeeded by any ; his being an eye-witness of what he was chosen to testify as an inspired apostle. And he exhorts them in these words : *The presbyters which are among you I exhort, who am also a presbyter, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed : feed the flock of God which is among you, exercising the bishop's office, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither exercising lordship over the lots, but being made examples to the flock. And, when the Chief Pastor shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.* Then he turns his exhortation to the Christian people, or the Lord's lots, (being each of them allotted to him as his property, and obtaining his part in the Lord's flock as by lot) ; among whom these presbyters were bishops and pastors : and he distinguishes the flock of these chosen people, which they feed as pastors, and oversee as bishops, no otherwise from them, but as the younger from the elder ; saying, *Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the presbyters : yea, all be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility : for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

As this passage affords us a beautiful prospect of the original order of the church, and the true spirit of its government ; so we may see from it, as manifestly as words can make any thing appear to us, that the apostle charges the presbyters among Christians, with the work of bishops, as well as of pastors, under Jesus Christ the Chief Pastor, committing the whole care of the flock, which is among them, unto them jointly, under him immediately, or without any one visible uniting head.

Now, whether Aerius had any respect to this passage or not, in his assertion, that the bishop's work was the same with the presbyters, it was bold enough in Epiphanius to call him a fool, or a madman, for urging what Peter had expressly commanded, and making no distinction where the apostle had made

none: for, would it not require a very extraordinary degree of wisdom, and soundness of mind, to discern a distinction betwixt the effect of the bishop's work done by Peter's presbyters, and the effect of that same work done by another, called a *bishop*?

### S E C T. III.

*Wherein is considered the other argument of Acrius for the sameness, taken expressly from the scriptures; with the answer of Epiphanius, shewing the difference.*

THE main strength of Acrius on this, as on all the other branches of his heresy, lay in what he had to say from the scriptures, as appears from his other argument; of which Epiphanius also informs us, for we have nothing from himself. This argument, even as stated by his adversary, serves to shew, from the scripture, the sameness; and even in that very point where Epiphanius had been placing the difference, with a reflection on his folly for not perceiving it.

The argument is to this purpose. The apostle writes *presbyters* and *deacons*, and writes not *bishops*. And to a bishop he saith, *Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which thou hast received by the hands of the presbytery*. And again, in another place, he writes to the bishops and deacons.

And the answer of Epiphanius comes to this: That times are to be distinguished: for the beginnings of all things are small; but they grow by time. The apostles could not, at once, constitute all things. They wanted fit men in some places for the bishop's office; and, in other places, for the presbyter's office: therefore, where bishops were already constituted, the apostle wrote to the bishops and deacons; but, where they were not, he wrote to the presbyters and deacons.

Then

Then he shews the difference of *bishop* and *presbyter* from the same apostle, in this manner. Paul admonishes Timothy, a bishop, not to rebuke a presbyter; likewise, not to admit an accusation rashly against a presbyter: but he did not say to any presbyter, *Receive not an accusation against a bishop*; nor did he admonish him not to rebuke a bishop.

In this answer, there is no notice taken of what is said in the objection, to shew, that the effects are the same even there where Epiphanius himself places the difference: for, as he looks on Timothy to be a father of the church, holding him as a bishop, in distinction from presbyters; the objection points out this same bishop of his, begotten by the presbytery, or company of presbyters, that laid hands on him: so that presbyters begat him who judged presbyters. And what more could his bishop do? For, if they were capable to ordain his bishop, what made them unfit to judge him?

But here it is supposed, that Timothy was a bishop, without the least foundation for it in the apostolic writings; where it cannot be pretended that he is called so, and where he is represented in a quite different light from any notion we have of a bishop. He is plainly there one of the ministers of the apostle; whom he calls *evangelists* and *teachers*, in distinction from the prophets; setting them in the third place, next to the prophets, who are second, as the apostles are first; and distinguishing them from pastors, or bishops, and ordinary teachers, as above them: for they are called *evangelists* and *teachers*, in distinction from these, as being endued with that same knowledge which the apostle says should vanish away, when prophecies failed and tongues ceased, *i. e.* when the New-Testament revelation should be perfected. When therefore that gift of knowledge vanished away, whereby these evangelists and teachers were fitted for their office, so did the office vanish for which that gift qualified them. And these

ministers of the apostles, whose business it was to attend upon them where-ever they went preaching the gospel, to go every where upon their errands, to carry their messages to the churches, and bring them accounts from them, while they were laying the plan of the churches, and forming them, cannot remain, after the apostles remain no more in the world, to be thus attended upon, and ministered to. Paul would have Timothy to go forth with him, from the church where he was, unto this work of his minister and evangelist, which was pointed out for him by prophecy, and to which he was separated by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery of the congregation of Christ's disciples in Lystra, or in Derbe, or in Iconium, (for from one of these Paul took him, and there was a presbytery in each of them); even as Paul and Barnabas were separated at Antioch, to the work to which the Holy Ghost called them. And as their separation to this work did not give them the charge of any particular flock of Christians; so neither did his: and therefore it could not make him a bishop. And it can never appear, that Paul made him bishop of Ephesus, from his beseeching him, when he went into Macedonia, to stay and act for him in Ephesus; from whence, after a few months stay, he returned to him in Greece, and from thence attended him in his journey to Jerusalem, in company with several others of his ministers. Even as it cannot appear, that he made Titus, another of these ministers, bishop in Crete, from his leaving him to set in order the things left undone there; calling him from thence to him to Nicopolis, where he was to winter: for one might with equal reason say, that he was bishop in Nicopolis, or in Dalmatia, to which Paul informs Timothy he had departed from him, as in Crete where he left him for a while, to return to him.

Epiphanius finds himself obliged to account for what Acrius observed in the scripture, That the apo-  
stles

files write of the bishop and presbyter as one and the same order, in distinction from the deacon; and never speak of them as three orders, bishop, and presbyter, and deacon; but as two only, bishop, or presbyter, and deacon. He denies not the fact from which Acrius drew his inference; but he accounts for it, and endeavours to make it consistent with the three orders, by saying, that, in places where they wanted fit men for the bishop's office, there they write of presbyters and deacons; and in other places, where they wanted fit men for the presbyter's office, there they write of bishops and deacons. But here the orthodox father speaks without book to his heretic, and, supposing the very thing in debate, goes quite off the question; which is, Whether it can appear, from the writings of the apostles, that they constituted these three orders, bishop, and presbyter, and deacon? And, when he cannot deny that the apostles write of them as if they were but two, surely he cannot then pretend, that he, or his heretic might learn from their writings, that they were three.

It is yet more surprising, how he came to guess, that the apostles found men in some places fit for the one office, and not for the other; so as in some places they had bishops, and not presbyters, and in other places, presbyters, and not bishops; seeing it is undeniable, that there is but one and the same character for them both, left in the apostolic writings, in distinction from the deacon. For, when Paul describes to Timothy the men whom he should account fit for the bishop's and deacon's office in Ephesus, he gives him no character for a presbyter distinct from that of the bishop and that of the deacon. And when, in his journey from Greece to Jerusalem, attended by Timothy, touching at Miletus, he sent for the presbyters of the Ephesian church, and gave them his last charge, leaving the whole care of the church and of themselves unto them, under God, and the

word



word of his grace; he expressly calls these presbyters *bishops*, saying, that they had been qualified by the Holy Ghost for that office. His words to the presbyters of the flock of God in Ephesus are: *Feed the flock of God, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops.* And again to Titus, whom he left, to constitute presbyters in every city in Crete, he describes what fits a man for the office of a presbyter, and gives him the same character over again that he gave to Timothy for a bishop: and he says to him, *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things left undone, and constitute presbyters in every city, as I had appointed thee. If any be blameless, the husband of one wife—For a bishop must be blameless.* Now, if the apostle had no other direction to give Titus, for constituting fit presbyters in every city, but a description of the character of a bishop, how could Epiphanius imagine, that in some places they had men fit for being presbyters, and not fit bishops; and that in other places they found men fit for being bishops, but not presbyters? We cannot but see a plain necessity here for guessing again, or giving up the point to Acrius: for, if the presbyter's character be not the same in scripture with the bishop's, it is certain he has no character there. And, as Paul directed Timothy how he should constitute fit bishops in Ephesus, it is quite ridiculous to seek the difference of bishop and presbyter in Paul's advices to him about rebuking, and receiving accusations against presbyters there; who were all bishops, and therefore might judge bishops, as Paul bids them take heed to themselves, as well as to the flock. And is not a bishop to be intreated as a father? Or is an accusation to be lightly received against a bishop, any more than against an elder?

And thus, for all that Epiphanius has said, the difference of the bishop in order and degree from the presbyter cannot appear in the scriptures of the apostles; to which Acrius appealed in his argument.

## S E C T IV.

*Which gives some account of the writers of the second century agreeing with the apostles and with Aerius, and of the writers of that same century agreeing with Epiphanius.*

**I**F we did not believe, that the same Providence that watched over the oracles of God in the scriptures of the Old Testament committed to the Jews, became also engaged for the preservation of the New-Testament scriptures, we might wonder how they got safe through the second century, which abounded as much with forged scriptures, as the first century did with false apostles. And so much did the humour of feigning and forging writings prevail in that time, that it produced false writings of famous wise men among the Heathen, as Hermes Trismegistus; and Heathen oracles, as false books of the Sibyls cited by many ancient Christian writers, and even of the second century, in favour of Christianity; though Origen informs us, there were some Christians who opposed those that made use of their testimony, and called them Sibyllists. Some in that century indulged themselves in telling fables, and speaking deceitfully for God; while others had an open ear to hear those fables and wonderful stories told, to serve the cause of Christianity, (as they supposed who could not rest in the apostolic evidence for it) but really serving against it. And we have a sample of the manner of writing history in that time, in the fragments of Hegesippus preserved by Eusebius. Yet the intercession of Jesus Christ for his apostles has prevailed, and the scriptures containing their word, have come safe through that century, and all the centuries following, to the present, testifying against all the corruptions of the Christian religion, by the very men who have been instrumental in preserving them. And there are still some records of the second century extant,  
from

from which we may form some judgement of the state of Christianity in that period; and even with respect to this question betwixt Acrius and Epiphanius.

The first of these is a letter from the church sojourning in Rome, to the church sojourning in Corinth, said to be penned by the Clemens, of whom the apostle speaks. While that letter mentions three orders of officers in the church of the Old Testament, it at the same time confounds bishop and presbyter, even as the apostolic scriptures do; and it most plainly makes but two orders of church-officers in the New-Testament church; which, Clemens says, were constituted by the apostles, in the foresight of a controversy that should arise about the episcopacy, *i. e.* the name of the bishop's office; saying, at the same time, that in this apostolic institution was fulfilled that prophecy of Isaiah, which he renders thus: *I will constitute their bishops in peace, and their deacons in righteousness.*

The next is a letter from Polycarp, and the presbyters with him in Smyrna, to the Philippians. And, whereas Paul had wrote to the bishops and deacons in Philippi, without any mention of presbyters, Polycarp commends to the Philippians due subjection to their presbyters and deacons, without any mention of a bishop. And this has obliged some of the contenders for the three orders to guess, like Epiphanius, that there was a vacancy at that time in Philippi by the death of the bishop.

And there is need for some conjecture like this, in order to maintain, that the seven epistles of Ignatius, commonly called the *genuine*, are the very same with those mentioned in Polycarp's letter; and in order to reconcile them with that letter, and with the common style of the first part of that second century; especially where they carry the dignity and pre-eminence of the one bishop above the presbytery so very high, and insist upon it with so great warmth and zeal, that (not to speak of those learned men who reject them altogether as spurious) they have been justly suspected

suspected by some as interpolated by \* some author of these forgeries committed, and false writings passing current toward the end of that century, when the difference of the one, bishop from the presbytery came to be established, especially in the greater cities. Not that they doubt of Ignatius's having wrote epistles, or of Polycarp's having had them, any more than they doubt that there were books of the Sibyls kept in the Capitol: but they no more believe what is said of the one bishop in these epistles to have been written by Ignatius, than they believe the books of Sibyls cited by the fathers to have been the same that were so carefully kept at Rome. The author of that interpolation, in all the epistles of Ignatius, concerning the one bishop, has been zealously engaged as a party on that side of the controversy which Clemens said the apostles foresaw would arise about the episcopacy: and that side of the question prevailed toward the end of the century, when they made up lists, which have been handed down to us, of single bishops above presbyters, succeeding one another, at Rome and other great cities. In these lists they placed the first bishops in succession after one another; who yet appear to have been bishops at the same time: as, in Rome, they have, first, Linus; after his death, Cletus, or Anacletus, (as Irenæus calls him); and, after he is defunct, Clemens comes; who is again succeeded by Anacletus, if he be not the same with the second, called *Cletus*. Whereas it cannot appear in the scriptures, that the apostles ever ordained a single bishop in any church; but it is manifest, they always constituted a plurality of presbyters, whom they called *bishops*. And it appears from Clemens's epistle to the church in Corinth, and the state of the church in Corinth represented in that epistle, that the church

\* Some author of these forgeries.] Dionysius of Corinth, who lived in that time, wrote several epistles. and complained, that the ministers of the devil had filled them with tares, by retrenching and adding many things.

of Rome then knew of no such thing as a single bishop in one church; as Polycarp's epistle to the Philippians shews, he knew nothing of a single bishop in Philippi, where the apostle had a plurality of bishops. This one bishop, in distinction from the presbyters, and pre-eminence above them, was the work of the latter part of the second century, when they made up their rolls of succession. And it is no wonder to find their genealogy of bishops a little confused, when it comes near the apostles: for there it behoved them to place those in succession who were bishops at the same time, even as the apostles constituted them in every church.

Nor was this the only deviation from the commandment of the apostles of the Lord and Saviour, that took place and began to prevail toward the end of the second century: for, together with this innovation, of one bishop in a church different in order and degree from the presbyters, and, as the native fruit of it, synods and councils of such bishops took place, after the profession of Christianity had been maintained in the churches for more than a hundred years without them, to far better purpose than ever it was since. This new church-officer, set over the presbytery as the visible head of the church, and called a *bishop*, could not be ordained or judged by the presbyters, but by his peers, the bishops of other churches: and this created assemblies of such bishops, and naturally brought the churches into dependence upon their councils; which produced a new kind of catholic church, visibly united in the connection of these heads of the several particular churches with one another. And, by a very great inconsistency, while a church, with its clergy and people united to their one bishop as the visible head, was reckoned a complete organized body within itself, it became, at the same time, through that head, but a part of a body organized in the connection of such heads. Whereas originally, every church of the saints, having one  
eucharist

eucharist, and the catholic rule of Christianity, the word of the apostles, with all the officers of Christ's institution within itself, and depending immediately upon him who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks; was considered as a complete visible representation of the only true catholic church, which is invisible; and not at all as a part of any other visible organized body or church.

Now, these councils or synods of bishops, whereby the union of this catholic visible church is established and maintained, had a remarkable beginning, and made their first notable appearance in the end of the second century, on occasion of a difference among Christians, as to an oral tradition from the apostles, about the day on which Easter should be observed: for then tradition began to be the rule together with the scriptures. And it was so ordered in Providence, that the uncertainty of that rule was manifest in fact, from that very question upon which these synods met; and the difference betwixt Victor of Rome and his western synod, and Polycrates of Ephesus with his Asian synod, might have opened the eyes of all Christians to see what kind of unity they were to expect from this mean of catholic visible union. But it behoved the *man of sin* to be revealed in his time.

And we may likewise notice, while we are on the second century, that, toward the end of it, and after Polycarp's martyrdom, annual days began to be observed to the honour of martyrs, and as an incitement to follow them. And praying for the dead began in a little to be talked of; as we see it is by Tertullian in the conclusion of the century. So that Acrius, who was no friend to these things, cannot be thought to have paid any regard to the sayings or doings of that time. He maintained his points by the scriptures against tradition; and he held every thing for an innovation, however ancient, that had no foundation there; in like manner as those Christians did, who, not being satisfied, it seems, with the ways

then prevailing, were requiring scripture for every thing; against whom Tertullian wrote, for tradition. And these opposers of tradition, whom Tertullian could not call heretics, may be considered as the opposers of the innovations, and particularly of the exaltation of one bishop in every church above the presbytery, contrary to what they saw in the scripture. And so they may be looked on as holding the scriptural side of that controversy which, Clemens said, the apostles foresaw would arise about the episcopacy, and in the view of which, they constituted the two orders, of bishops, or presbyters, and deacons.

## S E C T. V.

*Which takes the hint given by Acrius, to shew, that the one bishop was grafted upon the apostolic presiding presbyter; and gives some account of him.*

WHEN Acrius speaks of his being called *bishop*, who was chosen by the presbytery to preside in the church in any one act, he plainly refers to what the apostle wrote of *presbyters presiding well*, in distinction from *presbyters labouring in the word and doctrine*, and of him *that teacheth*, him *that exhorteth*, and him *that presideth*. For, while the apostles made bishop and presbyter the same, their office the same, and their character the same, in distinction from the deacons, or the ministers of tables, as being ministers of the word, *apt to teach, or holding fast, as to doctrine, the faithful word, that they may be able both to exhort in sound teaching, and to convince the gainsayers*, by which they were qualified to take care of, and preside in the church, which is to be conducted by the word of faith; they at the same time made a distinction in this ministry of the word, according to three remarkably different ways wherein it may be exercised, with a threefold difference of effects; for every one of which every minister of the word is not equally sufficient,

sufficient, and in each of which every presbyter or bishop does not equally excel. For one excels in the explication of the word of faith that was taught by the apostles, and in leading the church into a more explicit knowledge of that word, and in convincing gainfayers by it: and he who excels in this, and so gives himself especially to it, or labours in it, is *he that teacheth*, or the *presbyter that labours in teaching*. Another excels in exhortation, by that same word, moving the affections, and warming the heart with the love of the known truth: and he who excels in this, and gives himself especially to it, is *he that exhorteth*, or the *presbyter that labours in the word of exhortation*. And another excels in the application of the same word, for the direction of the outward conversation in the world, and among the brethren, in all good works, and in all the mutual offices of brotherly love, according to the new commandment; whose talent lies therefore in the direction of the discipline of the church, that goes upon the works and conversation of the brethren: and he who excels this way, and so gives himself mostly to it, and does it to the best purpose, or to the greatest advantage, is *he that presideth*, or the *presbyter presiding well*. One of this last sort ordinarily presided in the assemblies of the church, while the others were as his assessors in the discipline, every one exercising himself mostly in that branch of the same office wherein his fellow-presbyters agreed that he excelled. All these presbyters or bishops did teach, exhort, and preside: but he who excelled in teaching, was the labourer in teaching; and he that excelled in exhortation, was the labourer in the word of exhortation, and he that excelled in presiding, was the presbyter presiding well. It required these three in every church or congregation of the fairs, to perfect its order, and to make it fully complete. And, according to Christ's institution of binding and loosing by discipline, no church can exercise that discipline without two of them, at the very least,



least, harmonising a *all* concerning every deed to be done for them of the Father which is in heaven: and therefore the apostles left a plurality of presbyters or bishops, in every church immediately dependent on heaven.

Now, in a church where they left but one bishop teaching, and one exhorting, and one presiding, the last presided ordinarily in the assemblies of the church, whereof they were all bishops: and, when he did so, he was called *the angel of the church*, by a name borrowed from the synagogue, (even as the assembly of Christians is called by James their *synagogue*) where there was certainly a plurality of chief rulers, the *archisynagogoi*: and he, by whose mouth, at any time, the congregation sent up their prayers to God, was called *the angel of the congregation*, that is, their messenger to God, whether he was an *archisynagogos* or not, (for any Jew might be, at some times, the mouth of the synagogue in prayer); but he that was so ordinarily, was distinguished by the name of *the angel of the congregation*. Even so, whereas the discipline of the church was executed by prayer, and this prayer was in the mouth of one presiding, that president who spoke the prayer of the presbytery in the consenting church, was called *the angel of the church*, their messenger to God, to whom they sent up their prayers by his mouth. And so we see the Lord Jesus directing his epistle to a church from heaven, unto him by whose mouth they sent up their prayers to heaven.

But this was far from being limited to any single person, so as to make the unity of the church to hinge upon him, as set above the presbytery, (as the interpolator of Ignatius's epistles would do) and especially where there were more presiding presbyters than one in a church: for the apostles no where limit a church to a single teaching, a single exhorting, and a single presiding presbyter; and, where there

were

were more than one, they might take it by turns, even as the presbytery of the consenting church chose. Therefore we find the Lord Jesus, writing to the angel of the church in Thyatira, speaks to this angel as more than a single person, saying, *Unto you ~~and~~ and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as hold not this doctrine.*

The style of the writers of the second century agrees with what has been said of the apostolic way of writing, concerning presiding presbyters: for Justin Martyr, who wrote about the middle of that century, calls him the president; by whose mouth the eucharistical prayers of the whole church saying *Amen*, were sent up to God; the president, not of presbyters, but of the brethren; not of a presbytery, but of the whole brotherhood assembled in one place to eat the Lord's supper. And even Tertullian, in the very conclusion of that century, retains something of this primitive style: for, when he is describing the order and discipline of a Christian church, or worshipping congregation of Christians, he says, that approved elders preside.

But, toward the end of that century, they began to appropriate the scripture-name *bishop*, which it gives in common to all presbyters, unto the presiding presbyter; and called him the bishop in their lists of succession from the apostles. Thus Polycarp, a famous martyr, who had been only a presiding presbyter in the church of Smyrna, came to be called the bishop of Smyrna; and Anicetus, who had been, at that same time, but the presiding presbyter in the church sojourning in Rome, came to be afterward called the bishop of that church, and to stand under that name in the genealogy of succession. It might have then been thought an odd scrupulosity and extreme preciseness, to quarrel or make any noise about a small variation in the use of a word, or the application of a name; but all new uses of scripture-words, and different applications of scripture-names, have

have brought innovations with them in the Christian religion. And so did this: for, under this new use of the name *bishop*, a new order of church-officers was introduced, different from, and set above the presbytery. And this human plant, being thus cunningly grafted upon the scriptural stock of the presiding presbyter, was the more easily suffered to fasten and grow up at first in the churches; who never imagined, that it would grow to the height that Acrius beheld it at in his day. And so it may be true that Acrius insinuates, *viz.* That the difference of the bishop from presbyter in order and degree, began at calling the presiding presbyter the bishop.

And here it is much to be remarked, that the apostle, no doubt foreseeing this, took sufficient care to prevent it; and has said enough to hinder as many from complying with it, as would take earnest heed to the scriptures as the only rule of their religion. For what can be more express against the pre-eminence of the presiding presbyter above the other presbyters, than this that he says, *Let the presbyters that preside well, be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and teaching?* If the things the apostles wrote, must be acknowledged, by Christians, as the commandments of the Lord; was not this commandment of his plainly made void by the tradition that gave the pre-eminence to the presiding presbyter, under the distinguishing name of *bishop*, in order and degree above the presbytery? And had not Acrius reason to reject such a tradition? Or should Christians reject him as a heretic, for not receiving an oral tradition from the apostles, contrary to their express writings?

## S E C T. VI.

*Wherein it is observed, that the moderns who agree with Aerius as to the sameness of bishop and presbyter, have yet no connection with him, in their Presbyterian form of church-government.*

**J**OHAN CALVIN was a great divine and excellent writer of the sixteenth century, no way equalled by those who shew the greatest contempt of him in comparison with their ancients. The fourth century has not furnished us with any writing on divinity that can be compared with the *Institutions*, which this modern is said to have wrote at twenty-two years of age, and which he dedicated to the King of France. And, if he had lived in the fourth century, with the knowledge he had of the scriptures, one may be bold to say, that even Epiphanius might have been his scholar in divinity. He happened to agree with Aerius as to the sameness of bishop and presbyter: and a great many Protestants are the same way minded with him on that point; which is so manifest in the scriptures, that it may at any time be observed there, by any attentive reader or hearer, though neither Aerius nor Calvin had ever said a word of it.

But, though Calvin agrees with Aerius, and with the apostles, as to the sameness of bishop and presbyter; yet his form of Presbyterian church-government, grafted upon that by him in Geneva, and brought from thence to Scotland by his disciple John Knox, has no connection with any thing that Aerius built on that sameness, any more than it has with the apostolic order in the churches of the saints. For Aerius had no other followers in his day to bring into church-order, but as many as would hearken to him pleading scripture against established tradition; having no worldly interest, nor any other influence, but that of persuasion, to draw them in to that order, in

opposition to the order established in every province by the power of the empire : and so he had no more occasion than the apostles had, for making out a draught of church-government fit for being established by the civil power in any commonwealth, or kingdom, or province of this world, as its ecclesiastic government. But Calvin had occasion for this ; and accordingly devised a form of church-government fit to be established in Geneva, building it upon the sameness of bishop and presbyter ; and his disciple adapted it to Scotland, where he laboured to have it established by the civil power. And tho' this form, once established, may subsist among people that have been accustomed to it, without an establishment, as the Episcopal form likewise can do ; yet it is made fit for an establishment ; and the want of that must still be a great loss to it : whereas the draught of the apostolic order in the churches of the saints that is to be seen in the scriptures, appears not there with the least air of a design to be so established ; and is at no manner of disadvantage by the want of it : for indeed it must undergo some considerable alterations, before it can become the ecclesiastical government of any commonwealth, or kingdom, or province of a kingdom of this world. There is one thing that Calvin sets aside, as incompatible with his system, which some, it seems, were insisting for in his time ; and that is, the necessity of all the members of a church partaking of the eucharist, being satisfied in one another as Christians and brethren in Christ, in order to their coming together as one body, to eat of that bread, and to drink of that cup, in brotherly love to one another, as joint partakers of Christ. The people of his communicating church, the parish, must not be allowed in scrupling to partake with any whom the presbyter and kirk-session judge fit to communicate. And this makes a church of a different kind from the apostolic churches of the saints, and faithful in Christ Je-  
sus,

fus, while it gives the presbyter, in his session of presbyters not apt to teach, more power over the people than ever Bishop Cyprian and his presbytery offered to assume to themselves over their flock. And this is a first and most necessary article in the Presbyterian form of a church, or in any other form, to make it fit for an establishment in any nation of this world.

Again, the presbytery of Acrius and of the apostles, governs a congregation of Christians assembling in one place to eat the Lord's supper; and his presiding presbyter presides in this congregation, as Justin Martyr's president of the brethren, who was the mouth of their assembly all saying *Amen* to his prayers at the same eucharist, whereof his whole church did partake: and such, and no more, was the flock, the whole church, ruled by Cyprian's presbytery, in the middle of the third century. But Calvin's presbytery is a council of presbyters, gathered out of kirk-sessions, and governing them and all the congregations of the district, which made one Presbyterial church, the flock fed by this presbytery, and united in it. And to prevent confusion in this presbytery, one is chosen to preside among them, who is called *Moderator*. And here it is that the difference of this form from diocesan Episcopacy is most manifest; for they all have access to this moderatorship. This presbytery, over-ruling a cluster of congregations or parochial churches, is again subordinated to a synod of such presbyters, governing all the presbyteries of a province; and this provincial synod is again subject to a national synod, governing a national church: and there is room left in this draught for an œcumenic synod of presbyters, governing all the nations of the earth, when they can be made Christian, and brought in subjection to this Presbyterial form of government. I dare say, Acrius had not the least notion of this frame of church-government by presbyters. Does any man really

really perceive it in the scripture? or will any one pretend to shew, that ever it appeared in the world before the sixteenth century?

A presbyter, presiding in a kirk-session chiefly composed of a sort of presbyters who are not at all ministers of the word, can have no pretence to being any thing like him who Aerius says was chosen by the presbytery to preside in the congregation or church; and it is no more like Cyprian's bishop, governing with the counsel of his presbytery, and the consent of his whole people, than an apple is like an oyster.

## C H A P. II.

### Of no annual Christian Pasch.

#### S E C T. I.

*Explaining the subject, and stating the question, from the argument of Aerius, and the answer of Epiphanius.*

**T**HE next branch of the Aerian heresy is, *That there is no Pasch remaining to be observed and celebrated among Christians.*

And for this Aerius alledged, what Paul says in his first epistle to the Corinthians, *That Christ our pasch is sacrificed for us.*

To which Epiphanius answers, That Paul himself celebrated Pasch; because he kept the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem: so that the Pasch of Christians is not subverted by the authority of his epistle.

The question here is plainly about the Christian festival that we call *Easter*, from the name of an old Saxon goddess, called *Aester*, or *Aestar*; the same, as Bochart thinks, with the *Phœnician Astarte*, to whom the Heathen Saxons had sacrificed, and kept a solemn annual feast, about the same time in which they

they kept Pasch after they became Christians by baptism, by which many thousands of them were made Christians in a day. And the Hebrew *pasch*, or *pesach*, is, in plain English, *passover*. So that the question betwixt Acrius and Epiphanius, who had nothing to do with the Saxon Easter, must be, Whether Christians ought to observe, as the Christian passover, that annual religious festival which they kept at the season of the Jewish passover? For the argument of Acrius, which Epiphanius answers, is far from setting aside the true Christian passover. He cannot be charged with denying, that Christians ought always to feast on Christ their passover sacrificed for them. He did not deny, that they ought still to keep a holy remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection, and in a solemn manner, every first day of the week when they come together to break bread. But he denied, that the annual solemnity which we call *Easter*, is the Christian passover, and that it is to be kept by Christians in place of the Jewish passover: for, it seems, it appeared to Acrius, that, when God instituted annual feasts to be kept to him, he distinguished these solemnities by peculiar ordinances to be observed at them; as, at the passover, the sacrificing of the paschal lamb, with all the rites proper to it, repeated yearly at the appointed time. But the sacrifice of Christ, the truth of that paschal sacrifice, and the only Christian passover, being once made, and never to be repeated, has put an end to the annual solemnity of the passover. And, as God has not distinguished that time to Christians by any peculiar ordinance to be observed in that season, it must be a holy feast wholly of their own making, if they keep it, and not as the Jewish passover, which was a divine institution; in the place of which, he hath given to Christians, Christ their passover already sacrificed for them, and not to be sacrificed annually, or at any time again for ever: and it derogates from  
this,



this, as the end of the passover, to hold an annual Christian passover in place of the Jewish.

Epiphanius denies not, that Paul, in his epistle, gives us Christ sacrificed for us, and our feasting upon him, as the true Christian passover; nor does he deny, that this is a different thing from the passover in question betwixt him and Acrius: but he pleads, that besides the passover whereof Paul speaks in his epistle, he hath also recommended to us, by his example, the observation of the annual festival of the passover; because it is plain, from the history of him in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that he hastened, if possible, to be at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. If he then studied to keep these annual solemn feasts himself, notwithstanding what he writes in his epistle of Christ our passover, surely it cannot make it unlawful for us to keep that annual solemnity, the Christian passover: for, if the apostle of the Gentiles kept the Jewish Pentecost, after the first fruits of the Spirit had come, on that day, as the end of that feast; no doubt he as well observed the Jewish passover, after Christ our passover had been sacrificed, as the end of that feast: and, if this was not unlawful for him, far less is it unlawful for Christians, to regard the season of the sacrificing of Christ our passover, and keep an annual day to the solemn remembrance of that great benefit. And therefore the church ought no more to be condemned by Acrius for regarding that day, than the same apostle would have those condemned who, being Christians, in his time regarded the Jewish days.

S E C T.

## S E C T. II.

*Which serves to shew, that the annual Christian passover did not rise from the apostle's keeping the Jewish feasts, and that the lawfulness of keeping it cannot be made appear from his practice.*

THE apostles declared plainly to the Gentile converts, that they ought not to observe the law of Moses, while they themselves, being Jews, and all the Christian Jews with them, continued in the keeping of that law, till that part of the New-Testament revelation came forth which looses the Jews from the obligation of that law, once laid upon them by divine authority; and makes it as unlawful for them, by that same authority, to keep its peculiar precepts, as it is for the Gentiles. And this is that part of the New-Testament revelation which we have written in the epistle to the Hebrews. Before this came, the consciences of the believing Jews, who sought not justification by the deeds of the law of Moses, but by the faith of Christ, *as the end of that law for righteousness*, did yet remain obliged by the divine authority in the precepts of that law, until that obligation was loosed by that same authority, in a new revelation, shewing, that they ought no more to observe them: for the first Christians, who believed the imputation of righteousness without works, both Jews and Gentiles, made a great difference betwixt keeping divine precepts, and seeking to be justified thereby; yea, their faith in Christ for righteousness, shewed itself in the most tender regard to every divine precept. And therefore, long after the will of God was made known, that the Gentile disciples should not be circumcised, nor keep the peculiar precepts of Moses, the apostles, and other believing Jews, kept them: and even Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, who contended most zealously against their observing the law, kept it himself; as we may see  
from

from a passage in the *Acts of the Apostles*, where James, and the presbyters of the church in Jerusalem, say to him, *Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law. And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise children, neither to walk after the customs.*—Do therefore this that we say to thee: we have four men which have a vow on them; take them, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing, but that thou thyself walkest orderly, and keepest the law. As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded, that they observe no such thing.—Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them. By this we see, that James, and the presbyters in Jerusalem, agree with Paul in the revelation already made, and acknowledge, with him, that the Gentiles should not observe the law; and even the multitude of believing Jews, zealous of the law, had no offence at Paul on this head: and, by the reference here made to that revelation, touching the Gentiles which believe, it appears, they, as yet, knew of no revelation obliging the believing Jews to forsake Moses, and to observe his peculiar precepts no more than the Gentiles; yea, Paul plainly shews he knew then of no such revelation, and declares, in the most solemn manner, that he had never yet taught the Jews to forsake Moses, and that he had not forsaken him himself. Now, this happened at that same feast of Pentecost, which, Epiphanius observes, Paul kept in Jerusalem. And he might as well have said, that his forbidding the Gentiles, in his epistles, to keep Moses's law, ought not to hinder them from following his exam-  
ple

ple in keeping it. The apostles, and all the Christian Jews, observed the law, till they were loosed from it, by the revelation written in the epistle to the Hebrews, about the beginning of the Jewish war, when the destruction of the temple was approaching; which makes it as unlawful for the Jews, as it was before for the Gentiles, to serve the tabernacle, or keep the law of Moses. But, after that revelation came, it cannot be made appear, that any apostle, or true Christian Jew, did any more observe any of the peculiar precepts of Moses; nor could any believing Jew, after that, regarding the days instituted in that law, claim the forbearance that was due to them who regarded these days of divine institution, before the will of God was made known, that loosed them from the obligation of these institutions. And if it be not now lawful for a Christian Jew to observe the holy days of the law of Moses, much less is it lawful to regard any such days that God never instituted.

### S E C T. III.

*Which considers how Christians might fall in very early to the keeping of an annual Pasch, without being led into it by the apostles keeping the Jewish feasts.*

**F**ROM what is said it may appear, that the observation of an annual passover among Christians, after the death of the apostles, did not arise from their practice of keeping the feasts enjoined in the law of Moses until God declared them free from the obligation of that law. And there appears not any thing in the apostolic writings, to give rise to it, beside that practice; which, instead of leading Christians into the observation of their annual passover in place of the Jewish, would have led them to keep the Jewish law and Jewish feasts. Yet it was very possible for Christians, both Jews and Gentiles, who had been always accustomed to annual solemnities in

the religions of their education, to think of the observation of an annual solemnity in their new religion, very soon after the apostles.

They all knew, that Christ their passover was sacrificed for them, at the very time of the Jewish passover; and that he rose again for their justification on the first day of the week, as the first fruits of them that slept, the morrow after the great sabbath of the passover; when the first ripe sheaf was offered; and that, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he poured out the first-fruits of the spirit upon his disciples on the first day of the week, which was the morrow after the seventh sabbath from the great sabbath of the passover, and the waving of the first ripe sheaf; that morrow after the seventh sabbath being the very day of Pentecost, which was the feast of first-fruits. And they were taught by the apostles, even in that epistle which discharges the Jews from the observation of the law of Moses, and seventh-day sabbath, to observe this eighth day, or first day of the week, this other day, on which Jesus ceased from his own works, and entered into his rest, as the sabbatism, or weekly day of rest, remaining to the people of God in place of the sabbatism of the seventh day: they were led by the apostles to assemble together on that day to break bread; and, in the observation of that and all the other institutions of worship, to remember Christ's incarnation; death, and resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost. While they were doing this weekly, it was very natural for them, at the season of the Jewish passover and Pentecost, to reflect, that this was the very time of the year when the great events fell out which they were always remembering on the first day of the week, and to consider the day on which they were then assembling, as the day of the year whereon Christ arose, being the third from that whereon he suffered; and again, at Pentecost, as the day of  
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the year whereon his entrance into his rest was notified on earth, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. And how easy was it for them, who had been used to annual solemnities in the Jewish or Heathenish religions, to incline to distinguish, from other times of the year, those times wherein the great events happened, upon which their whole religion now depended, as well as their eternal salvation?

But they had nothing written to them by the apostles, of the manner wherein such an annual day should be distinguished and solemnized: they had no other ordinances of worship left them, to be observed on such a day, but those they were already observing every first day of the week; which was the only set day of rest, and set day of solemn assembling, left to them in the New-Testament scripture. And therefore it behoved them to distinguish such a day to themselves, and make it solemn the best way they could, borrowing as much from the solemnities of their old religions as they could, without the Jewish sacrifices, and without the idolatrous rites of the Gentiles; at the same time reserving something of that zeal and fervour in the Christian worship which was due to the Lord's day every week, and keeping it up for these annual high days.

Yet as to the time of the passover, when Christ died and rose again, they did not all happen to fix upon the same very day for the high day of their annual solemnity: for some, considering the day before the great Jewish sabbath of the passover, as the day on which Christ their passover was sacrificed for them, made that the great day of the annual solemnity, in honour to his death; and called that the Christian passover, whatever day of the week it fell upon; while others, considering the first day of the week, the Lord's day, as the day in which they had always remembered these great events of his death and resurrection, fixed upon the Lord's day that followed the Jewish passover, and, holding that as the day of Christ's re-  
surrection,

urrection, made it the high day of the annual solemnity, and called that the Christian passover. And hence came the different practice of Polycarp in Smyrna, and Anicetus in Rome, and the great breach that fell out after that, in the end of the second century, betwixt Victor of Rome, and Polycrates of Ephesus. Each of these contending parties pleaded tradition from the apostles, for the high day of their annual solemnity, the passover. And the very opposition of these two traditions, shews the agreement of both parties, that the apostles had left in the churches an unwritten tradition, (for there can be no plea for a written one) that a day should be observed annually, and an annual solemnity kept among Christians, as the Christian passover, about the time of the Jewish passover.

#### S E C T. IV.

*Shewing the necessity of a warrant from the apostles for Pasch, from the very plea of tradition from them; and the falsehood of that tradition, from the manifest contradiction in it, as well as from Acrius's argument.*

**W**HEN both contending parties pleaded apostolic tradition for the day of the Christian solemnity of the *passover*, it is plain, this plea, on both the sides, went upon the necessity of a warrant from the apostles for the observation of such a holy day. They were all agreed, that such a religious solemnity is a thing of that nature which requires apostolic authority, or an institution from Jesus-Christ himself by his inspired apostles: and therefore, having no written tradition, either for the thing itself, or the manner and precise day of it, they pleaded an oral one. For, if there was no need of apostolic authority in the case; if the churches had power, in any time after the apostles, to make such an institution of Christian religion, where was the occasion for  
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making any work or noise about apostolic tradition in the case? This was a proper occasion for shewing that the church was vested with this authority, and so condemning any party that took a different course from the most established and common custom of the churches, that had the best and the most of ecclesiastical authority on its side. But even Victor, who condemned the Asians, did not therein suppose that Christians were to be condemned for any thing but a transgression of the commandment of the apostles: and Polycrates agreed with him; tacitly owning, that he were indeed blame-worthy, if he transgressed the apostolic commandment; while he vindicated himself, and condemned Victor, by apostolic tradition. Indeed Polycarp and Anicetus, who lived a little nearer the time of the apostles, found no fault with one another, did not condemn one another for their different practices in this matter; being conscious there was no transgression of any apostolic commandment on either side, as knowing no authority in the case but the custom of the churches where they happened to preside. But, when Christians began to condemn one another for their different practices in keeping their *passover*, they found the necessity of an apostolic commandment to do it by: and so Victor pleaded a commandment from Peter and Paul, handed down to him through little more than a hundred and twenty years, by a lineal succession of bishops in Rome, his forefathers, who always kept the *passover* on his day; while, on the other side, Polycrates pleaded a commandment from the apostle John, handed down to him through not much more than ninety years, by the lineal succession of the bishops of Ephesus, where John died, his forefathers, who, as well as Polycarp of Smyrna, who had seen John in his youth, kept the *passover* on his day.

Now, this being the first remarkable instance wherein oral apostolic tradition was pleaded among Christians as the rule of Christian religion, let us see what

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what can be made of it to form our judgment about all other ancient traditions, for which we see not a foundation in the apostolical scriptures. Shall we then say, that one of these contradictory traditions must be false; or that either the Ephesian or the Roman tradition must be true, and the other false? But how shall we then find which to call the true one? For we cannot reject the other as false, without razing the firmest foundations upon which any oral tradition from the apostles can be established; so that we shall not leave any thing whereon to build the truth and certainty of the other that we admit as true. Shall we therefore say, for the credit of the succession of bishops handing down tradition, that both these contradictory traditions are true; or that the tradition of Victor was the commandment of Peter and Paul, and that the tradition of Polycrates was the commandment of John? But this is to say, that the apostles have left contradictory commandments to be observed by Christians: and, if we stand not by John's command as the last, who shall tell us which of them to observe? For we cannot take up with any one of them, without transgressing the other apostolical commandment. Shall we therefore say, which is the only thing left to be said, that both these traditions were false; or, as the apostles said of a tradition that some teachers brought from them in Jerusalem to Antioch, That they *gave no such commandment* either to the church of Rome or Ephesus? They gave no commandment about an annual Pasch among Christians. That usage, though the most ancient of all unscriptural usages, has no connection with the apostles, has no relation to their word, wherein the Lord pray, that they, and all that believe on him through it, may be one; and therefore should be rejected, as wholly foreign to true Christian unity, and serving to divide them whom Christ would have united only by the word of his apostles. And, if that word do not unite Christians,

tradition,

tradition, that caused divisions from the beginning of its establishment as a rule, never will.

But we must not imagine, that all Christians, in that time when the contending parties about Easter agreed in oral tradition as a rule of religion, were agreed with them on that head: for Tertullian informs us of some Christians in those days, who demanded scripture-authority for every thing; against whom he pleads for tradition, from the common practices of Christians in his time, that had no foundation in scripture. And it seems those Christians who made this demand, did not find themselves obliged to tell when or how any universal practice commenced, if it came not from the apostles; but wanted to oblige the zealous maintainers and promoters of such religious usages, to shew them apostolic written tradition for them. Acrius appears to have been the same very way disposed. But he carried this matter a little further: he pretended to shew from the scripture, that the apostles had left a quite different account of the Christian Pasch from that of an annual solemnity coming in place of the Jewish; and therefore denied that they could leave any tradition about such a Pasch. And Epiphanius cannot deny the fact, that the apostle writes of the Christian Pasch as a different thing; but yet makes Acrius a heretic, by the example of the apostle studying to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost. And so we have seen the second branch of the Acrian heresy.

### C H A P. III.

#### Of no fixed Annual Fasts.

**T**HE third branch of the Acrian heresy, is, *That fasts ought not to be prefixed to certain and stated annual days and solemnities, such as the fast of Lent, and of the week before Pasch.*

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Here Epiphanius mentions a scripture which Acrius made use of to shew that Christians are not bound to such fixed times of fasting. And that scripture is found in Paul's first epistle to Timothy; where he says, *But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not laid to a righteous man, but to the lawless and disobedient, &c. —and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.*

The words here, that Acrius is said to have founded especially upon, are these, *The law is not laid to a just man.* But, as we are not informed by the answer of Epiphanius, how he built upon it, all that can be made of his argument is this: That a Christian, or a righteous man, (for the heretic made not the difference betwixt the two that was made in his time) is not under the law of Moses, that obliged the Jews to feast annually at the time therein fixed; but under the gospel; which is indeed opposite to all unrighteousness as any thing can be, but fixes no annual stated time of fasting; though it be agreeable to it to fast occasionally, or as the proper occasions of fasting lead the righteous to think it fit for them; who are not limited to the times of Moses's law, and far less can they be limited by the commandments of men, fixing annual solemnities, with certain days of fasting, in imitation of that abrogated law.

And all that can be made of the answer of Epiphanius is, That, without touching the scripture, he opposes only to him, the common consent of the Christian world, and the constitution of the apostles, decreeing the fast of every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year, excepting from Pasch to Pentecost, and of the six days of Pasch, how nothing at all is to be taken, but bread, salt, and water.

It is odd that the slaves of church-authority must always be betraying a consciousness of the need of apostolic authority for the religious customs that they scrupulously

scrupulously observe. We find them still grasping at every shadow for some pretence of a countenance to their usages from the scriptures; even as, when they came first into the use of fasting before their annual Pasch, and fasted forty hours, as from the time of Christ's death to the time of his resurrection, they encouraged themselves in this usage, by the countenance they imagined this scripture gave to it: *When the bridegroom shall be taken from them, then shall they fast in those days.* But Epiphanius here, not satisfied in the common consent of the Christian world, and finding no pretence from the scriptures for his stated fasts, is fain to seek for some pretence to apostolic authority, by having recourse to the work of that impostor, who, about the beginning of the fourth century, made a collection of all the innovations that had taken place any where among Christians after the death of the apostles, throughout the second and third centuries, and palmed them upon the world for constitutions of the apostles.

And what sort of authority is it that warrants us in saying, that he who eats bread with salt and water, is not breaking his fast? When the ancients fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays till three o'clock in the afternoon only, we understand they did not break their fast by taking any thing till that hour. And we may conceive it possible for them to keep the Paschal fast while it lasted but forty hours: but, when it extended to six days, and at last to forty days, there was then a necessity for making an alteration in the very nature and notion of fasting, or abstinence from food; which was always essential in fasting, whatever else belonged to it. For though they pretended to imitate the Lord fasting forty days before his entering on his public ministry, as Moses did at the giving of the law by him; and though the promoters of such institutions as this boasted of miracles, as serving to countenance them: yet they were not possessed of miraculous power enough to make the

appointment of a fast of forty days, or even of six days, effectual upon the Christian world, nor had they influence enough to obtain common consent to it. But they had as much influence upon the Christian world, as to obtain their consent to an alteration of the notion and nature of fasting, which they thought themselves possessed of a power to make. The clergy are capable of doing great things, and marvellous in the sight of men, by means of distinctions. Some of them have distinctions ready to support us in believing them, telling us such stories as these, That one held his head in his teeth, or that one held his body in his hand, and the like. And, as distinctions have served all sorts of them much, in making void the commandments of God to establish their own tradition, they had an easy distinction here ready to serve them in the matter of their fasts, wherein they have especially displayed their authority: for, whereas fasting, if it be any thing at all that can be seen, is abstinence from meat, it was the easiest thing in the world, to distinguish betwixt a *total* and a *partial* abstinence, and so to make the partial to be fasting as well as the total. Thus eating bread with salt and water only, came to be strict religious fasting. And thus they made room for the brightest display of ecclesiastical authority and power: for now they had power to command men to fast while they were eating, and to permit and allow them to eat while they were fasting. But as they did not shew their authority and power sufficiently, but where it incroaches upon the divine, and in his name too, they have made void the divine apostolic commandment, that takes away all distinction of meats of God's creatures, forbidding nothing but the blood; and, by their own authority, have established a new distinction of meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. And so they have given a commandment, whereby it is unlawful, without their leave, to eat flesh, while it is lawful and right to eat fish, throughout

throughout the whole fast of forty days. These religious eaters of fish, who think it a sin to eat flesh in the season of their fast, yet, for the most part of them, think it is nothing to eat the blood, when they may lawfully eat flesh. And though some of this sort of Christians scruple at the blood, yet this scruple arises not so much from the apostolic commandment, (for then they would regard it in other things) as from the tradition of their ancients.

But here it shall be said, Why is all this clamour and noise raised upon nothing but the sense of the word *fasting*? Has it any other foundation but the fixing of the idea of total abstinence to that word? and that not agreeably to the scripture either: for was not Daniel fasting, when he ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in his mouth, neither did he anoint himself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled? And is it not said expressly that the men of Jabesh fasted seven days, when they buried the bones of Saul and his sons?

And to this it shall be answered, That if there be any fault in fixing the idea of total abstinence to fasting, the scripture must be charged with it. For it says not at all, that Daniel fasted in the three full weeks of his mourning; nor says it, that the men of Jabesh-gilead fasted from the beginning of their seven days till they were finished; for then, according to scripture-style, it must have been said, they fasted seven days and seven nights; as is said of Esther and her people fasting, neither eating nor drinking three days, night nor day. For, when the Jews fasted a day, their fast ended at sun-set; and so the men of Jabesh might easily fast seven days, while yet they could not fast seven days and seven nights, like as Moses was, at the receiving of the written law which he gave to Israel, forty days and forty nights neither eating bread nor drinking water; and as our Lord is said to have fasted in the wilderness forty days and forty nights; which is pretended to be imitated

in taking, not flesh, but fish, or let it be but bread, salt, and water, from the beginning of their forty days, till they be all finished. But, though it cannot appear from the scripture, that a man fasts who takes any thing in the way of meat or drink; who would strive with them about the use of a word, if there were no such thing built upon it as a tradition and commandment of men making void a commandment of God? And indeed we had need to look well about us, as to the use and application of scripture-words: for the corruptions of Christian religion, and the innovations that have been made in it since the days of the apostles, have always been promoted and maintained by perverting and misusing scripture-words and names.

#### C H A P. IV.

#### Of no Prayers for the Dead.

#### S E C T I.

*Which treats of the first use that Epiphanius finds for Prayers for the Dead.*

**W**HEN Acrius denied, that prayers are to be poured out and made for the dead, he supported himself in this denial, by alledging, in the first place, That our prayers can be of no use to them in that state: for, it seems, it was his persuasion, that they who had lived and died in unbelief, and so in a state of condemnation, could receive no more refreshment or ease of their pain in that state, by means of our prayers, than the rich man's soul in the parable had, or could receive from his father Abraham and Lazarus; and that they who had died in the faith, and so in a state of justification, cannot, through our prayers, receive, in the separate state,  
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any addition to that comfort wherewith they are comforted in the blissful sight and presence of the Lord Jesus; and, whereas their bodies are to be taken into his rest at the resurrection of the just, and they are then to stand in their lot in his kingdom, according to their works done in the body before they died, they can receive no benefit in that resurrection from any works done or prayers poured out for them after their death. And thus Acrius, or any other man who cannot stand a moment upon scruples about the benefit that the living saints, who are in the trial of faith, may receive from his prayers, might yet confidently deny, that the dead in Christ have any need of his prayers, or can have any advantage by them.

Epiphanius, in answer to this first objection of Acrius, finds himself obliged, in not very few words, to point out the usefulness of prayers for the dead; and he condescends on three uses of them.

The first of them is, That such prayers are useful as a testimony of our faith concerning the life of the saints with the Lord. And this must be considered as the use he assigns for reciting the names of the dead in the prayers, to persuade those that are present that the souls of the dead are still alive, and to let us see that there is good hopes of those that are dead.

But this can never be thought of as a reason why any petitions should be put up for the dead in our prayers: for, if we testify our faith of their living with the Lord, this is a plain declaration and confession, that they do not need our prayers for them, as being beyond our state of probation, and at rest with the Lord, as much as they can be before their bodies be taken into his rest at the resurrection. It is not charged upon Acrius, that he, in the least, denied the prayers of all saints for the second appearing of the Lord Jesus, and the redemption of the bodies of the whole church in the resurrection of the just. But



as, it seems, he thought that the saints, in that resurrection, must enjoy Christ's reward, according to each one's works done before death, even his works of charity; he could not be persuaded, that any one of them could, then, enjoy one whit more of that reward, through any prayers that can be made or poured out for them after they are dead, and all their works are finished that shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just. And so he was clear to say, that our prayers can be of no use to the departed saints, either as considered in the separate state wherein they are living with the Lord, or as considered in the state of the resurrection, wherein Christ will give his own reward to every one of his saints, according as his works done in the body shall then be found to be. We must not suppose, as some would do, that either Acrius, or any other who agrees with him on this head, makes no difference betwixt the separate state of the spirits of just men, and the state of the resurrection. For whoever said, that these two states are the same? Is it not confessed, that Jesus Christ himself is expecting till his enemies be made his footstool? And can they who acknowledge this, deny, that the spirits of just men, living with him, are in a state of hope and expectation, even while they deny that they can receive from our prayers any addition to their joy of that hope in the separate state? So that while every Christian joins in the common prayer of all saints in heaven and earth, for the glorious appearance of Christ, and the resurrection of the just, it is very idle to be telling us of the difference betwixt the separate state, and the state of the resurrection, as if that could shew us the usefulness of the prayers for the dead, which Acrius denied. One of those who insist on the difference to this purpose, is very diverting in his manner of describing it. He would shew us the happiness of souls in the separate state, consisting in a joyful retrospect upon their past labours, and holiness of their lives, (here suppose the thief on the

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the cross now in paradise) and in a certain prospect of their future bliss, rather than in a full participation of their ultimate reward. And he would shew us these same happy reflectors on the labours of their holy lives, when they pass out of that state at the resurrection, the time of their full recompense, not at all conscious of their actions for which their judge shall then reward them with that same reward, in the prospect of which they were before right happy. But how is it that they are not conscious of these actions, these past labours, upon which they had such a joyful retrospect in the separate state? Why, it seems they come out of that state ignorant of this, that Christ esteems what is done to the least of his brethren, as done to himself. He brings them out of that state, not as yet acquainted with this goodness and condescension of the Lord, which every believer of the scripture on earth, and every worker of the works of charity, knows very well. This learned doctor, interpreting scripture to us, and shewing us the blessedness of separate souls, can tell us no more of the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, than a Heathen poet entertaining us with a fable of his Elysian fields. He has no notion to give us of the happiness of separate souls, and even the souls of infants, in the presence of the Lord, partaking with him, as joint heirs, in the light of the Father's countenance, that fulness of joy in his presence, and those eternal pleasures at his right hand, wherein is rewarded that one obedience whereby they are all made righteous, as it will also be further in the resurrection at his appearing and his kingdom, and yet further after the last judgment, when all things are made new, and all Christ's people, as joint heirs with him, shall inherit the new heavens and the new earth. And with this those only are truly acquainted, who, being made the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus, receive the Spirit of adoption, giving them a lively sense of his fatherly love and

and favour, through the righteousness of his Son, wherein they believe: for this is the very beginning and earnest of all the Christian happiness. But neither has this Elysian doctor any notion to give us of the relation that the works of Christian faith and charity have to him who *was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*, nor any notion of the connection of these works with the reward of his righteousness, in the resurrection of the justified by faith, who shall then all partake with him of that reward as brethren and joint heirs, every one according to his works of faith in that righteousness, and of love to it. He is as ignorant of the relation of these works to his righteousness, and of their connection with his reward, as his Elysians are when they come up from that state. But, leaving him and them to be as happy as the retrospect of their past labours and holiness of their lives, and the prospect of a reward suitable to them, can possibly make them, we must return to Epiphanius.

And, if what he says of departed saints living with the Lord, were to be understood of that life, whereof they had the beginning and foretaste while they lived by the faith of Christ, and now, seeing him, and being present with him where he is in heaven, they enjoy; partaking there with him in that light of his Father's countenance, that full sense of his favour and love wherewith he is made most blessed for ever, and which is the most proper life that can be thought of for the soul of a man; this would be an argument against their standing in any manner of need of our prayers, and so against the usefulness of these prayers for them. But it is to be feared, his living with the Lord is another thing: for it is his opinion, that all the dead, except those who rose with the Lord, are absent from him; and so he encourages those who can now affirm, that even the highest of the departed saints, the blessed Virgin herself, is not yet admitted into heaven; in express contradic-

tion to Paul, confidently affirming from his certain knowledge, that he, and others having the earnest of the Spirit, would have a mansion there upon the dissolution of the body, and, when they were absent from the body, be present with the Lord. But the faith that Epiphanius would have to be testified in prayers for the dead, is not the faith of what is said in the apostolic writings concerning the state of the souls of saints departed. His faith of their living, is indeed a belief that they are not annihilated, but living still in some dark place of painful desires and longings for being acquitted in the judgment, where they are sequestered till the day of judgment, and where they may be refreshed with some sort of visits from the Lord, and enjoy happiness in various degrees; the highest of those degrees being still much more inferior to the happiness of heaven, than it is superior to any happiness in this world. And this belief concerning the life of saints departed, may indeed be testified in prayers for them: for such a place and state of the saints departed, is very consistent with their need of prayers to be poured out for them, with the usefulness of these prayers. But this faith has no connection with the word of the apostles; no foundation in their scriptures, except the names of *Hades*, and *Abraham's bosom*, and *Paradise*, which have been borrowed from them, and applied to this Heathenish place of shades: for the true foundation of this faith lies in that ancient forgery, the books of the Sibyls, which began to appear about the end of the reign of Antoninus Pius, who died about the year of our Lord 161. The villain who makes these Heathen prophetesses, the Sibyls, testify concerning Christ, Hades, and the judgment, was, it seems, very full of Hades; for he derives Adam's name from Hades. And the simple fathers, who were glad of the testimony of the Sibyls to Christianity, as it was laid in the work of this impostor, and openly pleaded this testimony, sucked

in with it this new notion of the separate state among Christians, very different from the apostolic notion of it, but altogether agreeable to the Heathen notion of the place of shades. But, as Acrius had nothing to do with this Sibylline faith, he could never perceive the use of testifying it, in prayers for any who were believed to live in that Sibylline place.

## S E C T. II.

*Which shews that the new sort of correspondence with departed saints after the death of Polycarp, and the new place assigned them toward the end of the second century, was wholly unknown to the apostles and first Christians, and had no connection with the scriptures.*

**A**FTER the death of Polycarp, which happened in the year of our Lord 167, the church in Smyrna gives an account of his martyrdom, in a letter to those of Pontus; and, after telling a marvellous story of some very strange circumstances of his death, they say, they carried away his bones, being more valuable than the most precious stones, and more pure than gold, which they buried in a place where they assembled together to celebrate with joy and chearfulness the day of his martyrdom; thus honouring the memory of those that have fought gloriously for the defence of their religion, and to confirm and instruct others by such examples. And, at the same time, they take care to vindicate themselves from the charge of worshipping him, which their enemies' wanted to fix upon them, declaring, that they worshipped only Jesus Christ, because he is the Son of God.

One would think that the martyrdom of Stephen was as great an occasion for commencing a practice of this kind, as that of Polycarp, even though all the marvellous story told about it were true. But

no such thing as this was once thought of on that occasion. The devout men that carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation for him, took no such purpose as this in their heads, about the burial-place of Stephen. And this business about Polycarp must be looked on as the commencement and first beginning of the practice of celebrating the memory of martyrs, on the anniversaries of their martyrdom, which they called their birth-days, with panygerics upon them, like as the Greeks had used to make on their illustrious men; and as the beginning of their holding their religious assemblies at the places of their burial, and of their making honourable mention of them in their prayers; which Tertullian seems to call making oblations for them. And this new kind of correspondence with the dead, and honour done them on the earth, was attended with the Sibylline faith, about their situation in the separate state, very consistent with their need of prayers to be poured out for them by the living: for, about the end of this second century, they began to speak of these prayers; and these are the ends and uses of them that they spake of, *viz.* To obtain for these souls, light, quiet from Satan's insults, refreshment in their painful thirst of desires, a happy resurrection, and introduction into heaven. And thus, while they contrived new ways of exalting them on the earth, which was a new incitement to the suffering of martyrdom, that a Christian should not wish to have been the apostolic motive; they, at the same time, depressed them in the separate state, and brought them down from the heavenly presence of the Lord, to a low dark place; which to make it Christian, they called *Abraham's bosom*, and *the place of the prophets*, and *Paradise*, from which they were not to be introduced or admitted into heaven, till after the judgment; though it might be much more easily shewed from the scriptures, that heaven, which must contain Jesus till the times of restitution of all things,

things, is their place before that restitution, than after it. And now this new motive to martyrdom, which he who believes the testimony of the apostles, must be assured was unknown to them, plainly set aside that first good old one which animated Christians to undergo martyrdom in the time of the apostles, and which we may suppose influenced Polycarp himself. It was this:—*Though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen, are temporal; but the things which are not seen, are eternal. For we know, that if our earthly house of tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our habitation which is of heaven: if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in the tabernacle do groan, being burdened: wherein we are not willing to be unclothed, but to be clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore always confident, and knowing that, being at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith not by sight.) Now we are confident, and are well pleased rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord. Wherefore we are also ambitious, either being present, or being absent, to be acceptable to him. This first and nearest hope, for which they found God had begun to form them, and whereof they had the earnest, as well as the hope of the resurrection, and regard to the judgment-seat, which was further off, and which the apostle also speaks of in that passage, was that which moved and animated the apostles and first Christians boldly to suffer for Christ, and undergo martyrdom.*

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But they were far from being moved with any ambition of being honoured either with civil or religious honour in this world, by the living after their death. And, if their words can tell us their mind, we may be very sure, nothing could be farther from their mind than this, that, when they should be absent from the body, they would then be still absent from the Lord, in some dark place, where, being liable to Satan's insults, they would groan, being burdened, as having anxious painful desires of acquitment in the judgment, and admittance into heaven, so as to need the prayers of the living, for light, quiet, and refreshment, for acquitment in the judgment, and introduction into heaven at last, to them.

The apostles, and Christians in their time, knew of no place for God's whole family, but either heaven, his dwelling-place, the house of that family; or earth, where they were sojourning, as strangers, in the body, as in a tabernacle; expecting, upon the dissolution of that tabernacle, to be at home, in a mansion of their heavenly Father's house, beside the Lord Jesus; there seeing him, with whom they had, even now on the earth, a correspondence by faith, entering into the holiest of all by his blood. And, being estranged from the things of this earth, and seeking the things above, where Jesus sat on the right hand of God, they looked upon themselves as citizens of heaven, fellow-citizens in that heavenly Jerusalem with the saints of the Old Testament, who had died in the faith of that promise which they now believed to be performed in Jesus Christ, and whereof they were partakers with them. They knew by revelation, and believed, that those saints were perfected in heaven, by becoming partakers with Jesus in his inheritance there, by becoming members of the body whereof he living there is the head, and by sharing with him in the promise of blessedness there; and they knew, that they were not thus perfected in heaven without them, who were believers



on earth, not only Jews, but Gentiles also, partaking with them, as being fellow-heirs and of the same body, and joint partakers of that promise in Christ by the gospel. So these saints in heaven were not perfected there without them.

They plainly supposed these saints to have been in heaven, before Jesus rose from the dead, and ascended there: for, as they knew that God had taken up Enoch and Elias bodily into his dwelling-place in heaven, they knew nothing to hinder the spirits of just men from being there in company with them; even as they knew that Moses, who died and was buried, was in company with Elias, who never died, conversing with Jesus at the transfiguration. And Paul knew nothing to hinder his being in the third heaven, (which he makes the same with Paradise) and conversing there out of his body, as well as in it. And why should they, who believe that the angels, those heavenly spirits, conversed familiarly with men upon the earth by a vehicle fit for that purpose, yet think it any way strange, that the spirit of a just man, upon the dissolution of his body, should have a fit mansion in heaven, God's dwelling-place, and converse with the inhabitants there? When Abraham, the friend of God, expired, he had no other fathers to go to in the separate state, wherein all earthly relations are dissolved, he had no other people to be gathered unto, but those who had gone before him in the faith of the promise of Christ, the head of the woman's seed. Unto these children of God, eternally distinguished from the seed of the serpent, who shall never see light, Abraham was gathered, in the dwelling-place of their Father, when he died. And, considering him as the Father of all the faithful that came after him in the belief of that promise, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; and of all that believe the performance of it in Christ, as the gospel testifies; nothing could be fitter to express the happiness of the departed soul of an heir of that promise,

mise, before Christ ascended into heaven, nothing could be fitter to represent the heavenly felicity of such a soul, than the way of speaking that the Lord uses in the parable concerning the rich man and Lazarus; for there he represents Lazarus, as *carried by the angels*, the inhabitants of heaven, *into Abraham's bosom*, and there *comforted*, as a son in the bosom of his father, partaking intimately with that Father in his happiness, who was supposed by the hearers of that parable to be the happiest soul with God. And, as the heavenly bliss is represented by a feast, Lazarus is represented in the parable, as at that feast with Abraham, and leaning on his bosom; as John, the beloved disciple, did on Jesus, at the paschal supper. But he sets it before the thief on the cross, in this manner, *Thou shalt be WITH ME in Paradise*; and now, when he is ascended from the dead to his throne on the right hand of God, the heavenly happiness of departed saints is expressed by *being with Christ*; as he prays to his Father, *That they may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*. And so Stephen, the first martyr after Christ's resurrection, was encouraged at his death by the vision of the glory of God in heaven, and of *Jesus standing on the right hand of God*, as ready to receive his departing soul there; which he accordingly commended into his hands, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*.

The spirits of just men before Christ ascended, however happy they were in heaven, God's dwelling-place, were there in a state of expectation, as Jesus Christ and all the saints with him are now expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; for then they were waiting for the performance of the promise of Christ, in the faith and hope of which they sojourned as strangers on earth, desiring the heavenly country: and they did not receive this promise till they saw Christ alive from the dead in heaven. Thus Abraham was not perfected in receiving the promise of the  
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seed in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed, till he saw Jesus in heaven alive from the dead, and beheld him receiving of the Father that promise of the Holy Ghost, which he then shed forth on all his saints in heaven, as also upon believers on the earth, Gentiles as well as Jews. When Abraham saw this *church of nations* coming into being, and forming into one body in Christ its head; and when he found himself, as a member of it, partaking of the promise of the Spirit, which is the blessing of Abraham, the same which the Gentiles received through faith: then he was perfected; *i. e.* as the apostle explains it, he received the promise, which he had not till then received. And this was not without believers of all nations, without difference, sharing with him in the same thing: so he, without them, was not made perfect. In like manner, David sojourned on earth and died in the faith and hope of the promise of Christ his Son, who was to reign on the right hand of God, whose kingdom was to be established before him after his days were fulfilled. All his salvation and desire was in this promise. But he did not receive it, and so was not perfected in the apostle's sense, till Jesus ascended to his throne on the Father's right hand, and sat there to rule in the midst of his enemies, till they be his footstool: nor was he thus perfected by receiving the promise, without believers on earth partaking with him as fellow-subjects in the blessed kingdom of his Lord. The first Christians, in this view of the thing, which the apostles gave them, and which is still plain in their writings, could have no thought of what is now alledged, That departed saints are not admitted into heaven till after the day of judgment, nor introduced there without the prayers of the living for them, from which also they receive benefit in the mean time. For they knew, that, by their connection with Jesus, they were citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem; and so associated with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with

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with the innumerable company of angels, in that city of the living God: for, though they did not believe that David ascended bodily into heaven, without seeing corruption in the grave, as Jesus ascended, because a part of the evidence on which they believed Jesus to be the Christ foretold by David, lay upon this; yet they were well persuaded, that David's soul, in the separate state, was in the same situation with the spirits of other just men, which they firmly believed to be heavenly. And, if they looked on themselves as fellow-citizens of heaven, where they were conyering by faith, while living on the earth; they also expected to be in heaven when they died, there seeing that which they now believed.

In this apostolical view of things, we may be very certain, no tradition could come from the apostles or Christians of the first age, for that sort of correspondence with the dead that Tertullian speaks of, and for which, he himself owns, there is no rule that we shall find in the scripture. The faith he speaks of, is the same that received the books of the Sibyls, and their testimony concerning Jesus Christ, Hades, and the Judgment; and the custom which confirmed this tradition, and was observed by this faith, had no place among Christians, till after the death of Polycarp. For it can never be fastened upon the apostle John, by these words of Tertullian, "Tradition will be given you for the author, custom the confirmer, and faith the observer:" though it be asserted, that Tertullian, who lived within less than an hundred years after the death of St John, professes, that his generation had received it from that before them; and though they should believe this, who receive this new translation of his words, "They stand upon the bottom of tradition, custom confirms them, and one generation follows them upon the credit of what went before." Where had the Christian religion been, if it had been left to stand upon tradition, committed to such faithful men!

## S E C T, III.

*Containing an account of Hades, and likewise of the place of a departed soul.*

**H**ADES is a scripture-name, a Greek word, by which the Septuagint renders the Hebrew SHEOL; for which our English translation has sometimes the *grave*, and sometimes *hell*. It is no more the name of any place with gates, than it is the name of a voracious monster with insatiable appetite and wide extended jaws. *Hades* is a name for the state of the human soul separate from its own body, which commences at death, when a man expires. This state is the consequent of sin, by which death entered into the world; and, without the hope that comes by Christ, it behoved it to have been eternal and very dismal. The entrance into this separate state, by leaving the light of this world, and descending from the highest elevations in life, unto death, wherein the king and the beggar are equal, and both as low as they can be; even there is the mouth of Hades; where they who are most elevated in this life, are for most part the lowest: and indeed, without Christ, there is no exaltation nor happiness to be thought of in it. The prospect of Hades, to Adam after he sinned, and before he had the promise of Christ, must have been very dismal: for it behoved him then to think of a soul alienated from God, and conscious of the irreparable loss of his favour, wherein is life, and, in this case, ceasing for ever to act in the body into which God inspired it, and having no more enjoyment in it.

But the revelation to fallen man concerning Christ, has changed that first prospect of Hades. For, in the *first* place, whereas it was originally the same for all men appointed to die by Adam's sin, that revelation shews us two sorts of men in Hades, the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the just and the

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the unjust ; who equally return to the dust of death, but are far from being equal in Hades. And, in the *next* place, that revelation shews us, the state of the human soul separate from the body, which is called Hades, shall not be eternal ; for there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust : and, when every human soul is again united to its own body, there is an end of Hades. And yet further, while Hades remains, the revelation concerning Christ changes the prospect of it, both as to the just and the unjust who are in it : for, whatever differences there may be among men in this life who go to Hades, there are only two sorts of men to be found in Hades, and who shall be brought out of it by the power of Christ's resurrection ; the seed of the woman, who are just through their head, the Son of God made of a woman, through whom they are the children of God ; and the seed of the serpent, the unjust, who are of their father the devil ; the one to be saved from death by the power of his resurrection, and the other to be punished in a second death by that same power. Now, Christ has changed the original prospect of Hades to us, as to both these sorts of human souls in it.

For, first, as to the seed of the woman, whom Adam called *the living*, in distinction from the serpent's seed, when he gave to the woman the name of *the mother of all living*, and upon whom the sentence of death goes no further than, *returning to the dust* ; Christ shews them in Hades, happy as Adam was in Paradise before sin entered, by which he was banished from it. Now his life in Paradise, without which no enjoyment there could have any thing of a blissful relish to him, consisted in loving the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, and mind, and in his lively peaceful consciousness of his Creator's love and favour. This made him an innocent man, which he could not be with the least air of alienation from God, and happy with the happiness proper to man,

in distinction from the beasts in Paradise. There was some faint representation of this, in the life that the nation of Israel enjoyed in the promised land, the land of Canaan, while they were obedient to the letter of their law, and cleaved to their God in opposition to all idols: for that which made them happy in the possession and enjoyment of all the good things of that land, was, that they looked on them as testimonies of the peculiar love and favour of their God, who gave them that good land, and assured them of a pleasant life in it, in cleaving to him; as, on the other hand, that which made them miserable under the sword, famine, and pestilence, or the violent or untimely death threatened in their law, was, that it behoved them to look on these things as the signs of the displeasure and wrath of their God against them. And so we find the happiness of Paradise, and that of Canaan's land, made an emblem of the happiness we expect by Jesus Christ; who, as man, was once in misery, by the hiding of the Father's face from him, for the sins of his people, and is now most blessed for ever, by the brightest light of his countenance lifted up upon him: for this is the misery, and this is the happiness, proper to the soul of man, as he stands distinguished from all other animals. Now, as man, being once alienated from God, and having lost the sense of his favour, can never be restored to the divine favour, and regain the sense of it, wherein happiness lies, but only through Jesus Christ the righteous, the Son of God, in whom the Father is well pleased, and in whom alone God appears in that view wherein a sinner can be engaged to love him; men are restored to the favour of God, only in the way of believing in him. We pass from death to life, in believing, and being justified by faith, *i. e.* not by what we do, but by what we believe Christ has done, we have peace with God, and rejoice in hope of his glory: we love God, as he appears gracious and just in reconciling us to himself,

himself, when enemies, by the death of his Son; and we joy in God, through Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the reconciliation. But, after all, while we are in the trial of faith, and fighting the fight of faith, which is as long as this life lasts, our love to God, as reconciled in Christ, is not pure, and unmixed with any alienation, nor is our sense of the divine favour through Christ, unclouded altogether, as Adam's love to God, and consciousness of his favour, was in Paradise, before his sin for which he was ejected: and so we cannot be, in this sense, in Paradise while we live. But, that day we expire, Christ shews believers in him they shall be in Paradise. And surely they who believe, that true Christians, who shall be found alive at the coming of Christ, shall then be, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, changed both in soul and body, so as to be in that instant fit to inherit the kingdom of God, can have no difficulty about a believing soul's being thus in Paradise that very day it is separated from the body. And, if the soul of the thief was in Paradise instantly upon its separation, no man that believes in Christ can be excluded. Now, taking Paradise in this view, we may think how Adam's prospect of Hades might be changed upon his hearing and believing the revelation concerning the seed of the woman, and being recovered to a friendly correspondence with God through that. He saw the sentence of death proceeding no further than returning to the dust, as to the seed of the woman, whom he now thought of as the living, reconciled to God and entitled to life by the sufferings of their head, the Son of God, made of a woman; and so he might have a prospect of the separate state of these souls, when their bodies returned to the dust, as very happy in the perfection of that friendly correspondence with God, reconciled as a father to them, which had some beginning in this life. The view of a soul, perfected in love to God as a father in Christ, and perfectly



perfectly conscious of his redeeming love and favour through Christ, in its state of separation, is vastly different from the former view of a soul alienated from God, and sensible of the loss of his favour for ever, and in that case separated from the body; for it behoved him to consider the souls of the woman's seed, in the separate state, as rather happier than he had been in Paradise.

But Christ has also changed to us the original prospect of Hades, as to the unjust, the seed of the serpent: for they are to be brought out of it in the *resurrection of damnation*; and so their spirits are represented in that state as in a prison, from which they are to be brought forth to that judgment, and the second death, and wherein they are, mean time, in torment; not only miserable in the want of the divine favour and countenance, lost by Adam's sin to all his posterity, but further, by a consciousness of his displeasure and wrath, due to their own deeds done in the body, which is to be fully manifested in that *resurrection of damnation*. Thus Peter represents the spirits of them who some time were disobedient to Christ's preaching to them by his Spirit in the days of Noah, as now in prison; even as he says, the angels that sinned, are delivered into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment.

Now, if we would think of a place of torment, or a place of happiness, for a soul in the separate state, a soul united with its own body can be in that place, enjoying or suffering in the body, as Enoch and Elias may be placed where the spirits of just men are supposed to be placed. But that place cannot be Hades; because no spirit of a man, in its own body, can be in Hades: it goes to Hades when it leaves the body, and is not left in Hades when it returns to the body. So that, when we think of any place of happiness or of torment, we are then thinking of something else than merely Hades: for, in whatsoever part of the bodily creation we place a departed soul, it shall be

be still in Hades, while it is not united to its own body. And indeed we can have no notion of the place, or the motion of a naked soul; for we cannot think of these, without thinking of bodies, or portions of matter, contiguous to one another, and changing their situations toward one another. And though we know not how the human soul is connected with its own body; yet we are sure it is so, and that it, was originally inspired by God, into that frame which he formed of the dust from the ground; and being thus made for acting in connection with it, we find it acting so with it, that it would be hard to conceive it acting, even thinking at all, in separation from it, without any manner of connection with any thing of body or matter at all: and therefore the apostle says, *We are not willing to be unclothed; but, being divested of this earthly tabernacle, and clothed with our habitation which is of heaven, we shall not be found naked.* Thus, when we think of a soul in connection with body or matter wherewith it acts, which the apostle signifies by its being clothed with it, and dwelling in it, then we conceive it to be in the place where that body is wherewith it is so clothed; so that, while it is connected with the earthly tabernacle, it is placed on the earth, and lives there where that clothing is; and when, being detached from that, it is clothed with the heavenly habitation, it is then placed in heaven, and lives there where that clothing is wherewith it is clothed: for, when a man expires, though we have no thought of the motion or place of his soul, as quite naked, or utterly detached from all body or matter; yet, when we think of that soul, as inspired by God into any kind of body, or portion of matter, we can then think, that the soul is there living, where we conceive that to be into which he inspires it, when a man expires. Thus, when we are taught that the third heaven is God's dwelling-place, we are taught to conceive him there dwelling in that glorious inaccessible light, which cannot

cannot be looked on by eyes of flesh, and which had some faint resemblance, in his dwelling in that visible light and bodily glory, that shone in the cloud between the cherubim, on the throne in the tabernacle and temple; even that glory of the Lord which the children of Israel saw, in the wilderness, appearing in the cloud: and where the brightness of that purest heavenly light and glory, wherewith he clothes himself, shines in heaven, there he dwells; there is the throne of God, and the glory of God, whereof Stephen had the vision, with the Son of man, Jesus, on his right hand. In his house are many mansions with Jesus; and in those mansions he places the souls of his children, while they are absent from their own bodies; which shall also in due time be glorified with that same heavenly glory wherewith the body of the Son of man, now made heavenly, is glorified on the right hand of God. If then we think of Paradise as a place, that place must be no other than heaven; as the felicity of Paradise is plainly made a type of the heavenly felicity; and the promised land of Canaan was in like manner given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as a figure of the better country, *i. e.* the heavenly; in the expectation of which, they sojourned in the land of promise as strangers on the earth. And, when the apostle speaks of paradise as a place, he makes it the same with the third heaven, where the soul of man may be out of its own body, and so in Hades; and where it may also be in its own body, and so not in Hades; even as well as Moses, in Hades, and Elias, never in it, were both together with Jesus on the mount where he was transfigured, having therein a pledge or earnest of the glory of heaven, that he should enter into after his sufferings.

As for a place of torment for a soul in Hades, or in the separation from its own body, we cannot think of it without considering the soul in connection with some portion of matter wherewith it acts, and whereby it receives impressions like as in the body. Thus,  
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when the soul of the rich man in the parable is represented to us in Hades, as being in a place of torment, he appears in that place as having like bodily organs, acting by these, and affected in them by bodily torments: for still we have no way to think of the place of a spirit having no connection with any thing of body or of matter. And therefore the Heathens, when they would think of souls separate from their bodies, as in any place or in motion, were forced to think of shades.

## S E C T. IV.

*Concerning the rest of the uses Epiphanius finds for prayers for the dead, with his answers to other objections of Acrius.*

**T**HE next way wherein Epiphanius says prayers for the dead, are useful, is, That they are profitable to sinners when dead as the living profit by prayers, although they do not cut-off the whole fault. Though they do not blot out all their sins, yet they serve to expiate some of those which they committed in this life.

By this, it would seem, he distinguishes sinners, who are profited by prayers in the separate state, from the saints; while he would have these sinners, who are thus distinguished, benefited in the matter of remission by the prayers of the living. And this way of thinking cannot be reckoned quite unsuitable to the fourth century, when they had not yet fully settled purgatory, or a middle state, for a middle sort of souls, betwixt the saints in heaven and the wicked in hell, but were fast moving toward it: for, though the spring from whence downright purgatory flowed, was opened in the end of the second century; yet it came not quite out till after the time of Epiphanius.

But, when he condescends on the use of prayers for sinners in the state of the dead, as to the removing of guilt, he must meet with the second objection of Acrius, who pleads, That prayers, supposing them thus profitable to the dead, derogate from the necessity of piety in this life; and, in place of that, one needs but procure friends to pray for him, that he may not be a sufferer in that state.

And to this Epiphanius has nothing to answer, but, That these prayers do not take away all the guilt, or the guilt of all their sins, though they do profit, so far, in that way.

Did this father, called a faint, believe that sin is expiated, or remission of guilt procured, by any thing but the blood of Christ, shed for remission, and once offered; or that the remission of sins by that, is not full? Did he suppose there is any condemnation to them that are in Christ, to be yet taken off, after they die in the Lord, by the prayers of the living? Or did he imagine, that, after death, the last enemy, God chastises his children, as he does in this world unto death, by any chastisements, to be removed from them in the separate state through the prayers of sinful mortals? Or did he believe, that the dead who are not in Christ, can, by any prayers, after dying in that state of condemnation, be delivered from the least part of that condemnation? If this was his doctrine, one may be bold to say, it was highly impious. And, certainly, they who seek not the whole remission of their sins by Christ's blood only, in this life, but, where their own righteousness must be found lacking at death, hope to have the deficiency made up by prayers to be put up for them after death, must be impious, if any of mankind be so. As these prayers therefore open a door to them who are willing to evade coming to God by Christ for the remission of sins, and making that sure in this life, Acrius had reason to charge them with derogating from the necessity of piety in this life.

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But Epiphanius finds yet *another* use for these prayers. He says, they are useful to distinguish Christ from all the saints; because he alone is worshipped\*. As he is for mentioning sinners who are dead in the prayers; to implore the mercy of God for them; so he is for mentioning the righteous men, that Jesus Christ may be distinguished from all his creatures, and that we may learn to give to him the worship that is due to him only; being persuaded that we ought not to equal mortal men to the Lord, whatsoever righteousness and holiness they have.

By this it would seem that Epiphanius did not acknowledge the worship of saints; as neither did they of Smyrna, who began the affair of the anniversaries of saints, by setting apart the day of Polycarp's martyrdom, to be religiously observed to the honour of his memory: for here Epiphanius makes it inconsistent to pray for them, and to worship them. And it seems neither he, nor they who began their anniversaries, knew, that setting apart a day to be religiously observed to the honour of any person, is doing religious honour or worship to that person. And so is

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\* Cyril of Jerusalem, in *Catech. Myst. V.* says, "Then we also make mention of those who have fallen asleep before us, first the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, that God, through their prayers and supplications, would receive our petitions; then, for our holy fathers and bishops who have gone before us; and, in general, for all who have departed from among us; believing it to be a great benefit to their souls for whom prayer is made whilst the holy and tremendous sacrifice lies before God." And a late patron of prayers for the dead among professed Protestants, makes this reflection upon the words of his forefather Cyril: "These two, *viz.* their prayers for us, and ours for them are undoubtedly two great branches of the communion of saints." And, by comparing Cyril with Epiphanius, and both these fathers with their latest offspring in the Sibylline faith, in what they profess upon this use of prayers for the dead, we may perceive they are not at all agreed among themselves, except it be in this one thing, *viz.* That our praying to God, that he may receive our prayers graciously, for the merit of the prayers of those departed saints, or calling for the help of their prayers, is the very opposite of worshipping them; and that this distinguishes them from Christ.

consecrating a place, as they of Smyrna did Polycarp's burial-place; which the Lord prevented as to Moses.

And by this it also appears, that Epiphanius meant more by praying for the dead, than praying for Christ's appearing; and his kingdom, and the resurrection of the just; which Acrius never denied: for, in that sense, even Christ, who is worshipped, is some way prayed for; for he is expecting till his enemies be made his footstool, and till the last enemy, death, be destroyed; and, while we see not yet all things put under him, we pray for his coming, we pray that his enemies may be made his footstool, and that all things may be put under him, as an addition to the glory and honour of that same Jesus, whom we see already crowned with glory and honour. So that we cannot say it is absolutely inconsistent, to pray for one, and to pray to him.

None, perhaps, pretend to give that same worship to any saint that is due to the Lord Christ only, or to equal mere men to him in worship, howsoever holy they be: but, if we may be benefited by the prayers of departed saints; if their prayers may be useful to us, as ours are said to be useful to them: may we not call for the same benefit from them, that we bestow upon them; and so hold a mutual correspondence with departed saints, as we do with the living, and call this the communion of dead and living saints? Would it be an indignity to human nature, to suppose any man capable of this correspondence and communion with departed saints, that is pretended to by thousands of reasonable men? But perhaps some may fear, that it would be an indignity to the priest that pours out the prayers for the dead over his unbloody sacrifice, to suppose him as dependent upon the departed saints, as they are upon him. And, if the Roman church has erred, in not taking sufficient care here of the honour and dignity of the priesthood, we may say, that is a matter where-

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in they have rarely erred ; for, if they may be depended on in any thing, we may trust them in this.

Now, the last argument of Acrius against these prayers for the dead, is, That they are not supported by the authority of the scripture : for this heretic was free to deny every thing in the religion of his day that he could not find supported by that authority.

And Epiphanius does not so much as pretend, like some that have come after him, that there is any thing of a foundation for these prayers in the scripture : but he appeals to the tradition of the elders, or of the mother, the church, whose statutes cannot be dissolved, according to the words of Solomon, *Hearken, my son, to the words of thy father, and do not reject the statutes of thy mother* ; shewing by this, that the Father, *i. e.* God, and the only begotten, and the Spirit, hath taught both in the scripture and without scripture ; and the holy church, our mother, has statutes belonging to her, which are indissoluble, and cannot be abrogated. Nothing is greater or more admirable than those laws ; and all those who would oppose them, are self-convicted of an error.

But Acrius, who denied what was not written, and thought that the church must be subject in every thing to Christ, whose laws are all written, could have no regard to this mother of Epiphanius. He saw, in the Old Testament, a mother espoused to God, as in a marriage-covenant, only to be the mother of his children according to the flesh ; and, in the New Testament, this mother turning out to be the earthly Jerusalem in bondage with her children under that covenant which gendered to bondage, and cast out with them, as Hagar and her son were cast out of Abraham's house. She pretended to have statutes of her own, beside the written ones, to which her children shewed the greatest respect ; and, in their zeal for them, persecuted the very heir of God, which was the cause of the ejection. And for another mother in her place, in the New Testament,



could find none, but Jerusalem which is above, the mother of all the free-born children of God. But what earthly mother is this of Epiphanius, that pretends to be the spouse of Christ, and has children subjected to laws, that she gives them besides his written ones? It is to be feared, Acrius would not have stuck at saying, This is the whore in the Apocalypse, that commits fornication with the kings of the earth, is supported and adorned by them, and has many children, not begot by Christ's word, but by their means; and not subject to Christ, but subject to her laws, and statutes, made effectual by their authority and power. One may be clear to say, that, whatever Acrius was, he was not a son of this whore, to whose statutes he shewed so much disregard and contempt, without appearing to be any way self convicted of an error in the case. But Epiphanius revered her as his mother, and accounted her statutes grand and most admirable: and so he was her most affectionate and obedient son. 

END OF VOLUME FOURTH.

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