

THE
GENERAL EPISTLE
OF
J A M E S.

P R E F A C E.

THE scattered Jews, as St. James calls them, and as they are called also in St. John's Gospel, vii. 35. were in general families belonging to the twelve tribes, who, at sundry times, and upon various accounts, had quitted Judea, and settled in other countries. Many had remained behind at Babylon, after the bulk of them returned from captivity; and moreover the violent persecutions which the nation suffered in Judea under the reign of the cruel Antiochus, had obliged many to seek protection in foreign countries. As the experiment had succeeded with the persecuted families, it happened afterwards that many others, finding themselves straitened within their ancient limits, emigrated to other countries, as invited by the advantages of commerce, or the hope of establishing themselves in a profitable way; so that, by insensible degrees, the Jews became dispersed almost throughout all the East, and in the most considerable cities of Europe. But, besides these various emigrations of Jewish families, there had been, for seven or eight centuries, vast numbers of Jews scattered in Syria and the neighbouring countries, who were descended from the ten tribes of Israel which Shalmanezzer carried thither from Samaria, 2 Kings, xvii. 6. Many of these families did indeed return into Judea with those of the kingdom of Judah, (as clearly appears in 1 Chron. ix. 2.) in consequence of the edict of Cyrus, which permitted all the Jews, of what tribe soever, to return to Judea. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23. These were the very families which in part had peopled the country of Zabulun, of Nephthalim, and several other parts of Upper and Lower Galilee, which, in our Saviour's time, were inhabited by Jews belonging to all the twelve tribes. Matth. iv. 15. and xv. 24. The bulk of the people, however, had remained in Assyria and in the other provinces of Asia; and of these were the scattered, and as it were lost sheep, which the apostles collected into the fold of the great Shepherd. The prophets had often foretold the readmission of the ten tribes into God's peculiar covenant and visible church; and they had fixed the time to the coming of the Messiah. The famous oracle, Gen. xlix. 10. where the gathering of the people is predicted after the coming of Shiloh, no doubt had a reference to that; and Isaiah is express to this purpose at the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th chapter. It would extend this Preface too far, were we to cite all the divine oracles which foretel the same thing; but we cannot conclude without observing, that this is a convincing proof against the Jews, that the Messiah is come; and that Jesus Christ, who has gathered into the church the people of the ten tribes of Israel, is the Messiah; since it has been no longer known, for more than 1500 years, what is become of the tribes of Israel, which had been so long scattered in the most distant parts of Asia; for neither there, nor elsewhere throughout the East, is any certain mark of them to be found. And indeed the Jews are so confounded by this argument, that, as their custom is, they are obliged to recur to fictions which a sensible man ought to be utterly ashamed of. To the churches therefore formed out of these tribes, and of many other families belonging to Judah and Benjamin, St. James and St. Peter addressed their Epistles. They are called General, because written to all the dispersed Jews universally; not to any one church in particular, like most of St. Paul's Epistles; nor even to the churches of one province, as the Epistle to the Galatians; but to all the churches of Jews throughout Asia.

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The intent of St. James in this Epistle was, in general, to console the converted Jews under the persecutions which the unbelieving Jews were continually raising against them, and to induce them to suffer patiently and devoutly. But, because many among them gave an erroneous turn to the doctrines of grace, and particularly to that of justification by faith without the works of the law, that great doctrine of the Gospel, which St. Paul has established in his Epistles to the Romans, to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to Titus, and upon which St. Peter expressed himself so forcibly in the council at Jerusalem where St. James presided, Acts, xv. 6—11. this apostle therefore, in his 2d chapter, makes a point of shewing that works are an essential accompaniment to justifying faith. He dissipates the illusion whereby some had deceived themselves, as if, being justified by faith only in Jesus Christ, they might leave faith to itself, without aiming at and experiencing holiness, and shewing forth every good word and work. By a corruption similar to that of certain profane persons whom St. Paul introduces in his Epistle to the Romans, as saying, Let us sin, that grace may abound, they imagined that good works were not essential to salvation, but that it was sufficient to believe in Christ, and make profession of his Gospel,—a tenet both impious and foolish, and against which St. Paul has written expressly in the 6th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, and which he has kept at a distance in all his Epistles from his description of justification by faith, as is particularly evident in the Epistle to the Ephesians, ch. ii. 8, 9, 10. and the Epistle to Titus, ch. ii. 11, 14. iii. 4—8. This also is done by St. James after his example, and in the same spirit, shewing that faith without works is a dead faith; and that Abraham himself, in whom the Lord exhibited the model of justification by faith, had a lively and efficacious faith, bringing forth fruit, as he evinced chiefly by his obedience to God in proceeding to sacrifice his only son: so true it is, that, though a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law, (Rom. iii. 28.) yet the faith by which we are justified, is always a faith which purifies the heart, (Acts, xv. 9.) and worketh by love. Gal. v. 6.

C H A P. I.

We are to rejoice under the cross, to ask wisdom of God, and in our trials not to impute our weakness or sins unto him; but rather to hearken to the word, to meditate upon it, and to act accordingly: otherwise men may seem, but never can be, truly religious.

[Anno Domini 60.]

JAMES^a, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,^b to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

2 My brethren,^c count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3^d Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

4^e But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5^f If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and

^a Mat. 10. 2. & 13. 55. Acts, 1. 3. & 15. 13. & 21. 18. Gal. 1. 19. & 2. 9, 12. Jude, 1. Titus, 1. 1. Rom. 1. 1, 23. ^b John, 7. 35. Acts, 2. 5—11. & 8. 1, 4. & 15. 13, 29. & 26. 7. 1 Peter, 1. 1. Deut. 32. 26. & 28. 64. ^c Deut. 8. 2, 3. Mat. 5. 21, 12. Acts, 5. 41. Rom. 5. 3. Heb. 10. 34. & 4. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Phil. 1. 29. 1 Peter, 1. 6. & 4. 13, 16. 2 Peter, 2. 9. Luke, 8. 13. & 22. 28. ^d Rom. 5. 3. 1 Peter, 1. 7. ^e Mat. 10. 22. & 5. 12, 48. 2 Peter, 1. 4—10. Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. Gal. 6. 9. ^f 1 Kings, 3. 9, 11. Prov. 2. 3, 6. Jer. 29. 12, 13. Dan. 2. 20. Mat. 7. 7, 11. & 21. 22. Luke, 11. 9. John, 14. 13. & 15. 7. & 16. 23. Ch. 3. 17. & 5. 16. 1 John, 3. 22. & 5. 14.

THE object of this epistle being to persuade the whole body of the Jewish nation to forsake the many errors and vices into which they had fallen, the apostle first directed his discourse to such of them as were Christians, many of whom, it would seem, were become impatient under the persecution that they were suffering for their religion; and the rather, because their unbelieving brethren had endeavoured to persuade them, that the evils under which they laboured were tokens of the divine displeasure: for they applied to them those passages of the law, in which God declared he would bless and prosper the Israelitish nation,

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or curse and afflict it, according as it adhered to, or forsook the law of Moses. Wherefore, to enable the Jewish Christians to judge rightly of the afflictions they were enduring, and to reconcile them to their then suffering lot, the apostle, in the beginning of his epistle, exhorted them to rejoice exceedingly in afflictions, as a real advantage, ver. 2.—Because it was intended by God to produce in them patience, ver. 3.—And if it produced patience, it would contribute to the perfecting of many other graces in them, ver. 4.—In the second place, the apostle exhorted them to pray for wisdom to enable them to make a proper use of

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upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

^c Mark, 11. 24. ^d Tim. 2. 8. Rom. 14. 23. Heb. 11. 6. ^e Eph. 4. 14. Heb. 13. 9. ^f Peter, 3. 17. Jude, 12, 13. Gen. 49. 4. Pl. 66. 18.

their afflictions, and assured them, that God was most willing to grant them that, and every other good gift, ver. 5.—provided they asked these gifts sincerely, ver. 6—8.—Thirdly, that the poor among the brethren might be encouraged to bear the hardships of their lot patiently, and that the rich might not be too much cast down when they were stripped of their riches and possessions by their persecutors, he represented to the poor their great dignity as the sons of God, and the excellent possessions they were entitled to as the heirs of God: on the other hand, the rich he put in mind of the emptiness, instability, and brevity of all human grandeur, by comparing it to a flower, whose leaves wither and fall immediately on their being exposed to the scorching heat of the sun, ver. 9—11.—Fourthly, to encourage both the poor and the rich to suffer cheerfully the loss of the transitory goods of this life for Christ's sake, he brought to their remembrance Christ's promise to bestow on them, in recompence, a crown of life, if faithful unto death, ver. 12.

The apostle next directed his discourse to the unbelieving part of the nation, and expressly condemned that impious notion by which many of them, and even some of the Judaizing teachers among the Christians, pretended to vindicate their worst actions; namely, that God tempts men to sin, and is the author of the sinful actions to which he tempts them. For he assured them that God neither seduces any man to sin, neither is himself seduced by any one, ver. 13.—but that every man is seduced by his own lusts, ver. 14.—which being indulged in the mind, bring forth sin; and sin, by frequent repetition, being nourished to maturity, bringeth forth death at length to the sinner, ver. 15.—Wherefore, he besought them not to deceive themselves by the impious notion, that God is the author of sin, ver. 16.—He is the author of every good and perfect gift, and of nothing but good, and that invariably, ver. 17.—Farther, that such of them as professed the gospel might be brought to a right faith and practice, he desired them, as learners, to hearken with attention and submission to the apostles of Christ who had brought them word, and to be charitable in delivering their opinion on matters of religion, lest they might say something that was dishonourable to God; and by no means to be angry with those who differed from them, ver. 19, 20.—and to lay aside all those evil passions which they had hitherto indulged, and which hindered them from receiving the word with meekness, ver. 21.—Then he exhorted them to be doers, and not hearers only of the word, ver. 22.—because the person who contents himself with hearing the word, is like a man who transiently beholds his natural face in a glass, then goes away, and immediately forgets his own appearance; so that he is at no pains to remove from his face any thing that is disagreeable in it, &c. ver. 23—25.

The apostle, having thus exhorted the Jews to be doers of the law, proceeded to mention certain points of the law, which too many professors are apt to neglect, but which merit the attention of all who are truly religious:

And, first, he recommended the bridling of the tongue, that virtue being a great mark of holiness in those who possess it, and the want of it a certain proof of the want of genuine religion, ver. 26.—An exhortation of this kind was peculiarly suitable to the Judaizing teachers, who sinned exceedingly with their tongue, both by inculcating erroneous doctrines, together with a most corrupt morality, and by reviling all who opposed their errors: and it is highly expedient for professors in general. The second point of duty which the apostle recommended, was kind offices to orphans and widows in their affliction, because such good works are principal fruits of true religion in the sight of God: and the third and last was, a crucifixion to the spirit and practices of the world.

JAMES.] As this epistle plainly intimates that the destruction of Jerusalem was near, which happened in the year 70, this epistle could not be written by St. James the Elder, who was beheaded by Herod in the year 44. Nor were any large number of Jewish Christians dispersed, nor were the Jewish Christians sunk into any remarkable degeneracy, so early as his death. Hence we may conclude, that it was written about the year 60, by St. James the Less, called the brother or kinsman of our blessed Lord. This James chiefly dwelt at Jerusalem; and as he presided over the churches of Judea, to the inhabitants of which he had limited his personal labours, he endeavours in this epistle to extend his services to the Jewish Christians who were dispersed in more distant regions. For this end the apostle confines himself particularly to these two points, to correct those errors into which the Jewish converts had fallen; and to establish the faith, and animate the hope of sincere believers, both under their present and approaching sufferings. These are both treated, jointly or distinctly, in a free epistolary manner. This epistle is placed before those of St. Peter, because St. James was the first bishop, and because it is more general than the epistles of St. Peter.

Ver. 1. *To the twelve tribes, &c.*] It is well known, that the Jews were dispersed abroad, and to be found in great multitudes in almost all parts of the world, as well at the time of writing this epistle, as at present. It seems to be plainly deducible from this passage, that no entire tribes were lost in the captivity. The number of those who came back was registered by Ezra and Nehemiah: twelve goats were offered for a sin-offering for all Israel, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. See Ezra vi. 17. viii. 35.

Ver. 2. *Count it all joy*] Under the law, great temporal blessings were promised to the people of God as long as they continued obedient, and terrible afflictions threatened if they were disobedient: but the Jews expected even far better temporal things under the Messiah; there was great occasion therefore to set the Jewish Christians right in this particular; for they were in general deeply tainted with the national prejudices, and could not easily be reconciled to suffer for righteousness' sake; especially now that the Messiah was come, and they continued to believe in and obey him. *Temptations* are here put for trials and afflictions. The Jewish

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

8 ¹ A double-minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

9 Let the brother of low degree * rejoice ^k in that he is exalted :

10 ¹ But the rich, in that he is made low : because as the flower of the grass he shall pass

away.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth : so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12 ^m Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation : for ⁿ when he is tried, he shall receive

¹ Hof. 10. 2. & 7. 8, 11. ¹ Kin. 18. 21. Pf. 12. 2. If. 29. 13. ² Kin. 17. 41. ^{*} Or glory. ^k Rom. 8. 17. Phil. 3. 14. ² Thel. 1. 11. Heb. 3. 9. Ch. 2. 5. ¹ Pet. 2. 1. Rev. 1. 6. Acts, 5. 41. ¹ Pet. 4. 16. Phil. 1. 29. ¹ Tim. 6. 17. with Job, 14. 2. If. 40. 6. ¹ Cor. 7. 31. ¹ Pet. 1. 24. ¹ John, 2. 17. Ch. 4. 14. Pf. 103. 15. & 37. 2, 10, 35, 36. & 73. 18. & 90. 5, 6. & 102. 12. ^m Job, 5. 17. Pf. 94. 12. Prov. 3. 11, 12. Heb. 12. 5. Rev. 3. 19. Pf. 119. 67, 71, 75. & 34. 19. Rom. 5. 3. ¹ Pet. 1. 6, 7. & 4. 10. Ver. 2. ⁿ Mat. 10. 22. & 19. 28, 29. Rom. 2. 7, 10. ² Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 12. 11. ¹ Cor. 9. 25. Luke, 22. 28—30. Mat. 5. 10. & 25. 34. ¹ Pet. 1. 7. & 3. 14. & 4. 12, 13. & 5. 4. Rev. 2. 10. & 3. 21. Ch. 2. 5. Exod. 20. 6.

Jewish Christians about this time seem to have endured many hardships and persecutions through the enmity of the unbelieving Jews.

Ver. 3. *The trying of your faith worketh patience*] *Produce*th patience. Heylin. The word *δοκιμιον* signifies *proof* or *evidence*, in most other authors : but still, as it denotes a proof given by trial, the meaning will be, "That proof or evidence which you give, (by undergoing trials or afflictions,) of your sincere adherence to the Christian faith, worketh patience."

Ver. 4. *But let patience have her perfect work*] "that it may rise to its highest improvements during this little space of time, in which alone you will have the opportunity of preparing for glory and promoting the interests of the church of Christ, that so you may be made perfect and complete, deficient in nothing ; for the other graces of Christianity will generally shine brightest where patience is most conspicuous."

Ver. 5. *If any of you lack wisdom*] That is, *wisdom* in general. But if the word be particularly applied to sufferings and trials, as many commentators do apply it, the passage may be paraphrased thus : "But if any of you should be deficient in wisdom, or at a loss what method to take, or how to behave in a time of such general distress and perplexity, let him address himself by fervent prayer unto that gracious God, who is so ready to bestow liberally and bountifully on all men, and upbraideth no penitent person with his former abused favours. And whoever seeketh wisdom in that way, may be satisfied that he shall obtain it : for there is no manner of reason to call in question either the wisdom, the goodness, or the power of God."

Ver. 6. *But let him ask in faith, &c.*] "But then let him take care that he ask in steady faith, nothing wavering, nor divided by the desires of obtaining, and the fears of not obtaining, the grace he asks, or doubting of God's readiness to bestow it ; for he that wavers, and has not a firm confidence in the Divine goodness and faithfulness, can have no other solid and substantial support ; but is like a billow of the sea, driven on and tossed by the sea, in a restless and unsettled condition (If. lvii. 20.) easily discomposed and agitated by every adverse blast, and in the greatest danger of being dashed to pieces." Mr. Saurin paraphrases the passage thus : "He ought not to resemble the waves of the sea, which seem to offer to

"the spectator who is upon the shore, the treasure with which they are charged ; but soon plunge it into the abyss, from which it cannot be recovered." See Saurin's Serm. vol. ix. p. 438. He elsewhere paraphrases it "Like a wave which moves on, and seems to come to the shore, but immediately returns with impetuosity into the gulph from whence it came." Vol. v. p. 56, 57.

Ver. 8. *A double-minded man is unstable*] "He, whose schemes are divided between God and the world, and who cannot cheerfully and resolutely commit himself, in confidence of divine support, to be led whithersoever Providence shall please, is unsettled in all his ways : he will perpetually be running into inconsistencies of conduct ; and those imperfect and undetermined impressions of religion which he feels, will serve rather to perplex and torment, than to guide and secure him." Moreover, he who desires the end, must desire, or at least fully acquiesce in, the necessary means ; else he is *double-minded*. He would, and he would not.

Ver. 9, 10. *Let the brother of low degree rejoice, &c.*] "In nothing are the generality of men more apt to mistake, than in estimating the value of external circumstances ; but let the principles of Christianity instruct you, my brethren, to correct that mistake ; and in this respect, let the brother of low degree, of a poor and obscure condition, rejoice in his exaltation ; let him think of his dignity as a Christian, and entirely acquiesce in his low sphere of life ; for his circumstances do really give him such advantages for religion, by placing him under a shelter from many temptations, that he has a much fairer probability than others, of rising to some eminence in the heavenly world. On the other hand, if a true Christian be in worldly prosperity, he will be well aware how transitory that state is ; and, far from confiding in it, he will contemplate on the certainty of his approaching humiliation in death, and on all the mortifying circumstances that attend it. Accepting these, with a total resignation to the divine will, he glories in the hope, that he shall one day complete his sacrifice."

Ver. 11. *For the sun is no sooner risen, &c.*] *For the sun ariseth with burning heat ; it withereth the grass ; the flower thereof falleth ; and all the beauty of its colour perisheth : Even so shall the rich man fade away in his course ;*—*ωροσίας αὐτοῦ ;* in all the projects and pursuits in which he has been immersed.

Ver. 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation*] *Happy*

the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

13 ° Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

14 ° But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 ° Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 ° Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 ° Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

° 1 Cor. 10. 13. Pf. 5. 4—6. Hab. 2. 12, 13. Jer. 44. 4. ° Rom. 7. 17. Gen. 6. 5. Mat. 15. 19. 2 Tim. 3. 13. If. 44. 20. 2 Pet. 2. 17. Tit. 3. 3. ° Job, 15. 35. Pf. 7. 14. Rom. 6. 21, 23. & 7. 5. Ezek. 18. 4. Gen. 2. 17. Pf. 9. 17. ° Gal. 6. 7. Col. 2. 4, 8. ° Ver. 19. Ch. 2. 5. Heb. 13. 1. ° Prov. 2. 6. John, 3. 27. Rom. 11. 36. 1 Cor. 4. 7. ° Gen. 1. 2, 3, 14, 15. John, 1. 9. 1 John, 1-5. Eph. 1. 17. Mal. 3. 6. If. 102. 26, 27. Num. 23. 19. 1 Sam. 15. 29. If. 14. 24, 27. & 46. 10. Rom. 11. 29.

is the man who persevereth under temptation, or trial; for, being approved, he shall receive, &c.

Ver. 13.] St. James had said so much about the benefit of temptations, or trials, that he thought it necessary to guard his readers against so dangerous a mistake, as that of making God the author of sin, or ascribing temptations to him, as they signify "a seducing men to what is evil." In that sense they proceed not from God, but from the lusts of men, which, if complied with, end in death, instead of bringing men to a crown of life. Though, therefore, trials may be ascribed to God, yet temptation, in the bad sense of the word, cannot by any means be ascribed to him. Sin and death proceed from the lusts and wickedness of men; but God is not the author of evil; on the contrary, He is, like the sun in the firmament, an universal Benefactor, and the author of all that is good: nay, he infinitely excels the sun, as not being subject to any change or variation.—The Jewish converts were by the divine benignity brought first into the Christian church; they therefore had peculiar reason to ascribe goodness unto God, and to obey readily the precepts of the gospel; governing their passions, bridling their tongues, manifesting their meekness and charity, and doing every thing which the Christian religion requires, through Divine grace. Ver. 13—27.

Let no man say—I am tempted of God] See on Gen. xxii. 1. Exod. xv. 25. xvi. 4. Deut. viii. 2. "There are two senses of the word temptation, says Dr. Heylin, according to the different ends proposed; the one for trial, the other for seduction: this last is here intended. As God, by virtue of his boundless knowledge and almighty power, is incapable of being tempted by evils, so likewise he is of such perfect rectitude and benevolence, that he tempteth not any man; that is, draws him not designedly into sin, nor lays him, in any imaginable circumstances, under a moral necessity of committing it."

Ver. 14. When he is drawn away of his own lust, &c.] "Drawn out of the water, and taken with the bait;" ἐξήραμεν & δελεάζομεν: in both these words there is an allusion to the catching a fish with a bait; and lusts, or sensual pleasures, are here represented as the bait with which wicked men are caught. Grotius observes, that the best Greek authors have used this phrase, "To be ensnared by the belly, and by fair words." Plato said, "That pleasure is the bait of evil;" to which Cicero alludes, when he says, "The divine Plato calls pleasure the bait of

"evil, because men are taken with it, as fishes are taken with a hook."—"Every man is tempted (in this bad sense of the word) by the innate weakness of his own nature, in concurrence with the circumstances of life in which he is placed, being allured by his own lusts; and for want of wisely and resolutely opposing the first rising of them, he is ensnared to the actual commission of sin."

Ver. 15. Then when lust hath conceived, &c.] "For the gradation is much more swift and fatal than the generality of mankind are aware: lust having conceived, brings forth actual sin by a speedy birth, where perhaps the full indulgence of it was not intended; and sin, when it is finished, or perpetrated, is impregnated with death, and tends in its consequences to the final ruin both of body and soul." According to this fine metaphorical genealogy, Concupiscence is the mother of sin, and sin is the mother of death. Milton seems evidently to have had his eye upon this passage in his famous allegorical description of sin and death: Par. Lost, book ii. l. 727, &c.

Ver. 16. Do not err, &c.] Or, Be not deceived.

Ver. 17. Every good gift, &c.] The first part of this verse is in the Greek an hexameter, and possibly was quoted by St. James from some of the Greek poets. See Acts xvii. 28. 1 Cor. xv. 33. Tit. i. 12. Father in this verse signifies author, or cause. Com. Gen. iv. 20. Heb. xii. 9. The Father of Lights is here used agreeably to the astronomical metaphor which follows;—with whom there is no deviation, or tropical shadow—Light invariable, without any interposing shade, which is lengthened or shortened by the different distance of the sun, according to the common mode of expression. There is in these words, says Amory, an allusion to the heavenly bodies, and the benefits which we derive from them. The sun, moon, and stars, are greatly beneficial by their light, warmth, and influences, but not always beneficial: they rise and set to us; are sometimes nearer, at other times more distant; sometimes eclipsed, and often clouded. But the divine benignity is not subject to any such variations; it is always equally near, and equally communicative of its influences to proper objects; nor can any thing interpose between it and them: it is not the flush of good humour, which may be spent: it is not a great but limited treasury, which may be exhausted by large and continued communications. As God is ever unerringly wise, and unchangeably happy;

18 ^a Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.

19 ^v Whetefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath :

20 ^c For the wrath of man worketh not

the righteousness of God.

21 Wherefore ^a lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and ^b receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 But ^c be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

^a John, 1. 13. & 3. 5. 1 John, 3. 9. & 5. 18. Gal. 4. 19. 1 Cor. 4. 15. 1 Pet. 1. 3, 23. Eph. 1. 4. Heb. 12. 23. Jer. 2. 3. Rev. 14. 4. 1 Ver. 16. Eccl. 5. 1, 2. & 7. 9. Pl. 4. 5. Prov. 10. 19. & 13. 3. & 17. 27. Mat. 5. 22. Gal. 5. 20—23. Eph. 4. 26, 31. Col. 3. 8, 15. 1 Tim. 2. 3, 8. Prov. 16. 32. Job, 6. 25. with ver. 18, 27. Ch. 3. 1, 13. ^b Eccl. 7. 9, 10. with Pl. 11. 7. & 33. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 34. Eph. 4. 25. 2 Tim. 4. 8. ^c Rom. 13. 12, 13. Col. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 11. Heb. 12. 1. ^d Pl. 25. 9. 1 Thes. 1. 5. & 2. 13. Rom. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 21. & 15. 1—4. Eph. 1. 13. Acts, 13. 26. Tit. 2. 11. Heb. 2. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 9. John, 6. 63, 68. 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. & 2. 15. Heb. 4. 2. ^e Mat. 7. 21, 24. —27. Luke, 6. 46. & 11. 28. Rom. 2. 3, 13. Col. 2. 4. 1 John, 3. 7. 2 Tim. 3. 13.

as his power is infinite, and he is raised above the possibility of want or suffering; he will certainly always choose to do, what his wisdom determines best to be done; and as he ever deems the happiness of his creatures, who will accept of his mercy, to be the worthiest end, he will certainly be always disposed and delighted to promote that best end. The infinite communications of good, which he hath made already, instead of causing us to fear that his goodness may be exhausted, serve to prove it infinite, and therefore inexhaustible: they give, and they will give his faithful saints, to eternity, the most substantial reasons to expect from their Creator and Redeemer, all that can be expected from a Being infinitely wise, powerful, and benevolent.

Ver. 18. *A kind of first-fruits, &c.*] More excellent than others, and in a peculiar manner separated and consecrated to him. By *κτισματα*, creatures, the apostle here means the new creation; and he seems by the expression to allude to Jer. ii. 3. See also Rom. xi. 16. xvi. 5. As in ver. 15. we have the genealogy of sin and death, in this verse is the genealogy of the Christian life and happiness.

Ver. 19. *Swift to hear, slow to speak*] Agreeably to this inspired direction of the apostle, and the sentiments of the wisest of the Jews, the ancient philosophers have taken notice, that men have two ears, and but one tongue; that they should hear more than they speak: as also that the ears are continually open, ever ready to receive instruction; while the tongue is surrounded by a double row of teeth, to hedge it in, and keep it within proper bounds. But what the apostle seems peculiarly to refer to, was the temper of the Jews at this time, from which the Jewish Christians were not entirely free; that is, many of them were exceedingly impatient in hearing others, even when they were vindicating the ways of God; but very apt to assume authority to themselves, and to set up for doctors, rabbis, and teachers of others. See ch. iii. 1. Rom. ii. 17, &c. Whereas it was their duty rather to be swift to hear the apostles, and such as were best acquainted with the nature of God and of Christianity; and slow to speak of such things themselves, especially before they had made themselves thorough masters of them.

Ver. 20. *For the wrath of man worketh not, &c.*] Multitudes of Christians, so called, seem either to have disbelieved this, or to have forgotten it; for how often have they attempted to bring others over, to what they have apprehended to be the truth of doctrine, or the right manner of

worship, by using them ill, if they were not convinced, or did not readily comply?—whereas the wrath of one man can never enlighten the mind of another; it is reason and argument that must convince men's judgments, and bring them over to our sentiments. If we have power, our wrath may make them atheists and hypocrites, and force them to profess what they do not believe, and so produce sin and unrighteousness, instead of that righteousness which God requires. For religion is under Divine grace a matter of pure choice, and is not, cannot be acceptable to God, unless the heart and the tongue go together. Besides, the usual progress of wrath and ungovernable zeal ought to deter all conscientious persons from the beginnings of it; for he that will be angry at another because he differs from him, will be in great danger of speaking against him, and blasting his character; and, as one step commonly leads on to another, when he cannot overcome by arguments, the next thing will be to crush his adversary's opinion by force, if he either have power to do it himself, or can prevail upon the magistrate or the multitude to aid and assist him. All the persecutions in the Christian church have arisen in this manner; for, when lesser evils were insufficient for the conviction of obstinate heretics, it was necessary, upon the same principles, to have recourse to persecution. The reader will find abundant proof hereof by referring to almost any Century of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History.

Ver. 21. *Superfluity of naughtiness*] Vicious superfluity; every vice, and especially worldly cares or desires: these, if allowed in the mind, will, as weeds, choke up the good seed; which is the same as the engrafted word, immediately following. The word of God is frequently compared to a seed, or plant; particularly 1 Pet. i. 23. 1 John, iii. 9.—In which sense it is here said to be *ἐμφυτῶς*, engrafted, or implanted in their minds. Ministers are said *φυτεύειν*, to plant this word, 1 Cor. iii. 6—8. which bringeth forth fruit: Col. i. 6. Mark, iv. 7, 8. Further, as in the Greek writers, the word *ἐμφυτον* sometimes denotes what is innate, and sometimes what is thoroughly implanted or fixed in the mind; so here it implies, that the heavenly doctrine not only enters into the ears, but is so implanted in the soul by Divine grace, as to become, as it were, a second nature. Meekness in this verse stands opposed to wrath, condemned in ver. 19, 20. See Parkhurst on the word *ἐμφυτῶς*.

Ver. 22. *Hearers only, deceiving, &c.*] The Jews did indeed

23 'For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass :

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 'But whoso looketh into the perfect law

of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his * deed.

26 'If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

^d Luke, 6. 47—49. Ch. 2. 14—26. 2 Cor. 13. 5. Tit. 1. 16.

Heb. 7. 19. & 9. 9.

13. & 39. 1. a. 1 Pet. 3. 10. Ch. 3. 6. Pl. 39. 1.

^e 2 Cor. 3. 6, 17, 18. John, 13. 17. Rom. 8. 15. Ch. 2. 12. Mat. 5. 19.

^f Luke, 11. 28. John, 13. 17. Pl. 19. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Rom. 2. 7, 8. Rev. 14. 13.

^g Or doing.

^h Pl. 34.

deed place much of their religion in going up at proper times to the synagogue to hear the law read; and there may possibly be an allusion to that disposition. The exact signification of the word παραλογίζομενοι, rendered *deceiving*, is, "imposing upon any, by a *sophistical* show of argument;" and here it is used with peculiar propriety. The Jews have a proverb, "That he who hears the law, and does not practise it, is like a man who ploughs and sows, but never reaps."

Ver. 23. Like unto a man beholding his natural face, &c.] By way of opposition to the moral temper and disposition of his mind;—which he is to view in the glass of the gospel, and carefully regulate thereby; ver. 25. Perhaps some of them pretended, that *Abraham believed*, and that was counted unto him for righteousness; and therefore there was no occasion that they should be *doers* of the word, seeing they believed it, and were very ready to *hear* it: (See ch. ii. 14, &c.) as too many professors do in these days, making the holy Jesus a minister of sin.

Ver. 25. But whoso looketh, &c.] Ο δε παραυψῶν: *He that hath bowed his head, or stooped down*, more curiously to pry into any thing. The word is used concerning the disciples bowing down curiously and intensely to pry into our Lord's sepulchre, Luke, xxiv. 12. John, xx. 5, 11. But the image which the apostle seems here to have had before his mind, most probably is the same with that expressed 1 Pet. i. 12. *Which things the angels desired to look into; παραυψῶν*: In which expression there is a most plain reference to the posture of the *two cherubims* which stood over the ark of the covenant in the Jewish temple. See Exod. xxv. 20. St. James represents a zealous and sincere Christian as looking into the gospel, and searching curiously into it, that he may understand it, and through grace live accordingly; looking, in the same diligent and careful manner, as the cherubims were represented bowing down and looking into the ark: and this by way of opposition to the careless Christian, who is like a man that takes a transient view of his face in a mirror, and presently forgets what he saw, and turns his thoughts to something else. The happy effects of such a careful looking into the glass or mirror of the gospel, are beautifully represented, 2 Cor. iii. 18. By calling the gospel a *perfect law*, St. James seems to have insinuated to the Jewish Christians, that there was no necessity for them to add the observation of the law of Moses to that of the Christian law; the Christian law being perfect of itself, and without that addition: and by calling it the *law of liberty*, he seems also to have transiently hinted, that the ceremonial law was

abolished by the coming of Christ, or that the Christian religion had set them free from any further obligation to that law. But these were ungrateful truths, against which they were so much prejudiced, that he could only insinuate them, unless he had an inclination to defeat the end of his writing to them. There is indeed another reason which may be alleged for the apostle's expression in this place; namely, that as the law was so burdensome a service, and treated men with such rigour, it produced a spirit of bondage; whereas the easy service and mild treatment of the gospel produces a spirit of love and filial freedom. This is a subject which St. Paul has frequently enlarged upon in his epistles.

Ver. 26. And bridleth not his tongue] Not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his heart. Bishop Butler. As if the apostle had said, "It is impossible that any man should so much as *seem to be religious*, if he does not at least think that he bridles his tongue; but if he deceive himself in this important branch of religion, he is deceived in the whole of it." And indeed, so many sins of the tongue are committed without any apprehension of their being evil, that this caution, and this remark for the explication of it, are of great importance; considering how little many professors seem to be aware of the great evil of bitterly reproaching their brethren on account of their religious differences; a sin, which the apostle seems to have had particularly in his view.

Ver. 27. Pure religion] By the word Σπουδή, *religion*, is often meant the worship of God; but here it evidently takes in a larger compass; namely, that men *visit the fatherless, &c.* "Pure and undefiled religion, that which is clear and without any flaw or blemish before the penetrating eyes of God, even the Father, consists not merely in speculations or forms, or even in the warmth of affection during the exercise of worship; but it is this—to take the oversight of orphans and widows in their affliction, with a tender regard to their calamitous circumstances, and endeavouring to oversee them, in such a manner as to provide for their relief, performing to others in distress suitable offices of kindness and charity; at the same time taking care to keep himself unspotted inwardly and outwardly from those bad practices and irregular indulgencies, which so generally prevail in the world about us, where so little either of religion or morality is to be found." Archbishop Tillotson has observed, that the word ἀμίαντος, rendered *undefiled*, seems here to be an allusion to the excellence of a *precious stone*, which consists much in its being clear, and without a

27 ^a Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, ^b To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and ^c to keep himself unspotted from the world.

^a Mat. 5. 8. John, 15. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 12. 1 Tim. 1. 5. ^b If. 1. 17. & 58. 6. Mat. 25. 36. 1 John, 2. 15. & 3. 17. Ch. 2. 14—16. Pf. 68. 9. ^c John, 17. 14. Ch. 4. 4. 1 John, 2. 15, 16. Gal. 6. 14. Rom. 12. 2 Eph. 5. 7, 11. Col. 3. 1, 2, 5. Prov. 23. 5. Pf. 17. 14. 1 John, 5. 4, 5, 18.

flaw or cloud; and surely no gem is so precious or ornamental as the amiable temper hereby described. The word *ἰστούμενοι*, rendered *to visit*, properly signifies, “to take the oversight of;” and may import, entering into measures for their subsistence, as well as going to them, and conversing with them in their distresses. See Matth. xxv. 36.

Inferences.—Let us learn from this chapter a holy caution, and guard against those baits of lust under which death is concealed; remembering that God has bestowed upon us a power of determining our own actions, that he tempts none to evil, nor appoints to any such temptations as he knows to be in their own nature irresistible. Be our spiritual enemies ever so powerful, or ever so artful, they cannot do us any hurt, till we betray ourselves into their hands. Yet certain it is, that their artifice and their power, in conjunction with the deceitfulness of the human heart, make it requisite, that conscious to ourselves of our deficiency in wisdom, we should ask wisdom of God. Let the liberality with which he gives it, and the royal freedom with which he has promised it, encourage us to ask it with such constancy, that we may receive daily supplies; and with such firm confidence in his goodness, that we may not waver, and be like a wave of the sea tossed by the wind.

Trusting in that supply of grace which we receive from him, let us go forth calmly and cheerfully to meet such trials as the infinite wisdom of God shall appoint or permit, how various and pressing soever they may be; remembering that they tend to improve our patience, and by patience to perfect every other grace; and that if we be not overcome, we shall be approved, and made meet to receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him. And O, that the love of this blessed Lord, who has purchased as well as promised it, may always render us superior to every trial, and more than conquerors through him that has loved us, and thereby hath acquired to himself so just a claim to our supreme affection. With hearts faithfully engaged to him, and established in the firmest resolutions for his service, let us look with indifference upon those worldly circumstances, about which they who have no sense of a higher interest are exceedingly solicitous; and let us regulate our value of all the good things of life, by a regard to their aspect upon our religious characters and hopes.—If low circumstances may improve these, let us look upon them as true exaltation; and if wealth, and dignity, and applause, may endanger these, let us rather fear them, than aspire to them. Whatever we have obtained of those things which the men of the world are most ready to covet and admire, is transitory and fading as the grass, or even as the flower of the field; and sometimes, like those beautiful, but tender productions of vegetable nature, is consumed by the excess of those causes to which it owes its existence and its beauty: “Give us, O Lord, durable riches, and righteousness, and

“that honour which cometh from thee, and is immortal, as its great Original.”

And with what gratitude should we direct our eyes and our hearts to the unchangeable Father of lights, and acknowledge every good and every perfect gift, as descending from him; but above all, the invaluable gift of his regenerating grace, for which, if we are of *the first-fruits of his creatures*, we are certainly indebted to him, and are thereby laid under the strongest engagements to consecrate ourselves continually to his service. Let us therefore listen with a most obedient regard to every intimation of his will, and set a guard upon all our passions, that they may move in sweet and harmonious subjection to it. Especially, let us be slow to wrath, and not imagine that we can be justified in the exorbitances of our angry transports, because they may possibly arise in the cause of religion. The righteousness of God is not to be promoted, but on the contrary, will be disgraced and obstructed, by such outrageous ungovernable follies. Let every impure and malignant affection be therefore banished from our minds, and let us pray that the word of God may be so ingrafted into our souls, as to become the effectual means of our salvation. Let us not rest in a mere forgetful hearing, or indeed in an ineffectual remembrance; but having looked into the gospel,—that perfect law, which by binding the soul gives it the truest liberty, let us by Divine assistance continue therein, and improve, to the immediate purposes of reformation and holiness, whatever knowledge we thereby gain; correcting whatever we observe amiss in ourselves. Particularly, let us study a proper command over our tongues, and cultivate those charitable dispositions and offices, in which true and undefiled religion is here declared to consist; that widows and orphans may give us their blessing, as their guardians and friends; and that an unspotted life, untainted with the vices of a degenerate age, may bear witness, that though in the world, we are not of it, and that we act in consistency with those sublime and holy ends to which we profess as Christians to aspire.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. The inscription of the epistle. *James*, who counts it his highest honour to subscribe himself *a servant of God*, and, or even, *of the Lord Jesus Christ*, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, wherever dispersed throughout the world, sendeth greeting, wishing that all blessings may descend upon them, whether of this world or a better.

2. He exhorts them, under the persecutions and troubles which for Christ's sake they endured, to rejoice. *My brethren*, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, and by Divine Providence are permitted to be variously exercised by the malice of the wicked; esteem their reproaches your honour, and your losses your truest gain; *knowing this*, by divine testimony, and happy experience, *that the trying of your faith worketh patience*; your faith is proved genuine by this blessed effect, and every exercise of it tends

CHAP. II.

It is not agreeable to Christ's profession, to regard the rich partially, and despise the poor brethren: rather we are to be loving and merciful; and not to boast of faith, where no deeds are; which is but a dead faith, the faith of devils, and not that of Abraham and Rahab.

[Anno Domini 60.]

MY brethren, have not ^a the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, ^b the Lord of glory, with ^c respect of persons.

^a Rom. 1. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 5, 19. Titus, 1. 1. Jude, 3. ^b 1 Cor. 2. 8. Phil. 1. 9. Heb. 1. 3. Acts, 7. 2. Pl. 24. 7—10. Titus, 2. 13. ^c Lev. 19. 15. Deut. 1. 17. & 16. 19. Prov. 24. 23. & 28. 21. Rom. 2. 11. Jude, 16. ^d Acts, 22. 3. & 23. 4. Jude, 16. ^e Gr. *Synagogue*.

to confirm your hearts in meek and humble resignation.

But let patience have her perfect work; be the trials never so many, never so grievous, never so long continued, bear up under them with persevering steadfastness, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing, possessing that perfect love which casteth out all fear that hath torment, and pressing forward till you arrive at the highest eminence of grace. Note; (1.) Surrounded as we are with temptations, we have need of patience, that we faint not under our trials. (2.) Philosophy may enjoin submission, but Christianity alone can teach us to rejoice under affliction. (3.) Faith is the root of all graces: as that is vigorous, these will be in exercise. (4.) The sharpest conflicts which we have to sustain, prove in their issue, when rightly improved, the greatest blessings to our souls.

3. If we would act aright under our trials, we must be upon our knees often, to beg divine direction. *If any of you lack wisdom, and know not how to act in any emergency, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men, who apply according to his word, liberality, and upbraideth not; never weary in granting, nor ever reproaching his supplicants with their unworthiness, or the multitude of the favours which he bestows; and it shall be given him; all the counsel and assistance which such a one needs, shall be bestowed in answer to his prayer. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; not distrusting the faithfulness, power, and grace of God in Christ, however difficult and embarrassed his circumstances may be: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed; the sport of every guilt of temptation, restless, impatient, fluctuating, unsettled in principle and practice: for let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord, while he dishonours him by his unbelief and fickleness. Such a double-minded man, divided between Christ and the world, halting between both, and willing to reconcile the incompatible services of God and Mammon, is unstable in all his ways, and, having no fixed end in view, can never prosper in his soul, nor expect an answer to his prayers. Note; (1.) We have every encouragement to approach a throne of grace; and every possible assurance of finding relief there, if we draw near in faith. How perverse and foolish then must we be, if we make not use of this invaluable privilege? They who come to God with their requests, must honour him by their confidence in his power, truth, and love; unbelief shuts out the blessing. (2.) When the heart is*

2 For if there come into your * assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

3 ^d And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here † in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

unstable and wavering, prayer cannot ascend with acceptance before God.

4. *Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted to the riches of grace, and the transcendent dignity of being an heir of glory; but the rich brother, in that he is made low; taught, amidst all his affluence and grandeur, true poverty of spirit, and lowliness of mind, and ready ever to part with any thing that he possesses for the sake of Christ, because he knows the fleeting and perishing nature of all worldly wealth, and that as a flower of the grass he shall pass away, and leave it all behind. For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways. Often in this world riches make themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven, and death at farthest will prove their vanity.*

5. A blessing is pronounced upon faithful perseverance. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; far from proving his heart, his trials in their issue tend to advance his truest felicity: for when he is tried, as the gold in the furnace, and comes forth brighter from the fires, he shall receive the crown of life and glory, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, hath promised, and will at the great day of his appearing assuredly give to them that perseveringly love him. Note; (1.) We must be tried, before we can be crowned. (2.) The reward of fidelity is still the gift of God, who freely promises it, and by his grace supports the faithful, and of his mercy bestows the crown of life.*

2dly, Concerning the cause of all the evil of sin which we fall into, when brought into temptation, we are taught,

1. That it is not to be imputed to God. *Let no man say when he is tempted to commit sin, in order to extricate himself from suffering, I am tempted of God; for this is abominably impious, since God, who is in his nature perfectly holy, cannot himself be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man to iniquity, whatever providential afflictions he may lay upon him. Note; We are very apt to cast our sins at God's door, and to blame him for putting us into such temptations; whereas our trials are designed to exercise our graces, and not to draw us into sin.*

2. We have only ourselves to blame for all the evil which is in us. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed; foolishly and perversely following*

4 ° Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hearken, ' my beloved brethren, ' hath not God chosen the poor of this world ^h rich

° Ch. 3. 16. & 4. 11. Mat. 7. 1—5.

' Ch. 1. 16. Ver. 1. Ch. 3. 1.

° Mat. 5. 3. & 11. 25. Luke, 6. 20. 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28. Johs, 7. 48.

^h Luke, 12. 21. 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19.

Rev. 2. 9. Exod. 20. 6. Prov. 8. 17.

1 Sam. 2. 30. Mat. 5. 3. Ch. 1. 12.

following the bait which Satan lays, beguiled by his enticements, and led by corrupt affections from the paths of truth and holiness. *Then when lust hath conceived, in thought and desire, it bringeth forth sin, gaining the consent of the will to the perpetration of iniquity; and sin when it is finished, in the act, and impenitently persisted in, bringeth forth death of body and soul for ever. Do not err, my beloved brethren, by entertaining false and injurious conceptions of the blessed God in this matter. Note; (1.) The root of all evil is in our own fallen hearts. (2.) Sin enslaves by flattery; it is the deceitfulness of unrighteousness yielded to, which proves our ruin; and false hope supports vain confidence, till it appears that there is a lie in our right hand. (3.) If we do not destroy the power of sin, we may be assured that it will finally destroy us.*

3. All the good which is in us, proceeds from God. *Every good gift, and every perfect gift, every bounty of Providence, and every spiritual endowment, which tends to the perfection of our nature in knowledge and holiness, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, the Author of all light, natural, moral, spiritual, or eternal; with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The sun that gilds the firmament, is obscured often by clouds, rises and sets, is eclipsed, and moves to and fro between the tropics; or changes equivalent are produced among the heavenly bodies; but God knows no change; nothing but good, without the shadow of evil, can proceed from him. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, not for any desert of ours, but of his rich and unmerited grace, sending us his gospel, and making it effectual, through the power of the Spirit, to quicken the souls of believers from the death of sin, and raise them to newness of life; that, as his adopted and regenerate sons, we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures; consecrated to him, and devoted to his immediate service. Note; (1.) All glorying must be excluded, if all good be of grace; for what then have we, which we have not received? (2.) All who are begotten by the word of truth in the gospel, must, from that moment, consider themselves as consecrated to God's service, and bound to live to his glory.*

3dly, The apostle enjoins them,
1. To restrain their passions. *Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear God's word; slow to speak, not daring to censure the ways of Providence and grace; slow to wrath; not disputing or quarrelling with the truths of God, or treating those who differ in point of controversy with contempt or anger: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; the cause of God cannot be served by our selfish passions; nor with such a spirit may we hope to speak aright, or to convince others. Note; (1.) We should not be obstinate in our own opinions, but be willing to hear the objections of others. (2.) God's cause is not to be served by noise and anger, but by meekness and the word of truth. Whoever is in the right, they that are angry are sure to be wrong.*

2. To put away every other vile and corrupt affection. *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, every defiling lust, and malicious temper; and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, that it may take fast hold of your affections, and be incorporated with your hearts; bowing before it with all humility, and receiving it on God's authority with faith and love; which is able to save your souls, when thus accompanied by the power of the Spirit, and yielded to by the heart unto righteousness. Note; Corrupt affections entertained, disengage and indispose the soul for receiving God's word, turn us away from hearing it, and prejudice us against the truth.*

3. We must be not only hearers of the truth, but practise it also, else it can profit us nothing. *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves, by fallacious conclusions, to the ruin of your own souls. For if any man be a hearer of the word merely, resting upon that as of any avail, and is not a doer of what he hears, he is like a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and, hastily passing by, straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. Such is the careless and cursory hearer of the word: he may discover, whilst under the word, in a transient glance, something of the sinfulness and depravity of his nature, and his need of Christ; but it makes no deep or lasting impression: no sooner is he gone forth into the world, than he forgets his convictions, and continues utterly unchanged in temper and conduct. But who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, attentively viewing himself in the glass of the gospel, wherein we are called from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and continue therein, careful to hold fast in principle, and to correspond in practice, with the things therein revealed; he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, diligent to obey what God commands, this man shall be blessed in his deed, made happy in God's present service, and, if faithful unto death, his end shall be everlasting life. Note; (1.) True religion consists not in profession merely, but in practice, without which Christianity is but an empty name. (2.) The word of God is as the faithful mirror, that knows not to flatter: if we attentively view ourselves in that glass, we shall see the horrid deformity of our fallen spirits by nature, and learn to entertain the lowest thoughts of ourselves. They only are blessed, who, having discovered their real state, are seriously led to the Fountain open for sin and for uncleanness; and in a Saviour's blood, and by the power of his grace, have their filthiness cleansed, and their nature renewed after his image, so as henceforth to walk with and please God.*

4. He marks the difference between true and false religion. *If any man among you seem to be religious, making such a profession, and yet brideth not his tongue, from railing, reproach, slander, profaneuess, bitterness, or proud talkativeness to display his own talents; this man's religion is vain: however plausible he may appear, his heart is rotten; and while he would build up his own excellence*

in faith, and heirs of * the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

6 But ¹ ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before

the judgment seats?

7 * Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

8 If ye fulfil the ¹ royal law according to

* Or *that*. ¹ 1 Cor. 11. 22. Ch. 5. 4, 6. Acts, 13. 50. 2. 25. & 4. 12. Deut. 4. 2. & 17. 31. & 5. 32.

* Pl. 73. 9, 11. Job, 21. 14, 15. Rev. 13. 5, 6. with Phil. 2. 9. ¹ Ch.

by detracting from others' worth, his hypocrisy is visible through the mask. *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father*, that religion which he approves, which is dictated by his word, and aims at his glory,—is this, *To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*; stretching out the kind hand of charity to relieve them, sympathizing with them, and affording them every assistance which they need, and we can give; and to keep himself unspotted from the world; neither polluted by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, nor the pride of life; but preserved pure for God amid the overflowings of ungodliness. *Note*; (1.) We have to do with a heart-searching God, who requireth truth in the inward parts. Where the soul is right with God, there purity, and love, and charity, will be manifest in every word and work. (2.) This world is full of defilement; it needs much watchfulness to keep our garments unspotted.

CHAP. II.

THE manners and customs of the Hebrews being different from those of all other nations, the jurisprudence of the Heathens could not be applied for determining the controversies which arose among the Jews in the provinces. The Romans therefore allowed them, not only in Judea, but in all the countries of the empire, to determine their controversies about matters of property by their own law and practice. So Josephus informs us; and gives us copies of several decrees of the emperors to that effect. See 1 Cor. vi. 2. Hence the apostle, in mentioning the right practice which the Jewish converts, who thought themselves religious, were to maintain, insisted, particularly in the first part of this chapter, on their observing justice and impartiality in judging such causes, as by the Roman law, or by the consent of parties, they were allowed to determine. And this he did the rather, because the unbelieving Jews were now become very partial and unjust in their decisions as judges. Nor were the believing part of the nation altogether blameless in that respect. But partiality in judgment being directly contrary to the gospel, the apostle severely reproveth both the one and the other, for shewing any disposition to favour rich litigants, though it were only by giving them a better or more honourable seat in their synagogue, than that allotted to their poor opponents, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4.—This partiality to the rich, and contempt of the poor, he told them, was extremely improper in the disciples of Christ, especially as they knew that in all countries the poor had shewn a greater disposition to receive the gospel than the rich, ver. 5.—and that the rich unbelieving Jews were great persecutors of the Christians, and dragged them to the Heathen tribunals to get them punished, ver. 6.—Wherefore, to prevent partiality in judgment for the future, the apostle enforced upon them that unfeigned benevolence towards all men, which

Christ has enjoined as his commandment, and which, on that account, may be called *the royal law*, ver. 8—13. This passage of the epistle, so far as it related to the Christians, was intended for the instruction of the rulers and other gifted persons in the church, whose office it was to determine those controversies about worldly matters which arose among the brethren. See 1 Cor. xii. 28.

Many of the Jews, influenced by the prejudices of their education, attempted to excuse their unjust judgments and other evil actions, by the care with which they performed some one or other of the precepts of the law, which they considered as of more importance than the rest. Hence the question of the lawyer, Matth. xxii. 36. *Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* Wherefore, to set them right in this matter, the apostle assured them, that though they kept all the other precepts of the law, if they offended in any one of them, they became guilty of all, ver. 10.—because the precepts of the law being all enjoined by one and the same authority, he who wilfully transgresses one precept, disregards the authority of the Lawgiver, and shews himself ready to transgress any other precept, in the like circumstances, ver. 11—13.

Another great error into which the Jewish Christians had fallen in the first age, and which had made them negligent of good works, was this: They fancied that the speculative belief of the doctrines of the gospel, to which they gave the name of *faith*, was sufficient to save them, however deficient they might be in good works,—a fatal error, which has too much prevailed in modern times likewise. Wherefore, to shew that one's assenting with his understanding to the truths of the gospel, will not save him, unless it leads him to holiness, and every good word and work, the apostle compared the faith of such a believer, to the benevolence of a man who in words expresses abundance of kindness to the naked and the hungry poor, yet gives them none of the things necessary to the body, ver. 14—18. For the same purpose he remarked, that even the devils believe speculatively the truths of the gospel, but will not be saved by their faith; on the contrary, they tremble when they recollect God's justice and power, ver. 19.—Farther, more fully to prove that good works are necessary to our final justification, or in other words, to obtain the approbation of the great Judge on the day of judgment, the apostle appealed to Moses himself, who has declared that Abraham and Rahab were, in this sense, justified, on account of the good works which their faith prompted them to perform, ver. 20—25.

St. James concludes this subject with a saying, which must impress every intelligent reader with the strongest conviction of the necessity of good works,—*As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*, ver. 26.

Ver. 1. *With respect of persons.*] The word *ἰσχυροῦσθε* signifies

the scripture, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well :

9 " But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

10 " For whosoever shall keep the whole

law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

11 For * P he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

^m Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 22. 39. Rom. 13. 8, 9. Gal. 5. 14. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thess. 4. 9.
ⁿ Deut. 27. 26. Mat. 5. 19, 20. Gal. 3. 10. Ver. 11. * Or that law which said.

ⁿ Ver. 1. Lev. 19. 15. Deut. 1. 17. & 16. 19. & 10. 17.
^p Exod. 20. 13, 14. Deut. 5. 17, 18. Gal. 3. 10.

signifies the respect of persons in judgment, not purely according to the merits of the cause, but according to external respects which relate not to it. As for instance, 1st, The dread of any man's power, or the fear of what he may do to us if we judge against him. See Lev. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17. Or, 2dly, The poverty of any man, which renders him less able to suffer punishment or loss. See Exod. xxiii. 3. 3dly, It is respecting persons in judgment, if we favour a cause by reason of any gift or hope of gain. See Deut. xvi. 19. Or, 4thly, By reason of relation, affinity, friendship, or affection. In spiritual or evangelical matters, it is to have respect to men, in reference to things which render them neither better nor worse, neither more nor less acceptable in the sight of God. As for instance, To respect them, 1st, in regard to their nation or their offspring. See Acts, x. 34, 35. for God will have no respect to nations, or external professions, in his future recompences. See Rom. ii. 6, 9, 10. Or, 2dly, With respect to their condition, as being masters or servants. See Eph. vi. 9. Col. iii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 17. Or, 3dly, To their quality. This is the thing here censured,—not as it respects the due subordination of ranks, which is necessary to the existence of society, but merely as it regards judicial matters; and in this latter and only true sense, the rule may be carried in its essence and spirit into every department of religious, civil, social, and domestic life.

Ver. 2. *Unto your assembly*] That here the apostle speaks of consistories for civil judicatures, is argued, 1st, From the accepting of persons, ver. 1. which in the Old Testament and the New, as often as it is applied to men, respects human judicatures. 2dly, From the *footstool* mentioned, ver. 3. which obtained in their judicial consistories, and which was proper to princes on their thrones, and judges on their tribunals. 3dly, From the *judges* mentioned, ver. 4. and the *judgment-seats* mentioned, ver. 6. And lastly, from the canon of the Jews, by which it is provided, that, "When the rich and poor have a suit together in their consistories, either both must sit, or both stand, to avoid all marks of partiality." See R. Levi Barcinon, l. 142. *Juris Hebraici*.

Ver. 4. *Are ye not then partial in yourselves,*] Do you not put a difference, or discrimination among yourselves on those accounts which are foreign to the cause? That this is the frequent sense of the words διακρίνομενοι and διακρίνοσθαι, see Acts, xv. 9. where the words εδεν διέκρινε are rendered, He put no difference betwixt us and them: and, Jude, 22. where we read, Of some have compassion, διακρίνομενοι, making a difference.

And are become judges of evil thoughts?] That is, Who pass judgment from your own evil thoughts, as considering

the rich worthy of respect in judgment, for his gorgeous attire and outward appearance, and the poor fit to be despised for his outward meanness.

Ver. 5. *Hath not God chosen the poor, &c.*] Christianity was not spread by the power or contrivance of courtiers and great men, or to advance a secular interest; but the God and Father of all chose this method in his infinite wisdom for the reformation and renovation of all who will yield to be saved by grace: but such as set their hearts upon the riches and grandeur of this world, are not of that number. No ellipsis is more common than that of the verb to be: we have an instance here,—*chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith*.

Ver. 7. *Worthy*] Honourable.

Ver. 8—11. *If ye fulfil the royal law*] The whole of the apostle's argument depends upon that sacred maxim so frequently introduced in a direct or indirect manner by the infallibly inspired writers of the New Testament, *That love is the fulfilling of the law*. St. James considers the whole duty of man to man as contained in one law, namely, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*: and then of course he argues rightly, ver. 10. *He who offends in one point, is guilty of the whole law*: for whether it be theft, or murder, or adultery, that you commit,—any of these crimes is inconsistent with the law, which contains, and is, the whole, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, &c.* But read the apostle's own words. In ver. 8. he observes, *If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, &c.* Where first you are to observe, that he calls this the *royal law*, not because given by Christ the King, for all laws are, in that sense, royal; but because it is the first supreme law, from which all others proceed, as distinct branches, and by which they must all be governed. Secondly, you must take notice what stress the apostle lays upon their *fulfilling* this royal law: *If ye fulfil the royal law,—ye do well*: that is, "if you attend to it in all instances, so as not to offend against it in any case, ye then will do well." The apostle proceeds, ver. 9. *But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, &c.* The law mentioned in this verse, is the same law which was mentioned before; that is, the royal law. "If (says he,) you have any partial regards, you will not then fulfil the law of love, but will be found transgressors of that law; for as it follows, ver. 10. *whosoever shall keep the whole law, &c.*" In this verse he considers the royal law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, as the whole law; and all particular commandments, as points of that law. And what he says amounts to this: "Whatever regard you may have to the law of loving your neighbours, which all profess to walk by, yet assure yourselves you cannot keep that law, if you offend against any one rule

12 ⁹ So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 ¹ For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and

mercy ¹⁰ rejoiceth against judgment.

14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

⁹ Phil. 4. 8. John, 11. 17. Ch. 1. 25, 27. Mat. 5. 48. 1 Peter, 1. 15, 16. 2 Peter, 1. 4—8. ¹⁰ Ver. 8. Ch. 1. 25. Rom. 7. 12, 14. Pf. 119. 14, 16, 32, 45. & 116. 16. ¹ Gen. 42. 4. Judges, 1. 7. Job, 22. 5—10. & 62. 24—26. Mat. 6. 15. & 7. 1, 2. & 18. 30. & 25. 41, 42. Luke, 16. 25. Ch. 5. 4. * Or *glorietb.* ¹ Mat. 25. 35. & 5. 7. 1 John, 4. 17, 18. ¹ Ch. 1. 23. Mat. 7. 26. 1 Tim. 3. 5. Titus, 1. 16. 11. 29. 13. & 58. 2—4. Acts, 3. 13. John, 12. 42.

“of charity; for every such single offence is a breach of that whole law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, &c.*” In ver. 11. he gives the reason of his assertion, *For he that said, do not commit, &c.* “For it is certain, that he disregards the authority of the Lawgiver which has established every precept; as it is evident, *He that says, Thou shalt not commit adultery, hath also said, &c.* Hence it appears, that it is not by a regard of the Divine authority that thou abstainest from the former crime, since that would equally have preserved thee from the latter.” And if you go on to the latter part of the verse, you will find it exactly suited to the whole thread of the discourse which went before: for thus it follows, *Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law*; that is, of that general law of loving thy neighbour, which said as well to thee, *Thou shalt not kill*, as *Thou shalt not commit adultery*. How this royal law speaks to us in the language of all particular laws and precepts, is easily understood, and is distinctly explained by St. Paul, Rom. xiii. 9. In short, what the apostle teaches, is plainly this: One great and fundamental law of the gospel is, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. The force of this all see, and all acknowledge; and while they pretend to be Christians, all must pretend at least to obey it. But, says he, whoever in any manner offends, injures, or oppresses his brother, it matters not in what way, whether it be by undue and partial preference of one to another, by contempt or slander, by theft, adultery, or murder; whoever, I say, in any of these instances sins against his brother, will be found to be a transgressor against this great, this vital principle of religion, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, &c.* For this reason he tells them, the way to do well was to fulfil the royal law, that is, to observe all points of it; because no point could be transgressed, but the transgressor must be found guilty of the law, which is a general law of love, extending to all points. There is nothing hard in this sense, nothing but what any man may see the reason of: for certainly, to injure our neighbour in any way, makes us guilty of a breach of the law, which commands us to love our neighbour; for one injurious action is as inconsistent with love as another; and, in this respect, injurious actions have no difference; for they are all equally inconsistent with the great law of love.

Ver. 12. *So speak ye, and so do, &c.*] “Let it therefore be your care, that ye so speak and so act as those that shall be judged by the law of liberty, by the glorious gospel, which is a dispensation that sets us at liberty from the bondage of the Jewish ritual, and directs us to all the branches of that virtue and holiness, which is the truest liberty of the mind, and which, being so excellent, must subject us to the severest punishment, if we presume to contemn it.”

Ver. 13. *For he shall have judgment without mercy, &c.*] “For he whose faith does not work by love, according to the grace and obligation of the gospel, so as to shew compassion to his poor brethren, shall pass under a severe sentence of condemnation and wrath, to be executed upon him in the day of judgment, without any mixture of that mercy, which is held forth in the doctrine of Christ: and, on the contrary, he who, as the fruit of his faith, exercises tenderness and loving-kindness toward them, shall rejoice in his deliverance from condemnation and wrath, and the fear of being cast in judgment: and divine mercy, according to the gospel, shall triumph in his favour, and glory over strict justice according to the law, in the final day of account, agreeably to our Lord’s own representation of it, *Matth. xxi. 34—46.*”

Ver. 14.] The Jews retained the highest reverence for their law, and would adhere to it as the method of justification or acceptance with God, even after the coming of the gospel of Christ. Whereas the apostles assured them, that *faith*, or the gospel method, was the only way in which they could hope for acceptance. Some of the Jewish Christians, hearing *faith* extolled so much above the law, seem to have wilfully misrepresented the design of the apostles, as if by *faith* they had meant no more than a bare assent to the word of God; and that if men believed the doctrines, there was no necessity for obeying the commands of Christ; but that they were freed from all moral and religious works whatever, as well as from the works of the ceremonial or Jewish law; and that such a faith or mere assent to the word of God, was sufficient to justify and save them. To prevent the spreading of such a dreadful doctrine, and the many unhappy consequences which it would have drawn after it, St. James had, in the preceding chapter, insisted upon their being *doers of the word*, as well as hearers of it; upon their bridling their tongues, and upon their relieving the fatherless and widows in their distresses, unless they would render all their pretences to religion vain. In the beginning of the present chapter he condemns *respect of persons*; and in ver. 13. points out the necessity of mercy towards men, in all such as hope for mercy with God. But now he proceeds to insist more particularly upon the necessity of a holy life; and in the most express manner assures them, that as charity to the poor does not consist in giving them good words only, without affording them some relief, so *faith* in the Christian doctrine, without a holy life, ought not to be looked upon as the *true Christian faith*;—that the saying, “we have faith,” and actually believing or assenting to the truth, is doing no more than the wicked demons, who not only believe but tremble;—that the only way of manifesting that we have *true faith*, is to shew it by our pious and *holy lives*: that, by such a faith, or in such a way, the great

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 ^a And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 ^b Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being ^c alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith,

and I have works: shew me thy faith [†] without thy works, and ² I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 ^a Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, ^b O vain man! that ^c faith without works is dead?

21 Was not Abraham our Father ^d justified

^a Job, 31. 25. Luke, 1. 17. & 6. 35. Gal. 6. 10. 1 Tim. 6. 18. Heb. 13. 16. 1 John, 1. 17, 18. Prov. 3. 27, 28. & 21. 13. [†] Ver. 14, 19, 20, 26. 1 Cor. 13. 3. with Gal. 5. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5. ^b Gr. by itself. [†] Some copies read by thy works. ^c Gal. 5. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Titus, 2. 13, 12. 2 Peter, 1. 4—8. Mat. 7. 17. Ch. 3. 12, 13. ^d Deut. 6. 4. Mat. 8. 29. Mark, 1. 24. & 5. 7. Acts, 16. 17. & 19. 15. Phil. 2. 10, 11. 2 Peter, 2. 4. Jude, 6. Rev. 20. 10. ^e Job, 11. 12. Ps. 93. 8, 11. 1 Cor. 8. 1. Gal. 6. 3. ^f Ver. 14, 17, 18, 24, 26. 2 Peter, 1. 4—8. Gal. 5. 6. ^g Mat. 12. 37. Ver. 18. with Gen. 22. 9, 12. Heb. 11. 17.

great patriarch *Abraham* was justified; for he not only assented to the truths which he had received from God, but manifested his faith in God, by performing such works as he commanded him; by which means he obtained that honourable title of *The Friend of God*. In like manner *Rahab* not only believed that God would bestow the land of Canaan upon the Israelites, but she manifested that faith by her kindness to the spies whom they sent to view the country; and thereupon she was delivered from the common destruction, and taken into the number of the people of God. From all which the apostle concludes, that as a lifeless carcase is not a man, so the *faith* which does not produce *good works*, is only the dead carcase of faith, and not the genuine Christian faith, ver. 14—26.

What doth it profit, my brethren,] In the preceding verses the apostle had enjoined them so to speak and act, as they who were to be judged by the gospel, or the law of liberty: intimating that they should be condemned if they did not. He now further enforces that injunction by asking them, “What can it signify for a man to pretend to “hold the Christian faith in the greatest soundness and “purity, and yet neglect the practice of good works? Is “it possible that such a fruitless faith can be the means of “salvation?”—I am surprised, says Dr. Doddridge, at the immense pains which commentators have taken to reconcile St. Paul and St. James, and the many hypotheses they have formed for that purpose; whereas to me nothing is more evident, than that the ideas which they affix to the word *faith* and *works* are entirely different. St. James, by the word *faith*, means simply an *assent* to the truth of the gospel, or of religious principles, without determining whether that assent be or be not effectual; and then declares, that in case this assent does not produce good works, that is, the solid virtues of the heart and life, it cannot be accepted by God: whereas St. Paul, by the word *faith*, means a *cordial* and *vital assent* to divine truth, which influences the heart to an holy temper; and, according to the gracious terms of the gospel, entitles a man to divine acceptance, without any regard at all to the Mosaic law, and previous to the production of any of those good works which will naturally be the fruit of it.

Ver. 17. *Even so faith, if it hath not works, &c.*] See the preceding note. St. Paul (says Dr. Heylin,) had used the term *faith* as it was understood in the Jewish schools;

(and still in our own schools, where it is said, “*Objectum formale fidei, est veritas prima;*”) and as our Lord often used it, particularly when he condemned the Pharisees for their neglect of it, though a principal point of their own law: but some Christian professors soon let go the primitive sense of the word, and meant by it only an *historical belief* of the gospel. St. James, judiciously avoiding to dispute about words, uses the term in the signification which they gave it;—and this perhaps is the reason why here, when he proposes the subject, he says not “what advantage is “it for a man to *have faith*, if he has not works;” but “what advantage is it for a man to *say that he has faith*, “&c.?”—And then, to shew the absurdity of supposing that there could be a salutary faith without good works, he puts a parallel case in the duty of charity; ver. 15, 16, We may, and we sometimes do, call a dead corpse a man; but very improperly: and as the carcase differs from a living man, so the nominal faith differs from that which is real and salutary.

Ver. 18. *Shew me thy faith, &c.*] “You talk mightily “of your faith, without giving any proof of its sincerity; “and I, on the contrary, instead of taking up with high “swelling words and professions of faith, have evangelical “works of love and obedience to bear witness that my “faith has its proper influence upon me.” The reading which our version follows, is not only the reading of ver. 20. but is supported by sufficient authority, and is more agreeable to the context: therefore I prefer it to the marginal reading.

Ver. 19. *Thou believest that there is one God;*] All that is said from this place to ver. 23. is by way of answer to the inquiry made ver. 18. namely, which was the way to manifest that a man had true faith;—by words and actions, and every other mode of evidencing holy tempers and dispositions.

Ver. 20. *O vain man!*] The word *Kεῖς* answers to the Syriac word *Raca*, Matth. v. 22. which is there condemned, when it proceeded from unjust anger, and was used by way of insult and reproach; but here it is used out of compassion and good will to the person, and as a grave and just reproof of a very dangerous error. Many words and actions may be right or wrong, according to the temper of mind, or the principles or views from which they proceed.

Ver. 21. *Was not Abraham our father justified?*] “Take “an

by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar ?

22 * Seeft thou ^c how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect ?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which faith, ^f Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called ^g the friend of God.

24 Ye see then how that ^h by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot ⁱ justified by works, ^k when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way ?

26 For as the body without the [†] spirit is dead, so ^l faith without works is dead also.

* *Thou seeft.* ^c Ver. 18, 14, 20. Gal. 5. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Mat. 7. 17. Ch. 3. 13. with Heb. 11. 17, 19. ^f Gen. 15. 9. Rom. 4. 3. 6, 10, 22, 23. Gal. 3. 6. ^g 2 Chron. 20. 7. ^h If 41. 8. Gen. 22. 16—18. John, 15. 24, 15. Rom. 5. 1, 10. 2 Cor. 5. 19. Eph. 2. 13—19. Rev. 5. 9. ⁱ Ver. 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 26. ^k Ver. 18. see 24. ^l Joh. 2. 1—21. & 6. 23, 25. Heb. 11. 31. [†] Or *breath.* [†] See ver. 20, 14, 13, 22, 24. with Gal. 5. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Acts, 8. 13. John, 12. 42. Titus, 1. 16.

“ an instance of the truth of what I have advanced under
 “ Divine inspiration, in the most celebrated of all the pa-
 “ triarchs; I mean, the instance of Abraham, our great and
 “ illustrious father: was he not plainly justified by works,
 “ when, in consequence of that full persuasion which he had
 “ of a divine commission and command to do it, he offered
 “ his son Isaac upon the altar, intending, in obedience
 “ to what he apprehended to be the will of God, actually
 “ to have slain him, and to have trusted in God to accom-
 “ plish the promise of a numerous seed to descend from
 “ him, by raising him from the dead ?” Though Abra-
 ham did not actually sacrifice his son, yet his readiness to
 do so, was looked upon by Almighty God as if he had ac-
 tually done it. And, in all cases, what we would do, if
 permitted, is, in its due degree and proportion, regarded by
 God as if we actually did it. Then it is, and then only,
 that he accepts the will for the deed.

Ver. 22. *By works was faith made perfect ?*] Faith is not perfect, without producing good works, wherever there is an opportunity for it, after men have believed: but, in such an instance as that of the thief upon the cross, there is no opportunity for manifesting the truth of faith by a pious holy life; because he died so soon after he first believed. However, such instances are very rare, and not like the case of Christians in general.

Ver. 23. *And the scripture was fulfilled, &c.*] The passage here referred to, is recorded Gen. xv. 6. and is there applied to Abraham's firm trust in the promise of God, concerning a son and heir. Now that was about fifty years before his binding Isaac as a victim upon the altar (Gen. xxii 9, &c.); by which act of obedience St. James here intimates, that the passage mentioned, Gen. xv. 6. was fulfilled; not that that passage was a prophecy, or prediction of this event, but that the words which were then used concerning the faith of Abraham, were now in a higher sense applicable to that patriarch; because he had now fully demonstrated his faith by a most signal act of obedience. The Jews used this, or the like expression, that *such or such a scripture was fulfilled*, in a very great latitude. Frequently, indeed, they understood by it an accomplishment of a prediction in the strict and primary sense; but very often they intended no more by it than to say, that a similar event happened; that there was a very remarkable agreement in particular circumstances between former and latter things; that a general rule or saying was

applicable to a particular case: and finally, they often used such expressions, when they meant no more than that the words of Holy Scripture, or of some antient prophet, might be aptly accommodated to the case in hand, or were very proper to express their present meaning. This text itself is sufficient to shew us, that they did not always intend by it the accomplishment of a prophecy: but there are many other passages, both in the New Testament, and in the writings of the Jewish Rabbis, to confirm this interpretation. See on Rom. x. 13.

Ver. 24. *Ye see then, &c.*] “ You see then by this in-
 “ stance of the great father of the faithful, if the charac-
 “ ters of the children are to be estimated in the same man-
 “ ner as those of the father, *that a man is justified by*
 “ *works, and not by faith only*: it is by no means enough
 “ that the great principles of religion be credited, if they
 “ have not also their practical influence on the heart and
 “ life.”

Ver. 25. *Was not Rahab—justified by works.*] It ought to be observed, that *Rahab* is not here celebrated for “ lying, and betraying her country to its enemies,” as some have objected. With respect to *lies*, they are every where condemned in the Holy Scriptures, and the truth is represented as sacred and inviolable: and as to the *inhabitants* of her country, they were devoted to destruction because of their idolatry and other great vices, and she appears to have been assured of this by a divine revelation, as well as by the events which had happened (see Josh. ii. 9, &c.). Her discovering of the spies would not have prevented the ruin of the nation. The lie which Rahab told is not to be vindicated, but was a crime partly owing to her fear, and perhaps partly owing to her being educated among a loose and idolatrous people. What she is here commended for, is her faith, her ready renouncing of idolatry, and acknowledging the true God; and her acting, in consequence of that faith, in the manner which she apprehended most agreeable to the divine will. Whatever Rahab once was, she proved afterwards a pious and holy woman. See Joshua, ii. 1, &c. particularly ver. 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 26. *For as the body, &c.*] “ And on such prin-
 “ ciples must all others expect justification and salvation;
 “ *for as the body, without the spirit, is but a dead carcase, how*
 “ *fair and entire soever it may appear, and will at length*
 “ *fall into putrefaction and dissolution; so such a faith as*
 “ *remains without the substantial fruits of good works,*
 “ which

CH A P. III.

We are not rashly or arrogantly to reprove others : but rather to bridle the tongue ; a little member, but a powerful instrument of much good, and great harm. They who are truly wise, are mild, and peaceable, without envying, and strife.

[Anno Domini 60.]

MY brethren, ^a be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater ^{*} condemnation.

^a Eccl. 7. 16. Mat. 7. 1, 2. & 23. 8, 10. Luke, 6. 37, 38. Rom. 2. 1—3, 20, 21. ² Cor. 1. 24. ³ Peter, 5. 3. Prov. 16. 18. Luke, 12. 47, 48. Mat. 11. 22, 24. ^b Or judgment. ^c 1 Kings, 3. 46. Prov. 20. 9. Eccl. 7. 20. ^d John, 1. 8. ^e If 64. 6. ^f Pl. 34. 13. & 39. 1, 2. Ch. 7. 26. Prov 15. 1. & 25. 8. Mat. 12. 36, 37. ^g 1 Peter, 3. 10. ^h Pl. 32. 9. ⁱ If. 37. 29. Prov. 26. 3. Pl. 39. 1. ^j Pl. 107. 25—27. ^k Job. 2. 4. Acts, 27. 14, 15, 27.

“ which ought ever to attend it, *is also dead* : it now “ appears as a carcase in the sight of God, and as such will “ ere long perish.”

Inferences.—The apostle could not intend to condemn those civil distinctions which are founded upon the different relations and circumstances of mankind in the present world ; but surely God intended to teach us, how little esteem he sets upon riches, by bestowing them on many of the most undeserving of mankind, while he withholds them from his dearest children. And therefore to admire them, and others, on account of their riches, while we pour contempt on the poor, as poor, though so many of them are distinguished by the riches of the Divine favour, must be highly unreasonable, and to God highly offensive. As for those who are poor in this world, but rich in faith, let them adore the divine munificence to them, and think with pleasure of those durable riches, and of that everlasting kingdom, which God has prepared for them as their inheritance, if they be faithful unto death.

Whatever our stations be, let us pray that the royal law may be inscribed upon our hearts, and that we may love our neighbours as ourselves ; guarding against that mean and prohibited respect of persons, which would expose us to conviction, as transgressors of the law. Let us also learn to guard against that partiality in our obedience to it, which is utterly inconsistent with sincerity. Let us remember, that the divine authority *equally* establishes every precept of it, and that the *generous* nature of the *gospel* dispensation, as a *law of liberty*, will be a sad aggravation of our presumptuous violation of it. A consciousness of those many defects and imperfections, which the best of men may see reason to charge themselves with, should certainly engage our most earnest application to God for mercy ; and as we desire to obtain it, let it be our care to exercise mercy to others, both in the candour of our censures, on the one hand, and the readiness of our liberality, on the other.

And let the great and important lesson which the apostle teaches so plainly, and inculcates so largely, in the latter part of this chapter, be never forgotten. It is true indeed, (as St. Paul elsewhere fully proves,) that we are justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law. The works of the Mosaic law are by no means necessary ; and it is not by our obedience to *any* law, but by embracing

2 ^b For in many things we offend all. ^c If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

3 Behold, ^d we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us ; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though *they* be so great, *and* ^e are driven of fierce winds,

and resting upon the *mercy* of God in *Christ*, for our salvation, that we obtain it. Nevertheless, it is vain to pretend to such a faith, if good works are not produced by it ; and we might as soon expect the guardianship and counsel, the offices and consolations of friendship, from a dead corpse, as happiness from a mere assent, even to the most important doctrines. Let us therefore endeavour to shew our faith by our works. Let us be ready, with Abraham, to offer up our dearest comforts to God. Let us, with Rahab, be willing even to expose our lives in the defence of God's people, and his cause ; otherwise our *faith*, being of no better a kind than that of *the devils*, will leave us the companions of their misery and despair ; even though the conviction should now be so powerful as to make us *tremble* ; or a false persuasion of our enjoying privileges to which we are utter strangers, should give as strong an emotion to any of the *softer* passions.

Let faith then be active and influential. *Let love be without dissimulation.* Let us not love merely in word but in deed, and charge it upon our consciences to be ready to authenticate by the most substantial offices of humanity, the profession that we at any time make of friendly wishes, or kind intentions. Otherwise, such professions will be worse than unprofitable ; as, by encouraging only a false dependance and expectation, they will make the disappointment proportionably grievous and afflictive, to those whom we hypocritically, or lightly, pretended to compassionate or succour.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle,

1. Warns them against all undue respect of persons, because of their rank in life, especially in their judicial proceedings. (See the *Introduction* and *Annotations*.) *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ*, which centres in him as the object, and is derived from him as the author ; *the Lord of glory ; with respect of persons ;* acting with undue partiality, unbecoming the disciples of Jesus, who is himself exalted to the highest glory, and has prepared eternal mansions for his faithful people, without distinction of rich or poor, and therefore we should make none in the merits of any cause which comes before us. *Note* ; A sight of Christ and the glory provided for his saints, stamps vanity on all the puny differences which here subsist between men.

2. He gives an instance of the great evil and injustice of

yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great

* Pl. 10. 3. & 12. 3, 4. & 73. 8, 9. Job. 21. 14, 15. Prov. 12. 18. & 15. 1, 2. Rev. 13. 5, 6.

of all such partiality. For if there come unto your assembly, that is, into your court, where causes civil or ecclesiastical are determining, a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man, who is a party in the cause to be tried, in vile raiment, making a wretched appearance; and ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and, with evident partiality on his side, say unto him with great deference, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, with insolence and contempt, Stand thou there, at a distance, or sit here under my footstool, in any despicable place; are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? disposed to favour the rich, and oppress the poor: and how criminal is such a behaviour? Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? Is not the gospel chiefly preached to them, because they will hear it? and are not those for the most part to be found among the poor, who yield to be saved by grace, and are accordingly made partakers of all the glorious privileges of the gospel? and if God hath so highly honoured them, we surely ought not to treat them with disdain or partiality. But ye have despised the poor; to your shame and guilt be it spoken. Do not rich men, to whom you pay such undue deference, oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats, with litigious suits, and exercise the most cruel tyranny over you? Do not they, who are high in the world, prove your bitterest persecutors, and blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? and then surely you have no cause to care for them. Note; (1.) All partiality in judgment is in God's sight abominable. (2.) Among the poor, God's saints are chiefly to be found; and the riches of faith, and heirship of glory, are infinitely more valuable than the wealth of both the Indies, or the widest earthly domains. (3.) They who love God, however poor, can never be despicable, since they are possessed of the highest dignity, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

2dly, The apostle,

1. Lays down the only proper rule of conduct. If ye fulfil the royal law, enacted by the King of kings, according to the scripture, where he hath revealed his will to us; and among the most eminent precepts stands this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, treating every man with that benevolence, kindness, and impartiality, which, if you were in their case, you would reasonably expect from them; ye do well; such a conduct is honourable, and becoming your profession. But if ye have respect to persons, shewing more favour to the rich than the poor, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors, (Lev. xix. 15.) and one such wilful iniquity must issue in your eternal ruin, if you be not washed therefrom in the atoning blood. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet should offend in one point, he is guilty of all; such an allowed transgression would be as evident a contempt to the authority of the Lawgiver, as if he broke every precept; and, as the wages of every sin is death, it must expose the soul to the wrath of God.

For he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law, and liable to suffer its awful penalty.

2. He exhorts them to behave as becomes the gospel which they profess. So speak ye, and so do, in every word and work seek to approve yourselves to God, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty; and who being brought under the gospel dispensation of light and grace, have the strongest obligations to shew an impartial, genuine, universal, and cheerful obedience to the Redeemer's commands.

3. He supports his exhortation by a most awful consideration. For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy, but has been partial to the rich, and oppressive to the poor; whilst, on the other hand, where by divine grace the heart has been influenced to exercise fervent love, there mercy rejoiceth against judgment; such a one shall not be afraid of appearing at God's bar, but through the great Redeemer shall have boldness, and, if faithful unto death, shall find favour with God in that day. Note; A solemn sense upon our minds of an approaching judgment, will necessarily have the most powerful influence on our conduct.

3dly, The apostle, having spoken of the royal law, proceeds to shew the influence of faith on all holy obedience; not, as many vainly suggest, in opposition to St. Paul, or to correct his doctrine; the word of both of them proceeded from that one Spirit, who is truth itself, and cannot contradict his own revelation. St. Paul speaks of faith as justifying the sinner as a sinner in the sight of God; St. James speaks of it as justifying us on the day of judgment, when all men shall be rewarded according to their works, for which St. Paul was equally an advocate.

1. True faith ever produces genuine fruit, and worketh by love, without which the profession of faith is useless. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Saying and having are very different things. What can a boasted name signify? Can faith, such a faith, save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and the necessaries of life; and one of you, pretending to charity, say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? such empty words have nothing of godlike charity in them, and are as mere sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone, an empty profession, without real life and power. Yea, a man may say to a vaunting hypocrite who pleads his faith, Thou hast faith in name, and I have works; shew me thy faith, to which thou makest such vain pretensions; without thy works, of which thou art destitute, how wilt thou prove its genuineness and reality? and I will shew thee my faith by my works, which are the only indisputable evidences of its truth. Thou mayest perhaps say thou are no atheist; thou believest that there is one God; so far thou dost well: but what

* a matter a little fire kindleth !

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of ini-

quity : so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on

* Or wood. Ch. 1. 26. Prov. 16. 27. & 15. 1. & 17. 4. Rom. 3. 13, 14. Pf. 5. 9. & 64. 3. & 140. 3. Mat. 15. 11, 18—20. Mark. 7. 15, 20—23. Ver. 2. Eccl. 7. 6.

what influence has this faith upon thee ? *the devils also believe and tremble*, and their faith is perhaps in this sense more operative than thine. *But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead*, and wants every proof of its soundness and sincerity. *Note* ; (1.) To rehearse the articles of our creed, if we have not the truth of faith in our heart, will not advance us above the devils. (2.) All pretences to faith are but delusion, where mens' works deny him in whom they profess to believe.

2. He supports what he advances with scripture evidence :

[1.] In the case of Abraham. *Was not Abraham our father justified by works*, and proved to be a true believer, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar ? then his justification in the sight of God, which he had many years before obtained, (Rom. iv.) became evident. *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works*, effectually engaging him to obey God's command ; and by works was faith made perfect ; manifested to be right in kind, and in the most vigorous exercise. *And the scripture was fulfilled*, and evidenced to be true, which said, many years before that event, (see Gen. xv. 6.) *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness : and he was called the friend of God.* Ye see then, by this instance, how that by works a man is justified, and the reality of his character as a believer evidenced ; and not by faith only, which is such only in name, without producing any genuine fruit that demonstrates its living influence.

[2.] In the case of Rahab. *Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works* ; and did she not give a solid proof of the faith she possessed ; when, in consequence thereof, great as the danger was to which she must expose herself, she had received the messengers, who came to spy out the country, and had sent them out another way ?

From the whole therefore it appears evident, that nominal faith, or the mere profession of it, without any living fruits of grace produced from it, is mere hypocrisy. *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.* Where that vital principle is implanted, its powerful energy will be evidenced ; and we may as assuredly conclude, where no fruits of grace appear in the temper and conversation, that the soul is really dead in sin, as that the body is dead when the spirit is departed, and nothing but the lifeless clay remains.

C H A P. III.

FROM the writings of St. Paul, but especially from his epistle to the Romans, we learn, that the Jews valued themselves highly on the knowledge of the true God and of his will, which they derived from the divine revelations of which they were the keepers ; and set themselves up every where as teachers of the Gentiles. Animated by the same spirit, many of the Jews who had embraced the gospel were exceedingly desirous of the office of teachers in the Christian church. But the apostle James, well know-

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ing that some of them still believed the observance of the law of Moses to be necessary to salvation ; that others had not shaken off all the prejudices of their education ; and that not a few still followed the bad practices to which they had been formerly accustomed ; he earnestly dissuaded them from becoming teachers, by representing to them the punishment to which they exposed themselves, if they either perverted the doctrines, or concealed the precepts of the gospel, ver. 1. Next, he insinuated that their ancient prejudices, or the want of genuine religion, might lead them to offend in many things : but at the same time to make them attentive to their own conduct, he told them that if they did not offend in word, it would be a proof of their having attained a great degree of piety and holiness, as it might well be concluded that they were then able also to bridle the whole body, ver. 2. Then, to make them sensible how dangerous it was to sin with the tongue, he shewed them by the power which bits in the mouths of horses, and helms in ships, have to turn these great bodies, whithersoever their governors please, that the tongue, though a little member, is capable of producing prodigious effects, either good or bad, according as it is used, ver. 3, 4, 5.—and further points out the mischief which the intemperate use of speech often produces in society, ver. 6.—adding, that though human ingenuity had been able to subdue all kinds of wild beasts, birds, and sea-monsters, the tongue is so unruly a thing that no one has been able to subdue it, except by the power of almighty grace, ver. 7, 8.—And to shew the unruliness of the tongue, the apostle mentioned, that with it we bless God ; but with it also we curse men made in the image of God, ver. 9.—Moreover, the absurdity of employing the tongue for such contradictory purposes, he displayed, by remarking that no such contradictions were to be found in any part of the natural system, ver. 10—12.

To his description of the mischiefs occasioned in society by an unbridled tongue, St. James subjoined an earnest exhortation to such of the Jews as pretended to be wise and intelligent, to make good their pretensions, by shewing their works all done with the meekness of wisdom. In this exhortation, he seems to have had those of them especially in his eye, who set themselves up as teachers ; and the rather because they all valued themselves on their wisdom and knowledge, Rom. ii. 10.—20. So that by supposing that many of them were wise and intelligent, he prudently used an argument which might draw their attention, ver. 13.—On the other hand, he told them, that if they taught either the Law or the Gospel with bitter anger and strife after the example of some of their bigotted brethren, they lied against the truth ; because such a conduct was a contradiction to the religion which they pretended to teach, ver. 14.—and was no part of the religion which cometh from above, to which they laid claim ; but was earthly, animal, and demoniacal, ver. 15.—Besides, bitter anger and strife never fail to produce tumult and every evil work,

5 E

ver.

fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 For every * kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of † mankind :

* Gr. nature.
Ephl. 10. 11.

† Gr. nature of man.
Pf. 145. 21. If. 29. 13.

^b See ver. 6. Pf. 55. 21. & 57. 4. & 59. 7. & 58. 4. & 64. 3. 4. & 140. 3. 4. Rom. 3. 13, 14.
^c Gen. 1. 27. & 9. 6. 1 Cor. 11. 7.

ver. 16.—Then he recommended to them the wisdom which is from above, by displaying its many amiable qualities, ver. 17.—together with its efficacy in producing in those whom they instructed, the good fruits of true and living faith.

Ver. 1. *Be not many masters*] *Many teachers.* The word Διδασκαλῶ among the Jews, commonly signified the same with *Rabbi*, a title of which the Scribes and Pharisees were exceedingly fond, as it signifies frequently the head of a sect, or author of a doctrine, Matth. xxiii. 7. But in that sense no Christians are to desire the title, much less to assume the thing thereby intended; for Christ alone is our Master, or the author of the doctrines which we are to embrace. But the word is here used in a more general sense, and the verse may be thus paraphrased: "Give me leave, my brethren, to caution you against another evil, which I have seen some reason to apprehend; and to press you, that you be not many teachers; that none of you rashly undertake the office of teachers, into which many are ready to intrude themselves, without due qualifications, or a real divine call: but I would urge you to be cautious against such an assuming disposition, as knowing that we who bear that office, must expect that we shall undergo greater and stricter judgment than others in a more private station of life."

Ver. 2. *For in many things we offend all, &c.*] "The many infirmities, to which the best of us are subject, may indeed teach us to think with awe of that exact trial which we are to undergo on the great day, and induce us to fly to the only refuge of sinners, the Blood of the covenant; for in many things we offend all; we are too ready to trip and stumble in our walk. But if any one is enabled to keep a bridle upon his tongue, that it utter no opprobrious, false, or other sinful words, from any corrupt or excessive passion; he is, in a very eminent sense, a finished Christian; is a man of rich attainments in knowledge and experience, integrity and holiness; and is furnished with such divine assistances, as are sufficient to prevent all irregularities of conduct, and to spread a most amiable influence through all the members of his body; and the whole behaviour of his life, to the advantage of every religious and civil body to which he is related."

Ver. 4. *Whithersoever the governor listeth*] *Whithersoever the action of the pilot directs.* Heylin. *Whithersoever the steersman pleaseth.* Doddridge; who remarks, "I know not how to express in English the force of Ὅπου τὸ εὐθύνοιστο, which admirably represents the impetuosity with which, in a storm, a man at the helm, on a critical occasion, turns his hand."

8 But the tongue can no man tame; ^b it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

9 ^c Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, ^d which are made after the similitude of God.

Ver. 5. *And boasteth great things*] Though the word μεγαλαυχῆν signifies in general to *boast great things*; yet here, to answer the two preceding comparisons, it must signify that the tongue, though a small member, can do great things; just as a small bridle can curb a great horse, and a small helm steer a large ship. Many critics join this first clause of the 5th verse to the 4th, and read the 5th thus: *Behold how great a quantity of materials a little fire kindleth!* ver. 6. *and the tongue is a fire, &c.*

Ver. 6. *And the tongue, &c.*] St. James seems to have called the tongue of man a *world of iniquity*, in the same sense that we say "a world of riches,"—"a sea of trouble,"—"an ocean of delights." So Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, speaks of "an universe of death," and "a world of woe." The word rendered *course* is τροχῶν, and the passage should be rendered, *and sets on fire the wheel or course of our life.* The present life of man is here compared to a wheel, which is put in motion at our birth, and runs swiftly till death puts a stop to it. By the rapidity of its motion, the tongue sets this wheel in a flame, which sometimes destroys the whole machine. One of the ancient Heathen poets compares human life to a wheel;

For, like a chariot wheel, our life rolls on; thus beautifully pointing out the continual tendency of human life to its final period. The Syriac version has rendered the last clause, *and it will itself be burned in the fire*; intimating the punishment which men who have used their tongues wickedly, must undergo: but as the false wisdom, ver. 15. is called *devilish*, the common interpretation seems preferable.

Ver. 7, 8. *For every kind of beasts, &c.*] Instead of *serpents*, in this verse, some read *creeping things*. Dr. Doddridge renders it *reptiles*. Good men have through Divine grace governed their own tongues: otherwise their religion would have been in vain; ch. i. 26. The comparisons mentioned in the context have led some to interpret the words thus: "That it is difficult for one man to subdue the tongue of another; more difficult than it would be for him to subdue a wild beast." But the apostle seems rather to speak of every man's governing his own tongue; and he could not look upon that as utterly impossible; for his whole design was to persuade Christians to govern their tongues. He does indeed represent it as a very difficult thing, in order to stir them up to a greater care and diligence: but if men could not possibly govern their tongues through the power of Divine grace, the evils which should arise from thence could not be their faults. The word Ἀκατάσχετον, rendered *unruly*, is a metaphor taken from beasts that are with difficulty kept within bounds, by walls, or by hedges, or ditches.

10 ' Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

12 " Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

13 " Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife

in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 " This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16 " For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 " But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 " And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

1 Gen. 49. 4. 1 Kings, 18. 27. If. 48. 2, 4. Jer. 7. 4, 9, 10. Mic. 3. 11. Luke, 6. 46. Pf. 50. 16. Ver. 9. Or bte. Mat. 7. 16-18. & 12. 33. Luke, 6. 44. Gal. 5. 19-23. Pf. 107. 41. Hof. 14. 9. Mat. 5. 16. Eph. 5. 8, 9, 15. Phil. 1. 27. & 2. 15. & 4. 8. Rom. xii. Col. iii. 1 Thes. v. 1 Tim. 6. 11, 12. 2 Tim. 2. 22-25. Tit. 2. 11, 12. & 3. 8, 14. Ch. 1. 21. & 2. 18. 1 Pet. 3. 15. Rom. 13. 2 Cor. 12. 20. Gal. 5. 15, 20, 21, 26. Rom. 2. 17-23. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Jer. 7. 4, 9. Ch. 1. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Jer. 4. 22. 1 Cor. 2. 7. Jude, 19. Gal. 5. 19, 20. Phil. 3. 19. Rom. 8. 7. Or natural. Gal. 5. 15, 20, 21, 26. 1 Cor. 3. 3. Ch. 4. 1. Gr. tumult, or inquietud. 1 Cor. 2. 6, 7. Ch. 1. 5, 17. Mat. 5. 7, 8. Luke, 6. 36. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Rom. 12. 9. 2 Cor. 6. 6. Gal. 5. 21. & 6. 9. 1 Thes. 4. 3. Ch. 1. 19, 21, 26, 27. 1 Pet. 1. 22. & 2. 1. Ch. 2. 1-4. Or without wrangling. Prov. 11. 18. If. 32. 17. Hof. 10. 12. 2 Cor. 9. 10. Mat. 5. 9. Phil. 1. 11. Heb. 12. 11.

Ver. 10. Out of the same mouth proceedeth, &c.] "So that out of one and the same mouth come forth blessings and praises in one mood, and curses in another. Certainly, my Christian brethren, these contrary uses of the same tongue are monstrously incongruous and absurd; and ought, by no means, to have any place in those who make a profession of Christ and his gospel."

Ver. 12. So can no fountain both yield, &c.] "Full as inconsistent is it to suppose, that a man's heart, the fountain whence all his words proceed, should habitually vent itself in ways of talking, which are of as directly contrary a nature, as the salt water of the sea, and the sweet water of the finest spring, are one to the other."

Ver. 13. Who is a wise man, &c.] "Who is there then among you, that would approve himself to be wise towards God, and for himself and others; prudent in his conduct; and endued with the true knowledge of God, of Christ, and of himself; and with a spiritual discernment of the absurdity and self-contradiction of these things? Let it be his great care and concern, that, by an honourable deportment in the church and in the world, he may evidently practise every kind of good works, in the whole course of his conversation, with a meek and humble spirit, which proceeds from, and discovers, the truest wisdom."

Ver. 14. But if ye have bitter envying, &c.] "But if ye have bitter zeal against each other, and uncharitable contention in your hearts, boast not of your improvements in Christianity, and lie not against the truth by such groundless pretensions."

Ver. 15. This wisdom descendeth not from above, &c.] "For, whatever pretences such a person may make, (ver. 14.) to a greater knowledge, or a sounder faith than others, this fierce zeal and love of strife is not the wisdom which descends from heaven; but it is produced upon earth, arising from an excessive regard to the present world, and

proceeds not from the Spirit of God, but from too great an indulgence of the sensual appetites: and it resembles the temper of demons,—those wicked spirits; for wherever there is such a sort of zeal, wherever such a spirit of strife and animosity is the root, the fruit which it yields must be irregularity, tumult, and almost every unchristian and destructive practice." St. James here calls the false wisdom of wicked men ψευδοσ, animal, or sensual: it proceeded not from the spirit of God, but from a criminal indulgence of the sensual appetites and passions: it is in other places called the flesh, and condemned under that image. See Rom. viii. 5, 7. xiii. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Gal. v. 19, 21. 1 Thess. v. 23. Jude 19. Dr. Bates supposes, that the three epithets in this verse refer to the three grand temptations of the world; avarice, pleasure, and ambition; the first of which is earthly, the second sensual, the third diabolical, being the sin by which the devils fell.

Ver. 17. But the wisdom that is from above, &c.] "But the wisdom that is of celestial origin, is first pure from all unclean and corrupt mixtures, and agreeable to the tenor of Divine and evangelical truth; then, in consequence of that, pacific, desirous to make and maintain peace; moderate, and easily to be persuaded and reconciled, where any matters of disgust may have arisen; compassionate to the afflicted, beneficent to all; without partiality to those of our own sentiments or denomination, to the injury of others; and without hypocrisy, meaning all the kindness it expresses, and glad to extend its good offices as universally as possible."

Ver. 18. The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace] "The word σπικτραι, rendered is sown, imports, says Parkhurst, the labour, attention, or pains employed upon any thing, whence are produced fruits or effects good or bad: in which sense it must be understood in this place; as to sow fruit does not appear a very intelligible expression. The purport of this verse, says Dr. Heylin, is to shew what effect might be expected from a teacher

CHAP IV.

We are to strive against covetousness, intemperance, pride, detraction, and rash judgment of others; and not to be confident in the good success of worldly business; but, mindful ever of the uncertainty of this life, to commit ourselves and all our affairs to God's providence.

[Anno Domini 60.]

FROM whence come wars and * fightings among you? come they not hence, even

of your † lusts? that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye † ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your † lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye

* Gal. 5. 15, 20. Mat. 15. 19. John, 8. 44. 1 Tim. 6. 4, 9, 10. Ch. 1. 14. Jer. 17. 9. Rom. 8. 7. Gen. 6. 5. Ch. 3. 14—18. Or drawings. † Or pleasures. † Rom. 7. 23. Gal. 5. 17. 1 Peter, 2. 11. † Hab. 2. 5. Ch. 5. 3, 4, 6. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. Eccl. 4. 8. † Ch. 1. 5. Phil. 4. 6. If. 43. 23. † Job, 27. 9. Pf. 18. 41. Prov. 1. 28. If. 1. 15. Micah, 3. 4. Zech. 7. 13. Jer. 11. 14. & 14. 12. Ezek. 8. 11. Mat. 20. 22. Pf. 66. 18. with ch. 1. 5, 6. Rom. 8. 26. 1 John, 3. 22. & 5. 14. † Or pleasures. Pf. 73. 27. Mat. 12. 39. & 16. 4.

endowed with the heavenly wisdom just before mentioned. Such a one would have learned virtue, before he took upon him to teach it; and as the fruits of one harvest are the seeds from which another is to be produced, so he, being full of those virtuous sentiments, which are the product of his own advanced state, the fruits of righteousness in himself will efficaciously sow the seed of virtue in minds rightly disposed to receive it. Now the right disposition on both sides,—in the teacher, and those who are taught,—is that eternal peace, and total silence of the passions, without which the still voice of wisdom cannot be heard.

Inferences.—Let the pathetic discourse of the apostle concerning the difficulty and importance of governing our tongues aright, engage us to the strictest care on this great article of practical religion, of which so many are careless, and in which the most are so far deficient, as to entitle those to the character of perfect men who do not here offend. Let us entreat the assistance of Divine grace, that we may keep our mouths as with a bridle; (Psal. xxxix. 1.) that we may steer this important helm aright, lest, by the mismanagement of it, we shipwreck even our eternal hopes. Let us be cautious of every spark, where there are so many combustible materials; and take heed, lest we, and others, be defiled, and infernal flames kindled and propagated. It is indeed a difficult, but in consequence of this a glorious toil, far more glorious than to subdue the fiercest animals, or the haughtiest enemies: let us therefore resolutely make the attempt, and learn to employ our tongues, as indeed the glory of our frame, to bless God even the Father. And let the remembrance of that similitude of God, in which men are formed, make us tender of all their interests; but especially careful, that we do not injure them by unkind reproaches, or detaching speeches; and so much the rather, that we may maintain a consistency between the words of devotion addressed to God, and those of converse with our fellow-creatures. So shall the well-spring of wisdom, rising up in our hearts, and streaming forth from our lips, be as a flowing brook. Let those, who are by Providence called to be teachers of others, set a double guard upon their words, not only in public, but in private too, as peculiar notice will be taken of them; and the honour of religion, one way or another, be greatly affected by the tenour of their discourses. And let the awful account which such are to give, and the greater

judgment they are to expect, prevent any from intruding themselves into such an office, without suitable qualifications, and a Divine call. May God enable them to judge rightly concerning that call; and where it is indeed given, may his grace furnish them for their work, and his mercy cover those many imperfections which the best will see room to acknowledge and lament.

Again, if we desire the character of wisdom, let us learn from the oracles of eternal truth how it is to be obtained—by meekness and a good conversation. Let us avoid that infernal wisdom, here so severely and justly branded, which consists in knowing the most effectual methods to distress others. On the contrary, let us pray, and study, and labour for that which is from above, and of which so amiable a character is here given. And so far as it can be obtained without injuring conscience, let us cultivate universal peace; and let a gentle and placable temper, an impartial and sincere disposition, be ever inviolably preserved, even when we are obliged to contend with others about matters of the highest importance; remembering, that the more sacred the cause is, the more solicitous we should be that we do not injure it by a passionate or iniquitous management of it. Thus let us sow the fruits of righteousness in peace, and wait the promised harvest; leaving wars and contentions to others, lamenting them, and praying that God would cause them entirely to cease.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, They who have the least pretensions to true godliness, are often the most talkative professors of it: to bridle the tongue is therefore among the proofs of living faith.

1. He warns them against a magisterial and censorious behaviour. *My brethren, be not many masters; affect not to set up for teachers (διδασκαλοι), loving to hear yourselves talk, and liberally dealing out reproof and censure; knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation, by being thus forward to pronounce sentence on others, when we do not truly first judge ourselves: for if we were duly sensible of our own faults, we should be less rigid in our judgment of others: seeing in many things we offend all; and the more we know of our own hearts, the more shall we be obliged to own, that our censure can no where so justly light as upon ourselves.*

2. He enjoins them to bridle their tongues. *If any man offend not in word, and has such a guard over himself, as to utter*

not that ' the friendship of the world is en- a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'
 mity with God? whosoever therefore will be 5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in

* John, 15. 19. & 17. 14. Rom. 8. 7. Gal. 1. 10. 1 John, 2. 15, 16. Pf. 17. 14.

utter nothing rash, opprobrious, false, or sinful, *the same is a perfect man, a finished Christian, and far advanced indeed in the divine life; and able also to bridle the whole body, and restrain the irregular appetites and passions which war against the soul. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body, governing and directing thereby all their motions. Behold also the ships, which, though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor or pilot listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things; and, according as it is under government, or lawless, is capable of doing much good, or much evil.*

3. The evil of an unruly tongue is great. *Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! what a conflagration blazes from a single spark! And the tongue, when let loose, is a fire, a world of iniquity, poureth forth the abominations of the heart: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, in nations, churches, families; spreading sedition, treasons, heresies, blasphemies, divisions, enmity; in every age, in every station, its baleful influences appear: and it is set on fire of hell; infected with the old serpent's venom, promoting the interests of Satan's kingdom, by profaneness, rage, lying, lewdness, slander, and all the train of evils which flow from thence; the punishment of which will be, that in hell it shall be tormented in flames unquenchable. For every kind of beasts, the most savage, and of birds, however untractable in their nature; yea, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind, mastered by their power, and rendered gentle by human art: but the tongue can no man tame; nothing short of almighty power can restrain or cure its malignity: it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison; deadly to the owner, and mortal as far as its influence extends. Therewith blest we God, even the Father, in prayer and praise speaking good of his name; and this is indeed the most excellent use of our tongues; but alas, how horrid is that perversion of speech, when therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Yet such is the inconsistency of some professors of religion, that out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing; worship in one breath, and then reviling, slandering, and backbiting in the next. My brethren, these things ought not so to be; such behaviour is utterly incongruous, and contradictory to the faith of the gospel. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries; either a vine figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh: and as impossible is it for a heart, in which true grace is implanted, to be guilty habitually of such gross inconsistencies.*

2dly, Nothing is more desirable than true wisdom. The apostle teaches us.

1. In what way that will shew itself. *Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom, and*

prove his pretensions, not by arrogant boasts, but by his humility, meekness, holy conversation, and every good word and work, which may prove him a partaker of the grace of God in truth, and of the wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation.

2. A contrary conduct evidently demonstrates the folly and falsehood of pretended sophists. *But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, live under the power of a contentious and disputing spirit, evident in the bitter word which proceed out of your mouths; glory not in any fancied attainments, or zeal for orthodoxy; and lie not against the truth, by pretending to contend for that, to which your temper proves you an utter stranger. This wisdom descendeth not from above, and never had God for its author; but is earthly, in its principle and end; sensual, the offspring of the fallen nature; and devilish, the image of Satan, and cultivated by him to advance the interests of his kingdom: for where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work, that tends to ruin both our own souls, and all that are around us.*

3. How different and lovely are the effects and influence of true wisdom! *But the wisdom that is from above, which cometh down from the Father of lights, and is the gift of his grace to his believing people, is first pure, engaging us to all purity in doctrine, manners, temper, speech, and conduct; then peaceable, breathing nothing but love and quietness, averse to noisy broils and hot disputes, maintaining peace where it subsists, and seeking to heal every breach at which division hath entered. It is gentle, affable, courteous, engaging, ready to recede from its own in matters of property to avoid litigation; and mild, where in sentiment any difference subsists; never urging its own opinion with violence, willing patiently to hear the judgment of others: easy to be entreated, and ready to forgive every offence; not rigidly obstinate, but flexible to the advice of the wiser and more experienced: full of mercy and good fruits; benevolent, generous, liberal, willing to the utmost to help and relieve the distresses of the afflicted: without partiality, in judging or censuring others; and without hypocrisy, speaking and acting always with simplicity and godly sincerity, without disguise or design. And the fruit of righteousness, even all the gracious produce above described, is sown in peace of them that make peace; they who are possessed of the peaceable wisdom above described, are the persons who go forth bearing the precious seed, and shall see in their own hearts, and under their ministry, the plentiful success of their labour both here and hereafter; for the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*

CHAP. IV.

IN the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, the apostle had recommended the wisdom from above, as producing the happiest effects, and particularly peace and love: upon which he takes occasion to ask them, whence sprung their contentions, and other extravagant and wicked desires, which

vain, ³ The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth
* to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore
he saith, ¹ God resisteth the proud, but giveth

grace unto the humble.

7 ² Submit yourselves therefore to God.
¹ Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 ³ Draw nigh to God, and he will draw

³ Gen. 6. 5. & 8. 21. Numb. 12. 29. Prov. 21. 10.
Luk. 1. 51, 52. & 14. 11. & 18. 14. Pl. 138. 6.
4. 27. & 6. 11, 12. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Rev. 12. 14.
25, 17. & 23. 28. Zech. 1. 3. Mal. 3. 7.

* Or *enviously*. ¹ Job, 22. 29. Prov. 3. 34. & 29. 23. Mat. 23. 12. 1 Peter, 5. 5.
* 1 am. 3. 27. 2 Chron. 30. 8. 1 Sam. 3. 18. 2 Sam. 17. 10, 11. Job, 1. 21. 1 Eph.
m 11. 1. 18. & 55. 7. 2 Chron. 15. 2. Jer. 29. 12, 13. Hosea, 6. 1, 2. Pl. 145. 18. & 147

which they barboured in their breasts?—Not from heaven, but from their own lusts; which, when indulged, produced very unhappy effects, such as quarrelling, envy, pride, and covetousness, a neglect of prayer, or a praying with wrong views, an inordinate love of the present world, and a disregard of the favour of God, and the happiness of another world. All these vices therefore he very strongly condemns, and recommends the contrary virtues and graces, ver. 1—10. After which he cautions them, ver. 11, 12. against censure and detraction; letting them know, that it was taking too much upon them, and was in effect a censuring of the Christian law which forbade such things, as well as displeasing to Christ, who is our only Lawgiver and Judge. Herein he seems to have had a particular reference to the censorious spirit of the zealous Jewish Christians, who thought and spoke very hard things of such of their Christian brethren as did not continue strictly to observe the ceremonial law. After this the sacred writer reproves those who presumed too much upon the present life, and had not a due regard to their own frailty and mortality, and to their being constantly at the disposal of the providence of God, ver. 13—17.

Ver. 1. *Whence come wars and fightings among you?*] Dr Benson is of opinion, that St. James could here intend no reference to the unbelieving Jews at this time in their dispersions; but that what he condemned was the quarrels and contentions which too frequently happened among the Jewish Christians, and which are very unbecoming the meek and pacific religion that they had embraced. What may confirm this is, that in the verses which immediately precede, the apostle had mentioned the *wisdom from above*, which brought forth nothing but peace and harmony; and upon that he inquires, “Whence then must your quarrels and contentions proceed, as the *wisdom from above* brings forth such different fruits?” To which he himself replies, “Not from the Spirit of God, but from your lusts;” the very principle which, ch. iii. 15. he had called the wisdom from beneath, which was *sensual*, or proceeding from the criminal indulgence of the lower appetites. If the apostle’s sense had been carried on without any division into chapters and verses, this connection would more clearly have appeared. The words rendered *wars and fightings*, are very often used for *strife and contention*.

Ver. 2. *Ye kill, and desire to have,*] We must take the word *φονεύετε*, *ye kill*, in a softer sense than the common meaning of the word. As *wars and fightings*, in the first verse, are interpreted *quarrels and contentions*; so here, *ye kill, and desire to have*, may be interpreted, “Ye are ready to murder and use violence, like the Jewish zealots, that you may satisfy your covetous desires.” The *thought or inclination* to murder, may possibly here be called *murder*;

in the same sense as St. John says, *Whoever hateth his brother, is a murderer*. 1 John, iii. 15. And in this sense Dr. Heylin understands and renders the verse, *You are full of desires, but you have not what you desire: you destroy with hatred and envy, but cannot get what you would have: you contend and strive, but without success, because you ask not*.

Ver. 4. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses,*] Great wickedness, and especially *idolatry*, among the Jews, is often represented as *adultery*. What follows in this verse shews, that by *adultery* St. James meant *spiritual idolatry*, or a love of the world more than of God. See Matth. vi. 24. xii. 30. Luke, xii. 15, &c. The word *καθιστάς* signifies properly *is adjudged*; and there is a considerable emphasis in the expression: “It is declared and adjudged beyond controversy, that he is an enemy of God.”

Ver. 5, 6. *Do ye think, &c.*] Dr. Benson paraphrases the passage as follows: “Do you think that the scripture speaketh in vain, or without a very good reason, when it condemns such a worldly temper?—No, that you cannot rationally suppose. Do you imagine that the Spirit of God, which dwells in us Christians, leadeth us to covetousness, pride, or envy? No, by no means. On the contrary, (ver. 6.) unto such as follow his guidance and direction, and excel in love, humility, and moderation as to the things of this world, he sheweth greater favour. Wherefore the scripture saith, *God setteth himself*, as it were, *in battle-array*, to oppose the proud and envious, but sheweth favour unto such as are humble and obedient, (see Prov. iii. 34.)” And this interpretation he would support in the following manner: The apostle had asked one question, ver. 4. *Know ye not that the law of this world is enmity to God?* To that question he himself gave no answer, but left it to them to supply the answer, as most plain and obvious: and in ver. 5. we suppose him to ask two questions,—giving no express answer to either; but, as is very usual with poets and orators, leaving his readers to supply the answer themselves. In the first question there seems to be an ellipsis, which, if it was supplied, would run thus: “Do you think that the scripture speaketh in vain, or without reason, *when it condemns this worldly temper?*”—The answer, if expressed, would have been *εδαπάνως*, *by no means*. The second question is, “Doth the Spirit which dwelleth in us, lust to envy?” The answer, if expressed, would be the same again; *by no means*.

Ver. 7. *Submit yourselves*] “*Subject yourselves therefore to God, and, being listed in his army, keep the rank which he hath assigned you.*” Thus much is implied by the word *υποτάσσιντε*.

Ver. 8. *Draw nigh to God,*] This seems to be an allusion to the manner in which the Jews in general, or rather the priests, drew nigh to God, by going to the temple, while

nigh to you. ⁸ Cleanse *your* hands, ye sinners; and purify *your* hearts, ye double-minded.

9 ⁹ Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heaviness.

10 ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

11 ¹¹ Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a

judge.

12 ¹² There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

13 ¹³ Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall* be on the morrow: for what *is* your life? * it is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

* Pf. 26. 6. If. 1. 15, 16. 1 Tim. 2. 8. Jer. 4. 14. Mat. 23. 26. Ch. 1. 8, 21. 1 Kings, 18. 21. 1 John, 3. 3. * Pf. 119. 136. Mat. 5. 4.
Jer. 13. 18. Ezek. 6. 9. & 7. 16. & 16. 63. Ch. 5. 11. P Job, 22. 29. Luke, 14. 11. 1 Peter, 5. 6. Pf. 10. 17, 18. Prov. 29. 23. Mat. 18. 4.
Luke, 18. 14. Titus, 3. 2. Mat. 7. 1. Luke, 6. 37. Rom. 2. 1. 1 Cor. 4. 5. If. 33. 22. Mat. 10. 28. Mat. 7. 1, 2. Rom.
14. 4. & 2. 1. Prov. 27. 1. Luke, 12. 18—o. Job, 7. 7. Prov. 3. 28. & 27. 1. If. 40. 6. 1 Cor. 7. 31. Ch. 1. 10. 1 Peter, 3. 24.
1 John, 2. 17. Job, 14. 1. * Or for it.

the *Shechinah*, the glorious emblem of the divine presence, was there. Christians may all of them now draw nigh to God, as a *holy nation*, and a *royal priesthood*. 1 Pet. ii. 9. By *clean hands* the scriptures generally mean "hands not polluted with any vice or wickedness." The ancient Jews used to *wash their hands* before they went to sacrifice, or to religious worship, as the Jews do to this day, before they go into the synagogue to worship: and to this custom the apostle seems to allude in this verse. See Pf. xxiv. 4. Matth. xxvii. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

Ver. 9. *Be afflicted, and mourn,*] We may and ought to rejoice in the Lord, that is, in the consciousness of his favour, and in the prospect of the happiness which is promised in the gospel; but in pride and envy, voluptuousness, or covetousness, we may not rejoice. The having been guilty of such things ought to humble us, and make us mourn. This is the apostle's advice in this place; and it seems to have been given with a particular regard to the vices condemned, ver. 3, &c. See also ch. v. 1, &c. The word *καταφραση*, rendered *heaviness*, signifies that dejected look which is observable in persons overwhelmed with shame, and confusion of face; when their countenance is cast down, their eyes are fixed on the ground, and both their face and posture express the most exquisite shame and sorrow. See Parkhurst on the word, and Luke, xviii. 13.

Ver. 10. *Humble yourselves, &c.*] "In this manner lay yourselves at the foot of God with the lowest prostration and self-abasement, as offenders against his sacred Majesty, and with an affecting conviction that he knows your hearts and principally looks at them, and observes all the secret workings of corruption, on the one hand, and of contrite sorrow, on the other, that pass within them; and he will revive your drooping souls with a sense of his pardoning and recovering grace; will raise you up above all your fears and troubles, temporal and spiritual; and will exalt you to honour among his people in this world, and, if faithful unto death, to immortal glory in the world to come."

Ver. 11. *Speak not evil, &c.*] St. James here returns to

what he had touched upon, ch. iii. 9—16. By the *law* in this place we understand *the law of Christ*, which is so called, Gal. vi. 2. St. James calls it *the perfect law of liberty* (ch. i. 25. ii. 12.); and in the next verse Christ is called our *Lawgiver*; see also Rom. xiii. 8. What it is to *judge* or *condemn* a divine law, see Gen. iii. 4, 5. Ezek. xviii. 25. Rom. vii. 7. That the Christian law condemns all censure and reviling, is plain from Matth. vii. 1, &c. Luke, vi. 37. and various other places.

Ver. 12. *There is one Lawgiver,*] Dr. Bentley would close the last verse with the words, *Thou art not a doer of the law*, and begin the present, *But there is one Judge—the Lawgiver*. Christ is here called the *Lawgiver*, most probably in opposition to those who were so fond of the law given by Moses, and so severe in censuring those who did not observe that law. Neither the bishop of Rome, nor any single man or synod, have any power to make religious laws which shall be binding upon the consciences of Christians; to assure such of salvation as shall observe them, or to sentence such as will not observe them to everlasting perdition. There is only *one Lawgiver and Judge*; that is, Christ; who is himself invested with all sufficient power, and who has not delegated that power to any weak, passionate, or fallible man. His laws are in the New Testament; and whoever adds to them, or takes from them, does so far detract from the only Lawgiver in the Christian church. Dr. Heylin renders this verse, *There is but one Legislator who hath power to absolve or condemn. Who are you, that usurp his office by judging your neighbour?*

Ver. 13. *We will go into such a city,*] That is, to Rome or Alexandria, Tyre or Sidon, Corinth or Ephesus; according to the countries into which the Jewish Christians were dispersed, or the trades they carried on. The next verse ought to be read in a parenthesis, as an important piece of advice which might be obviously inferred, when he was reproving them for building too much upon this precarious life. Without the parenthesis, the 13th and 15th verses join very well: "You say so and so;—*Instead of which you ought to say, &c.*"

Ver.

15 For that ye *ought* to say, * If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. all such rejoicing is evil.
 16 † But now ye rejoice in your boastings: good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

* Acts, 18. 21. Rom. 1. 10. 1 Cor. 4. 10. & 16. 7. Phil. 2. 24. Heb. 6. 3. † 1 Cor. 5. 2, 6. 1f. 47. 7, 8, 10. Rev. 13. 7. Pl. 5: 1, 7.
 † Luke, 12. 47, 48. John, 9. 41. & 15. 22. Rom. 1. 20, 21, 32. & 2. 17, 18, 23.

Ver. 15. For that ye ought to say,] Instead of which you ought to say, If the Lord will, and we shall live, we will do this, or that. Pious men have such a tacit sense of their dependance upon God, when they do not express it in words: so ought we to understand Rom. xv. 28. 1 Cor. xvi. 5. Indeed, the having in our minds such a constant regard to the providence of God, and such a due sense of our own frailty and mortality, is of much more moment than the outwardly expressing it; though, no doubt, the outward expression is highly proper, as it may put us in mind not to extend our views in this world too far, lest the grave lie between us and our distant hopes, and because we are continually in the hands of the Most High.

Ver. 16. But now ye rejoice, &c.] But you, on the contrary, glory in your boasting projects, — (respecting the gain they were to make by their traffic, ver. 13.) — you take pleasure in his confident and arrogant manner of talking. See 1 John, ii. 16.

Ver. 17. Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, &c.] Perhaps some of you, who so much value yourselves for your uncommon wisdom and knowledge, may object and say, These are plain obvious truths, and what we knew so well before, that there was no occasion to speak of them. But, in answer to such an objection, I would observe, that I have now carefully put you in mind of these things; and therefore, if you do not practise accordingly, you will be the more criminal. For he who knows what is good and excellent, and at the same time does not practise accordingly, his sin is aggravated, and his punishment will be the greater." See Matth. xi. 20, &c. Luke, xii. 47. John, ix. 41. xiii. 17. xv. 22. 24.

Inferences.—Alas! What dreadful work do the lusts of pride, covetousness, and envy make in the world! Hence proceed wars, and all manner of discords that are destructive to civil and religious society, and to a man's own soul: they carry him into wicked desires and attempts, which can turn to no good account; and either make him cast off prayer, or pervert its ends in asking temporal advantages, that he may gratify his own corruptions, instead of glorifying God and doing good with them. No wonder that such carnal prayers are not answered.—O what an enemy to God, what an adulterous disaffection to him in professors of his name, is an excessive fondness for any thing of this world! How justly does the scripture condemn this sensual temper, which naturally works in man! And how contrary is it to the suggestions and influences of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in true believers, and freely gives grace, with all needful increases of it, to humble souls; but rejects the proud with abhorrence and disdain! How unsuitable to our creaturely dependance and Christian character is it, to form and prosecute schemes for this world, without a religious sense of, and dependance on the providence of God; as if our times and the success of our affairs

lay in our own hands, though life itself is but as a vapour that soon vanishes away! Surely every thing ought to be undertaken with an eye to God, and submission to his will. A contrary way of thinking and talking is a vain-glorious boast, dishonourable to God, and injurious to ourselves and others. It is indeed a scandal to the Christian name, that all or any of the forementioned impieties should be found among gospel professors; and it is a high aggravation of their sin to go against the light of their own consciences in practising them. O how earnest should we be in our addresses to God for his grace, to enable us to submit to his commanding and disposing will, and in bewailing our iniquities, and humbling ourselves before him for them! And what encouragement have we, in this way, to hope for his reviving presence and liftings up! And if, in a dependance on divine strength, we resist the temptations of the devil, he will find us too hard for him, and flee, like a conquered enemy, before us. But how cautious should we be, never to imitate his temper, and give him an advantage over us, by slandering, censuring, and condemning our Christian brethren for little things, or things that may be allowable in them! This is to set up for judges, instead of obeyers of the law; and is a violation of its requirements to love them as ourselves; yea, is an invasion of God's prerogative, who alone is able effectually to vindicate its authority: O may it be unto our salvation, and not to our destruction!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Inordinate desire after earthly things, is the usual ground of contention; against this therefore the apostle warns them.

1. He ascribes to this the wars or contentions which then were notorious among them. *From whence come wars and fightings among you?* which some suppose has reference to the many seditions of the Jewish people against the Roman government; but rather refers to the contentions of law-suits which were maintained by those who made a profession of Christianity, and which were so unbecoming the name they bore; *come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* Yes: to the pride and covetousness of your hearts do these owe their origin, and tend to the ruin of religion, and the peace of the church, provoking God to withdraw his Spirit from you. *Ye lust,* and long to gratify your criminal passions, *and have not what you grasp after: ye kill,* impatient to inherit, and wishing those dead whom you expect to succeed; *and desire to have,* grasping covetously after abundance, *and cannot obtain;* disappointment blasts your pursuits: *ye fight and war,* contending fiercely for superiority, wealth, and victory; *yet ye have not,* your schemes and designs are defeated, *because ye ask not,* neglecting to seek counsel of God in your enterprises, and not desiring his direction and blessing. *And ye ask, and receive not,* because ye ask amiss: neither praying for right things, nor with a right view, but eager after earthly gain; *that ye may consume it upon your lusts,* not to employ

CHAP. V.

Wicked rich men are to fear God's vengeance. We ought to be patient in afflictions, after the example of the prophets, and Job: to forbear swearing; to pray in adversity; to sing in prosperity; to acknowledge mutually our several faults; to pray one for another, and to reduce a straying brother to the truth.

[Anno Domini 60.]

GO^a to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

^a Prov. 10. 15. & 11. 28. Amos, 6. 7. Luke, 6. 24. Ver. 6. Ch. 2. 6. & 4. 9. If. 22. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. ^b Mat. 6. 19, 20. Job, 13. 28. ^c Ps. 21. 9. If. 30. 27. & 33. 11. Rom. 2. 5. ^d Lev. 10. 13. Deut. 24. 14, 15. J. b, 24. 10, 11. Jer. 22. 13. If. 5. 7. Exod. 22. 23. Hab. 2. 11. Mal. 3. 5.

it for God's glory and the good of mankind. *Note;* (1.) Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of Christianity, than covetousness and fierce disputes. (2.) They who do not seek God's blessing, justly meet with disappointment in one way or other in all their enterprizes. (3.) To ask amidst is as bad as not to ask at all; nor may we expect an answer to those prayers which worldly-mindedness and selfishness, not God's glory, dictates.

2. He solemnly warns them against intimate connection with the world that lieth in wickedness. *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, whose affections are alienated from Christ, to whom ye were once espoused; know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?* all undue attachment to the pleasures, interests, honours of the world, and delight in the company of the worldly-minded, are utterly inconsistent with fidelity to God, and real friendship with him; nay, are virtually a profession of enmity against him. *Whoever therefore will be a friend of the world, and at all events is resolved to keep fair with the men of the world, he is, and must be, the enemy of God.* Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, in many passages describing the deadly corruption of the natural heart, *The spirit that dwelleth in us, lusteth to envy?* and, till renewed by grace, is ever with a longing eye regarding the superior prosperity and influence of others, and grasping after the like abundance: this spirit must therefore be mortified, or we must be condemned with the world.

3. He directs them how to overcome the world. *But he, even God, giveth more grace* than the world can give snares, and hath infinitely greater riches to bestow than this poor earth can proffer. *Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, who make flesh their arm, and place their happiness and confidence in worldly things, vain of their own wisdom, riches, or attainments; these he fights against, blasts their designs, and ruins their confidences: but he giveth grace unto the humble, who, sensible of their own wants and weakness, bow down at his feet for relief. Submit yourselves therefore to God, to his guidance and government, obedient to his will and word, resigned to his providence, and content with the portion which he allots you, whatever it be. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you, as a vanquished foe, unable to contend with those who have put on the whole armour of God, and appear resolved to fight manfully under Christ's banner.* Draw nigh to
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2^b Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

3^c Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

4^d Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of

God, in fervent prayer for help, and he will draw nigh to you, with comfort, strength, and salvation, in every time of need, and will make you more than conquerors.

4. He exhorts them to put away every evil thing, and with real penitence to return to God. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, in the atoning blood of Jesus, that you may lift them up with acceptance before the throne of grace; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded, from pride, envy, covetousness, and hypocrisy; seeking that grace which can alone be effectual for this blessed purpose. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep over the deep corruption and sinfulness of your hearts, and under a sense of your past grievous departures from God. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness, ashamed and confounded at your past baseness, ingratitude, and unfaithfulness to a dying Redeemer. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, acknowledging your vileness, and imploring his pardoning grace and help; and he shall lift you up with the arms of his love, and recover you from your backslidings, and restore you to his favour.* *Note;* (1.) They who would find acceptance with God must approach him as cleansed, or desiring to be cleansed, with atoning blood, and without hypocrisy desiring indeed to be received into the arms of his mercy. (2.) They who have unfaithfully departed from God, need with shame, remorse, and mourning, return to him, humbling their souls before him, that he may lift them up. (3.) None perish, who cast themselves at the footstool of divine mercy, and continue to cleave to the Divine Redeemer: it is God's delight to revive the spirit of the humble, and to heal the broken-hearted.

2dly, The former subject is resumed, concerning the right government of the tongue; and we are,

1. Warned against all reviling and rash censure. *Speak not evil one of another, brethren; inventing falsehoods, exposing the infirmities, publishing the failings, divulging the secrets, aggravating the offences, or detracting from the excellencies, one of another. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, in things which God hath left indifferent, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law; arraigning the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the Lawgiver, as if he permitted what he ought to condemn: but if thou arrogantly judge the law, and pretend to decide what is fit to be enjoined, and what not, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able*

them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5 ° Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your

° Job, 21. 13. Pf. 73. 7 & 119. 69, 70. Eccl. 11. 9. If. 5. 17, 12. & 22. 13. & 47. 8. Jer. 5. 8. Amos, 6. 4—6. Luke, 16. 19, 25. 1 Tim. 5. 6.

to save and to destroy; invested with supreme authority to enact laws, able to reward the faithful, and punish the disobedient. This is his prerogative; to invade it, is the highest insolence. *Who art thou*, a poor, despicable, perishing worm, *that judgest another*, and darest thus to usurp the throne of God? *Note*; (1.) Where we cannot in conscience speak well of a person, it is our duty at least to be silent. (2.) Since God hath reserved for himself to determine concerning men's everlasting state, and has given us his law as our only rule of duty, it becomes us to make nothing sin, which he has not declared to be evil; nor ought we to erect another court of judicature over our brethren, where men's opinions, not the word of God, are to decide.

2. He inculcates constant dependance upon divine Providence. *Go to now*, ye who forget your entire dependance upon God's disposal of you, and *that say*, with self-sufficiency and disregard of him, *To-day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain*; as if your time, and the success of your enterprizes, were in your own hands, and dependent upon your own wisdom and diligence. *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow*, or whether you shall live to the rising of another sun. *For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away*; so fleeting, so transitory is it, and every hour in jeopardy; the consideration of which should teach you to speak less confidently. *For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that*; adding this humble proviso, and owning your dependance for life, ability, or success in every enterprize, upon him, in whose hands your breath is, and whose are all your ways. *But now ye rejoice in your boastings*, and talk as if you were ceasing to be creatures under the care and keeping of your great Creator. *All such rejoicing in your own self-sufficiency is evil*, very offensive to God, and bringing great guilt upon your souls. *Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin*; highly aggravated, as he wilfully opposes the dictates of his own conscience, and treasures up wrath against the day of wrath. *Note*; (1.) In all our ways we should consider God, and in every undertaking beg his blessing, and commit ourselves to his guidance. (2.) When we know better, and do worse, we are most inexcusable, and shall lie down under peculiar condemnation.

C H A P. V.

THE first six verses of this chapter have been looked upon as an address to the unbelieving Jews, among whom the Christians lived in their dispersions, and by whom they were persecuted; but they appear to me to have been rather a fine apostrophe. It is evident that this epistle is written in a sublime style, and abounds with lively images, beautiful similitudes, and other strong figures. Why may not we then look upon these six verses as a remarkable instance of this kind? Indeed there appears to me nothing to

hinder us from supposing that they are introduced in a figurative manner; that is, by way of apostrophe. There is a beautiful apostrophe to this purpose, Rev. xviii. 20. and the speaking by way of apostrophe is not only usual with the sacred writers, (see Deut. xxxii. 1. Jer. xxii. 29. 1 Cor. xv. 55.) but also with the best Greek and Roman writers: and the apostle seems to have introduced it here, that by this image he might give the greater force to those arguments which he was about to offer for the support and encouragement of the Jewish Christians, who were at that time in a state of persecution. For after he had, in this lively manner, set before them the much heavier calamities which were hanging over the heads of their greatest enemies and most violent persecutors, and just ready to fall upon them, he then finishes the apostrophe; and, addressing himself directly to the Jewish Christians, says with the greatest propriety, *Be ye patient therefore, unto the coming of the Lord*, &c. That is, in other words, "Be patient, brethren; because the destruction of your enemies, and your deliverance, approach swiftly," ver. 1—11.

Among other effects of impatience, against which the apostle cautions them, he reckons the irreverent use of the name of God, and profane oaths and execrations, into which, in the transport of their criminal passions, some unhappy wretches are ready to fall: and he cautions them to content themselves with a simple affirmation or negation in all their conversation, and to take care to maintain such constant integrity in all their words, that nothing more may be needful to gain them credit, ver. 12. He then requires them to accustom themselves to the frequent exercises of devotion, as what will have the surest tendency to promote the comfort and happiness of their lives in every circumstance, ver. 13. And he advises them, if they be sick, and feel themselves so intigated by the secret workings of the Spirit of grace upon their minds as may encourage them to hope for an extraordinary cure, to send for the elders of the church to pray over them, and anoint them with oil, ver. 14, 15.

When they were conscious of having been really to blame, he charges them not perversely to vindicate a conduct which their own hearts condemned, but be frank in acknowledging it, ver. 16.—Then he illustrates the efficacy of the prayers of the righteous by the efficacy of Elija's prayers, ver. 17—19.—Lastly, that the faithful might be excited to do their utmost, by prayer and other proper means in dependance on Divine grace, to reclaim their brethren who had fallen into sin, he assures them that whosoever turns a sinner from the error of his way, becomes the instrument of obtaining pardon for him through Christ, and may thereby save him from death eternal, ver. 20.

Ver. 1. That shall come upon you.] Which are coming upon you. This latter rendering is, I think, more agreeable to the original than our English version; the word *επιρχομαι* being a participle of the present tense. Josephus particularly observes (Bell. Jud. v. 20. 30. iv. 19.) how much the

hearts, as in ' a day of slaughter.

6 ^b Ye have condemned *and* killed the just ;

and he doth not resist you.

7 ^h * Be patient therefore, brethren, unto

^f Prov. 7. 14. & 17. 1. If. 22. 13. Ezek. 39. 17.

^g Ch. 11. 2. Mat. 23. 34; 37. John, 16. 2. 1 Thef. 2. 15. Heb. 10. 32—34. & 11. 36, 37.

^h Heb. 11. 36. & 12. 1 Rom. 5. 3, 4. & 8. 25. & 15. 4.

Gal. 5. 5. & 6. 9. 2 Thef. 1. 3. Ver. 8.

* Or be long patient, or suffer with long patience.

the rich men suffered by the Romans in the Jewish war.

Ver. 2. *Your riches are corrupted,*] By *riches* here are very probably meant their *stores* of corn, wine, oil, and other perishing goods, which they used to lay up in great abundance: see ver. 4. and Luke xii. 16—19. Dr. Heylin reads it, *your stores*. Another thing which confirms this conjecture is, that the word *σίνης*, which we render *corrupted*, signifies any thing's being putrified by being kept too long,—like the *manna*, Exod. xvi. 20. Such riches as *gold, silver, &c.* afterwards mentioned, are not liable to a putrefaction of this kind. We have heretofore observed, that the rich among the ancients used to have many *changes of garments* ready made up, as many (or more sometimes,) as would serve them all their lives; and those they kept by them, as a considerable part of their possessions. The apostle alludes to this, when he says, *Your garments are moth-eaten*. See the note on Matth. xxii. 11.

Ver. 3. *Ye have heaped treasure together, &c.*] The literal and most exact translation of the words is, *Ye have heaped up treasure in the last days*; which rendering leads us to the true interpretation of them. By *the last days*, we understand here the end of the Jewish state; when the temple, city, and polity, were to be all destroyed together, and the Romans would spoil them of all their possessions. Daniel's *four monarchies* are, according to Mede, the grand calendar in holy scripture, to which the mention of times and seasons in the New Testament ought in general to be referred. These four monarchies were to succeed each other: that was the *long line of time*; and under the last, (that is, the Roman monarchy,) the kingdom of God was to be erected: the seventy weeks prophesied of, Dan. ix. 24. were to be a *shorter line of time, cut out of the longer line*. And the *last days* mentioned here, and in the parallel passages of the New Testament, were the conclusion of the seventy weeks, or shorter line of time; when the city and sanctuary, or temple, were to be destroyed with an utter desolation. See 1 Tim. iv. 1. Heaping up treasures when that desolation was approaching, could turn to no account, because they had very little or no time to enjoy them; for the rich Jews in their dispersions did many of them share the same fate with those in Judea and Jerusalem.

Ver. 4. *Which is of you kept back by fraud,*] This was one of their wicked methods of heaping up riches; they were not only covetous and uncharitable, but also unjust: the phrase, *crieth, &c.* seems to be taken from the customs of the Eastern people, who, when they have suffered an injury, go to the judge with a horrible clamour, to require vengeance; which loud clamour they repeat with great vehemence, if the judge seems slow to wrath and punishment; and the same custom prevailed in the dark and feudal ages of Christianity. Those sins are said to *cry unto heaven*, which so affect the guilty, as to seem with a loud voice to require vengeance from God. It is an observation of the Hebrews, "that when God judgeth his creatures, he is

called *Alcim*, God; when he doth mercy unto the world, he is called *Jehovah*: but when he warreth against the wicked, he is called *Sabaoth*, the *Lord of Hosts*;"—the last part of which rule holds in this place.

Ver. 5. *Ye have lived in pleasure, &c.*] *Ye have passed your lives in luxury and voluptuousness; ye have satiated yourselves [every day] as on a day of sacrifice*. It is well known that at their high festivals, or when they offered their eucharistical sacrifices, the Jews used to fare sumptuously, and devote the day to feasting and joy; and very often would drink to excess. How justly was their luxury condemned, when the rich persons here addressed, pampered themselves every day, as other persons used commonly to do on the day of a high sacrifice and festival;—while, notwithstanding their plenty, they neglected the poor, and hoarded up riches to spend luxuriously upon themselves!

Ver. 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just;*] By *τὸν Δίκαιον, the just*, some understand our Lord Jesus Christ, who is so termed, Acts iii. 14. and in other places. Him the Jews murdered, and *he did not resist them*; and they did it at the time of a great festival, when their hearts were elevated with high living and jollity; for which crime particularly wrath was now swiftly coming upon them. All these things may be alledged in favour of that interpretation;—but I scarce think, says Benson, that the apostle did here refer to the crucifixion of our Lord: for it was chiefly the Jerusalem Jews, and not they of the dispersions, who were his murderers; and how often is the singular number put for the plural?—I should therefore choose to interpret this text of any of the Christians put to death by means of the Jews, who were dispersed among the nations. Our Saviour prophesied that his disciples should meet with such treatment; and St. Paul confessed that, while he was a Jew, he had persecuted some of the Christians to death. Some of the Jews likewise of the dispersions were the occasion of stoning St. Paul himself, till *they thought he had been dead*. It may possibly be some confirmation that by *the just* is meant, not our Lord, but his disciples; that in ch. ii. 6. rich men are represented as then continuing to oppress the Christians by their power, and as dragging them before the heathen tribunals to condemn them: and none were more forward to do this than the unbelieving Jews. Michaelis supports the common interpretation by supposing the relative *ὃς, who*, to be understood;—*who doth not resist you*. His reasons are, *first*, That it was usual with the Hebrews, and much more with the Arabs, to omit the pronoun relative; which, among the Europeans, is particularly common with the English. *Secondly*, It was the greatest reproach to kill the innocent, who did not so much as *resist*. And then, from commending the Jull Man, who had patiently resigned his life, the apostle proceeds to recommend patience to the surviving Christians, from the consideration of all that he had said, ver. 1—6.

Ver. 7. *Brethren,*] It would have been exceedingly strange

the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive ¹ the early and latter rain.

8 ² Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 ¹ Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: ^m behold, the Judge standeth before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, ⁿ for an example of suffering affliction and of pa-

tience.

11 Behold, ^o we count them happy which endure. ^p Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that ^q the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

12 ^r But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

¹ Deut. 31. 14. Jer. 5. 24. Hof. 6. 3. Joel. 2. 23. Zech. 10. 1. ^k Ver. 7. 1 Cor. 10. 11, 12. Phil. 4. 5. Heb. 10. 25—37. 1 Pet. 4. 7.
² Gr. *Groan* or *grieve not*. Ch. 4. 11. Gal. 5. 14, 22, 26. ^m Mat. 24. 33. 1 Cor. 10. 11. Phil. 4. 5. Rev. 12. 12, 20. & 16. 15. ⁿ Mat. 15.
³ & 23. 34, 37. Heb. 11. 35, 16. ^o Ch. 1. 12. Dan. 12. 12. Mat. 5. 10, 11. Heb. 10. 36. & 11. 25. Pf. 94. 12, ^p Job, 1, 21, 22. & 42.
⁴ 10—12. ^q Pf. 103. 13. 16. 63. 7, 9. Joel. 2. 18. 2 Chr. 30. 9. Neh. 9. 17, 31. Pf. 103. 8. & 116. 5. & 117. 2 Jer. 3. 12. Joel. 2. 13. Luke,
⁵ 6. 36. Num. 14. 18. Mic. 7. 18. ^r Mat. 5. 34—37. & 23. 16, 20. 2 Cor. 1. 17, 18. with Exod. 20. 7. Deut. 5. 11.

if the Christians had condemned and killed any of their own number: what is said, therefore, ver. 6. as well as several other things, prove that ver. 1—6. is an apostrophe to the *unbelieving Jews*; who were wicked themselves, and persecuted the Christians, but were to come to a speedy and exemplary destruction. His beginning this exhortation with *Brethren*, and recommending patience to them, from the consideration of the approaching destruction of their rich and potent adversaries, seems a plain intimation that the apostle is turning his address to the Christians, to whom, in the preceding verses, he had not been speaking directly; for they were in a suffering state, and were not in general the persecutors of others. See ch. ii. 6, 7.

Ver. 8. *For the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*] The apostle by this phrase seems plainly to mean, the coming of the Romans to destroy or carry away captive the Jewish nation: for what God in his providence promises, he himself is very often said to do. See Matth. xxiv. 27. 33. Mark xiii. 29. Luke xxi. 20. Indeed it may be asked, What other *coming of the Lord* was then *drawing nigh*? Is it not intimated, ver. 1. that very great evils were just ready to fall upon the rich Jews? That they would speedily be punished for their covetousness and luxury, and particularly for their persecuting the Christians?—And it was about a year after the writing of this epistle that the Jewish wars actually broke out, which ended in the destruction of the Jewish nation. Well therefore might it now be said, that *the coming of the Lord drew nigh*. This was a very proper motive by which to excite the Christians to patience; for the *Jews* were their principal persecutors, and their destruction approached swiftly.

Ver. 9. *Grudge not, &c.*] *Μη στενάζετε*, *groan not*, from anger or envy; *complain not*. Impatience toward each other is here condemned, as impatience under the treatment which they met with from their enemies and persecutors is condemned in the preceding verse; and the *Judge* might be at *the door*, ready to condemn the guilty among the Christians, as well as to avenge them of their adversaries.

Ver. 10. *Take, my brethren, the prophets, &c.*] “You may think that your present calamities are great and heavy, and so indeed they are; but your case is not singular; (Lam. i. 12.) others have suffered as much before you, and those some of the most eminent and holy men. Learn, therefore, from their example, to suffer ill usage with patience.”

Ver. 11. *Behold, we count them happy which endure.*] “Do we look upon them as forsaken of God, because they were persecuted for righteousness’ sake? Or will any wise person say, that their sufferings were any token of the divine displeasure?—On the contrary, Behold we applaud such martyrs and confessors, and pronounce those happy, who have bravely endured the greatest injuries which tyrants and persecutors could inflict, rather than part with their integrity.” The apostle speaks of this not only as his own judgment, but that of all Christians who judged aright, and understood the nature of things. And it is indeed a judgment in which all Christians should be agreed. The word *Μακάριον* signifies *to pronounce or account others blessed*; but the Papists, to countenance their practice of beatifying, or *making saints* in the church, have translated this text,—*Behold, we beatify those who have suffered with constancy.*

Ver. 12. *But above all things—swear not,*] Some consider this verse as joined to what goes before, to intimate that they were to be aware of *impatience*, and particularly as it might lead them into rash and profane swearing, as men in a passion are more apt to swear. The *δε*, *but*, favours this connection; though as the word *δε* is often used by way of transition only, and this has so much the air of a general rule, it may well be considered as such, and as distinct from the rest. They were not to swear profanely at any time, either in affliction or prosperity; and accordingly the apostle here very strongly condemns the vice in general. When he says, *Above or before all things, swear not*, it is not to be supposed that he reckons this as the greatest of all crimes; but he condemns it in an earnest manner, as one very great vice to which the Jews were remarkably addicted, and

13 ' Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord :

¹ Pf. 50. 15. & 91. 15. Mat. 26. 38, 39.

² Eph. 5. 19. Col. 3. 16, 17.

³ 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

⁴ Mark, 6. 13. & 16. 18. with

1 Cor. 12. 28, 30.

and as a horrid habit which required much care and attention to shake it off. See what has been said on this subject, Matth. v. 33—37.

Ver. 13. Is any among you afflicted? &c.] These two directions concerning prayer when they were afflicted, and praise when they were easy and cheerful, seem to refer to private devotion, and not to their public worship: for if one person was afflicted, and another quite easy, what might suit one, would, according to this rule of the apostle, have been unfit for the other: accordingly it is put in the singular number.

Ver. 14. In the first age of Christianity, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were very common: it appears too, that when the Christians behaved very unbecoming their character and profession, God sent down some diseases upon them, as a punishment for those particular sins. Such of them as laboured under sickness or other bodily disorders on that account, are here advised to send for the elders of the Christian church, who had generally the power of miraculously healing diseases; that upon the repentance of the sick person, and the inspired prayer of the elders, such diseases might be cured, as one proof that the sins which had occasioned them were remitted.

Is any sick? &c.] The word *ἀρθεῖν* does not always signify "to labour under a mortal disease," though it appears to do so in this place; for it seems to be supposed of the sick person, concerning whom the apostle is here speaking, that he would have died of that particular disorder, unless his death had been prevented by a miraculous cure. Who the *elders* were, see on 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let them pray over him*, says the apostle, *having anointed him with oil.* In the former part of this direction there seems to be an allusion to the laying on of hands, which was used sometimes in the working of miraculous cures, according to our Lord's order, Mark xvi. 18. The *elders* were first to anoint the sick person with oil, and afterwards to lay their hands upon him, and pray for his miraculous cure and recovery. When our Lord first sent out his apostles, we find that they *anointed with oil many sick persons, and healed them*, Mark vi. 13. At other times, those who worked miracles, *laid their hands* on the persons whom they cured. Acts ix. 17. And together with laying on of hands they joined *prayer*. Acts xviii. 8. And finally, at other times, they used no external rites, but only spake some words in prayer and otherwise. The *anointing with oil*,—the *laying on of hands*,—the *making their shadow pass over*, and the like, were none of them the causes or means of the cure, but only the external signs, to denote that the miracle was performed in testimony of their mission and doctrine. For the same reason our Lord put his finger into the ears of a deaf man, whom he miraculously cured; and touched the tongue of one that was dumb, when he gave him the

power of speech; and put clay on the eyes of one that was blind, when he restored him to his sight. These were none of them causes of the cures, but signs and intimations of Jesus's doing them; and that they were not casual things, or done in the common course of Providence; but by an extraordinary and miraculous power, and as clear attestations to the divine mission and doctrine of him who did them.

It may with propriety be observed upon the passage before us, that one of the greatest abuses of the Christian doctrine has arisen from applying what was peculiar to some persons and cases, to all Christians in general. What though many or most of the things in this epistle be applicable to us, or other Christians in later ages,—will it thence follow, that every thing ought to be so applied? In the same gospel, or epistle, nay, sometimes in the same chapter, we find some rules and directions peculiar to the persons who could work miracles, and others common to all Christians: we ought therefore always to use our reason in interpreting Scripture, and from the nature of the thing determine which are peculiar directions, and which are general rules, and standing precepts. We may, indeed, from the abundance of passages in the New Testament which speak of the miraculous gifts, gather the many and clear evidences which must have attended the first planting of the Christian religion; and thence, as from a thousand other sources, we may very justly conclude, that our religion is true and divine: but we ought not to regard anything as a rule and direction for us to observe, unless it agree to our circumstances, as well as to the circumstances of the persons to whom it was first and more immediately addressed. This general observation is applicable to many points in divinity; but is made at present with a view to the case before us, and because the church of Rome has represented this anointing of persons with oil in the name of the Lord, as a standing ordinance in the Christian church, which they have termed "The sacrament of *extreme unction*," and which they would support from the words of the apostle in this text. But they have misapplied the apostle's direction more ways than one: for, *first*, according to St. James, the sick person was to be anointed in prospect of a cure; whereas *they* anoint persons in the agonies of death, and when there is no prospect of their recovery. *Secondly*, The anointing which the apostle here speaks of, was in order to a miraculous cure of some great bodily disorder; whereas *they* pretend that they do it to cleanse the soul of the dying person from the remainders of sin, and to remove what would obstruct its passage into heaven. *Thirdly*, The anointing with oil was not constantly used in working miraculous cures upon sick persons; whereas *they* are for applying their *extreme unction* to all Christians in their last moments.

Ver.

15 ⁷ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and, ² if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 ² Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. ^b The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man ^c subject to like passions as we are, and ^d he prayed ^{*} earnestly that it

⁷ Pf. 50. 15. & 91. 15. & 18. 6. & 34. 6. & 116. 8. John, 5. 19. & 9. 2, 3. 1 Cor. 11. 10—12. ² If. 33. 24. Mat. 9. 2. 1 John, 5. 14. 1 Cor. 11. 36. ^a Mat. 18. 15, 16. 1 Tim. 2. 1. Eph. 6. 18—20. ^b Gen. 20. 17. & 22. 25. Exod. 15. 25. & 17. 11. & xxxiv—xxxiv. Num. 11. 2. & 14. 20. 1 Kings, 13. 6. & 17. 21, 22. 2 Kings, 4. 4. 31. 2 Chr. 14. 11, 12. & 32. 20, 21. Pf. 34. 15. & 9. 9, 18. Prov. 15. 29. Hof. 12. 4. John. 9. 31. 1 John, 3. 22. Mat. 7. 7—11. & 21. 22. If. 4. 11. Dan. 2. 18. Pl. 10. 17. & 107. 6, 13, 18. & 145. 18. Jer. 15. 1. ^c Acts, 14. 15. & 10. 26. ^d 1 King, 17. 1. Luke, 4. 25. Rev. 11. 6. ^{*} Or in his prayer.

Ver. 15. The prayer of faith shall save, &c.] By the prayer of faith must here be understood, a prayer proceeding from a firm persuasion of mind, that God would assist them miraculously to cure the diseased person. Neither the apostles, elders, nor any other of the Christians, could work miracles, but when the Spirit saw proper, and by an impulse intimated as much to them. For that reason we find *strangers* were sometimes healed, while some of the *Christians* continued to labour under sickness, and other great bodily disorders. Philip. ii. 26, 27. 1 Tim. v. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 20. But when they had the *prayer of faith*, they might with assurance proceed to work a miracle; and such miraculous cures, though worked upon Christians, were very likely means to convert Jews or Heathens, as well as to confirm and establish in their most holy faith such as had already believed. The phrase *shall* or *will save the sick*, means “will prevail with God to cure the diseased person.” See Gen. xxi. 7. The salvation here spoken of, was not eternal salvation, but a miraculous *saving from*; or curing of some particular *bodily* disorder:—and so it is explained in the next verse, *Pray for one another, that ye may be healed*. It is not here said that the anointing with oil, or the laying on of hands, would cure them; nor is it intimated that the elders of *themselves* could effect the cure; but, upon the prayer of faith, *the Lord will raise him up*, the miracle being carefully ascribed to the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word *Kav*, rendered *and if*, in the next clause, might be rendered more properly *although*; for the apostle does not speak of it as a dubious thing, whether such a person had committed sin or not, but seems evidently to go all along upon the supposition of his having committed some one or more great crimes, which had occasioned that particular disorder. See Deut. xxviii. 15, &c. John ix. 2. 1 Cor. xi. 29—32. 1 John v. 16, 17. The Popish doctrine of the necessity of absolution by a priest, in order to the remission of the sins of private persons, and their obtaining eternal salvation, has no more foundation here, than their fictitious sacrament of Extreme Unction. See on 1 Cor. xii. 9.

Ver. 16. Confess your faults, &c.] Confess therefore your faults, &c. See Mills, and Wetstein. They were to make a confession of those particular sins which had drawn some remarkable diseases upon them, as a token of the divine displeasure for their unchristian conduct. Their sending for the elders of the church plainly supposes that they had faith to be healed; and the confession of their sins, which they are here ordered to make, as plainly supposes that they were penitent: for, unless they repented of those particular sins which had occasioned the disorders

under which they laboured, it does not appear that they obtained a miraculous cure. The confession was to be made by a sick person, in order to his being cured; not by a person in health, in order to his obtaining eternal salvation: and it was to be made to the elders, or to any other Christians, who had the power of miraculously curing diseases, that they might pray for the pardon of those particular crimes, and that the penitent might be released from the punishment under which he had fallen. From these considerations it appears, that the popish doctrine of *auricular confession* has as little foundation here, as their sacrament of *extreme unction*, and the necessity of *sacerdotal absolution*, in order to the remission of sins. They would build several of their novel doctrines on the concluding part of this epistle; but they are like castles in the air, without any foundation or support. From this direction of the apostle, *Confess your faults, &c.* they have introduced the necessity of private Christians *confessing* all their sins *to a priest*, that they may obtain his authoritative absolution, and may be assured of being fully pardoned. By this means, they have brought the people into a blind subjection to, and slavish dependance upon the clergy; by this means they have enticed women to lewdness, and taught vice to the innocent; have dived into the secrets of families and cities, of courts and kingdoms; have betrayed princes and states, as well as private persons, and done infinite mischief in the world: whereas, according to this direction of the apostle, the same persons are here ordered to *confess their faults one to another*, who in the next sentence are ordered to *pray one for another*. The priest ought therefore to confess to the people, and desire their prayers and absolution, as well as the people to the priest, in order to have his prayers and absolution; for it is said, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another*.

The effectual fervent prayer, &c.] The prayer of a righteous man under the divine impulse avails much. The word *ενεργουμ* signifies, “wrought by the energy of the Spirit.” The apostle, says Benson, means a prayer wrought in a man by the Spirit of God, or which proceeded from a prophetic impulse, and by which he knew what success he should have; as plainly appears from what is said in the preceding notes, concerning the miraculous cures which were effected upon such a prayer, and likewise from what is afterwards said concerning the prayer of Elijah. See Ephes. iii. 20. Col. i. 29. 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Ver. 17. Elias was a man subject to like passions, &c.] *ὁμοιωπαθής*, a man of a like frail and mortal complexion; liable to the evils and afflictions of life, and subject to death, as well as other men: and his saying in this place, that

might not rain : and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from

the truth, and one convert him ;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

* 1 Kings, 18. 42—45. † Mat. 18. 15, 16. Deut. 22. 1, 2. Lev. 19. 16, 17.

‡ Rom. 11. 14. † Cor. 9. 22. † Tim. 4. 16. Jude, 23.

§ Prov. 10. 12. † Peter, 4. 8. Pf. 32. 1.

that Elijah was *frail and mortal like other men*, seems to have been in order to anticipate an inquiry like that recorded, Ecclus. xlviii. 3, 4. "Elijah (they might have said) was an extraordinary prophet; and at last translated without dying; whereas we are only frail men; Why therefore should we expect such favours as were granted to him?" To obviate such a plea, the apostle takes notice, that *Elijah* was a man only, and not an angel; liable to many calamities, and naturally mortal, like other men; though by the extraordinary favour of God, he was actually translated: and as he was only a weak mortal man, it was not to be thought that he worked his miracles of himself. They proceeded from a divine power, and were effected in answer to his prayer to God. *Upon the earth*, would more properly be rendered, *Upon the land*; that is, of Judea. See on Luke iv. 25.

Ver. 19. *If any of you do err from the truth,*] The Christian revelation is often called *truth*, as containing the most important truths, such as lead men to holiness and happiness. That manner of life which the gospel prescribes, is here compared to a plain *path*; and such as departed from it into the crooked paths of unholiness or vice, were carefully to be brought under the power of Divine grace into the right way again, by the friendly admonitions and good example of those who had not wandered out of the way. See Gal. vi. 1. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

Ver. 20. *From the error of his way*] This seems to be in its primary sense the same which is called the *committing of sin*, ver. 15. for the person erring is here called a *sinner*; but the expression undoubtedly includes the conversion of any unawakened person to the life of God. A man may *err from the truth*, by apostacy from the Christian religion, or by a wicked life, and embracing such corrupt doctrines as will administer to and support his vices, or by an alienation in any way from the life of God. 1 Tim. vi. 3. &c. Tit. i. 1. In this text it cannot signify *apostacy* from the Christian doctrine, or his withdrawing from that union with God which he before experienced; for he is called *is in univ, one among you*; that is, one who had not cast off the Christian profession, though he had acted in a high degree contrary to it. The phrase of *covering sin* is found Pf. xxxii. 1. xxxv. 2. Prov. x. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 8. and it is used for one man's kindly *overlooking* the faults of another; 1 Pet. iv. 8. It is here to be understood of God's not taking any notice of the faults of justified souls, so as to punish them: when they had repented of and forsaken them, and obtained remission for them, they would be, as it were, covered up and hid from the view of God. The same thing is to be understood by the phrases made use of Pf.

ciii. 12. Isai. xxxviii. 17. xliii. 25. Mic. vii. 18. Though, by reclaiming a sinner from the error of his way, we may prevent his being punished, and so *cover his sins*; yet that will not cover any of our own sins, in which we persist impenitently. If we ourselves be indeed, through divine grace, truly holy, we may, by converting others, increase our own reward; Dan. xii. 3.; but converting others will not cover any of those sins which we ourselves have not repented of and forsaken.

Inferences.—Let rich men read the address of the apostle to persons in their circumstances, with holy awe, and with a jealousy over themselves, lest their present prosperity be succeeded by misery, and their joy by weeping and howling; as it undoubtedly will be, if wealth be unjustly gotten, or sordidly hoarded up, or luxuriously employed to pamper their appetites, while the truest and noblest use of it, the relief of the poor, and the benefit of mankind, is forgotten. Especially have they reason to tremble who abuse wealth and power as the instruments of oppression; soon will all their stores be wasted, soon will they become poor and indigent, and find a terrible account remaining, when all the gaieties and pleasures of life are utterly vanished. In the mean time, the saints of God may be among the poor and the oppressed; but let them wait patiently for the day of the Lord, for his coming is near. They sow in tears, but let them comfort their hearts with the view of the harvest; in like manner as the husbandman demands not immediately the fruits of that seed which he has committed to the furrows. Adored be that kind Providence, which gives the former and the latter rain in its season. To him, from whom we have received the bounties of nature, let us humbly look for the blessings of grace, and trust him to fulfil all his promises, both for time and eternity.

And may it ever be remembered by all, and especially by the ministers of the gospel, of how great importance it is to be instrumental in *saving a soul from death*, an *immortal* soul from *everlasting* death; that so they may be animated to the most zealous and laborious efforts for that blessed purpose; and think themselves richly rewarded, though it were for the otherwise *unsuccessful labours* of a *whole* life, by succeeding even in a *single* instance.

Whatever trials we may meet with in this or any other part of duty, may we take the prophets of old, and the apostles of our Lord, for examples of suffering adversity and patience; especially remembering *their Lord*, and *ours*; remembering how abundantly the patience of good men has been rewarded, the end of the Lord with respect to holy Job, and many others, who have trod in his steps

in succeeding ages; and remembering especially, that *the Judge stands at the door*, that in a very little time he will appear, not only to put an end to the trials of his faithful servants, but to crown their virtues and graces! In the mean time, the bowels of his compassion are abundant, and he will not be wanting in communicating all necessary consolations and supports. May we be so happy as to be acquainted with those of devotion, that in our affliction we may pray, and in our cheerfulness sing psalms; that we may know by blessed experience the efficacy of such a temper to soften the sorrows of life, and to sweeten its enjoyments. And as we desire to be visited of God in our afflictions, may we with Christian sympathy be ready to visit and relieve others in their sickness, or other kinds of distress. It is indeed the special office of the elders of the church, who should be sent for upon such occasions with readiness, and who, if they be worthy of their office, will attend with pleasure. But it is not their office alone. Let us be ready to pray for each other, in faith and charity; and where offences have been committed, let there be a frank and candid acknowledgment of them on the one side, and as hearty a forgiveness on the other. In a word, let the efficacy of the fervent prayer of the righteous be often reflected on, to excite fervour, and to engage to righteousness, and to lead us to honour those who maintain such a character, and who offer such petitions and supplications; that God may, in answer to their requests, shower down his blessings upon us, that our land may yield its increase, that righteousness may spring up out of the earth, and that in every sense, God, as our own God, may bless us. (Psal. lxxvii. 6, 7. lxxxv. 11.)

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle addresses himself,

1. To the rich oppressors. *Go to now, ye rich men, whose portion is in this world only, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you, both temporal and eternal. Your riches are corrupted, your hoarded stores putrify; and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered, laid by in useless bags; and the rust of them, which by time they have contracted like iron, shall be a witness against you, to upbraid your covetousness and avarice; and shall eat your flesh as it were fire, bringing down divine vengeance upon your guilty heads: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days, to provide for distant years to come, but they shall be a prey to the destroyers of your city and nation, and be to you a treasure of wrath against the day of wrath. Behold, the hire of the labourers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth against you for judgment, and the cries of them which have reaped, complaining of your injustice and oppression, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, who will avenge their quarrel. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; indulging every brutish appetite, and making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof: ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter; faring sumptuously on the spoils of iniquity, fattening yourselves as beasts for the slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just, both the Lord himself, and many of his righteous servants; and he doth not resist you, meekly and patiently resigned to suffer. Note; (1.) Though wicked men may prosper for a while, God keeps a strict account of all their ways, and will bring them to judgment for these things.*

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(2.) Riches are to be used, not to be hoarded in bags, or barns, or wardrobes; then they prove a blessing, else they are only treasures of wrath. (3.) Though the poor may groan under the yoke of oppression without present redress, there is one who heareth their appeal, and will vindicate their cause. (4.) Pleasure, luxury, and indulgence, may for a while lull the sinner's soul asleep; but he will soon be awakened from his short-lived dream, and startled with the fearful looking-for of judgment, when too late he will begin to weep and howl in vain.

2. He addresses himself to the persecuted poor saints.

[1.] *Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord, who will come, and will not tarry, to espouse your cause, and rescue you from the power of your oppressors. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and bath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain, expecting the desired harvest, when he hopes to reap the fruit of all his toils. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, when your redemption from every misery will be completed for ever.* [2.] *Grudge not one against another, brethren; groan not under your sufferings through envy, fretfulness, or desire to revenge; lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door; and that consideration should powerfully plead with you to wait with patience, and refer yourselves entirely to his determination.* [3.] *Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, faithfully discharging their commission, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience, whose noble behaviour bravely imitate under the like persecutions. Behold, we count them happy which endure with meekness and resignation the will of God, because their end must be peace and blessedness eternal. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, how eminently exemplary, and have seen the end of the Lord, the happy issue which God put to his troubles; or that perfect pattern of submission to the will of God which Jesus himself shewed under all his sufferings: that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, sympathizing with his suffering saints, and delivering them out of all their afflictions. We need not therefore be discouraged under any cross; the victory is secured for every faithful saint, and the end of it shall be their eternal glory.*

2dly, The apostle,

1. Warns them against all profane swearing. *But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay: except in solemn cases, where an appeal to God is lawful, never exceed a simple affirmation or denial in your conversation, lest ye fall into condemnation, and bring guilt upon your own souls. Note; Swearing is of all sins most unprofitable; and whilst it offers the highest affront to God, affords not even a momentary pleasure to the offender.*

2. He teaches them how to behave in adversity and prosperity. *Is any among you afflicted, let him pray, humbly spreading his case before the Lord, that he may obtain the needful relief. Is any merry? in prosperous circumstances, and happy in his soul, let him sing psalms, and praise the gracious giver of every good gift.*

3. *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, as the symbol of the miraculous power with*

with which the elders were invested; and the prayer of faith shall save and recover the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, which may have brought such a visitation upon him, they shall be forgiven him. *Note*; The removal of sickness is a great mercy, but the pardon of sin still far greater, for which we are especially called upon to offer up our prayers.

4. Confess your faults one to another, and take shame to yourselves, where you have offended your brother. Or if any thing lies particularly upon your conscience, communicate it to some pious friend, or able minister of Christ, and pray one for another over the sins you confess and bewail, that they may be healed, their guilt pardoned, and their power subdued.

5. He shews the great efficacy of prayer. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*; a memorable example of which we have in the case of *Elias*, who was a man subject to like passions as we are, liable to many infirmities; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, as a punishment upon Ahab and rebellious Israel, and a means to convince them of the greatness of their sins; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months, so long the land of Israel was parched with

drought, and a severe famine followed. *And he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit*; and as the effect of *Elijah's* prayer was so wonderful, we may comfortably be assured, that when we, like him, pray with faith and fervency, our prayers too shall receive an answer of peace.

6. He concludes with warmly recommending a zeal for the conversion of men's souls. *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, in principle or in practice, backsliding from Christ, and one convert him, recovering him back again to the great Shepherd's fold; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, preventing that eternal ruin which must otherwise have ensued, and shall hide a multitude of sins, which, when a sinner is converted, shall be forgiven and blotted out, as well as be the means of preventing all the evil which must have ensued from his ill example and influence.* *Note*; (1.) Nothing is so valuable an acquisition as an immortal soul: one such won to Christ is better than the riches of both the Indies. (2.) Death eternal, of body and soul, is the wages of sin; and unless we are saved from it now, we must be undone for ever.*

* * * The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
P E T E R.

P R E F A C E.

THIS apostolic Letter is addressed especially to the Jews who were dispersed through Lesser Asia, and had embraced Christianity, as well as to the Profelytes of the Gate, and others from the Gentiles in that country, who had yielded to the force of Christian truth; elect, or declared to be such, through the sanctification of the Spirit. The whole Epistle abounds in assurances that these converts were regenerate, and become children of God. It was written from a city, called by St. Peter, Babylon: this some think to be Babylon in Assyria, which, though demolished, might possibly have some few Christians in its neighbourhood. However, the generality, both antients and moderns, suppose it to have been a figurative name for Rome: but Michaelis finding, with some other learned writers, great reason to doubt whether St. Peter ever was at Rome, proposes it as a query, whether Jerusalem might not be shadowed out under that name. He also thinks, that the Epistle was written so early as the year 49, soon after the great council held there; but the more received opinion is, that it was written much later, either in the year 63 or 64, or, at latest, 65. St. Peter's chief design is to confirm the doctrine of St. Paul, which the false teachers pretended he was opposing; and to assure the converts, that they stood in the true grace of God. With this view he calls them elect, and mentions that they had been declared such by the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them. He assures them that they were regenerate without circumcision, merely through the Gospel and resurrection of Christ; and that their sufferings were no argument of their being under the displeasure of God, as their enemies among the Jews imagined. He recommends it to them to hope for grace to the end, and testifies that they were not redeemed by the paschal lamb, but through Christ, whom God had pre-ordained for this purpose before the foundation of the world. It is natural to observe, from a general view of this Epistle of St. Peter, that all the principles of our holy religion, as represented in it, are perfectly consistent with the analogy of faith, and with the whole tenor of the New Testament; that they are directly levelled against all kinds of corrupt affections, and immoral practices, as well as urged in the light of motives to all those graces and virtues, in which our conformity to God and the true glory of our renewed nature consists; and which (if it were the only circumstance that could be pleaded,) would exalt our religion to an infinite superiority above the institutions of the most renowned Heathen philosophers and lawgivers, and, in connection with its amazing progress, is a demonstration of its divine original.—Christians are here instructed to encounter outrageous violence and persecution only with the hallowed weapons of patience, meekness, and love; and to silence the cavils, and blast the machinations of their own and their Master's bitterest enemies, with the lustre of a pure and holy life, and the fervour of a generous and invincible benevolence. How amiable, how elevated, how divine, how worthy of all acceptation, is the religion of Jesus! in delineating of which, St. Peter and St. Paul are perfectly consistent and harmonious.

CHAP. I.

He bleſſeth God for his manifold ſpiritual graces, ſhewing that the ſalvation in Chriſt is no news, but a thing propheſied of old; and exhorteth them accordingly to a godly converſation, ſo far as they are now born anew by the word of God.

[Anno Domini 65.]

PETER^a, an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, to^b the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout Pon-

tus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, and Bithynia,

2^c Elec^t according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,^d through ſanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and^e ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt: ^f Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3^g Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which^h according to his

^a Mat. 4. 18, 19. & 10. 2. & 14. 28—31. & 16. 16—23. & 17. 1—5. & 26. 23—40, 69—75. John, xx. xxi. Acts, i—xii. 1 Cor. 9. 5. Gal. 1. 18. & 2. 7—14. ^b Deut. 32. 20. & 28. 64. If. 65. 9. Acts, 2. 5—11. & 6. 9. & 8. 1, 4. James, 1. 1. ^c Rom. 8. 28—30, 33. & 9. 23, 24. & 11. 5, 7. & 16. 13. 1 Cor. 1. 27, 28. Eph. 1. 4. 5. ^d 2 Theſſ. 2. 13. 1 Theſſ. 1. 4, 5. Eph. 1. 4. Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Rom. 8. 13. ^e Heb. 12. 24. Rev. 1. 5. Ezek. 36. 25. Zech. 13. 1. Exod. 24. 8. ^f Daniel, 4. 1. & 6. 25. Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 3. Gal. 1. 3. Eph. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 13. 14. 2 Peter, 1. 2. Jude, 2. ^g Eph. 1. 3, 17. 1 Cor. 1. 3. John, 20. 17. Rom. 8. 17. ^h Eph. 1. 7, 8. & 2. 7, 8, 10. Titus, 3. 5. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Pl. 86. 5, 15.

TO comfort the brethren of Pontus, &c. under their ſufferings, St. Peter put them in mind of the glories of that inheritance, of which they were the heirs, by thanking God for giving them the divine hope of a new life after death, through the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 3.—in order that they may be capable of enjoying that incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, which was preſerved in heaven for them who by the power of God are kept through faith to ſalvation, ver. 4, 5.—This, he ſaid, might be matter of great joy to them, though they ſuffered perfection. Then to reconcile them to their ſufferings, he ſuggeſted various powerful perſuaſives: ſuch as, that their ſufferings would ſoon be over; that they were neceſſary to try and improve their faith; that the improvement of their faith would be of greater value to themſelves and to the world than the fineſt gold, and would procure them great honour at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt. All theſe arguments the apoſtle comprized in two ſhort verſes, 6, 7.—Then addreſſing their ſtrongeſt feelings, he told them, that, though they had never ſeen their Maſter, they loved him; and that though they did not ſee him now, yet, believing him to be the Son of God, they rejoiced in him with joy unſpeakable, ver. 8.—knowing that from him they would aſſuredly receive the reward of perfevring faith, even the eternal ſalvation of their ſouls, ver. 9.—And, to ſhew the greatneſs and glory of this ſalvation, he obſerved, that it had been foretold and accurately ſearched into by the prophets, who before teſtified the ſufferings which the Chriſt was to undergo for our ſalvation, and the glories following his ſufferings; and that the angels deſired to look attentively into theſe things, ver. 10, 11, 12.—By mentioning the ſufferings of Chriſt, and the glories following, the apoſtle inſinuated, that if his diſciples ſuffered patiently and courageouſly after his example, they might expect through his grace to be rewarded as he was, in their meaſure.

The apoſtle having thus comforted the persecuted brethren to whom he wrote, by recalling to their remembrance the great objects of their faith and hope, he exhorted them to hope ſtrongly for the bleſſings that were to be brought to them at the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, ver. 13.—and, as became the children of God, the heirs of theſe great bleſſings, to avoid the luſts which they formerly indulged while unconverted: ver. 14.—and to imitate God in his holineſs: ver. 15, 16.—and, from the conſideration of the

future judgment, to live in the fear of God, ver. 17.—knowing that they were redeemed from their guilt, their corrupt nature, and their vain and wicked manner of living, not with ſilver and gold, but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as a ſin-offering appointed by God himſelf, before the foundation of the world; that their hope and aſſurance of pardon might be firmly grounded on that all-ſufficient ſacrifice, ver. 18—21.—Next, the apoſtle told the Chriſtians of Pontus, &c. that, ſeeing they had through grace purified their hearts from fleſhly luſts by receiving the goſpel, and had attained ſincere brotherly love, he hoped they would love one another always from a pure heart, as brethren, ver. 22.—a relation in which they ſtood to each other, by being born again as ſons to God, through the uncorruptible ſeed of the word: ſo that the pooreſt and meaneſt believer is not only the brother of every other believer, but he is a more noble and eſtimable perſon, than the greateſt prince on earth, who is not like him a ſon of God, ver. 23.—And in proof of this, St. Peter obſerves, that the nobleſt earthly deſcent, and the higheſt titles of honour, are ſhort-lived, like the flowers of the field, ver. 24.—But that the more honourable nobility which is founded on the belief of the word of Chriſt, whereby men are made partakers of the nature of God, continues to the faithful through all eternity, ver. 25.

Ver. 1. To the ſtrangers ſcattered, &c.] “To thoſe Chriſtians whom Providence has diſperſed through various countries, and whom divine grace has taught to conſider themſelves, wherever they dwell, as ſtrangers and ſojourners on earth.” By *Aſia*, in this verſe, is not to be underſtood what is now commonly meant by *Aſia*; that is, a fourth part of the world; but *Aſia Propria*, or Proconſular *Aſia*; in which ſtood the city of Ephesus, and ſome few of the neighbouring towns mentioned in the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, and in the *Revelation*. In this confined ſenſe of the word *Aſia* muſt be underſtood, Acts, ii. 9. xvi. 6. xix. 10. 31. Rev. i. 4. 11.

Ver. 2. Elec^t according to the foreknowledge, &c.] Dr. Heylin reads this verſe, *Whom God the Father, according to his foreknowledge, has elected and ſanctified by the Spirit, that they ſhould obey Jeſus Chriſt, and be ſprinkled with his blood.* And he obſerves, that as the Chriſtian church ſucceeded to the Jewish, it has the ſame titles of *elec^t* and *ſanctified*; that is, conſecrated to God, being ſeparated from the reſt of the world by the peculiar illumination of the Holy Spirit.

* abundant mercy ¹ hath begotten us again unto a lively hope ² by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 ¹ To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven † for you,

5 ^m Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ⁿ ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ^o ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations :

* Gr. *much*. ¹ John, 3. 3, 5. & 1. 13. James, 1. 18. ¹ John, 5. 18. & 3. 1—3, 9. Rom. 8. 17. ² Rom. 8. 11. ¹ Cor. 15. 20. Eph. 2. 6. ¹ Thess. 4. 14. John, 14. 19. Rom. 5. 10. ¹ If. 26. 19. Ph. 3. 10. ¹ Acts, 20. 32. & 26. 18. Eph. 2. 11, 14. Col. 1. 12. Rev. 21. 27. Ch. 5. 4. Col. 2. 5. ¹ Tim. 1. 12. & 4. 8. Pl. 31. 19. † Or for us. ^m John, 17. 11, 12, 15. ² Tim. 2. 19. Pl. 125. 1, 2. John, 10. 28, 29. Deut. 33. 27. Jude, 1. ¹ John, 5. 4. Eph. 3. 17. ² Cor. 1. 24. Ch. 5. 9. ⁿ Ver. 13. Col. 3. 3, 4. ¹ John, 3. 2. ¹ Tim. 6. 15. Titus, 2. 13. ^o Mat. 5. 12. ² Cor. 4. 17. & 6. 10. Rom. 5. 3. & 12. 12. Heb. 10. 32—34. James, 1. 2, 12. Ch. 4. 13. & 5. 10.

Spirit. The source of their redemption by Jesus Christ was the love of God the Father, who designed before the coming of Christ, not only to call the Jews, but also to take unto himself a chosen people from among the Gentiles. It was not owing to the merit of those Gentiles, or granted as a reward for their works of righteousness antecedent to their conversion, that the gospel was sent among them; but to the foreknowledge and love of God the Father. By the phrase the sprinkling of the blood the apostle may refer to the Jewish ceremony of sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices upon the people; whereby they entered into covenant with God.

Ver. 3. Which—hath begotten us again, &c.] “Who—hath regenerated us as his children to the hope of life and immortality; of which he hath given us a remarkable pledge and confirmation by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” The law of Moses condemned all offenders to death without mercy: the gospel promises pardon, and life, or immortality, to all penitent persons. The Jews were under the law before the gospel came, though at the same time under a covenant of grace. As to the Heathens, they were, through fear of death, all their life-time subject to bondage: though there were among them some confused notions, and pretty general expectations, of a life after death; yet their hopes were very faint and languid in comparison of what Christians may have. How great reason is there to bless God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath raised us to the hope of immortality; brought to light a future state in so clear and express a manner, and given us such a pledge and seal of its truth, as revealed in the gospel, by the resurrection of his Son!

Ver. 4. To an inheritance] St. Peter had spoken of the hope of life, ver. 3. He now explains what he meant by that life; even the greatest felicity that can be enjoyed, which he compares to an inheritance, or large estate, a thing most generally esteemed here upon earth. But there is also a further allusion; for parents beget their children to the hopes of living and enjoying their estates or inheritance after them; God had regenerated these Gentile Christians to the hope of a firmer and more durable inheritance: for mortal men in general are born to a short-lived inheritance; the pious are regenerated to one that is everlasting, and not only everlasting, but undefiled;—one neither gotten nor detained by any wicked methods; nor shall persons polluted with vice have any share therein. See Rev. xxi. 27. The inheritance of wicked men, or the land where they dwell, is said to be defiled by their own

sins; to which perhaps there may be an allusion here. It is added, which withereth not away;—so the word *ἀφθάρτων* properly signifies. Temporal possessions are soon lost, all the glory of them withereth like the grass; (James, i. 11.) but the future inheritance of the saints shall not remove from one person or family to another; it is no fading inheritance. The faithful lose it not while they live, neither shall they ever die and leave it to their heirs.

Ver. 5. Who are kept by the power of God] The word *φρουρούμενος*, which we translate kept, is very strong and expressive: it does not mean being kept after any manner, but with the most constant and vigilant care; as a tower or a city is watched by a military garrison, which keeps guard day and night, and plants the greatest number of centinels where the place is weakest, or there is most danger. Such is the watchful care of God over his people: as long as they continue faithful, nothing shall be able to hurt them; no enemies or persecutors can deprive them of their reward. Through faith, *διὰ πίστεως*, would be read most properly during faith; and the verse may be paraphrased thus: “who, as long as you steadily adhere to the Christian faith, are guarded and defended by the mighty power of God, and preserved unto that salvation or eternal happiness, which is prepared, and will certainly be revealed at last; that is, at the end of the world:” for at the general conflagration, or when the present state of things comes to an end, then shall the greatest and final salvation be revealed. In speaking of the last time, possibly St. Peter might allude to Dan. xii. 9. 13. See John, vi. 39. xi. 24.

Ver. 6.] St. Peter here begins to speak of their persecutions and sufferings, which he enters upon with great tenderness and address; and endeavours to reconcile their minds to them by many and various arguments. First, he intimates that such afflictions would soon be over. Secondly, that they were necessary, or at least highly proper, in order to purify and refine their minds. Thirdly, that if their Christian faith could bear the furnace of afflictions, it was more valuable than the finest gold, and all worldly treasures. Fourthly, that their sufferings would meet with a most ample reward at Christ's second coming. Fifthly, that, as they loved Christ, and believed in him, though they had never seen him, they would at last rejoice with ineffable joy, when they received, as the reward of their faith, the salvation of their souls. And sixthly, that the ancient prophets had made a strict and diligent inquiry about that salvation; even those very prophets who had prophesied of the Gentiles being favoured with the gospel;

7 That ^p the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ :

8 ^q Whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ^r ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory :

9 ^s Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

10 ^t Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you :

11 Searching what, or what manner of time ^u the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, ^v when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, ^w that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you

^p James, 1. 3, 12. Ch. 4. 13. If. 48. 13. Zech. 13. 9. Pl. 66. 10. Job, 23. 10. Mat. 19. 27. & 25. 21, 34. 1 Sam. 2. 30. Rom. 2. 10. & 8. 17. 1 Cor. 4. 5. John, 12. 26. Acts, 3. 21. Titus, 2. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 8. with ver. 18. Prov. 17. 3. Jer. 9. 7. ^q 1 John, 4. 20. John, 20. 29. Acts, 3. 21. 2 Cor. 5. 7. Heb. 11. 1, 27. ^r Isa. 61. 10. Hab. 3. 17, 18. Rom. 5. 3, 4, 11. Phil. 1. 25. & 3. 3. & 4. 4. Pl. 43. 4. & 149. 2. ^s Rom. 6. 22. Acts, 15. 11. 2 Tim. 1. 12. with Heb. 11. 13. & 6. 12. ^t Mat. 13. 17. Luke, 10. 24. Gen. 49. 10. Daniel, 2. 41. & 9. 24. Hag. 2. 7. Zech. 6. 12, 13. & 9. 9. Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 2. Mat. 11. 12. 2 Peter, 1. 19, 21. ^u 1 Cor. 3. 16. Gal. 4. 6. Rom. 8. 9. 2 Peter, 1. 21. ^v Pl. xxii. lxx. lxxii. cx. cxviii. If. liii. & 52. 13—15. & liv—lxvi. Daniel, 9. 24, 26. Luke, 24. 26, 27, 44. Acts, 26. 22, 23. ^w Daniel, 9. 24. & 12. 9, 13. Heb. 11. 13, 39.

gospel ;—to reveal which, God had lately poured out the Spirit, and sent the apostles not only to the Jews, but also to the Gentiles, ver. 6—12. Having alleged thus much to support them under their persecutions and troubles, he goes on to exhort them by all means to avoid their former way of living, and to practise the holy virtues of the Christian life, as they were obliged by their profession, ver. 13.—Ch. ii. 3.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice,] “ Upon which account you ^{greatly} rejoice, though now for a short time, as it is ^{fitting}, and you are distressed by diverse temptations.” *Heylin, and the Syriac version.* See James, i. 2. Matth. v. 4. and ch. iv. 12. 14. of this Epistle.

Ver. 7. That the trial of your faith, &c.] “ Though gold ^{loses} nothing in the furnace, yet will it by length of ^{time} wear away, or be affected with rust, though not so ^{soon} as some other metals ; and it will at farthest perish ^{in the general conflagration} : but *faith* will then stand the ^{trial}, and come out brighter and more glorious.” Some would read this, *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold and silver which had been tried in the fire.* Afflictions are to men’s faith, what the furnace is to gold ; that is, to try whether it is proof or no ; and, if it be proof, will purify, refine, make it brighter and more valuable. St. Peter therefore calls a severe persecution *πυρώσις*, a *fiery trial*. Ch. iv. 12. See Job, xxiii. 10.

Ver. 8. Whom having not seen,] It is very possible that, among these dispersed Christians, there might have been some who had visited Jerusalem while Christ was there, and might have *seen* or conversed with him. However, St. Peter speaks according to the usual apostolical manner, as if they all had not. See John, xx. 29. 2 Cor. v. 6, 7. Heb. xi. 1. 27.

Ver. 9. Receiving the end of your faith, &c.] *Because ye shall attain the salvation of your souls, as the recompence of your faith.* The word *Κομισθησθε* signifies, “ To receive as a ^{recompence}.” See Parkhurst.

Ver. 10. Of which salvation the prophets] The gospel was not fully revealed to the Jews before the coming of Christ. Something of the nature of the gospel in general,

and of that grand event, the conversion of the Gentiles, was revealed to them ; upon which they were very desirous to have found out all that concerned it, and would have been very glad to have lived to see that happy time, when their predictions should be accomplished. That Daniel understood not the full meaning of his own prophecies, see Dan. viii. 15, &c. xii. 8, 9. It is evident, that the ancient prophets had views of a greater salvation than that of being saved out of the hands of their enemies when they conquered Canaan, and got possession of that good land, the land of Promise. To that salvation, (especially that spoken of by Daniel,) St. Peter seems here to allude. By *grace or favour*, in this verse, we understand the favour of having the gospel preached unto them, and being admitted to the privileges of Christians ; the elect people of God under the Messiah. By *χαρις*, *grace*, in the New Testament, is often meant the gospel, or the Christian religion.

Ver. 11. The Spirit of Christ] It is well worthy of our notice, that the Spirit which dictated to the prophets is called *the Spirit of Christ* ; which both proves his existence before his incarnation, and his supreme Godhead ; and illustrates the full view that he himself had of all he was to do and suffer under the character of our Redeemer. The apostle, in discoursing so largely concerning the prophets, seems to have a special reference to the converted Jews, who would enter more thoroughly into this part of his reasoning, than the converted Gentiles. It has been with great propriety observed, that if the prophets and righteous men of old, to whom the word of God came, did not clearly understand the things they foretold, but employed themselves in searching and examining the prophetic testimonies of the Spirit which was in them ; it is evident that the prophecies themselves were obscure : and for good reason they were so ; because they were not delivered so much for *their* sakes, as for the sake of those who lived in the times when they were accomplished.

Ver. 12. Unto whom it was revealed,] Many of the things foretold by the ancient prophets, did evidently relate to distant times, and many of them to the coming of Christ, and

by them that have preached the gospel unto you² with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; ³ which things the angels desire to look into.

13 Wherefore ^b gird up the loins of your mind, ^c be sober, and hope ^{*} to the end for the ^d grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 ^e As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

15 But as he which ^f hath called you is

holy, ^g so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

16 Because it is written, ^h Be ye holy; for I am holy.

17 And if ye ⁱ call on the Father, ^k who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, ^l pass the time of your sojourning *here* in fear:

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ^m ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as silver and gold*, from your ⁿ vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

^a Acts, 2. 4, 33. Joel, 2. 28. 11. 44. 3—5. Prov. 1. 23. ^b Exod. 25. 20. Eph. 3. 10. Luke, 15. 10. Dan. 8. 13. & 12. 5, 6. ^c Exod. 12. 11. 1 Kings, 18. 46. Luke, 12. 35. & 17. 8. Eph. 6. 14. ^d Luke, 21. 34. Rom. 13. 13. 1 Thess. 5. 6. 2 Tim. 4. 5. Heb. 3. 6, 14, & 10. 35. 1 Titus, 2. 12, 13. ^e Gr. perfectly. ^f Eph. 1. 6, 7. & 2. 4—8. Rom. 5. 21. Ch. 3. 7. Ver. 7. 2 Thess. 1. 7. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28. ^g Eph. 4. 1, 18, 22. & 2. 2. Rom. 12. 8. Ch. 4. 2, 3. Titus, 3. 3. Acts, 17. 30. ^h 1 Cor. 1. 9. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Ch. 2. 9. 2 Peter, 1. 3. ⁱ 2 Peter, 1. 11, 14, 17, 18. & 1. 4—10. 1 Thess. 5. 23. & 4. 7. Mat. 3. 15. & 5. 48. Eph. 5. 1, 2. Phil. 1. 27. & 2. 15. Luke, 1. 74, 75. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Titus, 2. 12. & 3. 8, 14. Heb. 12. 14, 28. & 13. 9. ^j Lev. 11. 44. & 19. 2. & 20. 7. Mat. 5. 48. ^k Mat. 6. 9. & 7. 7—11. Eph. 1. 17. & 3. 14. ^l Deut. 10. 17. 2 Chron. 19. 7. Job, 34. 10. Mat. 3. 9. Acts, 10. 34, 35. Rom. 2. 10, 11. Gal. 2. 6. Eph. 6. 9. Col. 3. 11, 25. Gal. 2. 6. & 3. 28. ^m 1 Chron. 29. 15. Pf. 39. 12. John, 15. 19. & 17. 16. 2 Cor. 5. 6. & 7. 1. Phil. 2. 12. Heb. 12. 13, 14. & 12. 28. Ch. 2. 11. ⁿ 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20. & 7. 23. Ver. 7. Pf. 49. 7. ^o Rom. 1. 22. Ezek. 20. 18. Acts, 7. 51, 52. Pf. 94. 13, 14.

and the numerous conversions of the Jews and Gentiles to his holy religion. St. Peter very properly mentions it, to the honour of Christians, that the ancient prophets, ministered not unto themselves, but unto them: and it was a great confirmation to their faith to compare the prediction and event, and observe their harmony. By using the phrase, *Those that have preached the gospel unto you*, St. Peter seems to speak of these Christians, not as his own converts, but as converted by others; probably they had been converted by St. Paul and his assistants. St. Peter here plainly alludes to the prophecy, Joel, ii. 28, 29. which he himself declared to be accomplished, Acts, ii. 16, &c. The apostles evidently laid claim to the Spirit of God as their infallible guide in things which concerned the Christian doctrine; and did actually understand and plant Christianity by the same Spirit which had inspired the ancient prophets: but they never pretended to be infallible and unpeccable in their other conduct; neither was there any occasion that they should be so. Doddridge paraphrases the last clause of the verse thus: "And indeed, the doctrines which they preach, are things of so great excellence and importance, as to be well worthy the regard of angels, as well as men. And accordingly, as the images of the cherubim on the mercy-seat seem to bow down, to look upon the tables of the law, laid up in the ark; so those celestial spirits do, from their heavenly abode, desire to bend down, to contemplate such a glorious display of divine wisdom and goodness." See James, i. 25.

Ver. 13. *Gird up the loins of your mind*,] The apostle seems here to allude to the precept which he had heard from our Lord, Luke, xii. 35, &c. which is the more probable, from his immediately adding the words, *ἐνφρονίς τελαίως*,—*bring constantly upon the watch*. The meaning is, that Christians are to endeavour to have their minds in such a frame for the coming of Christ, as servants have their bodies for their master's coming to his marriage-feast,

when he is to entertain his friends in the most agreeable manner. See 1 Kings, xviii. 46. Luke, xvii. 8.

Ver. 14. *As obedient children*,] *As children of obedience*; an usual Hebraism, by which persons are called the children of that, to which they are addicted or devoted. "Obedience (says Dr. Heylin,) is a sure ground of hope: to expect salvation without it, is not hope, but presumption." What the former lusts were, see ch. iv. 3. Their conformity to them is here expressed by a very emphatical word; *συνκατάζήμενοι*; which signifies, "Such a conformity as a medal or image has to the mould in which it was formed or cast." Our translation has well expressed this allusion; *not fashioning yourselves*. Compare Rom. vi. 17.

Ver. 15. *As he which hath called you*, &c.] The gods which the Heathens worshipped had a very bad moral character, and the imitation of them rendered their worshippers worse than they would otherwise have been. But nothing can lead to higher degrees of holiness and virtue, than imitating the true God, who hath blessed us with the Christian revelation, and who is there displayed as a Being of the most perfect moral character. See 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Ver. 17. *And if ye call on the Father*,] *And since you invoke him as your Father, who impartially judges every man according to his actions, Live in a continual awe of him, while you sojourn here below*; ver. 18. *Considering that you were redeemed from the vain manner of life which you learned of your earthly parents, not by perishable things as silver and gold*; Heylin: who observes, that religious fear, or a continual awe of God, rightly concurs with hope, to support us in temptation. See ver. 14. Some think there is an allusion in the words *corruptible things, silver and gold*, to the lamb which made an atonement; and was bought at the common expence, furnished by the contribution of the half shekel, as a typical atonement for their souls. See Exod. xxx. 11, &c.

Ver.

19 * But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot :

20 * Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but ^a was manifested in these last times for you,

21 Who ^b by him do believe in God, that ^c raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in

God.

22 Seeing ye have ^d purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto ^e unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently :

23 * Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 * For ^f all flesh *is* as grass, and all the

* If. 52. 14, 15. & 53. 4—12. Dan. 9. 24. Zech. 13. 7. Mat. 20. 28. John, 1. 29, 36. Eph. 1. 7. & 5. 2. Col. 1. 14, 20. Acts, 20. 28. Heb. 9. 12, 14. & 10. 12, 14. 1 John, 1. 7. & 2. 1, 2. Rev. 1. 5. & 5. 5, 9. Ch. 2. 22, 24. & 3. 18. Heb. 4. 15. & 7. 26. 1 Cor. 5. 7. Exod. 12. 5. ^b Prov. 8. 23. Micah, 5. 2. Eph. 1. 4. Rom. 3. 25. Rev. 13. 8. Acts, 10. 42. If. 42. 1. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Titus, 1. 2. ^c Gal. 4. 4. Eph. 1. 10. Heb. 1. 1, 2. & 9. 26. Rom. 16. 25, 26. Col. 1. 26, 27. 2 Tim. 1. 10. 1 John, 3. 5, 8. & 4. 9, 10. Rom. 4. 24. Mat. 10. 6. & 15. 24. Acts, 3. 25, 26. Eph. 3. 3, 10, 11. ^d Phil. 1. 29. Luke, 22. 32. John, 14. 6. Heb. 12. 2. & 7. 25. Rom. 10. 9, 10. Acts, 3. 15, 16. ^e Rom. 4. 24, 25. Mat. 28. 18. John, 1. 14. & 8. 54. & 12. 16. & 13. 31. & 16. 14. & 17. 5, 24. Acts, 2. 24, 33, 36. & 3. 15, 26. & 4. 10. & 5. 3. & 10. 40. & 13. 30. & 17. 32. Rom. 6. 4. & 8. 11, 14. 1 Cor. 6. 14. & 15. 15, 20. 2 Cor. 4. 14. Gal. 1. 1. Eph. 1. 20. Phil. 2. 9—11. Col. 2. 12. 1 Thess. 1. 10. & 4. 14. 1 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Tim. 2. 8. Heb. 1. 3. & 2. 9. & 5. 9. & 7. 25. & 9. 24. & 10. 19. & 13. 20. James, 2. 1. Ch. 3. 22. Rev. 5. 9—13. ^f Acts, 15. 9. John, 15. 3. & 17. 17. 2 Thess. 2. 13. 2 Cor. 6. 7. 1 John, 3. 3. ^g Rom. 12. 9, 10. Eph. 4. 3. 1 Thess. 4. 9. 2 Peter, 1. 7. 1 John, 3. 18. Heb. 13. 1. Ch. 2. 17. ^h John, 1. 13. & 3. 3, 5. Titus, 1. 5. 1 John, 3. 9. & 5. 18. James, 1. 18. Heb. 4. 12. John, 6. 63. ⁱ Or for that. ^j Pf. 39. 5. & 102. 11. & 103. 15. If. 40. 6. & 51. 12. James, 1. 10. & 4. 14. 1 John, 2. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 31.

Ver. 20. *Who verily was fore-ordained*] All the former dispensations, from the beginning of the world, were carried on with a view to the coming of Christ, under whom was to be the concluding dispensation ; and in this view, the Bible takes in a large and extensive plan. What our translation has rendered *fore-ordained*, properly signifies *fore-known* ; and seems to relate to the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning the coming of Christ, together with his sufferings and death mentioned in the preceding verse ; or, rather, to God's foreseeing, before this world was created, that the consequence of his Son's coming among men, with such a view, and in such circumstances, would end in his undergoing a violent death ; and yet, though he foresaw that event, he did not therefore forbear to send him. See Ephes. i. 4. John, xvii. 24.

Ver. 21. *Who by him do believe*] *Who by him*,—by his means,—or on his account,—do trust in God. The expression is remarkable ; and the meaning seems to be, that Christians, who before their conversion were ignorant of the true God, learnt his Being and Providence, through grace, from the great fact of Christ's resurrection, and the power with which God the Father invested him on his ascension into heaven.

Ver. 22, 23. *Seeing ye have purified your souls, &c.*] *When through the Spirit ye have purified your hearts by obeying the truth, so that you are become capable of fraternal affection without disguise, See that you love one another with a clean heart fervently, or intensely ; ver. 23. As persons who are regenerated, not of corruptible seed, but of that which is incorruptible, even the efficacious and eternal word of God ;* Heylin : who observes, that the ground of fraternal affection among Christians, is their regeneration by the same divine principle. St. Peter here says, that they had *purified their souls from sin*, and attained to high degrees of holiness and piety, by *obeying the truth* ; that is, by obeying the gospel : for *truth* is above fifty times in the New Testament put for the *gospel*, which contains the most clear and important truths. *The love of the brethren*, is the love of Christians : in human friendship there is sometimes a mixture of hypocrisy ; but Christians love one another *unfeignedly*, or without hy-

pocrisy. They love one another for their holiness and piety, and *from a pure heart* ; not out of merely temporal views, but from views the most generous and disinterested. See 2 Cor. vi. 6. Gomarus observes, that the word *ἐκλεβώς*, *fervently*, or *intensely*, is a metaphor taken from a *bow-string*, or the strings of a *musical instrument* ; for, as a bow-string, when it is *intense*, or stretched to a proper degree, sends out the arrow with more force and to a greater distance ; and the musical chord, when it is intense, or stretched to a proper degree, gives a more clear sound, and is heard better and by more persons ; so Christian love, the greater and more intense it is, exerts itself further, and wider, and is of more universal advantage. To promote this love is one principal design of the Christian revelation. See ch. iv. 8. The reason why we should love all the Christian brotherhood out of a pure heart intensely, is given in ver. 23. because by being born again, we become brethren of the same family, and children of the same immortal Father. When we are considered merely as descending from mortal parents, we are born to die like grass, or flowers, which soon wither away ; but our being born again by the gospel, is a very different thing from a plant or animal's being produced by the seed of another plant or animal, and has very different effects : for the first renders us mortal, but the latter immortal. Christians are in some places represented, as *born again by the Spirit* ; but in other places, as here, they are said to be regenerated by *the word of God*, or the *everlasting gospel*, Rev. xiv. 6. The two phrases come to much the same ; for by the Spirit the gospel was revealed, and confirmed by many of his miraculous operations ; and when men are born again, there are no new revelations made to them by the Spirit ; but they are born again by the word of God, as it was first preached by men, under the immediate inspiration of the Spirit, and is now contained in the sacred scriptures, and applied by the divine Spirit to the believing heart. See Titus, iii. 5.

Ver. 24. *For all flesh is as grass, &c.*] *Flesh* is often, by a common figure, put for *man* ; but perhaps the apostle here used the word to intimate that he meant the *body* of man,

glory of man as the flower of grafs. The grafs withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away :

25 * But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. * And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

* Ver. 23. If. 40. 8. Pl. 119. 39. Mat. 5. 18. James, 1. 21. Luke, 16. 17.

* Acts, 20. 27, 1 Cor. 2. 2. & 15. 1—4. Eph. 1. 13. Gal. 1.

frail and short-lived like the tender herb ; by way of opposition to the soul, which he considered as incorruptible. *All the glory of man*, means every thing wherein men pride themselves, or which renders them admired or illustrious ;— beauty, strength, learning, eloquence, titles, riches, and honours : all these are only like a fair *flower*, which looks beautiful for a little while, but soon fades and withers away. See James, i. 10, 11. and Isai. xl. 6—8. the place from whence St. Peter quoted these words.

Ver. 25. The word of the Lord endureth for ever.] The word of God is said to be *incorruptible*, to be *alive*, and to *endure for ever*, because it teaches men the way to life ; or, if complied with, begins a life of happiness, which will, to the faithful, never end ; which is the seed or principle of a spiritual and incorruptible, of a glorious and happy life, which will endure for ever. See John, iii. 36. v. 24, &c. vi. 27, 63. Rom. viii. 6. 1 John, ii. 17. The connection of St. Peter's discourse in these verses is as follows :
 “ Though you by your natural birth are born mortal, and,
 “ in consequence thereof, must fade away in respect to
 “ this life, like grafs or flowers ; yet, by being born again
 “ into the family of Christ, or the Christian brotherhood,
 “ (ver. 22, 23.) by the immortalizing seed of the word of
 “ God, you are born to an immortal life of glory and
 “ happiness : and the gospel is that word of God, which,
 “ if you be faithful, will render you immortal ; namely,
 “ that gospel which I preach unto you.”

Inferences.—Are we desirous of rendering it apparent to ourselves, and all around us, that we are indeed elect of God ? Let it be, by a humble application to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, on the one hand, and by the evident fruits of the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, on the other.

The abundant mercy of God has begotten real Christians to the lively hope of an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven for them : let us keep it steadily in view, and earnestly pray, that God would preserve us by his mighty power through faith unto salvation. While we are waiting for this salvation, it is very possible, yea, probable, that affliction may be our portion ; but let us remember, it is, *if need be*, that we are in heaviness through manifold temptations. Our faith, and our other graces, are as it were thrown into the furnace, not to be consumed, but refined ; that they may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearance of Jesus Christ. Even at present, may this divine faith produce that love to an unseen Jesus, which is here so naturally expressed by the apostle ; and though now we see him not, yet may that love be eminently productive of joy, even that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory : and in the lively and vigorous exercise of these graces, may we all receive the end of our faith, even the everlasting salvation of our souls !

Let what we are told in this chapter of the prophetic writers, be improved as it ought, to confirm our faith in that glorious gospel, of which these holy men have given in their writings such wonderful intimations and predictions : writings, for the understanding of which we have advantages superior to those which even they *themselves* had. What exalted ideas should we entertain of a dispensation introduced by such a series of wonders, preached by the inspired prophets, and by the Holy Ghost in his miraculous gifts and salutary influence sent down from heaven : a dispensation into the glories of which the angels desire to pry ; how much more worthy then, the attention of the children of men, who are so nearly concerned in it, who are redeemed by the blood of the Son of God ? O ! let us review it with the closest application, and improve it to the infinitely gracious and important purposes for which it was intended. Then will grace and peace be multiplied to us ; and however we may now be dispersed and afflicted, pilgrims and strangers, we shall ere long be brought to our everlasting home, and meet together in the presence of our dear and condescending Saviour ; where, having a more lively sense of our obligations to him, and beholding his glory, we shall love him infinitely better than at this distance we have been capable of, and feel our joy in him increased in a proportionable degree.

Again. Let it be a matter of our daily delightful meditation, that, while we clearly discern the uncertainty of all human dependencies, which wither like the grafs, and fall like the flower of the field, the word of God abideth for ever. Let us cheerfully repose our souls upon it. And if we have indeed experimentally known its efficacy and power, so that our souls are purified by obeying the truth, let us carefully express our obedience to it by undisssembled, fervent brotherly love : and, animated by our glorious and exalted hopes as Christians, even that divine and illustrious hope of the grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, let us set ourselves to the vigorous discharge of every duty, as knowing that we should be *children of obedience*, having the excuse of ignorance no longer to plead for the indulgence of our lusts, but by a holy God being called with a holy calling, and instructed to invoke him, at once, as our gracious Father and impartial Judge.

It is worthy of our special remark, that the blessed apostle urges us to pass the transitory and limited time of our sojourning here *in fear*, from the consideration of our being redeemed by the blood of the Son of God, which is a price of infinitely more value than all the treasures of the universe. And certainly there is a mighty energy in the argument ; for as it is a very amiable, so it is also a very awful consideration. What heart so hardened, as not to tremble at trampling on the blood of the Son of God, and frustrating, as far as in him lies, the important design of his death ? And, while we are reflecting on the resurrection and exaltation of our Redeemer, as the great foundation of our

CHAP II.

He deborteth them from the breach of love; shewing that Christ is the foundation whereon they are built: he beseecheth them also to abstain from fleshy lusts, and to be obedient to magistrates; and teacheth servants how to obey their masters, patiently suffering for well-doing, after the example of Christ.

[Anno Domini 65.]

WHEREFORE^a b laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies,

and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 ° As new born babes, desire ° the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have ° tasted that the Lord is gracious.

4 To whom coming, as unto ° a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious,

5 Ye also, ° as lively stones, * are built up

^a Ch. 1. 2—4, 19, 21. ^b Eph. 4. 22, 25, 31. Col. 3. 5, 8. Heb. 12. 1. Jam. 1. 21. & 3. 14. & 5. 9. Mat. 6. 2. & 23. 28. 1 John, 3. 18. Rom. 1. 29—31. & 12. 9. Tit. 3. 2, 3. Ch. 3. 9. Jam. 4. 11. Gal. 5. 15, 20, 21, 26. ° Mat. 18. 3. Mark, 10. 15. Rom. 6. 4, 6. 1 Cor. 14. 20. ° 2 Cor. 2. 17. Eph. 1. 13. Pl. 19. 7—10. & cxix. Job, 23. 12. Jer. 15. 16. 1 Thes. 2. 13. with Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. 2 Pet. 3. 18. ° Pl. 34. 8. & 9. 10. & 119. 68. Heb. 6. 4, 5. Zech. 9. 17. ° John, 5. 26. & 6. 57. & 11. 25. & 14. 16, 19. Col. 3. 4. ° Eph. 2. 20, 22. 1 Cor. 3. 11. Pl. 118. 22. Mat. 21. 42. & 16. 18. Acts, 4. 11, 12. Dan. 2. 34, 44. Il. 28. 16. Ch. 1. 20. ° Eph. 2. 5, 6, 10, 20—22. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Mat. 16. 18. Heb. 3. 6. 1 Cor. 3. 16. & 6. 19. Rev. 3. 12. * Or be ye built.

our eternal hopes, let us dread to be found opposing him whom God hath established on his own exalted throne; and with the utmost reverence let us kiss the Son, in token of our grateful acceptance of his mercy, and cheerful and humble submission to his authority. (Psal. ii. 12.)

REFLECTIONS.—1st, This epistle opens with,

1. The writer's name and title: *Peter an apostle of Jesus Christ*, by his immediate appointment, and sent especially to the circumcision.

2. The persons to whom it is addressed: *To the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*; dispersed by various providences through these provinces, and now called to the faith of Christ;—to the *elect*, the converted Jews and others to whom he is writing, (see the introduction and annotations,) according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, discovered in the prophetic writings, which foretold of these blessings to be conveyed to them by the Messiah, who also is said to be foreknown before the foundations of the world, prophesied of from the beginning (Gen. iii. 15.) but manifested in the last times for them, ver. 20. through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, this blessed author of all grace, having converted their souls to the love and practice of true holiness, and brought them to the sprinkling of the Blood of Jesus Christ for pardon and peace with God, which only by the sacrifice of the Redeemer could be obtained.

3. The salutation: *Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied*; may the pardoning, sealing, sanctifying, comforting, preserving grace of our God be with you; and peace, the blessed effect thereof, be diffused in the Church, in your families, and in your own souls. Note; We need nothing more to make us happy, than grace and peace; and if we possess all the world beside, and lack these, we are poor and miserable.

2dly, The apostle proceeds,

1. To thanksgiving for the inestimable blessings which, through the gospel, they enjoyed. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope*, when we had nothing in prospect before us but misery and despair, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, that we, beholding in him the justice of God satisfied, might be

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emboldened to approach a reconciled God, and not only by his grace be quickened to newness of life here, but be entitled also to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, yea, for all the faithful saints of God, who are kept, not by their own natural strength or sufficiency, but by the power of God, engaged to protect them from all their enemies, and to preserve them through faith of his operation in their hearts, unto salvation completed in glory, and which is ready to be revealed in the last time, when Jesus shall appear, and take his faithful followers to their eternal mansions of blessedness above. Note; (1.) We can never be thankful enough, when we remember the abundant mercy of our God and Father in Jesus Christ to our sinful souls. (2.) Every blessing flows from boundless and unmerited grace.—(3.) The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the grand foundation of our hope; and it is a lively hope, animating the soul to patience and purity. (4.) Whatever enemies, snares, dangers, temptations, beset us in our way to heaven, we shall be more than conquerors, if we perseveringly cleave to Jesus Christ in faith and love.

2. Having mentioned the salvation which was in prospect, he shews how that afforded comfort and support under all their trials. *Wherein ye greatly rejoice*, looking forward and upward to your glorious hope, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, which though ye cannot but feel as men, you can rejoice under them as Christians; and they are sent, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; and in the mean time its purity, genuineness, and excellence, shall be brightened and strengthened by all the conflicts it hath sustained in the Saviour's service, whom having not seen, ye love with fervent and supreme affection, faith realizing his amiableness to your souls; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, the lively foretaste of eternal bliss; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls, begun already, and to be completed shortly in glory for every faithful soul. Note; (1.) A Christian has cause to rejoice in God and the hope set before him at all times; and, even in the midst of grief and trouble, this consolation

5 H

consolation

a spiritual house, ¹ an holy priesthood, to offer up ^k spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the

¹ Ver. 9. If 61. 6. & 66. 20, 21. Rev. 1. 6. & 5. 10. & 20. 6. Heb. 10. 22. ^k Rom. 12. 1. If 66. 20. Phil. 2. 17. & 4. 18. Pf. 141. 2. Hof. 14. 2. Mal. 1. 11. Hcb. 13. 15, 16. & 12. 28. Ch. 4. 11. Phil. 4. 18. Eph. 1. 6.

consolation the world cannot take away from the righteous. (2.) Though our lot as Christians in this world is through manifold temptations, and our own nature cannot but more or less feel the burden, yet we must remember there is a *need* be for every pang we feel, and that should reconcile us to them. (3.) The bitterest afflictions to flesh and blood are often the most profitable medicines to our souls; and if we come to glory, we shall see that these were indeed blessings in disguise. (4.) The trial of our faith tends to its confirmation and establishment; and like gold, when tortured in the furnace, we come forth from our troubles the brighter, and leave the dross of corruption behind. (5.) Fidelity will be crowned when Jesus shall appear, and all the trials of the saints will then end in immortal honour and eternal glory. (6.) Jesus is precious to the believing soul; and the realizing views of him, which faith presents, bring down the foretastes of heavenly blessedness.

3dly, The salvation of the gospel, on which their faith fixed, was that which the blessed prophets had foretold, and after which they earnestly inquired. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently into the meaning of their own prophecies which by inspiration they delivered, digging deep into the golden mine, that themselves might share the treasure; who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you through the incarnate Saviour: searching, with eagerness, what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ for the sins of the world, and the glory that should follow, when, having offered his one atonement, he should ascend to the throne of Majesty on high. They wished to know the exact time, and what would be the state of the world, when this great event should come to pass. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister: the events predicted were not to be fulfilled in their days, but ours; and they foretold the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, who by his miraculous operations, and by the communication of his gifts and graces, bears his sacred testimony to the truth of our report: which things the angels desire to look into, bending forward as the cherubims over the mercy-seat, with wonder and delight contemplating the wonders of gospel-grace, admiring and adoring.* Note; (1.) The mysteries of gospel-grace were not only the subjects which engaged the holy prophets' researches, but they afford matter for angelic contemplation, wonder, and praise. (2.) The word of God must be searched, and diligently examined: there are treasures hid in it which will abundantly repay our pains. (3.) The Holy Ghost sent down from heaven still continues to make the gospel effectual to salvation, and on his mighty operation all the success of our preaching depends.

4thly. From the foregoing considerations the apostle,

1. Enforces the practice of true godliness in sundry

particulars. *Wherefore, (1.) Gird up the loins of your mind, be disentangled from every thing in the world which would retard you in your heavenly course, and be strong in the Lord and the power of his might to fight the good fight of faith. (2.) Be sober, temperately using every creature-comfort, and with holy vigilance preparing for the Master's return. And, (3.) Hope to the end, never dismayed nor discouraged by any temptations to which you may be exposed, but patiently persevering, and confidently waiting for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ, when the work of grace shall be completed, and an eternity of glory succeed, for all the faithful; the hope of which, as an anchor of the soul, should enable us to ride out every storm. (4.) Behave as obedient children to your heavenly Father, dutiful in observing his commands, and submitting to his disposal and correction; not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance, not conformed to the corrupt manners, maxims, and pursuits of a world which lieth in wickedness, among whom we all had our conversation in time past, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and knowing not the dreadful ruin which hung over our heads. To these ways let us never return; but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, proposing to yourselves nothing short of his complete and perfect image, and in every state, condition, and circumstance, desiring that your hearts, lips, and lives, may exactly correspond with his holy will: because it is written in that word which is our only rule of duty, Be ye holy, for I am holy.— (5.) Maintain a holy jealousy over yourselves. And if, as becometh your profession, ye call in ceaseless prayer on the Father for that grace which alone can enable you for all that he commands, who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, and thereby proves whether they are obedient children or not—pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, in filial fear of offending God, and holy jealousy over your own hearts, knowing that your present state is your pilgrimage, and that, if you are faithful, you shall shortly reach the happy rest, where all your fears will end, and your felicity be completed for ever.*

2. To encourage and engage them to the practice which he recommends, he suggests the most powerful motives—you should thus live to God, *forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, from the foolish traditions and corrupt manners and ways received by tradition from your fathers: to redeem you from which, all the perishing treasures of this world would be a price too despicable to be mentioned: but an infinitely greater hath been paid for you; you are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, who offered himself as your ransom to God, pure from all defilement, a Lamb fit to bleed on God's altar, and of such transcendent dignity in his person as to add infinite value to his sacrifice. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world,*

scripture, 'Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth

on him shall not be confounded.

7^m Unto you therefore which believe *he is*

¹ 1st. 28. 16. Rom. 9. 33. & 10. 11. Eph. 2. 20. Luke, 2. 34. see ver. 4. 9-16. Hag. 2. 7.

^m John, 20. 16, 23. & 6. 69. & 4. 29. 42. Phil. 3. 7-10, Soig. 5.

to be the one propitiation; but was manifest in these last times for you, (becoming incarnate, and making the brightest displays of the glory of his grace,) who by him do believe in God as your reconciled and covenant God, that raised him up from the dead in testimony of his acceptance of the sacrifice which he had offered for our justification, and gave him glory, exalting him to the Mediatorial throne; that your faith and hope might be in God, assured through the divine Messiah of present favour and acceptance with him, and expecting, according to his promise, all the blessings of grace here, and of glory hereafter.

5thly, The apostle proceeds,

1. To inculcate the exercise of fervent love. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, and have so graciously begun to advance in all holiness of heart and temper, being led by him especially unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see therefore that, under his blessed influences and according to the gospel word, ye love one another with a pure heart fervently; with still increasing and more enlarged affection; being born again, and made partakers of a divine nature, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever; unchangeably the same, and communicating a dignity and honour to which the highest human pedigree cannot pretend. Note; (1.) The gospel truth, through the Spirit embraced and obeyed, is the effectual means of purifying the soul. (2.) Unfeigned love of the brethren is among the surest evidences of the Spirit's work upon the heart. They who have made the highest advancements in the divine life, have need to be exhorted to increase more and more.

2. He sets forth the vanity of man. All flesh is as grass, weak and perishing; and all the glory of man, his pomp, wealth, affluence, wisdom, and endowments of every kind, are as the flower of grass, that soon fades and decays. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; one stroke of sickness, or accident, or the ravages of age, make all human greatness droop; and death carries it to the grave: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever, and they who are begotten by it have in their hearts eternal life begun; and if they perseveringly improve it, they shall flourish in glory everlasting. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you, whose effects are so everlastingly blessed to the faithful saints of God. Note; A deep sense of the vanity of man, and of his present state of corruption, will serve greatly to draw off our minds from the trifles of time, to look to the abiding glories of eternity which in the gospel are revealed unto us.

CHAP. II.

IT being of infinite importance that the disciples of Christ, by a holy and virtuous behaviour, should confute the calumnies of their adversaries, who charged them with all manner of crimes, the apostle Peter earnestly exhorted the brethren of Pontus, &c. from the consideration of their character and dignity as the children of God, described in

the preceding chapter, to lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envyings, and calumnies, things utterly inconsistent with brotherly love, ver. 1.—and as new born babes, by the unadulterated milk of the word of God, to nourish the divine nature in themselves to maturity, ver. 2, 3.—that they might be fit to be built into the temple of God, as living stones, upon the foundation Christ, ver. 4.—agreeably to what Isaiah foretold, ver. 6.—And to encourage them he observed, to all who believe, the great honour belongs of being built into the temple of God, as constituent parts thereof. Whereas all who refuse to believe in Christ with the heart unto righteousness, are not only dishonourable, but miserable, ver. 7.—because they are to be broken in pieces by Christ, the stone against which they stumble, ver. 8.—Next, he told both Jews and Gentiles, that by their believing on Christ, being built up into a temple for the worship of God, all the honourable titles formerly appropriated to the Jews, as the visible church and people of God, now belonged to them, ver. 9.—so that many of them who had lain in the ruins of the Gentile world, were peculiarly honoured, as gathered into the Christian church, and by the favour of God entitled to all its privileges, ver. 10.—And seeing they were now become constituent parts of the temple of God, he earnestly exhorted them to abstain from fleshly lusts, ver. 11.—and to have their behaviour comely in the eyes of the Gentiles, who by their holy lives would be sensible of the falsehood of the calumnies uttered against the Christians, ver. 12.—In particular, they were in every thing innocent to obey the Heathen magistrates of all denominations, because their office required them to punish the bad and reward the good, ver. 13, 14.—Thus to shew themselves good subjects, he told them was the most effectual method of silencing those foolish men, who slandered them as seditious persons, ver. 15.—and he thus advises them, as those who were in the noblest sense free, in consequence of their relation to Christ, and interest in his Blood; yet not using their liberty as a covering for the practice of wickedness, but behaving continually as those who were now more than ever the property of God through Jesus Christ, ver. 16.—Next, because the Jewish zealots affirmed, that no obedience was due from the people of God, to the emperor, or any other prince who was not of their religion, and who did not govern them according to the law of Moses, the apostle commanded them to pay to all men, the honour which was due to them on account of their rank or office; to love the brotherhood; to fear God; and to honour the emperor, ver. 17.

Having thus enjoined the Christians in general to obey the Heathen magistrates in all things consistent with their obedience to Christ, St. Peter proceeded to direct such of them as were servants or slaves to obey their masters in the same manner, with all reverence, whether they were believers or unbelievers, and whether they were gentle in their manners, or froward, ver. 18.—assuring them, that it was an acceptable thing to God, if a servant or any other

† precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallow-
ed, the same is made the head of the corner,
8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of

† Or an honour.
11. 7—11.

* Pf. 118. 22. Mat. 21. 42. Luke, 2. 34. Acts, 4. 11, 12. Rom. 9. 33. 1f. 8. 14. 1 Cor. 1. 23. 2 Cor. 2. 16. Rom.

Christian, from a principle of religion, suffered bad usage patiently, ver. 19, 20.—and that they were called to patience under unjust sufferings, from the example of Christ, who, though he was a person of such infinite dignity and power, submitted to suffer wrongfully for our sakes, leaving us, when he returned to heaven, an example that we should follow his steps, ver. 21.—Farther, that the example of Christ in suffering injurious treatment patiently, might make the deeper impression upon them, he gave them an account of his innocence, sincerity, willingness to forgive injuries, and self-government, ver. 22, 23.—and of the end for which he suffered, namely, that we being freed from the dominion, as well as from the guilt of sin, like persons dead to it, might live in all holy obedience, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to God through him, ver. 24.—Lastly, by observing, that the sojourners of the dispersion, as well as the other Christians united to them, had been as sheep going astray, but were now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls, he insinuated the obligation which lay on them, to obey and imitate Christ their Shepherd and Overseer in all things, ver. 25.

Ver. 1, 2. *Wherefore, laying aside all malice, &c.] Wherefore renouncing all ill-nature, all fraud, dissimulation, envy, and detraction, (ver. 2.) thirst as new-born children for the pure milk of the word, that thereby you may thrive, and grow up to salvation.* Heylin; who observes, that this refers to ver. 22. and 23. of the preceding chapter, as thus: “Since your generation, from the same divine principle, obliges you to mutual love, as brethren,—therefore renounce all that is incompatible with it, and as new-born children thirst, &c.”—A new chapter should certainly not have begun in this place.

Ver. 3. *If so be ye have tasted]* “And I am satisfied that ye will do so, seeing you have already tasted how sweet and pleasant the Gospel is, or know by experience that the Lord is gracious.” This is an evident allusion to Pf. xxxiv. 8. The word *εἰσέτε* is properly rendered *seeing* or *since*; for the apostle did not intend to express any doubt about them, but encouraged them to *desire the sincere milk of the word*, the sweetness of which they had already tasted. In the same manner he exhorted them to mutual love, ch. i. 22. from their having already loved one another. Grotius has observed, that the verb *γευσαθε* signifies not to *taste lightly*, but to have the *experience* of any thing. Dr. Heylin connects this verse with what follows: *Since you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, (ver. 4.) apply yourselves to Him; who is the living stone, &c.*

Ver. 4, 5. *To whom coming, as unto a Living Stone, &c.]* By *coming unto Christ* is meant the joining oneself to him as a part of this spiritual building, or embracing his religion with the heart unto righteousness. The reason why St. Peter compares Jesus Christ to a stone was, because he had, under the Spirit of God, his eye upon those passages of the Old Testament which he quotes in the following verses. Plants and animals are alive, as long as there is a proper

communication of nourishment through their several vessels; so likewise *rocks and stones* are said to be *alive*, as long as they are not cut out of the quarry, but continue to partake of that nourishment which circulates from vein to vein; so long as they grow to it, and have the most close and firm union. Milton, however, has an image, which may further illustrate this of St. Peter's:

“Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
“Rose, like an exhalation; with the sound
“Of dulcet symphonies, and voices sweet;
“Built like a temple; where pilasters round
“Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
“With golden architrave.”

PAR. LOST, b. i. l. 710, &c.

For though the *stone* here spoken of is supposed to be now in the building, or at the foundation of it, yet it is represented as *still alive*: and therefore, in much the same way with the image in Milton, St. Peter intended to signify, that from a *living stone* at the foundation, a temple grows, and that it all partakes of such common nourishment as circulates through the living rock. By such means it has the most intimate union, and is rendered one firm and compact building. See Ephes. ii. 20, &c. The image, Dan. ii. 34, 35, 45. is somewhat different; but so far it agrees with this, as that the *stone cut out of the mountains without the hands of men*, is there supposed to be still a *living stone*, and to grow up itself into a great mountain. *Disallowed of men*, means “*rejected* of the chief priests, scribes, and elders, the rulers of the Jews, who were looked upon as master-builders in Israel.” Instead of *living stones*, ver. 5. we should certainly read *living stones*, as ver. 4. the word being the same. The Jews used to call themselves *the temple of the Lord*, because they worshipped at that temple. The Christian church is here called a spiritual house, not as deriving that title from their worshipping in the temple at Jerusalem, in which the Jews so much boasted: that was indeed called the *house of God*; but it was a lifeless building, compared with this spiritual house, of which Jesus Christ is the foundation, and Christians themselves the superstructure. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Grotius has observed, that among the Hebrews the Levites used to be called the *stones to the temple*; but this appellation is here applied to all Christians. When all Christ's disciples are represented as *living stones*, which ought to be united into one spiritual house or temple, it may put us in mind of that harmony and concord which is requisite to fit Christians into one well-united and complete society. Having in the foregoing sentence, compared them to the house or temple of God, in the next sentence the apostle rises somewhat higher, and compares them to the priests of the family of Aaron, who were appointed to minister in the temple. The Jews gloried in such a holy and magnificent building as the temple, and in their chief priests and other sacred persons of the tribe of Levi, who were appointed to perform the temple service; but *Christians have*

offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: ° whereunto also they were appointed.

9 But ^p ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, † a peculiar people; ^q that ye should shew forth the || praises of

° Ex-d. 9. 16. 1 Thess. 5. 9. Jude, 4. Rom. 9. 13, 22. & 11. 7. 14. 2. & 26. 18. & 32. 9. 1 Pt. 1. 35. 4. 11. 41. 8. & 43. 3, 21. & 60. 1, 2. John, 17. 9. Acts, 20. 28. & 26. 18, 23. Eph. 1. 4, 14. & 5. 8. 25. 1 Thes. 1. 4. Tit. 2. 14. Heb. 13. 12. Ch. 1. 1—5, 21. Rev. 1. 6. & 5. 10. & 20. 6. see ver. 5. † Or a purchased people. ° If. 43. 21. & 62. 3. xcv—c. ciii—cviii. cxv. cxxxv. cxxxvi. cxlv—cl. || Or virtues.

p Exod. 13. 2, 8, 21. & 19. 5. & 23. 22. Deut. 4. 20. & 7. 6. & 10. 15. & 61. 6. & 63. 18, 19. & 60. 20, 21. & 2. 12. Jer. 10. 16. Mal. 3. 17. 1 Thes. 1. 4. Tit. 2. 14. Heb. 13. 12. Ch. 1. 1—5, 21. Rev. 1. 6. & 5. 10. & 20. 6. see ver. 5. † Or a purchased people. ° If. 43. 21. & 62. 3. Zech. 6. 11. Mar. 5. 5, 16. Eph. 1. 6, 12—14. & 3. 21. Ch. 4. 11. Pt.

among them what is superior to both. In Israel there was only a part of one tribe appointed to be priests, and it was unlawful for the rest of the tribe, or for any person of any other of the tribes, to exercise the priest's office; nor could the priests offer sacrifices in any place but the temple: but under the Gospel, not the ministers of the gospel only, but all Christians, are represented as a holy priesthood, who are obliged to offer up the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, and who may offer them as acceptably in one place as another. See ver. 9. The sanctity of this priesthood does not arise from their being anointed with oil, or any solemn installment; neither does it consist in robes and vestments, or in their observation of rites and ceremonies; but in faith and love, in their holy and righteous lives, in their piety towards God, good-will to men, and wise government of themselves, particularly of their passions and appetites. This is the true sanctity wherewith all Christians should be clothed, as Aaron and his sons were with the holy garments, which were for glory and for beauty. Exod. xxviii. 2. Heb. xiii. 15. The allusion to the temple led the apostle of course to speak of the priests; and from the priests it was an easy transition to the sacrifices which they offered in the temple; and so to the spiritual sacrifices of prayer, praise, and obedience, which are all acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, who is the great High-priest over the house of God; and whose intercession alone can recommend to the Father such imperfect services as ours. See Ephes. v. 2.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore—it is contained, &c.*] St. Peter has given us the sense of Isai. xxviii. 16. but not exactly the words, either according to the Hebrew or the LXX.; which was a common way of quoting among the ancients. See the notes on Isaiah.

Ver. 7. *He is precious*] *Is this honour,—* τὴν τιμὴν, That is, “of being built upon that sure foundation, for which you will have no reason to be ashamed.” In using the word τιμὴν, St. Peter seems to have alluded to the word ἄτιμος, *precious or honourable*, which he had made use of, ver. 4, and 6. But to those who reject it, belongs the reproach of the Psalmist, *The stone, &c.* This passage is also quoted Matth. xxi. 42. and Acts iv. 11. The plain meaning of it, as applied to Christ, must be, that though the leading men of the Jewish nation rejected and slew him; yet God raised him from the dead, and exalted him to universal dominion. When important practical truths are revealed with sufficient evidence, to believe and obey them through divine grace, is faith and faithfulness; to reject them is infidelity and disobedience.

Ver. 8. *And a stone of stumbling, &c.*] We render this verse as if it were one continued sentence; but thus violence is done to the text, and the apostle's sense is thrown into obscurity and disorder; which is restored by putting a

full stop after *offence*, and beginning a new sentence thus: *They stumble at the word.* For, observe, the apostle runs a double antithesis between believers and unbelievers: *To you who believe*, says he, it is precious; to them who believe not, and are disobedient, *the stone which the builders rejected, &c. ver. 7. They stumble at the word; (ver. 8.)—but you are a chosen people, &c. ver. 9.* The passage before us is taken from Isai. viii. 14, 15. and is quoted by St. Paul, Rom. ix. 33. This is a quite different image from the last; for Christ is not here compared to a *foundation or corner stone*, but to a hard stone or rock in the course or highway, against which men are apt to stumble and fall; and the swifter they move, or the more heedless they are, the more is the danger of hurting or destroying themselves. We are not to understand the last clause of this verse, as if these persons were appointed of God to reject or obey the Gospel; for how then could it be said that God would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth? 1 Tim. ii. 4. If God appointed the unbelief of the Jewish nation, or of any particular persons, then their unbelief and rejection of the Gospel was complying with the will and appointment of God; and consequently could not be sin, or deserve punishment. From these and the like considerations it is evident, that St. Peter is not here speaking of their being appointed unto unbelief or disobedience, but unto the punishment which their unbelief and disobedience deserved. They were unbelievers of whom he was speaking; persons, who voluntarily and wickedly rejected the gospel, and refused to obey its laws; and therefore it was appointed, that Christ should be to them a *stumbling-block, or a rock*, against which they should dash themselves to their own destruction. Dr. Heylin translates these two verses: *To you, therefore, who believe, he is precious; but with regard to those who are disobedient, this same stone, (which the builders had rejected, and which is made the head of the corner) ver. 8. becomes a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to those who resist the word by their disobedience; to which also they were abandoned.* “The public translation, says he, has *whereunto they were appointed; which does not imply any absolute decree, with regard to those persons, but only the general one against all that are disobedient: for, 1 Thess. v. 9. we read, God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation; and yet they might incur wrath, as the tenor of that epistle, and indeed of all the Scriptures, demonstrates.*”

Ver. 9. *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood,*] This imports them to be of one stock through their new birth; as the Israelites, who were by outward calling the chosen of God, were all the seed of Abraham according to the flesh: so they that truly believe in the Lord Jesus, are all of them, by regeneration, one people. They are of one nation, belonging to the same blessed land of promise, all citizens

him ' who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light :

10 ' Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God : which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* ' as strangers and pilgrims, ' abstain from fleshly lusts, which ' war against the soul ;

12 ' Having your conversation honest

among the Gentiles : that, * ² whereas they speak against you as evil doers, ' they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 ' Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake : whether it be to the king as supreme ;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

* Rom. 9. 21, 23, 24. Gal. 1. 6. 1 Cor. 7. 9. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Phil. 3. 14. Heb. 3. 1. Acts, 26. 18. Eph. 5. 8, 11. Cl. 1. 13. Fl. 119. 18. If. 60. 1, 2. 1 John, 2. 8. & 5. 20. ' Hof. 1. 10. & 2. 23. Rom. 9. 25. Hof. 2. 1. Jer. 3. 20. Gen. 23. 4. Lev. 25. 33. 1 Chr. 19. 19. Pl. 39. 12. & 119. 19. Hcb. 11. 13. Jam. 1. 1. Ch. 1. 1, 17. 1 Cor. 7. 29—31. 2 Cor. 5. 6. Phil. 3. 20. ' Rom. 13. 13, 14. Gal. 5. 16, 20, 21. 2 Cor. 7. 1. Tit. 2. 12. 2 Pet. 3. 11, 14. & 1. 4—8. ' Rom. 7. 23. Gal. 5. 17, 24. Jam. 4. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 22. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10. 1 Ch. 3. 7, 16. R. m. 12. 17. & 13. 13. 2 Cor. 8. 21. Phil. 4. 5. & 2. 15, 16. & 4. 8. ' Or *wherein*. ' Tit. 2. 8. Ch. 3. 16. & 4. 11, 15, 16. Mat. 5. 16. ' Luke, 1. 68. & 19. 44. ' Jer. 27. 12, 17. & 29. 7. Mat. 22. 21. Rom. 13. 1—7. 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. Tit. 3. 1. with 2 Pet. 2. 12. Jude 8. 1 Tim. 6. 1—5.

citizens of the new Jerusalem, yea, all children of the same family, whereof Jesus Christ, the root of Jesse, is the stock, who is the great *King*, and the great *HIGH-PRIEST*. And thus they are a *royal priesthood*. There is no devolving of his royalty or priesthood on any other, as it is in himself; for his proper dignity is supreme and incommunicable, and there is no succession in his order; but they who are descended from him, do derive from him by that new original this double dignity, in that way in which they are capable of it, to be likewise kings and priests, as he is both.

An holy nation, &c.] "Ye are also a holy society formed into one spiritual body, like a nation collected together under Christ your Lord and King, sanctified by his Spirit, governed by his laws, and embarked in the same common cause and interest: and ye are a peculiar people, that, suitably to your dignities, privileges, blessings, and obligations, ye might both really and intentionally display the glory of divine virtues and perfections; and might shew forth, in word and deed, his honour and praise, who has called you by his grace, and delivered you from the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and misery, in which you were formerly involved; and has brought you into the most wonderful and affecting light of truth and grace, holiness and comfort, which he has caused to shine into your hearts: (2 Cor. iv. 6.)"

Ver. 10. Which in time past, &c.] "Who, for ages past, were divorced from the visible church; (Jer. iii. 8. and Hof. i. 6, 9.) but now, by the grace of the gospel, through Jesus Christ, are brought into the sweet and precious relation of a covenant people to him; and have found mercy with him, unto the forgiveness of your sins, and the renovation of your natures, according to Hosea's prophecy, ch. ii. 23. And this, in a higher sense, may be said of those *Gentiles* among you, who are now brought to the faith of Christ."

Ver. 11. I beseech you, as strangers, &c.] "In consideration therefore of these distinguished favours which God has bestowed upon you, I earnestly entreat and exhort you, my dear brethren, to look upon yourselves as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, who are travelling onward to a better country: and I beseech you, as

"such, to renounce and keep clear of all those inward workings of sensual inclinations, inordinate affections, and desires after earthly things, which arise from the corruption of nature, and exert themselves by the body; and are contrary to the liberty, peace and honour, purity and holiness of your renewed souls; and are engaged in a perpetual war against them, and do their utmost to defile, disturb, enslave, and destroy them."

Ver. 12. Having your conversation honest,] The word *Kαλῶς* does not signify barely being *honest*, or doing justice between man and man; but *good, virtuous, or amiable*; and refers to men's whole *behaviour*. These Christians lived among the Gentiles, or in heathen countries, and were more narrowly watched and observed, because of their difference in matters of religion. Many were the calumnies which the Heathens raised against the Christians. St. Peter, therefore, for this reason among many others of infinite importance, exhorted them to behave well, that they might give no ground for the enemy to reproach them, and at the same time might recommend their holy religion by their exemplary and holy lives. The *Jews* did not behave well among the Gentiles, but were almost everywhere detested; the *Christians* were hitherto commonly reputed a *sect* of the *Jews*: There was, therefore, great reason to exhort the Christians to distinguish themselves; that their lives, upon the most narrow scrutiny, might appear to be formed by other rules, and might turn the detraction of their enemies into esteem and praise. By the day of visitation, some understand that *signal time*, when God designed to visit the nation of the Jews for their many and great sins,—particularly for murdering our Lord, and persecuting his disciples; and when, the Jews perishing with such an exemplary destruction, the persevering Christians should escape in so remarkable a manner, as to lead attentive Heathens to glorify God for delivering persons whose lives upon a careful examination were found so very much to excel. But others, with more propriety, understand it of that season in which the gospel was preached among them; whereby they were visited with the offers of pardon and salvation.

Ver. 13. 14. Submit yourselves to every ordinance, &c.] See Rom. xiii. 1, &c. This epistle, we may recollect,

15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men :

16 As free, and not † using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

† Tit 2. 8. Ch. 3. 1, 16. & 4. 15, 16. Phil. 2. 15, 16. Mat. 5. 16 & 10. 16. 13. Jam. 1. 15, 25. & 2. 17. 2 Pet. 2. 10, 19. Jude, 4. 8.

† Or *having*. John, 8. 32, 36. Rom. 6. 18, 22. 1 Cor. 7. 22. Gal. 5. 1,

is directed to the strangers scattered throughout divers countries; for in the ninth year of the emperor Claudius, the *Jews* (under which name the Christians were comprehended, as is plain from Acts xviii.) were banished Rome for tumults and seditions occasioned by their disputes. This banishment is mentioned by Suetonius, and the inspired writer of the Acts. St. Peter, therefore, in this epistle, was necessarily to mention and press *obedience*, the want of which in the Jews had occasioned the present distress of so many Christians. Thus, then, he exhorts his scattered flock, ver. 11. 12. *Dearh beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers; that is, particularly as disobedient subjects; they may, by your good works which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.* Then follows the general precept: *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, or to governors, &c.* How St. Peter's original words came to be rendered *every ordinance of man*, is not easy to be understood. The word *Κανον*, rendered *ordinance*, signifies sometimes *a creature*, and the adjective *ανθρωπιν* joined with it, signifies *human*, which we have rendered *of man*: accordingly St. Peter's doctrine is plain; "Submit yourselves to every human creature; or to every man, for the Lord's sake." And that this is St. Peter's true meaning, will appear from the whole tenor of his discourse. It is usual with the best writers to set down the doctrine in general words, and then to reduce particulars: this is St. Peter's method in the place before us: "Submit, says he, yourselves to every human creature." This is the general point. He immediately descends to particulars: he begins with the king, as supreme; goes from him to governors appointed by him: ver. 18. he comes to servants; when he has done with them, he goes to wives. All these particulars are included in the general rule. The expression of *doing well* is appropriated both by St. Paul and St. Peter, to denote the good of *obedience*, in opposition to the evil spirit which sets all government at nought. The promise made to obedience is in these words, *Thou shalt have praise of the same.* What is meant by *praise*, may be understood by considering, that as it is opposed to *punishment*, it must denote *protection* and *encouragement*, which are the only proper rewards that good subjects in general can expect from their governors; and so it signifies in the place before us. The Roman governors had the power of life and death in such provinces as those mentioned, ch. i. 1. and therefore there is the exactest propriety in the stile. If we further compare St. Peter and St. Paul together, and consider the subject they were upon, we shall find it necessary to take the expression of *doing well* in the restrained sense above mentioned: for what other good could they mean, consistently with their argument and subject? For the *evil thing* which they had

then to contend with, was an opposition to all government in general; the good, therefore, they would recommend, was necessarily submission in general. In the same restrained sense St. Peter uses these expressions, ver. 12, 15, 20. We meet with the same word again, ch. iii. 15. where St. Peter having mentioned the duty of submission which Sarah paid to Abraham, exhorts wives to follow her example, whose daughters they were; which he explains, by *being in subjection to their own husbands*: so that there can be no doubt of the use of the word in this place.

Ver. 15. *Ye may put to silence*] *Ye may bridle-in.* The original *μυσειν*, is used for putting on a muzzle, as the ancients used to do upon oxen, horses, and mules, as well as upon dogs. Fierce calumniators and zealous prosecutors, who were unacquainted with the Christian doctrine, and not possessed of the meek and benign Spirit of Christ, were not improperly considered as *animals*, which upon some occasions required to be *muzzled*. By the *foolish men* here spoken of, Whitby understands the Heathen; who might be ready foolishly to judge of Christians by the behaviour of the turbulent Jews; and so might represent them as a people naturally averse from subjection to kings, as Josephus says of his own nation.

Ver. 16. *As free*] The Gentiles, by becoming Christians, were freed from the bondage of sin; they were likewise free from subjection to the Mosaic law: they were become the *Lord's people*, and *freemen*. Such privileges might possibly have exalted their minds, so as to have made them look upon it as an indignity to obey Heathen magistrates. St. Peter, therefore, recommends a due subjection to the Heathen emperor, and such as ruled under him; notwithstanding they were the Lord's people and freemen, and ought to behave as such. The word *Κακια* generally signifies *malice*, sometimes *wickedness* in general; but here it seems to be understood more particularly of *sedition* or *rebellion*. The word *Ἐπικάλυμμα* does not signify a *cloak*, but any *covering*. Beza thinks that it is here an allusion to the ancient custom of slaves who had been manumitted, walking about with a cap upon their heads. These Gentiles, by becoming *Christians*, had been lately made the *Lord's freemen*; but they were not to make the *cap of freedom* a pretence for sedition and rebellion. Josephus has in many places taken notice of the Jews rebelling against the Romans under this very pretence, that they were a *free people*. See John viii. 33. It was their attempt to throw off subjection to the Romans, which brought on their destruction; and that war, it is probable, was now actually begun. The *Christians* were *free*; but it was not inconsistent with their Christian liberty to obey civil magistrates, whether supreme or subordinate. They were not free from the *law of nations*, any more than from the *law of Christ*;—though, in this respect, *the servants of God*. That the freedom of Christians was such as was consistent with

17 † Honour all *men*. † Love the brotherhood. † Fear God. Honour the king.

18 † Servants, be subject to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

19 † For this *is* † thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering

wrongfully.

20 For what glory *is it*, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this *is* * acceptable with God.

21 † For even hereunto were ye called

† Or *offence*. † Ch. c. c. Rom. 13. 7. & 12. 10. Phil. 2. 3. † Rom. 12. 10. & 13. 8. Gal. 6. 10. Eph. 4. 3. Heb. 13. 1. Ch. i. 22. & 3. 8. & 4. 8. 2 Pet. 1. 7. 1 John, 3. 11—17, 23. & 4. 20. † Pf. 133. 10. Prov. 1. 7. & 23. 17. & 24. 1. Eccl. 3. 2. Mat. 22. 21. see ver. 13, 14. † Eph. 6. 5—7. Col. 3. 22—25. 1 Tim. 6. 1—3. Tit. 2. 9, 10. 1 Cor. 7. 20—24. † Mat. 5. 10. 2 Tim. 1. 12. Ch. 3. 14, 17. & 4. 14—16. Ver. 20. † Or *thank*, or *grace*. † Or *thank*, &c. † Mat. 10. 33. & 16. 24. John, 16. 33. Acts, 14. 22. 1 Thel. 3. 3. 2 Tim. 3. 12.

with their being the *servants of God*, is intimated, also, Rom. vi. 16.—22. 1 Cor. vii. 22. When, upon embracing the Gospel, they were blessed with Christian liberty, they were thereby laid under stricter obligations to render honour and tribute to whom they were due; though to whom they were due the Gospel determines not absolutely, but leaves that to be determined by circumstances, and the law of nations. Dr. Heylin observes, upon this and the preceding verse, “It is wrong not to stop the mouth of calumny, when that can be done by a prudent innocence. I suppose, therefore, the meaning of ver. 16. to be, “Free as you are from human regards, and under no restraint upon what men say of you,—for you know they are ignorant and foolish,—yet you must not make this notion of Christian liberty a cloak or pretence for neglecting to obviate, as far as you can, their perverse censures by a discreet behaviour: free as you are from men, yet you are the *servants of God*; and his service obliges you to give no needless offence.”

Ver. 17. *Fear God*] See Prov. xxiv. 21. Perhaps no finer or stronger instances of the laconic stile are to be found, than in this place. It is remarkable, that they are required to *honour the emperor*, though so great a persecutor, and of so abandoned a character as *Nero* himself. But St. Peter did not mean that they should obey any of his wicked and unlawful injunctions; (Acts, v. 29.) that they should betray their country, or give up any of their just rights and privileges, when they could preserve them. He only intimated, that being Christians altered nothing in their civil rights or duties; and therefore, under that pretence of their being the Lord's people, and the disciples of Jesus, they were not to presume that they had any new civil rights or immunities granted them.

Ver. 18.] *To the poor the Gospel was preached*; and many of the inferior sort, who were free from the incumbrance of riches, and the prejudices of the learned and mighty, embraced Christianity. Among the rest many *servants* or *slaves* became the disciples of Jesus; for the Gospel was calculated for an universal blessing. The behaviour of those servants or slaves toward their masters was very likely to give a good or bad idea of Christianity. St. Peter was anxious for their behaving well, and earnestly recommends to them a prudent conduct, as St. Paul had often done with the like view. Ver. 18—25.

Servants] The word *οἰκέται* signifies *domestic servants* in general, whether *hired servants* or *slaves*; but the apostle seems to restrict it to *slaves*, (and to mean those, whom

St. Paul has called by the term *δουλοῖ*, Ephes. vi. 5. Col. iii. 22. 1 Tim. vi. 1.) by his using the word *δουλοῖ* for *masters*; that is, such masters as had an absolute right and property in their servants. Some would understand the words *with all fear*, of the fear of God; but it seems rather to mean that fear and respect which was due to their masters. The like admonition is thus expressed in the Epistle of *Barnabas*, c. 19. “Be ye subject unto the Lord, and unto inferior masters, as the representatives of God, with reverence and fear.”

Ver. 19. *For this is thankworthy*] *Graceful*.

Ver. 20. *For what glory is it*, &c.] It may be said, “Is it no glory for a man who has done a fault to take his punishment patiently?—Would not resistance or clamour, nay, even murmuring or impatience, in such a case, be wrong? And consequently must not patience and submission be a virtue? When God punishes us for our sins, is not our patience unto Him a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour through Christ! And in proportion, the patience of a slave, when justly punished by his master, must have been preferable to the contrary behaviour, and in some degree praise-worthy.” The true solution is, that St. Peter is not here speaking absolutely, but comparatively; that is, “There is very little praise in a guilty man's suffering patiently the due reward of his deed; in comparison of an innocent person's suffering patiently, and out of a conscientious regard to the will of God, such injurious treatment as he may meet with among men.” The Syriac version renders the last clause of this verse, *Then shall your reward or praise with God exceed or abound*: intimating that it is in some degree praise-worthy, to suffer with patience such punishment as men have deserved; but not to be compared with the much greater virtue, of suffering patiently such injuries as they have not deserved. The emperor Antonius quotes it as an excellent saying of Antisthenes, “That it is truly royal to do good, and to be reproached.”

Ver. 21. *For even hereunto were ye called*] That is, “You were called to suffer for righteousness' sake, when ye became the disciples of Jesus.” See Matth. v. 10, &c. xvi. 24, &c. *Because Christ also suffered for us*: that is, for us Christians in general, Jews or Gentiles, bond or free. It is observable, that upon the mention of the name of Christ, the apostle falls into a noble and animated digression to the end of the chapter; afterwards he continues to pursue his exhortation to relative duties. The word *ὑπογραμμὴν*, rendered *example*, signifies “the exact model”

¹ because Christ also suffered † for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps :

22 ^m Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth :

23 ⁿ Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ;

but ‡ committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously :

24 ^o Who his own self bare our sins in his own body ¶ on the tree ; ^p that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness : by whose stripes ye were healed.

¹ Ch. 3. 18. Ver. 21—14. John, 13. 15. Mat. 16. 24. Phil. 2. 5. † John, 2. 6. † Cor. 11. 1. Eph. 5. 2. † Some read *for you*. ^m If. 53. 9. Luke, 23. 41. John, 8. 46. & 14. 30. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Heb. 4. 15. & 7. 26, 27. & 9. 28. & 1. 19. † John, 2. 1. & 3. 5. ⁿ Mt. 27. 39—44. Luke, 22. 34—46. John, 8. 48, 49. Heb. 12. 3. If. 50. 6—9. † Or *committed his cause*. ^o See ch. 1. 19. If. 53. 4—6, 11, 12. Mt. 8. 17. Heb. 9. 28. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Rom. 8. 3. Mat. xxvi. xxvii. Luke xxii. xxiii. Gal. 3. 13. ¶ Or *it*. ^p Luke, 2. 74, 75. Rom. 6. 2, 9, 10—12. & 7. 4, 6. Tit. 2. 14. Gal. 2. 20. John, 7. 19. Eph. 5. 25, 26. If. 53. 5.

“ model of any curious or regular work ;” here it signifies that exact pattern of holiness which Christ hath set his disciples, that they may copy after it. The example of our Lord is recommended John xiii. 15. Philip. ii. 5. 1 John ii. 6. But in what are we to imitate him ? Not in all his actions ; not in walking upon the water, commanding the winds and waves, miraculously curing all manner of diseases, or raising the dead ; no, nor in making new laws for his Church, drawing up new doctrines or new articles of faith, or laying down new rules of worship, new terms of ministerial or Christian communion, or precepts concerning practice. This seems to be the clue whereby we may be led to distinguish between what is imitable in the example of Christ, and what is not so : namely, “ What the rules of Christianity, of Scripture “ and right reason have made our duty, in such things the “ example of our Lord ought to excite us to the practice “ thereof.” For the example of Christ alone has not made any thing our duty, which is not so upon some other account ; or, in other words, his example is not so properly a rule of duty, as an alluring motive to the practice of what is our duty. Piety, benevolence, and self-government are the three grand branches of our duty ; and in all these we ought to set our Lord’s pattern before us, and copy after it. And in no particular have we more occasion for such an example, than in a patient *suffering for righteousness’ sake* ; the virtue here particularly recommended. The phrase *that you might tread in his steps*, is a very strong and lively figure, to denote how closely and carefully Christians should imitate the example of their Lord. See Rom. iv. 12. 2 Cor. xii. 18.

Ver. 22. *Neither was guile, &c.*] In the Eastern languages, *righteousness* and *truth* are put one for another ; and so are *wickedness* and *falsehood*, or *deceit*. By *guile* therefore we may here understand *wickedness* in general, but more especially in this connexion, *lying* and *deceit*. If Christ’s example have its genuine influence upon us, there will be *no guile found in our mouths*.

Ver. 23. *Who, when he was reviled, &c.*] Our Lord, during the course of his teaching and ministry, pronounced dreadful woes and denunciations against the wicked and hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees : but when he came to suffer, he forbore, lest his denunciations should be thought to proceed, not from a love of truth and righteousness, but from anger and hatred, and resentment of the cruel usage which he met with. Amidst all the barbarous treatment which he suffered, he never uttered one impatient or threatening word.

Ver. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins, &c.*] That which

is deepest in the heart is generally most in the mouth ; that which abounds within, runs over most by the tongue or pen. When men light upon the speaking of that subject which possesses the affection, they can hardly be taken off, or drawn from it again. Thus the apostles in their writings, when they make mention any way of Christ suffering for us, love to dwell on it, as that which they take most delight to speak of ; such delicacy and sweetness is in it to a spiritual taste, that they like to keep it in their mouth, and are never out of their theme, when they insist on Jesus Christ, though they have but named him by occasion of some other doctrine ; for He is the great subject of all they have to say.

Thus here the apostle had spoke of Christ in the foregoing words very fitly to this present subject, setting him before Christian servants, and all suffering Christians, as their complete example, both in point of much suffering, and of perfect innocence and patience in suffering. And he had expressed their engagement to study and follow that example ; yet he cannot leave it so, but having said that all those his sufferings, wherein he was so exemplary, were for us, as a chief consideration, for which we should study to be like him, he returns to that again, and enlarges upon it in words partly the same, partly very near those of that Evangelist among the prophets, Isaiah, liii. 4.

And it suits very well with his main scope to press this point, as giving both very much strength and sweetness to the exhortation ; for surely it is most reasonable, that we willingly conform to Him in suffering, who had never been an example of suffering, nor subject at all to sufferings, nor in any degree capable of them, but for us ; and it is most comfortable, in *these light sufferings of this present moment*, to consider, that he has freed us, if faithful, from the sufferings of eternity, by himself suffering in our stead in the fulness of time.

That Jesus Christ is, in doing and suffering, our supreme and matchless example, and that he came to be so, is a truth : but that he is nothing further, and came for no other end, is, you see, a high point of falsehood ; for how should man be enabled to learn and follow that example of obedience, unless there were more in Christ ; and what would become of that great reckoning of disobedience which man stands guilty of ? No, these are too narrow ; he came to *bear our sins in his own body on the tree*, and for this purpose had a body fitted for him and given him to bear this burden ; to do this as the will of his Father ; to stand for us instead of all offerings and sacrifices ; and by *that will*, says the apostle, *we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*, Heb. x. 10.

25 For ye were ^a as sheep going astray ; but Bishop of your souls.
are now returned unto ^r the Shepherd and

^a Pf. 119. 176. If. 53. 6. Jer. 40. 6. Ezek. 34. 16. Luke, 15. 4. Mat. 18. 12. ^r Ch. 5. 4. Ezek. 34. 23. & 37. 24. If. 40. 11. John, 10. 11, 14, 16. Heb. 13. 10. Rev. 7. 17.

This was his business, not only to rectify sinful man by his example, but to redeem him by his blood. *He was a teacher come from God.* As a prophet he teaches us the way of life, and, as the best and greatest of prophets, is perfectly like his doctrine; and his actions, (which in all teachers is the liveliest part of doctrine,) his carriage in life and death, is our great pattern and instruction: but what is said of his forerunner, is more eminently true of Christ; he is *a Prophet, and more than a prophet*, a Priest satisfying justice for us, and a King conquering sin and death in us; an example indeed, but more than an example, our *sacrifice, and our life, and all in all.* It is our duty to *walk as he walked*, to make him the pattern of our steps, 1 John, ii. 6.: but our comfort and salvation lies in this, that *he is the propitiation for our sins*, ver. 2. So in the first chapter of that epistle, ver. 7. *we are to walk in the light, as he is in the light*: but for all our walking, we have need of that which follows; that bears the great weight, the *blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.*

Ver. 25. *Bishop of your souls.*] The word Ἐπίσκοπος, here translated *bishop*, signifies “an overseer or inspector of any person or business;” and it is added to the word *shepherd*, to strengthen the expression concerning Christ’s fidelity and watchfulness over his people. See Isai. xl. 1. 11. liii. 6. Luke, xv. 4.

Inferences.—Let us examine our own hearts seriously and impartially, with respect to those branches of the Christian temper, and those views of the Christian life, which are exhibited in this excellent portion of holy writ. Let us especially inquire, in what manner, and to what purposes, we receive the word of God. Is it with the simplicity of babes, or children? do we desire it, as they desire the breast? do we lay aside those evil affections of mind, which would incapacitate us for receiving it in a becoming manner? And does it conduce to our spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace? have we indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious? do we experimentally know, that to the true believer the Redeemer is inestimably precious? have we indeed come to him, as to a living stone; and, notwithstanding all the neglect and contempt with which he may be treated by many infatuated and miserable men, by wretches who are bent on their own destruction, do we regard, and build on him as our great and only foundation? and do we feel that spiritual life diffused through our souls, which is the genuine consequence of a real and vital union with him?—If these be our happy circumstances, we shall not be ashamed or confounded.

Are we conscious of our high dignity, as we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people? are our hearts suitably affected with a sense of the divine goodness, in calling us to be a people, who once were not a people; and us beloved, who were comparatively not beloved; in leading us from the deplorable darkness of ignorance and vice, in which our ancestors were involved, into the marvellous light of his gospel; yea, in

dissipating those thick clouds of prejudice and error, which once veiled this sacred light from our eyes, that its enlivening beams might break in upon our souls? And are we now shewing forth his praises? are we now offering to him spiritual sacrifices, in humble dependence on Christ, our great High-priest, who continually intercedes for our acceptance with God? Then shall we indeed make our calling and our election sure, and shall ere long appear in his heavenly temple, both as kings and priests unto God, to participate of our Redeemer’s glory, to reign with him, and minister to him for ever.

Let us be careful, in the mean time, to remember, that we are strangers and sojourners on earth, as all our fathers were; and that our days in this transitory life are but as a shadow that declineth; and let us learn to regard the appetites of our animal nature, and the interests of this mortal life, with a noble superiority, reflecting, for how little a space of time they will solicit our attention. And as for fleshly lusts, let us consider them as making war against the soul; arming ourselves with that resolution and fortitude which are necessary to prevent their gaining a victory over us; which would be, at once, our disgrace and our ruin. There is an additional argument to be derived, for a strenuous opposition to them, from our circumstances and situation in the present world; where there are so many enemies to our holy religion, who cannot be more effectually silenced than by our good conversation. Let it be, therefore, our principal care to cut off from them the occasion of speaking against us as evil doers; and by exhibiting a clear and unexceptionable pattern of good words in our daily conversation, let us invite and allure them to improve the day of their visitation, and glorify their Father who is in heaven.

Again. As the honour of God is eminently concerned in the regard shewn by his people to the *relative duties*, let us, out of a due respect to *that*, pay a very careful and diligent attention to *them*; that the ignorance of foolish men, of those who reproach our good conversation in Christ, may be utterly silenced. Let magistrates especially be revered, and, in all things lawful, obeyed. And if *they* desire to secure reverence to their persons and authority, let them remember the end and design of their office, namely, “to be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise and encouragement to the regular and virtuous. And let us, who rejoice in our liberty, that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, be very careful, that it be not abused as a cloke of licentiousness; but as we would manifest our fear and reverence of God, let us remember to honour the king; yea, to render to every man, and every station and character, the esteem and respect which it justly claims; feeling, at the same time, the constraints of a *peculiar affection* to all those who are united to us by the endearing character of our *brethren in the Lord*.—Should men who fill superior stations and relations in life, not be so regular, and without exception, in their private and public deportment as they ought, let us perform our duty, not

C H A P. III.

He teacheth the duty of wives and husbands to each other; exhorting all men to unity and love, and to suffer persecution patiently: he declareth also the benefits of Christ toward the old world.

[Anno Domini 65.]

LIKewise, ^a ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands, that, if any obey

^a Gen. 3. 16. Eph. 5. 22, 24. Col. 3. 18. Titus, 2. 5. Phil. 2. 15, 16. & 3. 8, 9.

^c Ch. 2. 11, 12. Eph. 5. 33.

^b 1 Cor. 7. 16. & 9. 19—22. Mat. 5. 16. & 18. 13. Prov. 11. 30. James, 5. 20.

^d 1 Tim. 2. 9. Titus, 2. 3. 11. 3. 16—24. Zeph. 1. 8.

not only to the gentle and obliging, but to the perverse and froward; remembering our Lord's example, which was set before us that we might follow his steps. And let his marvellous love, in bearing our sins in his own sacred body on the tree, endear both his example and his precepts to our souls, and constrain us to a holy conformity to him.

Since he, who is the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, came on the most gracious and condescending errand of seeking and saving that which was lost, of gathering us into his fold, who were wandering in the way to perdition; let us shew so much gratitude and wisdom, as not to wander any more; but as we regard our security and our very life, let us keep our *Shepherd* in our eye, submit ourselves to his pastoral inspection, and cheerfully follow him in whatsoever path he shall condescend to conduct us.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle proceeds,

1. To exhort the Hebrews to shew a temper suitable to their profession. *Wherefore laying aside all malice, every thing spiteful, envious, and revengeful; and all guile, every thing deceitful in word or behaviour; and hypocrisies, whether in the profession of religion towards God, or in pretences of respect and friendship towards men; and envies, repining at the prosperity of others; and all evil speakings, which proceed from those vile tempers in the heart; in opposition to all these things, as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, the pure unadulterated gospel, that ye may grow thereby in every divine and holy temper, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: if so be, or so far as ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious, experimentally proving the riches of his mercy, and having begun to enjoy a sweet favour of that grace, which, though but a taste compared with what it shall be to the faithful, is yet so precious and reviving.* Note; (1.) All malice, guile, hypocrisy, and slander, are direct contradictions to the Christian character. (2.) By nature, all evil cleaves to us closer than our garments; but it must be put off as filthy rags, if we mean with comfort to appear in the presence of God. (3.) The word of God supplies milk for babes, and strong meat for men; and they who feel an appetite for it, verily shall be fed and nourished up in the words of sound doctrine. (4.) The grace which is in Jesus Christ, is rich and free to the poorest and most miserable sinner; and to those who have tasted of it, he will indeed be precious.

not the word, ^b they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

2 While they behold ^c your chaste conversation, *coupled* with fear.

3 ^d Whose adorning, let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel:

2. He described that blessed Jesus, the true foundation of the sinner's hope, of whose grace they had been made partakers. *To whom coming by faith, as unto a living stone, even Christ, who is the only foundation, everlastingly durable, and never to be shaken; a living stone, the head of vital influence, and communicating to all his members life and strength; disallowed indeed of men, rejected and slighted by the Jewish rulers, and all unbelievers, who will not come to him that they may have life; but chosen of God, and precious, appointed by him to bear the massy structure of his church, as most excellent in himself, and most able to exalt the glory of God, and to secure the salvation of his faithful saints.*—Coming therefore to him, *ye also, as lively stones, animated by virtue of union with him, are built up a spiritual house, in which God the Spirit is pleased to take up his blest abode; an holy priesthood, consecrated for God's immediate service, and devoted to his glory; not to offer up the blood of beasts, but the better spiritual sacrifices of your bodies, souls, and spirits, in prayer and praise, which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* Note; (1.) Every child of God is the temple of the Trinity, where he abidingly dwells. (2.) They who reject Christ as their foundation, must build on the sand, and be swept away by the deluge of wrath. (3.) All Christians are consecrated as priests to God, and must approve their peculiar relation to him by their unreserved devotedness to his service.

3. He supports what he had advanced by the testimony of Isaiah. *Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, with wonder, love, and praise, behold, I lay in Zion, in my holy mountain, a chief corner-stone, the great Messiah, on whom all his believing people's hopes are built; elect and chosen for this blessed purpose, to unite Jews and Gentiles, and the whole body of the faithful, in one glorious church; precious in my sight, and who is also above all things dear to those who are grounded on him as their foundation: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded, having confidence through a Redeemer's blood to approach a throne of grace. Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious; Jesus is inexpressively amiable in your eyes; you count your relation to him the highest honour, and firmly trust your everlasting hopes upon him: but unto them which be disobedient and unbelieving, as another scripture observes, the stone which the builders, the Jewish priests and rulers, disallowed and rejected, the same, as was foretold, is made the head of the corner, exalted to the greatest honour, and setting up his gospel church in defiance of their enmity and opposition. And, as Isaiah in another*

4 But ^o let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even* the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

^o Rom. 2. 29. & 7. 22. Luke, 17. 21. Pl. 45. 13. 2 Cor. 4. 16. Titus, 2. 11, 12. 1 Sam. 16. 7. Pl. 51. 6.

place prophecies, he is become a *stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word*, and through pride and prejudice will not bear the humbling manner in which the Messiah appeared, and the doctrines which he taught, *being disobedient and infidel, having rejected him as the promised hope of Israel, and split upon this rock; whereunto also they were appointed*: because they would obstinately and wilfully stand out against the gospel, they were appointed by God to stumble and fall at that Stone, to be bruised and ruined by that means, to be destroyed among the crucifiers of the Messiah, and condemned with them hereafter; it being just with God, that they who wilfully reject the gospel, and of course receive no benefit from it, should, for their obstinacy, be condemned, and so be the worse for it. *Note*; (1.) Christ is indeed precious to the believer, so precious, that, compared with the excellency of the knowledge of him, he counts all things beside but dung and dross. (2.) They who disbelieve the gospel, and disobey God's word, rush on their own ruin, and must suffer shipwreck in eternity.

4. He reminds them of the rich and invaluable blessings and privileges which in the Redeemer they had obtained. *But ye are a chosen generation, elect, called, invited to infinitely greater privileges than those which the visible church of Israel enjoyed; a royal priesthood having an union from the Holy One, and made kings and priests unto God, Rev. i. 6. victorious over your spiritual foes, and separated for God; an holy nation, consecrated to the Lord, and in spirit and temper conformed to his image; a peculiar people, in a nobler sense than ever Israel was of old, called to the highest dignity, and enriched with the most distinguishing blessings; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who, by his grace, hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light of gospel truth, brought from the cloudy dispensation of legal institutions, or from the still darker dispensation of Gentilism, into that bright day, which the Sun of righteousness makes, arising with healing in his wings. Which in time past were not a people, having been disowned and divorced from God, in a national sense, (see Hosea, i. 9, 10. ii. 23. and the Annotations,) but are now the people of God, through Jesus admitted experimentally into the gospel church, and acknowledged as the Lord's: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy; even pardon, grace, and all the privileges of the gospel.*

2dly, While they are in the flesh, the best of men have need to be warned and exhorted to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. The apostle therefore admonishes them,

1. To guard against all worldly and carnal affections. *Dearlly beloved, I beseech you, as becomes strangers and pilgrims, for such you profess yourselves to be upon the earth, abstain from fleshly lusts, subduing every inordinate appetite and every covetous desire, which war against the soul, and threaten its defilement and destruction; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, adorning your profession by every thing commendable and excellent; that, whereas*

they speak against you as evil-doers, and misrepresent you as a wicked, refractory, and lawless people, they may be confuted by your good works which they shall behold, be ashamed of their unjust aspersions, and compelled to glorify God in the day of visitation, either when in the day of judgment he shall punish them for their ill usage of you; or, when their hearts are turned by his grace to the wisdom of the just, and he leads them to approve and imitate your good conversation.

2. To be obedient to magistrates. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, under whatever form of government you live, or whoever they be whom the divine Providence sets over you; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him, and bear his commission, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well; from whom faithful and obedient subjects having nothing to fear, have every thing to hope for. For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, by your loyalty and cheerful submission to the civil government, confuting the calumnies of those who would brand you as seditious; but as free indeed from the tyranny of sin, Satan, and the curse of the law, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, to cover any treasonable design, or other malignant evil; but as the servants of God, conscientiously observant of his holy will in all things, and obedient to magistrates not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.*

3. He adds four short but important precepts. *Honour all men according to their rank and station. Love the brotherhood, high or low, rich or poor; bear them an unfeigned regard as members of Christ, shew it in every act of kindness to their bodies and their souls. Fear God with all reverence, and filial awe of offending. Honour the king, the sovereign power of your country, by whatever name distinguished, as God's representative, and governing under him.*

3dly, As the Jews very hardly bore a foreign yoke as a nation, they were also unwilling to submit to any Gentile masters; and many of those of them who believed in Christ, were persuaded by their Judaizing teachers, to think that they owed no obedience to unbelieving masters. To correct so dangerous an imagination, the apostle,

1. Inculcates the duty of servants. *Be subject to your masters with all fear and reverence, and be obedient to all their lawful commands; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward, if such be your lot to be placed under their power. For this is thank-worthy, a matter of real commendation, and a gracious gift of God, if a man's conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully, and bearing patiently the ill usage of a cruel master, to whom he has given no just cause of provocation. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? this can bring no credit to your religion; you receive but the just reward of your deeds. But if, when ye do well, faithful to your trust, and true to your profession, and*

5 ' For after this manner in the old time adorned themselves, being in subjection unto the holy women also, who trusted in God, their own husbands :

† 1 Sam. 1. 2, 10. Titus, 2. 3. with Deut. 14. 12. & 31. 7.

suffer for it, that is, for your conscientious regard to God and his service, ye take it patiently, with all meekness, and without murmuring, this is acceptable with God, and a sure proof of his grace in your hearts. Note ; (1.) The spirit of independence, which is in men, hardly brooks subjection, and correction still less. (2.) Patient suffering for well-doing, is our distinguished honour. (3.) Though the duty of servants is submission, yet their guilt is not the less who abuse their authority over them; and they will find a Master shortly, who will call them to account, with whom there is no respect of persons.

2. He enforces what he had enjoined with the most powerful arguments. *For even hereunto were ye called,—the cross which the Christian must be content to bear: and we should the more readily take it up, because Christ also suffered for us as our substitute, and to make atonement for us, for the meanest servant as well as for the highest of the sons of men; leaving us an example of patience and long-suffering under all the most cruel and unjust treatment which he met with, that ye should follow his steps, and be conformed to his blessed pattern; who, grievously as he suffered, yet did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; his bitterest enemies could not so much as fix upon him the shadow of a crime; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but observed an admirable silence, as the sheep before her shearers is dumb: when he suffered, he threatened not, nor discovered the least anger at his tormentors; but committed himself and his cause to him that judgeth righteously, and to whom vengeance belongeth: who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, submitting, as our surety, with his own blood to pay the penalty due to our iniquities; that we, being dead to sin, as crucified with him, should live unto righteousness, quickened by his Spirit unto newness of life: by whose stripes ye were healed; and the deadly wounds of your souls, far worse than those which the most cruel masters can make in your bodies, were cured by the sovereign balm of that Blood which streamed from his scourgings and flowed from his side. For ye were as sheep going astray, foolish, disobedient, deceived, in time past; but are now by grace recovered, and returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls, the blessed and adored Jesus. Note ; (1.) Christ's example should animate us with cheerfulness to take up every cross which in his providence he is pleased to lay upon us. (2.) Our sufferings, however cruel and unjust, will never be an excuse for our impatience under them, or for any anger toward the instruments of them, however wicked and unreasonable they may be. By nature, by practice, we have all gone astray. Reader, art thou then returning by faith in the atoning blood to the great Shepherd of our souls? art thou under his government, and dost thou tread in the footsteps of his flock?*

C H A P. III.

THAT the brethren might know how to behave in the various relations of life, the apostle, in this chapter, first of

all commanded the Christian women in Pontus, &c. who were married, to obey their own husbands, although they were Heathens; that, by their cheerful submissive behaviour, they might allure their husbands to embrace the gospel, ver. 1.—when they found that it had such a happy influence on the temper and behaviour of their wives, ver. 2.—With respect to their dress, the apostle ordered all the women who professed the gospel, to adorn their minds with the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, rather than their bodies with ornaments of gold, and silver, and costly apparel, ver. 3, 4. proposing to them the example of the godly women in ancient times, who adorned their minds with the female virtues, being subject to their own husbands, ver. 5.—such as Sarah, who obeyed Abraham, and shewed how greatly she respected him by calling him her Lord, ver. 6.

Then turning his discourse to husbands, the apostle ordered them to live with their wives, in the performance of all the duties of the married state, suitably to the more enlarged views which the gospel gave them of their duties: and in the treatment of their wives, to have a regard to the weakness of their bodily frame, ver. 7.—Next, addressing the disciples in general, he ordered them in their intercourse with one another, to be sympathizing, tender-hearted, and courteous, ver. 8.—never returning evil for evil, nor railing for railing; but, on the contrary, blessing; that they may obtain the blessing of inheriting the heavenly country, according to Christ's promise, ver. 9.—and David's declaration concerning those who desire to enjoy life, and see good days, ver. 10, 11.—He told them farther, that the divine protection is promised to the righteous; but that the anger of God is threatened against the wicked, ver. 12.—Besides, to forgive our enemies, is the way to disarm them, and restrain them from hurting us, ver. 13.—Then returning to the subject of suffering, he told them, that if they suffered for righteousness' sake, they were happy, as Christ declared, Matt. v. 10—12.—and exhorted them not to be terrified by the threatenings of their persecutors, ver. 14.—but to be always prepared to give with calmness an answer to every one who asked a reason, and particularly concerning their hope of an eternally happy life in the body, after death. This hope, the Christians were to profess, more especially, when their enemies were putting them to death, because the Heathens, who heard them on these occasions declare their hope, perceiving that it was what supported them under their sufferings, and made them fearless in death, could not avoid being curious to know what the foundation of that hope was whose influence was so powerful, ver. 15.—also because the declaration of their hope at such a time, might, under the divine blessing, induce some of the Heathens to embrace the gospel, who, with admiration, beheld their courage in suffering death.

Because the disciples of Christ, on account of their aversion to idolatry, and of their deserting the temples of the heathen deities, were represented as atheists, seditious persons,

6^b Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling as ye do well,¹ and are not afraid with any him lord :^h whose * daughters ye are as long amazement.

^c Gen. 12. 5. & 18. 6, 12.
7, 12, 13. Phil. 1. 28.

^d John, 8. 39. Rom. 9. 7, 8. Phil. 4. 8. Titus, 2. 12.

* Gr. children.

¹ Ver. 14. II. 8. 12, 13. & 31.

persons, and the most profligate of mankind, the apostle exhorted the brethren of Pontus, &c. while they resisted idolatry, and refused obedience to the sinful commands of the heathen magistrates, to maintain a good conscience in every part of their behaviour; that their persecutors, who spake loudly against them as evil doers, might be put to shame, ver. 16.—Besides, if they were to suffer, it was better for them to suffer as well-doers than as evil-doers, ver. 17. And lest their enemies might conclude from their sufferings, that they were wicked persons, or at least persons with whom God was displeased, the apostle observed, that Christ, though most righteous and infinitely beloved of God, had been put to death as an evil-doer; but was demonstrated to be innocent of the crimes laid to his charge, by his resurrection from the dead. This example shewed the brethren, that sufferings are no mark of God's displeasure; and that if they suffered with Christ, their innocence should be made manifest at least in the end; when, being raised from the dead, as Christ was, they should be brought to God to enjoy eternal life with him in heaven, ver. 18.—Farther, to prove what he had affirmed, ver. 12. that God protects the righteous, and will severely punish the wicked, the apostle, as an example of both, observed, that Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 6. brought a flood on the old world, and destroyed the ungodly, to whom, without success, he had preached by his Spirit speaking in his prophet Noah; but saved Noah and his family, by that very water with which he destroyed the ungodly, ver. 19, 20.—That the purpose for which St. Peter appealed to these ancient facts, was what I have mentioned, is evident, not only from what is said, ver. 20. but from 2 Pet. ii. 5. where, after mentioning God's saving Noah while he brought the flood on the world of the ungodly, he adds, ver. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the wicked to the day of judgment to be punished.*—Farther, that the brethren might be in no doubt concerning the apostle's design in mentioning the salvation of Noah and his family, he assured them, that the salvation of these eight persons by the water of the deluge, is a type of the salvation of believers from death by the water of baptism, through the resurrection of Christ: which baptism, he told them, consists not in the washing away of the filth of the flesh, but in the answer of a good conscience, ver. 21.—Then, to make the righteous or faithful, on whom the eyes of the Lord continually look, certain of deliverance out of temptation in the present world, and of eternal salvation in the world to come; and at the same time to fill the wicked; against whom the face of God is set, with a just dread of the future judgment, the apostle declared that Christ our Master, since his resurrection, has gone into heaven in his glorified humanity, and is now at the right-hand of God as Governor and Judge universal; every creature in the universe, whether good or bad, being put in subjection to him, ver. 22.

Ver. 1. *Likewise, ye wives, &c.] The tabernacle of the*

3

*sun is set high in the heavens; but it is, that it may have influence below upon the earth: and the word of God, which is spoken of there immediately after, as being many ways like it, holds resemblance in this particular; it is a sublime heavenly light, and yet descends, in its use, to the lives of men, in the variety of their stations; to warm and to enlighten, to regulate their affections and actions, in whatsoever course of life they are called to. By a perfect revolution or circuit, (as there it is said of the sun.) it visits all ranks and estates, Pf. xix. 6. *His going forth is from the end of heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat of it.* This word disdains not to teach the very servants, in their low condition and employments, how to behave themselves, and sets before them no meaner example than that of Jesus Christ, which is the highest of all examples. And here the apostle proceeds to give rules adapted to that relation which is the main one in families, *husbands and wives*: for the order, it is indifferent, yet, possibly he begins here at the wives, because his former rules were given to inferiors, to subjects and servants; and the duty that the commends particularly here to them, is *subjection*; likewise, *ye wives, be in subjection, &c.**

After men have said all they can, and much it may be to little purpose, in running the parallel between these two states of life, marriage and celibacy, the result will be found, I conceive, all things being truly estimated, very little odds, even in natural respects, in the things themselves, saving only as the particular condition of persons, and the hand of divine Providence, turns the balance the one way or other: and the writings of satires against either, or panegyrics on the one in prejudice of the other, is but a caprice of men's minds, according to their own humour: but in respect of religion, the apostle, having scanned the subject to the full, leaves it indifferent, only requiring in those that are so engaged, hearts as disengaged as may be, *that they that marry be as if they married not, &c.* 1 Cor. vii. 29. 31. Within a while it will be all one, as he adds that grave reason, *for the fashion [σχημα] of this world passeth*; it is but a pageant, a show of an hour long, [παράγει] goes by, and is no more seen: thus the great pomps and solemnities of marriages of kings and princes in former times, where are they? Oh! how unseemly is it to have an immortal soul drowned in the esteem and affection of any thing that perishes, and to be cold and indifferent in seeking after a good that will last as long as itself. Aspire to that good which is the only match for the soul, that close union with God which cannot be dissolved; which he calls an everlasting marriage, Hof. ii. 19. which will make you happy, either with the other, or without it. All the happiness of the most excellent persons, and the very top of all affection and prosperity meeting in human marriages, are but a dark and weak representation of the solid joy which is in that mysterious divine union of the spirit of man with the *Father of spirits, from whom it issues.*

The

7 ^k Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as

being heirs together of the grace of life; ^l that your prayers be not hindered.

8 Finally, ^m be ye all of one mind, having

^k 1 Cor. 7. 3. Eph. 5. 25, 28, 29, 31, 32. Col. 3. 19. Pf. 101. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 35. & 12. 23. Gal. 3. 28, 29. with 2 Cor. 4. 7. 1 Thess. 4. 4. 1 Tim. 2. 8. Job. 42. 8. Mat. 5. 23, 24, 18, 19. Pf. 66. 18. ^m Lev. 19. 18. Rom. 12. 10, 15, 16. & 15. 5. 1 Cor. 1. 10. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Eph. 4. 32. Phil. 2. 1, 2. & 3. 16. & 4. 2. Col. 3. 12. 1 Thess. 4. 9. Heb. 10. 34. & 13. 1-3. Ch. 1. 22. & 8. 17. & 4. 8. 2 Peter, 1. 7. 1 John, 3. 11, 16, 17.

The common spring of all mutual duties, on both sides, is to be supposed *love*: that peculiar conjugal love which makes them one, will infuse such sweetness into the authority of the husband, and obedience of the wife, as will make their lives harmonious; like the sound of a well-tuned instrument: whereas without that, having such an universal conjuncture of interest in all their affairs, they cannot escape frequent contests and discords; which is a sound more unpleasant than the jarring of untuned strings to an exact ear. And this should be considered in the choice, that it be not, as it is too often, (which causes so many domestic ills,) contracted only as a bargain of outward advantages, but as an union of hearts: and where this is not, and there is something wanting in this point of affection, there; if the parties, or either of them, have any saving knowledge of God, and access to him in prayer, they will be earnest suitors for his help in this, that his hand may set right what no other can; that he, who is Love itself, may infuse that mutual love into their hearts now, which they should have sought sooner. And they, that sensibly want this, and yet seek it not of him, what wonder is it though they find much bitterness and discontent; yea, where they agree, if it be only in natural affection, their observance of the duties required, is not by far either so comfortable and pleasing, or so sure and lasting, as when it arises from a religious and Christian love in both, which will cover many failings, and take things by the best side.

Love is the prime duty in both, the basis of all: but because the particular character of it, as proper to the wife, is conjugal obedience and subjection, therefore that is usually specified, Eph. v. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*: so here. Now, if it be such obedience as ought to arise from a special kind of love, then the wife would remember this, that it must not be constrained uncheerful obedience: and the husband would remember, that he ought not to require base and servile obedience; for both these are contrary to that love, whereof this obedience must carry the true tincture and relish, as flowing from it; there it will hold right, where love commands, and love obeys.

This subjection, as all other, is qualified thus, that it be *in the Lord*. His authority is primitive, and binds first, and all others have their patents and privileges from him; therefore he is supremely, and absolutely, to be observed in all. If the husband would draw the wife to an irreligious course of life and looseness, he is not to be followed in this, but in all things indifferent this obedience must hold; which forbids not, neither, a modest advice and representation to the husband of that which is more convenient: but that done, a submissive yielding to the husband's will is the suiting of this rule. Yea, possibly, the husband may not

only imprudently, but unlawfully, will that, which, if not in its own nature a thing unlawful, the wife by reason of his will may obey lawfully, yea, could not lawfully disobey.

Now, though this subjection was a fundamental law of pure nature, and came from that hand which made all things in perfect order, yet sin, which has embittered all human things with a curse, has disrelished this subjection, and made it taste somewhat of a punishment, Gen. iii. 16. and that as a suitable punishment of the woman's abuse of that power which she had with the man, to the drawing of him to disobedience against God.

The bitterness in this subjection arises from the corruption of nature in both; in the wife a perverse desire rather to command, or at least a repining discontent at the obligation to obey; and this is increased by the disorder, and imprudence, and harshness of husbands, in the use of their authority.

But in a Christian, the conscience of divine appointment will carry it, and weigh down all difficulties; for the wife considers her station, that she is set in it, *ὑποτασσόμενην*, it is the rank which the Lord's hand hath placed her in, and therefore she will not break it; out of respect and love to him, she can digest much frowardness of a husband, and make that, her patient subjection, a sacrifice unto God. "Lord, I offer this to thee, and for thy sake I humbly bear it."

The worth and love of a husband may cause that respect, where this rule moves not: but the Christian wife, who hath love to God, though her husband be not so comely, nor so wise, nor any way so amiable as many others; yet because he is her *own husband*, and because of the Lord's command, therefore she loves and obeys.

That if any obey not the word,] This supposes a particular case, and applies the rule to it; takes it for granted, that a believing wife will cheerfully observe and respect a believing husband; but if he is an unbeliever, yet that unties not this engagement; yea, there is something in this case which presses it and binds it the more, a singular good, which probably may follow upon obeying such; by *that good conversation*, they may be gained who believe not the word; not that they could be fully converted without the word; but having a prejudice against the word, that may be removed by the carriage of a believing wife, and they may be somewhat mollified, and prepared, and induced to hearken to religion, and take it into consideration.

This gives not Christians warrant to draw on this task, and make themselves this work, by choosing to be joined to an unbeliever, either a profane or mere natural husband or wife; but teaches them, being so matched, what should be their great desire, and their suitable carriage, in order to the attainment of it. And in the primitive Christian times this fell out often, that, by the gospel preached, the husband.

compassion one of another : * love as brethren,
be pitiful, be courteous :

9 ° Not rendering evil for evil, or railing
for railing ; but contrariwise blessing ; know-

* Or loving to the brethren.
4. 12. & 6 7. 1 Theff. 5. 15.

* Prov. 17. 13. & 20. 22. & 22. 29. Rom. 12. 14, 17—21. 1 Theff. 5. 15. Mat. 5. 39, 44. Ch. 2. 23. 1 Cor.

husband might be converted from gross infidelity, Judaism, or Paganism, and not the wife, or the wife, which is the supposition here, and not the husband ; and there came in the use of this consideration.

Ver. 2. *While they behold your chaste conversation*] Dr. Heylin's translation here, though not literal, seems well to express the sense of the sacred writer : *While they behold your purity of manners, and the respect you have for them.*

Ver. 3, 4. *Whose adorning, let it not be, &c.*] That nothing may be wanting to the qualifying of a Christian wife, she is taught how to dress herself ; supposing a general desire, but especially in that sex, of ornament and comeliness ; the sex, which began first our engagement to the necessity of clothing, having still a peculiar propension to be curious in that, and to improve the necessity to an advantage.

The direction here given corrects the misplacing of this diligence, and addresses it right, that is, *Let it not be of the outward man, in plaiting, &c.*

Our perverse crooked hearts turn all that we use into disorder. Those two necessities of our life, *food and raiment*, how few know the right measure and bounds of them ? Unless poverty be our carver, and cut us short, who, almost, is there that is not bent to something excessive ! Far more are beholden to the lowliness of their estate, than to the lowliness of their mind, for sobriety in these things ; and yet some will not be so bounded neither, but will profusely lavish out upon trifles, to the sensible prejudice of their estate.

The apostle expressly, on purpose, checks and forbids vanity and excess in apparel, and excessive delight even in lawful decorum ; but his prime end is to recommend this other ornament of the soul, *The hidden man of the heart.*

It is the thing which the best philosophy aimed at, as some their greatest men express it, to reduce men, as much as may be, from their body to their soul : but this is the thing which true religion alone does effectually and thoroughly ; from the pampering and feeding of a morsel for the worms, to the nourishing of that immortal being infused into it ; which, therefore, it directs to the proper nourishment of souls, *the bread that came down from heaven*, John, vi. 27. 32. 33.

So here the apostle pulls off from Christian women their vain outside ornaments : but is not this a wrong, to spoil all their dressing and fineness ? No, he does this, only to send them a better wardrobe ; and there is much profit in the change.

All the gold, and other riches of the temple, figured the excellent graces of Christians, of Christ indeed first, as having all fulness in himself, and furnishing them ; but secondarily of Christians, as the living temples of God. So the church is *all glorious*, but it is *within*, Psal. xlv. 13. And the embroidery, the variety of graces, the lively colours of other graces, shine best on the dark ground of humility. Christ delights to give much ornament to his church, commends what she has, and adds more.

The particular grace which the apostle recommends, is singularly suitable to his subject in hand, the conjugal duty of wives ; nothing so much adorning their whole carriage as this *meekness and quietness of spirit*. But it is, withal, the comeliness of every Christian, in every estate ; it is not a woman's garment or ornament, improper for men. There is somewhat (as I may say,) of a particular cut or fashion of it for wives toward their husbands, and in their domestic affairs ; but men, all men, ought to wear of the same stuff ; yea, if I may so speak, of the same piece ; for it is, in all, one and the same spirit, and fits the stoutest and greatest commanders. Moses was a great general, and yet not less great in this virtue, *the meekest man on earth*.

Nothing is more uncomely in a wife than an uncomposed turbulent spirit, which is put out of frame with every trifle, and inventive of false causes of disquietness and fretting to itself. And so in a husband, and in all, an unquiet passionate mind lays itself naked, and discovers its own deformity to all. The greater number of things that vex us, do so, not from their own nature or weight, but from the unsettledness of our minds. How comely is it to see a composed firm mind and carriage, which is not lightly moved !

I urge not a stoical stupidity ; but that, in things which deserve sharp reproof, the mind keep in its own station and seat still, not shaken out of itself, as the most are ; that the tongue utter not unseemly rash words, nor the hand act any thing which discovers that the mind has lost its command for the time. But, truly, the most know so ill how to use just anger, upon just cause, that it is easier, and the safer extreme, not to be angry, but still, calm, and serene, as the upper region ; not the place of continual tempest and storms, as the most are : let it pass for a kind of sheepishness to be meek, it is a likeness to him that *was as a sheep before the shearers, not opening his mouth*, Isa. liii. 7 ; it is a portion of his Spirit.

The apostle commends his exchange of ornaments from two things : 1. This is incorruptible, and therefore fits an incorruptible soul. Your varieties of jewels and rich apparel are perishing things ; you shall one day see a heap made of all, and that all on a flame ; and, in reference to you, they perish sooner ; when death strips you of your nearest garment, your flesh, all the other, which were but loose upper garments above it, must off too. It gets indeed a covering for the grave, but the soul is left stark naked, if no other clothing be provided for it. But spiritual ornaments, and this of humility and meekness, here, among the rest, remain, and are incorruptible ; they neither wear out, nor out of fashion, but are still the better for the wearing, and shall last eternally, and shine there in full lustre.

And, 2. Because the opinion of others is much regarded in matter of apparel, and it is mostly in respect to this that we use ornament in it, he tells us of the account of this. Men think it poor and mean, nothing more exposed

ing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is * against them that do evil.

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness'

* 1 Tim. 4. 8. Mat. 25. 34. Eph. 1. 3. P Pf. 14. 12-16. James, 2. 26. Pf. 32. 2. Rev. 14. 5. Ch. 2. 1, 22. 9 If. 1. 16. Pf. 37. 27. & 34. 14. Rom. 12. 18. & 14. 19. Heb. 12. 14. 3 John, 11. Pf. 34. 15. 16. & 33. 18. & 11. 7. & 66. 12. Job, 36. 7. Jam's, 5. 16. Gr. upon. Jer. 44. 11. Amos, 9. 4. John, 9. 31. Prov. 16. 7. Rom. 8. 28. Job, 5. 22. Mat. 5. 10. Ch. 2. 19, 20. & 3. 14. James, 1. 12.

to contempt than the spirit of meekness; it is mere folly with men, but that is no matter; this overweighs all their disesteem, it is with God of great price, and things are indeed as he values them, and no otherwise. Though it be not the country fashion, yet it is the fashion at court, yea, it is the King's own fashion, Matth. xi. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly, &c. Care not what the world say of this; you are not to stay long with them. Desire to have both fashions and stuff from court, from heaven, this spirit of meekness, and it shall be sent you. It is never right in any thing with us till we attain to this, to tread on the opinion of men, and eye nothing but God's approbation.

Ver. 6. And are not afraid with any amazement.] That is, according to some, "Are not by any means discouraged from so doing." Dr. Heylin renders it, *And do not despond in any terror.* I here understand, says he, the labour, emphatically so called, and peculiar to the sex; a season, which requires great resignation, with reliance upon almighty God.

Ver. 7. Ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge,] *Ye men that are married, behave prudently,* in such a manner as becomes those, who have been instructed in that great system of wisdom and duty,—the gospel of Christ. Some render the next clause, *Allotting an honourable subsistence to the wife.* It is to be remembered, that many of the Christians were persons of low rank in life; which might make such a precept of maintaining their wives decently, and not subjecting them to harder labour than they could bear, (which they might be tempted to do from their indigent circumstances,) exceeding proper. The sense of the word *τιμω*, as signifying subsistence, or maintenance, is confirmed by 1 Tim. v. 17. *That your prayers be not hindered,* is generally understood to mean, "That your praying together be not prevented or interrupted." Now quarrels and contentions, or any thing which breaks in upon the tranquillity, peace, and harmony which ought to subsist in families, and especially between a man and his wife, would be very likely to interrupt their daily prayers, or greatly discompose and unfit them for their social and Christian worship of God. Dr. Heylin renders this verse, *Likewise, ye husbands, cohabit with your wives according to discretion; paying them the respect that is due to the weaker sex, and considering them as heirs with you of the grace of life; that there may be no impediment to your prayers.*

Ver. 9. Knowing that ye are thereunto called,] "As knowing that ye are called into the Christian church, that you might return good for evil, and in consequence

"of that, inherit a blessing." Heylin renders the clause, *For ye know that your vocation obliges you to this, that ye yourselves may enjoy the benediction of God.*

Ver. 10. For he that will love life,] *He that would enjoy life.* See Pf. xxxiv. 12. The apostle here urges in favour of the virtue which he recommends, that by this the comforts of life will be secured; ver. 10, 11. the favour of God engaged ver. 12. and the malice of men in a great degree disarmed, ver. 13, &c.—three arguments of very great weight and importance. This passage seems to be brought in, to anticipate an objection, which would very naturally arise in their minds: "Our patience under injuries, they might say,—and especially our returning good for evil,—will rather invite injuries, than lessen them; and when men see that they can trample upon us with impunity, nay, to their own advantage, they will be the more ready to do so; and the consequence will be, that they will escape, and we shall perish." To this St. Peter replies, that meekness and patience, a holy and peaceable life, are the way for Christians to be preserved, and to escape numberless evils; for God approves of such as behave in that manner, and mankind in general are disposed to treat them kindly.

Ver. 12. Is against them] *Upon or over them;* as it is said in the first clause; *Eni, upon, or over the righteous.*

Ver. 13. And who is he that will harm you, &c.] This is in the nature of a proverb, or general truth, which is not without many exceptions; for there have been many such times and places, wherein those who would live godly in Christ Jesus, could not escape persecution; 2 Tim. iii. 12. And therefore many of the righteous, notwithstanding all their care to give no offence, and to practise what was good, have been obliged to pass through much tribulation, in order to enter into the kingdom of God; and some persecutors, and tyrannical men, have been of so cruel a disposition, as that no meekness, patience, or goodness of the pious could soften them. However, it is the most likely way to soften the hearts of one's enemies, to be steadfast in patience and goodness, and to abound in a meek and peaceable behaviour. The generality of mankind are affected with such a conduct; though many have arrived to so great a pitch of cruelty, and hardness of heart, as not to be moved thereby.

Ver. 14.] The apostle, in the last verse, had strongly insinuated that no man would harm the followers of that which is good; but, as the Christians were still persecuted, or in danger of it, St. Peter here adds, that if, after all their

fake, happy *are ye* : and ^x be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled ;

15 But ^y sanctify the Lord God in your hearts : and *be* ready always ^z to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason

of the hope that is in you with meekness and ^{*} fear :

16 ^a Having a good conscience ; that, whereas they speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely ac-

^a If. 12. 13. Mat. 10. 23. Jer. 1. 8. Ver. 6. Phil. 1. 23. John, 14. 1, 27. If. 51. 12. 13. ^y If 8. 13. Pf. 9. 7. Rev. 15. 4. Job, 1. 21. ^z Pf. 119. 46. Acts, 4. 8—12, 19. 20. & 5. 29—32. & xxiv. xvii. Col. 4. 6. 2 Tim. 2. 25. James, 3. 13. ^{*} Or *reverence*. ^x Ch. 2. 17, 15, 19. 2 Tim. 1. 19. Titus, 2. 8. Acts, 23. 1. & 24. 16. Phil. 4. 8. & 3. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 12.

care to behave inoffensively, they suffer even for their goodness, they had no reason to be dejected ; for their reward would be great ; and to suffer for well-doing was likewise following the example of Christ, who suffered death, though he was guilty of no crime, nay, was always doing good : for even in former ages, he inspired Noah to preach to that wicked generation which perished in the flood ; though few of them were reclaimed : and he now had granted men the light of the gospel, though many persecuted his disciples, and few, comparatively speaking, accepted the offers of mercy. Ver. 14—22.

Be not afraid, &c.] These words are taken by St. Peter from the LXX. of If. i. viii. 12. and accommodated to his present purpose. As the Jews of old were to rely on God, and not to make a confederacy with the king of Assyria, or fear the threats of the two kings of Syria and Israel, so these persecuted Christians were not to fall in with any of the idolatrous or wicked customs of their persecutors, whether Heathens or Jews, but steadily to trust in God, and adhere to the pure Christian religion. Though the Jews should accuse them, and drag them before the heathen tribunals : though the heathen magistrates should condemn them to pay fines, or suffer confiscation of goods, proscriptions, imprisonment, banishment, or even death itself, yet they were not to be so far afraid of all their threats or ill usage, as to forsake Christianity, or to commit any thing wicked, any thing unworthy of the Christian character. See Philip. i. 28.

Ver. 15. *But sanctify the Lord God*] Grotius thinks that to *sanctify God* means here, to *give thanks to, or glorify him* ; that is, in a time of persecution ; or as some of the martyrs gave thanks to God when they heard the sentence of condemnation. See Acts, v. 41. But in general it may be said, that *sanctifying God*, is behaving towards him as convinced that he is a holy God, who loves truth and integrity ; who will reward the righteous, if they persevere, but punish all such as apostatize. *Of the hope that is in you*, means, their hope of a resurrection, and happy immortality, for the sake of which, and the glory of God, they were to endure all manner of persecution and evil treatment, and even to sacrifice their lives. For this some would be apt to ridicule them, and others would be curious to know what grounds they had for so surprizing an expectation ; especially as they, from such a prospect, exposed themselves to many temporal evils : (Acts, xxvi. 6—8.) for this conduct, and that hope which was the foundation of it, they were to be ever ready to give a reason ; for every part of Christianity is agreeable to right reason, and therefore capable of a *rational apology* and just defence. Some would understand the last words, of the *heathen magistrates*, or other persons who should *ask* the

Christians a *reason* of the hope that was in them ; as if the Christians had not been obliged to answer, but when the Jews or Heathens demanded an account of them with *meekness and fear*. It seems, however, very unlikely that the heathen magistrates would commonly examine the Christians with so much mildness and respect : and therefore it is more probable that this *meekness and fear* related to the conduct of Christians in making an apology ; or that it was a description of the temper of mind with which they were to apologize, rather than what they were to expect in those *to whom* they were to make their apology. If any person desired them to assign a reason of the hope that was in them, they were to give one ; but in a soft and gentle manner, with meekness, and fear of offending any person ; lest they should thereby stir up a persecution against the Christians, or prejudice any against the gospel. Nothing can more become the professors of the simple and meek religion of Jesus, than reverence and modesty towards their superiors, lenity and mildness to all men, and a fear of offending any. As to those who have no reason to assign for their opinions, they will be very apt to fall into a passion, to calumniate such as oppose them, and frequently to manifest an intemperate zeal ; but they would do well to remember, that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God* ; James, i. 20.

Ver. 16. *A good conscience* ;] This may be called the *breast-plate* of righteousness. Ephes. vi. 14.

*—Hic murus abeneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi. —*

Be this thy brazen bulwark of defence,
Still to preserve thy conscious innocence.

FRANCIS'S HORACE.

See Prov. xxviii. 1. He that would apologize for the Christian religion, ought first to lead a holy life, or be a good Christian himself : this will enable him to defend Christianity with courage, and to speak with invincible force : but a wicked man hurts Christianity more by his own life, than he can help it by the finest apology. *Conscience* is the human understanding employed about moral or religious truths : the *having a good conscience* is, leading through grace a holy life, and uprightly speaking and acting according to what a man's conscience dictates. The order of the construction of the next words seems to be this : *That they who calumniate your good conversation in Christ, may be ashamed, upon that very account, that they speak against you, as against wicked persons.* All sober Jews and Heathens must needs have looked upon them as calumniators, who accused the Christians of sedition or gross immorality ; when, by their innocent lives and patient sufferings, it appeared how excellent their religion was, and how groundless were such accusations. " I think this
" passage,

cuse your good conversation in Christ.

17^b For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing.

18 For Christ also hath ^c once suffered for

sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, ^d being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit :

19 By which also he went and ^e preached unto the spirits in ^f prison ;

^b Ch. 2. 19, 20. & 4. 14, 15. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. Ver. 14, 16. 10, 12, 14. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Eph. 2. 18. & 3. 12. See ch. 1. 10. & 2. 21, 24. If. 53. 4—12. ^c Rom. 5. 6—11. & 3. 25. & 4. 25. Heb. 9. 26, 28, 12, 14. & 10. 3. 16. Rom. 1. 4. & 8. 11. & 6. 4. Acts, 3. 15. John, 10. 18. Rev. 1. 5, 18. ^d Luke, 16. 23. 2 Peter, 2. 4.

^e Rom. 5. 6—11. & 3. 25. & 4. 25. Heb. 9. 26, 28, 12, 14. & 10. 3. 16. Rom. 1. 4. & 8. 11. & 6. 4. Acts, 3. 15. John, 10. 18. Rev. 1. 5, 18. ^f Gen. 6. 3. Ch. 1. 11, 12. & 4. 6. 2 Peter, 2. 5. Heb. 11. 7.

“ passage, (says Doddridge) remarkably illustrated by the “ strain of that Epistle of Pliny, in which he gives an “ account of his own conduct in persecuting the Chris- “ tians ; by which it plainly appears, that he was *ashamed* “ of what the laws required, when he considered how “ inoffensive their behaviour was.”

Ver. 17. For *it is better, if the will of God be so,*] It is a great crime in him who inflicts misery, that he does it to the innocent, and not to such as deserve it. It is not better for him, that those whom he treats with severity suffer for their goodness ; but it is better for the *persons who suffer*, that they suffer innocently. See ver. 14. chap. ii. 19, 20. The lesser evil is, in a given sense, universally esteemed as the greater good ; and, in this view, it is better to suffer persecution, or any temporal evil, in comparison of the durable and more intense sufferings of wicked men and apostates in a future state. Holiness and piety are in themselves preferable to vice and wickedness ; and, as a resurrection to eternal life would, through the alone merits of Christ, be the sure consequence of their suffering faithfully for righteousness, and their rewards were to be greater in proportion to their sufferings ; upon these accounts it was unquestionably better, infinitely better, to suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing. Grotius here takes notice of that fine saying of Socrates, when he was unjustly condemned to die : “ He, who suffereth for evil “ deeds, hath no hope of reward ; but, he that suffereth “ for God, hath the greatest.”

Ver. 18. *Being put to death in the flesh, &c.*] By the *flesh*, in which our Lord was put to death, must be understood *his body*, which was nailed to the cross till he expired ; and by the *Spirit*, the holy and ever-blessed Spirit of God. See the *Inferences*.

Ver. 19. *By which also he went, &c.*] *By which Spirit also he, going, preached to the spirits in prison.* That is, our Lord, by the Spirit, inspired Noah, and thereby constituted him a preacher of righteousness unto those who were disobedient in that age. See Gen. vi. 3, &c. The inspiration of the prophets seems every where to be ascribed to the *Holy Spirit of God*, which is the principal reason for our understanding τὸ Πνεῦματι, *the Spirit*, in that sense, ver. 18. That our Lord imparted *the Spirit* unto the Old Testament prophets, see ch. i. 11. ; and as he had *glory with the Father before the world was*, even from all eternity ; and as by him *God made the worlds*, and governed his church and people in the early ages ; he imparted the Spirit unto Noah and other prophets, before his coming in the flesh. The word *going*, may be either looked upon as ornamental and giving strength to the idea,—as that and other like words are in the scriptures and other authors ;—or as God

the Trinity is represented as doing what he did by his Spirit in the prophets, (Neh. ix. 30. Isa. xlvi. 16. Zech. vii. 12.) so our Lord is represented as *coming* (or *going*) and doing what others did, in his name, and by that *Spirit* which they had received from him. And in like manner he may here be represented as *going*, and preaching to that wicked generation which perished in the flood ; because he gave the Spirit to Noah, and thereby inspired him to preach to them. He *preached* by that *preacher of righteousness*, in whom was *his Spirit*, which then strove with man. Compare 2 Pet. ii. 5. with Gen. vi. 3. By the *spirits in prison* we may therefore understand such persons as are now in the custody of death ; and shut up, as it were, in a prison ; where they are reserved unto the judgment of the last day : but unto whom Christ formerly preached, by the Spirit, that is, in the days of Noah, when those wicked persons lived here upon earth. For he inspired Noah to preach repentance unto that wicked generation, all the while the ark was preparing. But they continued impenitent, it is to be feared, and therefore perished in the flood ; when a few persons, viz. righteous Noah and his family, were saved in the ark : and if, through grace, we have that, which is principally intended by Christian baptism,—the stipulation of a good conscience towards God, we shall be saved by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, when the wicked world shall inevitably perish.

Dr. Fulke has quoted the *venerable Bede*, as giving the sense of the text in words to the following purpose : he, who in our time, coming in the flesh, preached the way of life to the world ; even he himself came before the flood, and preached to them who were then unbelievers, and lived carnally. For, even he, by his Holy Spirit, was in Noah, and the rest of the holy men who were at that time ; and by their good conversation preached to the wicked men of that age, that they might be converted to better manners. This interpretation Dr. Fulke doubted not but that Bede took from the more antient fathers.

To make out this interpretation, let the following things be carefully observed. The word *spirit* is commonly applied by the antient writers, not to living men, but to men after they are dead. Plato (toward the conclusion of his famous dialogue, entitled *Gorgias*) terms the place where wicked men are detained after death, τὸ δεσμωτήριον, *the prison*, which they call *Tartarus* ; and afterwards he speaks of wicked men deceased as ἐν Ἅδου—ἐν δεσμωτήριον,—*in Hades, in prison*. Elnor has quoted Aristotle, as using the phrase ἐν φυλακῇ εἶναι, *to be in prison*, concerning the dead. For when Evæfus Syrus had hanged some of the *satraps* who were about to revolt, he ordered it to be told to their friends, *that they were in prison*, ὅτι ἐν φυλακῇ εἴσιν. But he

20 * Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, ^b wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

21 ¹ The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) ^k by the resurrection of Jesus Christ :

^a Gen. 6. 1—5, 11—13. Job, 22. 15, 16. Heb. 11. 7. Mat. 24. 38. Luke, 17. 20. 2 Peter, 2. 5. & 3. 6. ^b Heb. 11. 7. Gen. 7. 7. & 8. 13. 2 Peter, 2. 5. ^c Acts, 22. 16. Mark, 16. 16. Eph. 5. 26. Titus, 3. 5. Rom. 10. 10. & 6. 4—6. Gal. 3. 27. Phil. 3. 9, 10. ^k Rom. 4. 25. & 8. 11. & 6. 4—6. & 7. 4. 1 Cor. 15. 20. Eph. 2. 6. John, 14. 19.

used the word equivocally: for though he meant that they were dead, yet he designed that their friends should think they were in *prison*; and accordingly they gave money to ransom them; which when he had received, he brought them out *dead*. What therefore he said amounted to this, "That they were *in custody*," whereby he meant, that they were in the custody of death. But he would not add πνεύματα, spirits, ἐν ᾨδῷ, in Hades, or any like words, because that would have made his meaning clear, which he intended should be obscure.

The persons here spoken of, are termed *spirits in prison*; that is, who are *now* in prison; though they formerly lived in bodies upon earth, and were disobedient in the days of Noah, all the while the ark was preparing. We find the word φυλακή, a prison, used concerning wicked spirits, Rev. xviii. 2. xx. 7. and the same word is applied to wicked men after they are dead. The Syriac version has rendered the words thus; *He preached unto those souls which were (or are) detained in Sheol, or Hades*; that is, to wicked men, who are now *spirits*, confined in their proper place, in the state of the dead.

Our blessed Saviour cautioned wicked men to repent before death, lest they should be cast into prison; Matth. v. 25. xviii. 30. Luke, xii. 58. And St. Peter seems here to be speaking of that prison, in which the spirits of wicked men are detained in safe custody; *reserved unto the judgment of the last day*; as it is said of the fallen angels. 2 Pet. ii. 4, 5. Jude, ver. 6.

To conclude. If this part of the present epistle be looked upon as a digression, it was a very pertinent one, and a carrying on of the grand view of the epistle; which was, to encourage the Christians to bear persecution with patience and fortitude, and still to continue to do good. For, Christ, their Lord and Master, did so, and persevered unto the death; but he rose again, and was amply rewarded: in like manner the *Christians* also, after suffering with him, might expect, at last, to be glorified together with him. Nay, farther; Christ was always doing good, and particularly endeavouring to render men pious and holy. For, he inspired Noah, and sent him to preach unto the antediluvians, who are now dead; and the effect was much the same with his own preaching in person, or by his apostles, afterwards; that is, some believed, but others were disobedient. It may be asked, "And what became of them?" The answer is, "The righteous few were saved in the ark: the numerous disobedient, who had rejected the admonitions of Noah for a hundred and twenty years, perished in the flood." What happened during the rains, &c. we must leave. And the event will again be analogous; for the unbelieving world must perish. But as righteous Noah and his family were saved in

the ark, so they who are baptized with the true Christian baptism, (which is not a mere putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the stipulation of a good conscience towards God,) will finally be saved, if they continue faithful, in consequence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is placed at the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him: ver. 22.

Ver. 20. *Were saved by water.*] Some would translate the words δι' ὕδατος, in, or amidst the water; others, with our translation, by water: that is, the water, which destroyed the rest of mankind, lifted up the ark, whereby Noah and his family were saved. Doddridge, after Raphaelius, would render it, *were carried safely through the water*. See the next note.

Ver. 21. *The like figure whereunto, &c.*] And that which is the antetype, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting off the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience) to God, by, &c. Sir Norton Knatchbull would join the words δι' ὕδατος, ver. 20. to the beginning of this verse, and would have us read thus: *By water also, baptism, which is the antetype, doth also now save us*. For this he alleges, that the preposition δια will then have its usual and proper signification: and as to the trajection of the words, he endeavours to confirm it by other like instances, both from the scriptures, and some of the best Greek writers. The word Τύπος, strictly speaking, signifies a type, or original model; and the word Ἀντίτυπον, the copy which is made after that model; but here it seems to signify no more than some *similitude* or *resemblance* in the two things compared. It may be inquired, "What are the two things compared? and wherein does the resemblance lie?" That is, Is the water of baptism compared to the waters of the flood? or baptism itself compared to Noah's ark? or the being saved by baptism to the being saved in the ark?—The last appears to have been St. Peter's design; namely, that the salvation by the ark, in this particular, resembled our salvation by *Christian baptism*: for as those righteous persons, Noah and his family, were saved in the ark from perishing by the deluge; so Christian baptism, if followed by, or accompanied with, righteousness, or a good conscience, will be a means, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, of saving Christians from perishing with the wicked world. St. Peter had observed, ver. 18. that Jesus Christ *being put to death in the flesh, was brought to life again by the Spirit*; and he seems here to refer to what he had said there: and by speaking of the resurrection and the glory of Christ, he means not only to represent him as the object of our confidence, but likewise to intimate, that if, through grace, we imitate him in his courageous fidelity, we may hope to partake with him in his glory.

Ver.

22 ¹ Who is gone into heaven, and is on ties and powers being made subject unto the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

¹ See ch. 1. 21. Pf. 68. 18. & 47. 5. & 110. 5. Mark, 16. 16. Luke, 24. 51. Acts, 1. 9—11. & 3. 21. Rom. 8. 21, 34. 1 Cor. 15. 24. Col. 3. 1. Heb. 1. 3. & 2. 8. & 4. 15. & 6. 19, 20. & 7. 26. & 8. 1. & 9. 24. & 10. 12. Acts, 7. 56. Eph. 2. 20—23. Heb. 2. 14. Mat. 28. 18.

Ver. 22. Angels, &c.] The scripture represents all things as put in subjection to Christ as Mediator by his Father. Now if Christ in his mediatorial capacity was advanced to the right hand of God; and the most exalted creatures, even *angels* of all ranks and orders, were made subject to him; we may easily conclude, that all inferior things must be under his power and government; and that he who hath the whole creation at his disposal, can undoubtedly raise us from the dead, and make us perfectly and for ever happy. And this is the very thing which St. Peter would have them collect from what he has said in these last two verses. See Heb. vii 25.

Inferences drawn from ver. 18. of this chapter.—The whole life of a Christian, is a steady aiming at conformity with Christ; so that, in any thing, whether doing or suffering, there can be no argument so apposite and persuasive as His example; and no kind or degree of obedience, either active or passive, so difficult, but the view and contemplation of that example will powerfully sweeten it. The apostle does not decline the frequent use of it: here we have it thus, *for Christ also suffered.*

Though the doctrine of Christian suffering is the occasion of speaking of Christ's suffering, yet he insists on it beyond the simple necessity of that argument, for its own excellency, and further usefulness. So we shall consider the double capacity.

The due consideration of Christ's sufferings does much temper all the sufferings of Christians, especially such as are directly for Christ. As the example and company of the saints in suffering is very considerable, so that of Christ is more than any other, yea, than all the rest together.—Therefore, the apostle having represented the former at large, ends in this, as the top of all, Heb. xii. 1, 2. *There is a race set before us, it is to be run, and run with patience, and without fainting:* now, he tells us of a *cloud of witnesses;* a cloud made up of instances of believers suffering before us; and the heat of the day wherein we run is somewhat cooled, even by that cloud compassing us: but the main strength of their comfort here, lies in *looking to Jesus,* eyeing of his sufferings, and their issue. The considering and contemplating of him will be the strongest cordial, will keep you from *weariness* and *fainting* in the way, ver. 3.

The singular power of this instance lies in many particulars, considerable in it. To specify some chief things briefly in the steps of the present words: the example is great and fit, and the result of the sufferings contemplated, of infinite importance to the Christian. Consider, 1st, the greatness of the example, which will appear from the greatness of the person, and of the sufferings.

1. From the greatness of the person: *Christ*, and that marked to us by the manner of expression, [*και Χριστος,*] *Christ also*, besides and beyond all others, *even Christ himself.*

There can be no higher example: not only are the sons of adoption sufferers, but the *begotten*, the *only begotten Son*,

the eternal Heir of glory, in whom all the rest have their title, their sonship, and heirship, derived from, and dependent on, his: not only all the saints, but the King of saints. Who shall now repine at suffering? Shall the wretched sons of men refuse to suffer, after the suffering of the spotless glorious Son of God? as one speaks of pride, that after Majesty, highest Majesty, to teach humility, hath so humbled himself, how wicked and impudent a thing will it be for a worm to swell, to be high conceited?

2. The greatness and continuance of his sufferings.—That which the apostle speaks of here, *his once suffering*, has its truth, taking in all. *He suffered once;* his whole life was one continued line of suffering, from the manger to the cross; all that lay between was suitable. His estate and entertainment throughout his whole life agreed well with so mean a beginning, and so reproachful an end, of it: forced upon a flight, while he could not go; and living till he appeared in public, in a very mean and despised condition, as the carpenter's son; and, after his best works, paid with envy and revilings, called a *wine-bibber*, and a *caster out of devils by the prince of devils;* his life often laid in wait and fought for. Art thou mean in thy birth and life, despised, misjudged, and reviled, on all hands? Look how it was with Him, that had more right than thou hast, to better entertainment in the world. Thou wilt not deny this, for it was his own; *it was made by him, and he was in it, and it knew him not.* Are thy friends harsh to thee? *He came unto his own, and his own received him not,* John i. 10, 11. Hast thou a mean cottage, or art thou drawn from it? Hast thou no dwelling, and art thou every way poor and ill accommodated? He was as poor as thou canst be, *and had no where to lay his head,* Mat. viii. 20. worse provided than the *birds* and *foxes.* But then consider to what a height his sufferings rose in the end, that most remarkable piece of them here meant, by his *once suffering for sins.* If thou shouldst be cut off by a violent death, or in the prime of thy years, may'st thou not look upon him as going before thee in both these? and in so ignominious a way; scourged, buffeted, and spat on; he endured all, *he gave his back to the smiters,* Isa. l. 6; and then, as the same prophet has it, *He was numbered amongst the transgressors,* Isa. liii. ult. When they had used him with all that shame, they *hanged him betwixt two thieves,* and they that passed by, *wagged their heads,* and darted taunts at him, as at a mark fixed to the cross; they *scuffed and said,* *He saved others, himself he cannot save:* but, *for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame,* as the apostle says, Heb. xii. 2.

2^{dly}, Consider the fitness of the example: as the same is every way great, yea, *greatest*, so it is fit, the *fittest* to take with a Christian, to set before him so near a pattern, where he has so much interest. As the argument is strong in itself, so is it to the new man, the Christian man, particularly strongest; it binds him most; for it is not far fetched, but a home pattern; as when you persuade me

C H A P. IV.

He exhorteth them to cease from sin by the example of Christ, and the consideration of the general end that now approacheth; and comforteth them against persecution.

[Anno Domini 65.]

FORASMUCH then ^a as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, ^b arm yourselves

likewise with the same mind: for ^c he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 ^d That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, ^e but to the will of God.

3 ^f For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,

^a See ch. 1. 18, 19. & 3. 18. & 2. 24. ^b Ch. 2. 21. Rom. 6. 2, 6, 8, 11—13. & 8. 13. Eph. 6. 11. Gal. 2. 20. & 5. 24. Col. 2. 13. & 3. 8. ^c Rom. 6. 2, 7, 9, 10. Gal. 2. 19, 20. Rom. 7. 4. Heb. 9. 14. ^d Ver. 3. Rom. 13. 11—14. & 14. 7. Eph. 4. 17—19. 22. Ch. 1. 14. Col. 3. 5, 8. see 13. ^e Rom. 6. 11. & 7. 4. & 14. 8. 2 Cor. 5. 15. Gal. 2. 19, 20. 1 Thes. 5. 10. & 4. 3—7. Exod. xx. Rom. xii. Eph. iv—vi. Heb. 9. 14. ^f Ezek. 44. 6. & 45. 9. Rom. 13. 11—14. & 1. 21—32. & 2. 21, 22. & 3. 10—13. 1 Cor. 5. 11. & 6. 9, 10. & 8. 7. & 10. 7. 14. & 12. 2. Eph. 2. 3, 11, 12. & 4. 17—19. & 5. 3—11, 15, 18. Gal. 5. 19—21. Col. 3. 5—8. Tit. 3. 3. 1 Thes. 4. 5. Ch. 1. 14, 18. 1 John, 5. 21.

to virtue, by the example of those to whom they have near relation. They are *his servants*, and shall they, or would they, think to be *greater than their Master*, to be exempt from his lot in the world? They are *his soldiers*, and will they refuse to follow him, and to endure with him? *Suffer hardship* (says the apostle to Timothy,) *as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*, 2 Tim. ii. 3. Will not a word from him put a vigour in them to go after him, whether upon any march or service, when he calls them *friends*, *Commilitones*, an appellation used by Julius Cæsar, which wrought so much on his trained bands: yea, *he is not ashamed to call them brethren*, Heb. ii. 11.; and will they be ashamed to share with him, and to be known by their suitable estate to be his brethren?

3dly, There is, from these sufferings of Christ, such a result of safety and comfort to a Christian, as makes them a most effectual encouragement to suffering; which is this, if he suffered once, that was *for sin*. The soul, perplexed about that question, finds no relief in all other enjoyments; all propositions of lower comforts are unfavourable and troublesome to it. Tell it of peace and prosperity; say, however the world go, you shall have ease and pleasure, and you shall be honoured and esteemed by all; yea, though you could make a man sure of these, yet, if his conscience be working and stirred about the matter of his sin, and the wrath of God, which is tied close to sin, he will wonder at your impertinency, in that you speak so far from the purpose. Say what you will of these, he still asks, "What do you mean by this? those things answer not me. Do you think I can find comfort in them, so long as *my sin is unpardoned*, and there is a sentence of eternal death standing above my head. I feel even an impress of somewhat of that hot indignation; some flashes of it, flying and lighting upon the face of my soul, and how can I take pleasure in these things that you speak of? And though I should be senseless, and feel nothing of this all my life, yet how soon shall I have done with it, and the delights that reach no further? and then to have *everlasting burnings*, eternity of wrath to enter to; how can I be satisfied with that estate?" All that you offer a man in this posture is, as if you should set dainty fare, and bring music with it, to a man lying almost pressed to death under great weights, and you bid him eat and be merry, but lift not off his pressure; you do but mock the man and add to his misery. On the other side, he that has got but a view of his Christ, and a

knowledge of the forgiveness of his sins, through him, can rejoice in this, in the midst of all other sufferings, and look on death without apprehension, yea, with gladness, for *the sting is out*: Christ has made all pleasant to him by this one thing, that *he suffered once for sins*. Christ has perfumed the cross, and the grave, and made all sweet. The pardoned man finds himself light, skips and leaps, and, *through Christ strengthening him*, he can encounter with any trouble. If you think to shut up his spirit within outward sufferings, he is now, as Sampson in his strength, able to carry away on his back the gates with which you would inclose him; yea, can submit patiently to the Lord's hand in any correction. "Thou hast forgiven my sin; therefore, deal with me as thou wilt, all is well." For the improvement of what has been said,

1. Learn to consider more deeply, and esteem more highly, of Christ, and his suffering, to silence our grumbling at our petty light crosses; for so they are in comparison of his. Will not the great odds of his perfect innocence, and of the nature and measure of his sufferings; will not the sense of the redemption of our souls from death by his death; will none of these, nor all of them, argue us into more thankfulness and love to him; and patience in our trials? Why will we then be called Christians? It is impossible to be fretful and malcontent with God's dealing with us in any kind, till first we have forgot how he dealt with his dearest Son for our sakes. But these things are not weighed by the most: we hear and speak of them, but our hearts receive not the impressions of them; therefore we repine against our Lord and Father, and drown a hundred great blessings in any little trouble that befalls us.

2. Seek surer interest in Christ and his suffering than the most either have attained, or are aspiring to, otherwise all that is *suffered here* will afford thee no ease nor comfort in any kind of suffering. No, though thou suffer for a good cause, even for his cause, still this will be an extraneous foreign thing to thee; and to tell thee of his sufferings, will work no otherwise with thee than some common story. And as in the *day of peace* thou regardest it no more, so in the *day of thy trouble* thou shalt receive no more comfort from it. Other things which you esteemed, shall have no comfort to speak to you; *though you pursue them with words* (as Solomon says of the poor man's friends,) *yet they shall be wanting to you*, Prov. xix. 7. And then you would surely find how happy it were to have this to turn you to, that the Lord Jesus suffered for sins, and for your's,

when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries :
4^s Wherein they think it strange that ye

• II. 8. 18. Acts, 13. 45. I Cor. 4. 13. Jam. 2. 7. Ch. 2. 12. & 3. 9, 16.

your's, and therefore has made it a light and comfortable business to you to undergo momentary passing sufferings.

Days of trial will come; do you not see that they are on us already? Be persuaded, therefore, to turn your eyes and desires more towards Christ. This is the thing we would still press; the support and happiness of your souls lie on it. But you will not believe it. Oh, that you knew the comforts and sweetness of Christ! Oh, that one would speak that knew more of them! Were you once but entered into this knowledge of him, and the virtue of his sufferings, you would account all your days but lost wherein you have not known him; and in all times your hearts would find no refreshment like to the remembrance of his love.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle proceeds to the duty of husbands and wives.

1. The duty of wives. *Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, whether Christian, Jewish, or Heathen, regarding them as your superiors by creation and the ordinance of God; that, if any obey not the word, and are strangers to the faith of Christ, they also may without the word, though they should refuse to attend the preaching of the gospel, be won by the conversation of the wives, struck with your exemplary, engaging, and amiable conduct, while they behold your chaste conversation, circumspection in every word and action, and your chastity coupled with fear; and while you also shew them that reverence, attention, and desire to please, and fear to offend, which cannot but attract their notice, and gain their high esteem. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; not making dress and finery your study, expensive, negligent of your family concerns, or desirous to attract others' eyes besides your husbands'; but, while careful of modest neatness of person, be most careful of that which will render you above all other things amiable in their eyes—bear within you the hidden man of the heart, the adornings of grace, truth, and holiness; in that which is not corruptible, and infinitely preferable to the poor and fading splendor of gaily apparel, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, gentle, mild, tractable, silencing every rising of anger, and the emotions of fretfulness, which is the great secret of happiness in a married state, and in the sight of God of great price, and highly approved by him. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands, delighting in their station, and never desiring to invert or change God's established order; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham with all dutiful subjection, calling him lord, and paying him reverence and respect as her superior: whose daughters ye are, in a spiritual sense, as long as ye do well, and copy her meek, dutiful, and humble example, and are not afraid with any amazement; not terrified from your duty by any menaces, not obedient through slavish fear of your husbands, but from a nobler principle of love and duty.—*
Note; Wives should seriously consider this word of God,

and make conscience of observing it: the advice is of infinite importance to their comfort in this world, and is essential to all their just hopes in respect to a better.

2. The duty of husbands. *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, delighting in their company, their persons, their conversation; with purity and tender affection discharging every duty of the conjugal state; giving honour unto the wife, treating her with respect, making her your bosom friend, consulting her comfort and happiness, providing in the best manner for her which your circumstances will afford, bearing with and concealing her infirmities, considering her as the weaker vessel, to whom peculiar delicacy and tenderness is due, and as your equal in all Christian privileges, being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered, or the effects of them defeated, as they must be by unchristian strifes, or austerity. Let those who bear the honoured name of husband then remember the duties of their station. Such a conduct will engage affection and submission, and supersede the exercise of authority.*

2dly, The apostle passes on to more general exhortations.

1. He enjoins the exercise of Christian love. *Finally, be ye all of one mind, united in the great points of Christian doctrine, and harmonizing in mutual affection; having compassion one of another, bearing with tender sympathy each other's burdens; love as brethren, out of a pure heart, fervently; be pitiful towards each other's wants, weakness, and infirmities; be courteous, obliging, friendly, condescending; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, however cruelly or unkindly treated by professed enemies or pretended friends; but, contrariwise, blessing, praying for those who most despitefully use you: knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, which promise God hath annexed to such a gracious conduct. Note; To love those who are kind to us, is in some sort but natural; but to love our enemies, and return their bitterness with blessings, this is the work of supernatural grace.*

2. Having mentioned the blessing which they should inherit, who walked according to the rule laid down, he quotes a passage from the Book of Psalms, shewing the way to a truly happy life. *For he that will love life, and see good days of prosperity and comfort in this world, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile, sincere in all his conversation, without dissimulation, and cautious never to utter a rash, hasty, or passionate expression: let him eschew and avoid evil of every kind, which misery, as its shadow, ever attends; and do good to all, according to his abilities and opportunities: let him seek peace, as the richest acquisition, and ensue it, using every lawful means to preserve it inviolable in all his connections and relations, and to heal every breach which may be made. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, observing, approving, and directing them in all their holy conversation; and his ears are open unto their prayers, regarding every request they make, and ready to fulfil all their petitions:*

run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you* :

5^h Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

^h Eccl. 12. 14. Rom. 2. 6, 16. & 14. 10, 12. 1 Cor. 5. 10. Rev. 20. 12. Acts, 10. 42. & 17. 31. 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. 2 Tim. 4. 1. Heb. 10. 37. Jam. 3. 3. Phil. 4. 5. Rev. 1. 7. & 22. 7. 12, 20. John, 5. 29.

petitions: *but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*, with frowns of righteous indignation he beholds their crooked ways, and winged vengeance cuts off the remembrance of them from the earth; see Pl. xxxiv. 16.—*Note*; (1.) Godliness hath the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come. (2.) What an encouragement have we to approach a throne of grace, when God assures us of his constant attention to our prayers? (3.) They who persist in their iniquities, must perish without remedy.

3. He suggests the most encouraging motives for their patient suffering. *And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* What have you to fear from men or devils, if God is on your side? And will not such an inoffensive conduct disarm even your very enemies? *But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake*, and your religion exasperate your persecutors, *happy are ye* in this honourable cross; *and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled* at any of their menaces, frowns, or cruelty; *but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*; set him before you, that, filled with holy fear of offending him, relying on his power, faithfulness, wisdom, and mercy, you may destroy all the impotent wrath of men, *and be ready always to give an answer*, and to make your defence and apology to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear, with all dispassionate calmness and holy reverence of God, whose cause you plead; or this may refer to him that asketh the reason of their Christian hope; if he appear, with meekness and fear, willing to hear your defence, then faithfully deliver your souls; *having a good conscience toward God and toward men*; and acting so uprightly and irreproachably, *that whereas they speak evil of you as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ*; and let your lives give the lie to their slanders, and turn them to their own confusion. *For it is better, if the will of God be so*, that ye are appointed to suffer, *that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing*—it is better indeed, for when sin and suffering meet together, the burden is then grievously insupportable. *Note*; (1.) To suffer for righteousness' sake is our honour and happiness. (2.) The more we live in the fear of God, the less shall we be influenced by the fear of men. (3.) We never need be ashamed of our principles, but should be ready to vindicate them whenever we can gain an attentive hearing. (4.) The purest innocence is not a defence from the aspersions of malice. (5.) The surest way to confound the slanders of malevolence, is *to live them down*.

3dly, We have,

1. The example of Christ proposed for our encouragement to suffer patiently for him. *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*; he who was perfectly pure and holy giving himself a sacrifice for us, to bear the sins of such polluted wretches as we are, *that*, having made a perfect satisfaction to Divine Justice, and obtained re-

conciliation through his own blood, *he might bring us to God*, into a state of favour and acceptance with him, *being put to death in the flesh*, and suffering in his human nature the penalty of sin, *but quickened by the Spirit*, by that eternal Spirit of the Son of God, which had taken the human nature into union with himself; or *by the Holy Ghost*, who is one in operation and agency with the Son. *Note*; (1.) The sufferings of Jesus were the real penalty due to our iniquities, and God laid them upon him in all their bitterness. (2.) He was the *Just* one; had he not been so, he could not have satisfied for the unjust. (3.) By the sufferings of Jesus sinners have access to and acceptance with God. (4.) If he voluntarily endured so much for us, shall we shrink from any cross which we may be called to bear for him?

2. He mentions what Christ did in the old world. *By which also he went and preached unto the spirits* which are now in prison, by his Spirit enlightening Noah, and sending him forth as a preacher of righteousness to them; *which sometime were disobedient*, and would neither believe nor attend to the warnings which Christ sent them, *when once the long-suffering of God waited*, during a hundred and twenty years, *in the days of Noah*, while the ark was preparing, who continued preaching, and building that immense structure which was a living sermon to them; *wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water*, passing safely through the deluge which covered the earth, while the rest of the world perished in the waters. *The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us*, as the antitype of the ark, (*not the mere external ordinance, the applying water to the body for the putting away of the filth of the flesh, which of itself could be of no avail, but*) as an outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, even *the answer of a good conscience toward God*, pledging our fidelity to him in return for the privileges to which we are admitted, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*, who is the author of life and salvation, being raised for our justification, the head of vital influence to the faithful, and shall raise them up at the last day. *Note*; (1.) God warns before he strikes. (2.) They who reject the counsel of God against their own souls, have themselves only to blame for their destruction. (3.) Baptism saveth, not as a mere ceremony performed, but as a seal of that covenant which is established through a Redeemer, and a symbol of that grace which out of his fulness we may all receive.

3. Christ is now exalted to the throne of Majesty on high. *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him*; he is possessed of universal dominion, appointed to be Head over all things to his church; and whatever any of his members may endure, he is able and willing to support and bring them safely through; and, as surely as they perseveringly suffer with him, they shall also reign with him.

CHAP.

6¹ For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, ² that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

¹ Ch. 3. 19. or Rev. 14. 13. ² Thes. 4. 14. Job, 5. 25. Eph. 5. 14. John, 16. 33. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Ch. 4. 13, 14. & 5. 10. & 1. 6, 7. ³ Pf. 103. 14. Phil. 2. 19. Rom. 7. 23. 2 Cor. 4. 16. or Rom. 8. 17. Rev. 7. 14—17.

C H A P. IV.

THE apostle having told the brethren of Pontus, &c. that it was better to suffer as well-doers, than as evil-doers; also having insinuated that the peculiar dignity and power with which Christ, as Mediatorial King, is invested for the salvation of his faithful people, was the reward of his sufferings; he begins this chapter with an exhortation to them to arm themselves with the same resolution to suffer death for the gospel, which Christ manifested when he suffered death for declaring himself the Son of God: and gave this reason for their doing so, that the person who is firmly resolved to suffer death, rather than renounce his religion, has through Divine grace freed himself of course from the dominion of sin, ver. 1.—so that he does not live the rest of his life according to the flesh, or the inclinations of his persecutors, but according to the will of God, ver. 2. Besides, the time past of their life, he told them, was sufficient to have complied with the will of the Gentiles, by walking in lasciviousnesses, &c. ver. 3.—and, although their heathen acquaintance might be surpris'd that they did not still accompany them in these vicious courses, and might revile them on that account, they were not to be moved thereby, ver. 4.—These wicked men shall be called to an account for their crimes, and be severely punished, ver. 5.—They were likewise to consider, that the gospel had been preached to the faithful among those that were dead, for the very purpose of assuring them, that if for their faith they might be condemned to death in their fleshy body by men, they should at the last day be raised, and rewarded in their spiritual or incorruptible body, ver. 6.—Farther, he assured them, that the end of all things, the end of the Mosaic dispensation, and of the Jewish state, was at hand, so that the power of the unbelieving Jews, their greatest persecutors, would soon be broken. And from that consideration, he exhorted them to continual sobriety and watchfulness, ver. 7.—and to comfort one another under their sufferings by mutual love, which would lead them to overlook each other's faults, ver. 8.—and to be hospitable, ver. 9.—and to exercise their spiritual gifts for each other's benefit, ver. 10, 11.—Next, he told them that they were not to think it strange, that God had permitted so hot a persecution to fall on them. It was for the trial of their faith, and the improvement of their graces and virtues, ver. 12.—that their reward might be the greater at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ver. 13.—Besides, if they were reviled for the name of Christ, they were happy for this other reason, that the Spirit of Christ resting on them and strengthening them to suffer, would be a Spirit of glory to them in the eyes of their persecutors, as well as of their brethren, ver. 14.

About the time the apostle wrote this letter, the unbelieving Jews, especially the Zealots so called, were raising great disturbances, both in Judea and in the provinces; and in these confusions, they murdered their brethren who were of a different faction, and plundered

their goods. These fanatics, fancying that no obedience was due from the people of God to idolatrous princes, paid no regard to the heathen laws and magistrates, but were guilty of the grossest outrages in the countries where they lived, by which they often brought on themselves punishment. Wherefore to prevent the Jewish Christians in particular, and all of them in general, from joining the unbelieving Jews in these outrages, the apostle exhorted them not to bring punishment on themselves as murderers or thieves, &c. because to suffer for such things was extremely disgraceful, as well as most highly criminal, ver. 15.—But if any of them suffered as a Christian, he was not to be ashamed, but rather to glory in it, ver. 16.—In the mean time, lest any of the Christians might have entertained harsh thoughts of God on account of their sufferings, the apostle told them, the time was come, in which the Jews, the ancient household of God, were to be punished as a nation, for all the crimes committed by them from the beginning; and that the Christians themselves should not be exempted from sufferings, though now become the house of God; because the justice of God would be the more illustriously displayed thereby. However, to terrify their persecutors, he observed, that if punishment was to begin with them, who were become the house of God by believing in Jesus, the punishment of those Jews who obeyed not the Gospel of God would be most terrible, ver. 17.—and that if the righteous would be saved with difficulty, the ungodly and sinners could not hope to escape, ver. 18.—Lastly, he directed, that those Christians who might suffer these temporary punishments, (which, according to the will of God so permitting, their enemies had then a power of inflicting,) should with resignation acknowledge the will of God in this mysterious event; assured that while they continued to act under a sense of his presence, and endeavoured to approve themselves to him, he would regard them as his creatures, and even his children, and would render their immortal interests secure, whatever injuries of a temporal nature he might suffer them to sustain.

Ver. 1. *Forasmuch then, &c.*] “I have already observed, that Christ suffered, though he was perfectly innocent: as therefore Christ, your great Lord and Master, hath suffered for you in the flesh, do you also wear the same spirit, as *armour*; (Ephes. vi. 11.) conscious that you ought to suffer for the truth, if called thereunto: for it is rationally to be supposed, that he, who has upon this account suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from leading an unholy life, and is resolved to live, during the residue of his abode in the flesh, not in conformity to the lusts of men, but to the will of God,” ver. 2. Dr. Bentley would read these verses thus; *As Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind; for he that suffered in the flesh, hath died for our sins, ver. 2. that we should no longer live in the flesh, &c.*

Ver. 3. *For the time past of our life, &c.*] St. Peter did
5 L not

7 ¹ But the end of all things is at hand: ⁸ ² And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity * shall
^a be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

¹ Phil. 4. 5. ² John, 2. 18. Jam. 5. 8. Rom. 13. 12. Heb. 10. 25. 37. Rev. 22. 12. ³ 1 Theff. 5. 6, 17. Ch. 5. 8. Mat. 26. 41. Luke, 21. 34—36. Eph. 6. 18, 19. Col. 4. 2. ⁴ 1 Theff. 5. 17. Ch. 1. 13. ⁵ 2 Pet. 3. 9, 11, 14. Rev. 1. 3. & 22. 10—15. & 16. 15. ⁶ 1 Cor. 13. 7, 13. Col. 3. 14. Heb. 13. 1. Ch. 2. 22. & 2. 17. & 3. 8. Rom. 12. 12. with Prov. 10. 12. Jam. 5. 20. ⁷ * Or will.

not mean that it is lawful for men to satiate themselves with vice, and that they need not leave it off till they are weary of it; but he stirs up those to whom he wrote, to care and diligence for the future, in the practice of holiness, from the consideration of their having lived so long in the vices of the Heathens. It would have been the greatest shame for them, now that they were better instructed, to have continued in, or returned any more to such abominable practices: their future lives were to be consecrated unto the true God. There is no reason to interpret the word *idolatrics* in a figurative sense, more than any other of the vices mentioned in this verse: on the contrary, St. Peter, by calling their idolatries *abominable*, seems to lay a particular emphasis upon this last expression; so as to make one ready to suspect, that those Christians had once been guilty of some of the most cruel and debauched of the rites of the idolatrous Heathens. Some think that St. Peter joined the vices mentioned in this verse with *abominable idolatries*, because the Heathens were guilty of such horrible excesses, even in their religious worship. Surely Christianity was a most astonishing blessing to mankind in delivering them from such abominations!

Ver. 4. *Wherein they think it strange, &c.*] In the Syriac the words run thus: *And behold now, they are amazed and blaspheme you, because you do not grow wanton with them in the same intemperance as formerly.* Έν ᾧ, *wherein*, or *in which*, refers to the will of the Gentiles, ver. 3. The word ξενίζονται, rendered *they think it strange*, properly signifies, *they are strangers*; but it appears that many Greek writers used it for being astonished, or standing in admiration of a thing, as new, absurd, or surprizing: and accordingly it is so rendered in some of the ancient versions and fathers. Indeed the allusion is fine, and what obtains in many languages, to express men's admiring or wondering, as strangers do at the customs and manners of a people in a foreign country. Thus in England we say that "such a thing is *very strange*," when we mean that it is *very surprizing*, or very different from what we have known, expected, or been used to. Their idolatrous neighbours and acquaintance had formerly looked upon these Gentile Christians, as of the same country and religion; but now they regarded them as strangers, or as a people whose conduct was new, strange, and surprizing. See ver. 12. Acts xvii. 20. and 2 Macc. ix. 6. Possibly St. Peter in the word ἀντιτρέχοντων, *running*, might allude to the orgies of *Bacchus*; in which his worshippers *ran forward*, like persons agitated by the furies, and, with the vehemence and transport of madmen, rushed together to the commission of the most abominable wickedness. The word ἀμαίχουσι, rendered *excess*, has various significations. It is used for a *quibble* or sink of waters, and here may be applied metaphorically, for a sink or gulph of vice. It is used elsewhere for sloth, effeminacy, confusion, prodigality, excess, or profusion; in which last sense Archbishop Leighton understands it. The word Ἀσάρια signifies riot, luxury,

prodigality, or a lewd and dissolute life: see Prov. xxviii. 7. St. Peter has joined these two words to express the astonishing wickedness and debauchery of the Heathens, and that even in their religious worship. He adds, that on this account they *railed*, or *spoke evil of them*: they railed at them as unsocial, and deserters of the sacred temples. Genuine converts from vice to true experimental religion, are more exposed to the ridicule and insults of their old companions than others; and indeed it was no small trial to the primitive Christians, when they were accused as morose and unsocial, and of different manners from the rest of mankind. There was great occasion for resolution and fortitude in those who adhered to Christianity; as they dared to dissent from the rest of their neighbours in matters of religion. But neither this nor any other temptation was to make them depart from truth, or practise wickedness: though Christianity was a sect every where spoken against; yet to the judgment of men they were to oppose the judgment of Christ, who will soon judge the quick and the dead; for a day and a thousand years are the same to him.

Ver. 6. *For, for this cause was the gospel preached, &c.*] "For this is the end for which the gospel was preached to those believers, who are now *the dead in Christ*" (1 Theff. iv. 16.), as well as to those who are still living upon earth, that they, by a divine power attending it, "being thoroughly mortified and dead to their former incinations and courses of life, might be eventually censured and condemned, and even put to death, for their novel and unsocial principles and behaviour, as being judged according to the dictates of corrupt nature, and of mere natural men; but that they might really live after a spiritual and joyful manner, by a holy conformity to the image and will of God in their renewed souls, as being quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and assisted by his Spirit to do the things that are pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; and might at last be raised up to a glorious and immortal life, by his Spirit that dwelleth in them." (Rom. viii. 11.) See this verse more fully treated on in the *Inferences*.

Ver. 7. *But the end of all things is at hand:*] That is, of all things relating to the Jewish temple, city, and nation:—an event, which so strongly corroborated the prophecies, and was on many accounts so alarming in itself, and so confirmatory of the Christian religion, that we cannot wonder the sacred writers dwell so often upon it. In opposition to the *fleshy lusts* of the Heathens, hinted at ver. 6. and mentioned expressly, ver. 2, 3, 4. the Christians are exhorted to be *sober*, or *temperate*; and in opposition to the stupor and security of the unbelieving Jews, they were to *watch unto prayer*; that they might not be involved in the like calamities with the unbelieving Jews and apostate Christians.

Ver. 8. *And above all things have fervent charity.*] See

cover the multitude of sins.

9 ° Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

10 ° As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as

good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

11 ° If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God ; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth : that God in all things may be glorified

° Rom. 12. 8, 13. Heb. 13. 2. Philem. 14. Phil. 2. 14. 2 Cor. 9. 7. 1 Sam. 26. 11. P Rom. 12. 6—8. 1 Cor. 12. 4—11, 28. Eph. 4. 11, 12. Mat. 25. 14, 15. Luke, 19. 11. Prov. 3. 28. Acts, 8. 4. 2 Cor. 8. 11. ° Mat. 25. 45. Luke, 12. 42. 1 Cor. 9. 17. & 4. 1, 2. Tit. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 7. & 15, 10. Eph. 4. 11. & 3. 2. Jer. 23. 22, 28. Rom. 12. 6—8. 1 Cor. 3. 10. Eph. 6. 20. 1 Thel. 2, 13. ° Ezra, 2. 69. Neh. 5. 8. Acts, 11. 29. 2 Cor. 8. 3. 1 Cor. 10. 31. Eph. 5. 20. 1 Tim. 6. 16. 2 Tim. 4. 18. Ch. 2. 5. & 5. 11. Rev. 1. 5, 6. & 5. 9—13. Pf. 115. 1. see Rom. 16. 27.

on James v. 12. Lest they should imagine that the *sobriety* and *prayer* recommended in the preceding verse were all that was required of them, St. Peter here inculcates mutual love, as a principal part of their duty. They were to make conscience of all the duties of the Christian life, but to lay the greatest stress upon the most important ; and this, both in the idea of St. Peter and St. Paul, is *love*. Comp. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. Instead of *charity*, as we have frequently observed, the word ἀγάπη should be rendered *love*. Have fervent love ; for love will cover a multitude of sins. See Prov. x. 12.

Ver. 9. Use hospitality, &c.] We have had frequent occasion to remark the especial necessity and importance of hospitality, for the want of inns in the Eastern world. Dr. Robertson, speaking of the little intercourse between nations during the middle ages of Christianity, observes as a proof hereof, “ that there were no inns, or houses of entertainment for the reception of travellers, during those ages. Among people (says he) whose manners are simple, and who are seldom visited by strangers, hospitality is a virtue of the first rank. This duty of hospitality was so necessary in that state of society which took place during the middle ages, that it was not considered as one of those virtues which men may practise or not, according to the tempers of their minds, and the generosity of their hearts : hospitality was enforced by statutes, and they who neglected this duty, were liable to punishment. The laws of the Slavi were remarkably rigorous : they ordained, that the moveables of an inhospitable person should be confiscated, and his house burned. In consequence of these laws, or of that state of society which made it proper to enact them, hospitality abounded while the intercourse among men was inconsiderable, and secured the stranger a kind reception under every roof where he chose to take shelter. This too proves clearly that the intercourse among men was rare ; for as soon as this increased, what was a pleasure became a burthen, and the entertaining of travellers was converted into a branch of commerce.” See his History of Charles V. vol. i. p. 326. But by the word *hospitality*, I conceive all other supply of the wants of our brethren in outward things to be here comprehended. Now, for this, the way and measure, indeed, must receive its proportion from the estate and ability of persons. But certainly the great straitening of hands in these things, is more from the straitness of hearts than of means. A large heart, with a little estate, will do much with cheerfulness and little noise, while hearts glued to the poor riches they possess, or rather are possessed by, can scarcely part with any thing, till they be pulled from all. Now, for supply of our

brethren's necessities, one good help is, the retrenching of our own superfluities. Turn the stream into that channel where it will refresh thy brethren, and enrich thyself, and let it not run into the dead sea. Thy vain excessive entertainments, thy gaudy variety of dresses, these thou dost not challenge, thinking it is of thine own ; but know, as follows, thou art but *steward* of it, and this is not faithfully laying out ; thou canst not answer for it ; yea, it is robbery ; thou robbest thy poor brethren that want necessities, whilst thou lavishest thus on unecessaries. Such a feast, such a suit of apparel, is direct robbery in the Lord's eye, and the poor may cry, That is mine which you cast away so vainly, by which both I and you might be profited, Prov. iii. 27, 28. With-hold not good from him therefore to whom it is due, &c.

Ver. 10. As every man hath received, &c.] “ And as all talents for public offices, as well as private capacities of usefulness in the church, are the free gift of God, let every one who is favoured with them, be careful to employ them, in proportion to what he has received, for the advantage and edification one of another, as persons entrusted with, and accountable to their great Lord and Master for the various gifts and endowments which he has graciously bestowed upon them, that they may manage them with wisdom and faithfulness, like honorable stewards, (καὶ οὐκ οἰκονομοὶ) for the good of the church for which he gave them.” By the *manifold* or *various* grace of God, we may understand, that great diversity of gifts, which all proceeded from one and the same Spirit, and which were all of pure grace, or free favour ; for none of the Christians could demand any of them by any claim of justice, or as a debt due to him. Now every one of those gifts was to be made use of, not merely for the private advantage of the persons upon whom they were bestowed, but for the glory of God, and the public good of mankind ; and more particularly of the Christian church ; that the Christians might promote divine knowledge, experience, and piety in each other. See Rom. xii. 6—8.

Ver. 11. If any man speak, &c.] St. Peter having, in the preceding verse, spoken of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were distributed among the Christians in great diversity,—and recommended it to every one to make use of his own spiritual gifts for the good of the church,—in this verse he descends to particulars, and instances in the two offices of a *pastor* or teacher, and a *deacon*, who were very commonly in that age, not only chosen by the direction of the Spirit, but who likewise had extraordinary helps from God, to direct and assist them in the discharge of their

through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you :

13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be-reproached for the name of

Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

* See ch. i. 6, 7. Pf. 17. 3. & 66. 10. Is. 48. 10. Jer. 9. 7. Dan. 11. 35. Zech. 13. 9. 1 Cor. 3. 13. † Mat. 5. 13. Acts, 5. 41. Heb. 10. 34. Jam. 1. 2, 11. Rom. 5. 3. 2 Cor. 1. 5. Phil. 3. 10. Col. 1. 24. 2 Tim. 2. 10, 12. Rev. 1. 9. Rom. 8. 17, 18. ‡ Mat. 25. 31. Ch. 1. 6, 7, 13. 1 Cor. 1. 7. 2 Thes. 1. 7. Luke, 17. 30. Mat. 19. 28, 29. § Mat. 5. 10, 11. Jam. 1. 12. Ch. 2. 20. & 3. 14, 16. ¶ 1c. 11. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 9. †† Jam. 2. 7. Phil. 2. 28. ††† Ch. 2. 14, 20. & 3. 14, 17. 1 Thes. 4. 11. 1 Tim. 5. 13. †††† Ver. 13, 14. Ch. 3. 14, 17. 1 Tim. 1. 12. & 3. 10, 12. Phil. 1. 29. Acts, 5. 41. Mat. 5. 12.

their particular office. Perhaps St. Peter, by using the word *λόγια*, oracles, might allude to the high-priest's consulting the oracle by *Urim and Thummim*. When he inquired in that manner, the divine oracle gave answers to the children of Israel, and that oracle, in the LXX. is frequently called *λόγια*. The teacher or minister in the Christian church was to speak as giving answers to the people, as uttering divine oracles, or as teaching the word of God, not of men. The original of *if any man minister, might be rendered, if any man officiate or serve as a deacon, let him, &c.* See Acts vi. 2.

Ver. 12.] St. Peter here returns to what he had often touched upon in this epistle; namely, to exhort the Christians to behave with patience and integrity under their present severe persecution. To which purpose he uses the following arguments: *first*, He insinuates that it was not a strange or unusual thing, for the people of God to be persecuted: *secondly*, Though they suffered here as Christ did, they should hereafter, if faithful, be glorified with him: *thirdly*, Besides the prospect of that future glory, they had at present the Spirit of God for their support and comfort: *fourthly*, That it was an honour for any one of them to suffer, not as a malefactor, but as a Christian: *fifthly*, Though afflictions began with the Christians, yet the weight of the storm would fall upon the unbelievers.—From these considerations he exhorted them to persevere in their duty, and trusts all events with God, ver. 12—19.

Think it not strange, &c.] See on ver. 4. By serious and frequent meditations Christians should be prepared for the cross, and then they would not think persecution a strange thing: it would not then terrify or surprize them. See ch. i. 6. ii. 21. 1 Thes. iii. 3, 4. By *πυρρός*, fire or burning, is meant that trial as it were by fire, or that hot and fiery persecution of the Christians, which had then proceeded chiefly from the unbelieving Jews. The image is the same here as in ch. i. 7. where see the note. This may help to explain Matth. xxiv. 7, 8, 9. For this fiery trial was a literal and exact accomplishment of that part of our Lord's prophecy, *then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, &c.* This fiery persecution happened only for a trial of the Christians. It was not to burn them up, or a fire kindled to their destruction; but it was to prove them, whether they would conceal or deny the truth;

whether they would give up Christianity, or continue true to their profession.

Ver. 13. But rejoice, inasmuch, &c.] But, in proportion to your partaking the sufferings of Christ, rejoice, that at the revelation of his glory, you may rejoice with exceeding great joy. Christ will not always be concealed from the eyes of men: there is a time coming, when he will make himself conspicuous to all, and be revealed from heaven, as the universal Judge, with the greatest glory, and most divine majesty. See 1 Cor. i. 7.

Ver. 14. For the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:] The Venetian reading is, *The Spirit of honour, and of glory, and divine power, even the Spirit of God, resteth upon you.* The meaning seems to be, in general, "You shall have the Spirit of God in a very glorious manner, to support you, in proportion to the trials which you are called to bear; and this will spread a glory round you, even though you may be treated in the most infamous manner, as the vilest of malefactors;"—which we know was the case with several of the primitive Christians. See Isai. xi. 2. xvii. 22. Acts i. 8. ii. 3. and comp. Exod. xl. 35.

Ver. 15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, &c.] Let not therefore any of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a malefactor; or as one who busily affects the government of other men, or the magistrate's office. See ch. ii. 20. &c. and the Apostolic Constitutions, b. v. c. 2. Dr. Lardner has well observed, "That the word *ἀλλοτριεπιστοπία*, cannot here signify merely 'a prying into the concerns of private families;' which could not be ranked with such crimes as are here mentioned, nor expose a man to the punishment of the civil magistrate: but it may signify a man who presumes to inspect and direct the affairs of others; perhaps who aspires to public authority;—a temper which shewed itself much among the Jews, particularly at Alexandria and Casarea, and which would naturally give great offence to the Romans, and make them very dangerous enemies. If therefore any thing of this kind might appear among Christians, it would be of particular bad consequence in those times."

Ver. 16. Let him not be ashamed;] There is no shame in suffering, unless it be for some crime: to be a Christian, and to suffer for being so, is an honour. Grotius's remark

17 * For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God : and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ?

18 * And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner ap-

pear ?

19 Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

* If. 10. 12. Jer. 25. 29. & 49. 12. Ezek. 9. 6. Amos, 3. 2. Dan. 9. 27. Mal. 3. 5. Mat. 24. 9. 14. John, 16. 2. 12—15. & 21. 23, 24. Mat. 24. 21. ^a Prov. 11. 31. Jer. 25. 29. Luke, 23. 31. Mat. 25. 22. Jer. 30. 11. & 46. 28. Ver. 14, 16. 2 Tim. 3. 12. ^b Pf. 31. 5. Luke, 23. 46. 2 Tim. 1. 12. Rev. 2. 10.

^c Luke, 23. 31. & 10. ^d See ch. 3. 14, 17.

mark on the words is this: " If a man was not to be " ashamed to die with Phocion, how much less to die for " Christ ! " It was sometimes deemed a sufficient accusation of the primitive Christians, " that they were the " disciples of Jesus ; " and upon that account alone many of them suffered death : but what a glorious thing was it thus to die, when their bitterest adversaries had no crime to lay to their charge, nothing to object against them, but that they were Christians !

Ver. 17. For the time is come, &c.] 'Ο καιρός, the time ; the signal time prophesied of, Matth. xxiv. 9, 21, 22. Mark, xiii. 12, 13. By τὸ κρίμα, judgment, seems here to be meant the particular distress which was to happen before Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed.— The Christians were to expect to feel some of the first effects of that general calamity : it was to begin with them, as our Saviour had plainly prophesied in the text already referred to. It was God's way of old, to begin with sending calamities on his own people ; and indeed a state of trial seems highly proper before a state of recompence. See ch. i. 6. The present verse looks like an allusion to Ezek. ix. 6. comp. Jer. xxv. 29. By us here seems to be meant the Christians of that age, whether formerly Jews or Gentiles ; for they appear now to have been persecuted generally every where. See ch. v. 9. They who obey not the gospel of God, is a proper description of the unbelieving Jews : they were not chargeable with idolatry ; they acknowledged and worshipped the true God ; but they rejected the gospel which God revealed by his Son ;— and therefore they came to so dreadful an end. See 1 Thess. ii. 14—16. Whoever compares the accounts in the Scriptures, or ancient fathers, concerning the persecutions which befel the Christians about this time, with the sufferings of the Jews as related by Josephus, will easily see, that the distress only began with the Christians, and was light compared with what afterwards fell upon the Jews : for, when Jerusalem was destroyed, the Christians escaped with their lives, and enjoyed more peace and tranquillity than they had done before. God delivered Noah in the time of the flood, Lot out of Sodom, and the Christians at the destruction of Jerusalem. See the next note.

Ver. 18. And if the righteous, &c.] St. Peter having, in the preceding verse, compared the case of the Christians with that of the unbelieving Jews, he intimated that the approaching calamities were only to begin at the house of God ; but the end, the weight of the storm, would fall upon the unbelieving Jews, because of their refusal of the gospel. But in this verse he seems to have enlarged his view, and to have compared the present case of faithful Christians, to the case of the idolatrous and wicked world

at the last day, as he had already done, ver. 5. The verse before us is taken from Prov. xi. 31. according to the text. The apostle seems to have quoted the words, not by way of proof, but as alluding to that ancient proverb, and according to the words of the Wise King to his present subject. The word scarcely, or with great difficulty, must allude to the difficulties arising to good men in their Christian course, from the dangerous snares and temptations of sin and the world. St. Peter has put it by way of question, Where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? In which he alludes to an earthly court of judicature, where the innocent, or such as are sure of pardon, may appear with courage and cheerfulness ; but the guilty are afraid and unwilling to appear at all. The turn of the expression in the original is very lively : The ungodly and the sinner— where shall he appear ? It seems as if the apostle were solicitous to lead the sinner to consider where he should hide his head, since wherever he was, he would find God immediately appearing against him as an irresistible enemy. This he might say, by way of warning to persecutors, and to encourage Christians to hope and trust that God would vindicate their cause, and preserve them from turning aside to crooked paths.

Ver. 19. According to the will of God] That is, " According to his permission, suffering as Christians, not as " evil-doers : ver. 15." The soul, by a Hebraism, is often put for the whole man ; but here it may be understood of the highest concerns, and of our future and everlasting welfare. See Pf. xxxi. 5. Eccles. xii. 7. Luke, xxiii. 46. When they suffered for righteousness' sake, they were to commit their souls or lives unto God, as unto a faithful Creator. This was another argument for patience ; their suffering was not agreeable to the will of God, considered as their Governor or Judge ; but God was also their Creator. But, besides his being their Creator, he is likewise faithful ; that is, true to his promises, and may be depended upon, as one of sufficient power, wisdom, and goodness, to make all things conduce to the good of the pious, and particularly to raise them to a happy immortality. This promise he had made to them in the gospel, and they might trust him for the performance. By well-doing, some would understand, " a kind treatment of their " enemies and persecutors ; " which behaviour is unquestionably the duty of Christians when persecuted : but St. Peter seems to have used the word here in a more extensive sense, as intending to exhort them to a good behaviour in general. If they had been malefactors, and suffered as such, they could not have rationally committed their souls unto God as unto a faithful Creator : whereas such as make it their study to obey him, may confide in him in

the

C H A P V.

He exhorteth the elders to feed their flocks: the younger to obey; and all, to be sober, watchful, and constant in the faith; and to resist the cruel adversary, the devil.

[Anno Domini 65.]

THE ^a elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an elder, and a ^b wit-

ness of the sufferings of Christ, and also ^c a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 ^d Feed the flock of God ^e which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; ^f not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 ^g Neither as ^h being lords over ⁱ God's

^a Acts, 14. 23. & 15. 6, 23. & 20. 17, 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17, 19. Titus, 1. 5, 7. 2 John, 1. 3 John, 1. Philem. 9. ^b Luke, 24. 48. Acts, 1. 8, 22. & 2. 32. & 3. 15. & 5. 32. & 10. 39, 41. ^c Rev. 1. 9. Rom. 8. 17, 18. 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. 1 John, 3. 2. Col. 3. 4. Ver. 4. ^d John, 21. 15—17. Acts, 20. 20, 25. 1 Cor. 9. 17. & 4. 1. 2 Tim. 4. 2, 5. ^e Or as much as in you is. ^f 1 Tim. 3. 3, 8, 16. Titus, 1. 7. 2 Cor. 12. 14, 15. Acts, 20. 17, 34. ^g Mat. 20. 25, 26. 2 Cor. 1. 24. 1 Cor. 3. 5. James, 4. 12. ^h Or overruling. ⁱ Deut. 32. 9. Ps. 33. 12. & 74. 2. & 135. 4. Ezek. 34. 4. 1 Cor. 3. 9. & 6. 19, 20. Titus, 2. 14. Ch. 2. 9. Rev. 5. 9. Acts, 20. 28.

the greatest distress. He will support them in trouble, or deliver them from it; at death he will receive their spirits; and at the last day he will raise them again, and make them happy for ever.

Inferences drawn from ver. 6.—It is a thing of prime concernment for a Christian, to be rightly informed, and frequently put in mind, what is the true estate and nature of a Christian; for this the multitude of those who bear that name, either know not, or commonly forget, and so are carried away with the vain fancies and mistakes of the world. The apostle has characterized Christianity very clearly to us in this place, by that which is the very nature of it, *conformity with Christ*, and that which is necessarily consequent upon that, *disconformity with the world*.

We have first here, the preaching of the gospel as the suitable means to a certain end. Secondly, The express nature of that end.

1. The preaching of the gospel as a suitable means to a certain end; *for this cause*. There is a particular end, and that very important, for which the preaching of the gospel is intended; this end many consider not, hearing it, as if it were to no end, or not propounding a fixed determined end in their hearing. This therefore is to be considered by those who preach this gospel, that they aim right in it at this end, and no other. There must be no self end. It is necessarily incumbent upon ministers of the gospel, that they make it their study to find in themselves this work, *this living to God*, otherwise they cannot skilfully nor faithfully apply their gifts to work this effect on their hearers; and therefore acquaintance with God is most necessary.

How sounds it to many of us, at the least, but as a well contrived story, whose use is to amuse us, and possibly delight us a little, and there is an end! and indeed no end, for this turns the most serious and most glorious of all messages into an empty sound. If we keep awake, and give it a hearing, it is much; but for any thing further, how few deeply beforehand consider, "I have a dead heart; therefore will I go unto the word of life, that it may be quickened: it is frozen, I will go and lay it before the warm beams of that Sun which shines in the gospel; my corruptions are mighty and strong, and grace, if there be any in my heart, is exceeding weak; but there is in the gospel a power to weaken and kill sin, and to strengthen grace; and this being the intent of my wife

" God in appointing it, it shall be my desire and purpose, in resorting to it, to find it to me according to his gracious intendment; to have faith in my Christ, the fountain of my life, more strengthened, and made more active in drawing from him; to have my heart more refined and spiritualized, and to have the sluice of repentance opened, and my affections to divine things enlarged; more hatred of sin, and more love of God and communion with him."

When you come to hear the gospel, inquire within, "Why came I hither this day? what had I in mine eye and desires ere I came forth, and in my way as I was coming? Did I seriously propound an end or no, and what was my end?" Nor does the mere custom of mentioning this in prayer satisfy the question; for this, as other such things usually do in our hand, may turn to a lifeless form, and have no heat of spiritual affection; none of David's panting and breathing after God in his ordinances; such desires as will not be stilled without a measure of attainment, as the child's desire of the breast; as our apostle resembles it, chap. ii. 2.

And then again, being returned home, reflect on your hearts, "Much has been heard, but is there any thing done by it? Have I gained my point? It was not simply to pass a little time that I went, or to pass it with delight in hearing; *rejoicing in that light*, as they did in St. John Baptist's, John, v. 35. *for a season* (*προς ἄρα*), as long as the hour lasts! It was not to have my ear pleased, but my heart changed; not to learn some new notions, and carry them cold in my head, but to be *quickened*, and *purified*, and *renewed in the spirit of my mind*? Is this done? Think I now with greater esteem of Christ, and the life of faith, and the happiness of a Christian? And are such thoughts solid and abiding with me? What sin have I left behind? What grace of the Spirit have I brought home? or what new degree, or at least new desire of it, a living desire, which will follow its point?" Oh! this were good repetition.

It is a strange folly in multitudes of us to set ourselves no mark, to propound no end in the hearing of the gospel. The merchant fails not only that he may fail, but for traffic, and traffics that he may be rich. The husbandman plows not only to keep himself busy with no further end, but plows that he may sow, and sows that he may reap with advantage: and shall we do the most excellent and fruitful

heritage, ^b but being ensamples to the flock.

pear, ye shall receive ^c a crown of glory that
fadeth not away.

4 And when the ^d chief Shepherd ^e shall ap-

^a Phil. 3. 17. ^b Thess. 3. 9. ^c 1 Tim. 4. 12. Titus, 2. 7. ^d 1 Jo. 40. 11. Ezek. 34. 23. & 37. 24. Joh. 10. 11. Heb. 13. 20. Ch. 2. 24.
^e Titus, 2. 13. Mat. 25. 31-46. Acts, 17. 31. ^f 2 Thess. 1. 7-9. Rev. 1. 7. & 20. 11, 12. ^g 1 Cor. 9. 25. ^h 2 Tim. 4. 8. Rev. 2. 10. &
3. 11. Ch. 1. 4.

ful work fruitlessly? hear only to hear, and look no further? This is indeed a great vanity, and a great misery, to lose that labour, and gain nothing by it, which, duly used, would be of all others most advantageous and gainful; and yet all meetings are full of this.

Now, when you come, this is not simply to hear a discourse, and relish or dislike it in hearing; but a matter of life and death, of eternal death and eternal life; and the spiritual life, begot and nourished by the word, is the beginning of that eternal life. Which leads us to consider,

2. The express nature of the end, that they might *live to God in the spirit*. Men pass away, and others succeed; but the gospel is still the same, has the same tenor and substance, and the same ends. As Solomon speaks of the heavens and earth, that remain the same, while *one generation passes, and another cometh*, Eccl. i. 4.; the gospel surpasses both in its stability, as our Saviour testifies, Mat. v. 18. *they shall pass away, but not one jot of his word*. And indeed they wear and wax old, as the apostle teaches us; but the gospel is from one age to another, of the most unalterable integrity, has still the same vigour and powerful influence as at the first.

They who formerly received the gospel, received it upon these terms; therefore think it not hard: and they are now dead; all the difficulty of that work of dying to sin is now over with them; if they had not died to their sins by the gospel, they had died in them after a while, and so died eternally. It is therefore a wise prevention, to have sin judged and put to death in us before we die; if we will not part with sin, if we die in it, and with it, we and our sin perish together; but if it die first before us, then we live for ever.

And what thinkest thou of thy carnal will, and all the delights of sin? What is the longest term of its life? Uncertain it is, but most certainly very short: thou and these pleasures must be severed and parted within a little time; however, thou must die, and then they die, and you never meet again. Now, were it not the wisest course to part a little sooner with them, and let them die before thee, that thou mayest *inherit eternal life*, and eternal delights in it, *pleasures for evermore*? It is the only wise and profitable bargain; let us therefore delay it no longer.

This is our season of enjoying the sweetness of the gospel; others heard it before us, and now they are removed, and we must remove shortly, and leave our places to others, to speak and hear in. It is high time that we were considering to what end we speak and hear; high time, without further delay, to lay hold on that salvation which is held forth to us: and that we may lay hold on it, we must immediately let go our hold of sin, and those perishing things which we hold so firm, and cleave to so fast. Do they that are dead, who heard and obeyed the gospel, now repent their repentance and mortifying the flesh? Or, do they not think ten thousand times more pains, were it

for many ages, all too little for a moment of that which now they enjoy, and shall enjoy to eternity? And *they that are dead*, who heard the gospel and slighted it, if such a thing might be, what would they give for one of these opportunities which now we daily have, and daily lose, and have no fruit or esteem of them! You have seen many, and you that shifted the sight have heard of numbers, cut off in a little time. And yet, who has laid to heart the lengthening out of his day, and considered it more as an opportunity of securing that higher and happier life, than as a little protracting of this wretched life, which is hastening to an end? Oh! therefore be entreated *to-day, while it is called To-day, not to harden your hearts*, Pl. xcvi. 7, 8. Heb. iii. 7. iv. 7.

Think therefore wisely of these two things, of the proper end of the gospel, and of the approaching end of thy days, and let thy certainty of this latter drive thee to seek more certainty of the other, that thou mayest partake of it; and then this again will make the thoughts of the other sweet to thee. That visage of death, which is so terrible to unchanged sinners, shall be amiable to thine eye: having found a life in the gospel as happy and lasting as this is miserable and vanishing, and seeing the perfection of that life on the other side of death, thou wilt long for the passage.

Be more serious in this matter, of daily hearing the gospel; consider why it is sent to thee, and what it brings; and think, it is too long I have slighted its message, and many who have done so are cut off, and shall hear it no more: I have it once more inviting me, and it may be this may be the last invitation I shall receive: and in these thoughts, ere you come, bow your knee to the Father of spirits, that this one thing may be granted you, that your souls may find at length the lively and mighty power of his Spirit upon yours, in the hearing of this gospel, that you may be *judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit*.

Now, if this life be in thee, it will act: all life is in motion, and is called *an act*; but most active of all is this most excellent, and, as I may call it, most lively life. It will be moving towards God; often seeking to him, making still towards him as its principle and fountain, exerting itself in holy and affectionate thoughts of him; sometimes on one of his sweet attributes, sometimes on another; as the bee among the flowers. And as it will thus act within, so it will be outwardly laying hold on all occasions, yea, seeking out ways and opportunities to be serviceable to thy Lord; employing all for him, commending and extolling his goodness, doing and suffering cheerfully for him, laying out the strength of desires, and parts, and means, in thy station, to gain him glory. If thou be alone, then not alone, but with him; seeking to know more of him, and be made more like him. If in company, then casting about how to bring his name into esteem, and to draw others to a love of religion and holiness by speeches,

5 Likewise, ^m ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you ⁿ be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility :

for ^o God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

6 ^p Humble yourselves therefore under the

^m Lev. 19. 32. 1 Tim. 5. 1, 2. ⁿ Rom. 12. 10, 16. Phil. 2. 3. Eph. 5. 21. Ch. 3. 4. ^o Job, 37. 24. Prov. 3. 24. & 6. 16, 17. & 16. 5. 18, 19. & 18. 12. & 22. 4. & 29. 23. If. 2. 11. & 13. 11. & 57. 15. & 6. 2. Mat. 23. 12. Luke, 1. 51, 52. & 14. 11. & 18. 14. James, 4. 6. ^p Job, 22. 29. James, 4. 7, 10. Jer. 13. 18. Pl. 50. 15. & 91. 15. Prov. 29. 23. Mat. 23. 12. Luke, 1. 52. & 14. 14. & 18. 14.

as it may be fit, and most by the true behaviour of thy carriage ; tender over the souls of others, to do them good to thy utmost ; thinking, each day, an hour lost when thou wert not busy for the honour and advantage of him to whom thou now livest ; thinking in the morning, " Now, what may I do this day for my God ? How may I most please and glorify him, and use my strength and understanding, and my whole self, as not mine but his ? " And then in the evening, reflecting, " O Lord, have I seconded these thoughts in reality ? What glory has he had by me this day ? Whither went my thoughts and endeavours ? What busied them most ? Have I been much with God ? Have I adorned the gospel in my converse with others ? " And if thou findest any thing done this way, this life will engage thee to bless and acknowledge him the spring and worker of it. If any step has been taken aside, were it but to an appearance of evil, or if any fit season of good has escaped thee unprofitably, it will lead thee to check thyself, and to be grieved for thy sloth and coldness, and see if more love would not beget more diligence.

But wouldst thou grow upwards in this life ? Have much recourse to Jesus Christ thy Head, the spring from whom flow the animal spirits which quicken thy soul. Wouldst thou know more of God ? He it is that reveals the Father, and reveals him as his Father ; and in him thy Father, and that is the sweet notion of God. Wouldst thou overcome thy lusts entirely ? Our victory is in him ; apply his conquest ; *We are more than conquerors, through him that loved us*, Rom. viii. 37. Wouldst thou be more replenished with graces, and spiritual affections ? His fulness is, for that use, open to us ; life, and more life, in him, and for us ; this was his business here, he came, *that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly*, John, x. 10.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle,

1. Draws an inference from what he had advanced. *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind*, with patience and holy resolution : *for he that hath suffered in the flesh*, crucifying the body of sin through union with a dying Saviour, and willingly taking up any cross which the divine Providence may lay upon him, *hath ceased from sin*, from his former corrupt principles and practice, and is mortified to every evil affection : *that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men ; but the little space which yet remains, he is earnest to redeem, and fain would spend it according to the will of God.* Note ; (1.) Nothing so effectually mortifies sin as a believing view of the cross of Christ. (2.) The will of God, not our vile affections, must be our guide. If we live after the flesh, we must die eternally, while the paths of grace and holiness alone can lead us to immortal life and glory.

2. The apostle argues on the reasonableness of living unto God, from the consideration of the abuse they had made of the time that was past. *For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when (with shame we remember it,) we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings and riot, banquetings and luxurious carousals, and abominable idolatries*, joining with the Gentiles in these horrible deeds : *wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them still to the same excess of riot as before, speaking evil of you and your religion*, as if it made you morose, unsociable, and poor despicable objects : *who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead*, at the great day of his appearing and glory. Note ; (1.) The remembrance of our former evil ways should often dwell upon our minds for our deep humiliation before God. (2.) The conduct of a Christian appears very strange to an ungodly world, and they wonder what there is in religion, which, for the sake of it, can induce men to forego all that they call enjoyment. (3.) They who speak evil of our good conversation in Christ, must shortly give a solemn account of their hard speeches before an awful tribunal.

3. The former saints of God were thus censured of the world, and saved by grace. *For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are now dead in Christ*, and departed in his faith and fear, *that they might be judged according to men in the flesh*, and undergo reproach, persecution, and some of them even death itself, for those tenets which the carnal world derides and abhors, *but might, notwithstanding all the sufferings in the body, live according to God in the Spirit*, under the mighty influences of his grace, in a holy conformity to his will, and expecting, through the power of the Holy Ghost, to be raised up at the last day to live with God eternally.

2dly, We have an awful position : *But the end of all things is at hand*. The Jewish state was soon to be destroyed, where dwelt the most inveterate persecutors of the Christian name ; and to every individual is this truth most applicable, to whom death and eternity are approaching, and judgment is at the door ; from which awful considerations the apostle enforces the following exhortations :

1. *Be ye therefore sober, temperate in all things, not immoderately pursuing, nor immoderately using any thing in this world, knowing how short the time is.* And,

2. *Watch unto prayer ; be on your guard against the numberless temptations which beset you, and especially be looking up by ceaseless prayer for strength to resist and overcome them.* Note ; Prayer is our great preservative ; and we shall never fail, while we continue waiting upon God.

3. *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, cordially and tenderly affected towards each other :*

mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time :

7 Casting all your care upon him ; for he careth for you.

1 Pf. 35. 5. & 55. 22. Mat. 6. 25—34. Luke, 12. 22. 1 Cor. 9. 9, 10. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Tim. 6. 8. Heb. 13. 5.

for charity shall cover the multitude of sins, engaging you kindly to overlook the offences of your brethren, and cast a veil of oblivion over their many infirmities, and to conceal them from the censorious world.

4. Use hospitality one to another without grudging, freely and cheerfully receiving those who, for righteousness' sake, are driven from place to place, or are travelling to spread the glad tidings of salvation, and trusting on the divine Providence for their maintenance : and in every other respect be hospitable, always keeping within the due bounds of Christian prudence and temperance.

5. As every man hath received the gift, whatever talents he is blessed with, whether of wealth, abilities, or more especially of grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, even so minister the same one to another, laying out yourselves for your mutual edification and comfort, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God, from whom you have received all that you possess, and to whom you are accountable for the due improvement of it. If any man speak, therefore, as called to the office of a preacher, let him speak as the oracles of God, with strict adherence to the sacred doctrines therein revealed, not presuming to add any thing thereunto, or diminish ought therefrom : if any man minister in the office of a deacon, or out of his worldly substance to the necessitous, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth, with all fidelity, cheerfulness, and diligence, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, and his name exalted in the advancement of his church and his kingdom in the world, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, to the incarnate Saviour, and to the Father through him. Amen! Note ; (1.) Whatever we possess, we are but stewards, and must give an account to the great Master for the talents committed to our trust. (2.) God's glory should be the great end of all our conversation, and in our lips and lives we should endeavour to shew forth his praise.

3dly, The apostle,

1. Encourages them to bear up boldly under their expected trials. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you as gold in the furnace, as though some strange thing happened unto you, and your sufferings were uncommon, and such as God's children might not have expected. But however severe your trials may be, rejoice in them, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, and herein conformed to your glorious Head ; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy, and reign with him, as you have suffered for him. And, in the lesser trials of reviling and slander, if ye be reproached for the name of Christ, branded with some opprobrious name, and made the objects of derision and contempt, happy are ye ; let it be your delight to be thus vile, and gladly bear this honourable badge of infamy ; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, to comfort you under these reproaches, and to give you an earnest of that eternal glory to which these trials are the way : on their part he is evil spoken of, and his blessed operations reviled and blasphemed ; but on your

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part he is glorified, and his name exalted by your faith and patience, and by the praises given him for the supports and comforts which you experience from him. Note ; (1.) We must count no affliction strange, however grievous for the time ; it is permitted to be, because God sees that we have much dross, and need that furnace to purge us from it. (2.) Our sufferings for Christ are our real honour, and shall be, if we be faithful, our highest joy. (3.) In a day of recompence we shall never regret what we have endured for Christ and his cause. (4.) We need not wonder at any reproaches cast on ourselves, when even the blessed Spirit of God himself sustains the like blasphemies, and his operations are branded as delusions and enthusiasm.

2. He admonishes them to give their enemies no such handle against them as they desire to have. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, justly chargeable with any criminal conduct whatever ; or as a busy-body in other men's matters, labouring after pre-eminence and authority, or prying into the concerns of his neighbours which do not belong to him, and neglecting his own. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, and if, however innocent, through enmity to him on account of his religion, any of these atrocious crimes are charged upon him, let him not be ashamed of such malignant abuse, but let him glorify God on this behalf, that he is counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, and enabled to despise these calumnies.

3. He supports what he had advanced, by the most weighty considerations. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God, not only in the destruction of the Jewish temple, but in very severe visitations upon his spiritual church and people, who need the correction of his rod : and if it first begin at us, and we undergo the severe discipline of the cross, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ? How fearful will be the vengeance executed on them ? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, plucked as brands from the burning, and hardly escaping, like Lot from the flames of Sodom, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear, who wilfully and obstinately reject all the warnings of God's providence, and the word of his grace, determined to abide in their iniquities, whatever the consequence may be. How terrible, sure, and inevitable must be their eternal perdition ! Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, patiently and submissively, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator, content to refer themselves to him, resigned to his will, and ready to do or suffer according to his pleasure, satisfied in his faithfulness to all his promises, and trusting to reap their fulfilment in a blessed eternity. Note ; (1.) God corrects his own children that they may not be condemned with the world. (2.) If the Lord chastises his own people for the evil that he sees in them, shall the rebellious sinner go unpunished ? No, verily ; there is dreadful vengeance hanging over him. (3.) The gate of heaven is strait ; how surely then must they be excluded, who never so much as set their faces

5 M

heaven-

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh

about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, know-

¹ Luke, 21. 34, 36. ¹ Theff. 5. 6. Ch. 1. 13. & 4. 7. Rom. 13. 11—14. 4. 27. & 6. 11, 13. James, 4. 7.

² Job, 1. 7. & 2. 2. Rev. 12. 9. & 20. 2. Luke, 22. 31. ¹ Eph.

heaven-ward! (4.) Come what will, we know that our sufferings are sent or permitted of God, and that his faithfulness, power, and love, are engaged to bring every persevering believer safely through them; and this is sufficient to make us easy, yea, happy under them.

CHAP. V.

BECAUSE the knowledge, experience, and conduct of the people, depend in a great measure upon the kind of instruction which they receive from their teachers, the apostle in this chapter, addressed the *elders*, that is, the bishops, pastors, and rulers, among the brethren of Pontus, &c. ver. 1. exhorting them to feed the flock of God committed to their care, faithfully; and to exercise their office, not as by constraint, but willingly; not from the love of gain, but from love to their great Master and to the flock, ver. 2.—and not to lord it over God's heritages, but to be patterns of humility and disinterestedness to their people, ver. 3.—Next, because the faithful performance of the pastoral duty was in that age attended with great difficulty and danger, the apostle, to encourage them, assured them that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall, if faithful, receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, ver. 4. The distinguished reward, which Christ is to bestow on those who have suffered for his sake, being a favourite topic with our apostle, he introduces it often in this epistle.

Having thus exhorted the pastors, the apostle turned his discourse to the people, charging them to be subject to their elders, and to one another; that is, to be of a teachable disposition, and to receive instruction from every one capable of giving it, and to do all the duties which they owed to each other, according to their different stations and relations, ver. 5.—but especially to be subject to God, by humbly submitting themselves to the judgments which were coming upon them, that God might exalt them in due time, ver. 6.—casting all their anxious care on God, because he cared for them, ver. 7.—and to watch against the devil, who went about as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy them, particularly by instigating the wicked to persecute them, and drive them into apostacy, ver. 8.—But they were to resist that terrible enemy by steadfastness in the faith, and not to think themselves hardly dealt with when persecuted or tempted, knowing that their brethren every where were exposed to the same temptations of the devil, ver. 9.—In the mean time, to give them all the assistance in his power, the apostle prayed earnestly to God to establish and strengthen them, ver. 10.—and ended his prayer with a doxology to God, expressive of his supreme dominion over the universe and all the things that it contains.

The apostle informed the brethren of Pontus, &c. that he had sent this letter to them by Silvanus, whom he praised for his fidelity to Christ, ver. 12.—Then giving them the salutation of the church in Babylon, (whatever it may mean,) where it seems he was when he wrote this letter, he added the salutation of Mark, whom he called

his son, either because he had been the instrument of his conversion, or on account of the great attachment which Mark bore to him, ver. 13.—And having desired them to salute one another, he concluded with giving them his apostolical benediction, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. The elders—I exhort,] St. Peter's mode of address here, saying, *I exhort*, or *entreat*, *who am also a fellow-elder*, (παράκλητος, ὁ συμπρεσβυτερος,) is quite different from the high tone of *the Pope*, who, under pretence of being St. Peter's successor and head of the church, commands with sovereign authority, like a lord, and not a fellow-elder, which all the apostles were with other elders, though every elder was not an apostle.

Ver. 2. Feed the flock of God, &c.] Every bishop and pastor was to feed his own flock; that is, the particular church of which he had the care; there he was to lead the Christian people by his example, doctrines, and admonitions. This precept is similar to that which our Lord gave to St. Peter himself, John, xxi. 15, &c. What we render, *Taking the oversight thereof*, is, literally, *Discharging the episcopal office*, or, *the duty of a bishop*;—ἐπινομήσεις; which some understand as denoting the work and office of the elders. See the passages in the margin. Upon the words, *Not by constraint*, Dr. Doddridge observes, "It is true, that in the primitive church some were, almost against their will, forced into the episcopal office by dint of importunity: and one would hope it was not an affected modesty with which they declined the office; especially as it was then attended with no temporal emoluments, but exposed them to distinguished labours and sufferings. It is difficult to see how any could, in the strictest sense, be constrained; but, perhaps, the apostle saw some good men too unwilling to accept the office when the churches chose them to it, and when inspired teachers urged it upon them: and though little gain could have been made of it, and the temptation to lord it over God's heritage was not so great as when ecclesiastical persons were invested with civil power; (in which most of the honour and influence of their ecclesiastical character, as such, has been generally lost,) yet, foreseeing what would happen in the church, and observing perhaps some discoveries of such a temper beginning to prevail, the caution was exceedingly just, proper, and important."

Ver. 3. Over God's heritage,] There is nothing for God's in the original; the word κληροί, seems here to denote those distinct congregations of Christians, which fell to the lot, as it were, of different pastors; alluding to the division of Canaan by lots. Comp. Deut. iv. 20. ix. 29. They are called in the next sentence, *the flock*. Dr. Heylin renders it, *Lords over them who are allotted to you*: for all Christians are the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance. It has been well observed, that the church of Rome could not well have acted more directly contrary to the injunction of St. Peter, if she had studied to disobey it, and to form herself upon a rule that should be the reverse of this.

For,

ing that "the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

10 But the * God of all grace, † who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ

* John, 16. 23. Acts, 14. 22. 1 Thess. 3. 3. 2 Tim. 3. 12. Ch. 1. 6. & 2. 20, 21. & 3. 14. & 4. 1, 12. Rev. 1. 9. & 6. 11. & 7. 14. & 13. 7.
 † Exod. 34. 6, 7. Pf. 86. 5, 15. Micah, 7. 18, 19. 2 Cor. 13. 11. Eph. 1. 6, 7. & 2. 4, 7. † Ch. 2. 9. 2 Pet. 1. 3. 1 Cor. 1. 9.

For, what can be called, *Lording it over God's heritage*, if the requiring a blind and implicit faith from all her members be not so? Or, the commanding men to lay aside their reason and understanding, in order to become good Christians? This is to *lord it over* the disciples of Christ in a most tyrannical manner; and most daringly to disobey the command of him, whom they style, "Prince of the apostles, and Head of their Church." Erasmus has observed, "That by the *κλήροι*, clergy, here, we are not to understand the *priests* and *deacons*, but the *flock*;—the Christians over whom the bishop was set; and this precept of the apostle (says he,) ought to be written up in the halls of bishops, even in gold letters, *Feed the flock of God*. Do not oppress it; do not fleece it; and feed it, not by constraint, or as bound to it by virtue of your office; but out of sincere affection, like the fathers of the church: not for filthy lucre's sake;—as if St. Peter had foreseen the plagues which would arise to the church from hence: lastly, not as *lording* it, but feed it by your good example; conquer it by your good actions. Go before the people in all the virtues of the Christian life; and even in suffering persecution for the sake of your religion. *Kings* may rule over the *unwilling*, but *Christian bishops* over none but the willing; and nothing can recommend their instructions more than a good example."

Ver. 4. A crown of glory that fadeth not away.] See ch. i. 4. The ancients used to wear beautiful crowns, or *crowns of glory*, in times of festivity and joy; and the Greeks used to bestow crowns, made of the leaves of parsley or olive, laurel or bay, upon such as conquered in their games. The glory of such crowns was short-lived, and they soon withered away; the *crowns of glory* which Christ will bestow upon the faithful shall be incorruptible. But St. Peter is here thought to allude more particularly to the crowns made of the flowers of the *amaranth*, which Pliny says had that name, because it withered not away. Galen is very particular in describing it; and observes, that when it was cropped, it was preserved, and, when all the flowers failed, it being watered revived again; and, he says, they used to gather it, and dry it in a gentle heat in a furnace; and then kept it, to make crowns of it in the winter; and that it did not lose its colour or its beauty.

Ver. 5. Ye younger,] The word *Νεώτεροι* is used by our Saviour for *inferiors*, or those who were to be subject; Luke, xxii. 25, 26. It seems here to mean the body of the people. See 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. Heb. xiii. 17. The word *ἐνκοσμήσαθε*, rendered *be clothed*, signifies properly, "To clothe with an outer ornamental garment, tied closely upon one with knots;" and refers to the dress of girls and shepherds. So that St. Peter implies by this word, that the *humility* of Christians, which is one of the most ornamental graces of their profession, should constantly appear in all their conversation, so as to strike the eye of every beholder; and that this amiable grace should be so closely

connected with their persons, that no occurrence, temptation, or calamity, should be able to strip them of it. See Parkhurst on the word *ἐνκοσμοῦμαι*.

Ver. 6. Under the mighty hand of God,] "Under all the dispensations of divine providence, even though wicked men should be made the instruments of effecting its purposes." Perhaps by this expression, the apostle might intend to remind them, that the hand of a righteous Providence was concerned in those events which were owing to the wickedness of men: so far concerned as to over-rule them, and render them instrumental and subservient to the accomplishment of his own designs. This is strongly intimated, Isaiah, x. 5. Psalm, xvii. 14. and in many parallel places.

Ver. 7. Casting all your care, &c.] *Your anxious care or solicitude.* See on Matth. vi. 25.

Ver. 8. Be sober, be vigilant, &c.] They were not so to cast all their care upon God, as to be off their guard, or to indulge in any vice; they were to *watch*, like soldiers encamped near an enemy, lest they should be suddenly surprized. Sobriety at such a time conduces much to watchfulness and safety; whereas drunkards are apt to fall asleep, or to be secure, and off their guard; beasts of prey go about in the night, and creatures which are off their guard are in danger of being taken by them. The *devil*, the grand *adversary* of Christians, is compared to a *roaring lion*, going after his prey. Naturalists have observed, that a lion roars when he is roused by hunger; for then he is most fierce, and most eagerly seeks for prey. Many commentators suppose, that the sacred writer designed hereby to denote the fierce and terrible attacks which the persecuting Jews, instigated by Satan, made upon the Christians. They were like the grand *adversary* and destroyer, and raged, because their time was short; Rev. xii. 12. The expression of *walking about*, is perhaps in allusion to what is said of Satan, Job, i. 7. ii. 2. The word *καταπίνω*, rendered *devour*, originally signified to *drink down*; but it is used by some of the best Greek authors for swallowing solids, as well as liquids: it strongly represents the insatiable rage of the enemy of our salvation. Some have observed, that St. Peter might well give such a caution as this, having himself received such very particular and express warning from Christ his Master, and so shamefully fallen immediately after, for want of the watchfulness which he here recommends. See Parkhurst on the word *καταπίνω*.

Ver. 9. Whom resist, stedfast in the faith,] See Ephes. iv. 27. vi. 10, &c. and James, iv. 7. The word *ἐπιτελειῶθαι*, rendered *accomplished*, signifies *perfected*, or brought to an end. It seems here to mean particularly, that the persecutions of the unbelieving Jews, stirred up by the devil, were every where carried to as great a length upon the *Christians*, as our Lord foretold they would be, before the destruction of Jerusalem. The argument contained in these words lies thus: "You are not the only persons that suffer for the sake of Christ, neither do you suffer more than

Jesus; * after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 * To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By * Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written * briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the * true grace of God wherein ye stand.

13 The church that is at * Babylon, elected

* 2 Cor. 4. 17. Ch. 1. 6, 7. Rom. 16. 25. 2 Cor. 13. 11. 2 Theff. 1. 17. & 3. 3. 1 Tim. 6. 12. Heb. 10. 36, 37. & 13. 21. Jude, 24. * See Rom. 16. 27. 1 Tim. 1. 17. & 6. 16. 2 Tim. 4. 18. Eph. 3. 21. Ch. 4. 11. Rev. 1. 6. & 5. 13. ^b 1 Theff. 1. 1. 2 Theff. 3. 1. 2 Cor. 1. 19. Acts, 15. 22. 27, 40. ^c Heb. 13. 21. Eph. 3. 3. ^d Gal. 1. 8, 9. Titus, 2. 11. Acts, 20. 24. Ch. 1. 13. & 2. 3. Rom. 5. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 24. Heb. 13. 9. ^e Gen. 10. 10. Dan. 4. 30. Pl. 87. 4. with ch. 1. 2, 9.

“ others. The persecution is now carried on with as much fierceness, wherever there are any disciples of Jesus your Master. Do not therefore expect to escape while others suffer: murmur not that you are subject to the common lot of Christians in this hour of trial, neither come behind your brethren in patience and fortitude.”

Ver. 10. *But the God of all grace*] That is, “The most merciful and gracious God.” It is remarkable, that St. Paul has usually given God a title, according to the subject whereof he is treating. If he was treating of *peace*, then he was the *God of peace*; if of *love*, he was the *God of love*; if of *grace*, he was the *God of grace*. St. Peter has with like propriety styled him, the *God of all grace, or favour*; and the two favours which he particularly mentions are, the calling of these Gentiles to be Christians, and thereby raising them to the hope of eternal glory; and the delivering them from their present persecution: which deliverance they might expect would be shortly. They were to suffer for a little while, Heb. x. 37. Wisl. iii. 5. This life is short, compared with eternity; but they were to be delivered from their sufferings before death; for their enemies were to be destroyed speedily. *Avr*Ⓞ, *he, or the same*, is sometimes redundant; but here it seems to have a peculiar force and emphasis: “May he himself,—that same God of all favour, who hath called you to be Christians, fit, support, &c.” The words here used, seem to be all taken from building; *Καθαρίζαι, fit you to each other*; as stones are hewn, cut, or polished, to make them fit one another: 1 Cor. i. 10. *Στηρίζαι, to support*, and *σθενώσαι, to strengthen*, as magnificent buildings are, with well-adjusted pillars: Rom. xvi. 25. *Θεμελιώσαι, to lay the foundation*, upon which the whole structure depends for its support and stability. In such apt words did St. Peter pray that these Christians might be established in their holy faith, and persevere to the end, that they might be saved!

Ver. 12. *By Silvanus, a faithful brother,—(as I suppose, &c.)*] This rendering has seemed to many like a questioning the fidelity of Silvanus. The Syriac has thus rendered the words; *These few things (as I suppose, or reckon them) I have written unto you by Silvanus, a faithful brother.* The word *λογίζομαι*, which we have translated *I suppose*, does not signify *I conjecture*, nor always imply suspicion, or doubting; but is used in the strongest manner to express the most full and firm persuasion of mind. See Rom. iii. 28. viii. 18. Amongst other significations of the word, says Parkhurst, it means to *infer, to conclude*, after stating the reasons on both sides, and as it were balancing the account; for in the prophane writers it is applied to arithmetical calculations: it signifies also to esteem; Rom.

xiv. 14. So that St. Peter might use this word, and not have the least suspicion of the fidelity of Silvanus; but, on the contrary, design thereby to intimate, that he was fully persuaded of his being a *faithful Christian brother*; one who would not corrupt or suppress this letter, but spread it diligently and faithfully among them; and one whose preaching they were to regard, as he would not pervert the gospel. Whether this was the Silvanus or Silas mentioned several times in the Acts as the companion of St. Paul, cannot certainly be determined. Instead of *wherein ye stand*, the Greek may be rendered more properly *wherein ye have stood*. The churches of Galatia were planted by St. Paul, and so very probably were all or most of the churches to which St. Peter wrote. If this *Silvanus* therefore was the companion of St. Paul, he would not only be a proper messenger to send by, as being well known among them, and perhaps assisting in their conversion; but it would greatly tend to confirm them in their holy faith, to find that St. Peter taught the same doctrine with St. Paul, or confirmed what the great apostle of the Gentiles had taught; testifying that it was the true gospel which they had already received. See 2 Pet. ii. 15. The Judaizers would have taken shelter under the authority of St. Peter, and other apostles of the circumcision; Gal. ii. 6, &c. 1 Cor. i. 12. but when the Gentile Christians found that all the apostles harmonized; that St. Peter approved of the gospel preached by St. Paul; that he commended St. Paul's fellow-labourers, and even bore his testimony that the Christians in Asia Minor were right, though converted by the apostle of the Gentiles, and his assistants; it must have greatly established and strengthened them against all the attacks of the Judaizers: and with such a view St. Peter seems to have borne this testimony; intimating in a soft and gentle manner, that they had no occasion to add circumcision and the observation of the Jewish law, to the gospel of Christ. Surely then “St. Peter would not set himself up as the head of the Judaizing Christians in Galatia, or any where else; nor preach a gospel directly contrary to that of St. Paul, or behave as his most active, bitterest, and most dangerous enemy.” The anti-revelationists, who have asserted such things, would do well to review their rash assertions, and consider how unreasonable and groundless these insinuations are. See Parkhurst on the word *λογίζομαι*.

Ver. 13. *The church—at Babylon,*] See the Preface to this epistle. Bishop Cumberland and Mr. Cradock argue from hence, that probably St. Peter wrote from the neighbourhood of Babylon, and found many Jews remaining there ever since the Babylonish captivity, among whom he had preached the gospel with considerable success. “Upon
“ comparing

together with you, saluteth you; and so doth charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of

Acts, 12. 12, 25. & 13. 5, 13. & 15. 37, 38. Col. 4. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 11. Philem. 24. Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 20. 2 Cor. 13. 12. 1 Thess. 5. 26. See ch. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. Jude, 2. Rom. 8. 1. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Eph. 1. 1. Col. 1. 2. & 3. 1, 3, 4. Gal. 2. 20. 1 Thess. 1. 1. 2 Thess. 1. 1, 2. Jude, 1.

“ comparing all the solutions together, (says Benson,) it seems most probable, that by *Babylon* we are to understand the ancient and most famous city of that name. It was in a manner the metropolis of the eastern dispersion of the Jews, and from thence the Jews in Asia Minor had been transplanted. St. Peter as an apostle of the circumcision, would be very likely, when he left Judea, to go amongst the Jews, and where he might find the greatest numbers: and finally, it is most natural to date a letter, or send salutations from a place by its real, and not by a figurative name.” Instead of *elect together with you*, Doddridge reads, *chosen with you*; that is, to be the people of God, and to partake of the privileges of the gospel. *Marcus* was, very likely, converted to Christianity by St. Peter, and afterwards served him in the gospel, as a child serves his father; and therefore he calls him *his son*. See 1 Tim. i. 12. Perhaps Mark had travelled through Asia Minor, and might be known among those churches. Some suppose him to have been a different person from him who was the companion of Barnabas and Paul, and to have been the author of the gospel which bears his name. See the introductory note to the Gospel of St. Mark, and Acts, xii. 12.

Ver. 14. *Peace be with you all, &c.*] St. Peter, in the introduction to this epistle, had addressed himself to the *strangers in Pontus, Galatia, &c.* and wished such of them as were *Christians, or elect*, grace and peace. He now in like manner concludes, and wishes peace unto such of them as were Christians, and continued faithful. As to the other strangers, particularly those who were not professing Christians, he did not directly write to them; for they would have paid but little, if any regard, to his letters or salutations.

Inferences drawn from ver. 10.—The apostle closes his divine doctrine and exhortations with prayer, which he addresses to the *God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus*. It is supplication with thanksgiving, prayer with praise. The matter or thing requested is expressed in divers brief words, *Make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you*; which, though they be much of the same sense, yet are not superfluously multiplied; for they carry the great importance of the thing, and the earnest desire in asking it. The first, *Perfect*, implies more clearly than the rest, their enjoyment of that perfect love which casteth out all fear that hath torment. *Stablish*, has more express reference to both the inward lightness and inconsistency which is natural to us, the counterblasts of persecutions and temptations, and to outward oppositions; and imports the curing of the one, and support against the other. *Strengthen*, adverts to the growth of their graces, especially gaining of further measures of those graces wherein they are lowest. And *settle*, though it seems the same, and in substance is the same with the other word

stablish, yet it adds somewhat to it very considerable; for it signifies to found or fix upon a sure foundation, and so indeed may have an aspect to Him who is the *foundation* and strength of believers, on whom they build by faith, even *Jesus Christ*, in whom alone we can have all, both complete victory over sin, and increase of grace, establishment of spirit, and power to persevere against all difficulties and assaults: *He is that corner foundation-stone laid in Zion, that they who build upon him may not be ashamed*. If. xxviii. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

All our endeavours and diligence in this will be vain, unless we look for our perfecting and establishing from that *right hand*, without which we can do nothing: thither the apostle moves his desires for his brethren, and so teaches them the same address for themselves, *The God of all grace make you perfect*.

The well-instructed Christian looks to *Jesus*, Heb. xii. 2. looks off from all opposition and difficulties; looks above them to *Jesus, the Author and Finisher of the faith* of every soul which perseveringly cleaves to him. Though thou art weak, he is strong: it is he that strengthens thee, and renews thy strength,—makes it fresh, and greater than ever before. The word *יְהוָה*, which we render *renew*, signifies *change*; they shall have for their own, his strength; a childlike believer, and his strong Saviour, are too hard for all that rises against them. It is here fit, as in statues, to measure the man with the basis on which he stands; and there is no taking the right measure of a Christian but that way. *He is the God of all grace*. By reason of our many wants and great weakness, we had need to have a very full hand, and a very strong-hand to go to, for supplies and support. And such we have indeed: our Father is the *God of all grace*, a Spring which cannot be drawn dry, no, nor so much as any whit diminished. By his Spirit within them, the faithful children of God are most powerfully sanctified; without which, indeed, no other thing could be of advantage to them in this. That divine fire kindled within them, is daily refining and sublimating them; that Spirit of Christ is conquering sin, and, by the mighty flame of his love, consuming the earth and dross that is in them; making their affections more spiritual and disengaged from all created delights: life from their Lord still flowing and causing them to grow, strengthening their faith, quickening their love, teaching the soul the ways of killing the strongest corruptions, and fortifying every grace; yea, in wonderful ways advancing the good of his children even by the hardest means, as afflictions and temptations.

And as he is the God of sanctifying grace in the beginning and growth of it, so also the God of supporting grace,—that supervenient influence, without which the graces we possess would fail us in the time of greatest need. This is the immediate assisting power that bears up the soul under the hardest services, and backs it in the sharpest conflicts, communicating fresh auxiliary strength, when

when we and all the graces we have within, dwelling in us, is furcharged. Then he steps in, and opposes his strength to a prevailing and confident enemy, who is at the point of insulting and triumph. When temptations have almost made a breach, and are on the point of entering with full force and violence, he lets in so much present help on a sudden, as makes them give back and disappear. *When the enemy comes in as a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him* (Ii. lix. 19.); and no siege against the true believer, can be so close as to keep out this aid; for it comes from above. It is the will of God, that we have constant recourse to him for all that we want. He is so rich, and withal so liberal, that he delights that we seek and draw much from him; and it is by believing and praying that we do draw from him: were these plied, we should soon grow richer. But remember, all this grace, which we would receive from the God of all grace, must be from *God in Christ*. There it flows for us; thither we are directed. *It was the Father's good pleasure, that in him should all fulness dwell* (Col. i. 19), and that for us, that we might know whither to go, and where to apply for it.

The state to which a Christian is called, is not a poor and sad estate, as the world judges; it is no less than glory, eternal glory, *his eternal glory*—*Glory*, true real glory. All that is here so named, is no more than a name, a shadow of glory; it cannot endure the balance, but is found too light; as was said of a great monarch, Dan. v. Men are naturally desirous of glory, and gape after it; but they are naturally ignorant of the nature and place of it; they seek it where it is not, and, as Solomon says of riches, *set their hearts on that which is not*, Prov. xxiii. 5. has no subsistence nor reality. But the glory above is true real glory, and bears weight; and so bears aright the name of glory, which in the Hebrew [כבוד] signifies *weight*; and the apostle's expression seems to allude to that sense; speaking of this same glory to come, he calls it “a far more exceeding and eternal *weight* of glory,” 2 Cor. iv. 17. It weighs down all labour and sufferings in the way, so far, that they are not once worth the speaking of in respect of it. It is the *hyperbole*, *καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην*; other glory is overpoken; but this glory, over glorious to be duly spoken, it exceeds and rises above all that can be spoken of it.

And it is *eternal*. Oh! that adds much! Men would have some more reason so to affect and pursue the glory of the present world, such as it is, if it were lasting, if it stayed with them when they have caught it, and they stayed with it to enjoy it. But how soon do they part! they pass away, and the glory passes away, both as smoke, as a vapour. Our lie, and all the pomp and magnificence of those that have the greatest outward glory, and make the fairest shew, it is but a shew, a *pageant*, *παρρησι*, which goes through the street, and is seen no more. But this has length of days with it, *eternal glory*. Oh! a thought of that swallows up all the grandeur of the world, and the noise of reckoning years and ages. Had one man continued from the creation to the end of the world, in the top of earthly dignity and glory, admired by all; yet, at the end, everlasting oblivion being the close, what nothing were it to *eternal glory*! But, alas! we cannot be brought to believe, and deeply take the impression of eternity; and that is our undoing.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle,

1. Exhorts the elders to a diligent discharge of their sacred trust. *The elders which are among you I exhort, who also am an elder, put in trust with the same gospel, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, bearing testimony to what I have seen, and ready to suffer with him and for him, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed when the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls shall appear to reward his faithful ministers.* In the view and expectation of which, *feed the flock of God which is among you with fidelity, diligence, and zeal, preaching the sound doctrine, and maintaining the wholesome discipline of the gospel, and considering the inestimable price which has been paid for the salvation of all who will yield to be saved by grace; taking the oversight thereof; watching over them with wisdom, and holy solicitude to promote their spiritual and eternal good; not by constraint, as compelled to do it against your inclinations, but willingly, delighting in your blessed office and employment; not for filthy lucre, as the motive to undertake the charge, but of a ready mind, free from every mercenary view, and influenced purely by zeal for the Redeemer, and love towards immortal souls; neither as being lords over God's heritage, and ruling with arrogance and haughtiness, as if you had dominion over men's consciences, but being ensamples to the flock, in all humility, meekness, and holy conversation.* And then know, for your encouragement, that *when the chief Shepherd shall appear, who hath appointed you to serve under him, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, the blessed reward of your fidelity.* *Note;* (1.) The office of an elder or presbyter is a high and honourable employment, and calls for suitable zeal and faithfulness to discharge it aright. (2.) None should ever enter the ministry by constraint, at the solicitation of friends, or as bred to it for a maintenance, but as prompted by a desire to glorify God, and to be instrumental in the salvation of lost souls. (3.) They who would profit others by their preaching, must second it by their examples, else how can we think others will believe us, if it appear by our ill conduct that we do not believe ourselves? (4.) The reward of faithful ministers shall be eminently glorious; they shall shine as stars in the firmament for ever and ever.

2. He addresses himself to the younger, and all private members of the church. *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; be guided by their advice, and attend to their admonitions; yea, all of you be subject one to another, paying that deference and respect which is due to every one according to his station, age, rank, or office; and be clothed with humility, as a shining garb which gives beauty to the whole conversation, and adds a lustre to every other grace: for God resisteth the proud; that is the character which of all others God abhors, and he giveth grace to the humble, who are peculiarly his delight, and enriched by him abundantly, and in proportion prepared for his presence in glory.* *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, enduring meekly whatever afflictions he is pleased to send upon you, and submissive to those whom he hath set over you; that he may exalt you in due time, lifting you above all your tribulations, and bringing you to a throne at his right-hand: casting all your care upon him, whatever difficulties and trials you may be involved in; for he careth for you, and will in this case preserve your bodies and souls, give you a happy issue out of all your afflictions, and cause them to work together for your eternal felicity.* *Note;* (1.) It is the

the wisdom of young men to pay deference and obedience to the advice and admonitions of their more aged and experienced friends. (2.) God is the enemy of the proud, as of Satan their chief; and in the unequal contest with Omnipotence, they must needs be undone. (3.) Humility is our greatest ornament, and in God's sight of great price; and those who possess it, he delighteth to honour.— (4.) God's time must be expected; he will send us relief in due season, if we faint not. (5.) None ever cast their care upon God, and were confounded.

2dly, The apostle, in the view of the subtle enemy whom they had to contend against,

1. Admonishes them to be on their guard. *Be sober, be vigilant, weaned from all inordinate attachment to present things, and watchful in the use of every divine ordinance against the wiles of the great deceiver; because your adversary the devil, ever waiting for your halting, as a roaring lion, fierce and cruel, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; restless and indefatigable in his attempts to murder immortal souls, and maliciously endeavouring to terrify those whom he is not permitted to destroy. Note; We have a deadly foe to conflict with, powerful, wily, watchful, experienced in deceit; we need be ever on our guard against his snares.*

2. The only way in which we can overcome, is here set before us. *Whom resist, steadfast in the faith, lifting up this impenetrable shield against all the fiery darts of the wicked one, and encouraged by the examples and the victories of our suffering Fellow-Christians; knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world; they war against the same enemy, and are supported by the same Divine power. Note; (1.) The examples of others should be our encouragement. (2.) They who in faith resist the devil, will find the weakness of all his efforts; and that before this terrible shield he will be compelled to fly.*

3. He offers up his fervent prayers on their behalf. *But the God of all grace, the Fountain and Giver of it to all that believe, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ*

Jesus, has invited us to partake of unutterable blessedness in his presence for ever through the redemption obtained by his dear Son—after that ye have suffered a while, make you by this means, under the influences of his Spirit, perfect in holiness, stablish you in the truth, strengthen your hearts with his grace, and settle you on the true foundation by the full assurance of faith and hope. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever; be his name adored for all his past mercies and protection, and may we be enabled still to trust upon his care and love. Amen!

3dly, He concludes,

1. With giving an account of his design in this epistle, and the person who was the bearer of it. *By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you (as I conclude from the most substantial grounds,) I have written briefly this short epistle, exhorting, and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand, in the doctrine and practice of which you have hitherto persevered, and I trust will continue even unto the end. Note; They who have begun well, must take care to stand fast in the same grace which they have experienced.*

2. He presents the salutations of the church at Babylon, whence he seems to have written this epistle. *The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, called and invited to, and partakers of, the same glorious privileges and blessings as yourselves, through Jesus Christ, saluteth you in all Christian wishes of peace and prosperity; and so doth Marcus my son.*

3. He exhorts them to fervent love among themselves. *Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity, in token of your mutual, unfeigned affection.*

4. He pronounces his parting benediction upon them. *Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus, and every blessing, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, which is the happy portion of those that are perseveringly united to him their Living Head. May that portion, reader, be thine, and mine. Amen!*

* The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
P E T E R.

P R E F A C E.

ST. PETER'S intent in this Epistle, which he wrote, as he did the former, to the dispersed Jews who had embraced Christianity, and to the other Christians among them, was to raise more and more in their hearts the love of holiness, and to warn them against false teachers who were labouring to implant the most pernicious errors in all the churches. He then speaks of those wicked wretches who scoffed at the belief of our Lord's second coming, and of the last judgment, ch. iii. 1---4. and who took in an ill sense what St. Paul had written thereon in his epistles; and he bears full and just testimony to the great wisdom wherewith the Lord had enlightened that apostle, and to the sound doctrine which is evident in all his writings; ver. 15, 16. and, though they are not entirely free from difficulties, (as indeed how can such darkened and limited understandings as our's fail of meeting with difficulties when endeavouring to seek out the high things of God?) yet St. Peter attributes the erroneous explanations of the Scriptures to the evil and perverse dispositions of those who wrest them for the indulgence of their own lusts or fancies. And, to mortify the vanity of such still more, (for they are generally people of a certain rank, not the humble poor, who make a snare of the Scriptures and fall into heresy,) he calls them unlearned and unstable persons, ever ready to follow the first illusion that arises in their minds; and reproaches them with wresting the scriptures to their own destruction, ch. iii. 16. Yet he still recommends the perusal of St. Paul's epistles, and all the other books of Scripture, notwithstanding the ill use which perverse minds had made of them. All parts of them are not indeed equally clear and easy to be understood; but the difficulties are not such as to throw any obscurity over matters of faith and salvation; nor have these very difficulties been left by the Holy Spirit, which is the primary Author of the Scriptures, but to make us more attentive in the reading of them, and to induce us to apply to God for Divine illumination; humbly addressing him, as often as we open that sacred volume, in the words of the Psalmist, Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law! Ps. cxix. 18.

CHAP. I.

Confirming them in the hope of the increase of God's grace, he exhorteth them by faith and good works to make their calling sure, whereof he is careful to remind them, knowing that his death is at hand: he warneth them to be constant in the faith of Christ, who is the true Son of God by the eyewitness of the apostles beholding his Majesty, and by the testimony of the Father and the prophets.

[Anno Domini 67.]

SIMON ^a Peter, ^b a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have ob-

tained ^c like precious faith with us ^d through the righteousness of ^e God and our Saviour Jesus Christ :

² Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

³ According as his divine power hath given unto us ^g all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, ^h through the knowledge of him that hath ⁱ called us ^{*} to glory and virtue :

^a See 1 Pet. 1. 1. Mat. 10. 2. ^b John, 20. 21. & 21. 15-17. Mat. 28. 18-20. Mark, 16. 15. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 11, 12. 1 Pet. 5. 7. ^c Acts, 11. 17. & 15. 9. Rom. 1. 12. 2 Cor. 4. 13. Eph. 4. 5. Tit. 1. 4. Jude, 3. ^d Phil. 1. 29. Eph. 2. 8. with Rom. 1. 17. & 3. 21-26. & 5. 15-21. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Phil. 3. 9. Rev. 5. 9. ^e Or our God and Saviour. Tit. 2. 13. ^f Dan. 4. 1. & 6. 25. Num. 6. 24-26. Rom. 1. 7. Pf. 28. 9. & 29. 11. Jude, 2. see 1 Pet. 1. 2. John, 17. 3. ^g 1 John, 2. 20-27. & 5. 20. II. 5. 17. ^h Pf. 34. 10. & 84. 11. & 85. 12. Rom. 8. 28, 32. 1 Cor. 3. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 8. & 6. 6. ⁱ John, 13. 17. 1 John, 2. 20, 27. & 5. 20. Ch. 3. 18. see ver. 2. ^{*} 1 Cor. 1. 9. 2. Tim. 1. 9. Gal. 1. 6. & 5. 8. Eph. 4. 7, 4. 1 Pet. 2. 9, 21. & 1. 3-5. 1 Thes. 4. 7. ^{*} Or by.

II PETER.]—THIS second epistle is supposed to have been written many years after the former; namely, in the year 67, a short time before St. Peter's martyrdom, which happened in 68, and to which he alludes in one or two places. The general design of this epistle is, to confirm the doctrines and instructions delivered in the former epistle; and to excite the Christian converts to adorn and adhere steadfastly to their religion, as a religion proceeding from God; notwithstanding the artifices of false teachers, whose character is described at large,—or the persecution of their bitter and inveterate enemies.

CHAP. I.—IN the latter part of the apostolical age many false teachers arose, among whom the Nicolaitans and the Simonians were the most remarkable. These, as St. Jude tells us, ver. 4. *Perverted the grace of God to lasciviousness.* They perverted the doctrine of the gospel concerning men's being justified of free grace by faith, without the works of law, so as to make it a pretence for gratifying the lusts of their flesh without restraint. And to gain credit to their impious explications of the doctrines of the gospel, these impostors denied the authority of the apostles of Christ, and arrogated to themselves an illumination and authority superior to theirs. Nay, they in a most important sense denied the authority of Christ himself, chap. ii. 1. And having thus set themselves up as the only inspired teachers, (Jude, ver. 16, 19.) they assured their disciples, that being justified by faith without works, believers are under no obligation, either to abstain from sin, or to do what is morally good; that Christ has purchased for them a liberty to gratify all their passions and appetites; and that Christ will not judge and punish them for so doing, nor for any sin whatever.

These doctrines being extremely agreeable to the corruptions of the human heart, were embraced by many in the latter part of the first age. Wherefore, to stop the mouths of these false teachers, who were now gone abroad among the churches, and to prevent the faithful from being seduced by them, and to establish them in the belief of the things which the Lord himself had taught, and which his apostles had delivered in his name, St. Peter wrote this second epistle, in which he brought these things to their remembrance.

VOL. II.

And first of all, in opposition to the calumnies of the false teachers, he assured the brethren to whom this epistle was directed, that Christ had gifted to his apostles every thing necessary to qualify them for leading mankind to a godly life, and for making them partakers of the divine nature. He had bestowed on them inspiration to know the true doctrines of the gospel, and authority to declare them to the world. From this it followed, that the teachers who pretended to possess a greater illumination than the apostles, or greater authority, were impostors, ver. 3, 4.—And because these seducers taught their disciples, that morality was dispensed with by the gospel, St. Peter commanded all who professed the gospel, to add to their faith courage, and to courage knowledge, &c. ver. 5-7.—declaring, that these excellent dispositions would make them fruitful in good works, ver. 8.—That if they were deficient in these things, they were blind, notwithstanding their pretensions to illumination, ver. 9.—And as it would be very fatal to fall from those bright views and expectations into a state of such aggravated condemnation, he required them to make their calling and election sure; that having been called into the church of Christ, and chosen to such exalted external privileges, and such glorious hopes, they might not finally lose them, ver. 10.—but might have an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of the Saviour richly or honourably ministered to them, ver. 11. These things, he told them, he would not cease to call to their remembrance while he was in life, although they knew and believed them already, ver. 12, 13.—Withal, being sensible that he was soon to die, he proposed, by committing his instructions to writing in this epistle, (as he had done before in his former epistle,) to put it in their power, after his decease, to have them always in remembrance, as his dying words, ver. 14, 15.

In the mean time, to give the faithful the fullest assurance of the truth of all the things which the apostles with one consent had delivered to the churches, and which, in part, he was now going to write; more particularly, to give them a perfect assurance of Christ's being the Son of God, and of his coming to judge the world, which the infidels of that age loudly denied, St. Peter told them, that in making known the power and coming of Christ, he and

4 Whereby * are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that ¹ by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the

world through lust.

5 And, beside this, ² giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

¹ 2 Cor. 7. 1. Gal. 3. 16. Acts, 13. 26. If. 56. 5. Rom. 8. 15, 32. Pf. 147. 19.
1 Pet. 1. 3, 22, 23. 2 Cor. 3. 18. Eph. 4. 23, 24. Col. 3. 10. Heb. 12. 10. 1 John, 3. 2, 3.

² Ezek. 36. 26. John, 3. 6. & 1. 12, 13. James, 1. 12.
³ Prov. 4. 23. Phil. 3. 13, 14.

Ch. 2. 12. Ch. 3. 18. Rom. 5. 3—5. & 12. 10—21.

his brethren apostles, had not published a fable cunningly devised by Christ, and credulously received by them. They had the clearest evidence of their Master's power and coming set before them visibly, in the honour and glory which he received from the Father, when he was transfigured in their presence, and a voice came to him from the excellent glory, saying, *This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.* This voice, said he, we, Peter, and James, and John, heard distinctly, being with him, on that occasion, upon the holy mountain, ver. 16—18.—He added, by these proofs of our Master's greatness, of which we were beholders, we and all mankind have the ancient prophecies concerning the resurrection of the dead and the judgment of the world, as well as our Master's prophecies concerning these events, made still more firm. Wherefore, it is your duty to give heed to the prophetic word thus confirmed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until Christ, as the Sun of righteousness, the Day-star from on high, and the bright and morning star, (Mal. iv. 2. Luke i. 78. Rev. xxii. 16.) shall arise in full lustre, and shed such a transcendent light in your souls, as shall entirely dissipate all obscurity or doubt, about what was intimated by the vision on the mount, and is further confirmed by the sure word of prophecy, ver. 19.—knowing this first, as a circumstance necessary to confirm you in the belief of the ancient prophecies, that no prophecy of scripture is of the prophet's own invention, ver. 20.—but that all the prophets spake their prophecies by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Ver. 1. Through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ] Through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ—through which, sinful as we are, if we believe, we obtain acceptance with the Father—even through that atonement which our Divine Redeemer has made for the justification of all that yield to be saved by grace. The order of the original words justifies the translation which I have given above. It is observable, that the order in the next verse is different, and determines it to the translation there used.

Ver. 2. Through the knowledge of God] By the acknowledgment of God. Doddridge. The word *ἐπίγνωσις*, doubtless, sometimes signifies *acknowledgment*; but as it signifies *knowledge* in the next verse, and in many other texts of the New Testament, it seems most proper so to understand it here.

Ver. 3. According as his divine power] Some would read this verse in a parenthesis, as an incidental thought, and so connect the 2d and 4th verses. Others would connect this with the foregoing verse;—*Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, in or by the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord; according as his divine power hath bestowed upon us all things pertaining, &c.* But the salutation being finished in

the foregoing verse, the epistle seems to begin here, and the connection to be continued from this to ver. 5. &c. For there is no reddition till you come to the beginning of ver. 5. "His divine power having given us all things pertaining to life and godliness, do you therefore, giving all diligence to this very thing, add to your faith virtue." *Life and godliness* are by an usual figure put for a godly life. God had given them all things pertaining to a godly life: it was not owing to any merit in them, but purely to divine grace: it was the gift of God. Whitby supposes the words to be an *hendyades*, and understands them of "a glorious and powerful effusion of the Spirit."

Ver. 4. Whereby] By means of which; namely, of the illustrious seal of the Spirit set to the declaration of the gospel. By *partaking of the divine nature*, we are to understand a participation of the divine holiness; or a being holy, as the Lord our God is holy; enjoying such communion with God in his holiness, as, on account of its resemblance of him, derivation from him, tendency towards him, and complacency in him, may be called a divine nature. Thus it will connect with what follows: "That you might be holy as God is holy, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, through lust; that is having renounced, and fled away, with vigour and abhorrence, from all the corrupt principles and practices, which spread and prevail among the men of this world; through the power of their depraved inclinations and inordinate affections to carnal things."

Ver. 5. And, beside this,] And for this purpose. The apostle's meaning, says Dr. Heylin, in brief is this:—"Whereas God, by giving you the knowledge of Jesus Christ, has given you the means whereby to acquire all the virtues, you must correspond on your part by exerting your utmost endeavours," &c. *Faith* is the foundation of all religion, and therefore deservedly mentioned first. The word *ἄρετή* here translated *virtue*, is variously interpreted. In some Greek authors, and more especially among the poets, it signifies *fortitude*, and is often used for *military courage*; but in prose authors, and particularly among the philosophers, the word signifies *virtue*, that is, a right moral conduct. As our apostle wrote in a popular style, in prose, and as a divine moralist, several have been for interpreting the word *ἄρετή* here, of *virtue* in general, or of a wife and Christian conduct; and some have thought that he mentions the first three general duties, of *faith*, *virtue*, and *knowledge*, and afterwards enumerates such particular virtues as were most important in themselves, or most suited to the state of the persons to whom he was writing. But the apostle seems to have designed an enumeration of several particular virtues; and therefore, as the word *ἄρετή* sometimes signifies *fortitude*, one would so understand it in this verse. In all times and places,

6 And to knowledge temperance ; and to temperance patience ; and to patience godliness ;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be † barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind,

^a John, 13. 17. Gal. 5. 23. 1 Cor. 9. 25. Heb. 10. 36. & 13. 1 Jam. 5. 7, 8. 1 Tim. 4. 7. Tit. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 7. 15, 16. Gen. 5. 24. & 17. 1. ^b John, 13. 34, 35. Heb. 13. 1—3. 1 Pet. 1. 22. 1 Thef. 4. 9. & 3. 12. & 5. 15. 1 John, 4. 20. 1 Cor. 13. 4—8. Gal. 6. 10. Rom. 12. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 8. ^c John, 13. 17. & 15. 2, 5, 8, 16. Tit. 2. 12, 14. & 3. 8, 14. Pfl. 119. 32. † Or idle. ^d If. 6. 9, 10. & 59. 10. John, 9. 39, 41. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. 1 John, 2. 9, 11. John, 3. 19.

places, persons who would do their duty, have need of fortitude to encounter a variety of difficulties and discouragements: and as it was now a time of persecution, the Christians, to whom St. Peter wrote, had great occasion to add to their faith in the Christian religion, fortitude in the profession of it, that they might not betray the truth, either in their words or actions, but bravely suffer all manner of evils for the sake of Christ, if called thereto. By the word γνώσις, rendered knowledge, the best commentators understand prudence. See 1 Peter iii. 7. Prudence was proper to go along with fortitude, in order to prevent its degenerating into rashness and folly. Heylin renders it discretion. See Ephes. v. 15, 16. vi. 10. &c. Col. iv. 5. and Parkhurst on the word ἄπειρος.

Ver. 6. Temperance] The word ἐγκράτεια sometimes signifies abstinence from some particular vice, and is used more especially for continence or chastity: but it commonly signifies abstinence or moderation as to the pleasures and possessions of this life in general; and as there is no restriction of the word in this sense, we may understand it in its most extensive signification. Temperance and prudence are very fit to go hand in hand: the intemperate are commonly, if not always, imprudent. The word ὑπομονή, which we render patience, signifies bearing the assaults of any evil, more especially of an enemy. In the New Testament it implies a meek and composed enduring of evil, in dependence upon God, and resignation to his will. Εὐσεβεία, godliness, when it is joined with other religious virtues, commonly means a reverence of God, or a fear mixed with love. So it is used 1 Tim. vi. 11. and so it signifies here. This reverence for God is to be manifested and supported by frequent worshipping of him, and such worship produces submission and obedience. Godliness differs from superstition, just as a rational and divine love of a Being of the most perfect moral character, and a fear of offending the most wise and amiable Governor of the world, and most gracious Saviour of mankind, differs from that groundless fear, which arises from supposing that a capricious or weak, a tyrannical or malevolent Being governs the universe; an opinion which leads men to do the most ridiculous things to obtain his favour. Godliness implies our duty more immediately towards God, as temperance and patience denote our duty towards ourselves, and love and charity our duty towards other men. As to the two virtues which are here to join hand in hand, no two things could suit better; for nothing promotes patience under the evils of life, like godliness, or a frequent spiritual worshipping of God, and a steady conviction that perfect wisdom governs the world. See the next note.

Ver. 7. And to godliness, brotherly kindness] Or the love of

the Christian brotherhood, which is often and earnestly recommended. See 1 Pet. i. 22. The connection between these two virtues is inseparable, (comp. 1 John iii. 17. iv. 20, 21.) and indeed what can be more properly connected with the love of God, than the love of real Christians, who are formed after the image of that God who made them? He adds, And to the love of Christians,—the love of all mankind. Our first or superlative love is due to God, as the most holy, most amiable, and most beneficent Being. In the next place, we are to love real Christians, as being the most like to God. But there is also a degree of love due to all mankind, as descending all of them from one common Father: having the same human nature, being liable to the same wants and infirmities, and born for the common good. How well may these two virtues go hand in hand, or what more proper to add to the love of the Christian brethren, than the love of all mankind! The apostle begun with faith, as the foundation of all these virtues; and he ends with love, or benevolence, which is the crown or perfection of all. Brekel has attempted to shew, that here is one continued allusion to military affairs: if that be so, we may then consider the apostle as exhorting them, to their faith, or oath of fidelity, to add courage, to courage prudence, and to prudence temperance; that, being continent, sober, and vigilant, they might be always upon their guard against the enemy. To temperance they were to add patience, so as to endure hardship, like good soldiers of Jesus Christ, cheerfully sustaining all the difficulties and fatigues even of a long campaign in this glorious spiritual warfare. Sufine and abstine, “endure and abstain,” were the two words under which the ancient philosophers used to comprize all moral virtue. The faithful soldier of Jesus Christ will endure every evil, and every ignominy, rather than betray the truth, act contrary to his conscience, or give up his hope in God his Saviour.

Ver. 8. For if these things be in you, and abound, &c.] For your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ will not be barren and fruitless, if these virtues take place and improve in you. Heylin. The words make you—neither barren nor fruitless, are, by a meiosis, put for will make you very diligent and fruitful. One grand end of our Christian knowledge and truth is, that we may be diligent and fruitful in works of holiness and righteousness. Tit. iii. 8, 14.

Ver. 9. And cannot see afar off.] The word Μωρανίζω signifies literally winking, or closing the eyes against the light. The apostle having represented the professed Christian, who is destitute of the graces and virtues of the Christian life, as blind, immediately informs us what sort of blindness that is, and intimates that it is a voluntary blindness. He does not see his way, because he voluntarily

and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for, if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting king-

dom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

12 Wherefore 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.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

¹ Ver. 4. Ch. 2. 18, 20. ² Heb. 3. 1. ³ 1 Pet. 1. 2, 3. ⁴ Rom. 12. 1, 2, 11. ⁵ Phil. 2. 12, 13. ⁶ 1 John. 3. 19. ⁷ Phil. 1. 27. & 4. 8. & 3. 13, 14. ⁸ 2 Thes. 2. 13. ⁹ 1 Pet. 1. 2. ¹⁰ Rev. 3. 10, 11. ¹¹ 1 Pet. 1. 5. ¹² John. 10. 9, 10, 28. ¹³ 2 Cor. 5. 1. ¹⁴ 2 Tim. 4. 8. ¹⁵ Rev. 3. 21. & 2. 26. ¹⁶ Mat. 25. 34. ¹⁷ Rom. 15. 14, 15. ¹⁸ Phil. 3. 1. ¹⁹ Ch. 3. 1. ²⁰ Jude, 3. ²¹ Ver. 13, 15. ²² 1 John. 2. 21. ²³ 1 Pet. 5. 9, 12. ²⁴ Ch. 3. 17. ²⁵ Rev. 3. 10.

²⁶ 2 Cor. 5. 1, 4. ²⁷ Ch. 3. 1. ²⁸ Hab. 13. 3.

shuts his eyes against the light. The Christian religion does so often and so clearly represent the absolute necessity of a holy life unto all that would be saved, and the light of the Holy Spirit is so far given or offered to every man, that whoever can read the scriptures, and does not perceive the nature of the gospel so far, as to press after acceptance with God through Jesus Christ his Son, and holiness of heart and life in consequence thereof, is indeed blind, but wilfully so: blinded by criminal prejudice, by lust, passion, or a love of vice. They must be wilfully blind, who see not that Christianity requires a holy life as necessary to eternal salvation.

Ver. 10, 11. Wherefore the rather, &c.] The connection seems to be this: "As he who is destitute of the graces and virtues of the Christian life, is voluntarily blind; therefore, my Christian brethren, do you give the more diligence to make your calling and election firm and steadfast, by the exercise and practice of those graces and virtues which I have already enumerated: for, if you perform these things—if you live in the exercise of these graces and virtues, you shall never stumble like the blind man mentioned ver. 9. but your way shall be made plain, and a wide, smooth, and easy entrance granted you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Those Jews and Gentiles to whom the gospel was preached, were called to come and embrace it; just as all the Roman citizens were called together when it was proposed to levy an army. Then all who were capable of bearing arms were by a public summons called to the standard, and obliged thereupon to appear. Those Jews or Gentiles who under the blessing of God came with well disposed minds, and embraced the gospel, were chosen out from among the rest; and baptism was like the sacramental or military oath of fidelity; whereby they obliged themselves to be faithful soldiers under Jesus Christ, the great Captain of their salvation. As they were not in this sense chosen till after they were called, and had embraced that call, it is evident that this text can have no reference to any decrees of God made from all eternity, concerning those particular persons to whom St. Peter is here writing. It is moreover to be observed, that they were not so called or elected; but that if they did not exercise and perform the graces and virtues here recommended, they would *stumble* and *even fall* both from their calling and election, or from the happy consequences of both; and if they had so fallen, the fault

would have been their own, and not owing to God, nor to any thing in his decrees. *Faith* was the condition on which they were called into the Christian church, and elected to be of the number of God's people here upon earth. And they were so called and elected, with a view to their obtaining everlasting salvation: for, as Christians, they had all things pertaining to a godly life, and the best advantages for preparing for everlasting life: but the bestowing that life, even upon such as are called and elected, is suspended, upon the condition that they, according to the measure of grace given them, and the opportunities afforded them, do internally and externally exercise these graces and virtues. Otherwise, both their calling and election will prove in vain, and they will finally miss of a happy immortality. See on ver. 7.

Ver. 12. Wherefore] That is, "Because in this way alone you can have an admittance into Christ's everlasting kingdom." *I will not be negligent*, by a common figure signifies, "I will make use of the greatest care and diligence." The *present truth* was, that the practice of the Christian graces and virtues was necessary to *make their calling and election firm*. They might indeed have said, "We know these things already." St. Peter, therefore, anticipates such an objection, answering it solidly, and by a beautiful gradation declaring that truths, known and firmly believed, should be often called to remembrance, in order to have their proper influences; and that therefore he would put them in remembrance of these things; that he would do it, not once, but always; and that not only during his life, but likewise after his decease; that is, by leaving those two epistles behind him, as their constant monitors. The teachers of the gospel, after St. Peter's example, should often repeat important truths, though well known and firmly believed; that the people may have them continually in remembrance.

Ver. 13. Yea, I think it meet] St. Peter accounted it *δίκαιον, meet*, that is, becoming his character and office, as one of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and proper for them, as professed Christians in such a situation. With great propriety and beauty, he calls his own body a *tabernacle*: it was not like a *house*, a firm fixed building, likely to stand for some ages; but a structure comparatively light and weak, and which was shortly to be taken down: like the travelling *tents* of the wild Arabs, easily set up and easily removed. St. Peter was then in his tabernacle; but he was going to remove; however, as long as he continued

14 ^b Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

15 Moreover, ^c I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

16 ^d 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 ^e eye-witnesses of his majesty.

^b Deut. 4. 23, 22. & 31. 14. 1 Kings, 2. 1. 2 Tim. 4. 6. John, 21. 18, 19. Prov. 27. 1. Ver. 12. ^c 1 Cor. 1. 17, 23. & 2. 1, 14, 13. & 4. 20. 2 Cor. 2. 17. & 4. 5. & 6. 7. Ch. 3. 4.

^d Deut. 31. 16, 19, 28. 2 Tim. 2. 2. Ch. 3. 4. ^e 1 John, 1. 1, 14. & 4. 14. Mat. 17. 1-4.

nued in it, he thought it proper to *stir up*, or *rouse* his converts; (*διεγείρειν*.) Christians should be continually excited to look forward to Christ's second coming, and to press on in all Christian experience and holy duties, by way of preparation for that day; since, without being frequently put in remembrance, many are apt to be drowsy, or not duly attentive to such important truths. See ch. iii. 1.

Ver. 14. Knowing that shortly I must put off, &c.] Knowing that the laying aside of this my tabernacle approacheth swiftly, in the manner that the Lord Jesus Christ hath made known unto me. Our Lord not only told St. Peter that he was to die a violent death, but also the *manner* of it: John, xxi. 18, 19. It is inquired, "How did St. Peter know that he was to die *shortly*?" Now it is generally agreed, that our Lord, in the place above quoted, foretold him that he was to die a violent death; but because there is no express mention of the exact time, some of the ancients say that St. Peter had about this period a vision, declaring to him that the time was now approaching. Others think that our Lord limited the time so far, as that it was to happen before the destruction of Jerusalem; though St. John was to survive that desolation. St. Peter, therefore, hearing, where he now was, of the calamities coming upon the Jewish nation, and learning from those signs and fore-runners, that the destruction of that nation was at hand; he from thence concluded, that the time of his own martyrdom must be very speedily. This may be said with certainty,—that the Lord Jesus had told him that he should die a martyr in his old age; and his being now grown old, might help to determine the time of his martyrdom. But I have no doubt that all these evidences were also accompanied with immediate divine intimations. St. Peter wrote by the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.

Ver. 15. To have these things always in remembrance.] The things which they were to have always in remembrance, were, the necessity of experiencing and practising the graces and virtues of the Christian life, mentioned ver. 5. &c. and that if they did so, they should have an abundant entrance into Christ's everlasting kingdom of happiness. More important truths they could not remember; these things St. Peter had preached during his life; and he wrote these two epistles, that the Christians might remember them when he was dead. He thought writing much preferable to oral tradition, for preserving the exact knowledge and remembrance of truths of the last consequence:—and he judged well; for what have we certain from oral tradition? whereas these two epistles of St. Peter's have already continued above 1700 years, and are

as able to put *us* in remembrance of these things, as they were the Christians at that age when they were written, and of all ages since. The note of the Rhemish annotators upon this verse is most curious; for they fancy that St. Peter had intimated to the Christians, "That his care over them should not cease by death; but that by his intercession before God, after his departure, he would do the same thing for them that he had done before in his life by teaching and preaching." Surely it is a sign of a desperate cause, and that men are put to the most wretched shifts to maintain a party or faction, when they make use of such despicable proofs! "I was of opinion," says Dr. Heylin, that probably St. Peter fulfilled this promise, not only by leaving these epistles behind him, but by leaving also some directions with St. Jude, who, in his epistle to the same persons, repeats many things from this, with such a sameness, as I thought difficult to be accounted for any other way, till I saw a more satisfactory solution of the difficulty, in that admirable performance, "The Use and Intent of Prophecy;" where, in the first dissertation, it is shewn, from some passages quoted from the *Apostolical constitutions*, that it is highly reasonable to suppose, that the apostles had a meeting upon the extraordinary case of the new false teachers; and that they gave jointly, by common consent and deliberation, precepts proper to the occasion, to be communicated to all churches by their respective apostles and bishops; that accordingly many circular letters were sent for that purpose; and that the second epistle of St. Peter, and St. Jude's epistle, seem to be of this sort, &c."

Ver. 16. Cunningly-devised fables,] Sophistical fables. Ben-son. For there was nothing fabulous, or artfully invented, in the information that we gave you, of the powerful advent of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we ourselves were eye-witnesses of his majesty. Heylin. This epistle of St. Peter was written to support and maintain the hopes and expectations which he had raised by the *first*; wherein much weight is laid on the expectation of Christ's coming in all his power and glory. It is very probable, that the distressed Christians conceived at first great hopes from these assurances given them by the apostle; and expected, as it is natural for men in affliction, that every day would bring them deliverance: but when one year after another passed, and no deliverance came; when the scorers began to ridicule their hopes, and asked in mockery, *Where is the promise of his coming?* (ch. iii. 3, 4.) the hearts of many grew sick; and their hopes, deferred, instead of being any comfort or support to them, became an additional grief, lest they had believed in vain. Many of them, worn out with distress and

17 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.

18 And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the

holy mount.

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; 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:

^f John, 20. 17. ^a Cor. 1. 3. & 11. 31. Eph. 1. 3. & 4. 6. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 3. John, 22. 28. Eph. 1. 6. Col. 1. 13. 1f. 42. 1. ^b Mat. 17. 12, 6. with Exod. 3. 5. Joh. 5. 15. ^c Mt. 17. 5. & 3. 17. Mark, 1. 11. & 9. 7. Luke, 3. 22. & 9. 35. 1f. 8. 20. John, 5. 39. Acts, 17. 11. ^d Pl. 19. 9. Luke, 16. 29, 31. ^e Pl. 119. 105. John, 5. 35. Acts, 2. 25—39. & 13. 26—46. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Rom. 13. 12. Rev. 2. 28. & 22. 16.

and persecution, began to give way, and willingly listened to the corrupt teachers, who instructed them to keep fair with the world, and to keep their faith to themselves; by means of which wicked doctrine, they were led away, fell from their steadfastness, and denied the Lord who bought them.

Ver. 19. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy;*] It would swell this note into a very considerable treatise, if we were to give the numerous interpretations and different opinions on this much-controverted passage. We shall therefore content ourselves with three solutions; referring those who desire to enter more deeply into the subject, to the larger discussions of Sherlock, &c. I. By the word of prophecy, says Benson, I understand the same thing with what is called, ver. 20, a prophecy of scripture; that is, those predictions, whether in the Old Testament or New, in which was foretold the power of Christ, and especially his second and glorious appearance; and I apprehend with Cæcumenius, that St. Peter first mentions Christ's transfiguration, as an emblem of his coming in power and glory, and then says, *Herby we have the word of prophecy rendered more firm;* or in other words, "The prophecy of Christ's coming in power and glory, is confirmed by his transfiguration, and the voice from heaven in his favour." Accordingly, the Vulgate hath rendered the passage, *And we have the prophetic word more sure.* Now, according to this interpretation, here is no such thing intimated, as that prophecy is a stronger argument than miracles (according to the assertion of a writer, who has taken great pains to shew the absurdity of that argument.) Here is no preference of the one to the other, nor any comparison between them, but a very reasonable assertion; namely, that the one is confirmed by the other. II. Mr. Markland, as we learn from Bowyer's *Conjectures*, would at the end of the former verse place only a colon: that the beginning of this verse may connect with it, and so lead to the true and obvious sense of a passage which of late (says he,) has exercised in vain the pens of many learned writers: namely, *This voice saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,* (taken from *Isai. xlii. 1.*) *we heard in the mount: and we have by that means prophecy, or the words of the prophet, more fully confirmed.* Which words, how clear soever a prediction of Christ, were more determinately declared so, when we heard them applied to him by a voice from heaven. The expression in both parts of the sentence is confirmed by the best writers; and the passage of *Isaiah* is referred to in the margin of some Bibles on *Matth. iii. 17. xvii. 5.* where the same words occur. But the reference being omitted here, the sense has been overlooked. III. Some,

says Dr. Doddridge, are of opinion, that the apostle intended no comparison in this place; but that the comparative is used for the positive, or superlative, as is frequent in the New Testament; so that it only signifies a very sure prophetic word. As I must confess myself, says Parkhurst, to be, after attentive consideration, most inclined to this interpretation, I shall beg leave to support it by the remarks of Wolfius: "For my part, observes that learned writer, I am best pleased with those, who think that the word of the prophets, that is, of the writers of the Old Testament, (comp. ver. 20, 21.) is here called firm, or very firm, without respect to that divine voice mentioned ver. 17, 18." For St. Peter in this passage is displaying the supports of the apostles in preaching of Christ as our Lord: these supports or arguments are three. The first is, that they saw the majesty of Christ; the second, that they heard the divine testimony from heaven; the third, that they read the prophetic predictions concerning him; predictions above all exception, and of the firmest or surest kind. That the apostle is heaping up arguments of the same sort, is evident from the expression, *Καὶ ἔχομεν*, we have also or moreover: but if he had designed to call this last more firm, in respect to the voice of God which they had heard, he would, I believe, have written *ἔχομεν δὲ*. The apostle does not advance these things, that they to whom he was writing might understand on what proofs or supports they themselves ought to rest; but he is recounting by what arguments the apostles were convinced of the truth of their own preaching; and on this footing the divine voice heard from heaven certainly had the same credit with themselves as the predictions of the prophets: and that the apostle is here speaking of himself and the rest of the apostles, appears also from hence, that at the end of this verse he turns his discourse to those to whom he was writing; *To which* [word of prophecy] *ye do well to attend, as unto a light, &c.* Bishop Chandler supposes, that prophecy is called a light shining in a dark place, because it grows gradually brighter as it approaches nearer and nearer to its accomplishment. To the word of prophecy, and especially to the predictions concerning Christ's second coming, they were all to attend. Even common Christians were to read the scripture, and it would be as a lamp to them shining in a dark place. The light of revelation, even the marvellous light of the gospel, is no more than a lamp or candle in the night, compared with that brightness ushered in by the dawn of the day, or the rising of the sun in all its splendor. We are therefore to attend to the scriptures only till the day dawn, and the sun arise in our own hearts; that is, till the morning

20 Knowing this first, that ' no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For ^m the prophecy came not ^{*} in old

time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.

¹ Rom. 12. 6. ² Tim. 3. 16. ²³ 2. Luke, 1. 7c. Eph. 3. 20.

^m 2 Tim. 3. 16. ¹ Pet. 1. 11. ² Kings, 4. 27. ^{Amos} 7. 14, 15. ^{Num.} 16. 28. & 23. 12, 20, 26. ² Sam.

^{*} Or at any time.

of the great day dawn, and Jesus Christ, the *Day-star*, or the *Sun of righteousness*, shall arise in all his glory, and give us perfect light, and perfect knowledge. See 1 Cor. xiii. 9, &c.

Ver. 20. Knowing this first,] The apostle here assigns an important reason why they were to attend to the word of prophecy as long as they lived; namely, because it was not of human device, but of divine original. Dr. Mill has in few words given the sense of this place: "In writing this, the prophet did not interpret or explain his own mind, but the mind and will of the Holy Spirit with which he was inspired." This interpretation is agreeable to the usual sense of the word *επιλοσις*, and is greatly confirmed by the next verse; where it is said, that *holy men of God* (prophets or men inspired by him,) *spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*.

Inferences.—It is honour enough for gospel-ministers to be, what the apostles counted themselves, the servants of Jesus Christ; and they, who are truly such, cannot but heartily wish, that grace and peace, inclusive of every blessing, may be multiplied to all that have obtained like precious faith with themselves, through the infinite merit of the righteousness of God their Saviour, and through the knowledge of him who has called them by the gospel to a glorious inheritance, and to a free and holy profession of their faith and hope, till, if faithful, they enter with triumph into his everlasting kingdom. How precious are the promises, by which believers are made partakers of a divine nature, in a holy conformity to God, and departure from all the wickedness of this world, which proceeds from the corruption of men's own hearts! But O, of how great concern is it, to give all diligence, by divine assistance, to add to our faith every Christian grace and lively exercise of it! This will make and prove us to be active believers, whose knowledge of our Lord and Saviour is not a lifeless notion, but will produce substantial and assuring evidences of the divine grace from whence it flows, and will, if persevered in, be the infallible means of preserving us from apostacy and falling short of heaven. But he who is destitute of these things, apostatizing from his God, is wandering in the dark, and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. What need therefore have believers themselves of being often put in mind of these important things, though they already know them! And what care should Christ's ministering servants take to repeat them on all occasions, that their dear flocks may remember and practise them when they are dead, and gone to heaven; especially considering, that their souls must soon depart from their bodies, which are the frail tabernacles of their present abode! And with what confidence may they recommend and inculcate such things as are founded on the testimony of God himself by his apostles and holy prophets, relating to Christ, whom he

declared, with an audible voice from the excellent glory on the mount, to be his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and relating to the divine majesty and power with which he will gloriously appear at his coming to judge the world! These are not cunningly-devised fables, but unquestionable truths, as contained in the infallible word of God, which was written not according to the private will and fancy of men, but by the inspiration of his Spirit; and ought to be attended to as a light, which he has given us to guide us through all our darkness in this world, till, by the rising of the Sun of righteousness upon our souls, we arrive at the unclouded light and glory of the world to come. O may the blessed Author of the holy scriptures lead us into the knowledge of his mind and will in them, and make us wise to our own salvation!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle, being about to finish his glorious course, addresses his last epistle to his Hebrew brethren, as well as to those Gentile Christians who were among them. We have,

1. The writer: *Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ*. In the dignity to which he was advanced, he did not forget, that his office was not so much to rule, as to serve the meanest member of Christ's church.

2. The persons to whom the epistle is addressed,—*to them that have obtained like precious faith with us*, and feel themselves interested in the same glorious salvation, *through the righteousness of God, or of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*,—his righteous obedience unto the death of the cross, which is the sole meritorious cause of every blessing that we can receive, in time or eternity. *Note*: Divine faith may well be called precious, seeing that the effects of it are so unspeakably glorious.

3. His apostolical benediction, *Grace and peace, with all the blessings of the everlasting gospel, be multiplied unto you*, in more abundant manifestations and deeper inward experience of them, *through the knowledge of God*, as your covenant and reconciled God, *and of Jesus our Lord*, in all the blessed offices and relations which he bears toward his faithful people.

4. The ground on which he built his confidence that his prayers for them would be heard and answered. *According as his divine power hath given unto us freely all things that pertain unto life and godliness*, bestowing every blessing and means of grace which can conduce to the furtherance of the divine life in our souls, *through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*; our acquaintance with Jesus, and acknowledgment of him as the only Saviour of souls, being sufficient, if duly improved, to engage us in the pursuit of glory as our end, and with fortitude unshaken to walk in all his holy ways. *Whereby, even through the grace of these Divine Persons, and especially by the seal of the Holy Spirit, are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises*, above all our conceptions,

C H A P. II.

He foretelleth them of false teachers, shewing the impiety and punishment both of them and their followers; from which the godly shall be delivered, as Lot was out of Sodom: and more fully describeth the manners of these profane and blasphemous seducers, whereby they may be the better known, and avoided.

[Anno Domini 67.]

BUT * there were false prophets also among the people, even as [†] there shall be false

* Deut. 13. 1-3. † Kings, 18. 19, 22. & 22. 6. II. 56. 10, 11. Jer. 14. 14. & 23. 16, 25, 26. Ezek. 13. 3-6, 16, 17. Hosea, 9. 8. Micah, 2. 11. & 3. 5, 11. † Mat. 24. 11, 24. Acts, 20. 29, 30. † Cor. 11. 19. † Phil. 3. 19. Ver. 3, 9. † Acts, 20. 30. † Tim. 3. 1-6. & 4. 3, 4. Mat. 24. 11, 24. † O. lascivious way. † Ver. 14. Ezek. 13. 19. with † Theff. 2. 5. Ch. 1. 16. † 2 Cor. 7. 2. & 12. 14, 17. † 2 Tim. 3. 6.

teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even [†] denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 [†] And many shall follow their * pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3 And [†] through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of

as well as all our desires; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, by the gospel word, and the great and precious promises therein revealed; wherein beholding as in a glass the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, you are transformed into the same image, formed anew after the divine likeness in righteousness and true holiness; having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, flying from out of the world which lieth in wickedness, as from a city infected with the plague, and renouncing all the corrupt principles and practices, which, through the carnal concupiscence that reigns in every unrenewed heart, defiled in time past your whole body, soul, and spirit. *Note*; (1.) All that is good in us, comes from the divine power and grace. (2.) The knowledge of God, as he is revealed to us in the gospel of his dear Son, is the grand means of engaging our hearts towards him. (3.) Exceeding great indeed and precious are those promises, that reach to the deepest state of human guilt and misery, and extend to an eternity of glory in the highest, in behalf of all the faithful. (4.) They who, by the transforming vision of God in the gospel, are truly made partakers of the divine nature, will shew it by their deadness to the world, and the subdual of every sensual appetite.

2dly, Because they had already received so much from God, they were bound to make their profiting appear. We have,

1. A golden chain of graces, which we are called to put on. *And beside this*, or for this cause, seeing that you are partakers of the divine nature, giving all diligence to increase with the increase of God, add to your faith virtue, courage, and boldness in the profession of the gospel; and to virtue knowledge, prudently considering the company, place, and time, when your courage in vindicating the cause of Christ may be most successfully exerted; and to knowledge temperance, keeping your passions and appetites under strict government, and using all the creatures with a holy moderation; and to temperance patience under every provocation, bearing with the injuries, reproaches, and perverseness of others, and meekly submissive under every affliction; and to patience godliness, exercising yourselves in every act of devotion and means of grace, from a principle of love to God, and desire of nearer communion with him; and to godliness brotherly kindness, feeling the tenderest sympathy and compassion towards your fellow-Christians, and

ready to every good word and work that may be helpful to them; and to brotherly kindness charity, having your hearts enlarged to all mankind, with universal benevolence to every human creature, and a desire to promote their temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare, not excluding even your greatest and most inveterate enemies.

2. These graces will adorn our profession, as the want of them must necessarily prove us destitute of true Christianity. *For if these things be in you and abound*, in lively exercise, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but as trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, you will be full of life, sap, and fruitfulness, which redounds to his glory. While he that lacketh these things, is blind, whatever pretences to wisdom he may make; and cannot see afar off, at best has but a glimmering and notional apprehension of divine truth, being a stranger to that realizing faith which brings near the distant objects of an eternal world; and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins, unfaithful to the grace which he once possessed, and negligent in his application to that Blood which alone can cleanse him from his iniquities.

3. He exhorts all believers to diligence in the Christian course. *Wherefore the rather, brethren*, considering how many have a name to live who are really dead in trespasses, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, in the lively use of every means of grace, and in the practice of all holy conversation; for, if ye do these things, and perseveringly live in the exercise of the graces above-mentioned, ye shall never fall from Christ and grace, or perish with the world: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; when at the last, triumphant over death and the grave, you shall be admitted into all the glories of the eternal world, and so shall be for ever with the Lord. *Note*; They shall shortly enter an eternal world of glory, who now perseveringly walk under the influences of a Saviour's grace.

3dly, The apostle appears careful to discharge his own solemn trust towards them. *Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things*, as matters of the last importance, though ye know them in a good measure; and be established in the present truth, fully satisfied in general of the necessity of holiness, in order to an entrance

you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation flumbereth not.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be re-

¹ Ver. 1, 9. Jude, 4, 19. Deut. 32. 35.

² Job, 4. 18. Luke, 8. 31. Mat. 8. 29. John, 8. 44. 1 John, 3. 8. Jude, 6. Rev. 20. 2, 10. Mat. 25. 41.

trance into the kingdom of heaven. *Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle of clay, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance, that your hearts may be suitably affected, and your practice correspondent with your Christian principles. And hereunto I give the greater diligence, knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle of the body, which will be soon silent in the dust, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. Moreover, I will endeavour, both by my labours among you, and by these epistles, which when I am dead will yet speak, that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.* Note; (1.) Even the truths that we know, we need be often reminded of, and urged to shew their influence on our conduct. (2.) A minister's work is never done till he closes his eyes: his death-bed must be his farewell sermon. (3.) We live in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust; but, blessed be God, we need not regret the dissolution of this wretched tabernacle, when we are to exchange it for a mansion of glory.

4thly, We have a reason given for the importunity and seriousness with which he pressed the foregoing exhortations. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, like the Gentile legends or Jewish traditions, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, at the last great day of his appearing and glory, to judge the assembled world.* But,

1. *We were eye-witnesses of his majesty, on the mount of transfiguration, and attest that of which we have had the fullest demonstration; not only seeing his transfigured body shining in all the brightness of the meridian sun, but hearing the voice of God. For he there received from God the Father honour and glory, who bore the fullest testimony to the transcendent dignity of his divine character as his Son Messiah, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, the bright cloud which overshadowed him, the symbol of the divine Presence, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, in his person, offices, and all his undertakings. And this voice, which came from heaven, we heard distinctly and clearly, when we were with him in the holy mount.* So that they could not be mistaken themselves in the things which they testified.

2. *We have also a more sure word of prophecy, wherein a more direct attestation is borne to the power and coming of Jesus to judgment, than might be inferred from what we saw and heard. Or, We have a most sure word of prophecy, wherein this second appearing of the Lord to judgment is most expressly and repeatedly affirmed; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, (and a dark world indeed would this be without the word of God,) until the day, the great and expected day of our final redemption, dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts, to shine thenceforward with unclouded lustre on his faithful saints, when the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and their God their glory.* Knowing this first,

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that, till the day of Christ appears, we may surely depend upon his prophetic word as our guide; for no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, is of human invention or composition, but of celestial origin: for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God, whom he had sanctified to be instruments in his hands to deliver his messages, spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, directing and dictating both the matter and expression. Note; (1.) The scriptures alone are our guide to glory. All our wisdom is comparatively ignorance, and our light darkness, without a divine revelation. (2.) The more diligently we take heed to the word of God, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, the more surely shall we walk in holiness and happiness. (3.) The scriptures carry their own divine authority along with them, and, through the energy of that Spirit who indited them, impress a full conviction of their truth on the consciences of the sincere. (4.) Though the Bible was written by men, we must say, as of the tables which Moses hewed, that the writing was of God. They were but organs and instruments, and did not themselves often comprehend the full meaning of what they delivered. With what sacred reverence and awe then should we open that holy book, where God himself is heard still speaking!

CHAP. II.

THE entrance of false teachers into the church, their impious doctrines, their success in perverting many, and the influence of their doctrines in corrupting the morals of their disciples, were all very early made known by the Spirit to the apostle Paul; as we learn from his speech to the elders of Ephesus, and from his Epistles to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, and to Titus. The same discoveries were made to the apostles Peter, and John, and Jude, who as well as St. Paul published them in their writings, that the faithful might oppose these false teachers, and confute their errors, as soon as they appeared.

With this benevolent design, therefore, St. Peter, in his second chapter, recorded the revelation which was made to him, concerning the false teachers who were to arise in the church, and concerning their destructive ways. But, lest the prospect of these great evils might have grieved the faithful too much, as if God had forsaken his church, he observed, by way of preface, that in the Jewish church there were false prophets, even as among the disciples of Christ there would be false teachers, who, in a covert manner, would introduce most destructive heresies, denying even the Lord who bought them, ver. 1.—and, by their vicious manners, would occasion the gospel to be evil spoken of, ver. 2.—These false teachers, St. Jude describes, as in part actually come when he wrote his epistle, and mentions their perverting the grace of God to lasciviousness. Both apostles, I suppose, spake particularly of the Nicolaitans, whose deeds our Lord hated, Rev. ii.

5 0

6. 15.

served unto judgment ;

5 And ^b spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righ-

teousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly ;

6 And ⁱ turning the cities of Sodom and

^b Gen. ii.—viii. Job, 22. 16. 1 Peter, 3. 19, 20. Heb. 11. 7. Ch. 3. 6. x6. 49. Hosea, 11. 8. 16. 1. 9. Amos, 4. 11. Zeph. 2. 9. Luke, 17. 29.

ⁱ Gen. 19. 24, 28. Deut. 29. 23. H. 13. 19. Jer. 50. 40. Ezek. Jude, 7. Numb. 26. 10.

6. 15. and of the pestilent sects which sprang from them ; namely, the Gnostics, Carpocratians, and Menandrians.—Farther, St. Peter foretold, that these teachers, actuated by an insatiable love of gain, would make merchandise of the people with feigned words ; but should at length suffer condign punishment, ver. 3.—Of these feigned words, the most destructive it seems were, their confidently affirming, that God is merciful in such a sense, that he will not punish men for their sins. For, in confutation of that pestilent error, St. Peter appealed to the punishment of the angels who sinned, and of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrha, as clear proofs from facts, that sooner or later God will not spare impenitent sinners, ver. 4, 5, 6.—By what other feigned words the false teachers were to make merchandise of the people, St. Peter has not so plainly insinuated ; but from his appealing to the punishment of the antediluvians and men of Sodom, in proof that heretical teachers and their disciples shall not escape, and from what he says, ver. 10. and downwards, concerning the practices of these men, it may be presumed that they were falsehoods, contrived to make the indulgence of their lusts consistent with their hope of salvation.

But lest it might be alleged, that the flood which destroyed the old world, and the fire which fell on the cities of the plain, were natural events, in which the wicked were no more concerned than the righteous, St. Peter, in describing the destruction of the antediluvians and men of Sodom, took care to mention the deliverance of Noah and Lot, as evident proofs, that these punishments fell on the wicked by the immediate interposition of God, ver. 7, 8.—And from the whole he draws this conclusion ; that the Lord is able and willing to deliver the godly, and to reserve the wicked to the day of judgment to be punished, ver. 9.—So that the righteous have no reason to fear their being involved with the wicked, in the everlasting destruction which in the end is to fall on them.—Farther, that the faithful might know who the false teachers and wicked men are, that shall be punished at the day of judgment, the apostle told them, that they are those especially who go after the flesh in the lusts of pollution, and who despise government, that is, the wholesome laws of the countries where they live, and speak evil of magistrates, ver. 10.—characters, by which false teachers in all ages have been distinguished. For their errors have constantly ended in the gratification of their lusts ; and they themselves have always hated laws and magistrates, because they restrained and punished their enormities. But the apostle justly observed, that persons of this stamp, by their own corruptions, destroy themselves, both in the present and future life, ver. 12.—Then he described the rioting of the false teachers, at the love-feasts of the church, ver. 13, 14.—And, by remarking that they followed in the way of Balaam, he insinuated, that, in opposition to their own knowledge and conscience, they, for the sake of drawing money

from their disciples, taught them to indulge themselves in all kinds of sensuality, ver. 15, 16.—Next, because these teachers never delivered any instructions really useful, the apostle compared them to wells without water, and to clouds driven by the wind, which yield no rain, ver. 17.—while in the mean time, to draw disciples after them, they boasted of the excellency of their doctrine, by which they permitted those to live in lasciviousness, who, by receiving the gospel in the love of it, had separated themselves from the wicked Heathens, and had been saved from their errors and their sins, ver. 18.—But of the miserable state into which they brought their disciples by promising them liberty from the restraint of all laws human and divine, these teachers were glaring examples ; being themselves slaves to their own lusts, ver. 19.—He therefore told the disciples of these teachers, that if, after fleeing away from the pollutions of Heathenism, and cordially embracing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, they were again entangled in the same pollutions through the base arts of their teachers, they would become even worse than ever before, ver. 20.—So that it had been better for them, never to have known the way of righteousness, than, having known it, to forsake it, ver. 21.—For, in that case, they would be like to dogs who turn again to their own vomit, and to the washen sow which returns to its wallowing in the mire, ver. 22.

Ver. 1. But there were false prophets] The false apostles, prophets, and teachers among the Christians, gave rise to the sects of the Ebionites, Cerinthians, Nicolaitans, Carpocratians, and Gnostics, of whom the primitive fathers have said so many dreadful things. They were not only exceedingly corrupt and vicious themselves, but great corrupters of others : they now began to shew themselves ; but afterwards waxed worse and worse. Their character is drawn in this chapter in very lively colours, and it was highly proper to guard the Christians against such pernicious men. As their heresies were foretold, such a disagreeable event would be the accomplishment of a prophecy, and thereby become an evidence of the truth of the apostolic doctrine. The clause *who privily shall bring in, &c.* may be rendered, *who will privately or subtly introduce destructive heresies.* The word *Δεσποτῆν*, rendered *Lord*, signifies a *sovereign, or arbitrary monarch*, and consequently, applied to Jesus Christ, is a high testimony of his Divinity. See Jude, ver. 4. Observe, these wicked men brought perdition upon themselves ; it was not God who did it by his eternal and unconditional decrees, or by withholding effectual grace, or by making impossible conditions of acceptance :—no : it was their own fault alone ; by their vices they brought upon themselves swift destruction. Again, from the text it appears, that those may perish, whom the Lord hath bought, or for whom Christ hath died. See Matth. xiii. 21. Rom. xiv. 15. 1 Cor. viii. 11. In this and the two following verses it would be better to read

Gomorrha into ashes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly ;

* Gen. 19. 10, 15, 16, 22, 24. Job. 5. 19. Pl. 34. 19. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Pl. 120. 5. & 55. 5, 10, 11. & 119. 136, 139, 158.

7 And ^h delivered just Lot, ⁱ vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked :

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among

¹ Gen. 13. 13. & 19. 7, 8. Jer. 9. 1—6. & 23. 9. Ezek. 8. 17. & 9. 4.

will than *shall*, where that word occurs ; as the original will full as well bear to be translated *will* as *shall*.

Ver. 2. *And many shall follow their pernicious ways, &c.*] The absurd doctrines and wicked practices of professed Christians have done infinite harm, and often caused the enemies of religion to blaspheme. The Judaizers much infested the first Christians, and perverted many in the Churches of Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, and Crete. The Nicolaitans, Carpocratians, and Gnostics succeeded them, being exceedingly impious in their principles, and obscene in their lives ; and they occasioned great scandal to the Christian name. As the Jews and Heathens took little pains to distinguish between Christians who did or did not live according to the rules of the gospel, hence mankind were imposed upon, and both the populace and governors greatly incensed against them. The church of Rome has succeeded them, and caused Jews and all manner of Infidels to speak evil of Christianity. It was highly proper that the apostles should forewarn the Christians of this event, that they might not give heed to licentious doctrines, nor be shocked when such things happened ; but be the more confirmed in the faith, when the accomplishment so exactly answered to the prediction.

Ver. 3. *With feigned words, &c.*] The phrase, *παραδοίς λόγοις*, means, words formed to deceive ; smooth and artful speeches, such as covetous merchants or unfair traders make use of, to put off bad goods. “ They will make merchandise of you ; use you like cattle or slaves brought to market to be sold.” Judas sold his Master for what the Jews would give him : false teachers sell their doctrine for what they can get by it ; so did the Gnostics, &c. in the first ages ; so have all false teachers done in all ages. But, above all, the church of Rome, with the smooth and plausible words of unity, uniformity, a catholic church, universality, antiquity, and the like, has traded in all kinds of merchandise ; and, among other things, in the souls of men : hence they are called *the merchants of the earth* : Rev. xviii. 11, &c. The character of the Bishops of Rome has answered much more exactly to this prediction of St. Peter, than to that character which they have assumed of the successors of St. Peter, and the vicars of Christ upon earth. *Whose judgment now of a long time, is rendered much better by Heylin ; But their condemnation long since resolved or threatened.* In Jude, ver. 4. they are spoken of as persons who had been described of old as liable to, or deserving this condemnation : see Deut. xxxii. 35. Mr. Blackwall observes, that the latter part of this verse contains a most beautiful figure, representing the vengeance which shall destroy such incorrigible sinners, as an angel of judgment pursuing them upon the wing ; continually approaching nearer and nearer, and, in the mean time, keeping a watchful eye upon them that he may at length discharge an unerring blow.

Ver. 4. *For if God spared not the angels*] Some think

the sense is suspended till we come to ver. 9. and the re-edition to be looked for there ; that is, *If God spared not the angels who sinned, &c. the Lord also knoweth how to deliver the godly, &c.* This may possibly be the connection ; or, if the words *εἰ γὰρ* are taken affirmatively for *since—inasmuch as*—there will be no occasion for a re-edition afterwards. From this verse to the end of ver. 8. are contained three remarkable instances of divine judgments formerly inflicted upon transgressors ; which are mentioned by the apostle here in confirmation of what he denounces against those heretics who then infested the Christian churches. The literal translation of the latter clause of this verse is ; *But confining them in Tartarus, in chains of darkness, he hath delivered them to be reserved unto judgment.* The word *Ταρταρος*, in St. Peter, is the same as *Πιττω ες Ταρταρον*, to throw into Tartarus, used by Homer ; only rectifying the poet's mistake of Tartarus being in the bowels of the earth ; and recurring to the true sense of the word, namely, the thick darkness that bounds this created system ; which, when applied to spirits, must be interpreted spiritually. And thus the word *ταρταρώσας* will import, that God call the apostate angels out of his presence into that *blackness of darkness*, (Jude, ver. 13.) where they will be for ever excluded from the glorious light of his countenance. See Parkhurst on the word *Ταρταρος*.

Ver. 5. *Spared not the old world,*] This is put by a metonymy for the persons who lived before the flood, and perished in it ; by way of opposition to the new world, or to mankind restored after that spreading desolation. Bishop Pearson would render the next clause, *Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness*, but it seems very difficult, if not impossible, to make out that Noah was the eighth preacher. The Bishop adds, that if we are not disposed so to translate, it may be understood as denoting, not the order in which Noah was ranked, but merely the number of persons who were with him : Noah, with seven others ; or Noah, one of the eight. And as this is true, so the calling him the eighth, in this sense, may be illustrated by authorities taken from several Greek writers. Heylin reads it, *and preserved only eight persons, whereof the principal was Noah.* God made more account of one righteous family, than of a whole generation of wicked persons. How could the false teachers and their wicked disciples hope to escape, when neither strength nor multitudes could defend the ungodly of former ages ?—Or what need was there for the faithful to be terrified, when they were under the protection of that God, who had formerly delivered the righteous, how weak or few soever ?

Ver. 6. *And turning the cities, &c.*] Strabo says, that all the ground thereabouts, was *περρωδη*, reduced to ashes or cinders. Condemned is here put for punishment, which commonly follows condemnation, and is no more than a carrying of the sentence into execution. Some read this, *condemned them to a total destruction.* Doddridge renders

them; in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds):

9^m The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and toⁿ reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

10^o But chiefly them that walk after the

flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise * government: presumptuous *are they*, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:

11^p Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation † against them before the Lord.

12 But these,^q as natural brute beasts, made

^m 1 Cor. 10. 13. Job, 5. 19. Pf. 34. 19. ⁿ Job, 21. 30. Prov. 16. 4. Ver. 4. Deut. 32. 3. ^o Jude, 4, 7, 8, 10, 16. 1 Thess. 2. 25. Titus, 1. 7. ^p Or *dominion*. ^q Pf. 103. 20. & 104. 4. Jude, 9. Dan. 3. 14. † Some read, *against themselves*. ^r Jude, 10. Pl. 94. 5. Jer. 12. 3. & 10. 21. & 12. 3. Ch. 3. 3, 4. Mat. 22. 29. If. 27. 11. & 3. 11.

the verse, *And he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with destruction, reducing them to ashes, &c.*

Ver. 7. *And delivered just Lot*] *And rescued righteous Lot, &c.*

Ver. 8. *Vexed his righteous soul*] The word *ἔλασινζεν* signifies the torment of the rack. It is here used as a strong figure whereby to express the unspeakable grief and anguish of mind of the righteous, at the overspreading wickedness of the times and places where they live; especially the debauchery of bad men, their open profaneness, and their rage against the just. Grotius takes notice, that after Lot parted from Abraham, he lived sixteen years in Sodom;—a long time to abide in the most outrageously wicked city in the world, and not be tainted with their vices.

Ver. 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver, &c.*] We have already taken notice, that some have thought the sense is suspended from ver. 4. to this verse. This then would be the connection, “*If God spared not the angels that sinned,—nor the old world, nor the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; and if, on the other hand, he saved the holy angels, and also Noah and Lot who were righteous men; then the Lord knoweth how to deliver, &c.*” Dr. Heylin, beginning each of the verses foregoing with *Since*—*Since God did not spare*, begins the present verse: *It appears from these instances, that the Lord will deliver, &c.* From the distinction which God hath already made in many cases between the righteous and the wicked, the apostle infers a righteous judgment to come, or a state of universal and exact retribution.

Ver. 10. *But chiefly them that walk after the flesh*] The Lord knoweth how to keep all the wicked unto the day of judgment, to be then punished: but (though none of the unrighteous shall escape unpunished,) he will more especially punish those who are debauched, &c. In ver. 1. the prophesy is mentioned concerning the rise of false teachers in the Christian church: that prophesy had been delivered some time before by our Lord and his apostles. See chap. iii. 2, 3. Matth. xxiv. 24. Now from this and the following verses it appears, that some of these false teachers began to rise up and fulfil the prophesy; for here is a description of persons who now existed. What is here called *flesh*, is by St. Jude, ver. 7. called *other*, or *strange flesh*: by which may be meant all the foul and unnatural crimes of uncleanness. It appears abundantly from Josephus and other writers, that the Jews despised dominion, and spoke evil of all the dignities or magistrates, but those of their own nation;—notions which the Judaizing teachers were very

apt to infuse. From which it seems most probable, that the word *καριώματα*, both here, and in Jude, ver. 8. is used in its proper sense for *dominion or government*; and that the word *δόξας*, which follows, is by a *metonymy* put for the *persons*, as it is in other places. So that the meaning seems to be, “*They despised dominion or government, as thinking themselves in all respects sui juris, or not subject thereto, but at liberty to indulge their vicious appetites: as a consequence of which, they speak evil of magistrates, who restrain them by laws, which threaten to punish such immoralities as break in upon civil order. Whereas the good angels pay a regard to the divine order and regulation appointed among themselves, and use no indecent expressions towards the evil angels; not even when they see reason to oppose them.*” So that what is here said of the angels, is spoken by way of comparison, and brought in only for illustration.

Ver. 11. *Whereas angels*] It is a rule of interpretation, that the plainer and larger account of any thing should be taken, to explain that which is more brief and obscure. Accordingly, Jude, ver. 9. ought to be consulted in order to interpret this text. For, having condemned some who pretended to be Christians, for despising dominion, and railing against dignities, as St. Peter does in the preceding verse, he adds, *Whereas, when Michael the archangel, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses, he dared not to bring against him a railing accusation; but said, The Lord rebuke thee: and as what follows in Jude agrees with what follows here, ver. 12. there can be no doubt of their treating of the same thing. This therefore seems to be the connection: “If the holy angels, who are greater in strength and power than the fallen angels, dare not allow themselves to rail against them, when they justly reprove and condemn their wicked actions, but behave with the greatest modesty and decency; how unjust is it, that men, who are possessed of no power or authority, should allow themselves such a liberty of railing against princes and magistrates, who are exalted to power and dignity, and are the ministers of God set over men for the common good?”—See Jude, ver. 9.*

Ver. 12. *But these, as natural brute beasts;*] *But these, as animals, by nature void of reason, born for capture and destruction, railing against things in which they are ignorant, shall be utterly corrupted [or perish] in their own corruption.* Benson. Dr. Whitby would render it, *But these are as animals void of reason, &c.* Indeed it is evident, that it must be explained as a general assertion relating to some violence of temper;

to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of * adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable

souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of ² Balaam the son of Bofor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.

17 These are wells without water, clouds

¹ Ver. 19, 22. Prov. 14. 32. Ch. 1. 4. John, 8. 21. 11. 66. 4. Jer. 2. 19. ² Phil. 3. 19. Rom. 2. 8, 9. Rev. 18. 7. ³ Jude, 12, 19. Rom. 16. 18. ⁴ Cor. 11. 20, 21. ⁵ 1 Theff. 5. 7. ⁶ 2 Tim. 3. 6. ⁷ Jer. 5. 8. Mat. 5. 28. ⁸ Jude, 4. 8, 11, 18. Micah, 3. 11. Ch. 3. 3. ⁹ 2 Tim. 3. 6. ¹⁰ Gr. *an adulterers*. ¹¹ Numb. 22. 7, 18, 22. & 23. 3, 12, 16. & 24. 1. & 25. 1, 2. Jude, 12. Rev. 2. 14. Acts, 2. 18. ¹² 1 Tim. 6. 10. ¹³ Numb. 22. 22—33. ¹⁴ Jude, 12. 13. Eph. 4. 14. James, 1. 6. Ver. 3, 9, 13.

temper; as no sin of the tongue (which is immediately afterwards spoken of) could be the resemblance of a brute. It may refer to their running headlong into extreme danger, to which their licentious manner of speech, especially when attacking the characters of governors, might very naturally expose them. See Jude, ver. 10. The word *φθοράν*, corruption, is twice used in this verse: in the first place, for a natural corruption, or destruction: in the last for moral corruption, or vice. Their moral corruption, if persisted in, would bring on their natural corruption; or, in other words, vice would lead them to misery and ruin. They were like brute animals in being governed by sense and appetite; and, like them, they would fall into a snare. They were like brutes, and were, in respect to the present life, to perish like brutes.

Ver. 13. *As they that count it pleasure to riot, &c.*] Some understand St. Peter as intimating, that they lived in riot and luxury every day. Others suppose the meaning to be, that they took pleasure in that riot, which "endureth only for a day, or for a short season." The apostle seems to allude to the proverbial saying, 1 Theff. v. 7. *They that are drunken, are drunken in the night*: whereas these wicked Christians had cast off all shame, and were so abandoned, as to practise their vices in the open daylight. Isai. iii. 9. They are called *spots* and *blemishes*, in allusion to a spot upon a garment, or a blemish in the human body. These words are applied to moral stains or blemishes. See Deut. xxxii. 5. and 1 Pet. i. 19.

Ver. 14. *Having eyes full of adultery,*] There is a prodigious strength in the original; it properly signifies their having an adulterers continually before their eyes;—*having eyes full of an adulterers*. Instead of *cannot cease from sin*, the original should be rendered, *and that cease not from sin*: if they could not have ceased from sin, it would have been no crime in them; but they were men of most insatiable desires, and in their eyes one might have read the wickedness of their hearts. In this sentence the apostle represents them as wicked in their own practice; in the next, *as laying baits for unstable souls*. He paints them in lively colours, and gives all their remarkable features, that true Christians might easily know and carefully avoid them. See on ver. 18. ch. iii. 16. and the note on James, i. 14. As the word *πλεονεξίας*, rendered *covetous practices*, is in the plural number, Wolfius and others would understand

thereby every immoderate desire, whether of riches or sensual pleasures. So understood, it will connect with what goes before and what follows: for in what goes before, they are charged with debauchery of heart and life; and, in what follows, with covetous practices. *Cursed children*, or *children of a curse*, means exposed to a curse, as being vicious themselves, and endeavouring to ensnare others into vice. See Matth. xxv. 41. 1 Pet. i. 14. and Longinus on the Sublime, sect. iv. *ad fin*.

Ver. 15. *Which have forsaken the right way,*] It is called *the way of righteousness*, ver. 21. which leads to happiness; but turning aside to error and vice, is wandering out of the way into forbidden paths, which lead to misery and destruction. Perhaps the apostle here alluded to Numb. xxii. 32. when the angel of the Lord said to Balaam, *Thy way is perverse before me. The wages of unrighteousness are called the rewards of divination*, Numb. xxii. 7. namely, the riches and honour which he sought by wicked methods. When God would not allow him by the Spirit of prophecy to curse Israel, he gave Balak the most diabolical advice; namely, that by the beautiful Midianitish women he should tempt the Israelites, first to debauchery and then to idolatry, as the most likely way to expose them to a curse. Jude, ver. 12. Rev. ii. 14. Now as Balaam, through covetousness, corrupted the people of Israel, and thereby exposed them to the judgment of God, so did those false teachers, through covetousness, corrupt the Christians, giving them liberty to indulge the lusts of the flesh; and thereby exposed them to the righteous judgment of God.

Ver. 16. *The dumb ass speaking, &c.*] When Balaam laid aside his reason, and acted like a brute, then the brute animal, the ass on which he rode, *ὑποζύγιον*, though naturally dumb, was, by the miraculous power of God, endued with a voice, like that of a man, to rebuke the madness of his master. *The madness of the prophet*, signifies, his mad attempt to oppose the divine will. The Jerusalem Targum and Ben Uzziel, on Numb. xxii. 30. introduce the ass saying to Balaam, "Woe unto thee, Balaam! *thou art mad!*" His madness was voluntary, and consequently criminal; and all wickedness will in the end, according to the degree and aggravation of it, appear to be *madness*; for in every act of wickedness, men so far oppose the will of God. See on Numb. xxii. 28.

Ver.

that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

^a Ver. 4. Job, 20. 26. Mat. 22. 13. & 8. 12. & 25. 30. Jude, 6, 13. Titus, 2. 12. ^b Or for a little, or a while. ^c Acts, 2. 40. Ch. 1. 4. Ver. 20. Mat. 13. 20, 21. ^d Gal. 5. 13. 1 Peter, 2. 16. ^e John, 8. 34. Rom. 6. 16. Jude, 19. ^f Mat. 12. 43-45. Luke, 11. 24-26. Heb. 6. 4-8. & 10. 26, 27, 38. Pl. 125. 5. with ch. 1. 2, 4.

Ver. 17. These are wells without water, &c.] When a thirsty person goes to a fountain to drink, and finds it dried up, and there is nothing but an empty pit, he is greatly disappointed. These false teachers pretended to be fountains of deeper knowledge and greater purity than any others; but when a man came thirsting after truth and righteousness, how great must be his disappointment when he found nothing but emptiness and vanity! In this comparison is pointed out their ostentation and hypocrisy: they made a show of something profitable and refreshing; but it was only a mere show. They were altogether empty and unprofitable; all appearance, but no reality. They made great pretences to extraordinary holiness, but were very wicked. They invited men to come and drink at the inexhaustible fountain of their knowledge, but not one drop of the water of life could be found there. 2 Tim. iii. 5. Again, he compares them to light or small clouds, carried about with a whirlwind: so the Arabs compare persons who put on the appearance of virtue, when yet they are destitute of all goodness, to a *light cloud*, which makes a show of rain, and afterwards vanishes. When clouds arise in a dry and thirsty land, they give men hopes of refreshing showers; but when the promising appearance ends in a tempest, it proves hurtful, and destroys the fruits of the earth: in like manner these false teachers promised to be fruitful clouds, and to refresh men with their uncommon knowledge and piety; but they were only empty and delusive promises, and ended in the harm of such as regarded them. In this comparison the apostle might probably intend to denote their levity and inconstancy, as well as their hypocrisy. They were carried about with every wind of doctrine: they were dark as a mist, light as a cloud, empty as a thin vapour; shadow without substance; pernicious, instead of being profitable and useful. *The mist of darkness*, means the thickest and most horrible darkness. The allusion here seems to be to a most dark and dismal prison or dungeon. They were like dark clouds, and they were to be punished in extreme darkness: they endeavoured to spread darkness over the minds of others, and darkness was to be their portion. See ver. 4. and Jude, ver. 6, 13.

Ver. 18. For when they speak great swelling words] For, while they utter high swelling words of vanity, they, by the lusts of the flesh, lay a bait for those who had really escaped from them that live in error. See Jude, ver. 16. By *swelling words of vanity*, we are to understand the most vain and boasting, proud and high sounding words. It is observed, that here, and in many other places, these heretical teachers are re-

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

presented as seducing their followers, not by the power of miracles, but by the art of address. By their artifices they laid a bait for those, who, by embracing the Christian religion, had been reformed from idolatry and vice, not *almost*, or *a little*, but *really, truly, and experimentally*. See ver. 20. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. Those false teachers boasted that they delivered men from error and vice; whereas they seduced into them, those who had escaped from the idolatry and wickedness of the unbelieving world.

Ver. 19. While they promise them liberty,] Nothing is more sweet or desirable than *liberty*; and therefore in order to allure men to become their disciples, they *promised them liberty*: by which they meant licentiousness, or a liberty to gratify their lusts, and to do any thing, whatever they pleased, without any fear of an invisible Governor, and a future punishment. *That*, as they pretended, was the true Christian liberty: God saw no sin in those who understood and believed aright. If they had true knowledge, or right faith, they were free to do any thing; they were restrained by no laws of marriage; the civil magistrate had nothing to do with them; the fear of God was superstition and the greatest servitude. See Irenæus, lib. i. c. 5. Thus they *turned the grace of God into wantonness, and, promising liberty, were themselves the slaves of corruption*. See Gal. v. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 16. Jude, ver. 4. Heylin renders the last clause very well; *For every one is a slave to that which subdues him*. Benson's paraphrase is, "For by whatever a man is conquered, to that he may very properly be called a *bind-slave*."

Ver. 20. For if after they have escaped, &c.] For inasmuch as having escaped. See on ver. 4. *The pollutions of the world, were idolatry, superstition, and vice.* By the *world* we may understand here the unbelieving and wicked world; and more especially the idolatrous Gentiles. *Μιασματων pollutions*, is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It was used by the ancient physicians for the pestilential infection in the plague, which spreads secretly and insensibly, and affects many. Nothing pollutes or infects the minds of men like vice and wickedness: the *world*, or *multitude*, being generally infected, is apt to infect others. *The knowledge of Jesus Christ*, here implies not only knowledge in the Christian religion, in a general sense, but in Christian experience and practice. They who live in vice, do not know Christ; but by the true knowledge of Christ men are freed from vice. John, viii. 36. The Christian religion is, through divine grace, of a purifying nature: ch. i. 4. John, xv, 2, 3. The word *εμπλακίνας*, rendered *entangled*, signifies *taken in a toil, or snare*; see Prov. xxviii.

they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 [†] For it had been better for them not to

have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according

[†] Luke, 12. 47, 48. John, 9. 41. & 15. 22.

xxviii. 18. in the LXX. and 2 Tim. ii. 4. Through a pretence of Christian liberty, they were again entangled in the vices of the heathen world. In the word *overcome*, there is a reference to what is said, ver. 19. St. Peter, in the last clause, is not speaking of the false teachers alone, but of those Christians also who were seduced by them; and in this verse, compared with ver. 18. 21, 22. Ezek. xxxiii. 12, &c. and many other texts of scripture, it is plainly supposed to be a possible thing for true believers, or those who have been once regenerated and purified, totally and finally to fall away: so far is it from being true, "that God sees no sin in believers;" that, if they fall away, they will be involved in greater guilt, and exposed to a severer punishment than the ignorant or unbelieving.

Ver. 21. *It had been better for them not to have known, &c.*] By the word *better*, is meant the lesser evil: which, when two evils are compared together, is accounted the greatest good. *Righteousness* in this place does not stand for *justice* alone, but comprehends all the graces and virtues of the Christian life. See 1 Pet. ii. 24. The two evils here compared are, their having remained idolatrous Heathens, in ignorance, infidelity, and vice; and their having once been enlightened and regenerated by the Spirit of God, and afterwards relapsing into the greatest and most scandalous vices. The latter is reckoned the greater evil, and therefore it is said, that they had better have continued in their former state. The *commandment* was called *holy*, because the observation of it rendered men holy, through divine grace, or freed them from the pollutions of the world. The holy *commandment* is that great commandment which runs through the whole gospel, and which insists upon holiness of heart and life as absolutely necessary to everlasting salvation: for the gospel is not a collection of unconditional *promises*; it contains *commandments* also, which, through almighty grace, must be obeyed by all those who would inherit the promises.

Ver. 22. *But it is happened unto them*] The connection is, "It had been far better for them not to have done so:—but they have relapsed into their old vices; and that is agreeable to some ancient proverbs; nothing new, or unheard of, hath happened unto them." The ancients used to sum up their wisest and most useful observations in short, nervous, and expressive *proverbs*; which are more easily understood, and better remembered, than long, laboured discourses. The two following proverbs teach us, that a well-regulated life can proceed from nothing but constant watchfulness, through grace, over our tempers and actions, and a steady regard to the divine law. The former of these is found, Prov. xxvi. 11. the latter is said to have been also a common proverb among the ancients. Gataker takes these two proverbs to have a poetical turn, and to have been a distich of *Iambics*. Horace has a plain

reference to both these proverbs, lib. i. ep. 2. line 26. where he is speaking of the travels of Ulysses, and says, "If he had been conquered by the charms of Circe,

"Vixisset canis immundus, vel amica luto sus.

"He had lived like an impure dog, or a sow that is fond of the mire." Surely these proverbs will not be thought coarse or unpolite in the holy apostle, when some of the most elegant writers of classic antiquity have made use of, or referred to them.

Inferences.—There is no church so pure, but some false members, and even false teachers, may insinuate themselves into it; yet it is our duty to watch and pray, that the churches to which we respectively belong, may be guarded against their pernicious insinuations, and especially against the *destructive heresies* of those who deny the Lord who bought them. As we regard the edification of the church, and the salvation of our own precious and immortal souls, let us guard against whatever may justly deserve such an imputation as this. Woe be to those teachers who are actuated with a covetous spirit, who teach things which they ought not for the sake of filthy lucre, and make merchandise of the souls of their hearers! How swiftly does their damnation approach, though they perceive not the gradations by which it advances; and with what irresistible terror will it at length overwhelm them!

That our hearts may be preserved under an awful impression of the Divine judgments, let us often meditate on those displays of them of which the scripture informs us. And let us, in particular, reflect on the fall of the apostate angels, who were precipitated from heaven, and reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day; and while we contemplate this awful dispensation, let us adore that grace and compassion which laid hold on apostate man, and provided an all-sufficient Saviour for him. Let us call to remembrance the dissolution of the old world by a deluge of water, and the tremendous destruction of the cities of the plain by fire from heaven; and let us fear Him, who can at pleasure break open the fountains of the great deep, and open the windows of heaven, and emit from these his various magazines, deluges of water, or torrents of burning sulphur, to execute his vengeance. Who can flee from his pursuing hand? or who can be secure and happy but under his almighty protection? Yet awful as the terrors of his indignation are, his eyes are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.—What a noble support and encouragement may it therefore be to the truly pious, who from day to day are vexing their righteous souls at the ungodly deeds of the wicked among whom they dwell, to reflect on the deliverance of Noah, and of Lot, from that general destruction with which they were surrounded. A more perfect and complete

to the true proverb, ^a The dog is turned to washed to her wallowing in the mire. his own vomit again; and the sow that was

^a Prov. 26. 11. Mat. 12. 43—45. Luke, 11. 24—26. Heb. 6. 4—8. & 10. 26, 27, 38.

plete deliverance will be at length accomplished for all the faithful servants of God, and there will be no possibility of doubting any more his ability, or his willingness, to rescue them from every evil; for he will make the day of his vengeance on his enemies, a day of complete and everlasting salvation to his saints. And the Lord grant that we may all find mercy of the Lord in that important day.

Again. It is matter of grievous lamentation, that such wretches as those who are described in this chapter, should be any-where found in the Christian church. Let us be the less surprised, if any such spots and blemishes are discovered among us, on whom the ends of the world are come; but let the licentious character, here drawn, be noted with a just abhorrence, that if any such persons are found, they may with becoming indignation be put away. Many there are who seem to be as irrational and ravenous as brute beasts, and are far more pernicious to society than the race of savage or poisonous animals. They are indeed children of a curse, and they will inherit the curse, who thus contrive to make their lives one scene of iniquity; whose eyes, and lips, declare more wickedness in their hearts than they have power to execute. But it should be remembered, they are accountable to God, not only for all they do, but all they desire and wish to do; and they are incessantly aggravating that terrible account. These disciples of Balaam will surely receive his reward; those dark clouds will quickly, if they continue thus to obscure with their crimes the horizon in which they ought to shine as stars, be doomed to blackness of darkness for ever. May persons of such a character, how specious soever the form which they wear, be universally detected and disgraced; may none of their swelling words of vanity entice and ensnare those who appear just escaping from the delusions of error and the fetters of vice; and may none permit themselves to be seduced by promises of liberty from such mean and miserable slaves of corruption!

Finally, let us learn, by the awful conclusion of this chapter, to guard against all temptations to apostasy; may we never, after having long escaped the pollutions of the world, be entangled again, and overcome by them! Those expressive similes, taken from such loathsome and detestable animals, would not be sufficient to paint out the degree, in which we should ourselves be loathsome and odious, in the sight of that God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and cannot look upon evil (Hab. i. 13.). May we therefore, with the righteous, hold on our way; and, taking care to preserve the cleanness of our hands and hearts, may we daily wax stronger and stronger, (Job xvii. 9.) and shine with an increasing lustre! for the path of the just should be as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (Prov. iv. 18.)

REFLECTIONS.—1st, False teachers in the church have ever been more dangerous and destructive than all the persecutions of the enemies without. Against those the apostle warns the people.

1. He describes them. *But there were false prophets also among the people of Israel of old, even as there shall or will be false teachers among you, who privily shall or will bring in damnable heresies, craftily perverting the word of God, and adulterating the doctrines of the gospel; even denying the Lord that bought them, disowning him as over all, God blessed for ever, or otherwise impugning his merit, dignity, and offices; as the others denied him who redeemed them from Egypt with his mighty hand, and by a long succession of miracles repeatedly delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, Deut. xxxii. 6. yet they both doctrinally and practically renounced and disowned him: and, as the dreadful consequence of their disobedience, these latter apostates, like the former, bring upon themselves swift destruction, which shall quickly come upon them to the uttermost. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, seduced by their cunning and ill examples; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of, and blasphemed by the enemies of the Christian name: and through covetousness shall or will they with feigned words make merchandize of you, influenced by the detestable principles of avarice, and, amidst all their specious professions, making religion their trade, and designing wholly their secular advantage.—* Note; They who enter the ministry for gain, must needs be deceivers, and perish in their wickedness.

2. He foretels their destruction. *Whose judgment, now of a long time suspended, yet lingereth not; and their damnation slumbereth not, but soon shall it terribly overtake them in the midst of their security and sensuality. Note; Vengeance against sinners is often slow, but always sure. Three awful instances are here produced of God's judgments.*

(1.) The fallen angels. *For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, though creatures of a higher rank than men; and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment at the great day: much less will he spare these obstinate offenders.*

(2.) The antediluvian world. *And God spared not the old world, when abandoned to wickedness; but saved Noah, the eighth person, with whom only seven more escaped in the ark, a preacher of righteousness, both of the righteousness of faith, and that moral righteousness to which he exhorted the men of his generation, calling them to repent of their iniquities: and, when they continued obstinate against his warnings, God issued forth the dread decree, opening the windows of heaven, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly, and swallowing them up in the mighty waters. If therefore he executed such vengeance upon them, let not other incorrigible sinners think at present to escape.*

(3.) The destruction of Sodom. *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, he condemned them with an overthrow, raining fire and brimstone upon them; making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly, that, taking warning by their fearful punishment, they may avoid or repent of their crimes before it be too late; otherwise, the same wrath shall still seize upon the ungodly and the sinner.*

3. For

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He affirmeth them of the certainty of Christ's coming to judgment, against those scorers who dispute it; warning them, from the long patience of God, to hasten their repentance: he describeth also the manner how the world shall be destroyed; exhorting them, from the expectation thereof, to all holiness of life; and again, to think the patience of God as tending to their salvation, as Paul wrote to them in his epistles.

[Anno Domini 67.]

THIS ^a second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your

^a Ch. 1. 12—15. Rom. 15. 14, 15. Phil. 3. 1. Jude, 3. ^b 1 Pet. 1. 2, 3, 22, 23. & 2. 1. Jam. 1. 21, 27. Ch. 1. 3—8. Heb. 3. 7. ^c Ch. 1. 19. Jude, 17. Acts, 17. 11. John, 5. 39. 1f. 8. 20. Pf. 119. 105. 1f. 24. 16. Deut. 6. 6, 7. ^d 1 Tim. 4. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 1. Jude, 18. Ch. 2. 1, 10—18. 1f. 5. 19. & 28. 14, 15, 22. ^e 1f. 5, 19. Jer. 17. 15. Ezek. 12. 22. Mal. 2. 17. Mat. 24. 48. Luke, 12. 45. 1 Cor. 15. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 17.

3. For the encouragement of the faithful, he mentions the wonderful escape of Lot from the flames. When God destroyed the cities where he dwelt, he delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked, grieved for the dishonour brought thereby upon God, and for the ruin which must infallibly descend upon their devoted heads: for that righteous man, dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds, enduring the most painful reflections, in the view of their wickedness, and the vengeance which hung over them. The Lord knoweth, as is evident by this instance, how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and he will do it in his own good time; and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished, who, though they should escape any signal stroke of divine vengeance in this life, are reserved unto the last dreadful day, when their iniquities shall receive their just reward.

2dly, The apostle,

1. At large describes the seducing teachers, whose practices were similar to those of the vilest of those ungodly workers of former times, and who with them must perish. But chiefly them will God reserve unto judgment, that walk after the flesh, in the lust of uncleanness, like the men of Sodom; and despise government, seditious, refractory, unwilling to submit to any restraint: presumptuous are they, and self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities, reviling both the ministers and apostles of Christ, and the civil magistrates set over them for the restraint of evil-doers. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might than every earthly potentate, yet bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord, reviling their persons and government. But these despisers of God's ordinances, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed by men for whose use they were created, speak evil of the things that they understand not, reviling persons and things civil and religious, of whose excellence they have not the least knowledge; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption, abandoned to their wicked hearts, and left to their ruin: and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time, daring and impudent in sin, not even waiting for the night to cover their shame. Spots they are, and blemishes, a reproach to the name of

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pure minds by way of remembrance:

2 That ye ^c 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:

3 ^d Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, ^e Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all

Christian which they presume to bear, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you; they live in the indulgence of their sins, while they outwardly appear to maintain communion with you; having eyes full of adultery, whose wanton looks bespeak the impurity of their hearts; and that cannot cease from sin, enslaved by their sensual appetites, and insatiate in the indulgence of them; beguiling unstable souls, as Satan beguiled Eve through his subtilty, and tempting them to comply with their corrupt desires. An heart they have, exercised with covetous practices, all their contrivances and pursuits being to amass wealth: cursed children, under the wrath of a holy God; which have forsaken the right way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and are gone astray from the paths of truth and holiness, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, and, notwithstanding his specious professions to Balak's messengers, really coveted the king of Moab's offers; but was rebuked for his iniquity in a very signal manner; the dumb ass, on which he rode, speaking with man's voice, by miraculous power, forbid the madness of the prophet, in presuming to go, after the warnings to the contrary which he had received, or to attempt the cursing of that people whom the Lord had blessed. These are wells without water, pretending to piety, but disappointing those who, like the thirsty traveller, come to them for the water of life; clouds that are carried with a tempest, that promise rain, but prove noxious vapours: to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever, going from the darkness of sin and error to the horrible and eternal darkness of hell. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, pretending to high flights of science, and boasting their vast attainments, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, by temptations suited to the corrupt inclinations of their hearers, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error—who had experienced a real reformation and renovation of heart, but now relapse into their former abominations. While they promise them liberty, a carnal liberty to do as they list, without restraint, they themselves are the servants of corruption, the veriest slaves in nature to base and vile affections: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage; and no bondage is so dreadful as that of sin and Satan. Note; (1.) The sins of

5 P

lewdness

things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

5 For ' this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of

Pl. 28. 5. & 33. 6. & 24. 2. & 136. 6. Heb. 11. 3. Gen. 1. 6, 9. Job, 38. 4—11. Exod. 20. 11.

lewdness are the dreadful rocks, on which multitudes of unstable souls make shipwreck of the faith. (2.) They who have hearts set on their covetousness, are hardly turned away from their vile pursuits, though conscience, like the faithful monitor of Balaam, often startles and accuses them. (3.) None are so far escaped from the world, but they have need to watch and pray that they fall not into temptation. (4.) However speciously the snare may be laid, and whatever liberty we may promise ourselves in sin, we shall find the dire delusion to our cost, if we yield to temptation; and shall prove how fearful is the bondage of corruption.

2. He warns them, by all the dreadful consequences of apostacy, to beware of these seducers. *For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ—have embraced and received the gospel in its divine power and efficacy—they are again entangled therein and overcome, so as to become again slaves to their lusts and appetites, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning, and their state more guilty than when they lay before in utter darkness, ignorance, and error. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, or to have received Christ and his salvation, than, after they have known it,—have experimentally enjoyed it,—to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and, the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.* Note; None perish with such aggravated guilt, as those who were once cleansed from their guilt and renewed in grace, and afterwards fall in their course, and relapse finally into iniquity. Woeful will be the end of apostates.

C H A P. III.

THE apostle informed the brethren, that his design in writing both his epistles, was to bring to their remembrance the doctrines and precepts delivered by the prophets and apostles; because it was the most effectual method of preserving them from being seduced by false teachers, ver. 1. Wherefore, as one of the greatest of these men's errors, was their denying the coming of Christ to judge the world and destroy this mundane system, he desired the brethren to recollect, what the holy prophets anciently had spoken, together with the commandments of the apostles of Christ to their disciples, to prepare for and expect these events, ver. 2.—But, lest they might think that Christ was to come to judgment immediately, he told them that in the last days, even before the destruction of the Jewish state (see the notes), scoffers would arise, avowed infidels, ver. 3. who, because Christ's coming was so long delayed, would ridicule the promise of his coming as a mere fable, and from the permanency of the mundane system without any alteration since the beginning, would argue that there is no probability of its being ever destroyed, ver. 4.—But to

show the fallacy of these reasonings, the apostle observed, that such atheistical persons are wilfully ignorant of Moses's doctrine, that by the almighty and efficacious *word of God*, the heavens, or firmament, were produced of old, and the earth also subsisting *from the water*, with which the mass of it was at first covered; till, by the Divine command, it emerged from it, and the liquid element flowed to its appointed channel: and that God ordained that the earth should be nourished and supported by *water*, which is the life of the vegetable creation, ver. 5. and that the destruction of the old world was accomplished by the same *word of God*, through his overflowing it with water, ver. 6. Wherefore the world having been once destroyed as well as made by the word of God, there is a possibility that it may be destroyed by him a second time. This conclusion following clearly from the Mosaic history, the apostle did not think it necessary to mention it. But to shew the certainty of the destruction of the mundane system, he assured the brethren and all mankind, that the world is no more to be destroyed by water, but by fire; being defended from deluges, and kept safely to be destroyed by fire at the day of judgment, ver. 7.—This argument, being founded on experience, was unanswerable.

The apostle, it seems, foresaw that on account of the day of judgment's being so long delayed, the scoffers would charge Christ with want of faithfulness, or want of power, to perform his promise. He therefore assured the brethren that God's purposes are not affected by any duration whatever. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. His purposes are accomplished with as much certainty, however long delayed, as if they had been executed the very day they were declared, ver. 8.—Further, he assured them that Christ does not delay his coming, either because he has forgotten his promise, or because he wants power to do what he hath promised, but with a view to afford sinners space for repentance, ver. 9.—That his coming will be sudden and unexpected, and occasion inexpressible terror to infidels and all impenitent sinners: that the heavens and the earth, and all the works of God and man upon the earth, shall be utterly burnt up, ver. 10.—And that, knowing these things, believers ought always to live in a godly manner, ver. 11. looking for, and earnestly desiring, the coming of the day of the Lord, in which the heavens being set on fire, &c. ver. 12.—But though the world is thus to be burnt, the apostle declared, that he, with all the godly, according to God's promise, expected a new heaven and a new earth, in which the righteous are to dwell, ver. 13.—Wherefore he exhorted the faithful, in the expectation of an abode in that happy country, to endeavour earnestly to be found blameless by Christ at his coming, ver. 14.

In the remaining part of the chapter, St. Peter informed the brethren, that some of the teachers built their false doctrine on certain passages of his brother Paul's epistles, which they wrested, as they also did the other scriptures,

old, and the earth * standing out of the water and in the water :

6 ^s Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished :

7 ^a But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store,

reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that ¹ one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

* Gr. *confisting*. ² See ch. 2. 5. Gen. 7. 10, 11, 21. Job, 22. 16. ³ Pf. 102. 26. If. 34. 4. & 51. 6. & 65. 17. Heb. 1. 11. Mat. 13. 40. & 25. 41. ⁴ Thef. 1. 8. Ver. 10. ⁵ Pf. 90. 4. Job, 10. 5. & 36. 26. ⁶ 1 Tim. 1. 17. & 6. 16. If. 57. 15.

to their own destruction, ver. 15, 16.—He desired them therefore to be on their guard, that they might not be carried away by the error of these lawless persons, ver. 17. and exhorted them to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he addressed a doxology; and so concluded his letter, ver. 18.

Ver. 1. Your pure minds] Your sincere minds. This seems to be an intimation that their minds were not yet corrupted, either by the false teachers, or by the scoffers. They were through Divine grace *pure*, or untainted with the evils which he describes; and St. Peter was desirous that they should continue so, ver. 17. It was his grand view in both his epistles, to stir up their untainted and sincere minds to remember and attend to what they had learned from the apostles and prophets. See ch. i. 12, 13.

Ver. 2. That ye may be mindful, &c.] This is an allusion to what he had said ch. i. 12—21. where he had alleged the authority both of the prophets and apostles. By the *prophets* are meant the Old Testament prophets, who are properly placed before the apostles of Christ, as having lived long before them. The prophets had foretold Christ's second coming. See ch. i. 19. The apostles had commanded the Christians steadfastly to look and diligently to prepare for that day; and as there were now rising up *scoffers*, who ridiculed all expectation of any such thing, it was highly proper to put them in mind of what they had formerly learned. It was with equal propriety that St. Peter intimated *whose* apostles they were, when he took notice of the commandment which they had given. When our Lord gave the apostles their commission, he ordered them to teach men to observe *whatsoever he had commanded them*. St. Peter here intimates, that they had kept to that order; and that the commandment which they his apostles had delivered, was not their own, nor any other than the commandment of Jesus Christ himself: and what Christian would dare to call in question such a commandment? When men would move us from the truth or simplicity of the gospel, a careful attention to the words of the apostles and prophets will be of eminent service to keep us steady to truth and purity.

Ver. 3. Knowing this first] That is, either what was to happen first in order of time, or as a premise, from whence they might conclude, that they ought to remember the predictions of the prophets, and the commandments of the apostles. *The last days* particularly and more immediately refer to the last days of Jerusalem, or of the Jewish state. See Jude, ver. 18, 19. Archbishop Tillotson thinks, that by these *scoffers* are meant the *Carpocratians*; a large sect of the Gnostics, who denied the resurrection of the

dead and future judgment, and who appeared quickly after the writing of this epistle. The root of infidelity, and the grand reason of men's scoffing at religion, is given in the last words of this verse; *they walk after their own lusts*. They may pretend to reason, but they are governed by sense and appetite; and they take refuge in infidelity, and scoff at religion, to make themselves easy in their vices: they are against religion, because religion is against them: they account it their interest that the gospel should not be true; for if it be true, their case is desperate: but it is the interest of every good man that it should be true; and the more any one searches with a well disposed mind, the more will its truth and evidence appear.

Ver. 4. Where is the promise of his coming ?] The promise is here put for the *thing promised*. The meaning of the question was, "Where is the promised advent of Christ? What proof or sign is there of his appearing again?" By this question these scoffers intended to insinuate, that there was no hope or prospect of his coming again; and that, as it was so long delayed, the promise was vain and delusive, and would never be accomplished.

Ver. 5. For this they willingly are ignorant of] It is probable, that these scoffers had once been Jews, and afterwards professed Christians; and consequently their ignorance in this point must needs have been wilful and affected. They prevaricated in their inquiry, or did not duly attend to and regard the Scriptural account of the flood, with the causes of it, which they knew; nor the intimations given by Christ, and his apostles, of the dissolution of the present world by fire.

Ver. 6. Whereby] *Δι' ὧν*, by which things; that is, by the heavens and earth being of such a constitution.

Ver. 7. But the heavens, &c.] Not only the ancient Jews, but the Stoics, and other philosophers among the Heathens, held that the world was to be destroyed by fire. It was also intimated by some, both of the Greek and Latin poets. *By the same word*, means, "The same wife will and appointment of God, revealed in his word, which originally constituted the heavens and the earth, ver. 5." Some would read the next clause, *Are treasured up for fire, reserved against the day of judgment*. There seems to be a particular reference in these words to the promise which God made to Noah; namely, that he would destroy the earth no more by a flood, Gen. ix. 11—15.

Ver. 8. One day is with the Lord, &c.] "I have taken notice, that the scoffers are voluntarily ignorant of, or inattentive to these things. But as to the *distance* of time, with which they insult you, be not you ignorant of, or inattentive to *this one thing*; namely, *that one day*

9 ^k The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; ^l but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 ^m But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which ⁿ the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the

earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

11 ^o Seeing then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, ^o what manner of *persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness,

12 ^p Looking for and ^q *hasting* unto the coming of the day of God, ^r wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

^k If. 46. 13. Hab. 2. 3. Heb. 10. 37. Ezek. 12. 22. Mat. 24. 42. Ver. 4. ^l If. 30. 18. Rom. 2. 4. 1 Pet. 3. 20. Ver. 15. Ezek. 18. 23, 32. & 33. 11. 1 Tim. 2. 4. Rev. 6. 10. Pf. 86. 15. ^m 1 Thes. 5. 2. Mat. 24. 43. Rev. 3. 3. & 16. 15. ⁿ Pf. 102. 26. & 96. 11. & 98. 7. & 50. 3. 1 Cor. 5. 6. Mat. 5. 18. & 24. 35, 44. Luke, 12. 39. 1 Cor. 3. 13. 2 Thes. 1. 8. Rev. 20. 11. & 21. 1. ^o Mat. 24. 42. Luke. 21. 34, 36. Titus, 2. 12, 13. 1 Pet. 1. 15. Ch. 4. 8. Phil. 4. 8. Amos, 4. 12. Ver. 14. ^p Mat. 25. 6. Titus, 2. 13. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28. Luke, 12. 35. 1 Pet. 1. 13. ^q Or *hasting the coming*. ^r Pf. 50. 3. 1 Cor. 6. 1. & 34. 4. Mic. 1. 4. 2 Thes. 1. 8. Ver. 10.

“ is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. It makes no difference with God, whether the thing which he has engaged to do is to be performed now, or a thousand years hence: he will as certainly and punctually accomplish it; and time makes no alteration, as to his wisdom, goodness, power, or veracity.” This was a proverbial expression among the Jews, (see Pf. xc. 4. Eccus, xviii. 9, &c.) and was plainly intended to signify, that no finite duration bears any proportion to the eternity of God. Plutarch has a passage exactly parallel to it, in his discourse “ On the Slowness of the divine vengeance.” It may be proper just to observe further, that if St. Peter had been speaking here, as some suppose, of the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened within *three years*, it is not likely that he would have talked of *a thousand years*. The most natural answer to the scoffers, if they had inquired about that event, would have been, “ It is just at hand; the Jewish war is broke out; and by many of the signs and fore-runners of it, you may be sure that the *desolation thereof draweth near*.”

Ver. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise*] He may be called slow or slack, who has it in his power, and yet does not perform a thing at the proper time; but that cannot be said of God, who is perfectly wise, true, powerful, and good. The apostle, by *some men*, refers to the scoffers mentioned ver. 3, 4. *To us-ward*, means, “ To us mortal men in general.” It is expressed here both negatively and positively, and in the most general terms concerning mankind, that *God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*; and we may depend upon it that God is sincere and in earnest: he does not tantalize poor, helpless, miserable man; he has no secret will contrary to, and inconsistent with his revealed will; but is a God of truth, and detesteth all falsehood and insincerity. See Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. xxxiii. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 4. St. Peter shews us in this verse, that the delay of the final judgment is designed for the general good; and implies no backwardness in God to accomplish what he has promised, nor any uncertainty as to that grand event. See Rom. ii. 4. And hence it appears evidently, that God hath not absolutely decreed the damnation of

any man; but men, by their own folly and wickedness, bring upon themselves misery and destruction.

Ver. 10. *But the day of the Lord will come*] The last great day of general judgment will come, when it is least of all expected. See Matth. xxiv. 43, 44. The *passing away of the heavens*, here means the same as by their being *dissolved by fire*, ver. 12. The word *ἦχος* signifies, with a *very loud and terrible noise*; with a sound resembling that of a great storm. In this place it more particularly denotes the horrid crackling noise of a wide-spreading fire. The plain interpretation of the next clause is, “ As the old heavens and earth were destroyed by water, so the present heavens and earth, and even the elements, the first principles or constituent parts of them, shall be destroyed by fire: that dreadfully spreading fire will carry all before it: all the works of God upon earth; all the works of man also, shall be involved in one common heap of ruin.”

—The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like the baseless fabrick of a vision,
Leave not a rack behind.

Ver. 11. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved*] Some would read this and the following verse thus; *As then all these things are to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be?—Even such, as by a holy conversation and pious life shew that you expect, and eagerly desire, or aspire after the coming, &c.* These words are St. Peter's practical improvement of the foregoing doctrine concerning the certain, sudden, and terrible coming of Christ to judgment. If the whole frame of heaven and earth shall be so wonderfully changed, and a new world made, how great a degree of purity should *they* labour to attain, who expect to live in this new world? The word rendered *melt*, is a metaphor taken from *metals* dissolving in the fire, or *wax* before the flame: so will the fierce and spreading fire of the last day *melt down* this globe, and its surrounding atmosphere. Dr. Burnet in his Theory, vol. ii. p. 30. having considered the antiquity and universality of this opinion, “ That the world is at last to be destroyed by fire,” says, “ We have heard, as it were, a cry of fire, through-

“ out

13 Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for 'new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, 'be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15 And account, *that* 'the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved

brother Paul also, according to "the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

16 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 *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

* If. 65. 17. & 60. 21. & 26. 2. & 66. 22. Rev. 21. 1, 27. Heb. 2. 5. * See ver. 17. Mat. 24. 42. Rom. 5. 1, 10. 1 Cor. 7. 8. Eph. 1. 4. & 5. 27. Phil. 1. 10. & 2. 15. Col. 1. 22. 1 Thes. 3. 13. & 5. 23. Jude, 24. * Rom. 2. 4. Heb. 9. 18. & 10. 36. 1 Pet. 3. 20. Ver. 9. * Rom. 8. 19-24. 1 Cor. xv. 2 Cor. 5. 10. 1 Thes. 4. 15-37. * Deut. 29. 29. & 30. 11. Pl. 19. 8. & 119. 105. Prov. 6. 23. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Heb. 5. 13.

“out all antiquity, and throughout all the people of the earth: let us then examine what testimony the prophets and apostles give to this ancient doctrine of the conflagration of the world. The prophets see the world on fire at a distance, and more imperfectly; as a brightness in the heavens, rather than a burning flame: but St. Peter describes it as if he had been by, and seen the heavens and earth in a red fire, heard the cracking flames, and the tumbling mountains: *the heavens shall pass away, &c.* This is as lively as a man could express it, if he had the dreadful spectacle before his eyes.”

Ver. 13. *Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look, &c.*] That is, “Though the present frame of things shall be dissolved by fire, yet we look for another, a more durable and perfect state; new heavens, and a new earth—new and everlasting abodes, which the divine mercy will then open to our enraptured view, into which it will conduct us, and in which, perfect righteousness, holiness, and felicity shall dwell for ever.” Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 14, 15. As St. Peter had a revelation from Christ, that he would create new heavens and a new earth, he might justly call that *his promise*; but the patriarchs and believing elders were not without the expectation of such felicity. See Gen. xvii. 7. Dan. xii. 2, &c. Matth. xxii. 31, 32. Acts, iii. 21. Heb. xi. 10—16.

Ver. 14. *In peace, without spot, and blameless*] By the words *in peace*, some understand that they should be at peace with their own consciences; others, that the Christians should be at peace with one another, or with mankind in general. But it seems more likely, that St. Peter means they should endeavour to be found at last in peace with their great Judge; and that, by endeavouring in this life, under divine grace, to be *without spot and blemish*. The corrupt Christians are called *spots and blemishes* among the Christians at their love-feasts: in opposition to such a character, the *true* Christians were to keep themselves without spot or blemish. See 1 Pet. i. 19.

Ver. 15. *And account, that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation;*] They were not to account the long extended patience of God as any sign of an unreasonable delay, or as implying any the least danger of his never coming to judge the world, and make the righteous perfectly happy; but as

a proof of his *goodness*, and as giving men an opportunity to work out through his grace their own salvation. It is a matter of some difficulty to determine to which of the epistles of St. Paul St. Peter refers in the last clause of this verse. Several take him to mean the epistle to the *Hebrews*; others, the epistle to the *Romans*. In favour of which last opinion it should be observed, that the epistle to the Romans was written to Gentile Christians, and that it was St. Paul's way to send copies of his letters to other churches besides those to which they were originally directed: (see Col. iv. 16.) And others think, that as St. Peter directed *his* epistles to the Christians dispersed in *Asia Minor*, St. Paul's epistles to those in the same country, namely, the *Galatians* and *Ephesians*, are referred to.—Doddridge paraphrases the words thus: “The passage to which I refer, is in a letter immediately directed to the Romans; but it may be considered as designed *for you*, and for the general use of all Christians.” I look upon this passage, says he, as a very instructive admonition to *all Christians*, to consider St. Paul and the other apostles as writing to *them*, in their epistles, so far as a similarity of circumstances will admit. In which view it is of infinite importance, that we should esteem them as written to *us*, in like manner as St. Peter tells us even the ancient prophets considered the great subjects of which these epistles treat, as relating to *them*. 1 Pet. i. 10—12.

Ver. 16. *In which are some things hard, &c.*] “In which epistles of his are some things, &c.” And it is most true, that in St. Paul's epistles there are some difficult points, which were greatly abused and perverted even in that age, and which have been perverted by *unstable* men in almost every age since; such as those of *free-grace*,—election,—reprobation, &c. This is no reflection at all upon St. Paul or his epistles, or upon his manner of writing: some objects are more difficult than others, and it requires more study and attention to understand them. They may be expressed with the utmost justness and propriety, and as perspicuously as the nature of the things treated of will bear; and yet, to hasty and inconsiderate readers, they may have things in them hard to be understood. The most judicious writers are often the most profound; but then they will bear a second or third reading; and the more

17 Ye therefore, beloved, ^a seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

18 ^a But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. ^b To him *be* glory both now and for ever, Amen.

^a Mark. 13. 23. Eph. 4. 14. Ch. v. 10, 12. & 2. 1, 17, 18. Jude. 12. 13. Jam. 1. 8. ^b Ch. 1. 5—8. Eph. 4. 13, 15, 16. Mat. 13. 13;
^a Thef. 1. 3. ^b 1 Pet. 2. 2. Col. 1. 10. ^c Rom. 16. 27. ^d 1 Tim. 1. 17. ^e 2 Tim. 4. 18. ^f 1 Pet. 4. 11. Rev. 1. 6. & 5. 13.

more they are studied, the more they are esteemed. This is the glory of St. Paul's epistles, in the estimation of all who have examined them with care and attention in humble dependance on the Divine blessing. The expression, *στραβασω*, *wrest*, or *put to the torture*, plainly implies, that violence is done by these bad men to some passages of scripture, to make them speak an unnatural sense, which may answer their own purposes: and truly he must know little of the history of theological controversies, who has not observed many deplorable instances of this.

Ver. 17. Ye therefore, beloved,] Beza observes, that St. Peter does not say here, "Abstain from these obscure scriptures; choose out only certain chapters; leave the rest either to the more learned, or the more curious; expect new revelations, and suffer the tares in the mean time to grow;—for *who art thou that judgest?*" Nor, finally, does he say, "Be content with implicit faith in mother church." These are the sayings of Antichrist and his followers; whereas the apostle of Christ says, *Seeing ye now know these things, &c.* Dr. Heylin renders this verse, *Since therefore, my beloved, you are forewarned of these things, be upon your guard, that you may not be seduced by those profane men; but persevere, and grow in grace, &c.*

Ver. 18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge, &c.] "But to help you against all declensions and revolts, let it be your earnest prayer and endeavour, in the use of all proper means, to be progressive in daily exercises and increases of every Christian grace, as also in an abiding sense of the free love and favour of God, according to the gospel; and in a clear, judicial, practical, and experimental acquaintance with the person and offices, doctrines, promises, and commandments of our divine Lord and all-sufficient Saviour Jesus Christ, and with your own personal interest in him: to whom be ascribed, as is most justly due, all adoration, worship, and honour, henceforth and for ever. May we sincerely add, in testimony of our approbation and assurance of its being so, *Amen!*"

Inferences.—Who is there that can be so sluggish and lethargic as not to be, in some measure, awakened and alarmed by the awful views here given, of the dissolution, as well as the creation of the world, by the word of God! Who must not even tremble, when he turns his eye back to the dreadful ruin brought on it by the universal deluge; when that element, which had been, and is, the means and instrument of life to the whole animal creation, became, at the divine signal, the means and instrument of death! Who can be unaffected, when he seriously reflects on the heavens passing away with a great noise? on the elements melting with fervent heat? on the burning up of

the earth, and all things therein? Let scoffers, who walk after their own lusts, madly deride the promise of his coming; let them deliver over their taunts and insults to each other through the succession of a *thousand years*, were his coming at a distance still more remote, they who have any just impression on their minds of the eternity of God, or of the immortality of the human soul, would discern the important day of final retribution as immediate and present to their view. While *they scoff* and deride the tremendous reality, let us *bear* the declaration of its approach with the profoundest attention; and let our souls enter deeply into the alarming and important reflection. If indeed we look for such great things as these, *what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness*, that we may be *found of him in peace, without spot or blemish?* And if we desire this blessedness, (as who can fail earnestly to desire it, who has a firm and steady persuasion of its reality?) can we possibly live in tolerable *composure*, if we have little or no reason to conclude we shall obtain an interest and share in it? Let us be all concerned that we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; by the increasing knowledge of whom every grace will be greatly revived and strengthened. On these lively and important subjects of meditation let our thoughts frequently dwell; and let us endeavour, that the sentiments which result from them, may be wrought in our hearts, and controul our lives. And as for those *hard sayings*, which occur, either in St. Peter or St. Paul, or any other sacred and inspired writer, let us neither *wrest* and torture them to our own mischief and destruction, nor be so curiously and sedulously diving into their meaning, as to neglect these and the like plain and serious admonitions, this sincere milk of the word, that we may *grow* thereby. May all the powers of our souls be exerted in securing their deliverance from the wrath to come, that so the patience of God, and his long-suffering towards us, may indeed prove salvation. And if that be indeed the case, the light of heaven will mightily illustrate those mysteries both of the divine Word and Providence, which our weak and defective organs of vision have not enabled us clearly to discern and unfold; while, by the comparatively fainter, though in itself glorious light of revelation, we are guided through this dark and gloomy valley.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle sets forth his design of writing both these epistles. *This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that you may be guarded against the arts of deceivers, and 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, who, in perfect*

perfect conformity with the inspired penmen of the old scriptures, as in other things, so particularly with regard to the coming of the Lord to judgment, have forewarned and admonished you. *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers at revelations, and all its glorious and distinguishing doctrines; walking after their own lusts, given up to sensuality and brutish appetites; and, with daring infidelity, and defiance of the divine declarations, saying, Where is the promise of his coming, so much talked of? when is this Jesus of Nazareth to come and take vengeance on his enemies? for since the fathers fell asleep (say they), during for many hundred years, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Thus they vainly argue; and, because judgment is not speedily executed upon the workers of iniquity, they would conclude there is nothing to be feared. For, though the scripture assures them that God hath already manifested his righteous wrath by the general destruction of an ungodly world, this they willingly and wilfully are ignorant of, that the heavens were of old created by the almighty Word, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water, rising from the abyss of waters which covered it at the first, moistened still by this element, and compacted together, and surrounded with waters above, and full of water in its bowels; whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water at the general deluge, perished, and the scoffers of that day met their righteous doom. But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same almighty word are kept in store as treasures, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.* And however scoffers of this day may despise God's warnings, yet evident marks which still remain of what he hath done by the deluge, are speaking evidences of his power to fulfil a more terrible denunciation, when his fire shall descend, and a general conflagration ensue,—a day, which will spread terror and dismay through the ungodly world, and too late convince those infidel mockers, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

2dly, The apostle, having warned them against the scoffers, encourages the saints of God to expect their Lord's second coming.

1. He will surely come. *But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* Though we measure time by succession, the past, the present, and the future appear, to the eternal God, in one comprehensive view, and as nothing compared with his eternity. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise (as some men count slackness,) too impatient for his appearing, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any of the human race should perish, but that all should come to repentance, and be saved by grace through faith,—the only possible way of salvation.* *Note;* (1.) The great design that God hath in view, is the salvation of all those who will yield to be saved by grace through faith. (Eph. ii. 8.) (2.) The way in which we can meet the Lord with comfort is, by being converted and turned to him now by faith: the impenitent and unbelieving must assuredly perish.

2. He will come suddenly. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, with such a terrible surprize to an ungodly world; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when nature in convulsions shall utter her*

expiring groans, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, dissolved amid the universal conflagration; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up, and not a wreck remain of all its glorious structures.

3. What influence ought such an expectation to have upon us? *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* How dead to the world, how loose to its enjoyments, how patient under the present momentary afflictions, how wholly engrossed with one great concern, to secure a happy part in that eternal world whither the faithful are going, *looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, keeping it abidingly in view, and living in a constant preparation for that solemn hour, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?* *Note;* It is the character of a disciple of Jesus, that he is ever looking for his Lord's return, as the glorious hope which animates him for every duty, and supports him under all his trials.

3dly, We have,

1. The Christian's expectations when this heaven and earth shall be dissolved. *Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, even that blessed abode which the infinite love of God hath prepared for the faithful; where nothing shall ever enter which defileth, and where their bliss and glory will be eternal.*

2. He exhorts them, in the prospect of such an inheritance,

(1.) To be faithful in their holy profession. *Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent in the use of every appointed means of grace, and in all holy watchfulness, that ye may be found of him in peace, possessing a sure interest in his love, without spot of sin, and blameless in his presence, through the Blood of the covenant and the efficacious influences of the Spirit of God.*

(2.) Patiently to persevere, though the time should be distant. *And account, that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation, and that the reason of his delay is, that nothing may be left undone, that is consistent with all his moral perfections and with the moral agency of man, for the salvation of mankind: even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, of God's long-suffering, and the coming of the Lord to judgment; in which doctrines are some things hard to be understood, being of a sublime and spiritual nature, which they that are unlearned and unstable, who are not divinely taught of God, and whose principles are fluctuating and unsettled, wrest and distort from their true meaning, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.* *Note;* The more dangerous it is to be ignorant in the scriptures, the more diligently should we search them, and pray God to enlighten our minds that we may be made wise unto salvation.

(3.) To beware of all deceivers. *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, that Christ will surely come and take vengeance of the ungodly, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, by their flatteries and seductions, fall from your own steadfastness, and depart from the purity of that gospel, which you have hitherto so nobly maintained.* *Note;* (1.) When deluding teachers are

are

are at work, we need be deeply on our guard. (2.) They who fall into erroneous principles, grow soon unsettled in their practice, and shew the baleful influence of this poison.

(4.) To advance in the divine life. *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, gaining a deeper and more experimental acquaintance with his love, a more unshaken dependance upon him, and an*

increase of every divine and spiritual disposition in consequence thereof.

3. He concludes with an ascription of praise to the divine Redeemer. *To him be glory both now and for ever. May every creature in heaven and earth unite in ceaseless worship, praise, and adoration to the great Immanuel! Amen!*

* * The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF
J O H N.

P R E F A C E.

THIS Epistle bears so much resemblance, in the matters treated of, as well as in the style and expressions, to the Gospel of St. John, that, although it does not bear the name of that apostle at the beginning, no one has ever doubted but it is his. Inimitable marks of mildness and love pervade every part of it; and the apostle recommends that divine virtue (love) in such moving terms, and upon motives so proper to make an impression on the soul, that we cannot doubt but he was himself entirely filled with it. And with equal strength he confirms two of the most important truths in the Christian religion, against which the heretics of his time had begun to declaim; the incarnation of the Son of God, and his Divinity: and all these heretics he calls antichrists, ch. ii. 18. or enemies of Christ, because they attacked his Person, though by different, and even contrary ways. St. John proves, therefore, in opposition to the first kind of heretics, who were the Basilideans, Valentinians, &c. that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, (ch. iv. 1, 2, 3. and 2 John, 7.) that is, that the Son of God was really made man, and not in appearance only. It is almost inconceivable how such an absurd imagination could enter the mind of man; but, under a pretence of doing more honour to the Son of God by denying him the infirmities inseparable from our nature, these heretics taught that he was only in appearance, not really, clothed with the human nature; whence it followed also, as a necessary consequence, that his dying was only in appearance; which was entirely destroying our redemption. The other sort of heretics, as the Ebionites and the Cerinthians, attacked the Person of Christ in a very different way; for, leaving his human nature entire, they restricted him to that only, denying to him essential Deity, and giving him the title of Son of God merely in a figurative sense, as the scripture gives it to kings and governors. It is in contradiction to this damnable heresy, that St. John so often in this Epistle calls Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God's only-begotten Son, ch. iv. 9. the true God, and eternal Life, ch. v. 20. and that he says, ch. iv. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God; and, he that overcometh the world is he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God; ch. v. 5. And a passage immediately follows wherein he expressly affirms the Trinity of persons in the unity of essence, saying, ver. 7. There are three that bear record in heaven to these salutary truths, namely, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. The anti-trinitarian heretic trembles at this passage; it is a thunderstroke to him, of which he well knows the weight; therefore he leaves no means untried to turn it aside, or to avoid it. The chief mode has been to deny that this text was written by St. John; and, under pretence that it does not appear in all the ancient manuscripts of this

Epistle, and that some of the fathers who formerly wrote against the Arian heresy, did not avail themselves of it in proof of Christ's Divinity, the heretics of the present day deny the authenticity of the text. But a cause must be very desperate which can allege no better reasons against the strength and evidence of a text of Scripture. For, to give any force to such an argument, it would be necessary to shew, that the passage in question existed but in very few manuscripts, or at least only in those of a modern date, and of small authority, and that it was unknown in all Christian antiquity: but the fact is, that this passage is found in a great number of manuscripts, and those the most ancient; and is quoted in books of the most venerable ecclesiastical antiquity, and all much older than those manuscripts which do not contain the passage, from the omission of which some modern heretics and daring critics pretend to draw inferences fatal to the authenticity of this text. But, not to mention St. Jerome, who found it in the Greek manuscript of the New Testament from which he made his Latin version, in which we find it also, and a long comment upon it in his Preface to the Canonical Epistles,—we find it cited in proof of the Trinity in the Confession of Faith, presented about the end of the fifth century by the bishops of the African churches to Huneric king of the Vandals, an Arian, and a great persecutor of the orthodox defenders of the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, would it not have been a most unexampled piece of imprudence in these bishops, purposely to expose themselves to the rage of Huneric and of all the Arian party, by alleging, in so solemn a piece as a Confession of Faith, this passage of St. John, if it had not been universally extant in all the manuscripts of that day, or if it had been forged? Doubtless the Arians would sufficiently have triumphed in such a discovery; and it is clear, that nothing but the truth and notoriety of the fact could have silenced those heretics. Neither could the citation of the passage at that time have been regarded as a thing new, or of doubtful authority; for it was more than 250 years before, that St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and a celebrated martyr, who flourished but little more than a hundred years after St. John, had quoted it in his Treatise on the Unity of the Church; and all the printed editions of St. Cyprian's works, as well as the most ancient manuscripts of that father of the church, constantly contain that citation, which is a certain mark of its authenticity; besides which, Facundus, quoting the same passage, cites also St. Cyprian as having urged it in the Treatise that we have mentioned. Lastly, to go still farther back, we find Tertullian, who was before St. Cyprian, mentioning it in his dispute against Praxeas. Now, since nothing reasonable can be objected against a passage quoted by such celebrated writers, one of whom is Tertullian, who flourished towards the conclusion of the very same century in which St. John died, it is a certain proof that these words were extant in the very first manuscripts; and consequently that the doctrine of the Trinity, which, from the unwillingness of man to submit his proud reason to the authority of divine revelation, has met with so many heretical opponents in various times and places, is the real doctrine taught by the apostles, and the doctrine of the primitive church, as it has also been that of after ages.

But the reader must remember, that the doctrine of the Trinity does not depend on any single text of Scripture. Innumerable passages, directly and indirectly, establish the doctrine of the supreme Godhead of Christ: all the attributes, honours, and operations of the supreme and eternal God, are fully and repeatedly ascribed to him. And an abundance of texts demonstrate the Personality, and, of course, the supreme Divinity of the Holy Ghost. And, besides all this, the whole tenor of the sacred writings, and every dispensation of grace which they hold forth to mankind, confirm, on the most solid basis, this great and fundamental truth. See particularly the Inferences drawn from 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

CHAP. I.

He describeth the person of Christ, in whom we have eternal life by a communion with him and God the Father: to which we must adjoin holiness of life, to testify the truth of that our communion and profession of faith, as also to assure us of the forgiveness of our sins by Christ's death.

[Anno Domini 90.]

THAT which was from the beginning,
which we have heard, which we have

seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life;

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have

^a Prov. 8. 23. Micah, 5. 2. John, 1. 1, 2. & 8. 56. Ch. 2. 13. Pl. 2. 7. Rev. 1. 8. & 21. 6. & 22. 13. If. 41. 4. & 44. 6. ^b 2 Peter, 1. 16, 18. John, 1. 14. Ch. 4. 14. Acts, 4. 20. Mat. 3. 16, 17. Luke, 24. 39. John, 20. 27. & xiii. ^c John, 1. 1, 4, 14. & 5. 26. Ch. 5. 7. Rev. 19. 13. ^d Ver. 1. John, 1. 4. & 11. 25. & 5. 25, 26. & 10. 18. & 14. 6. Heb. 5. 9. Ch. 5. 11, 20. ^e John, 1. 14. & 3. 13. & 7. 34. & 21. 24. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Ch. 3. 5, 8. & 4. 14. Acts, 2. 32. & 3. 15. & 5. 32. & 10. 41. Rom. 16. 26. Col. 1. 26, 27. 2 Tim. 1. 10. Titus, 2. 2. ^f Pl. 2. 7, 8. Prov. 8. 23—31. John, 1. 1, 2, 18. & 3. 13, 31. & 7. 29. Gal. 4. 4. Rom. 8. 3. Zech. 13. 7. John, 10. 30. Ch. 5. 7.

CHAP. I.

IT is remarkable, that the apostle begins this epistle with a confutation of those corrupt teachers, whom he afterwards calls *anticrists*, but who were named by the ancient fathers *doctæ*, because they affirmed that Christ had not come in the flesh, and that the things which were related concerning him by the evangelists, were not really done and suffered by him, but were transacted in appearance only. For he assures us, that the evangelists and apostles testified to the world, nothing concerning the life of the Word in the flesh, but what they had heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes, and handled with their hands; founding their attestation on the evidence of their own senses, ver. 1.—So that the apostles, who accompanied the Word during his abode on earth, bare witness to his life in the flesh, as it was plainly manifested to their senses, ver. 2. And, that they declared these incontestable facts to the world, that all who received them might have fellowship with the apostles, through their believing the truth. This, he told them, would be an unspeakable honour to them, because the apostle's fellowship was with God the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, ver. 3.—St. John mentioned the honourableness of being in the fellowship of the Father and of his Son Jesus, for the following reason among many,—because the Heathens boasted to the believing Jews and Gentiles, of the honour which they derived from their fellowship in the Eleusinian and other Heathen mysteries. But the heathen gods, the supposed heads of the heathen fellowships, were mere non-entities, 1 Cor. viii. 4. Or, if any of them were real beings, they were devils. Whereas the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, the great Heads of the Christian fellowship, governed all the affairs of the universe without controul. These things concerning the Heads of the Christian fellowship, the apostle told them, he wrote, that their joy in being members of such an honourable and powerfully protected fellowship, and experimental partakers of its glorious privileges, might be complete, ver. 4.—Further, that the believing Jews and Gentiles might more fully know the advantages which they enjoyed in the Christian fellowship, he told them, This is the message which we apostles have received from Christ, and which we declare to you the initiated into our holy fellowship, that God is Light, and

in him is no darkness at all: he is goodness and truth, without any mixture of evil or error. Wherefore, the discoveries made in the gospel, to the initiated into the holy Christian fellowship, concerning the nature and perfections of God, were very different from, and infinitely superior to, the boasted discoveries made to the initiated in the heathen mysteries, who were made to believe that their gods practised every sort of vice, and that their votaries worshipped them acceptably by imitating them in their vices, ver. 5. To shew that the character and manners of the initiated into the fellowship of God, were of a very different nature from those of the initiated into the heathen fellowships, the apostle declared, That if any one pretended to be a member of the fellowship of God, who lived in wickedness, he lied, and was no member of the fellowship of God, who is infinitely holy, and admits none but the holy into his fellowship, ver. 6.—In the mean time, to encourage the disciples of Christ to imitate the glorious Head of their fellowship in his moral perfections, the apostle assured them, that if they walked in holiness as God is holy, they would certainly have fellowship with God and his saints, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son would cleanse them from all sin. Such is the nature of the Christian fellowship, and such its unspeakable advantages, ver. 7. And this is a consolation which we absolutely need; for if we say that we have no sin, that we are not poor guilty sinners, it is too evident that we grossly deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; we must be destitute of every good principle, if we are utterly insensible of our guilt, ver. 8. But, adds the apostle, if we confess our sins to God, with a becoming lowliness and contrition of spirit, he is not only merciful and gracious, but faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, in consideration of his engagements to our great Surety, and to us by him; and also effectually to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, by his atoning Blood, and by the influence of that sanctifying Spirit which it has purchased for us, ver. 9. This, the apostle informed them, was their ground of confidence, and their refuge as sinners, to which they should often renew their applications: for as on this foundation we are indeed secure; so, on the other hand, if we are so rash and presumptuous as to say that we have not sinned, we not only lie ourselves, which in every instance must be displeasing to the God of truth; but we,

¹ fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

• 4 And these things write we unto you, ^h that your joy may be full.

5 ⁱ This then is the message which we

have heard of him, and declare unto you, that ^h God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 ⁱ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

¹ John, 17. 21. & 14. 21, 23. & 15. 10. 1 Cor. 1. 9, 30. Ch. 2. 24. Ver. 7. ^h John, 15. 11. & 16. 24. 2 John, 12. If. 61. 10. Hab. 3. 17, 18. Rom. 15. 13. Phil. 3. 3. & 4. 4. Luke, 1. 47, 48. 2 Cor. 1. 12, 24. ⁱ Ch. 3. 11. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Mat. 28. 20. ^h John, 1. 9. & 8. 12. & 9. 5. & 12. 35, 36. James, 1. 17. 1 Tim. 6. 16. Ver. 7. Job, 11. 7. Pf. 147. 5. Exod. 15. 11. Hab. 1. 12, 13. ⁱ Ch. 2. 4. 2 Cor. 6. 14. Pf. 5. 4-6. & 94. 20.

in effect, make him a liar, who, in the constitution of the gospel, which he hath sent to all, goes on a supposition, that every soul, to which it is addressed, is by nature under guilt and condemnation. And consequently, if we assert and maintain our own personal innocence, we shall shew that *his word is not in us*, that this humbling message of his grace has never been cordially received by us, nor has produced its genuine effects upon our hearts, ver. 10. See the note on ver. 8.

Ver. 1. That which was from the beginning, &c.] Though from the beginning (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*), and in the beginning (*ἐν ἀρχῇ*), as we have it, John, i. 1. are somewhat different expressions; yet, as Christ is here styled in the next verse *eternal Life*, it is natural to take in his *eternal existence*, correspondent to this apostle's assertion of it, John, i. 1. The phrase *Ye have known him that is from the beginning* (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*), ch. ii. 13, 14. whether applied to the Father or Son, evidently relates to his *eternal existence*. Accordingly, we may take the phrase *that which was from the beginning* to relate to the *eternal Deity* of Christ, rather than to *the beginning of the gospel dispensation*, though it may bear the last of these senses in some other parts of this epistle. The neuter gender is sometimes used concerning a person, both in the New Testament and in some of the Greek classics. St. John, as well as the other eleven apostles, had heard Christ preach, and had heard the Father bear testimony to him by an audible voice from heaven: they had seen him with their own eyes; they had viewed him attentively and deliberately. Nay, St. John here declares, that he had not only seen and heard Christ in the flesh, but had *felt* and *handled* his body, and had all possible evidence that he came in the flesh, or had a real body: by which expressions St. John seems particularly to advert to the heresy of the *docetæ*. See the introduction to this chapter.

Ver. 2. For the life was manifested] Jesus Christ is here called *the Life*, not only as having life in himself, but as the author of eternal life, or that great and glorious Person, who revealed, and will bestow, that immortal glory and felicity, which was in former ages *comparatively* concealed in the breast or council of Deity; and which the Lord Jesus Christ so clearly manifested unto the apostles, and brought to light in the gospel. See John, i. 4. xi. 25. xiv. 6. and 1 John, v. 11, 12. 20. All this second verse ought evidently to be read in a parenthesis.

Ver. 3. That ye also may have fellowship, &c.] According to the scriptures, every man who, to the best of his power, follows the true doctrines of the apostles, and through grace acts according to their precepts, is entitled

to communion with every Christian church wherever he comes: but if any part of the visible church should refuse to have communion with him, he nevertheless belongs to the true and invisible church of Christ, which consists of all his sincere and faithful disciples throughout the whole world. He has communion with all righteous and good men: he has likewise communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. False teachers and wicked men cut themselves off from the true church of Christ by their heresies or wickedness; but, though a good man may perhaps be rejected by some parties of Christians here on earth, he will not be rejected by the Judge of the world, but admitted to the communion of the saints above. See on ver. 6.

Ver. 4. That your joy may be full.] “That the divine life may be so improved in your souls, and your meetings for the heavenly inheritance may be so apparent, and so advanced, that your joy may, as far as possible, be fulfilled; and no circumstance which this mortal life will admit, may be wanting to complete it.”

Ver. 5. Which we have heard of him, &c.] *Of him*, means, “From Jesus Christ;” for St. John evidently refers to what he had said in some of the preceding verses, concerning his seeing Christ in the flesh, and hearing him preach the word of life; what that apostle had heard from *Him*, he delivered faithfully unto the Christians. *Light* is in several texts put for knowledge or felicity; and darkness for ignorance or misery. But here light is put for purity or holiness, and darkness for moral impurity, or vice and wickedness. God is a pure and spotless Being, without any dark stain of impurity whatever. The phraseology of this verse, of affirming one thing, and immediately denying the contrary, or of denying one thing and affirming the contrary, was very common with the Hebrews, and St. John has often made use of that idiom. See ver. 6, 8. ch. ii. 4. 7. 10, &c. Dr. Bates says, that the phrase, *God is Light*, expresses his most clear and perfect knowledge; for light discovers all things: his unspotted holiness; for light is incapable of any pollution: and sovereign goodness and happiness; for light, joined with vital heat, inspires pleasure into universal nature.

Ver. 6. If we say that we have fellowship with him,] By communion with God, St. John means a holy exercise of the Divine presence, walking by faith in the light of his countenance, and an abiding consciousness of his favour, which can be experienced by none but those who lead a holy life. We cannot have communion with God, unless we resemble him in purity, holiness, and all moral perfection. Holiness is through grace preserved and increased by the habitual

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 ° If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 ° If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 ° If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

^m 2 John, 4. ³ John, 4. Col. 2. 6. Titus, 2. 12. Eph. 5. 8, 9, 15. Col. 1. 9, 10. 1 Thess. 5. 5—8. 1 Peter, 1. 15, 16. ⁿ 1 Cor. 6. 11.
 Heb. 9. 14. 1 Peter, 1. 19. Ch. 2. 1, 2, 12, 24. Rev. 1. 5. & 7. 14. ^o 1 Kings, 8. 46. 2 Chron. 6. 36. Prov. 20. 9. Eccl. 7. 20. Job, 9. 2.
 & 15. 14. & 25. 4. & 14. 4. Pf. 143. 2. James, 3. 2. & 2. 10. Ch. 2. 4. Ver. 6, 10. P Prov. 28. 13. Pf. 51. 1. & 32. 5. Acts, 10. 43. Jer.
 3. 12, 13. ^q Ch. 5. 10. Job, 14. 4. & 15. 14. Pf. 130. 3. & 143. 2. Rom. 3. 23. James, 3. 2. & 2. 10. See ver. 8.

biual practice of it, and by devotion. Thus may we maintain communion with God: but if any one who neglects to worship and obey God, or who practices vice, should pretend to communion with God, he wilfully imposes upon himself, and does not act according to truth: truth is the rule or measure of right.

Ver. 7. *But if we walk in the light, &c.*] “But if, on the other hand, we walk in the light of holiness, as he himself is ever in the light of it, and surrounded with it as his brightest glory, we have then communion with him, and with one another in him; and though we are indeed conscious to ourselves of many past offences, for which so holy a God might for ever banish us from his presence, and of many remaining imperfections which might discourage our approaches to him, we have this grand consolation, that the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.” See *Is. ii. 5.*

Ver. 8. *If we say that we have no sin, &c.*] Several commentators of note judge that this text has particular reference to the Gnostics: others give it a more general sense, but still as referring solely to the unawakened or unconverted, and having no allusion to the children of God: others, that the first clause signifies *If we say that we have not sinned*, the present tense being inserted instead of the past. The followers of Dr. John Calvin lay peculiar stress upon these words, as favouring the doctrine which maintains the impossibility of being saved from all sin in the present life. Mr. John Wesley supposes that the words *before his Blood has cleansed us*, are to be understood—*If we say that we have no sin before his Blood has cleansed us*. And when I compare the following passages of this epistle, viz. *ch. i. 9. ii. 5. iii. 3. iv. 12. 16, 17, 18. v. 18.* with the present, I am constrained to acknowledge that I believe Mr. Wesley’s comment on the passage to be perfectly just. At the same time I suppose no one will deny, that every human being on this side of the grave, may say with truth, “Father, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.” We every moment need the atoning Blood, the propitiatory Sacrifice as such, whatever be our situation or experience in the church of God.

Ver. 9. *If we confess our sins, &c.*] “If, on the other hand, we, under a humbling sense of our imperfections and many disallowed failures, acknowledge our transgressions to the Lord, and confess them with faith in Christ’s propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of them, he is so true and faithful to his promise to the Redeemer, and to those that believe in him (*Is. liii. 11. Heb. viii. 12.*); and is so just to the merit of his Blood

(*Rom. iii. 26.*), as for his sake freely to pardon all our sins of omission and commission, in thought, word, and deed, and to purge our consciences from all guilt; and to cleanse us from the internal defilement of all our iniquities by the sanctification of the Spirit, which was purchased by the blood of his Son to purify our hearts and lives, that we may be fit for constant communion with him in this world, and eternally enjoy his presence and glory in the world which is to come.”

Ver. 10. *If we say that we have not sinned, &c.*] “If, after all, we assert that we have not transgressed the law of God, so as to need pardon through the Blood, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, we, in effect, make God himself a liar; as we therein deny the truth of what he has said in his word, which pronounces upon the whole race of mankind, that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God* (*Rom. iii. 23.*); and we thereby shew that the truth of the gospel has no place in us; the very nature of which supposes us to be sinners, and is designed to bring us to a humble, penitent confession of sin, ver. 9. and to faith in the Redeemer’s blood for the remission of it, and for victory over it, till we be completely delivered from the whole nature thereof,” ver. 7.

Inferences.—How seriously should we attend to the word of life, when addressed to us by those who were so intimately acquainted with it, and with him who brought it and revealed it to the world! In like manner may all concerned in dispensing it, be able to say that it is what they have heard, and as it were, seen and handled; yea, tasted, and let in all its sweetness and energy. Jesus Christ is indeed that life which was with the Father, and is now manifested unto us: may we ever regard him as such, and have communion with St. John, and the other sacred writers, in their communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Surely they, who by experience know the delight and benefit of that communion, will desire that others may be partakers of it with themselves. Their own joy, instead of being diminished, will be rather rendered more complete and intense, by being in this manner imparted to others.

Nothing can be of more importance than to form right and worthy conceptions of God; and that we may do so, let us reflect on him as the purest and even unmingled Light, without any the least shade of darkness; as Truth in perfection, without any mixture of falsehood or evil. And let us be particularly concerned, that, as we desire to have fellowship

C H A P. II.

He comforteth them against the sins of infirmity. Rightly to know God, is to keep his commandments, to love our brethren, and not to love the world. We must beware of seducers: from whose deceits the godly are safely preserved, by perseverance in faith, and holiness of life.

[Anno Domini 90.]

MY little children, these things write I unto you, ^b that ye sin not. And, if

^a 1 Cor. 4. 15. Gal. 4. 19. Ver. 12, 13, 28. Ch. 3. 7. 18. & 4. 4. & 5. 27. 3 John, 4. John, 13. 35. ^b Tit. 2. 11, 12. 2 Pet. 1. 15, 16. Phil. 2. 8. ^c Rom. 8. 34. 1 Tim. 2. 5. Heb. 7. 24, 25. & 9. 24. 1 Pet. 5. 18, 22. ^d Rom. 3. 24, 25. & 5. 6—11, 15—19. John, 1. 29. & 4. 42. & 11. 51. 2 Cor. 5. 13—21. Col. 1. 20. 1 Pet. 2. 24. & 3. 18. Heb. 2. 17. Ch. 1. 7. & 4. 10, 14. ^e Ver. 4—6. Ch. 5. 3. John, 24. 14, 24. & 15. 10, 14. Heb. 5. 9. Pl. 119. 6, 32. ^f Ch. 1. 6. & 4. 20. & 5. 10.

fellowship with him, we allow not ourselves to walk in darkness of any kind, but put off all its works, that we may put on the whole armour of light, and walk in the light as he is in the light. Let every action of our lives, every thought of our hearts, be brought to the light of the gospel, and tried and proved according to it. And, as it would be very vain and criminal in us to deny that we are sinners, as it would be self-deceit to imagine it, and self-confusion to affirm it, let us, with humble thankfulness, apply to that *Blood, which is able to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Most freely confessing our sins, in all their aggravations, so far as our weak and limited thoughts can attain to the view of them, let us humbly plead his promise, and his covenant; and then *fidelity and justice will join with mercy and power to cleanse us from all sin*.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The blessed penman of this epistle immediately enters into his subject. Full of Christ, he breaks forth;

That which was from the beginning, that glorious and divine Person, who from eternity as the Son, subsisting with the Father in the same essence; which, in the fulness of time, became incarnate; we have heard preaching his everlasting gospel; which we have seen with our eyes, living and dying; which we have looked upon, attentively regarding him both before and after his resurrection from the dead; and our hands have handled, so that we have the strongest and most indubitable evidence of his true humanity, and of the reality of his resurrection in the same body which on his incarnation he had assumed into personal union with himself; who emphatically bears the name of the word of life, being the fountain of natural life to every creature, and the giver of spiritual and eternal life to his faithful people; (for the life, the Lord of life and glory, was manifested in the flesh; and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you that eternal life, who from everlasting existed in the unity of the Godhead; which was with the Father, one with him in co-essential glory, and was, in the fulness of time, according to the prophetic word, manifested unto us in the human nature) that adored Personage, which we have seen and heard, and concerning whom we are most incontestably assured that our record is true, him declare we unto you, as God and Man in one Christ, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour, through

any man sin, ^c we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And ^d he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.

3 And ^e hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 ^f He that saith, I know him; and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth

whom all blessings in time and eternity are obtained for his faithful saints; and we publish his offices, glory, and gospel, *that ye also may have fellowship with us* in all the inestimable privileges which he bestows on his saints, even on all who perseveringly believe on his name: *and truly this communion is of the most transcendently glorious nature, for our fellowship is with the Father himself, and with his Son Jesus Christ, in and through whom we are admitted into the nearest and most honourable union and friendship with the God of glory. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full, abounding with consolation in the experience of the present invaluable privileges of pardon, adoption, and grace, and advancing towards the perfection of joy in heaven, and to the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore.* Note; (1.) It is the dignity of every faithful soul, that it is admitted into communion with God, and is one with Jesus, as a member of his body mystical. (2.) They who know the Saviour experimentally, as united to him in faith and love, have within them a fund of consolation, which the world knows nothing of.

2dly, Having mentioned the Author of the everlasting gospel, the apostle passes on to the message which they had received from him to deliver unto them.

1. Concerning God. *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light; a Spirit absolutely pure, infinite in all perfections, without the least shadow or possibility of imperfection; and in him is no darkness at all.* Note; Our poor and finite ideas are unable adequately to comprehend the divine excellencies; nay, angels before him veil their faces, for he dwelleth in that light which no creature can approach unto, so as fully to discern his glory. What we know of him is rather by removing every defect from him, and saying what he is not, rather than what he is.

2. Concerning those who professed to believe in him. (1.) *If we say that we have fellowship with him, through the gospel of his dear Son, and yet notwithstanding walk in darkness, the servants of sin, which is so opposite to his essential purity, we lie, and do not the truth; our falsehood is evident to his all-searching eye, and our practice contradicts our professions, and proves our hypocrisy.* But (2.) *if we walk in the light of truth and holiness, under the guidance of his Spirit, and according to our Christian profession;*

is not in him.

5 ⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him

verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

⁵ John, 14. 15. 21, 23. & 13. 35. Ch. 4. 12, 13. Pf. 119. 9, 11. Tit. 2. 11, 12, 14.

profession; as he is in the light, resembling him in his communicable perfections; then we have fellowship one with another; we enjoy the most distinguishing communion with him and with his saints in spirit; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin; though we are indeed conscious to ourselves of many past offences, and even then of many remaining infirmities, we have this grand consolation—that the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, however deep, innate, or heinous. Blessed and happy are they whom this Blood thus cleanses, and who are admitted into this holy fellowship!

3. The apostle, to prevent all possible misconception, adds the following observations, either as qualifications, or explanations, of what he had before advanced.

(1.) *If we say that we have no sin*, that we are not poor guilty sinners; if we imagine that we have no need to pray, “Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,”—*we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*, we are spiritually proud, and have no interest in the Blood of Christ, except as fallen creatures who are still in a state of trial: but, *if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar*, by directly contradicting his truth; because, being by nature corrupted creatures, we must have often sinned against him, before we were renewed in grace; and, if we deny it, *his word is not in us*, which every where supposes and declares us to be such by nature.

(2.) *If we confess our sins*, and humbly, through faith in Jesus Christ, apply for the promised mercy of God, *he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins*; faithful to the covenant of grace, and to his promise made therein, to forgive all those who come to him penitently through faith in his eternal Son; and just, because having received the ransom of atoning Blood, it is become an act of justice to pardon those who plead it, and, if they perseveringly plead it, to cleanse them from all unrighteousness. Note; The acceptance with God of persevering believers, stands not on the footing of mercy only, but is assured to them by that very perfection of holiness which seemed most strongly to militate against their hope.

CHAP. II.

THE apostle having in the preceding chapter, mentioned the honour which believers derive from being members of the fellowship of God the Father and of his Son Jesus Christ; also having shewed the obligation which lieth on all the members of that infinitely honourable fellowship, to imitate God in his holiness; and described the benefits to be obtained by being in that Divine fellowship, particularly the great benefit from being cleansed from all sin through the blood of Christ; he, in the beginning of this chapter, declared that he wrote these things to them, not to encourage them to sin, but to prevent them from sinning. Yet if any one happened to sin, through surprise or strong temptation, or weakness of understanding, he was not to despair of pardon, provided he repented

and did not continue in his sin; because we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just One, ver. 1. who is the propitiation appointed of God for their sins, and not for theirs only, but for the sins of the whole world: no nation under heaven is excluded from a share in the blessings that he has purchased; nor shall any person whatsoever be excluded, let his iniquities have been ever so great and aggravated, if he will but make a proper application to him, ver. 2. And it is evident to us, adds the apostle, that we have a true and saving knowledge of Christ, which includes faith in him, and love to him, if it has a powerful influence to engage us to a sincere, cheerful, and unreversed obedience to whatever he has commanded, both in the precepts of the moral law, and in the institutions of the gospel, ver. 3. On the contrary, the disobedient falsely pretend to a knowledge of him, of which they are quite destitute, ver. 4. But, says he, whosoever uprightly, impartially, and continually keepeth his word, *in him certainly is the love of God perfected*: it is plain he has that perfect love truly in his heart, and does not make a vain and hypocritical pretence to it; and such a person may thereby know that he is in close, intimate fellowship with God, ver. 5.—But he who professes to live in such communion with him whom he calls his Divine Master, ought in every thing to trace, and, according to the rich measure of grace bestowed upon him, to imitate, his example, ver. 6.

Next, the apostle told them, that in so earnestly pressing them to an imitation of Christ, and that with regard to the great duty of love, which he was in an especial manner going to recommend to them (ver. 8–11.) he did not write about any commandment which was entirely new; but reminded them of a divine precept, which, for the substance of it, was of perpetual obligation, long before, even as long as the beginning of the Old Testament dispensation; and which they were taught with additional light, and enforcements at the first publication of the gospel among them, ver. 7. But to give them a larger and still more striking view of it, he again wrote to explain the excellent duty of brotherly love, and to inculcate it upon them under new obligations, motives, encouragements, assistances, and endearments, and to raise it to a higher degree of spiritual, extensive, and cordial affection, according to Christ's new injunction of it (Math. v. 43, 44.) than ever was known or practised before: and with regard thereunto it may be called a new commandment, which is eminently copied out with the greatest truth and evidence in Christ, who in his transcendent love had set them the brightest example of it, and which was imitated to a good degree in them who were taught of God to love one another (1 Thess. iv. 9;) because the darkness of the Old Testament dispensation, and of their former state of ignorance, error, and sin, had passed away, and in a great measure was over and gone, and the clear light of the truth of the gospel in the revelation which it makes of Christ, who is by way of eminence *the true light*, (John, i. 9.) is now displayed in its full glory, and shines in their hearts

6^b He that faith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye

^a John, 6. 46. & 15. 4, 5, 10. John, 13. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 20, 21. 1 Cor. 11. 1. Eph. 5. 2. Ch. 1. 7. ^b Ch. 3. 11. ^c John, 5. Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 5. 43. John, 15. 12.

hearts (2 Cor. iv. 6.) ver. 8. He therefore who professes to believe the gospel, and to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and at the same time is under the power of an uncharitable, malicious, or revengeful temper towards his Christian brother, is a stranger to evangelical light and grace, and remains in a state of sin and error, which is the worst of all darkness, to this very day, ver. 9. On the contrary, the believer who has a cordial love to his brother for Christ's sake, in imitation of him, under the constraints of his love, and in obedience to his commands, is really enlightened and renewed by the grace of the gospel; and there is no room for taking offence at him, who lays no stumbling-block before his brethren: nor will any difficulties that he may meet with in the way of his duty, be a stumbling-block to himself, to hinder his cheerfully persisting in it, ver. 10. But, I now repeat it, every professor of Christ's name that harbours a severe unfriendly disposition, and indulges prejudices in his heart against his brother, is in an unregenerate state, and under the power of sin; and he hereby shews that he goes on in such errors and evil courses as are spiritual darkness itself; and does not understand the way which leads to eternal life, because of the blindness of his heart, ver. 11. The admonitions which I have given, adds the apostle, are such as equally concern you all. As for those of you, who are young converts, *babes in Christ*, I write to you, because you are freely forgiven of God for the sake of Jesus Christ, through the merit of his atoning Blood, in whose name this great benefit has been preached, and is conveyed to you, ver. 12. As to those of you who have attained a large flock of knowledge and experience, I write to you, *fathers in Christ*, because you have been long acquainted with the *Ancient of days*, even God the Father and his co-eternal Son. As to those of you, who, for zeal, activity, and spiritual attainments, are like *young men* that are come to the strength and vigour of their age, and fit for military exploits, I write these things to you, because you have encountered, wrestled against, and obtained glorious victories over your great adversary the Devil. To impress these things the more deeply upon you severally, I now say again, proceeds the apostle, I write them to those of you who are but newly born of God, because ye have been brought to a fiducial, affectionate knowledge of God, as your Heavenly Father in and through his beloved Son. I have also written these things to those of you who, like fathers, are far advanced in knowledge and grace, and who take pleasure in meditating upon the deep things of God, because you have, with great judgment, faith, and love, understood much of him, and entered deeply into the enjoyment of the Triune God. And I have written these things to those of you who, like young men, are grown up to maturity in spiritual growth and liveliness for action, because you are enabled to perform the most difficult duties; and the word of God, according to the gospel-revelation, has deep root within you; and, by wielding this sword of the Spirit with the hand of faith, you have

defeated and gained signal conquests over the great enemy of your souls, ver. 13, 14. St. John, having roused the attention of the old, the middle-aged, and the young, in the divine and heavenly life, told them that one of his grand precepts was, not to be in love with the spirit, or the men, or manners of this world, neither with the things which the men of the world pursue; because, in such case, the grand principle of all religion, the love of God, would not be in them, ver. 15. For, how enticing soever the things of this world be to the irregular desires of men's hearts, they only prove ensnaring to the affections, so far as any of them are perverted: this is not according to the original design of the Father of mercies in giving them, nor is it the product of his love to his children, or of theirs to him; nor can he be the approver of it: but it all proceeds from the malignant influence of the things of this world on men's carnal hearts, and their own corrupt inclinations to them, ver. 16. And still further, adds the apostle, to arm you against all temptations, and to take off all inordinate affections from things on earth, you ought to consider what an uncertain, unsatisfying, fading, and perishing thing this world is; that it is continually fleeting and changing hands while we are in it; and that even its best things are very precarious and transitory, and will soon come to an end. But the true lover of God, who is wrought into a conformity to his holy will, as made known in his word; and who, from a principle of faith, as working by love, perseveres in a governing course of obedience to it, is possessed of substantial, satisfying, and abiding realities; and shall live for ever in full possession of all durable and heavenly happiness, ver. 17.

At the time St. John wrote this letter, the Christians in Judea and the neighbouring countries were greatly harassed by the unbelieving Jews, in the tumults which they excited immediately before their last war with the Romans. Wherefore, to comfort more especially the newly converted under these sufferings, he assured them that it was the last hour of the duration of the Jewish state; so that the power of their persecutors would soon be broken: and to prove that it was the last hour, he put them in mind that Christ, in his prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, had mentioned the appearing of many false prophets, as a sign of the impending ruin. Wherefore, since many false teachers, whom the apostles called anti-christs, because they were opposers of Christ (ver. 22.) were then going about deceiving many, they might from that circumstance know that it was the last hour of the Jewish commonwealth, ver. 18. These false teachers, the apostle observed, had gone out from them, having been once in the Christian church; but they were not of the number of the teachers who were commissioned and inspired by Christ. For if they had been of that number, they would have remained with the apostles. But they were permitted to depart from the society of the apostles, that they might be known to be impostors who taught false doctrine, ver. 19. But as to those of you, adds the apostle, who have not been

had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, ^k a new commandment I write

^k John. 13. 34. Ch. 4. 21.

been carried away with their errors, you have a rich unction of the Spirit in his gifts and graces, which is shed abundantly upon you through Jesus Christ your exalted Saviour: and you, through this spiritual anointing, are led into an experimental and practical knowledge of every thing that is necessary for your preservation from the deceit of these seducers, and for your own salvation, ver. 20. The apostle therefore observes, I have not written to you because you do not know the grand truths of the gospel, and particularly those two fundamental doctrines, the supreme Godhead of the Son, and his real incarnation; but because ye know them, and know also that the false teachers affirm abominable lies in direct contradiction to the truth, when they deny the supreme Godhead of Christ, or say that he did not come in the flesh, ver. 21. Who then, said he, is the liar or false prophet foretold to arise before the destruction of Jerusalem, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son and the anointed of God come in the flesh: they are antichrists who deny the Father's testimony that he hath sent his Son in the flesh, and the Son's testimony that he actually came in the flesh, ver. 22. Whoever he be that denies the divine personality and mediatorial office of the only-begotten Son of God, he denies, not only the Father's testimony to him as the Messiah, but also, by consequence, denies the Father's divine relation to him as *the Son*; and so takes away the distinguishing *personal* characters of both, and the peculiar glory which belongs to them respectively in the economy of salvation; and has not a true knowledge of the Father, nor a saving interest in him. But he who cordially owns and confesses the Son to be a divine Person, and the only Saviour of lost sinners, believes and confesses that he is the eternal Son of the Father, and was sent by him; and thus has a due regard, and pays suitable honour, both to the Father and the Son (John, v. 23.) ver. 23. Therefore, said St. John, let the belief of the Father's testimony concerning his Son, which you have heard from the beginning, abide in you, that ye may abide in the fellowship of the Son and of the Father, and thereby obtain eternal life, ver. 24. For this is the promise which the Son hath made in his Father's and his own name, to those who abide in his fellowship, namely, that they shall obtain eternal life, ver. 25.

The apostle now concludes this excellent discourse. These things, says he, I have written to you, &c. ver. 26.—But I need not insist so largely on them as I otherwise might, because that unction, consisting of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which you have been favoured with, remains as a constant principle within you, to enlighten, guide, and govern you; so that there is no necessity for your being instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God by any man whatever; much less of your being taught by any of these new upstarts, who would carry you off from the pure gospel of Christ: but as this holy unction itself leads you into the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, according to the word of God, which is

truth, and has no falsehood in it; so by means of its continual influence upon you, you may remain steadfast in Christ and in the doctrines of his gospel, ver. 27.—I say, little children, by holding the truth concerning the Son, and practising holiness, abide in his fellowship; that when he appears to judge the world, we may have full confidence of your acceptance, and not be put to shame by the errors or vices of our disciples. This is the hope that we have concerning you now: and since (*sav*,) as we trust, you have right thoughts of Christ, as the righteous and holy One, and the Author of all righteousness in others wherever it is found; you may thence assuredly conclude with an application to yourselves, that every one, who, like him, is a lover and practiser of those things which are right and holy, in imitation of him, and from a principle of faith in and love to him, is a partaker of a divine nature by his regenerating Spirit, and so is, by gracious adoption and the new birth, a child of God and an heir of eternal glory.

Ver. 1. *My little children, &c.*] St. John has several times called the Christians to whom he wrote, *little children*; not that it is to be supposed they were all his converts, though probably many of them were; but he was an apostle, and, as such, he looked upon himself as a *father*, and all Christians under his care and inspection as his children. It was a tender and affectionate appellation, denoting his paternal authority, love, and concern for them. *If any man sin*, might be rendered more properly, *If any man have sinned*; that is, "have formerly sinned;" and thus it falls in admirably well with the connection: "I write these things unto you, that you may not hereafter sin; and if any man have formerly sinned, I write likewise to inform him, that if he repent, he need not despair of mercy; for we have an Advocate with the Father, &c." Jesus Christ is here represented as our Advocate with the Father: he is sometimes also represented as our Intercessor, which, in English, signifies "one who petitions or prays for favour for others." But what principally concerns us upon this subject is, that the Greek words *ἐπιτροχάζω*, and *ὑπερίτροχάζω*, are of a more lax meaning, and signify to interpose or intervene in any way, whether by authority, petitioning, pleading, or otherwise. See Rom. viii. 27. xi. 2. According to the import of the Greek words, an *intercessor*, who pleads the cause of another, is the same with an *advocate*; for an advocate pleads the cause of his client before his prince or judge. An *accuser* and an *advocate* stand opposed to each other: the first is applied to the *devil*, who is called *The accuser of the brethren*: Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is our Advocate with the Father, maintaining and pleading our cause, always fully *patronizing* those who come to him in faith—that great exalted Saviour, who was himself by way of eminence, and in such a degree as no other person dwelling in human flesh ever was, so perfectly righteous, that his obedience absolutely answered the demands of the divine law in all its extent and purity.

unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that hath the faith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

¹ Ch. 3. 16. John, 15. 12, 13. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Pet. 2. 21. ² Rom. 13. 12. 1 Thes. 5. 5. 8. Acts, 27. 30. Mat. 4. 16. 1 Pet. 2. 9, 11. John 7. 9. & 8. 12. & 12. 35. Eph. 5. 8. Ch. 1. 7. Tit. 2. 11, 12. 2 Tim. 1. 10. 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6. ³ 1 Cor. 13. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 9. Ch. 3. 14, 15. John, 12. 35. Ver. 22.

Ver. 2. And he is the propitiation] Rather the *propitiatory sacrifice*; the sin-offering, or sacrifice of atonement; for so the word ἱλασμός signifies both here and ch. iv. 10. See on Rom. iii. 25. In this and the former verse, Jesus Christ is considered as being himself both the High-priest and the Sacrifice of atonement; and St. John having represented him as our Advocate with the Father, or our great High-priest gone within the veil to plead for us, further intimates, that he was also the great Christian Sacrifice or Sin-offering, and entered with his own blood within the veil, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Under the law the high-priest had never perfectly made an atonement, until he had entered within the veil, and sprinkled the blood before the mercy-seat. The slaying of the sacrifice, and offering it upon the altar, were previous steps; but the completion of the work was going within the veil, and there sprinkling the blood: thereby the high priest made an atonement for himself, for his household the priests, and for all the congregation of Israel. Lev. xvi. 17.

In allusion hereto, our blessed Lord is here represented as entering into heaven, to plead our cause with the Father, after he had offered himself on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins; a view in which he is often represented, particularly in the epistle to the Hebrews. "He is the great propitiation for our sins, to whom, under that character, we have fled with cheerful confidence: and it is a joy to us to reflect, that he is not only the propitiation for ours but also [for the sins] of the whole world," &c. See the annotations on the epistle to the Romans for a full view of this subject, as it relates to the Heathen world.

Ver. 3. Hereby we do know that we know him] To know Christ, to love him, to have him, and to be in him, are in this epistle used as synonymous terms, or very nearly so. St. John had in the former chapter intimated, that no man can have communion with God, unless he walk in the light, as God is in the light. Here he asserts, that no man can have any benefit from Christ's being an Advocate with the Father, or a propitiation for the sins of men, unless his knowledge of God and the gospel produces holiness of heart and life. This seems to be the connection between the present and the foregoing verse. The false teachers boasted of their knowledge, while their practice was bad; hence they were called *Grossicks*;—and that perhaps might be the reason why St. John so often repeats the words *know* and *knowledge*. The knowledge of God does not consist in mere opinion, or barren speculation, or in mysterious notions of his nature and essence, but in that practical knowledge which leads to a love of God, and keeping the divine commandments. It has been observed, that there was a set of men, who rose up in the Christian church, even in the days of the apostles, who so far perverted the doctrine

of the great apostle St. Paul concerning justification by faith, without the works of the law, as to pretend that they who knew the truth, and had faith, were under no necessity of leading a holy life. All the seven Catholic Epistles seem to have been particularly levelled against that dangerous error, and the present text is a direct confirmation of this opinion. Practical errors are the most dangerous errors; and unless knowledge is carried into practice, and faith influences to a right temper and conduct, our knowledge is vain, and our faith also is vain: but the knowledge of God which influences to a holy experience and a right practice, will, if persevered in, end in eternal life.

Ver. 5. His word] The word of Jesus Christ; the same with his commandments in the preceding verse. The love of God is sometimes put for that love which God bears to us; but as the fear of God signifies our fear of offending the Divine Being, and the faith of Christ signifies our believing in him, so the love of God signifies that love which genuine believers bear unto God, and which all men ought to bear to that most amiable Being. See Jude, ver. 21. In this latter sense the love of God is to be understood in this text. "Whosoever uprightly and impartially keepeth his word, in him certainly is the love of God perfected: it is plain he has the perfect love of God in his heart."

Ver. 7. But an old commandment] Founded in innocent nature before the Fall, recommended by the Mosaic law, and that which you had especially inculcated upon you from the beginning of your acquaintance with the gospel, the great practical intent of which was, doubtless, presently made known to you by whomsoever it was preached. I may therefore well say, it is the old commandment; for it is the word which you heard from the beginning of your acquaintance with Christianity.

Ver. 8. Again,] Or, on the other hand. The apostle, as it were, checks himself for what he had said ver. 7. See the like use of the word παλαιόν, Matth. iv. 7. The same commandment may, upon different accounts or in different respects, be called both old and new. For instance, the commandment that Christians should love one another as Christ had loved them, might, when St. John wrote this epistle, be called an old commandment, as having now been inculcated for a long time, or from the beginning; and yet it was, nevertheless, Christ's new commandment, first proposed and enjoined by him in its present form, and made the badge of distinction between his disciples and the rest of the world: he laid down his life for his disciples; and this is his new commandment, that we should love one another even as he has loved us; that is, be ready, when proper occasions call for it, to lay down our lives for the Christian brethren. See ch. iii. 16. and John, xv. 12, &c. Dr. Heylin observes, that the commandment here spoken of is that of charity, which indeed is old, and of eternal obligation;

10 ° He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none * occasion of stumbling in him.

11 ° But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12 I write unto you, little children, be-

* Ch. 3. 14. Pl. 119. 165. John, 12. 35. Rom. 14. 13. 2 Pet. 1. 10. ver. 9. John, 12. 35. 2 Cor. 4. 4. Luke, 24. 47. Acts, 4. 12. & 10. 43. & 13. 38. Ch. 1. 7. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14. 14. 20. with ch. 1. 1. & 5. 20. Dan. 7. 9. Pl. 90. 2. Ver. 14. Eph. 6. 10, 12. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Ch. 4. 4. & 5. 4 & 5. Rom. 16. 20. & 8. 13. & 7. 24, 25. Gal. 1. 8, 9. Phil. 3. 1. 2 Pet. 3. 1. & 1. 12—15. Il. 28. 10. Heb. 5. 12—14. & 6. 1.

cause your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, ° fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, ° young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

° Or. scandal. Lev. 19. 17. Tit. 3. 3. Ch. 3. 14, 15. with 1 Cor. 10. 15. & 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Ch. 4. 4. & 5. 4 & 5. Rom. 16. 20. & 8. 13. & Heb. 5. 12—14. & 6. 1.

obligation; but as it had been almost effaced by the malice of mankind, it was renewed, improved, and perfected by Jesus Christ. The thing enjoined in this new commandment of Christ's, had been verified in Christ himself. He had most intensely loved his disciples, and had even laid down his life for them. It had been also verified, at least in part, in the practice of the Christians to whom St. John wrote; and the Jews and the Heathens used afterwards to observe of the primitive Christians, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" St. John commends the Christians for their love to each other, in order to encourage them to persevere and abound therein more and more.

Ver. 10. *There is none occasion, &c.*] *There is no stumbling-block, Σκωδαλον, in him.* By this expression it may be implied, that such a man lays no stumbling-block in the way of others; but it more particularly means that there is no stumbling-block lies in his way; he walks in the light, and therefore avoids all stumbling-blocks, and sees his way plainly before him. "The word Σκωδαλον in the New Testament, says Parkhurst, denotes whatever actually makes, or has a manifest tendency to make men fall, stumble, or be remiss in the ways of duty; and particularly whatever hinders men from becoming the disciples of Christ, discourages them in their new profession, or tempts them to forsake that faith which they had lately embraced."

Ver. 11. *But he that hateth his brother*] Here is all along an evident allusion to one person's walking in the open day-light and another's walking in a very dark night: the one walks securely, and avoids all dangers, seeing his way clearly before him; the other, like a blind man, is in danger every step he takes; cannot tell which way he is going, whether in the right road or not; nor is he sensible of the danger which may be near at hand. Just so the truly benevolent and genuine Christian has through grace his eyes open, walks in broad day-light, and is safe and secure; whereas the uncharitable, contentious, or malevolent person, is involved in thick darkness, and his sin and danger are greater than if the light of the gospel had never appeared. See John, xii. 35.

Ver. 12.] In this and the two following verses, St. John affectionately addresses Christians of various ages or standings in the church; *children*, or young converts; *young men*, or those who were more established in the faith; and *fathers*, or those who were the most confirmed in the divine life. He then cautions them against the love of

this world, and enforces the caution with three arguments, shewing, *first*, that the love of God and the love of this world are inconsistent; *secondly*, that this world will soon pass away; *thirdly*, that the rewards of sincere piety will be eternal: ver. 15—17. After which he advises the Christians to be upon their guard against the deceivers, who then appeared in great numbers, and points out to them the many advantages which they had for knowing the truth; and the many obligations which they are under to adhere to it, and to practise accordingly: ver. 18—28.

I write unto you, little children] "These things I say unto you, and they are of universal concern; I hope therefore you will attend to them, and improve them for your own advantage. *I write unto you, little children*, among the rest, to guard the least and weakest of you against sin; because by his name, even the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made an atonement for them, *your sins are forgiven you*, and I am very solicitous that you may make all due return for so inestimable a favour, as a pardon purchased at the expence of such sacred Blood." As they probably had been but lately converted to the Christian faith, St. John, with the greatest propriety, takes notice of their sins having been forgiven them because of Christ's name; whereby it was insinuated, that if they would not have that forgiveness cancelled, but desired a final justification at the great day, they must not hearken to the deceivers, who were endeavouring to corrupt them, See ch. v. 13.

Ver. 13. *I write unto you, fathers*] "Because you have heard of his divine dignity and glory, who was in the beginning, who was with God, and himself God; and you are old in grace, have experienced much of the heights and depths and lengths and breadths of the divine love; that you may behave aright towards that Divine Saviour, who submitted to such abasement for us, though in himself so exalted and glorious. *I write to you, young men*, because you have bravely and effectually bid defiance to the allurements and terrors of the wicked one; and I would by no means have you disgrace the victory that you have already gained. *I write to you, little children*, because even the youngest of you in grace, have known God as *your Father*; and I desire you may, with all filial reverence and love, approve yourselves dutiful and grateful to him under that relation."

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 Love not the world, neither the things

that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

* Eph. 6. 10—17. 2 Tim. 2. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 8, 9. Ver. 13. * John, 5. 38. & 8. 31. Col. 3. 16. Pl. 119. 11. Jer. 32. 33. 7 Rom. 12.
2 Col. 2. 7, 8. Mat. 6. 24. Luke, 16. 13. Gal. 1. 10, 16. Jam. 4. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 31. Ver. 16. * Rom. 13. 13, 14. Eccl. 5. 10—12. Eph. 4.
2, 3. Tit. 3. 3.

Ver. 14. *I have written unto you, fathers,*] It is said, Job, xii. 12. *That with the ancient is wisdom, and in length of days understanding.* The propriety of St. John's address to the Christians aged in experience consists in this, that age brings both experience and wisdom; and as no knowledge or remembrance of former things could equal their knowledge of Christ, therefore St. John points at this, as hoping their wisdom and long experience had so established them, that the false teachers could make no impression upon them. The most celebrated of the Greek and Latin poets have very frequently taken notice of the strength and valour of *young men*; and what was a propriety in them, cannot be less so in an inspired apostle. There is therefore this poetical beauty in his saying to the young men, "*Ye are strong, and have got the victory.*" the Christian life is in many passages compared to a warfare. These *young men* were therefore considered as warriors under Christ, the great Captain of their salvation; and as young soldiers count it their highest ambition to distinguish themselves in the field of battle, and obtain the victory over the enemies of their country; St. John alludes thereto, and applauds these young Christians, as in the strength of grace signaling themselves, in fighting the spiritual warfare, and gaining the victory over the grand enemy. He adds, *The word of God abideth in you.* The false teachers endeavoured to take the pure word of God from them, and to impose their corrupt and immoral doctrine instead of it; but the apostle intimates the vast advantage of the true Christian principles: thereby through grace they had obtained the victory; and if they would go on conquering and to conquer, they must not hearken to the seducers, who would have taken from them the pure word of God. How much are they to be blamed, who would hinder the people from reading the Scriptures; who would take that spiritual weapon out of their hands, and leave them naked and defenceless, to be conquered in this important warfare. And how greatly was it to the glory of these *young men*, that when their passions and appetites were in their full strength and vigour, yet in the power of the Spirit of God they conquered the temptations arising from sensible objects, and were not discouraged by the contempt and opposition which the gospel met with! Such was the applause bestowed upon them by the apostle, that he might animate and encourage them to persevere to the end. St. John goes over his address to these three sorts of persons a second time, to make the deeper and more lasting impression upon their minds; and if we consider the unwearied

zeal and industry of the false teachers, we shall easily perceive that there was occasion for so doing.

Ver. 15. *Love not the world, &c.*] By the *world*, is sometimes meant the whole creation; sometimes the visible part of it, more commonly this earthly globe, with its appendages. Sometimes the world includes this animal life, together with the place of our present abode, and the things which support this life, or render it agreeable in a temporal sense. The love of such a state is then criminal, when it is exorbitant, and disproportioned to the worth and value thereof; when it is regarded as the chief good of man, and a due regard to God and religion, to holiness and to a better world, is thereby neglected: and as the many set too great a value on present and sensible things, they are sometimes called *the world*. See ch. 5. 19. If it should be objected, that we ought to love the wicked, and all mankind, the answer is obvious: we ought to love all mankind with a love of benevolence or good-will; but we ought not to love a wicked world with a love of complacency or delight: we should shun their company as much as possible, lest we be tainted by their customs, and corrupted by their bad examples. By the *things which are in the world*, we may understand the good things, or the enjoyments thereof; the inordinate love of which is in the next verse reduced to three heads, and all most justly condemned. God is considered as the Creator and Father of all men, (but more especially of real Christians,) who has amply manifested his paternal affection for them. An inordinate love of earthly things is inconsistent with that love which we owe our Heavenly Father. When conscience under the Spirit of Christ governs, and the passions, affections, and appetites are regulated thereby; when the rules of the gospel are our guide, that is the government of God over us; but when a worldly disposition governs us, and the passions and appetites bear sway, *the love of the Father is not in us*, nor do we behave at all as his obedient children. Hence it was that in the primitive church adults, when baptized, renounced the *world*, that is, the unlawful pursuit or love of riches and honours; the *flesh*, that is, all sensual impurity, or criminal pleasures; and the *devil*, that is, idolatry, and all the vices which it supported and encouraged: and Christians are still under the same obligations; for the love of these things is utterly inconsistent with the love of God. See the next note.

Ver. 16. *For all that is in the world,*] St. John did by no means intend to say, that the natural world, and every thing in it, is confusion and deformity. If so, how could we from the make and constitution of the world infer a God

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and,

as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

* Pf. 90. 9. & 102. 26. 1f. 40. 6. James, 1. 10. & 4. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 24. 1 Cor. 6. 13. & 7. 31. John, 10. 28, 29. 1 Pet. 1. 5. John, 4. 14. c Mat. 24. 5, 11, 24. John, 5. 43. Acts, 20. 29, 30. b John, 6. 58. Pf. 125. 1, 2. Prov. 10. 25. 3. 1-6. & 4. 3, 4. 2 Pet. 2. 1. Ch. 4. 3. Ver. 19. 2 John, 7. Rev. ix. 2 Thes. 2. 3-12. 1 Tim. 4. 1-3. 2 Tim.

God and Providence? The three particulars immediately specified, shew what he means by *all that is in the world*. The first head of human vices is, *the lust of the flesh*: the flesh of itself has no lusts, no passions, appetites, desires, or inclinations whatever; but when the human body is united to a rational spirit, and they mutually influence each other, then it appears that certain passions, appetites, and inclinations are planted in man, and that the flesh is the chief seat of several of them; or that a human soul would have no such appetites as spring from the flesh, unless it were united to such an animal body. Perfectly fallen as we are by nature, yet the Spirit of God is offered to us, whereby we may controul and direct these appetites and propensities: but when they are indulged in a wrong manner, or beyond proper bounds, then they become vices, and are condemned as *fleshly lusts which war against the soul*. By the *lusts of the flesh* expositors in general understand gluttony, drunkenness, and lewdness. Covetous desires are excited by the eye, and steal that way into the heart, Eccles. ii. 8-10. and if by the *lust of the eyes* we here understand covetousness, then this second head will not interfere either with the *lust of the flesh*, or the *pride of life*; and moreover, it is perfectly agreeable to the Jewish phraseology, by the *lust of the eyes* to understand covetousness. See Matth. vi. 23. Prov. xxvii. 20. Eccles. iv. 8. v. 10, 11. Though the word *Bίβλος* sometimes signifies *life* itself, sometimes worldly substance, or a provision for life; yet we need not restrict the meaning of the third phrase, the *pride of life*, to men's being proud of their riches: for ambition, an aspiring to places of power or preferment, high titles and graudeur, the pomp and glory of this world, or placing too great an esteem on ourselves, and despising others upon these or any other accounts, may be justly called *the pride of life*. Raphelius on this passage observes, that Polybius uses the same phrase with St. John, for all kind of luxury in one's manner of living, whether in dress, houses, furniture, eating, &c. No doubt St. John's expression implies all this; but it seems moreover to include all those other pursuits, whether of ambition or vain-glory, by which men aim at making a figure in the eyes of their fellow-mortals. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are the three great idols of the world; St. John mentions them as *all that is in the world*: it may therefore be inquired, whether he intended under these three heads to rank all the vices of the world? To which it may be replied, that certainly there are several vices, which are not particularly named here; but it would be no very difficult matter to shew, how other particular vices may either be reduced under these three heads, or are closely connected with them, how *lust*, *covetousness*, and *pride*, lead men to private injustice and injuries, or to public murder, rebellion, and cruelty, and to

trample upon all laws, human and divine; and upon that account this division of the vices of mankind may well be defended. But St. John seems to have had his eye upon the grand temptation which seduced our general mother Eve;—*The woman saw that the tree was good for food*,—that was the *lust of the flesh*;—that it was *pleasant to the eye*,—that was the *lust of the eyes*; and *a tree to be desired to make one wise*, (i. e. to exalt men to the rank of gods);—this was the *pride of life*: and Dr. Lightfoot thought that the three great temptations with which Satan assaulted our Lord, might be reduced under the same heads.

Ver. 17. *And the world passeth away, &c.*] The short continuance of this life is here alleged as another reason against worldly-mindedness. See Pf. xxxvii. 36. 2 Pet. iii. 7. In this and the two foregoing verses there is an antithesis, which helps to fix the sense: this world is opposed to the future state; the inordinate love of the world, to doing the will of God. The springs of action in good and bad men are also set in opposition; the one is of God, the other is of the world: and finally, we are presented with their different ends. This world, and its enjoyments, together with the desires thereof, soon pass away; the enjoyments of the holy and faithful will endure for ever. The good man as well as the bad must pay the great debt of nature; but he that now perseveringly *doeth the will of God* is to be raised to a glorious immortality, and then abide in that happy state for ever.

Ver. 18. *Little children, it is the last time*] If these words are to be connected with the context, then we may consider them either as connected with the immediately preceding verses, and as containing one reason why those Christians were not to love the world; namely, that it was the last hour, and therefore the enjoyments thereof would continue but a little while; (See James, v. 3.) or this verse may be connected with all that went before, and then the connection will stand thus: the apostle, having laid before the Christians some of the principal doctrines and duties of Christianity, takes care that the false teachers might not impose upon them, and draw them off from a steady adherence to these doctrines, and the faithful practice of the duties which he had been recommending. The word *antichrist* is in Scripture no where to be found but in this and in the second epistle of St. John. Some understand by it a *false Christ*, or one who unjustly assumed the character of the Messiah; others take it to signify an *opposer of Christ*. All those false prophets and corrupt teachers who arose before the destruction of Jerusalem, did not pretend to be themselves the Messiah or Christ: any person who opposes Jesus Christ, or corrupts the gospel, may be called an *antichrist*. See 2 Cor. xi. 13-15. The persons on whom St. John had his eye more particularly, denied that Jesus, who came in the flesh,

19 ¹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 ¹ But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 ¹ I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 ¹ Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? he is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 ¹ Whosoever denieth the Son, the same

¹ Deut. 13. 14. Pf. 41. 9. & 55. 12—14. Acts, 20. 29, 30. 1 Cor. 11. 19. ² Job, 17. 9. Pf. 115. 1, 2. Prov. 10. 25. Mat. 24. 24. John, 6. 37. & 10. 23, 29. 2 Tim. 2. 19. 1 Peter. 1. 2—5. Heb. 10. 39. Jude, 1. John, 4. 14. ³ Ver. 27. Ch. 4. 13. 2 Cor. 1. 21, 22. 11. 14. 3, 4. Ezek. 36. 27. Zech. 12. 10. John, 7. 18, 39. & 14. 16, 17, 26. & 15. 26. & 16. 7—13. 1 Cor. 2. 25. Prov. 28. 5. Mat. 21. 25. ⁴ Ch. 2. 4. & 5. 23. Ver. 11—14, 26. ⁵ 2 Thess. 2. 3, 4, 9, 12. Ch. 4. 3. 2 John, 7. ⁶ Ver. 22. Luke, 12. 9. John, 6. 53. & 8. 19. & 14. 9, 10. & 10. 30. & 15. 23. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Ch. 4. 15. 3 John, 9.

flesh, was the Christ. See ver. 22. Ch. iv. 3. 2 John, ver. 7. They were, most likely, of the number of the *Doctez*, who held that Christ only *seemed* to have flesh, and to suffer. When the false teachers were spoken of collectively, they were, in the singular number, called the *antichrist*; when distinctively, in the plural, they were called *many antichrists*. The Jewish Christians had heard, that *many antichrists*, or false prophets, and corrupt teachers, would appear a little before the destruction of Jerusalem: the apostles, without doubt, mentioned this to their converts, generally speaking, wherever they came; but the most famous predictions of that kind were delivered by our Lord himself, Matth. xxiv. 1, &c. Mark, xiii. 1, &c. Luke, xxi. 5, &c. And St. John's putting them in mind that they had heard of these things, was in effect saying, "Take heed and beware, by attending to the admonitions which have been given you." See 2 John, ver. 7, 8. The strength of his argument lies here: Our Saviour had foretold, that just before the destruction of Jerusalem, antichrist would appear: a number of antichrists had accordingly appeared. Hence they might conclude, that it was the last hour; or that the desolation of the Jewish temple, city, and nation, was just at hand.

Ver. 19. *They went out from us, &c.*] It is one mark of antichrist, that he had once been in the bosom of the church, and a Christian at least in profession. There were some judaizing Christians, who went down from Judea to Antioch, and assured the Gentile Christians there, that unless they were circumcised according to the law of Moses, they could not be saved; and the apostles, elders, and brethren, writing to the Gentile converts concerning those deceivers, say, (Acts, xv. 24.) *They went out from us*, and have troubled you with their doctrine; but we sent them not. Whether the false teachers, against whom St. John is here warning the Christians, went out pretending a commission from the apostles, does not appear; but St. John writes to obviate such difficulties as these: "What! Does the Christian church breed such pests, or does she nourish them in her bosom? Did not these men learn their Christianity from the apostles and true Christians? Did they not frequent their company, and communicate with them; and, as such, may we not hearken to them?"—To such difficulties St. John answers, "Yes, they went out from us; but, before they forsook us, they were not of the number of the true Christians; if they had been so, they would have remained with us; but their forsaking us has had this good consequence, to

"make it manifest to you, and to all the world, that they do not any of them belong to us. This will free us from the reproach which the unbelieving Jews and Heathens might cast upon us, because of the behaviour of these false teachers, and ought to prevent your paying any regard to them." See John, vi. 66. Acts, xx. 30. The church of Rome would gladly represent the *beretier*, as they call them, (that is, the Protestants,) in going out from them, to be as criminal as the false teachers were in going out from the apostles and true Christians. But the two cases are not at all parallel; for the Protestants left the church of Rome, because that corrupt church had forsaken the apostles, departed from the scriptures, and left the pure doctrine of the gospel, to which the Protestants have returned.

Ver. 20. *But ye have an unction, &c.*] Both kings and priests were consecrated to their offices by anointing; and in the New Testament, wherein the title of *kings* and *priests* is given to true believers, by *anointing* we are to understand any divine grace imparted to true believers. The apostle's meaning therefore is to this effect: "The Spirit of truth and holiness, which Christ the Holy One of God hath poured forth upon you, is to guide you into all truth; so that you have an experimental knowledge of all things relating to the pure gospel, at least so far as is necessary to salvation."

Ver. 21. *I have not written unto you*] Though St. John uses the word *ἔγραψα*, *I have written*, as he had done before, ver. 14. yet he speaks of what he was now writing; for there is no reason to think that he had written his Gospel or one Epistle to these Christians before this. See 1 Pet. v. 12. And his using the aorist is well accounted for by Beza, who observes, that he refers to the time when the epistle would be read; which manner of speaking is used by the Latins, as well as the Greeks.

Ver. 22. *Who is a liar, but he that denieth, &c.*] See ch. iv. 3. Some are of opinion, that this was written against Cerinthus, who in his doctrine separated Jesus from Christ, maintaining that they were two distinct persons, and denying Jesus to be the Son of God. The church of Rome denies both the Father and Son, by throwing off the government of God and of his Christ over the Christian church, setting up a pretended infallible head, reversing the laws of Christ laid down in the New Testament, and making laws at pleasure to bind the consciences of all Christians. The pope therefore, as head of the church, may properly enough be called *antichrist*. It has indeed very

hath not the Father: [but] *be that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

24 ^k Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall ^l continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 ^m And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even eternal life.*

26 ⁿ These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But ^o the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ^p ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in ^q him.

28 And now, little children, ^r abide in him;

^k Pf. 119. 11. Prov. 23. 23. John, 15. 7. Col. 3. 16. Luke, 9. 44. 15. 9, 10 & 17. 21—24. Ch. 1. 3, 7. & 4. 15, 16. ^m If. 45. 17. & 17. 2, 3. & 5. 24. Rom. 5. 10, 15—21. Titus, 1, 2. Ch. 1. 2. & 5. 11. 2 Peter, 1. 12—15. & 2. 1. & 3. 1, 17. ^l See ver. 20. Ch. 3. 24. Heb. 8. 10, 11. John, 14. 26. & 16. 23. 1 Cor. 2. 15. ⁿ Or it.

Rev. 3. 3, 11. Heb. 3. 6, 14. 2 John, 6. Jude, 3. ^o John, 14. 23. & 54. 8, 9, 19. Mat. 19. 29. John, 3. 14—17, 20. & 6. 31—58. & 8. 51. & 17. 2, 3. & 5. 24. Rom. 5. 10, 15—21. Titus, 1, 2. Ch. 1. 2. & 5. 11. ^p Ch. 3. 7. 2 John, 7. Acts, 20. 29, 30. Phil. 3. 2. Col. 4. 8, 18. Rom. 8. 9. Gal. 4. 6. 1 Cor. 2. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 14. ^q Jer. 31. 33, 34. ^r John, 15. 4—7. Col. 2. 6.

very often been inquired, whether the pope be antichrist? This seemed so clear to the famous Lord Bacon, that, being asked by king James I. whether he thought the pope so to be, he answered, “That if an hue and cry should come after antichrist, which should describe him by those characters whereby he is decyphered in the Bible, he should certainly take the pope for him.”

Ver. 23. *But he that acknowledgeth the Son, &c.*] Our translators have printed this passage in Italics; but it is found in many authentic manuscripts, as well as in the Syriac, Vulgate, and other versions.

Ver. 24. *Let that therefore abide in you*] This verse contains an inference from what was said before; namely, “As they who received the doctrine of the false teachers, did in effect hold neither the Father nor Son, therefore the true Christians were to hold fast the pure, primitive, and apostolic doctrine, which they had heard from their first conversion to Christianity, and not regard the false teachers.” The pure doctrine of the gospel is that which was from the beginning; that which was preached by the apostles and evangelists, and which is with certainty to be found in their writings, and no where else: accordingly Tertullian says, “That is true which was first; that was first which was from the beginning; that was from the beginning, which was from the apostles.”

Ver. 25. *And this is the promise, &c.*] Œcumenius thought, that *was, and,* was put for *was, for, or, because.* It is evident, that the apostle here mentions the promise of eternal life as a motive to induce them to retain the true gospel, and remain faithful to Christ; as if he had said, “There is motive sufficient to induce you to remain true to Christ; for this is the promise which he hath promised to us that do so; even eternal life.” To *promise a promise* was a common form of expression with the Greeks and Latins, as well as with the Hebrews. The *promise* is here put for the thing promised, as in other texts of scripture.

Ver. 26. *These things have I written, &c.*] By *these things* some understand all that is said from ver. 18. to this place; others understand this whole epistle. If some of the Christians to whom St. John wrote had been seduced, then by *you*, in this verse, the apostle might mean *some of you*: but it is generally thought, that by *those who deceive*

you, he meant *those who endeavour to deceive you.* There are many passages, both in sacred and profane authors, in which a person is said to do a thing which he attempts. St. John thought it a possible thing for them to be deceived, and to fall away: and therefore he wrote to prevent the impostors succeeding in their attempts. It is the part of good shepherds, not only to gather together their flocks at night, but prevent their going astray by day; and not only to feed them in good pastures, but to drive away the wolves. They are to teach the people the pure doctrine of Christ, and likewise to guard them against the errors, arts, and delusions of false teachers.

Ver. 27. *But the anointing, &c.*] See on ver. 20. The Spirit of God is compared to an *anointing*, because of his precious and cheering gifts, which rendered Christians more fit to encounter spiritual enemies; as wrestlers were anointed with oil, to make them fitter for their various exercises, and to prevent the advantages which might otherwise be taken of them. This has been produced to shew, that the office of a *stated ministry* in the church was unnecessary; “because (say the advocates for this opinion,) this *anointing* could not be any special, peculiar, or extraordinary privilege, but that which is common to all saints, this being a general epistle, directed to every one of them of that age; and *he that hath an anointing* abiding in him, which teacheth him all things, so that he needs no man to teach him, hath an inward and immediate teacher, and is taught inwardly and immediately.” But those who argue after this manner, would do well to consider, that the *Christian ministry* was in the highest repute in the church, even when the gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured down upon them in the greatest abundance; and moreover, that this epistle was written to Christians in general, which it would not have been, were not the admonitions that it contains necessary. And, if they were necessary in those early ages, when so many Christians were endued with the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, and there was, in some sense, a necessity that they should be thus extraordinarily invested with powers from on high, and the admonitions for exhortations in this epistle are similar to the exhortations of a *stated ministry*, the expediency of a *stated ministry*, instead of being superseded, seems to be confirmed by this very passage.

Ver. 28. *Abide in him; that—we, &c.*] St. John says, “Do

that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29 If ye know that he is righteous, * ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

¹ Ch. 3. 2. Col. 3. 4. ¹ Peter, 5. 4. Luke, 21. 36. Mark. 8. 38. Ch. 4. 21. ¹ If. 25. 9. ² Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28. Rev. 22. 14. ³ Or know ye. ⁴ Ch. 3. 7, 20. ⁵ 2 Cor. 1. 12. Gal. 5. 22, 23. ⁶ 1 Peter, 1. 15. Titus, 2. 12, 14. ⁷ Ezek. 36. 26. John, 1. 13. & 3. 3, 5, 6, James, 1. 18. ⁸ 1 Peter, 1. 3, 23. ⁹ 2 Peter, 1. 4. Ch. 3. 9. & 5. 18.

“Do you abide in him, that we may not be ashamed;” which change of persons may be accounted for thus: “Do you continue true and faithful Christians, that we your apostles and teachers may not be ashamed of our converts, as persons who have lost their labour.” Or thus: “Do you remain steadfast, as we do, that we may all appear with courage before our Judge, and not be confounded at his second coming.”

Ver. 29. *If ye know, &c.*] “I have before been discoursing of the Divine holiness and purity: now the consideration of this may enable you to judge, whether you are, or are not, in the happy number of the children of God. For since you know that he is perfectly righteous, you may know that every one who practiseth righteousness, is born of him; as the production of righteousness in the mind argues a Divine agency upon it; therefore he, in whom it is produced, is, by regeneration, a son of God.” This verse ought to have been placed at the beginning of chap. iii. as being a most evident introduction to what follows.

Inferences.—How beautifully harmonious is the tendency and design of the gospel, to caution believers against all sin, and to support them under a humbling sense of their former iniquities, and of their present disallowed infirmities! The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and his advocacy founded upon it, are extended to all believing sinners of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews, through the whole world. But how vainly do any pretend to have a right knowledge of Christ, or true faith in him for their own salvation, if they cast off a conscientious regard to his commandments! They give the lie to their own profession, and to the truth itself, and have no sincere love to him, which would engage them to a holy imitation of him.—The law of love to his people is, for substance, an old commandment; but, for circumstances, suited to the light and grace of the gospel, is a new one; and whatever any one may pretend to, his loving his Christian brother, or not, is one test of his either being truly enlightened, or remaining under the power of darkness. O how happy is their condition, who walk in the light of truth and holiness, whether they be babes, young men or fathers in Christ! The weakest believer is forgiven all trespasses for Christ's sake, and has a filial affection to God as his Father; the more grown Christian is established in the faith, and has greater strength from Christ for vanquishing the temptations of the devil and his instruments; and the old experienced Christian is best acquainted with the Ancient of Days. But alas! what an enemy is the love of this world to the love of God! As far as we are carried away with pleasures, riches, or honours, which are all precarious, empty, and perishing, so far are we estranged from the love of God to us, and love to him: and a predominant

love of this world is inconsistent with a true love to him, who cannot be the author of any evil influence which the things of flesh and sense make upon us.—How dangerous are the schemes of men of an antichristian spirit, which has worked in all ages of the church! But O what a blessed and holy unction of the Spirit have true believers from their exalted Head and Saviour: by this they are well satisfied about the truth of all the fundamental articles of the gospel, insomuch that they do not need to be always taught the first rudiments of Christianity; much less to be taught any of its doctrines by false pretenders to it. All that deny Jesus to be the Son of God and the only Saviour are antichristians, and constructively deny both the Father and Son; but all that cordially believe the doctrine originally delivered in the gospel concerning these divine Persons, have a sure interest in them both. The great promise of eternal life belongs to those who persist in their most holy faith, and continue in union and communion with Christ to their own and their faithful pastor's joy and confidence at his second and most glorious appearing: and they that have such just and impressive sentiments of his purity and holiness, as produce an effectual change upon them, in resemblance of him, may certainly conclude that they are partakers of a new and spiritual birth from him, and have a title to the inheritance of children.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. The design which the apostle chiefly aimed at in what he had written. *My little children, whom I regard with the tenderest sensations of paternal love, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; watchful against every surprise and temptation, and never allowing yourselves in the practice of any sin. And if any man, through the infirmity of his nature, be drawn aside from the way of God's commandments, and sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, through whom alone God the Father can be just, and yet a Justifier of the sinner; and if we with shame and sorrow, and true contrition of spirit, return to him, his infinite merit will plead the cause of the returning penitents before the throne of God. And he is the propitiation for our sins, having made the full atonement, and paid that ransom which alone is available for them: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world,—the ransom was paid for all mankind, and no damned sinner shall have the least ground of accusation against him as a partial Judge; but every mouth shall be stopped, and he alone be justified before an assembled universe. Note: (1.) While with holy jealousy we war against sin, we must not, if at any time cast down, sink into despair: we have one before the throne, who ever liveth to make intercession for every faithful soul that comes to God through him. (2.) Christ's salvation is universal to sinners of all ranks and nations,*

CHAP. III.

He declareth the singular love of God towards us, in making us his sons; who therefore ought obediently to keep his commandments, as also to love one another as brethren.

[Anno Domini 90.]

BEHOLD^a, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us,^b that we

should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved,⁴ now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

^a John, 3. 16. Pf. 36. 6, 7. & 39. 1, 2, 28. Jer. 31. 3. Rom. 5. 8. Ch. 4. 9, 10, 16, 19. Mat. 5. 45. ^b Jer. 3. 4, 19. John, 1. 12. 2 Cor. 6. 18. Rom. 8. 16, 17. ^c Col. 3. 3. John, 15. 18, 21. & 16. 3. & 17. 25. ^d If. 56. 5. Rom. 8. 14—17. Gal. 3. 26, 29. & 4. 6, 31. ^e Pf. 31. 19. 1 Cor. 2. 9. Rom. 8. 18. 2 Cor. 4. 17. ^f 2 Cor. 5. 1—7. Eph. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 18, 29. 1 Cor. 15. 49. Phil. 3. 21. Col. 3. 4. Eph. 5. 26, 27. Jude, 24. ^g Job, 19. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 13. 12. Mat. 5. 8. Pf. 17. 15. & 16. 11. John, 17. 24. Rev. 22. 4, 5.

nations, who yield to be saved by grace: none who answer this description shall be cast out or rejected.

2. The rule of judgment concerning our real knowledge of Christ. *And hereby we do know that we know him, and have the fullest demonstration of our real acquaintance with him, and of our genuine faith and love, if we keep his commandments, and of course unreservedly yield up ourselves to be guided by his holy word and will. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, living in the inward indulgence, or outward practice of iniquity, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, however confident his boast may be, and however high his pretensions. But whoso keepeth his word, in doctrine and practice, faithfully corresponding therewith in all things, in him verily is the love of God perfected; its prevailing influence over the whole soul is hereby manifested; it is plain that he has this perfect love truly in his heart, and does not make a vain and hypocritical pretence to it: and by this know we that we are in him; vitally united to the Living Head, interested in all the privileges of his gospel, in which the hypocrite hath neither part nor lot. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked; copying the divine pattern, and, though at a humble distance, following the footsteps of the holy Jesus. Note; The profession of Christianity, without the practice of true godliness, is but an empty name. They who are truly Christ's, will prove it not only in their lips, but by their lives.*

2dly, The apostle, as the most distinguishing character of true discipleship, and the great command of the divine Master, earnestly inculcates the great duty of brotherly love. *Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but remind you of an old commandment which ye had from the beginning; written upon the heart of man in innocence, and enforced in that revelation which God from the first made unto men. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning, wherein love is enjoined as the fulfilling of the law. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, the same indeed in substance, but enforced by new motives, encouragements, assistances, and examples; which thing is true in him and in you; manifested most strikingly in that divine pattern of love which he set before you, and which you have in a gracious measure humbly imitated. Because the darkness of the former dispensation is past, and the true light now shineth, the Sun of righteousness is arisen, and the shadows are fled, the glorious gospel bringing us forth as it were into the meridian light of*

truth, and demanding from us a conversation suitable to the peculiar advantages which we enjoy. *He that saith he is in the light, and professes faith in Jesus the Light of the world, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now, a stranger to the godlike spirit of love which the gospel breathes, and covered with the black night of sin and error. He that loveth his brother, as a fellow-member of Christ's mystical body, and because he is a child of the same heavenly Father, abideth in the light of truth, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him; he will carefully avoid whatever would offend or weaken his brother's soul, and walketh in the light himself. But he that hateth his brother, who harbours an uncharitable, envious, proud, or revengeful disposition, is in darkness, under the evident dominion of Satan and sin; and walketh in darkness, all his ways being perverse before God; and knoweth not whither he goeth, nor is aware of the dreadful issue of his ways, because that the darkness of his fallen heart hath blinded his eyes to all the dire consequences of sin. Note; (1.) Charity or love is the distinguishing characteristic of the Christian. (See 1 Cor. xiii) (2.) If there be a creature living, against whom we harbour allowed envy, malice, or revenge, in whose misery we should delight, or whose good we desire not to promote, we brand ourselves the children of darkness.*

3dly, The great duty of love is equally the concern of all ranks and degrees of Christians, whatever their several attainments may be in the divine life.

1. He addresses himself to Christians in every stage of their profession.

(1.) *I write unto you, little children; and, as a powerful incentive to the exercise of love, urge this duty upon you, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake; and having much forgiven, you should love much. Note; The lowest in the Christian life have received the free and full pardon of all their sins, this being the first great privilege of the gospel, of which every babe in Christ is immediately a partaker.*

(2.) *I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning, and, by long and intimate acquaintance with his grace and love, are peculiarly called and engaged to shew the same divine love to others.*

(3.) *I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one, and have been made more than conquerors over sin and Satan, and the world, through him that loved you. And, to impress more deeply my exhortation, I repeat my words,*

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth

also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5 And ye know that he was manifested

^h 2 Cor. 7. 1. 2 Peter, 1. 4. & 3. 14. Col. 1. 12. Ch. 4. 17. Heb. 12. 14. & 7. 26. ¹ Rom. 4. 15. & 7. 12, 14. Ch. 5. 17. ² II. 5. 4-12. Mat. 1. 21. & 20. 28. Rom. 3. 24-26. & 4. 25. & 5. 6-21. 2 Cor. 5. 21. 2 Peter, 2. 22, 24. & 3. 18. 1 Tim. 1. 15. Titus, 2. 14. Ch. 1. 7. & 4. 9, 10. Rev. 1. 5. Eph. 5. 2, 25-27. Heb. 1. 3. & 4. 15. & 9. 26, 28. & 7. 26. Luke, 23. 41. John, 8. 46. & 14. 30. Ch. 2. 1

(4.) *I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father; and, young as you are in the Christian life, have tasted the goodness and love of your heavenly Father. I have written unto you, fathers, grown old in the happy-experience of the good ways of Christ, because ye have known him that is from the beginning, entered deeply into the mysteries of his grace and love, and transcendent excellencies. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong in faith and knowledge, and the exercise of every heavenly temper; and the word of God abideth in you, Christ being formed in your hearts, and his gospel dwelling in you richly, and influencing all your conversation; and ye have overcome the wicked one, have effectually defeated all his efforts against your souls, and will, I trust, go on still conquering and to conquer; and blessed are they who are thus strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

2. He solemnly warns them all, whatever their several attainments may be, to beware of this present evil world. *Love not the world, set not your affections thereon; neither be inordinately delighted with the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, set his heart upon it as his home and his happiness, the love of the Father is not in him; it is evident that such a one does not experience a sense of his love, or feel any real heart-attachment to God in Christ as his portion and exceeding great joy. For all that is in the world, to engage and seduce the heart from God; the lust of the flesh, whatever ministers to the lawless gratification of appetite, and leads to excess, sloth, intemperance, luxury, drunkenness, revellings, and every kind of impurity; and the lust of the eyes, the gain, possessions, wealth, and glittering riches which the covetous eye gazes upon with such rapture, or with eager desire after them; and the pride of life, the pomp and splendor of titles, show, equipage, honours, magnificence, which gratify the vanity, and inflame the ambition of the fallen mind; of all and each of these we must say, that it is not of the Father; worldly things were not given to be thus abused, nor are these the objects on which God's children place their affections; but we know, that each of these things is of the world; they are the flattering baits which the god of this world, the devil, spreads to ensnare the sensual and earthly hearts of fallen men, and to seduce them from their true Lord and Master. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; great and desirable as the things of it appear in the eye of sense, they are poor, perishing, unsatisfactory in the enjoyment, and transitory; often in life flying our grasp, and certainly failing us at death: but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever; has a more enduring substance; his fidelity to death shall be crowned with immortal life and glory; his pleasures in eternity shall be infinitely superior to all the delights of sense; and his inheritance above, incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away. Oh! that thou mayest be wise, reader, and learn to weigh*

time and eternity, this world and the next, in the balances of the sanctuary!

4thly, As the mystery of iniquity had begun already to work, the apostle,

1. Reminds them, that the Jewish dispensation was now ready to expire utterly, with the destruction of their temple, city, and nation. *Little children, it is the last time; and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; either those who among the Jewish people set up themselves for the Messiah; or rather, who under the Christian profession opposed and denied the person, offices, and gospel of Christ; broaching their heretical tenets, and perverting many from the truth. They went out from us, from our communion and society; but they were not of us, did not enjoy the renewing power of the grace of God, or the communion of saints: for if they had been of us, partakers of the like precious faith with us, and enjoying the genuine communion of saints, they would no doubt have continued with us,—possessing such a spirit, they would not, they could not, have separated from us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us, but were false-hearted hypocritical professors, who either had never tasted the grace of God in truth, or had made shipwreck of their faith, and become vile apostates.*

2. He encourages them to trust, and not be afraid, since no seducers should ever be able to move them from their steadfastness, if they perseveringly cleaved to Christ, and used the power bestowed upon them. *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, from the Spirit of grace and truth, which, through the exalted Saviour, hath been bestowed upon you; and ye know all things necessary to preserve you from the wiles of deceivers, and to bring you to everlasting salvation. I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth; but because ye know it, and are established in the principles of the gospel, and the fundamental doctrines of Christ; and know that no lie is of the truth, but the very reverse, and proves the hypocrisy or apostacy of those who by fraud and error would support their heretical doctrines.*

3. He particularly points out these seducers, by their tenets. *Who is a liar, and to be deemed an impostor, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ, rejecting him as the true Messiah? He is antichrist, and bears the brand of this hateful name, that denieth the Father and the Son, either confounding the persons in the Godhead, or dividing the substance; or denying that flood of evidence, wherewith God the Father hath borne witness to the mission and incarnation of his dear Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, his Personality and essential Deity, or the office that he bears as Mediator, the same hath not the Father, holds not the true doctrine of the Trinity, and of the relation which God the Father bears to God the Son; and therein denies all that revelation which he hath made of pardon and reconciliation through the substitution of the incarnate Redeemer; but he that acknow-*

to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. **6.** ¹Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: **whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**

¹ John, 15. 4-7. & 8. 34, 36. 1 Cor. 1. 30. Col. 1. 2. & 2. 6. Ver. 9. Ch. 5. 18. & 2. 4. & 4. 8. 3 John, 11.

ledgeth the Son, hath the Father also; he that receives the Lord Jesus by faith as the only Saviour, and confesses him to be the eternal Son of God, he hath the true knowledge of God the Father, and an interest in his favour and love.

4. He exhorts them to cleave to the old truth, for novelty of doctrine is the sure proof of error. *Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning, when the gospel was first preached to you. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father, and, holding the profession of your faith unwavering, shall enjoy the most happy communion with the Father through the Son, until you come to his kingdom in glory. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life, which he will infallibly fulfil to those who perseveringly abide in him, and will bring them to the beatific vision and enjoyment of his blessed Self for ever and ever.*

5. He mentions one great purpose of this epistle. *These things have I written unto you concerning them that labour to seduce and pervert you from the simplicity which is in Christ. But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you; the Spirit which he hath given you, continues to teach, direct, and lead you aright; and ye need not that any man teach you; you cannot want the help of these pretended wise men to instruct you above what is written: but, as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and hath opened your eyes to see in the revealed word all things that pertain unto life and godliness, and is truth, and is no lie, but directly contrary to the spirit of error which actuates those seducers: and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him, your living Head, to whom by the divine Spirit you are thus vitally united; and continue under the blessed influence and guidance of his truth and grace unto the end. See the Annotations.*

6thly, From what he had said, the apostle closes with this affectionate exhortation to them: *And now, little children, abide in him, maintaining the closest communion with Jesus, and walking in the lively exercise of faith and hope, and love towards him, unmoved from the doctrines of his gospel by the wiles of deceivers; that when he shall appear on the throne of judgment at the last day, we may have confidence and boldness to appear in his presence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming, when we, your ministers, shall not be disappointed of our hopes, but meet you as our joy and crown, and, together with you, stand forth without fault, and blameless, acknowledged by him as his saints, and admitted into the joy of our Lord. If, or since, ye know that he is righteous, perfectly righteous himself, and the lover and author of all righteousness in his faithful people, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him, and thereby gives a demonstration that he is a partaker of a divine nature, and has the possession of spiritual life. (1.) They only will have boldness in the day of judgment, who are found in Christ, and perseveringly cleave to him. (2.) Everlasting shame and contempt will*

cover those, who ungratefully, unfaithfully, and perversely, have departed from the truth, and they shall be disowned of Jesus in the day of his appearing and glory. (3.) The evidence of a divine nature must be manifested in a good conversation; for whatever conceits men may entertain of themselves, it is their fruits by which they must be known.

CHAP. III.

THE apostle, in the last verse of the preceding chapter, having declared that every one who worketh righteousness, that is, internally and externally, has been begotten of God, and is his son, begins this chapter with an exclamation, expressive of his high admiration of the love of God in calling such his children, although they are not acknowledged to be such by the men of the world, because unregenerate men have no just notion of the character of God, ver. 1.—Then, to explain the ground of his admiration, he described the dignity and happiness to which the faithful children of God will be raised, at the appearing of Christ to judge the world. They shall be like Christ, because they shall see him as he is, and shall live with him for ever, ver. 2.—Now, this being the greatest honour and felicity of which mankind are capable, every one who has the hope of seeing Christ, and of becoming like him, and of living with him for ever, is careful to purify himself from evil affections and wicked actions, as Christ is pure, that he may be qualified to associate with Christ, ver. 3.—This naturally led the apostle to condemn a second time the impious doctrine of the Nicolaitans, Simonians, and other heretics, who affirmed, that every action being free to those who had the knowledge of God, such will not be punished for their actions, however vicious they may have been. For, in opposition to these heretics, the apostle declared, that whoever worketh sin, shall certainly be punished; because sin being a transgression of the law of God, without doubt God will support the authority of his law, by punishing severely the transgressors of it, ver. 4.—Besides, that he will punish obstinate sinners, God hath shewed, by sending his Son to take away the punishment of sin from those only who repent and believe. For since the Son of God was free from sin himself, he would not die to procure for his disciples a liberty of sinning, ver. 5.—From this it follows, that whosoever abideth in the fellowship of Christ, and is the object of his love, doth not sin. Whosoever sinneth, though he may have seen Christ in the flesh, has not seen him in his true character, neither has known his will, ver. 6.—Wherefore, my beloved children, let no teacher deceive you, by affirming that the speculative belief of the gospel will make you righteous in the sight of God. He alone who habitually worketh righteousness on the true foundation of the atoning Blood, is righteous in the sight of God, and will be accepted by him; even as Christ himself was righteous, by keeping his Father's commandments, and abode in his love, ver. 7.—He who worketh sin, instead of being a child of God, is a child of the devil:

7 Little children, let no man deceive you : he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil : for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was mani-

¹ 1 Cor. 6. 9. Gal. 6. 7. Ch. 2. 26, 29. Ver. 10. Ch. iv. & 5. 1—3, 21. 2 John, 6. Ezek. 18. 5—9. ² John, 18. 44. Mat. 13. 38. Eph. 2. 2. Ch. 5. 19. Ver. 10. ³ See ver. 5. Mat. 12. 29. Luke, 10. 18. John, 12. 31. & 16. 11. Col. 2. 15.

devil : for the devil hath sinned from the beginning of the world. Now the evil nature of sin, and its hatefulness to God, may be known from this, that the Son of God was manifested in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil ; namely sin, and all the miseries which flow from sin, ver 8.

Having described the character of the children of the devil, together with the evil nature of their works, the apostle explained the character of the children of God, and taught the faithful how to distinguish them from the children of the devil. Whosoever is begotten of God, doth not commit sin, because God's seed, the doctrine of the gospel, with the grace and Spirit of God, abideth and operateth in him constantly. Such a person cannot sin, for this very reason that he is begotten of God, ver. 9.—By this sure mark, therefore, the children of God, and the children of the devil, are distinguished. Whosoever doth not internally and externally practise righteousness, is not begotten of God, neither he who doth not love his brother, so as both to do him good, and to abstain from injuring him, ver. 10.—And to impress them strongly with a sense of the obligation which lay on them, as the disciples of Christ, thus to love their brethren, St. John put them in mind, that the message which the apostles brought from Christ, and delivered to them from the very first, was, that they should love one another, ver. 11.—and not behave like persons begotten of the wicked one, as Cain was, who slew his brother from envy and hatred, because his own works were evil, and his brother's good, ver. 12.—Having this example of the hatred which the wicked bear to the righteous, recorded in the scripture, the faithful were not to wonder that the wicked hated them. It has been the lot of the righteous, from the beginning of the world, to be hated and persecuted of the wicked, ver. 13.—But to animate them to bear these evils courageously, he told them, if they really and cordially loved their brethren, they might know certainly that they had passed from death to life ; that they were quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. Whereas the person who does not cordially love his brother, remains under the condemnation of death, ver. 14. because every one who hateth his brother, is a man-slayer, like Cain ; and unless he repenteth, he is incapable of eternal life, ver. 15.—Farther, to prevent them from thinking that the only operation of love, is to restrain one from injuring his brother, the apostle told them, that as by this we have known the great love of Christ to us, that he laid down his life for us, we ought to shew our love to our brethren, by laying down our lives for them when called in providence to do so, ver. 16.—Whosoever, therefore, hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother in necessitous circumstances, and yet does not give him somewhat to relieve him, such a hard-hearted person has no love to God, ver. 17.—From this consideration, the apostle affectionately exhorted his disciples, not to put off their

needy brethren with good words only, but to shew the reality of their love to them, by relieving their necessities, and by doing them acts of beneficence, as occasions required, ver. 18.—For by such a conduct, among other divine marks, they would know themselves to be of the fellowship of the true God, and would have confidence in his presence, as his acceptable worshippers, ver. 19.—But if our own conscience condemneth us, as wanting in love both to God and man, because we refuse to relieve our needy brethren in their distress, certainly God, who is a more perfect and impartial judge than our conscience, and knoweth all things, will much more condemn us, ver. 20.—Whereas, if our conscience does not condemn us as deficient in any of the sacred fruits of love, we may have confidence with God, that we are accepted of him, and are the objects of his love, ver. 21.—And whatsoever we ask, agreeably to his will, we shall receive ; because by the improvement and exercise of divine love in every thing which relates to the glory of God and the good of our brethren, we keep his commandments, and do those things which are pleasing to him, ver. 22.—For this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of Jesus Christ as his only-begotten Son, and that we should love one another, as he gave commandment to us by his Son, ver. 23.—Now he who thus keepeth God's commandments, abideth in his fellowship, and God abideth in him, as the principle of his spiritual life and strength. And by this we know that God abideth in us, even by the witness and graces of the Spirit, which he hath given us, ver. 24.

Ver. 1. *Behold, what manner of love, &c.*] The word *behold*, is made use of to excite new degrees of attention ; and indeed is generally used in the scripture as a kind of hand, to point out what is peculiarly worthy our attention. The word *ωρανος*, rendered *what manner*, properly signifies quantity ; when it denotes quality, it is some eminent sort or high degree of the kind. In either sense it will suit this place ; but the latter seems preferable. The persons who in the last verse are said to have been born of God, are here called the *sons or children of God*. St. John was willing to make the Christians sensible of the happiness of being continued in the family of God. If the child of the poorest man upon earth was adopted by the greatest monarch, it would not be an honour, exaltation, and felicity, in any degree equal to that of being made one of the sons of God. See Hosea, i. 10. Hence we are told, that when the Danish Missionaries appointed some of their Malabarian converts to translate a catechism, in which it was mentioned as the privilege of Christians to become *the sons of God*, one of the translators was startled at so bold a saying, as he thought it, and said, " It is too much ; let me rather render it,—they shall be permitted to kiss his feet."

The two members of this argument in the latter clause

feſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.

9 Whoſoever is born of God ſ doth not commit ſin; for his ſ ſeed remaineth in him:

John, 18. 34. Ch. 2. 29. & 5. 18. Rom. 7. 15—24.
2 Peter, 1. 4. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Eph. 2. 5, 10. & 4. 23, 24.

1 Kings, 14. 8. Eſek. 36. 26. Job, 19. 28. John, 3. 3, 5, 6. 2 Peter, 1. 23.

of the verſe are tranſpoſed; *becauſe the world knew him not, therefore it knows us not*; or, the truth is firſt laid down, and then the reaſon of it aſſigned. True Chriſtians are ſeparated from the world to be holy unto the Lord; and they differ from the world in their principles, profeſſion, and converſation: it is no wonder therefore that the world deſpiſes and hates them. See ver. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. John, viii. 55. xv. 18, &c. xvi. 1, &c.

Ver. 2. Now are we the ſons of God, &c.] In ver. 1. the apoſtle ſays, the world knew them not. Here he intimates, that they themſelves did not fully comprehend what glory and felicity was implied in their being ſons of God, and heirs of his eternal inheritance. It is obſervable, that theſe are the words of *John*; of him who had not only ſo familiarly converſed with Chriſt on this ſublime and delightful ſubject, but had ſeen his tranſfiguration when Moſes and Elias appeared in ſuch tranſfulgent glory. In our preſent ſtate, we are not capable of forming an adequate idea of our future ſelves, or of the glorious ſcenes which will preſent themſelves to the view of the faithful hereafter; but when our Saviour ſhall be revealed from heaven, arrayed in all his *glories*, we are aſſured that our frail bodies ſhall be transformed into the likenefs of his glorious body. Seneca has ſome ſublime paſſages in his 102d Epistle, relating to that divine Light which good men ſhall behold in a future ſtate, “The very thought of which (he ſays) will prohibit any thing ſordid, baſe, or malevolent from ſettling in the mind that entertains it.”

Ver. 3. That hath this hope] The phraſe *ὁ ἑξῆς*, ſignifies, he that *keepeth, holdeth, or retaineth*: he purifies himſelf; conſequently he is not like a ſtone, or like a machine, which is entirely paſſive: God, it is true, gives him all the power by imparting his grace unto him; and this is the uſe which he is obliged to make of it. It is not ſaid that he purifies himſelf, as *Jeſus Chriſt* purifies himſelf; Jeſus Chriſt was never polluted with any immorality, he therefore has no occaſion to purify himſelf: he is abſolutely pure, without ſpot or blemiſh, the ſtandard of all moral excellence and perfection; and they who would ſee him, and be like him in immortal glory and felicity hereafter, muſt be like him in holineſs here. This purifying ourſelves, even as Jeſus Chriſt is pure, denotes not an abſolute equality to his purity, for that no man can attain unto, but a *likenefs or reſemblance*. We may finally obſerve, that the ſacred ſcriptures do not propoſe to us a Mahometan para-diſe of ſenſual enjoyments as our eternal portion, (the very proſpect of which is enough to encourage men in debauchery and ſenſuality;) but the *ſeeing Chriſt*, and being like that pure and infinitely holy perſonage: that is, the pureſt, moſt ſpiritual, and moſt refined enjoyments are propoſed to us, as our everlaſting reward. The hope of ſuch things, which grace alone can beſtow, has the moſt direct tendency to excite us to purity and holineſs; and, in this view, how excellent muſt that religion be, which promiſes the promoting of holineſs and the ſpiritual enjoyment of God, as its grand and ultimate reward!

Ver. 4. Whoſoever committeth ſin] St. John’s deſign in this verſe, was not to explain the meaning of the word *ſin*, but to aſſure the Chriſtians that *ſin* expoſed a man to puniſhment; and then the connection is clear and evident: ver. 3. “He that hopes for the heavenly felicity, purifies himſelf even as Chriſt is pure: ver. 4. He who deſiles himſelf with vice or wickedneſs, muſt be miſerable; for wickedneſs will expoſe a man to puniſhment: ver. 5. For this great and gracious purpoſe was Jeſus Chriſt maniſteſted, that he who had no ſin of his own, might take away our ſin, and free us from the puniſhment of the wicked and impenitent.” See ch. v. 17.

Ver. 6. Whoſoever abideth in him,] “Hence it plainly follows, that whoever abides in him by vital and influential union and communion with him, like a branch in the vine (John, xv. 5.), does not commit ſin: he that ſinneth, has no realizing view of him by faith: his views and knowledge of him have been ſo ſuperficial, as that they deſerve not to be mentioned, ſince they have not conquered the love and prevalence of ſin, and brought the man to a holy temper and life.”

Ver. 7. He that doeth righteousneſs,] *He who practiſeth righteousneſs*; and ſo ver. 8, 9. *he who practiſeth ſin*. The ſcriptures frequently represent him as the *righteous man*, who habitually and conſtantly, internally and externally, practiſeth righteousneſs. The verſe may be thus paraphraſed: “My dear little children, let no one deceive you on this important matter by vain words, with whatever pomp, or ſolemnity, or plauſibility, they may be attended. A Being, himſelf immutably holy, can never diſpenſe with the want of holineſs in his reaſonable creatures: *He that practiſeth righteousneſs is righteous, even as he himſelf is righteous*: it is his own image, and he muſt invariably love and delight in it; and muſt as invariably abhor ſin, as utterly contrary to his nature.” This is an obvious interpretation of the phraſe; and is very neceſſary to avoid an *indulgence* of the moſt extravagant kind. For certainly it is not every one who performs *ſome one* juſt or righteous action, that can be denominated *righteous*; nor can any man be entitled to that character, who does not in the main courſe of his life, practiſe *univerſal* righteousneſs. Aristotle has a paſſage much to the ſame purpoſe with this of St. John: “Then ſhall a man be righteous, *firſt*, if he does the things which are righteous, and knows what he does; *ſecondly*, if he does them freely, or out of choice; *thirdly*, if he continues firmly and conſtantly in that courſe of action.” St. John, by introducing this verſe with *let no man deceive you*, intimated that the matter was of vaſt importance, and there was danger of their being deceived by the falſe teachers in this particular.

Ver. 8. He that committeth ſin, &c.] Or, *who liveth in ſin*, ſays Heylin. The original is a Hebraiſm, importing a habit of ſin. Limborch imagines the phraſe *ſinneth from the beginning*, to refer to repeated acts of ſin, and a continued courſe of it, which preceded Satan’s expulſion from heaven. But it ſeems that the uſe of the preſent tenſe implies

a con-

and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

11 For this is the * message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

* Ch. 2. 29. 2 Cor. 2. 12. John, 8. 44. Acts, 13. 10. Ch. 4. 8. 15. 11. Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 22. 39. Gal. 6. 2. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thess. 4. 9.

1 Gen. 4. 4-8. Jude, 11. Heb. 11. 4. Prov. 25. 8. with John, 15. 19. 1 Pet. 4. 4. Prov. 29. 27. 2 John, 15. 18, 19. & 17. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 11. John, 18. 33. Acts, 14. 22. Ch. 2. 10. & 5. 13. Ver. 15. John, 5. 24. & 13. 35. with ch. 2. 9, 11. & 4. 7, 8, 20, 21. 1 Thess. 4. 9.

12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.

* Ch. 1. 5. & 2. 7.

Or commandment.

John, 13. 34, 35. &

15. 11. Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 22. 39. Gal. 6. 2. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thess. 4. 9. 1 Pet. 1. 21. & 3. 8. & 4. 8. James, 2. 8. Ch. 4. 21. Ver. 16, 23.

2 Gen. 4. 4-8. Jude, 11. Heb. 11. 4. Prov. 25. 8. with John, 15. 19. 1 Pet. 4. 4. Prov. 29. 27. 2 John, 15. 18, 19. & 17. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 11. John, 18. 33. Acts, 14. 22. Ch. 2. 10. & 5. 13. Ver. 15. John, 5. 24. & 13. 35. with ch. 2. 9, 11. & 4. 7, 8, 20, 21. 1 Thess. 4. 9.

a continuance in a course of sin. See John, viii. 44—47. xv. 27. The word *δύω*, rendered, *he might destroy*, is expressive, and leads us to look on sin and misery as a fabric, of which Satan is the great architect, but which Christ is come to overthrow and demolish: accordingly, he has already broken, as it were, the *compages* and strength of it, and we may fully expect that it will be gradually levelled, and its very ruins removed. He has certainly done already what has a most powerful tendency to produce such an effect; and will, in his due time, accomplish all his designs against sin and the devil. The inference which St. John intended from this verse is, that Christians should not take part with the devil as all wicked men do; that they should not build up again what Jesus Christ came to destroy; but that they should, internally, externally, and perseveringly, practise righteousness; which is falling in with the great design of Christ's coming; and then they will finally be made glorious and happy by him.

Ver. 9. *Whosoever is born of God, &c.*] "Whoever he be that is a partaker of the divine nature by the regenerating Spirit, is no longer a doer or practiser of iniquity; for that divine principle of grace, which is infused into him, has an abiding root and residence in him, to rule and govern him; and he has such a thorough hatred of all iniquity, that he cannot love or live in sin; because he, as a child of God, and born of the Spirit, has received a principle of grace, which wills and works in direct opposition to all sin: much less can he sin, upon the score, or by virtue of his being born of God, as though his new birth were a licence for it, or had any tendency towards it." The phrase, *He cannot sin, because he is born of God*, cannot signify an impossibility to sin: for, in that case, St. John, and the other apostles, needed not to have taken so much pains to guard real Christians against sinning; to have condemned, forbidden, and threatened; or to have exhorted, commanded, and promised. These things plainly suppose not only the possibility, but the danger there was of true Christians falling away: by *cannot*, therefore, we may here understand, that he will not, he does not choose to live wickedly; it is contrary to his principles and the settled bent and habit of his temper and life. So we say, "A wise man *cannot* do such a foolish thing; a good man *cannot* act such a base and wicked part." Certain it is, that the words must be taken in some qualified sense, or they would prove the impeccability of every child of God, or the impossibility of his sinning; which scarcely any have been wild enough to assert. It is evident that

there are many passages of scripture, in which the word *cannot* must be taken in such a latitude; see Luke, xiii. 33. Heb. ix. 5. Neh. vi. 3. Numb. xxii. 18. And this phraseology is also used by the best classic writers.

Ver. 10. *In this the children of God are manifest, &c.*] All men are either *the children of God*, or *of the devil*. Here is the rule to distinguish the one from the other; not by boasting that we are the elect people of God; not by a set of notions, or barren speculations; but by our own present and personal experience and practice of righteousness, and, as another mark of our adoption, by our cordial love to all Christians. These are the marks of a true Christian; by these the true are distinguished from the false professors. How excellent must that religion be, which so much promotes genuine benevolence and universal righteousness!

Ver. 11. *For this is the message*] In this verse we have St. John's first reason why Christians should love one another; namely, "It is the message or command of God in Christ."

Ver. 12. *Not as Cain, &c.*] The original is expressive; *Not like Cain! he was of the wicked one, and murdered his brother*: God forbid therefore that we should be like him. *To be of the wicked one*, is the same thing as being a child of the devil. See ver. 8. In this verse St. John assigns a second reason why Christians should love each other, namely, that otherwise they will be *like Cain*, and children of the devil. If, instead of *evil*, in the last clause, our translators had rendered it *wicked*, the apostle's sense would have appeared more plainly; and the connection between the *wicked one*, and *wicked works*, would have been set in a stronger light. Cain's brother being preferred to him, gave rise to jealousy, envy, and hatred, which, at length, settling into the most rancorous malice, hurried him on to fratricide. See on Gen. iv. 4. and Heb. xi. 4.

Ver. 13. *If the world hate you*] By the *world*, understand the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. See ch. v. 19. The *world* is here set in opposition to the Christian brethren. This verse contains an inference from what had been said in that preceding; "There has all along been enmity between the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent; or, bad men have envied, hated, and persecuted the good from the beginning:" therefore the Christians to whom St. John wrote, were not to be surprised at it, as a thing new and unusual, if the world hated them: the more the world hates them, the more should Christians unite and love one another.

Ver. 14. *We know that we have passed from death, &c.*] This

He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

15 ^a Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 ^a Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and ^b we ought to lay down *our* lives for the bre-

thren.

17 But ^c whofo hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, ^d let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

^a Lev. 19. 17. Mat. 5. 21, 22. Titus, 3. 3. Ch. 4. 20. Gal. 5. 21. ^b Ch. 4. 9, 10. John, 3. 16. & 15. 13. Rom. 15. 8. Eph. 5. 2, 25. John, 10. 15. Titus, 2. 14. Mat. 20. 28. 1 Peter, 1. 18, 19. & 2. 24. & 3. 18. ^c Rev. 1. 5. & 5. 9. ^d Rom. 16. 4. Phil. 2. 17. Luke, 3. 12. Ch. 4. 20. & 5. 2. Deut. 15. 7. James, 2. 15. ^e Rom. 12. 9. James, 2. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 22. & 3. 8. & 4. 8. Ver. 11. with Ezek. 33. 31.

This is said even of the best men; which implies, by a strong consequence, that they are, as it were, born in the land and territories of death; or that the gospel finds them in such a condition, as to be liable to condemnation and destruction; to the execution of a capital sentence. Oblique expressions of this sort speak such truths as these, in a manner peculiarly convincing and affecting. Here is a third reason assigned for loving the Christian brethren; namely, that a cordial love of genuine complacency to all Christians was a sure mark or evidence, that they were quickened from the death of sin to a life of righteousness, and entitled to immortal life. See John, xiii. 35. It is added, *he that loveth not his brother, abideth in death.* Though he had been baptized, and visibly taken into the church, yet he was not a true Christian; and therefore no more translated into the kingdom and favour of God's dear Son, than a Heathen: but if he continued impenitently in that want of love to the brethren, he would be as much exposed to the second death, or the punishment of the future state, as the unbelieving and wicked world. This may be justly looked upon as a fourth reason for their loving the Christian brethren; namely, that without such love their Christianity was vain.

Ver. 15. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer:* That is, in the temper and disposition of his mind; or, hatred is one step towards murder. See Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, 44. In the 6th commandment murder is forbidden; but the commandments are so to be interpreted, that every tendency towards the crime condemned, is in its proportion forbidden, as one step towards the crime, or one degree of it. Murderers, and all sinners, are condemned to the second death: not but that upon deep humiliation and unfeigned repentance, murderers may obtain mercy; witness the case of David: but the impenitent murderer, yea, even he who only hates his brother, has not the heavenly temper and disposition of mind, nor any title to eternal life; *hath not eternal life abiding in him.* There is a fifth reason for their cultivating love to the Christian brethren; namely, that hatred of them, or want of love to them, was one degree of murder, or one step towards it: and who would not be shocked at the thought of being a murderer!

Ver. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God,* This text, as it stands in our version, has generally been mentioned as equivalent to Acts, xx. 28. In which, as he who laid down his life for us, *is God as well as man,* God is said to have done that, which the man united to him did. The

verse may be thus paraphrased: "How contrary is this unmerciful temper to that which God the Son has shewn towards us: we may conceive something of the greatness of his compassionate love, from the most transcendent instance that could be given of it; since he, who is *the eternal Word, and was made flesh,* and so was truly and properly God incarnate (John, i. 1. 14.), *has loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour* (Eph. v. 2.). And we ought to be so deeply affected with, and influenced by this unparalleled love of Christ, as to stand ready after his example, and in imitation of his love, to expose or lay down our own lives, whenever he calls us to it, (as St. Paul did his, Phil. ii. 17.) for encouraging the faith and hope of the brethren; and for the preservation and safety of those who are eminently serviceable to his church, as Aquila and Priscilla laid down their own necks for that great apostle's life. Rom. xvi. 4." In what sense the primitive Christians understood this injunction of the apostle, may appear from what the world is said to have reported concerning them; "Behold, how they love one another, and how ready they are to die for one another!" We have here a sixth reason why Christians should love one another,—even the astonishing and unparalleled love of Christ in dying for them.

Ver. 17. *Whofo hath this world's good, &c.]* The common signification of the word βίον, rendered *good,* is *life;* but it is used also for riches, or worldly subsistence;—for that which is *the support of life.* The heart and bowels are put for human affections, because they are moved and affected when we are touched with love, pity, compassion, &c. and men are represented as opening or shutting their hand, or heart, or bowels, as they are merciful and liberal, or otherwise. The real Christian not only constantly desires to do good; but, as far as he has power, actually does good. As God has commanded us to love, and do good to our brethren, he cannot love God, who neglects to obey this command. See ch. iv. 20, 21. v. 1, 2. Matth. xxii. 37—39.

Ver. 18. *Let us not love in word, &c.]* All hypocritical pretences to love, where there is none in the heart, are very justly condemned and abhorred; but rough language, and an open profession of hatred or dislike, though sincere, are also abominable in the sight of God. St. John recommends sincerity, and does not prohibit our professing love to our fellow-christians, or speaking to them in kind

19 ° And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall * assure our hearts before him.

20 † For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, ‡ if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 † And whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and

do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And † this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, † and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And † he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. † And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

* See ver. 14. Ch. 5. 1, 2. & 4. 17, 20, 21. John, 13. 35. & 18. 37. & 8. 31, 32. 2 Tim. 1. 11. † Gr. persuade. ‡ Rom. 2. 15. Pf. 50. 16—21. & 90. 8. 1 Cor. 4. 4. † 2 Cor. 1. 12. Heb. 10. 22. Ch. 2. 28. & 4. 17. Ver. 22. † Pf. 10. 17. & 34. 15. & 66. 18. Prov. 15. 29. & 28. 9. Jer. 29. 12. Mat. 21. 22. & 7. 7, 8. Luke, 11. 9. John, 15. 7. & 9. 31. & 14. 13. & 16. 23. James, 1. 5. & 5. 16. Ch. 5. 14. † John, 6. 29. & 17. 3. Pf. 2. 12. John, 3. 14—16. & 9. 31. Mark, 16. 15, 16. Acts, 16. 31. 1 Tim. 1. 15. † Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 22. 39. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thes. 4. 9. 1 Pet. 4. 8. & 3. 8. Ch. 4. 12, 21. Ver. 11. John, 13. 34, 35. & 15. 12. † John, 14. 23. & 15. 10. & 6. 54, 56. & 17. 21. Ch. 4. 22. † Rom. 8. 9. Ch. 4. 23. & 2. 20, 27. Ezek. 37. 27. Zech. 12. 10. If. 44. 3—5.

and obliging words; but he does not forget to put us in mind, that much more is required of us. Some are for connecting this with ver. 16. others with ver. 17. It is most likely that St. John designed to connect it with both, and to intimate that kind words, and professions of love, are not all that are required of us; we must willingly lay down our lives, when the good of the Christian church so requires; and much more ought we cheerfully to relieve our fellow-Christians in indigent circumstances; for by such willing sufferings, and generous beneficent actions, we shall plainly manifest that we love not in word and in tongue only, but in deed and in truth.

Ver. 19. *And hereby we know, &c.*] “And by a constant prevalence of this excellent temper and conduct, we may be well satisfied that we are begotten with the word of truth (Jam. i. 18.), and are brought to understand, believe in, and live under, the government of the true principles of the gospel, as sincere Christians: and, in the consciousness of this, we shall assure our hearts before him, when we draw nigh in the exercises of devotion.”

Ver. 20. *God is greater than our heart,*] That is, more powerful, say some, and consequently more able to condemn and punish: but greater in knowledge, say others; and the following words evidently favour this interpretation: a criminal may have some hopes of escaping, when he stands before an earthly judge, though his own conscience condemn him; but God knows us more exactly than we do ourselves; and those whose consciences condemn them, must expect that God will ratify the sentence of conscience, and condemn them also.

Ver. 21. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,*] Though the expression is negative in the text, it must imply somewhat positive; namely, that conscience should upon examination acquit us. St. John is speaking here not of Jews, Heathens, Infidels, hypocrites, or vicious persons; but of himself, and other real Christians, who were experimentally acquainted with the pure gospel, and might easily examine their hearts and lives thereby. If such, upon a careful examination, find a divine conformity to the rules of the gospel in their tempers and lives, they may be satisfied that their present state is good, and may with plea-

sure expect Christ's second coming. The philosophers have disputed much about tranquillity of mind; nevertheless there is nothing which can truly render our minds quiet, easy, and satisfied, but a just persuasion of the love of God toward us.

Ver. 22. *Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him,*] There are four conditions on which men may expect to have their prayers heard: *First*, If they pray for things agreeable to the will of God; that is, for things in themselves truly good and proper. See ch. v. 14, 15. *Secondly*, If they pray in a right manner, or with a right temper and disposition of mind; that is, with faith in the atoning Blood, and in the wisdom, goodness, power, and over-ruling providence of God; with humility and resignation to the Divine will, with importunity, patience, and perseverance: *Thirdly*, If they pray for a good end, or with a design to make a right use of mercies when bestowed: *Fourthly*, and above all, If they be real Christians, and of course keep the commandments of God, and do those things which are pleasing in his sight. In this verse, St. John assigns another reason for cultivating universal righteousness, and particularly mutual love; namely, that then their prayers would be heard, and God would grant them all proper blessings.

Ver. 23. *And this is his commandment, &c.*] “And this is his great commandment, that we should endeavour to grow more in that blessed principle of faith in his dear Son Jesus Christ; and that we should unfeignedly and cordially love one another, as he has so strongly and affectionately charged us to do.”

Ver. 24. *Dwelleth in him,*] That is, in God; and He, that is, God, in him. Neither this text, nor 1 Cor. vi. 17. will prove, (as some have absurdly averred,) that a good man is the Deity himself, or a part of God, or of the same essence or substance. The apostle intended only to say, “Whoever is brought to yield a conscientious obedience to all God's commandments, from a principle of faith as working by love, which counts none of them grievous,—he really does, and hereby makes it evident that he does, live in a state of vital union with Christ, and with the Father through him, and Christ dwells in his heart by faith, who is a habitat on of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 22. iii. 17.). And we who stand in this near

CHAP. IV.

He warneth them not to believe all teachers who boast of the Spirit, but to try them by the rules of the faith delivered by the apostles: and by many reasons exhorteth to brotherly love.

[Anno Domini 90.]

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God:

^a Acts, 17, 22. ¹ Theff. 5, 21. Jer. 29, 8, 9. Mat. 7, 15, 16, & 24, 4, 5, 24. Eph. 5, 6. Phil. 1, 10. 2 Pet. 2, 1. 2 John, 7. Acts, 20, 29, 30. Col. 2, 8, 18. ^b Ch. 5, 1, 2. 1 Cor. 12, 3. ^c Ch. 2, 18, 22, 23, & 5, 10. 2 John, 7, 9. 2 Theff. 2, 7.

“and happy relation to Christ, and to the Father through him, are assured that he lives with abiding influence in us, by the light, energy, and witness of his Holy Spirit, which he has freely given us, to produce, excite, and assist a constant exercise of faith and love, and every other grace in our souls.” Comp. John, xiv. 23.

Inferences.—How inestimable a privilege is it to be born of God! What infinite reason have those that possess it, to rejoice and be exceeding glad! With what astonishment should we reflect upon the Divine condescension, in admitting us to such an endearing relation! Let us behold with admiration and joy, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we sinful wretched mortals should be called the sons of God! Let us behold how high it rises, how wide it diffuses its effects! How glorious the inheritance, to which in consequence of this we are entitled! *The world indeed knows it not; nor do we ourselves completely know it.* Even John, the beloved disciple, who lay in the bosom of our Lord, and drank so deep out of the Fountain-head of knowledge and holiness, even he says, *it doth not yet appear what we shall be.* But let us, in sweet tranquillity of soul, depend on our heavenly Father, that he will do whatever is becoming his perfect wisdom and goodness, in respect to the advancement and felicity of his own faithful children. During our state of minority, let us be contented to be at his allowance, and rejoice, that we are in the general told, that when Christ, the first-born of the family, shall make his second triumphant appearance, we shall also appear with him in glory, yea, all his saints, new dressed from the grave, to adorn his train, and transformed into his illustrious image, not only with respect to the glories of the body, but the brighter glories of the immortal spirit. With him, if faithful, we shall have an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom, and for ever experience the efficacy of that near and intimate vision of him, which we shall there enjoy, to transform us into the same likeness from glory to glory. O, that, in the mean time, we may all feel the energy of this blessed hope to purify our souls, that our hearts and dispositions may correspond to our expectations! When Christ came in human flesh, it was with this important purpose, that he might take away sin, that he might destroy the works of the devil, and reduce to order and harmony that confusion and ruin, which Satan, by his malicious insinuations, had introduced into the world. Blessed Jesus! may this thy benevolent design be more and more effectual! May the empire of sin and corrup-

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because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2^b Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3^c And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye

tion, which is the empire of hell, be entirely subdued, and thy celestial kingdom of grace and holiness advanced. And may none deceive themselves, nor forget, that he alone is righteous, who practiseth righteousness. By this let us judge of ourselves, whether we are the children of God, or of the devil. And instead of falsely flattering ourselves, that though we do commit sin with allowance, yet there may be some secret seed of God still concealed in our hearts; let us judge of our having received this regenerating seed, by its tendency to preserve us from sin, and the victories which it enables us to gain over its destructive wiles and insufferable tyranny.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle,

1. Breaks forth with admiration in the view of the love of God toward his believing people. *Behold with wonder and amaze, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, in Jesus Christ, that we, who have been by nature and practice so vile, corrupt, and sinful, should, notwithstanding, be adopted into his family, and be called the sons of God, advanced to that dignity and honour: therefore the world, who have their minds wholly engrossed with sensible objects, and have no discernment of spiritual things, knoweth us not; far from esteeming and valuing us, they deride and persecute us for that image which we bear; because it knew him not, they are ignorant of God; and when his only-begotten Son appeared incarnate, they nailed him to the tree.* Note; (1.) The meanest child of God has a dignity infinitely greater than the first-born of princes. (2.) If we be treated with derision and contempt by this wicked world, we should remember the cross which Jesus bore, and be ashamed to murmur.

2. He declares the high expectations of God's children. *Behold, now are we the sons of God; this is our present honour; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; greater blessedness is in store for the faithful, than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive: but we know that when he shall appear, who is our Head, even Christ, we shall be like him, admitted to his presence, and partakers of all his glory, if faithful unto death; for we shall see him as he is, and our bodies as well as our souls shall be fashioned after his bright image.* Note; The day of judgment will be a day of glorious triumph to every faithful soul.

3. Such a hope cannot but have the most powerful influence upon our conduct. *And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure, setteth Christ's glorious pattern before him, and earnestly endeavours*

5 T

Yours

have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world.

4 ^d Ye are of God, little children, and have

overcome them : because ^e greater is he that is in you, than ^f he that is in the world.

5 ^e They are of the world : therefore speak

^d Ch. 3. 9. & 5. 18—20. & 4. 5. Rev. 12. 11. Ch. 2. 13. Ver. 16. 12. 31. & 14. 30. & 16. 21. 1 Cor. 2. 12. & 6. 2, 3.

^e John, 10. 28, 29. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Ch. 3. 24. Eph. 3. 17. ^f John, 2 Pet. 2. 10—17. Jude, 16. John, 3. 31. & 15. 19. & 17. 14. & 7. 7.

vours to obtain a holy conformity to him in all things. *Note* ; The hope which does not lead us to holiness, is but the hope of the hypocrite, which perisheth.

2dly, Nothing can more strongly urge the believer to strive against sin, than the arguments which the apostle proceeds to press upon him.

1. Sin is the breach of God's holy law. *Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law : for sin is the transgression of the law.* Every deviation from that perfect rule, needs the atoning Blood ; but where sin is the allowed practice, there all hope towards God must be delusion.

2. The very end of Christ's redemption was to cleanse us from all iniquity. *And ye know that he was manifested in the flesh, on purpose to take away our sins,* both the guilt of them from our conscience, and the power and nature of them from our hearts : *and in him is no sin* : all, therefore, who belong to him, must shew that the design of his incarnation is answered respecting them, in their deliverance from the bondage of corruption, and in their growing conformity to his blessed image.

3. An allowed course of sin is utterly contradictory to real union with Christ. *Whosoever abideth in him,* as the branch in the vine, deriving constant supplies of grace out of his fulness, *sinneeth not,* does not wilfully commit any sin, but hateth sin as the greatest evil, and endeavours to keep at the greatest distance from it : *whosoever sinneth, wilfully and determinately, hath not seen him, neither known him,* but is an utter stranger to Christ, and his great salvation.

4. It is the most fatal deceit to imagine, that without the practice of righteousness, we can be ever like him or with him. *Little children, let no man deceive you with any vain suggestions : he that doeth righteousness in the constant and habitual course of his temper and conduct, and conscientiously towards God and man endeavours to be found without offence, he is righteous, even as he is righteous, and thus resembles, in a measure, the Holy One of God.*

5. The allowed practice of sin is a virtual compact with the devil, and renunciation of Jesus Christ. *He that committeth sin, as his delight and choice, is of the devil,* bears his image, and is completely under his influence ; *for the devil sinneth from the beginning,* was the author of evil, and continues to spread the dreadful poison : having tempted angels from their allegiance, and seduced man in paradise, he persists with unrelenting malice in labouring for man's eternal ruin. *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil,* and rescue his faithful people from Satan's hateful power, breaking his yoke from off their neck, and destroying the very being of sin in them : all therefore who are his people, experience his power, and are delivered from the bonds of the wicked one, in respect at least to the dominion of sin.

6. Every regenerate person cannot but renounce his connection with iniquity. *Whosoever is born of God, doth*

not commit sin, does not commit it wilfully ; because it is contrary to that divine nature which he has received : for his seed remaineth in him ; he has that principle of grace implanted in his heart, which makes sin odious and hateful to him : and he cannot sin ; not that he is literally impeccable, but that the new nature he has received, is utterly averse to it, and successfully opposes the carnal mind, because he is born of God.

7. *In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil ; their works always evidence what spirit is in them : whosoever doth not righteousness, is not of God,* has no part or lot in his kingdom ; *neither he that loveth not his brother ; these two things, neglect of godliness, and an uncharitable spirit, are the sure brands of Satan's slaves.*

3dly, The apostle, having mentioned the want of brotherly love as the sure evidence of exclusion from God's favour, enforces the practice of that most excellent of graces, Love. *For,*

1. *This is the message that ye heard from the beginning, and one of the chief precepts of the Redeemer, that we should love one another.*

2. He mentions the dire example of the wicked Cain, to shew the hatefulnes of such a spirit as he possessed. *Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, a child of the devil, and slew his brother : And wherefore slew he him ? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous,* and he could not bear the rebukes of his pious example, and the approbation which God testified of Abel's sacrifice, when his own was rejected. And if this was the case so early, and the enmity between the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent appeared then so malignant, *marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you ; the same diabolical nature will produce exactly similar effects.* *Note ;* (1.) Envy or hatred in heart, is murder begun. (2.) We need not wonder at the world's enmity : such is, more or less, the lot of all the saints.

3. Brotherly love is a proof of our spiritual life. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren ; to love them as children of God, and for the sake of him whose image they bear, evidences the life of God in our own souls.*

4. The contrary is a sure sign of the power of spiritual death over the soul. *He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death,* in a state of nature, and of wrath, under the curse of the law. *For whosoever hateth his brother, is, in the eye of the law of God, a murderer : and ye know that no murderer, who continues under the power of this malignant spirit, hath eternal life abiding in him, nor the least prospect of attaining it : eternal death is the wages of his sin.*

5. The love of Jesus to us, should engage our love to our brethren. *Hereby perceive we the love of God the Son toward us, because he laid down his life for us on the accursed tree ; an instance of love so stupendous, as passes all understanding ; and we, animated by such an example,*

they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6. ^b We are of God: ⁱ he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not

^a Rom. 1. 1. ^a Pet. 1. 1. James, 1. 1. Jude, 1. ⁱ John, 8. 47. & 10. 27. & 18. 37. ¹ Cor. 14. 37. ^a Cor. 10. 7.

ought, if duty so require, to lay down our lives for the brethren; and if our lives must readily be offered for their service, how much more our substance, when their necessities call for our relief? But *who* hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Such a conduct must necessarily shew the absence of that divine principle, and prove the hypocrisy of every pretension to the high relation of children of God. *My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, merely, but give the more substantial evidences thereof in deed, and in truth,* acting according to our professions, with an open hand and open heart towards every Christian brother, for his sake whose love we in common share.

6. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth;* such a conversation demonstrates the reality of our interest in the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, and shall assure our hearts before him, bearing witness to our simplicity and godly sincerity, and giving us rejoicing in the testimony of our conscience. *For if our heart condemn us* of allowed hypocrisy, and we cannot stand before our own tribunal within, *God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things,* and must therefore much more condemn us, as his piercing eye can discover hidden iniquities which we pass by unregarded. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not,* not the stupidified hearts and feared consciences of the unregenerate, but the enlightened of the faithful, where, though many infirmities may be seen and lamented, allowed guile is not harboured, this consciousness of our simplicity gives a humble boldness to the soul; and *then have we confidence toward God,* a holy freedom and liberty of soul in our approaches to a throne of grace. *And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight,* asking always according to his will, and aiming at his glory in all our conversation.

4thly, We have,

1. The great commandments of the gospel. *And this is his commandment, (1.) That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ,* as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of lost sinners, renouncing every other hope or dependance, and, with satisfaction, resting our souls on him for pardon and acceptance with God; *and, (2.) That we should, in consequence of faith in him, love one another, as he gave us commandment,* exercising the most enlarged, unfeigned, and cordial affection towards all the members of his body mystical in particular, and shewing a general benevolence to mankind.

2. Great will be the blessedness resulting hence. *And he that keepeth his commandments,* from this principle of faith, which worketh by love, *dwelleth in him, and he in him,* abideth in a state of vital union with the exalted Jesus: *and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us,* whose mighty energy effectually influences our hearts and conduct, and who bears witness to his own work to our increasing comfort and joy.

CHAP. IV.

BECAUSE the Gnostics and other heretics, in the first age, to gain the greater credit to their erroneous doctrines, assumed to themselves the character and authority of inspired teachers, St. John put his disciples in mind, chap. ii. 27. that they had an unction from the Holy Spirit, by which they were enabled to judge with certainty, both of teachers and of their doctrine. He, therefore, in this chapter, commanded the disciples in general, not to believe rashly every teacher who pretended to be inspired; but carefully to examine, and prove by the touchstone of the word (11. viii. 20.), what manner of spirit they were of and were influenced by, and what doctrines they preached; whether they were agreeable to the holy nature and revealed will of God, and derived their original from him, or not. There was great need of their being very cautious on this head, because there were swarms of impostors at this day, who, according to our Lord's prediction, were gone abroad, and made a great noise in the world, (see Matth. xxiv. 24.) ver. 1. Now, in this, adds the apostle, you may distinguish the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of truth, from that of error: every spirit which confesseth Jesus Christ, *who is come in the flesh,* (see the note on this verse,) that pays a becoming deference to his authority, and the divine discoveries which he has made, is of God: there cannot, in the general, be any better attestation of any spirit than this, that it tends, in its agency and operations, to promote the honour of the great Redeemer, ver. 2.—On the other hand, such inspired teachers as did not thus confess Christ, were not inspired of God, but of the devil; and were *the antichrists,* or deceivers, foretold by Christ to come before the destruction of Jerusalem, ver. 3.—But, my dear children, ye are of God, says St. John, and have overcome these antichrists in all their snares and delusions; because the Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostacy, and for all his confederates, ver. 4.—who, being worldly men, speak from worldly principles, and are listened to by those wicked men who resemble them in their corrupt maxims and practices, ver. 5.—Therefore regard our temper and conduct, and compare it with that of those who oppose us; and you will find a *carnal* principle continually prevailing in them, and a *spiritual* principle governing us: in consequence of which you may know assuredly that *we are of God,* and they of the world, ver. 6.

Having thus taught the brethren, how to distinguish the real inspirations of the Spirit of God, both from those which were feigned, and from those which came from evil spirits, the apostle, in an oblique manner, condemned those heretical teachers, who made the whole of a Christian's duty to consist in the speculative knowledge of God, without any regard to Christian experience and a right practice. For he enjoined mutual love on all Christians, from these

us. ^k Hereby know we the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

7 ^l Beloved, let us love one another: ^m for love is of God; ⁿ and every one that loveth is

^k Jf. 8. 20. Acts, 17. 11. John, 14. 17. 30. 6. ⁿ Ch. 3. 14. & 2. 29.

^l See ch. 3. 13, 18, 23. & 5. 1. Ver. 20, 21.

^m Phil. 1. 29. Gal. 5. 6. Rom. 5. 5. Deut.

these considerations, that it derives its origin from God, and that every one who cordially loveth his brother, and no one else, hath been begotten of God, and knoweth God, ver. 7.—Withal, that his affirmation might make the deeper impression on his readers, the apostle, according to his manner, denied its contrary: He, said he, that doth not love his brother, whatever he may pretend, doth not know God. For God is love, ver. 8.—and by this manifested his love to us, even by sending his Son, the only-begotten, into the world, made flesh, that we might live eternally through him, ver. 9.—Farther, the apostle observed that God greatly enhanced his love to men, in sending his Son to save them, by this circumstance, that they did not love God first, but he loved them so exceedingly, that he gave his Son to die as a propitiation for their sins, ver. 10.—And from this he inferred, that if God so loved them, they ought, from love and gratitude to him, to love one another, ver. 11.—Next, he told them, that although no man hath seen God at any time, because he is not an object of men's senses, yet if we love one another, God really abideth in us, by virtue of his nature communicated to us; and, by that great blessing, the love which he bears to us is carried to perfection, ver. 12.—And as he had in the preceding verses, been mentioning love as an argument of our union to God, he adds, “In this also we know, that we abide in him, and that he dwells in us, because he has given to us the communication of his Spirit, which operating in us by its gracious influences, sets, as it were, the mark of God upon us, and thereby assures us that he owns us as his, and is become our God, ver. 13.—Now, both before and after his resurrection, we beheld the Son of God in the flesh, and bear witness that the Father hath sent his Son a Saviour of the world, and our testimony is rendered indubitable by the miracles which we perform,” ver. 14.—From these things St. John drew the inference: whoever, in a steady and uniform manner, shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God sent into the world a Saviour, maintaining this profession of faith with resolution and zeal, and acting in conformity to it, gives the happiest proof that *God dwelleth in him*, and that *he dwelleth in God*; there is a blessed union between God and his soul; so that it is in the language of scripture (Is. lvii. 15.) the habitation of God, and he may be said to be, as to his affections and hopes, with God in heaven, ver. 15.

Having thus taught the disciples to distinguish true from false teachers, and true from false Christians, by their doctrine, their love, and their obedience, the apostle still further urges upon them the same important point. We, says he, have been well assured, and fully persuaded, on the ground of the gospel revelation, and the concurring witness of the Spirit with our spirits, that the most transcendent, free and unmerited love is in the heart of God toward us, and is manifested by his sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live through him. Hence we may certainly conclude, that whoever lives under the power of a cordial love to him, and to his children for his sake, is

so assimilated to the God of love, as to abide in a reciprocal union and communion with him, ver. 16.—And *herein is love perfected in us* (see the note on this verse), that, notwithstanding all the infirmities inseparable from this mortal life, we may have confidence in the day of universal judgment, because as he our Father and our God is, so are we as creatures in a very glorious sense, even while we reside in this world, so far as the infirmities of that mortal life to which we are here confined will admit, ver. 17.—and happy are they, who are arrived to such a temper and character as this; for there is no servile and abject fear in love, but perfect love casts out such fear from the soul in which it resides. And this is a very desirable effect; because fear hath torment; it throws the mind into a most uneasy situation; therefore *he that feareth, is not made perfect in love*. Study then to increase more and more in that noble affection of love to God, and you will find your self-enjoyment rising in proportion to it, ver. 18.—And reflect upon this with all humility, that if we do indeed experience that divine principle in our hearts, we must freely acknowledge that *we love him, because he first loved us*. He has not only poured in upon us numberless providential bounties, but has also appointed his Son to lay a foundation for our happiness in his own Blood, and his Spirit to diffuse that grace in our hearts, by which they are formed to every sentiment of pious gratitude, ver. 19.—And let this also be remembered, as of the last importance, *that if any one say, I love God, and hateth his brother, how high soever his pretensions to devotion may be, and to whatever fervour he may carry his zeal, he is a liar*; for it is impossible that the love of God should be sincere in the soul which is destitute of this brotherly affection; as will appear, if you consider what peculiar advantages we have for engaging our hearts toward those with whom we are conversant. The invisible nature of the Divine Being is, in this respect, an obstacle which seems to be more difficult to overcome, than the obstacles which oppose the love of the brethren: but every thing is possible to grace, and therefore is so to him that believeth, ver. 20.—And it is certain, that the neglect of this benevolent disposition would be a high instance of disobedience to God, since we have this express commandment from him, *that he who loveth God, and professeth himself religious, should also love his brother*. And God has hereby, in effect, declared, that he will treat those as his enemies, who pretend to devout zeal, while they are destitute of brotherly love, ver. 21.

Ver. 1. *Believe not every Spirit.*] By the spirits, understand not the men pretending to inspiration, nor the doctrines which they delivered, but the spirits from whence the doctrines proceeded; namely, *first*, the Spirit of God; *secondly*, the spirit of the man himself; or, *thirdly*, a demon, or wicked spirit. Having taken notice, ch. iii. 24. that true Christians had the Spirit, the apostle here insinuates, that the false prophets had either never received the Spirit, or had entirely quenched it. They therefore were not to believe every one who pretended to be inspired

born of God, and knoweth God.

for God is love.

8 ° He that loveth not knoweth not God ;

9 ° In this was manifested the love of God

° Ch. 2. 4. & 3. 6. Ver. 20. 8. 32. Ch. 3. 16. & 5. 11.

° Ver. 16. Pl. cxxxvii. & 86. 5, 15. Exod. 34. 6, 7. Micah, 7. 18, 19.

° John, 3. 16. Rom. 5. 8. &

spired by the Spirit of God, but to try the spirits. We should observe, that this rule is directed to Christians in general; to the people, as well as ministers; and if the people think and believe at all, they must judge and believe for themselves. A man must either take somebody for his infallible guide, or he must try and judge for himself. How much soever some churches or particular Christians have condemned the liberty of private judgment, the Christian religion encourages the most generous and extensive liberty, or freedom of inquiry: and all Christians ought to assert that liberty, and make the proper improvement of it; neither lightly receiving, nor rejecting what is proposed to them.

Ver. 2, 3. *Hereby know ye the Spirit, &c.*] *Hereby you may discern, &c.* Heylin. There are two ways of interpreting what St. John has here laid down as a rule by which to try the spirits: 1. Their acknowledging that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; or, 2. Their acknowledging that Jesus, who came in the flesh, is the Christ. In favour of the latter opinion, which is my own, and which coincides with that of some of the most eminent commentators, I would observe, 1st, The unbelieving Jews and Heathens would readily acknowledge, that Jesus, who is called Christ, came in the flesh, or had a real body, like another man; but they would not acknowledge Him to be the Messiah, or the Prophet and Saviour of the world. If therefore any of them had pretended to the Spirit of prophecy, their acknowledging that Jesus came in the flesh, would have been no proof of their prophetic mission. 2dly, The word *ὁμολογῆναι* signifies not only to confess, but to teach and defend: Acts, xxiii. 8. Now not only to confess but to teach and defend that fundamental article of the Christian doctrine, that Jesus is the Christ; or so to confess it, as to stand by it in times of persecution and danger, was a proper mark of trial: whereas the proposition interpreted in the former sense, does not appear to be any mark of trial at all. 3dly, The parallel places confirm the last interpretation. See ver. 15. ch. ii. 22. v. 1, 5, 12, 13. Comp. with ch. iii. 23. 2 John, ver. 7, 9, 10. John, viii. 24. 4thly, Those who continued cordially and firmly to hold and support that fundamental article of Christianity, that Jesus is the Christ, would have the Spirit abide with them; whereas those who denied and opposed that article could not possibly possess the Spirit of Christ, which is a Spirit of truth. St. John, throughout this epistle, seems to have had his eye upon the *Docete*: for that reason, in the beginning of the epistle, he speaks of seeing, hearing, and handling Christ; and here, to the fundamental article of Jesus's being the Messiah, he adds, that he came in the flesh. His having a body, and really suffering and dying, ought not to have offended them. From the latter clause of ver. 3. some have argued, that the Pope cannot be antichrist, (see on ch. ii. 22.) because he confesses Christ; and that it must necessarily be some entirely opposing person or sect, and which does not bear the Christian name. But it should be considered, that

popery is an usurpation entirely inconsistent with a due homage to Christ, and founded upon principles most opposite to those of his government and religion. It is said to have been already in the world, as the ambitious, imposing, persecuting spirit, which is the very essence of antichristianism, did then very much prevail.

Ver. 4. *And have overcome them:*] From this and several other passages it appears, that the Christians to whom St. John wrote, had not yet been drawn aside by the false teachers, though they were in imminent danger thereof: there had been frequent contests between them; but by steadfastness in the faith, through the grace of God, they had hitherto gotten the victory. And the apostle puts them in mind of the victory which they had obtained, to intimate that the cause was not in the least degree desperate, but that by the same methods they might still go on conquering, and to conquer. See Rev. xviii. 2. 20, &c. xix. 1, 2, &c.

Ver. 5. *They are of the world:*] False prophets and corrupt teachers are of the world, as long as a worldly spirit influences them; therefore speak they from that worldly disposition, suiting their hearers, and consulting worldly interests; and as they soothe men in their prejudices, flatter them, and make them easy in their vices, the world readily heareth them; for there are many who would be gladly freed from moral obligations, and reconcile religion and the love of the world.

Ver. 6. *We are of God:*] When the apostles had given clear proofs of a divine mission, by numerous and beneficent miracles which they worked; by the exercise of various spiritual gifts themselves, and by imparting spiritual gifts and miraculous powers to others; when their lives were so holy, their labours so disinterested, their sufferings so great and numerous, their doctrine so excellent, and their proofs of a divine mission so many and evident,—they might justly say, *we are of God: He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth us not.*

Ver. 7. *Beloved, let us love one another:*] St. Jerome tells us, that when this blessed evangelist had continued at Ephesus to extreme old age, and was with difficulty carried to the church between the arms of some of the disciples, being unable to pronounce more words, he was wont, every time they assembled, to say nothing but this, "Little children, love one another." In the verse before us, the apostle assigns a strong reason why we should love one another;—*for love is of God.* He who planted the principle of attraction in the material world, plants the principle of benevolence in intelligent creatures; and has in particular enjoined Christians to love one another. He therefore who, through grace, possesses and cultivates this disposition, manifests that he is a Christian, born into the family of God; and that he continues to be a true child of God, resembling his heavenly Father; and that he knows the nature and will of God, so as to comply therewith. Others may pretend to great knowledge and sound faith, or just sentiments in religion; but he who does not love his Christian

toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 ^r Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, ^r if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 ^r No man hath seen God at any time, ^r If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 ^r Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 ^r And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of

^r Deut. 7-7, 8. John, 15. 16. Rom. 8. 3, 4, 32. & 3. 24, 25. & 5. 8, 10, 20, 21. 2 Cor. 5. 19—21. Col. 1. 20. Titus, 3. 4. Ch. 2. 2. Ver. 19.
^r Mat. 18. 33. John, 15. 12, 13. Ch. 3. 16, 17, 23. ^r Exod. 33. 20. Deut. 4. 12. John, 1. 18. 1 Tim. 6. 17. & 6. 11. ^r John, 17. 27.
 Ch. 3. 24. & 2. 5. Ver. 18. ^r See ch. 3. 24. & 2. 20, 27. John, 14. 20, 23, 26. & 17. 21. Ver. 15, 16. ^r Ch. 1. 1, 2. & 2. 1, 2. & 3.
 5, 16. John, 1. 14. & 3. 14—17. Gal. 4. 4, 5. Mat. 1. 21. & 20. 28. Luke, 19. 10.

tian brethren, has not that disposition, and does not those actions, which are agreeable to the nature and command of God, and pleasing and acceptable in his sight. See the next note.

Ver. 8. *For God is love.*] God is the most benevolent of all beings, full of love to his depending creatures; so that in him there is nothing wanting to the highest perfection of love. See ver. 9—16, &c. He is the great fountain and exemplar of love; he recommends it by his law, and produces and cherishes it by his influences; and the due contemplation of him, will of course inflame our hearts with love to his Divine Majesty, and to our fellow-creatures for his sake, whose creatures they are, but especially to our fellow-Christians.

Ver. 9. *In this was manifested the love of God, &c.*] All the blessings of Providence are effects of the divine love to man; but St. John has said, ver. 8. that *God is Love itself*; and to illustrate that, he here pitches upon the most remarkable proof and instance of God's love to man. The love of God was the source and origin of the plan of our redemption: the eternal Son of God, by his patient suffering and perfect obedience unto death, purchased or obtained of his great Father, to be the person who should be honoured with carrying this glorious plan into execution, which in time he will finish in the most complete manner, for all his faithful saints. *God's sending his Son into the world*, includes his *dying* for us; see ver. 10. He became the great vicarious Sacrifice, and, through the complete atonement which he has made, God the Father may now be just, and yet a Justifier of those that believe in Jesus. Those false prophets who denied Jesus to have a real body, and really to suffer and die, took away entirely the love which God manifested, in sending his only and dearly-beloved Son to die, that we might live through him. They not only invalidated the force of Christ's example, and the infinite merit of his atonement, but, of consequence, the greatness of his love, which appeared most illustriously in his willing sufferings and cheerful dying for us: and no wonder that they who thus enervated the love both of the Father and the Son, should not be moved by such infinitely amiable examples to love their Christian brethren.

Ver. 10. *But that he loved us,*] St. John's meaning is, that God loved us for it. See ver. 19. Men are generally very ready to love those by whom they are first loved: now, such was the astonishing love of God to men, that,

when they were sinners and enemies; he so loved the world, as to send his most beloved Son to live and die for them! The love wherewith God so loved the world, as to send his dear Son to redeem and save them, does, in some respects, differ from the love wherewith he loves all true believers, in addition to that grand primary instance of his love. The first has been called a *love of pity*, or *benevolence*, or the *antecedent* love of God, and with such a love God has loved the whole race of mankind. The other is called a *love of complacency*, or *delight*, or the *consequent* love of God; and with such a love God loves all sincere believers.

Ver. 11. *We ought also to love one another.*] We, as his children, ought to imitate the infinitely amiable example of our common Father, and sincerely and affectionately love one another. Sometimes the love of God the Father, sometimes the love of God the Son, is proposed to our imitation.

Ver. 12. *No man hath seen God, &c.*] "God himself is an invisible Spirit, whom no man hath seen nor can see with his bodily eyes. But as he is the great Fountain of benevolence, *if we love one another* with cordiality and entire sincerity, it appears that *God dwelleth in us*, and that his love is perfected in us; for this is the best proof we can give of our love to him, and of the prevalence of his grace in our hearts, transforming us into his image."

Ver. 13. *Hereby know we, &c.*] "By this we have a comfortable evidence of a mutual inhabitation between God and us, of our dwelling by faith and love in union and communion, through Jesus Christ, with him; and of his dwelling by gracious manifestations and influences in our souls; because he has freely afforded us rich communications of his Spirit, to beget and animate this faith and love, and to cast a light upon his own work within us."

Ver. 14. *And we have seen, &c.*] "And animated and sealed by this Spirit, as we have seen and known by undoubted evidence ourselves, so we courageously testify to others, how hazardous soever the bearing that testimony may be, that the great almighty Father of all hath sent Jesus his eternal and only-begotten Son, under the infinitely important character of the *Saviour of the world*; and that it is in him, and by him alone, how proudly soever the infidel world may reject him, and disdain him, that eternal salvation can be obtained," St. John and the apostles had been eye-witnesses of Christ's holy life, numerous

the world.

15 ² Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, ² God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 ^b And we have known and believed the love that God hat^h to us. ^c God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 ^d Herein is ^e our love made perfect,

^e that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because ^f as he is, so are we in this world.

18 ^g There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 ^h We love him, because he first loved us.

^a Acts, 8. 37. Rom. 10. 9. Ver. 2. Ch. 5. 1, 5. 1 Cor. 12. 3. Heb. 11. 13. Acts, 15. 11. Gal. 2. 20. Pf. 18. 1-3. & 14. 2, 5. ^b Ch. 3. 6, 24. John, 14. 20, 23. & 17. 21. ^c Ch. 3. 7, 16. Ver. 9, 10. ^d See ver. 8, 12, 13. ^e Ch. 2. 5. & 3. 3. Ver. 12, 18. ^f Rom. 8. 29. 1 Cor. 15. 48, 49. 1 Peter, 1. 15. or 2 Tim. 2. 12. Mat. 10. 25. ^g James, 2. 13. Ch. 3. 19, 21. & 5. 14. ^h Luke, 7. 47. Pf. 116. 1, 12, 16. & 119. 32. 2 Cor. 5. 14.

numerous miracles, patient sufferings, and willing death; they had also seen him after his resurrection: to such proofs of their divine mission, St. John had referred at the beginning of this epistle, and he now refers to them again; withal declaring, that he and the other apostles had testified what they had seen; and from their testimony, supported by many miracles, the world might be satisfied of the truth of their message, and look upon Jesus as sent of God the Father to be the Saviour of mankind, and might hence gather the great love of God to men.

Ver. 15. *Whosoever shall confess*] See on ver. 2. The confession here required must have been sincere, otherwise it would have been of no moment. Confessing Jesus to be the Son of God, or the Messiah, implied their taking him for their Head and Lord, whom they were to love, imitate, and obey. Together with confession of the mouth, there was to be faith in the heart, and a suitable behaviour in the life and practice. They were to confess that Jesus is the Christ openly and publicly, even when danger and persecution attended that confession. Hence came afterwards the distinguishing name of *confessors*, to denote those who had suffered in part for their religion, and who were ready to have died as *martyrs*, rather than to have denied the truth. Such were undoubtedly the most likely to imitate Christ's example, obey his commands, and rejoice in the prospect of his second coming. The connection of this verse with the context stands thus: It was intimated, ver. 14. that the apostles had known and clearly proved, that Jesus was the Messiah and Saviour of the world. Here it is to be observed, that whoever duly attended to the evidence which the apostles had brought, and thereupon with the heart believed Jesus to be the Son of God, and lived and acted accordingly, was a true Christian, and in the divine favour: Whence St. John makes the intended inference, ver. 16. namely, that whoever believed that astonishing instance of the love of God in sending his Son, would be inflamed with a just sense of it, and would sincerely love his fellow-Christians. See John, xvii. 22, 23.

Ver. 17. *Herein is our love made perfect*,] *Herein is love perfected in us* (so it should be rendered), even by our thus dwelling in love, and thereby dwelling in God: and having this plain token of God's love to us, we may assuredly hope to appear with humble confidence before him in the awful day of judgment: because as he is all love to us, so we

in resemblance of him, and in consideration of his love, are filled with a supreme love to him, and with a sincere and ardent love to the brethren for his sake, even while we live in this tempting and ensnaring world. The phrase *day of judgment*, does not appear ever to signify in the New Testament (as some assert) the day of *trouble*, or the time of those calamities by which the faith and patience of God's servants are often tried in this world; or the day in which the primitive Christians should be brought before the tribunal of the unbelieving Jews or Heathens: but it is well known to every reader of the Scripture, that it frequently signifies the day in which Jesus Christ will judge the world with the most perfect justice and equity. See 2 Thess. ii. 2.

Ver. 18. *There is no fear in love, &c.*] "This perfect love is of such a delightful nature, that though it be ever attended with a holy filial reverence of God, and cautious filial fear of offending; yet there is no distrustful or terrifying fear of God in it, as if he were our enemy. But this perfect love to him, and to our fellow-Christians for his sake, when thus exalted to so high a pitch and fervour under a strong assurance of his love to us, banishes all dissident and slavish fear of God; because this sort of fear is a distressing passion, utterly inconsistent with this perfect love, and with the sweetness, pleasure, and humble but strong confidence which flow therefrom. It is therefore a plain consequence, that he who has any servile dread of God, is far from living under the power of this delightful perfect love, which springs from the full assurance of faith, and enables us to consider God, not only as the most amiable object, infinitely lovely in himself, but as all love to us."

Ver. 19. *We love him, &c.*] Some would read this, *Let us therefore love him*: and their reasons for it are, because the connection is by this interpretation rendered more easy and obvious; and the word *ἀγαπῶμεν*, may be indifferently understood, either in the indicative or subjunctive mood: and as the word *ἀγαπᾷ* is in the subjunctive mood, ver. 21. so it seems to be ch. v. 1. and therefore the word *ἀγαπῶμεν* should be so understood in this place. St. John, ver. 11. infers from God's first loving us, that we ought to love one another: here he infers from God's first loving us, that we ought in return to love God.

20 ¹ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And ² this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

¹ Ch. 2. 4. & 3. 17. Gal. 5. 14. James, 2. 8. ² John, 13. 14, 35. & 15. 12. Ch. 3. 11, 18, 23. Lev. 19. 18. Mat. 22. 39. Eph. 5. 2. Rom. 12. 9, 10. & 13. 9, 10. 1 Thet. 4. 5. 1 Pet. 3. 8. & 4. 8.

Ver. 20. For he that loveth not his brother, &c.] By brother is all along to be understood a real Christian; and if Christian professors are what their religion obliges them to be, that is, more holy than other men, we ought in reason to love them with a greater degree of affection than others. It is intimated, ch. v. 1. that every one who loveth God, will of course love all Christians, who are his children, and resemble him. Here we are taught, that he who loveth not Christians, who are the visible image of God, cannot possibly love the invisible God, whose image they are: and that if any man pretends to love God, without loving all Christians, who are his image, he is a liar, and imposes upon himself as well as endeavours to impose upon other men. To this purpose Grotius quotes the following passage out of Philo: "It is impossible that the invisible God should be worshipped in a right manner, by those who behave wickedly towards such as are seen by them and are their neighbours." It is likely that the false prophets and their disciples boasted that though they did not love all Christians, yet they loved God; and that was the principal thing. St. John knew the men and their conversation, and therefore sharply reprov'd them for such an idle pretence. If it be our duty to love our Christian brethren, whom we see, and with whom we daily converse; and if love and beneficence to *them* be the way to manifest that we love God; what shall we say to those, who retire from the world, and shut themselves up in monasteries, abbeys, nunneries, cells, or deserts, to shun the conversation of men, and avoid the sight of their Christian brethren; and that, under a pretence of more than ordinary love to God? Or what can be thought of those, who spend their lives in mere contemplation, without being useful to the community, and to the Christian brethren? Who, while they pretend to the warmest love of God, do not behave with that strict justice, truth, and benevolence towards men, which might be wished and expected? Or, who contend so fiercely for the faith, (or rather for their own opinion,) as to lay aside the spirit of meekness and love, and to forget that of faith, hope, and charity, those three great Christian virtues?—The greatest of these is not faith, but love.

Inferences.—What a certain test have private Christians, as well as others, in the word of God, to distinguish between those who broach errors concerning the divine person and saving offices of Christ, under pretence of their having the Spirit of God; and those who, under his guidance and influence, preach the truth as it is in Jesus, and cordially own, and bravely profess that he is the only-begotten Son of God, and has really appeared in human nature as the Saviour of lost sinners among both Jews and Gentiles! All pretenders to the Spirit are not of God, nor

are to be believed and followed; and they that are born of God, need not be stumbled at them, since there ever have been such in the world; and true believers may see through them and their delusions, and withstand and overcome them; because God, who dwells in them by his Spirit, is infinitely greater, wiser, and stronger than the devil, who works and prevails by his antichristian emissaries upon carnal men. And what wonder is it, that people of a worldly spirit should adhere to those who are like themselves, and accommodate their schemes and discourses to their corrupt taste? But the servants of God speak from, and for him, according to his mind and will; and therefore are suitably regarded by those, and those only, who are well affected in their hearts towards him.—How astonishing is the free love of God towards such sinful creatures as we are, that he (as his inspired servants testify,) has sent his beloved Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live in all blessedness and glory for ever with him! This is a high demonstration indeed, that God is Love; and we must be utter strangers to his amiable excellencies, if we do not love him: not that we are or can be beforehand with him in loving; for we love him, because he first loved us, and because we are brought under its influence and manifestation, to know and believe it. This melts our hearts and gains over our affections to him, and to his children for his sake. And what a sure token is this of our being born of God, and of his dwelling by his Spirit in us, and of our union and communion with him! But how vain and preposterous is it, for any to pretend that they have a true and hearty love to that God whom they never saw, if they have enmity in their souls against those in whom his image is visible, and whom they often see and converse with! This is giving the lie to their own profession, and to the declarations of God in his word, who has commanded that he who loves him, should love his brother also. And when perfect love to God and one another is genuine and abounding, how divinely sweet are its workings! It banishes all slavish tormenting fear of him and of his wrath, which is utterly inconsistent with the most affectionate complacential love to him, and to his children as such. But having this evidence of our interest in his love, with what satisfaction may we hope to appear before him with humble boldness in the day of judgment, as those who are accepted of him through his Son.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle,

1. Warns them against seducing teachers. *Beloved, believe not every spirit, nor credit rashly each pretender to inspiration; but try the spirits, by the infallible oracles of truth, whether they are of God, and speak agreeably to his revealed will: because many false prophets are gone out into the*

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He that loveth God, loveth his children, and keepeth his commandments, which to the faithful are light, and not grievous. Jesus is the Son of God, able to save us, and to hear our prayers, which we make for ourselves, and for others.

[Anno Domini 90.]

WHOSOEVER ^a believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God : and ^b every

^a Mat. 16. 16. John, 6. 69. Acts, 8. 37. Rom. 10. 9, 10. John, 1. 12, 13. Ch. 2. 22, 23. & 4. 2, 14, 15. & 2. 29. ^b Ch. 3. 14, 17, 23. & 4. 7, 8, 12, 20, 21. with Esth. 2. 10. James, 1. 3. 1 Peter, 1. 3, 23. ^c Ch. 3. 14. & 4. 20. John, 13. 35. ^d Ch. 2. 13. John, 14. 15, 21, 23. & 15. 10, 14. & 13. 17. 1 Tim. 1. 5. Mat. 22. 37—40. 2 John. 6. ^e Mat. 11. 28—30. Rom. 7. 22. Jer. 31. 33. Mark, 9. 23. Phil. 4. 13.

the world, and we need be on our guard, proving all things, and holding fast that which is good.

2. He gives them a certain rule to direct their judgment in this matter. *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God, and those who are influenced by it: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, or that confesseth Jesus Christ who is come in the flesh,* receiving him in his divine person and mediatorial character and offices, as the true Messiah, from whom alone life and salvation are to be expected, *he is of God,* and speaks according to his mind and will. *And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, but denies his divine glory, his real incarnation, and mediatorial undertaking, is not of God,* but is under the spirit of Satan and delusion: *and this is that spirit of antichrist, which is enmity against Christ and his gospel, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world,* the mystery of iniquity having already begun to work, and woe to those over whom it prevails!

2dly, To encourage them against the fears of being drawn aside by seducers, the apostle,

1. Assures them, that, while they keep God on their side, they are safe. *Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them hitherto, and, if faithful, shall be still superior to all their arts: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world;* and he will preserve his faithful people from the power of evil.

2. He describes these seducers. *They are of the world: whatever pretences they make, they are wholly engrossed and influenced by the riches, honours, and pleasures of this life: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them, greedily drinking in a doctrine so suited to their carnal hearts.*

3. He shews the different character of God's true ministers and people. *We are of God,* appointed by him, and owned of him, having his glory singly in view, and walking under the guidance and influences of his word and Spirit: *be that knoweth God, heareth us, and receives our testimony as divine; he that is not of God, not enlightened by him, nor born of him, heareth not us, disregarding our doctrine, and counting it foolishness. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.* Note; They who reject the warnings of God's ministers speaking according to his holy word, evidently shew themselves to be under the Spirit of error.

3dly, The apostle returns to recommend the exercise of fervent love, as the genuine evidence of a right spirit.

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one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 ^c By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

3 ^d For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and ^e his commandments are not grievous.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, his genuine offspring, and his brightest image; and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God; he evidences hereby his experimental acquaintance with God, and shews himself a child of his family of love. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, whatever he may pretend; for God is Love, and the true knowledge of him has ever a transforming efficacy to change us into his image. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, and shone forth with the most distinguished lustre, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, to become incarnate, to live and die for us, that we might live through him, redeemed from the sentence of death, quickened to newness of life, and through his infinite merit, entitled to immortal bliss and glory. Herein is love, surpassing strange! not that we loved God! no; just the reverse; we were sinners, ungodly, enemies; but even when we had every thing which could render us the objects of his loathing, even then, that he might magnify the wonders of his grace, he loved us, and gave the most astonishing demonstration of it, when he sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, with his own blood making atonement for us, and now purging the faithful from all their iniquities through this amazing sacrifice, and by his own divine Spirit. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another: who can possibly offend us to highly as we have offended God? yet he forgives and pardons abundantly; yea, he spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all: what then can we withhold from our brethren, when we have such an example before us? Surely, if we belong to him, we shall be like him, and prove it by this spirit of love. No man indeed hath seen God at any time, for he is a Spirit invisible and incorporeal. But if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, by his Spirit manifesting his presence in our hearts; and his love is perfected in us, our love towards him is entire, unreserved, and unmixed with any idolatry. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit, whereby we become one with him, united to him in faith and love, and experiencing the most gracious manifestations of his presence with our souls. Thou God of life and love, give me more abundantly of this blessed Spirit!

4thly, We have,

1. The apostolic testimony. *And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son, in his infinite grace and love, to be the Saviour of the world, of both Jews and Gentiles, even of all that will accept of his grace, without ex-*

4 For ' whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that
 5 ' Who is he that overcometh the world,

^f Ch. 4. 4. & 2. 13. & 3. 6. Gal. 6. 14. John, 16. 33. Rom. 8. 35, 37. 1 Cor. 10. 3, 4. Eph. 6. 12. 1 Peter, 5. 9. Ver 5. 6 1 Cor. 15. 57. Ch. 4. 2, 4, 15. See ver. 1.

ception, and placing all mankind within the reach of eternal glory, if they will faithfully submit to the operations of his Spirit.

2. The true evangelical confession. *Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, owning him as the divine and true Messiah, and making open profession of his faith in the face of every danger, God dwelleth in him, and he in God, being happily joined to God, and living continually within the veil.*

3. The experience of all true Christians. *And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us, the astonishing manifestation of which, in sending his Son, leaves us no room to doubt of his transcendent and infinite grace and love. God is Love, pure, perfect Love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him; there subsists a most holy union between them.*

5thly, The apostle proceeds to set forth the blessed effects of Christian love. *Herein is our love made perfect, entire, unreserved, and unmixed with any alloy, notwithstanding our many acknowledged infirmities, and deviations from the perfect law of innocence, (all of which have an absolute need of the Blood of the Atonement)—our love, I say, is made perfect by our union of heart to God, and ardent love to the brethren; and, where this is the case, then,*

1. *We may have boldness in the day of judgment, and confidently appear before the throne of Jesus, most assured of a glorious and distinguished acceptance: because, as he is, so are we in this world; and he cannot but receive into the bosom of his love those who so fully bear his own bright image.*

2. *We are delivered from all slavish fear. There is no fear in love, nothing distressing, terrifying, and servile; but perfect love casteth out fear, this entire, unreserved, and pure love of God silences all fearful apprehensions: because fear hath torment; and where it prevails, must proportionably make the soul unhappy: he that feareth with a fear that is accompanied with any anxiety, doubt, or wavering, is not made perfect in love, has not known him, nor loved him who is from the beginning, according to the full privileges of our high dispensation, as a father in God. We love him because he first loved us; his love, shed abroad in the heart, must kindle ours; and the view of those amazing manifestations of it which he has made, should every day add fuel to the sacred fire, and raise the flame of holy affections still higher and higher, till at last we are wholly assimilated to his image in the full consummation of holiness, happiness, and love, in everlasting glory.*

3. *Love to God necessarily includes love to the brethren. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; his uncharitableness proves the hypocrisy of his pretensions: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen with his bodily eyes, and whose distresses, which should excite compassion, he has beheld; or the divine image in him, which should engage his regards; how can he*

love God, whom he hath not seen? how absurd is the supposition! And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also, and prove thereby the unfeigned sincerity of his professions.

CHAP. V.

THE apostle, in the preceding chapter, having, from various considerations, inculcated the love of the Christian brethren, and of mankind in general, and even of enemies, goes on in this, to speak more particularly of the obligation that we are under to love all who are the sincere disciples of Christ. And first, to shew that such are worthy of being loved, he declares, that every one who cordially believeth Jesus is the Christ, is begotten of God. He possesses the nature of God, and thereby is more truly a son of God, than any Jew who claims that high relation, merely on account of his descent from Abraham, John, viii. 39. Next, to shew the obligation that all who love God are under to love the disciples of Christ, he observes that every one who loveth God the Begetter, will love also the begotten of him; he will love good men because they resemble God in his moral qualities, ver. 1.—Then, that they might judge with certainty of their own character, he told them, that one of the best methods of knowing whether from love to God they really loved the children of God, was to consider, whether from love to God they performed to his children what he commands them to perform, ver. 2.—For, said he, this is the true expression of our love to God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome to the children of God, because they are agreeable to their inclinations, ver. 3.—and because by the power of their faith, they are able to overcome all the temptations which the world lays in their way, to induce them to break the commandments of God, ver. 4.

But that we may know, who the children of God are who overcome the world, and what their faith is by which they obtain that victory, the person who overcometh the world by the power of faith, is he who cordially believeth that Jesus is the Son of God, sent into the world to bestow eternal life on all who perseveringly believe, ver. 5.—And such a person's faith in Jesus as the Son of God, is well founded: for he was demonstrated to be the Son of God, by the water and the blood, even Jesus the Christ was proved to be the Son of God, not by the water alone, but by the water and the blood. For at his baptism with water, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by a voice from heaven. The same was declared by the shedding of his blood, that is, by his death; for by his resurrection from the dead, God demonstrated him to be his Son. Now it is the Spirit who, by the water and the blood, beareth witness to Jesus as the Son of God. For by descending on him in a visible shape at his baptism, he pointed him out to the Baptist, (John, i. 32, 33.) and to the surrounding multitude, as the person concerning whom the voice from heaven spake. In like manner, the Spirit

but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 ^a This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by

^a John, 10. 33, 35. & 7. 38, 39. & 1. 14, 23, 36. Eph. 5. 25—27. Titus, 2. 14. & 3. 5. Acts, 3. 26. & 5. 31. Heb. 9. 14. 1 Peter, 2. 24. & 1 18, 19. Rom. 5. 9. Gal. 3. 13, 14. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 1. 14.

bare witness to Jesus as the Son of God, by the blood; for it was the Spirit who raised his human body from the dead, ver. 6.

The apostle, having thus declared how Jesus came into the world, attested as the Son of God by the water and the blood, proceeds to inform us, that there are three in heaven, and three on earth, who are continually witnessing something concerning Jesus, which he does not explain, till ver. 11. where he tells us, that the facts which they attest are, that God hath given eternal life to all the faithful; and that this life is in his Son. Now the three in heaven, who bear witness to these important facts, are the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One, one in Essence, but three in Personality, ver. 7.—And the three on earth, who bear witness to the same facts, are the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. All these witnesses, the apostle tells us, agree in one and the same testimony, ver. 8.—And because they attest these facts by the appointment of God, he calls the joint testimony of the three in heaven and of the three on earth, the witness of God; and observes, that if we receive the testimony of men, and without hesitation rely on it, even in the most important matters, the witness of God is of much greater force to establish what he attesteth concerning his Son, ver. 9.—especially as he who believeth on the Son of God, hath the thing witnessed by God begun in himself; whereas he who does not believe God's witness concerning his Son, endeavours to make God a liar, ver. 10.—To this account of the witnesses in heaven and on earth, and of the certainty of their testimony, the apostle, at length, subjoins a declaration of the important facts to which they bear witness; namely, that God will bestow eternal life on persevering believers, and that this life is to be bestowed on them through his Son, ver. 11.—Then he repeats what he had hinted, ver. 10. That he who cordially and faithfully acknowledgeth Jesus to be the Son of God, hath the eternal life which God hath promised to bestow through his Son, assured to him on his perseverance, by the graces and virtues which his faith produces in him, and the direct witness of the Spirit of God. Whereas he who does not acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God, has no spiritual life in him, and of course no title to eternal life. Lastly, the apostle told those who believed on the name of the Son of God, that he had written these things to them, concerning the coming of Jesus into the world attested to be the Son of God by the water and the blood, and concerning the three in heaven and the three on earth who are continually bearing witness to Jesus, and concerning the facts which they attest, namely, that God hath promised to give persevering believers eternal life through his Son,—these things he had written, that they might continue to believe on his name, ver. 12.

St. John had told them, chap. iv. 17. that if they perseveringly imitated God in his benevolence, it would give them boldness in the day of judgment: here he assured

them, that, even in the present life, they who believe on Jesus, have this boldness with the Father, that if they pray to him for any thing according to his will, he hearkeneth to them, ver. 14.—and granteth them what they ask, because they are the disciples of his Son, ver. 15.—The apostle also assured those who were endowed with miraculous gifts in particular, and perhaps it was applicable to them only, that if any of them found a brother labouring under a bodily disease, inflicted on him for some sin that he had committed, and if the spiritual man had reason to think his sin was not to be punished with bodily death, he might, on account of his faith in God's promise, ask his recovery, if moved to do so by an impulse of the Spirit. And God, in answer to his prayer, would grant a miraculous recovery to such sick person, the temporal punishment of whose sin was not a disease to end in death. At the same time, by observing that there was a sin unto death, for the removing of the punishment of which, he did not direct any spiritual man to pray, he insinuated that apostacy, or gross idolatry, or some other sin, entirely excluded the sinner from the privilege mentioned above, ver. 16.—And to shew this more clearly, he added, though every unrighteous temper as well as action is sin, there is a great difference in sins. For there is a sin not unto death, from the punishment of which the sinner may be delivered, because he hath repented, ver. 17.—However, to prevent them from falling into mistakes in judging what sins were unto death, and what not, he told them, that no one who is begotten of God sinneth wilfully, because such a person keepeth himself from the dominion of the devil, ver. 18.—He added, that, by the witness of the Spirit of God, and keeping themselves through grace from the dominion of the devil, they would know that they were begotten of God; as by the wickedness which prevailed among infidels, idolaters, and hypocrites, they knew that the whole of them, yea, the whole unawakened world, were lying under the dominion of the devil, in subjection to him, and lying wounded and slain under him, ver. 19. But they knew, that, when the whole human race was in this helpless and miserable condition, the Son of God was come, and had given them an understanding that they might know him who is true; and they were in him who is true, even in the Father, and in his Son Jesus Christ; he is the true God and eternal life; he partakes with the Father in proper Deity, and their immortal life could be supported by union with him alone, ver. 20. He, therefore, entreated them to keep themselves from idols of every kind, whom the jealous God will not suffer to share with him, either in the offices of religious worship, or in the supreme affection of the mind, ver. 21.

Concerning the spiritual men's praying for the recovery of sick sinners, and the sinner's being restored to health miraculously in consequence of such prayers, of which the apostle speaks in this chapter, it is proper to observe, that the successful exercise of these spiritual gifts, like all the

water and blood. And ¹ it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 ^k For there are three that bear record in heaven, the ¹ Father, the ^m Word, and the

¹ Ver. 7, 8. John, 15. 26. & 16. 13. & 14. 17. 3. 16, 17. & 28. 19. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Rev. 1. 4, 5. 10. 25, 37, 38. Eph. 1. 3. 1 Peter, 1. 2, 3. & 9. 3—5.

^k Pf. 33. 6. Il. 11. 2. & 48. 16. & 61. 7. & 63. 9, 10. Hg. 2. 5, 7. Zech. 12. 10. Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. 2 Peter, 1. 16, 17. John, 12. 23. & 8. 18, 54. & 1 Cor. 12. 4—6. ^m John, 1. 1. Rev. 19. 13. Ch. 1. 1. John, 8. 13, 14. & 5. 17. & 10. 24, 30. Acts, 7. 55, 56.

other miraculous powers, was intended to render the Christian societies venerable in the eyes of the Heathens, by shewing that God was actually among the Christians, 1 Cor. xiv. 25. and to inspire the Heathens with the desire of becoming members of a community which was honoured with such extraordinary privileges.

Ver. 1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ] The apostle had been shewing the inseparable union between the love of their Christian brother and the love of God: here he shews who was their *Christian brother*;—*every one who believed that Jesus is the Christ*, that is, with the heart unto righteousness. This the unbelieving Jews and Heathens openly denied; this the false prophets also, and their disciples, did, in effect, deny, and did not therefore love the Christian brethren. St. John has in this epistle given three marks of their being born again: *First*, Their believing this fundamental article of Christianity, that Jesus is the Messiah, or their acknowledging or receiving him as such: *Secondly*, Their experiencing and practising holiness or righteousness, and being saved from the dominion of sin. *Thirdly*, That one particular virtue of loving the Christian brethren, is mentioned, ch. iv. 7. and in the latter part of this verse, as another mark of a man's being born of God: from all which it appears, that if a man acknowledges Jesus to be the Christ, enjoys his pardoning love, and makes conscience of living accordingly, he is, in scripture language, *born of God*, or a child of God. It is true, that he who loveth God, will love his eternal Son Jesus Christ; but by *him that is begotten of him*, is not here meant Jesus Christ, but every true Christian; for, though it is in the singular number, the connection shews that it was intended to signify Christians, as they are the *children of God* by faith, and imitators of the divine holiness, see ver. 2. Whoever professes to love God, the Father of Christians, is obliged to love Christians, who are his children, and who resemble their heavenly Father. He who loves holiness, loves God; and he who loves God, loves the image of God wherever it appears.

Ver. 2. By this we know, &c.] St. John has often intimated, that the love of the Christian brethren, who are the children of God, is a sign or evidence of our love to God; and it appears highly reasonable, that what is visible, should be a sign or evidence of what is invisible. But here he seems to argue the contrary way; namely, that our love to God is a sign or evidence of our love to the *children of God*, or the Christian brethren. Now it may be objected, "How can what is invisible be looked upon as a sign or evidence of what is visible." In answer to which, let it be considered, that the friendships of the world are too often confederacies in vice, or leagues in pleasure; and that Christians may love one another from natural affection, relationship, temporal interest, or some other worldly motive; but loving them from such considerations, is not that *peculiar love of the brethren* which the gospel requires. It

may be said, "How then shall we know that we love them spiritually and as Christians?" The apostle has here answered that very question: for, having declared, ver. 1, that he who loveth God, the Father of Christians, is obliged to love Christians, who are his children, he here adds, "By this we may know that our love to Christians is of the right sort, when it proceeds from a love to God, and a sincere desire to keep his commandments; among which this of loving the Christian brethren is none of the least." A love to Christians, which has an extensive piety and virtue for its basis, must be highly valuable; Matth. xii. 50. A man who lives in any vice, or who does not so love God, as to make conscience of keeping all his commandments, may be assured that his love to Christians is not of the right sort: but wherever there is extensive virtue and piety, there is the best proof of the genuineness of any one single grace or virtue, and particularly of our love to Christians, who are the children of God.

Ver. 3. For this is the love of God,] The love of God is a principle in the heart of a regenerated man, which leads him to keep the commandments of God; and which cannot be visibly manifested any other way; for, whatever some men may pretend, there is no true love of God without keeping his commandments. The Christians to whom St. John wrote, might perhaps be ready to object, "You exhort us to keep the commandments of God; but that is either impossible, or at least cannot be done without very great difficulty:" Now St. John knew well that the notion of God's commands being impossible, or grievous and burdensome, tended to discourage men from attempting to keep them, and therefore would be of very bad consequence: for that reason he added, *And his commands are not grievous*, that is, under the power of Divine grace which all true believers possess. But the *commandment* which St. John had more particularly in his eye, was that of *love to the Christian brethren*. Real Christians behave through grace as their religion directs, and therefore are the most amiable persons in the world; and the love of such lovely objects is certainly delightful; but the commandments of Christ in general are not grievous; they are the kind counsels of the wisest Father, and the best Friend; who had nothing else in view in giving us such commandments, but the advancing our true dignity, perfection, and happiness. Instead of being burdensome, religion is to the regenerated man the joy and delight of his soul; his meat and drink, his daily business, and unspeakable pleasure, see Prov. iii. 13—18. By the connection between ver. 3 and 4. it appears, that this last clause is a *meiosis*; that is, much less is expressed than was intended; for so far are the commandments of God from being *grievous*, that they are most delightful and excellent.

Ver. 4, 5. For whatsoever is born of God, &c.] That is, every child of God. The connection of this with the preceding verse stands thus: "*His commandments are not*
 "grievous;

“ Holy Ghost : and these three are one.
8 And there are three that bear witness in

earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood : and these three agree in one.

Mat. 3. 16. John, 1. 32, 33. Acts, ii. & 8. 7. & 10. 44. John, 15. 26. Rev. 22. 1. or Heb. 2. 4. Mat. 28. 19. & 26. 26-28.

John, 10. 30. Deut. 6. 4. Mat. 19. 17. Ver. 10. 1 Pet.

“ grievous ; because in observing them we gain a victory through grace over this world, our grand enemy ; and nothing can be accounted grievous which produces so much good.” The principle by which they overcame, was faith in the infinite merit and intercession of Christ. It may be proper just to take a view of the advantages which true Christians have for gaining the victory over this world, by means of that faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God. *Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God, or the Messiah, that great Personage, who was with God, and was God, eternally lay in the bosom of the Father, and came from him ; and who promised a glorious and happy immortality unto all persevering believers ; who lived the most exemplary life ; worked great numbers of unquestionable, glorious, and beneficent miracles ; had a real body, and really suffered and died as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, sealing his doctrine with his own blood, and offering his life as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling favour unto God ; rose again from the dead, and after that, was exalted in his mediatorial kingdom to the right hand of God, a Prince and a Saviour ; and who has all power committed unto him both in heaven and upon earth ; particularly power to raise the dead, to judge the whole world, to punish the impenitent with everlasting misery, and to render eternal rewards unto his faithful servants ;—Whoever firmly believes these things through the Spirit of God, what may he not be expected to do or suffer, to avoid the future punishment, and obtain the transcendent rewards which God hath graciously promised to them that love him ?—What can this world offer him of equal value ? What evil can it threaten him with, to deter him from such a pursuit ? When it opposes him, how complete a victory may he gain in the power of Divine grace !*

Ver. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood*] St. John, ver. 5. as well as often elsewhere, intimated that Jesus was the Christ, and that the belief of that article was of the highest moment. Here he is proceeding to the grand evidences of that important truth. The Spirit alone is here said to bear witness, because he was the principal witness ; but, ver. 8. the water and the blood are represented as witnesses, together with the Spirit. In John, xix. 34. the water and blood which came out of Christ’s side when he was pierced with the spear, were a clear proof of the reality of his death, and might have taught the *Disciple* that he had a real body, and really suffered and died ; and consequently that his resurrection was a real resurrection.

Ver. 7. *For there are three, &c.*] “ For there are three divine Persons, the habitation of whose glory is in heaven, who from thence bear their united testimony to the incarnate Saviour. The first is God the Father, who said of Christ at his baptism and transfiguration (Matth. iii. 17. xvii. 5.), *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ;* and (Rom. i. 4.) *declared him to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead : the*

second is the eternal uncreated Word himself, who was ever God with the Father (John, i. 1.) ; and said, *I and my Father are one* (John, x. 30.) ; and often asserted his office as well as divine character in the plainest terms, and appealed for the truth of it to the miracles which he wrought by his own power : the third of these heavenly witnesses is the Holy Spirit, who gave abundant attestations to our blessed Lord, as the only Saviour, by his visible descent upon him at his baptism (Luke, iii. 22.), and by his coming from the exalted Messiah in heaven to bear witness to him, and to spread his name, kingdom, and glory in the world. And these three heavenly witnesses, though personally distinct in a manner that infinitely transcends all our ideas, are essentially one divine Being, one thing (εἷς ὄν), or one God, in distinction from, and in opposition to, all nominal or pretended deities, which by nature are no gods (Gal. iv. 8.)” I have entered very fully into a critical view of this text in my Preface to this Epistle, and shall therefore only add the following remarks : If we drop this verse, and join the 8th to the 6th, there is a considerable tautology, and the beauty and propriety of the connection are lost, as may appear to any who attentively read the 6th and 8th verses together, leaving out the 7th, and they do not give us near so noble an introduction of the witnesses, as our reading (which, I have no doubt, is the true canonical one) does : nor do they make that visible opposition to some witness or witnesses elsewhere, which is manifestly suggested in the words *and there are three that bear witness in earth*, ver. 8. But all stands in a natural and elegant order, if we take in the 7th verse, which is very agreeable and almost peculiar to the style of our apostle, who, of all others, delights in these titles, *the Father and the Word*, and who is the only sacred writer that records our Lord’s words, in which he speaks of *the Spirit’s testifying of him, and glorifying him, by receiving of his things and shewing them to his disciples*, and says, *I and my Father are one* (John, x. 30. xv. 26. xvi. 14.). The Trinitarians therefore had less occasion to interpolate this verse, than the Antitrinitarians had to take it out of the sacred canon, if any, on either side, can be supposed to have been so very wicked as to make such an attempt : and it is much more likely that some transcriber might, through the similarity of the beginning of the 7th and 8th verses, or through some obscurity in the writing of that part of his copy, carelessly slip over the 7th, than that any should be so daring as designedly to add it to the text : and it can scarcely be thought that the apostle, in representing the foundation of the Christian’s faith, and the various testimonies which were given to Christ, should omit the supreme testimony ; and yet with a reference to the before-recited witnesses should add, ver. 9. *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*, though, according to the Arian sense of the 8th verse, no immediate witness of God had been mentioned before, if we leave out the 7th verse. But, as I have observed in my Preface, we have

9 ⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of

his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you

⁹ John, 2. 17, 18. & 5. 36, 37. Heb. 3. 12. & 4. 11.

^r John, 3. 1, 35. Rom. 8. 16. Gal. 4. 6. Eph. 2. 10. Heb. 12. 2. & 11. 13.

^s John, 3. 33. & 5. 38.

^t John, 3. 5, 6. & 6. 40, 47. Ch. 2. 25. & 4. 9, 14.

^u John, 1. 4. & 17. 2, 3. & 14. 6. & 11. 25. Gal.

^x John, 3. 36. & 5. 24. & 1. 12. Eph. 3. 17. Gal. 2. 20.

^y Ch. 1. 4. & 2. 26. & 3. 14. 2 Cor. 13. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 10. John,

also a thousand other texts which, directly or indirectly, establish the Personality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the supreme Godhead.

Ver. 8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, &c.] “And in concurring testimony with these three divine Persons in heaven, who subsist in the unity of the Godhead, and have given their distinct attestations to the saving office of Christ, there are three practical witnesses to the same upon earth. One of these lies in the miraculous gifts and saving graces of the Holy Spirit: another is the spotless purity of Christ’s human nature and life (Heb. vii. 26.), and his holy doctrine, by means of which the souls of believers are sanctified, and cleansed, as it were, with clean water (John, xvii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 22. Ezek. xxxvi. 25.), as was signified, not only by John’s baptism, which pointed to Christ for this benefit (Matth. iii. 11.); but also by our Lord’s own institution of the standing ordinance of Christian baptism in the name of the sacred Three, which is a solemn and holy dedication of the baptized to the Son, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost: and the third of these witnesses is the Blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins, as represented in the Lord’s supper (Matth. xxvi. 28.), and is applied to purge the consciences of true believers from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. ix. 14.); and these three, though they be not one in nature or essence, nor are to be considered personally, as the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost are; yet they harmoniously agree (εἰς τὸ εἶ) unto the bearing of one and the same practical testimony among themselves on earth, and with the adorable Three in heaven, as to Christ’s being the divine and only Saviour of sinners.” The whole context shews, that the witness here given to Christ, relates most immediately to his character as the great Messiah, or incarnate Son of God; and therefore he, as the Word, denoting his divine nature, under which he is mentioned as a witness to this character, ver. 7. is a proper witness of it as either the Father or the Spirit: and I take the Spirit in this verse to relate, not to his personal attestation to this character of Christ, which he gave as one of the witnesses in heaven, ver. 7. but to his gifts and graces, since that which is born of the Spirit is called spirit (John, iii. 6.), and these witness to Christ on earth, as they appear, and evidently operate in and by the subjects of them on earth, in confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel concerning him.

Ver. 9. If we receive the witness of men, &c.] “Now if, according to what is written in the law of God, we readily admit of, and depend upon, the testimony of two or three credible witnesses among men (Deut. xvii. 6. xix. 15. comp. Matth. xviii. 16. 2 Cor. xiii. 1. Heb. x. 28.), and they are judged sufficient to determine all controversies about human affairs in any court of judicature; we may be much more sure that the infallible testimony of God the Father, Son, and Spirit in heaven, as well as of those three other witnesses, by divine appointment, on earth, ought to be unquestionably and absolutely depended upon: for this is the testimony of that God who cannot lie, and who in these various ways has given it concerning his only begotten and eternal Son, with regard to his being the true Messiah.”

Ver. 10. Hath the witness in himself:] “He who upon this testimony cordially believeth in the Son of God, has not only an external evidence to produce, which may suffice, under the Spirit of God, for the conviction or condemnation of the unawakened world, but he also hath the witness within himself: the happy change that it makes in the whole state of his soul, manifests the excellence and reality of its object.” The reader may find this sense of the passage finely illustrated, to his great improvement and satisfaction, in Dr. Watts’s Sermons on the text, vol. i. serm. 1, &c.

Ver. 11. And this is the record, &c.] The phrase ἡ μαρτυρία seems here to signify, not the evidence of testimony, but the thing proved or testified of. So ch. ii. 25. This is the promise, that is, the thing promised. The verse may be thus paraphrased: “And this is the substance and abridgment of this testimony, that the blessed God has, in his infinite condescension and bounty, given unto us the promises of eternal life; and this life is in his Son: purchased by him, and laid up in him, to be bestowed on all his faithful saints; and therefore only to be obtained through him.”

Ver. 12. He that hath the Son, &c.] “He, who is vitally united to the Son of God, as his Head and Redeemer, through faith in him, is already spiritually alive: and he who has not an interest in the Son of God, has not this spiritual life, whatever proud conceit he may entertain of his own merits and excellencies; but, on the contrary, remains exposed to the righteous displeasure of God, and under a sentence of eternal death.”

Ver. 13. These things have I written unto you, &c.] This verse

that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have * in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 ^b And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have

the petitions that we desired of him.

16 ^c If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is not unto death.* ^d he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: ^e I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 ^f All unrighteousness is sin: and ^g there is a sin not unto death.

18 ^h We know that whosoever is born of

^a Acts, 4. 12. Mar. 16. 16. John, 6. 6, 9. 1 Tim. 1. 11. ^b Or concerning him. ^c Ch. 3. 22. James, 4. 3, 15, 5, 6. Jer. 29. 12, 13. Mat. 7. 7—11. & 21. 21. Job, 14. 13. & 15. 7. & 16. 21. If. 45. 11. ^d See ver. 14. Mark, 11. 24. Luke, 11. 9. Mat. 17. 20. ^e Job, 42. 8. James, 5. 15—16. Gen. 20. 7, 17. Pl. 106. 24. Ezek. 22. 31. ^f Num. 15. 30. 1 Sam. 2. 25. Mat. 12. 31, 32. Heb. 6. 4—8. & 10. 26, 27, 29, 35. 2 Pet. 2. 20, 22. ^g Jer. 7. 16. & 11. 14. & 14. 11. & 15. 1. John, 17. 9. ^h Ch. 3. 4. Rom. 4. 15. Deut. 5. 32. & 12. 32. ⁱ If. 1. 18. & 43. 25. & 55. 7. & 44. 22. Epa. 1. 7. Titus, 2. 14. Rom. 5. 20, 21. ^j Ch. 3. 9. & 2. 29. Rom. 7. 14—24.

verse is by some looked upon as a summing up of the principal part of this epistle, in which St. John professes that he wrote, not to the false prophets and their disciples, (for very probably he despaired of doing any good to them.) out to the true Christians, to put them in mind that everlasting life was depending; to let them know that they had a title to it, as long as they continued to believe with the heart unto righteousness; and to incite them to persevere in the true faith, and in a holy Christian practice, notwithstanding the attempts of the seducers, who were many and zealous. The latter part of the sentence means, *That you may continue to believe, or believe more firmly on the name, in the merits, intercession, love, and power, of the Son of God.* See John, ii. 11. xi. 15. xx. 31.

Ver. 14, 15. And this is the confidence, &c.] “And we who really believe in him, have this satisfaction and holy boldness, that whatever we present our petitions to God for, with faith in Christ’s name, after such a manner as is agreeable to his holy will, according to the notices that he has given of it in the declarations, precepts, and promises of his word, he mercifully attends to, and favourably regards the voice of our supplications. John, xvi. 23, 24. Jam. i. 5, 6. And if we are well satisfied that he graciously condescends, for Christ’s sake, to hearken to our humble, fervent prayers, we may certainly thence conclude, that whatever we thus beg of him, he will grant as may be most for his glory and our good: for it is always his will, that his faithful people should be truly happy, and be supplied with every necessary good.”

Ver. 16, 17.] In the apostolic age, the power of working miracles was very common; and in this conclusion of his epistle St. John gives directions to the Christians, to whom that power was granted. They could not indeed work a miracle till they had an impulse of the Spirit to suggest to them that God would hear their prayer, and at their request miraculously cure the diseased. And St. John seems here to order them to wait for the impulse of the Spirit, before they attempted to work a miracle. Such Christian professors as experienced and lived the Christian life, were in no danger of falling under any remarkable divine judgment; but from 1 Cor. xi. 30. James, v. 14, &c. and this place, it appears, that some professed Christians behaved irregularly, and thereby drew down upon

themselves some diseases, as judgments from God. Some were punished with diseases that ended in temporal death; others, whose offences were not so aggravated, and who truly repented, were to be miraculously cured, and their diseases not to end in death. In such cases, the Christians who had the power of working miracles, had a divine impulse to direct them to pray for their offending Christian brother; and when they so prayed, according to the will of God suggested to them in that manner, God, at their request, granted life unto their Christian brother, who had sinned a sin not unto death. After this, St. John takes notice of the advantages which Christians had above the rest of the world; and concludes with cautioning them against falling into any act of idolatry, to which their heathen neighbours, who were then very numerous, would be likely enough to tempt them; and perhaps that is mentioned in this place, as having been one of the sins which had drawn down remarkable diseases upon some of the offending Christians. See ch. iii. 22. and on James, v. 15, &c.

If any man see his brother sin, &c.] “If a Christian, by an impulse of the Spirit, perceives that any Christian brother has sinned such a sin as to draw down upon himself a disease which is not to end in death, but to be miraculously cured by him; then let him pray to God through Jesus Christ, and God, in answer to his prayer, will grant life and perfect health unto such Christian as hath sinned a sin which is not unto death. There is a sin which draws down a disease upon Christians, that is to end in death; I do not say or mean that any Christian shall pray for that; because in such a case God would not hear his prayer, nor miraculously cure his Christian brother at his request.” Some by a sin unto death understand apostacy from the Christian religion.

Ver. 18. We know that whosoever is born of God, &c.]: “We, who have received Christ, and enjoy his gracious presence, are well assured, both from the word of God and from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, that whoever is really regenerated by the Spirit of God, and continues in that grace, does not live in the practice of any known iniquity whatsoever, either internally or externally; but he who is spiritually begotten of God, and so born again, has an utter detestation of, and abiding contrariety of heart against, such ways of sinning, inasmuch, that by watchfulness and prayer, and
“ by

God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God¹ keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

19 *And*^k we know that we are of God, and^l the whole world lieth in^m wickedness.

20 *And*ⁿ we know that the Son of God is come,^o and hath given us an understanding,

that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. ^q This is the true God, and eternal life.

21 ^r Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

¹ Ch. 2. 13, 14. & 3. 12. Pl. 18. 27. & 39. 1. Prov. 4. 23. Jude, 21. James, 1. 27. ^k Rom. 8. 16. Ver. 13. Ch. 3. 14, 24. 2 Cor. 1. 12, 2 Tim. 1. 12. ^l Eph. 2. 2, 12. Titus, 3. 3. Rom. 1. 28—32. & 3. 10—18. ^m Or *the wicked one*. John, 12. 31. & 14. 30. & 16. 11. 2 Tim. 2. 26. Eph. 2. 2. ⁿ Ch. 4. 2. & 5. 1. ^o Mat. 13. 11. Luke, 24. 45. Esh. 1. 17, 18. & 3. 18, 19. John, 17. 3. ^q Ch. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 1. 50. 2 Cor. 5. 17, 21. Phil. 3. 0. Jude, 1. John, 17. 21. ^r 11. 9. 6. & 44. 6. & 54. 5. John, 17. 3. & 20. 28. Rom. 9. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Titus, 2. 13. Ver. 11, 12. ^s Exod. 20. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 10. 7, 14. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17.

“by strength derived from Christ, he takes care to keep himself from them: and Satan, that wicked spirit, has not power to influence him in such a manner, as to lead him into sin.”

Ver. 19. And we know that we are of God, &c.] “And we are well satisfied that we are so born of God, as to be partakers of a divine nature, which is a powerful and abiding principle of all holiness; and that we are the children of God, in a peculiar relation to him; and that we side with him: and we know that all the rest of mankind, who are strangers to the new birth, and make up the greatest part of this world, continue voluntarily under the power of sin, and of the wicked one (*ἡ τω πονηρῷ*), and must be ranked under him as their head and prince, *who works in the children of disobedience* (Eph. ii. 2.)” Doddridge is of opinion, that the word *κείρατ*, *lieth*, alludes to the circumstance of a body which *lies slain*, in which sense it is often used by Homer: and on this interpretation it gives us a most affecting idea of the great misery and helpless state of mankind by nature, fallen by the stroke of this formidable enemy, the wicked one, and insulted over by him as his prey: but our comfort is, that the grace of God is offered to all, and is sufficient for the salvation of all who will embrace and improve it.

Ver. 20. And we know that the son of God is come, &c.] “And from all the undoubted proofs before insisted on, we certainly know that Jesus, the Son of God, has assumed human nature, and actually came into this lower world to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Heb. ix. 26.); and we know by our own happy experience, that he has not only given us an external revelation in his word, but has enlightened the eyes of our minds by an internal operation of his Spirit, that we might have a saving knowledge of him who is Truth itself: and we are vitally united to him, who, in all that he has said, is the true and faithful witness (Rev. i. 5.), even Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God. This Jesus (*ἁγιος*), in his original nature, is the only living and true God, together with the Father and the Spirit; and he is the purchaser and giver of spiritual and eternal life to all his faithful saints.”

Ver. 21. Keep yourselves from idols.] “Upon the whole then, my dear children, whom I as affectionately love as a father does his tender babes, let all these considerations engage you to abstain from every appearance of fellowship with pagans in their idolatrous worship of false gods, from all use of images, as representations of the Deity, or as mediums of worship, and from every idol of

“your own hearts; and consider Christ as the true God (ver. 20.), that you may be secured against idolatry in the worship which you pay to him. So may it be, to his and his Father’s glory, and to your own comfort and salvation! In testimony of my desire and hope of its being so, I heartily say, *Amen!*” It seems highly probable, from the connection, that falling into some acts of idolatry, such perhaps as feasting upon the heathen sacrifices, and even in the idols’ temple, were some of the crimes for which the Christians had been punished with extraordinary diseases: some unto death, and some not unto death. How amazing is it, that the church of Rome should so directly break the commands of God, by falling into idolatry in such a variety of kinds, and to so high a degree, when it was one grand design of the Jewish and Christian revelation to condemn idolatry, and banish it from the face of the earth! That corrupt church is, indeed, the mother of abominations, or of idolatries, and has taken in a great part of the ancient heathen superstition and idolatry; palliating it with the thin disguise of worshipping Christian saints instead of the ancient heathen gods.

Inferences.—Let us regard the grand question, on which our life, our eternal life, is suspended! I mean, whether we have, or have not, the Son of God? Let us then examine into this important matter with the greatest attention. Let us hearken to, and receive the testimony of God, as comprehended in this one word, that God hath given us, even to us, dying, perishing men, eternal life; and this life is in his Son. Let us receive this transcendent gift with all humility and thankfulness; and so much the rather, as it is given us in him. By firmly believing this, we shall conquer the world, and gain a victory of an infinitely different and more exalted nature, than they who are strangers to Christ, or who reject him, ever have done, or can possibly do.

May our steadfast faith in him furnish us with a substantial attestation that we are born of God; and may we prove it to be sincere, by loving the children of God, and by keeping all his commandments. We must surely acknowledge, that his commandments are reasonable; and if we have a genuine love to God existing in our hearts, it will render the observance of them pleasant and delightful. And if we are not possessed of that evidence of love, which arises from a disposition to obedience, let us remember, he has fairly and frequently warned us, that no other expres-

sions of love, how fervent and pathetic soever, will be accepted or allowed by him. That our faith may be confirmed, and our love awakened, let us often look to Christ, as coming by water and by blood. Let us meditate on that mysterious stream of blood and water, which came forth from his wounded side. Let us solemnly remind ourselves of the baptismal water, in which we were washed, and of the sacred cup, the communion of the blood of Christ, referring to this great important event. And while we are contemplating the memorial of his humility, let us also consider him as one with the Father and the Holy Spirit; and as each of the sacred Three join their testimony to the truth of the gospel, and join their kind offices for supplying to us the invaluable blessings of it, let us joyfully ascribe glory to each, world without end. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle shews,

1. The genuine marks of a child of God. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah, placing his whole dependance for pardon, life, and salvation, upon him, is born of God, adopted into his blessed family, and dignified with the title of a son and heir of the Almighty: and every one that loveth him that begat, the blessed God, the Author of all grace to his believing people, loveth him also that is begotten of him, and delights in his image wherever it appears.*

2. *By this we know that we love the children of God, as his children, and purely for his sake, when we love God unfeignedly, and keep his commandments, from a principle of faith which worketh by love. For this is the love of God, the most undoubted evidence of it, that we keep his commandments; counting them all holy, just, and good, and having respect unto them without partiality or hypocrisy: and his commandments are not grievous; love makes the labour light, and the obedience cheerful and willing.*

3. This is what will gain the conquest over an ensnaring world. *For whatsoever is born of God, and partakes of a new and divine nature, overcometh the world, and triumphs over both its terrors and allurements: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith, which realizing unseen and eternal things, stamps vanity upon all present objects; and, deriving strength from the Redeemer's fulness, enables us to be more than conquerors over all our trials. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? who, dependant upon him for life and salvation, holds on his heavenly way, and is neither to be seduced nor terrified from his holy profession? Lord, give and increase this victorious faith!*

2dly, Faith in the divine Messiah, being of such essential consequence to our souls, we have the foundation on which this faith is built.

1. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: he at his baptism entered upon his office, and on the cross finished the great atonement; and the blood and water which flowed from his wounded side, declared the purposes of his coming, both to pay a ransom for our sins, and to cleanse us from the defilement of them, by the renovation of our natures through the mighty energy of his Spirit; for which glorious purpose faith looks to Jesus Christ, as appointed of the Father to his mediatorial office, and able and willing in these respects to perfect the salvation of his faithful people.*

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2. Christ has the strongest attestation borne to his divine person and character. *It is the Spirit that beareth witness to the consciences of believers, and in the miraculous powers bestowed at that time on the ministers of the gospel; because the Spirit is truth itself, and his testimony cannot deceive. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; the Father, at his baptism and transfiguration, bore witness to the Son; the Son repeatedly asserted his own divine glory and office, and appealed to the miracles that he wrought, for a proof of the truth of what he advanced: the Holy Ghost, by his descent on Jesus at his baptism, and by the miraculous powers with which he invested the apostles and others, added his full attestation to the great Redeemer: and these three, though personally distinct, are in essence one. And there are three that bear witness in earth; the Spirit, in his gifts and graces; and the water, wherewith every believer is baptized in the name of the Son of God, as a divine Person (see the Annotations); and the blood, which Jesus shed upon the cross, and of which he instituted in his last supper a constant memorial to be observed in his church: and these three agree in one, and bear testimony to the divine character of our adored Immanuel, and to the complete Redemption provided by him for all his faithful saints. If we receive the witness of men, attesting any fact; and every court of human judicature admits their oath and evidence as satisfactory; the witness of God is greater, which Father, Son, and Spirit, severally bear to the dignity and glory of the Lord Jesus, and with whom the appointed witnesses on earth agree; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son, as the true and divine Messiah, whom we by faith and love must embrace, and in whom alone salvation can be attained.*

3dly, We have,

1. The happy state of the true believer. *He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he feels the suitableness of the Saviour to his state of guilt and misery, and knows, by happy experience, his excellence, fulness, and all-sufficiency: he walks in the light of the Son of God, and can say to him continually, My Lord, and, My God. He that believeth not God, and receiveth not his testimony concerning his only-begotten Son, hath made him a liar, and denied his truth, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son, and submits not to the witness which he hath borne to the character of Jesus as the true Messiah.*

2. The Fountain of his felicity. *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, the earnest and foretaste of it through the Redeemer's infinite merit; and this life is in his Son, purchased by him, treasured up in him, and communicated from him to his believing people. He that hath the Son, who is by faith united to him, and interested in the merit of his Blood, hath life; hath spiritual life here, and possesses a title to eternal life hereafter; and he that hath not the Son of God, who does not by faith embrace him, and derive grace from him, and feel an interest in his death, hath not life, is more or less dead in trespasses and sins, and the wrath of God abideth upon him.*

3. The knowledge which he has of his invaluable privileges. *These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, this glorious foretaste of it, and may rejoice in this excellent gift of God; and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God; engaged more steadfastly to cleave to him, and, with unshaken perseverance, maintaining your*

5 X

holy

holy profession. *Note*; (1.) Those who have life in Christ Jesus, know it: the Lord seal this knowledge to our consciences! (2.) They who have begun well, should be encouraged to persevere, assured that, in this case, their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

4thly, The apostle adds, to all the other blessings flowing from faith in Christ,

1. Access to God in prayer, and the sure answer to all our petitions. *And this is the confidence that we have in him, and the boldness to approach a throne of grace; that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; accepts our prayers, and will grant our requests. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him, in manner, time, and measure bestowed, as he sees most for his own glory and our good.* *Note*; (1.) If we would obtain an answer to our prayers, God's revealed will must be the rule of them. (2.) When we pray in faith, we may confidently rest ourselves upon God's promise: he will hear and help us.

2. Our prayers for others, as well as for ourselves, shall meet with kind acceptance. *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death; though it deserves death as its wages; he shall ask God to pardon his offending brother, and he shall, in answer to his prayer, give him life for them that sin not unto death.* But see this subject fully considered in the Annotations.

5thly, The apostle concludes,

1. With a recapitulation of the believer's privileges and practice. *We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not, he cannot, as a child of God, wilfully sin; but he that is begotten of God, and is thus a partaker of a new and divine nature, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not;*

the power of sin and Satan is broken, and he enjoys constant dominion over sin, and at least ardently longs for the entire annihilation of it.

2. He mentions their happy separation from the world. *And we know that we are of God; his children, renewed in the spirit of our minds, and living separate from the corrupt mass of mankind: and the whole world, besides those who are born of God, lieth in wickedness, (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,) in the wicked one, under his power, influence, and dominion, and must, if they die in this state, be condemned together with him.* *Note*; It is most indubitably certain, that the far greater part of the world, even of the Christian world, lieth in wickedness; and as certain, that, if they die impenitent, they will perish everlastingly. It becomes us therefore seriously to inquire, whether we are of the world; for, if so, we must be condemned with the world.

3. They knew the Son of God, and enjoyed a blessed union with him. *And we know that the Son of God is come, in the human nature, to take away our sins by the sacrifice of himself; and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, by his Spirit opening the eyes of our minds, and shining into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory: and we are in him that is true, vitally united to him who is the truth itself; even in his Son Jesus Christ, as living members of his mystical body. And this Jesus is the true God, the self-existent Jehovah, and eternal life; the purchaser, fountain, and bestower of it on all his faithful people; and they who perseveringly know him now by faith, will live eternally with him in glory.* *Note*; Either Jesus Christ is the true God, or the Scriptures are a fiction.

* The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
SECOND EPISTLE

OF

J O H N.

P R E F A C E.

WE know not who was the Lady to whom St. John addressed this Epistle, nor in what city she lived; she appears only, by its contents, to have been a woman of great distinction, by her rank and devotion, and by the services which she rendered the church. Some think that the Greek word Ἐλεῖκτῆ, in English Elect, by which St. John addresses her, was her proper name, like that of Justus, and many others, which were names peculiar to certain persons; though of themselves, by their signification, they indicated qualities which might be common to many. But others, in conformity with our version, conclude the original word to be a title by which St. John thought proper to commend the piety of this woman; and, for the same reason, he has bestowed it upon her sister at the conclusion of the Epistle. He praises her on account of the piety which reigned in her family; and he expressly recommends to her to have no communication with certain heretics of that time, who, being unable to understand the great mystery of the Gospel, the incarnation of the eternal Word, and not choosing to believe any thing at all beyond the compass of their reason, (which is the general spirit and character of heresy,) denied that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, ver. 7. These he calls deceivers and antichrists; and hence we may see how dangerous it is to trust too much to reason in matters of faith, and to determine upon believing nothing in religion but what we can perfectly comprehend.

He exhorteth a certain honourable matron, with her children, to persevere in Christian faith and love, lest they lose the reward of their former experience; and to have nothing to do with those seducers who bring not the true doctrine of Christ Jesus.

[Anno Domini 90.]

THE ^a elder unto the ^b elect lady and her children, whom ^c I love in the truth; and

not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

2 ^d For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever.

3 ^e Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord

^a 1 Peter, 5. 1. ³ John, 1. 6. ^b Acts, 13. 48. Eph. 1. 4, 5. ^c 1 John, 3. 18. Mat. 22. 35. Gal. 2. 5, 14. & 3. 1, 5, 7. Eph. 1. 13. ² Theil. 2. 13. ¹ Tim. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 26. James, 1. 18. & 5. 19. 1 Peter, 1. 22. ³ John, 1. 3, 8. ^d Phil. 1. 6. 1 John, 2. 14, 23. Col. 3. 16. John, 15. 7. ^e Rom. 1. 7. 1 Tim. 1. 2.

THE apostle, after addressing this letter to a woman of distinction, and her children, and expressing great affection to them on account of their adhering to the truth of the gospel, ver. 1.—declared that he was moved, thus to love

them, by the gospel itself, ver. 2.—And as a testimony of his love, he gave them his apostolical benediction, ver. 3.—then told this lady, that he felt the greatest joy when he found some of her children, with whom he had conversed,

Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, ' in truth and love.

4 ' I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, ' not as though I wrote a new commandment unto

thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 ' And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

7 ' For many deceivers are entered into the

^f Zech. 8. 19. Gal. 5. 6. ^g Phil. 4. 1. ^h 1 Thess. 2. 19. ⁱ John, 3. 4. ^k John, 13. 34. & 15. 11, 12. Eph. 5. 2. ^l 1 Pet. 4. 8. ^m 1 Thess. 4. 9. ⁿ 1 John, 2. 7, 8. & 3. 11, 23. & 4. 21. ^o 1 John, 14. 15, 21. & 15. 10, 14. Rom. 13. 8, 9. Gal. 5. 24. ^p 1 John, 5. 3. & 2. 5, 24. ^q Mat. 24. 5, 24. ^r 2 Pet. 2. 1. ^s 1 John, 2. 18, 22. & 4. 1-3. ^t 2 Thess. 2. 7, 11.

perhaps at Ephesus, walking in the truth; that is, holding the true doctrine of the gospel, experiencing its power, and behaving suitably to that doctrine, ver. 4.—From this he took occasion to exhort them, to love all the sincere disciples of Christ, and to do them good offices, according to the commandment which Christ gave to his apostles at the beginning, ver. 5.—and to express their love to Christ by obeying all his commandments; particularly the commandment which they had heard from the beginning, that they should love one another sincerely with a pure spiritual love, ver. 6.—Next, he told this excellent lady, that his joy, on account of her children's walking in the true doctrine of the gospel concerning the person of Christ, was the greater, because many false teachers were going about, who denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. Each of these, he told her, was a deceiver and an antichrist foretold to come by our Lord. This account of the false teachers the apostle gave, left the lady and her children, deceived by their plausible speeches, and their shew of extraordinary piety, might have been disposed to shew them kindness, supposing them to be the servants of Christ, ver. 7.—He therefore desired them to be on their guard against such teachers, for this, among other reasons, that, if they should be drawn away by them, he should lose the reward which he expected for his having, not only faithfully but successfully, taught them the true doctrine of the gospel: for he wished that his reward might be complete through their continuing in the belief and practice of the truth, ver. 8.—Moreover, he told them, that the teacher who does not abide in the true doctrine concerning Christ, does not acknowledge the truth of God's testimony concerning the incarnation of his eternal Son. But the teacher who continues to hold that doctrine, acknowledges the Son's testimony concerning himself, as well as the Father's, ver. 9.—Wherefore, if any teacher came to them, and did not bring the true doctrine concerning Christ, he forbade them to receive him into their house, or so much as to give him the common salutation or wish of health, ver. 10.—Because the person who gives any encouragement to false teachers, though it be done inconsiderately, is in some sort accessory to the mischiefs which their pernicious doctrine may occasion, ver. 11.—He then told them, that he had many other things to say to them concerning these impostors, but he would not commit them to writing, because he hoped to come soon and converse with them personally, in a more free manner than he could do by letter, that their mutual joy might be complete, ver. 12.—and so concluded, with giving this lady the salutation of the children

of her sister, to whom likewise he gives the appellation of Elect, on account of the excellence of her character, ver. 13.

Ver. 1. The elder, &c.] The word *elder*, whether considered as a name of office, or taken in its literal sense, as implying age, will very well suit the character of St. John, who was above 90 years old when this epistle was written, and had the direction and government of the Asiatic churches. There can hardly be stronger internal arguments, that the three epistles now commonly ascribed to St. John, were the production of the same author, than may be derived from that remarkable similarity of sentiment and phraseology which appears in them. *Whom I love in the truth*, means, "Whom I love truly and sincerely;—on those principles which the gospel, the great system of truth, requires, with respect to those who so remarkably support and adorn it."

Ver. 4. I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children, &c.] In testimony of the sincerity of my love towards you, "I can assure you that my soul was warmed with exceeding joy, (*or,*) because upon good evidence, I was well satisfied that, of the children which God has graciously given you, there are some at least, who have received Christ and the truth of the gospel with faith and love to influence their hearts and lives; inasmuch, that wherever they go, their conversation is answerable thereto, in obedience to the holy commandment, which we, the apostles of Christ, have received from God the Father, with a commission to declare it." It is probable, that on one occasion or other, some of her sons had travelled abroad, as the word *περιπαθουσιν* may signify; and that the apostle had met with them, and seen their excellent spirit and deportment to be as became the gospel of Christ; and therefore spoke of them as persons whom he had found walking in the truth.

Ver. 6. And this is love,] That is, "the love which God the Father, by Christ his eternal Son, has enjoined upon Christians one towards another," as appears from the connection. The exhortations to mutual love among Christians, and the use of that phrase *from the beginning*, are so common in St. John's first epistle, that we need not refer to particular places. However, the parity between this and the first epistle appears remarkably in these instances.

Ver. 7. For many deceivers] "I exhort you to walk in the truth, and keep the commandment which you have had from the beginning, because many deceivers are gone out into the world, who, by their novel doctrine, pervert
y the

world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

8 ¹ Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have ^{*}wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 ² Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 ³ If there come any unto you, and bring

not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed :

11 For he that biddeth him God speed is ⁴ partaker of his evil deeds.

12 ⁵ Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink : but I trust to come unto you, and speak [†] face to face, that ⁶ our joy may be full.

13 The children of thy ⁷ elect sister greet thee. Amen.

¹ Mark, 13. 9. Gal. 3. 4. Heb. 10. 32. Mat. 13. 21. 1 Tim. 1. 19. 1 Cor. 15. 58. Pf. 29. 11. ^{*} Or *gained*. Some copies read, *which ye have gained, but that ye receive, &c.* ² 16. 3. 20. 1 Pet. 2. 2. Col. 3. 16. 1 John, 2. 23, 24. ³ Rom. 16. 17. Gal. 1. 8, 9. Prov. 4. 14, 15. Titus, 3. 10. Ver. 8. ⁴ 2 Tim. 3. 5, 6. & 4. 14. 1 Cor. 16. 22. ⁵ 1 Tim. 5. 21. Eph. 5. 11. Prov. 1. 10—19. ⁶ 3 John, 13. Rom. 7. 10—12. John, 16. 12. [†] Gr. *mouth to mouth.* ⁷ John, 17. 13. 1 John, 7. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 4. ⁸ Ver. 1. Rom. 8. 30. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 2 Thes. 2. 13. Eph. 2. 4. Rom. 11. 7.

“ the truth, and render the old commandment of none effect, &c.” All the sentiments and phrases in this verse are found in the first epistle.

Ver. 8. *Look to yourselves, &c.*] “ Beware therefore of them ; look about you ; stand upon your guard ; and take heed that your own faith and practice be not corrupted by them ; that so neither you yourselves, nor we, the ministers of Christ, may lose the good fruit of our ministry, which was instrumental in gaining you over to Christ, not only in profession, but, as we trust, in sincerity and truth : but, after all the attempts of deceivers to pervert you, hold that fast which ye have, that no man take your crown (Rev. iii. 11.), and that we, together with you, may reap the whole of the blessed reward, answerable to the utmost of our hopes and desires, which God, for Christ’s sake, has graciously promised to his faithful servants *that turn many to righteousness* (Dan. xii. 3.), and to all *them that love him* (James, i. 12.)”

Ver. 9. *Whosoever transgresseth.*] Instances of expressing the same thought, both negatively and positively, abound in the first epistle of St. John ; (see ch. i. 5.) and not only the sentiments, but many of the words in this verse are contained in the first epistle. *The doctrine of Christ* means the pure Christian doctrine mentioned, ver. 7.

Ver. 10. *If there come any unto you,*] *If any one come unto you.* Doddridge. Polycarp is said to have reported, that St. John, on going into the bath at Ephesus to wash himself, seeing Cerinthus there, he immediately hastened out of the bath ; saying, “ that he was afraid the bath should fall down, when Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, was there ;” and Polycarp himself is reported to have treated Marcion with no more civility. Whence we may learn what caution the apostles made use of to avoid intercourse or commerce with those who adulterated the truth. The Jews were forbidden by their rabbis to say, “ God speed” to, or to come within four cubits of, a heretic or excommunicated person. Our apostle, however, must not here be understood as excluding the common offices of humanity to such persons ; for that is contrary to all the general precepts of benevolence found in the gospel : but, to have received a seducing teacher into their house, and

have given him suitable accommodations, would have been shewing him such regard, and affording him such countenance, as indeed in some measure would have made them answerable for the mischief he might do in the church ; such favours being not merely offices of common humanity, but of patronage and friendship ; and in the general, at least, a testimony of their approbation, as well as kindness. See ver. 11.

Ver. 12. *Having many things to write*] Perhaps this lady, or her children, might have several difficulties to propose to the apostle, which he could answer more directly and largely in conversation ; or there might be several particulars with respect to the names, characters, behaviour, and doctrine of the false teachers, which St. John might not think proper to commit to writing. When he had said enough in this letter to guard against the present danger, he deferred saying more, till he had an opportunity to visit and converse with them.

Ver. 13. *The children of thy elect sister greet thee.*] *Brother and sister* very commonly, in the New Testament, mean fellow-christians ; but in that sense the word *sister* would have been too general and indeterminate in this place, and therefore we must understand it of a sister by blood or relationship. The word *elect*, in this and the first verse, denotes, that these sisters were *choice* or *excellent* Christians.

Inferences.—Let us observe the delineation of a love truly Christian, given in this chapter ; the love which the apostle, and all who knew the truth, are said to have had towards this excellent lady, for the truth’s sake which dwelt in her. Adored be that grace, which preserved her in so high a rank of life, from temptations which could not fail to surround her ! that grace, which rendered her an example of wisdom and piety, great and eminent in proportion to her exalted situation !

Nor can we forbear reflecting, how happy, in consequence of this, she herself was, possessed of grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord, in truth and love ! What were all the secular honours by which she was distinguished ! What the possession of riches, which in their own nature, and unimproved to the pious and charitable purposes to which she improved them,

them, are empty and unsatisfactory; what are these, when compared with such important blessings! We cannot but rejoice, at this distance of time, and ignorant as we are of the name, situation, and history, of this worthy lady, that her children walked in the truth. It was a singular joy to St. John, and may be so in a degree to all; and may teach us to lift up our hearts to God in prayer, that all Christian parents, especially pious mothers, and more particularly those whose character in life is so eminently distinguished, may enjoy this happiness, and see the seed that they are, with such commendable industry, sowing in the minds of their tender offspring, growing up, and bringing forth much fruit.

We have, in the beloved apostle, an excellent pattern of a becoming care, to make a correspondence with our Christian friends useful; which we shall do, if, like him, we are exhorting them to the cultivation of mutual love, and to a constant uniform care in keeping the commandments of God; if we continue warning them against the prevailing sins and errors of the day, and urging them to a holy solicitude, that they may not lose what they have already attained; but may receive a full reward for every work of faith, and labour of love, in consequence of a course of resolute and persevering piety.

Persons of the most distinguished goodness have need to be cautioned against that excess of generosity and hospitality, which might sometimes make them partakers with seducers in their evil deeds, by giving them their audience, and wishing them good success, while, by their fair speeches, they impose upon the simplicity of open and upright hearts, who, because themselves are void of fraud, are often void of suspicion too. But there is a prudent caution to be observed upon this head; and it is the part of faithful friendship to suggest it; for many deceivers are come out into the world. For our security against them, let us be always upon our guard, and take care to continue in the doctrine of Christ: that so we may have the Father, and the Son; and if we are interested in their favour, we shall stand in need of nothing, and shall have nothing of which to be afraid. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, St. John opens his epistle,

1. With the inscription. *The elder*, John, now far advanced in age, and by office an elder, as well as an apostle, unto the *elect lady*, whom I need not name, as her excellent Christian graces render her so gloriously distinguished; and to her children, heirs with her of the same promise; whom I love in the truth, unfeignedly, and for the sake of him whose image they bear; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth, and are personally acquainted with them, or have heard of their character in the churches, and cannot but respect and delight in those who adorn so eminently the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; for the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, which renders the professor more respectable than all riches, birth, or titles; and shall be with us for ever; as if he had said to them, So deep is the truth, as it is in Jesus, grounded in your mind and heart, that I indulge a holy confidence that the relish of it will never be lost, be the remaining years of life ever so many, or the events of them ever so trying.

2. We have the apostolic benediction. *Grace be with you*, in all its happy fruits and effects, of pardon, strength, and consolation, with *mercy and peace*, and every blessing

that we can ask, or the Lord hath promised to give, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom we are indebted for all, and who is the Son of the Father,—may these graces animate you to walk in truth, and in universal love, according to the tenor of that glorious gospel with which the Lord has favoured you.

3. His congratulation. *I rejoiced greatly, that*, in some of those excursions which I made for the service of the gospel, I found of thy children walking in the truth, as it is in Jesus, and in their spirit and conduct, a credit to the holy profession which they make, guided by the oracles of God, as we have received a commandment from the Father. Note; (1.) It is a singular joy to ministers, to behold the rising generation ornaments to religion. (2.) We then walk in the truth, when we make God's word a constant rule of conduct.

4. His request and exhortation. *And now I beseech thee, lady*, as the chief design of my epistle, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another, out of a pure heart fervently, from the divine principle of faith which worketh by love. And this is love, the infallible test of true love to God and man, that we walk after his commandments, with universal and conscientious respect to all his holy will. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it, under the influence of this great law of love. Note; Kind exhortations are in general preferable to authoritative commands, and usually much more available.

2dly, The apostle proceeds,

1. To warn and guard this honoured family against the wiles of seducers. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, broaching the most fatal and heretical doctrines, as that Jesus Christ assumed not the real human nature, but lived and died in appearance only; or that he who was born at Nazareth, was not the true expected Messiah. This is a deceiver and an antichrist, an avowed enemy to the Redeemer's glory and gospel, and a destroyer of the souls of men. Therefore look to yourselves with holy jealousy and watchfulness, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, and be at last disappointed of our hope of you; while you come finally short of eternal salvation, and, after all the most promising appearances and experiences, be seduced by the error of the wicked; but hold fast the truth, and, whereunto ye have already attained, walk by the same rule, mind the same things, that we receive a full reward; that you persevering and abounding in the grace of God, both we and you may receive the ample reward which, through divine grace, is laid up for us, if faithful unto death. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God, is not influenced by his Spirit, and hath now no part in his salvation: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, with regard to his divine Person, real incarnation, mediatorial offices, and the complete salvation which he bestows upon all his faithful people, professing boldly his faith in defiance of all opposition, be hath both the Father and the Son, is admitted into a holy and happy communion with them, and has a most blessed interest in their love and favour.

2. They are enjoined not to give the least countenance to these seducers. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor afford him

ought of that hospitable entertainment which you kindly give to the faithful ministers of Christ; *neither bid him God speed, nor with the least success to such ungodly attempts as the propagation of these poisonous errors: for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds, and an abettor of his wickedness.* *Note;* We need be very cautious, not only to keep from evil ourselves, but to avoid being partakers of other men's sins.

3. He concludes with informing the lady, that he hoped shortly to have a more full personal conference with her

on this subject. *Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, more at large; that our joy may be full, and we may be happy together in the experience of the true grace of God, and be preserved from all deceivers. The children of thy elect sister greet thee!* How happy is it where grace thus diffuses itself through a whole family, and those who are united by the ties of blood are thus more nearly united in the bonds of God's love! *Amen.* Would to God that this were the case in every family!

••• The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
THIRD EPISTLE
OF
J O H N.

P R E F A C E.

ST. JOHN in this Epistle calls himself *The Ancient*, not so much in reference to his office, like *St. Peter*, in his first Epistle, ch. v. 1. as on account of his great age. It were presumption to pretend to determine who was the *Gaius* to whom this Epistle is addressed; for, there being at that time several believers of this name, as appears from *Acts*, xix. 29. and *Rom.* xvi. 23. we can find nothing conclusive upon the subject. Neither is it certain whether this man was a minister, or a believer only; but more probably the latter, since *St. John* does not call him by any of the names which are usually given to ministers of the Gospel, as servant of Christ, brother, fellow-labourer, &c. which the apostle would hardly have omitted, had he been a minister. Besides, he charges him with the care of the travelling ministers who should come to him, and that he would conduct them safely to the neighbouring towns, which is rather the office of a private person than of a minister, who, being occupied with the care of his flock, could not be so much at liberty to employ himself in these offices as private persons. *St. John* complains, in this Epistle, of the haughtiness of one *Diotrephes*, who had carried his arrogance so far as to speak disrespectfully of the apostle himself, whom the whole church held in the highest esteem. It is probable, that the meekness and simplicity which appeared in every part of *St. John's* behaviour, offended this proud haughty man, who would have had all bend under the ecclesiastical yoke, and wanted himself to be at the head of the church.

He commendeth Gaius for his piety, and hospitality to true preachers; complaineth of the unkind dealing of ambitious Diotrephes, on the contrary side, whose evil example is not to be followed; and giveth special testimony to the good report of Demetrius.

[Anno Domini 90.]

THE ^aelder unto the well beloved ^bGaius,
^cwhom I love ^{*}in the truth.

2 Beloved, ^aI [†]wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as ^athy soul prospereth.

3 For ^aI rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of ^athe truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that ^amy children [†]walk in truth.

^a See 2 John, 1. ^b Acts, 19. 29. & 20. 4. ^c Rom. 16. 23. [†] 1 Cor. 1. 14. ^{*} See 2 John, 1. [†] Job, 3. 18. ^{*} Or *truly*. ^a Rom. 11. 10.
Pf. 122. 6, 8. [†] Phil. 2. 4. [†] Or *pray*. ^a 1 Cor. 1. 5. & 2. 14. & 4. 16—18. & 3. 18. ^a 1 Pet. 1. 3—9. & 3. 18. [†] 2 John, 4. ^a Ver. 4.
Phil. 4. 1. [†] 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20. ^a 2 John, 2. [†] 1 John, 2. 14, 24. [†] John, 15. 7. ^a Col. 3. 16. [†] Phil. 1. 6. ^a Pf. 119. 11. & 51. 6. [†] John, 1. 47. ^a Phil. 30.
[†] 1 Cor. 4. 15. ^a Gal. 4. 19. [†] 1s. 8. 18. [†] Eph. 4. 21. & 6. 15. ^a Prov. 23. 23. [†] Col. 3. 16. ^a Jude, 3. [†] Mat. 28. 20.

TO encourage Gaius to persevere in that holy virtuous course, by which he had obtained the love of all who knew him, *St. John*, in the inscription of this letter, declared his

own love to him, on account of the uncommon goodness of his character and actions, ver. 1.—and prayed to God to prosper him in his spiritual concerns, ver. 2.—and told him what

5 Beloved, ² thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers ;

6 Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church : whom if ¹ thou bring for-

² Luke, 12. 42. 1 Pet. 4. 2, 10. Heb. 13. 1-3.

¹ Titus, 3. 13. Col. 1. 10.

what joy it gave him, when the brethren who had been assisted by him brought him the welcome news of his perseverance in the true doctrine of the gospel, ver. 3.—because one of the apostle's greatest joys was to hear that his disciples walked in the truth, ver. 4.—Next, he praised Gaius as acting agreeably to the gospel, when he shewed kindness to the brethren and to the strangers, who had applied to him for succour in their straits, ver. 5.—And to encourage him to persevere in these charitable Christian offices, he told Gaius, that the brethren and strangers, when they returned, bare an honourable testimony to his love, publicly before the churches over which St. John presided. And, as they were, at the time this letter was written, making a second journey among the Gentiles, he told him, if he helped them forward a second time, in a manner worthy of God whom they served, by succouring them, he would still do a good work acceptable to God, ver. 6.—because these brethren and strangers, for the sake of publishing the name of Christ and the doctrine of the gospel among the Gentiles, were gone forth, as formerly, with a resolution of taking nothing on the score of maintenance from the Gentiles, notwithstanding they infinitely benefited the Gentiles by preaching the gospel to them, ver. 7.—For which cause, all who had the furtherance of the gospel at heart, he told him, were bound to shew such persons kindness, that they might be joint labourers with them in spreading and establishing the truth, ver. 8.

Next, he told Gaius, that he would have written the same exhortation to the church of which he was a member ; but he had abstained from writing, because Diotrophes, who ruled every thing in that church according to his own humour, did not acknowledge his apostolical authority ; thereby insinuating, that Diotrophes probably would have suppressed any letter which the apostle might write, ver. 9.—He added, that because Diotrophes did not acknowledge his authority, he would, when he came among them, put him in mind of his deeds ; his prating against the apostle with malicious words, his not receiving the brethren and the strangers who had applied to him in their straits for relief, his hindering the members of his church from assisting them, who were disposed to do it, and his casting those out of the church, who had persevered in assisting them contrary to his arbitrary orders. By this, I think, the apostle threatened to exercise his miraculous power in punishing Diotrophes for his evil deeds, ver. 10.—But, beloved, said he, do not imitate what is evil in Diotrophes, but what is good in Demetrius. For he who from the heart doth good, knows God, and imitates the most amiable and spotless pattern ; but he that harbours such malignant passions, and behaves in so injurious a manner, whatever high notions he may pretend to, is plainly ignorant both of the perfections and will of God, ver. 11.—He then told Gaius, that Demetrius was every way worthy of being imitated, because he was praised not only by all good men, but by the gospel itself, his temper and actions being conformable to the precepts of the gospel

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in every respect. To these honourable testimonies St. John added his own approbation of Demetrius's character, which Gaius knew to be a true testimony, because he knew that the apostle never praised any person from flattery, and that he wrote by the infallible inspiration of the Spirit of God, ver. 12.—He told him farther, that he had many things to write to him, probably concerning the unchristian temper and conduct of Diotrophes in particular ; but he would not commit them to paper, lest his letter, falling into other hands, might be shewed to that imperious man, and enrage him against Gaius, ver. 13.—But he hoped to visit Gaius soon, and then would speak to him mouth to mouth freely concerning Diotrophes, and on every other useful subject. In the mean time, to testify his esteem of Gaius, he gave him his apostolical benediction, together with the salutation of all the faithful who were with him, and whom he named *the friends*, because they were the friends of Christ, and lived in strict friendship with each other. Lastly, he desired Gaius, in his name, to wish health and happiness to all the faithful in his church, whom he termed *the friends* because they also were the friends of Christ, and lived in the strictest friendship with each other, ver. 14.

Ver. 1. The well-beloved Gaius,] We read of one Gaius, of Corinth, Rom. xvi. 23. who hospitably received St. Paul, when he went out to preach the gospel *gratis* ; and if this were, as he seems to have been, the same, he was St. Paul's convert : nor is St. John's calling him *his child*, an argument to the contrary ; since in the general he addresses all Christians in the same tender and affectionate style, agreeably to the sweetness of his temper, and suitably to his advanced years.

Ver. 2. Above all things] *In every respect.* Schmidius and Doddridge. The word *ἑνωσθησάου* signifies *to walk in a right path*, or to go prosperously on one's way ; from whence it is applied to prosperity in general. See 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Comp. Pf. i. 3.

Ver. 3. Testified of the truth] *Testified concerning the truth* (*ὡς τῆ ἀληθείας*), *as thou walkest in the truth*, and adornest the gospel by an exemplary behaviour.

Ver. 4. To hear that my children] There is no occasion to understand hereby that they were all St. John's own converts : (see 1 John, ii. 1.) he had styled himself the *elder* ; there was therefore a beauty in his calling all those *his children*, who were under his apostolic care, or paternal inspection ; and he rejoiced like a tender father over a wife son. The apostle seems to have alluded to Prov. x. 1. with which compare Prov. xiii. 1. xvii. 25. xix. 13. Baxter's note on this verse is, " True ministers rejoice more for the welfare of men's souls, than in preferments, wealth, or worldly honour."

Ver. 5. Thus doest faithfully] " As becomes a faithful Christian." The Papists have contrived, by various falsifications, to make the scriptures speak the language of their church. We have given a remarkable instance on James, v. 11. Here we have another ; for " St. John," say they, " praises Gaius, for having dealt faithfully with

5 2

" pilgrims."

ward on their journey after a godly sort thou shalt do well :

7 ^m Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 ⁿ We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be ^o fellow helpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church : but Diotrophes, who ^p loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, * receiveth us not.

10 Wherefore, if I come, ^q I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words : and not content there-

with, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, ' follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. ' He that doeth good is of God : but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.

12 Demetrius hath ' good report of all men, and of the truth itself : yea, and we *also* bear record ; and ye know that ^r our record is true.

13 ^s I had many things to write, but I will

^m Acts, 3. 4. 1 Cor. 9. 12, 15. 2 Cor. 11. 7, 9. & 12. 13. ⁿ Mat 10. 14. Luke, 10. 7. ^o Zech. 3. 19. Prov. 23. 23. 2 Thess. 3. 7. Jude, 1. 2 Tim. 1. 11. & 2. 15. Titus, 1. 9. 1 Tim. 1. 18, 19. & 6. 20. ^p 1 Cor. 1. 24. Mark, 9. 34. Luke, 22. 24. ^q Re'u eth to own my authority. ^r 2 Cor. 10. 6, 9, 10. 11. 65. 5. John, 16. 2. ^s 1 xid. 23. 3. Numb. 16. 26. 1st. 37. 27. 1st. 1. 16. 2 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Pet. 3. 11. ^{*} 1 John, 2. 29. & 3. 6, 9. 1 Tim. 3. 7. 1 Thess. 4. 12. & 2. 6-10. ^u John, 19. 35. & 21. 24. ^v 2 John, 12.

“ *pilgrims.*” See “ *Popery an Enemy to Scripture,*” by Mr. Serces, and the Preface to Dr. Middleton’s Letter from Rome, p. 66, &c.

Ver. 6. If thou bring forward on their journey] If, according to your wonted kindness, you will do what in you lies to give them all needful assistances for their journey, in a manner suitable to your own Christian temper, and to their relation to, and employment for God, you will act (*καταως*) a worthy part toward them in imitation of his goodness.

Ver. 7. Because that for his name’s sake] “ For the sake “ of spreading the name or religion of Jesus :” out of zeal for his honour and interest, they went out, abandoned their habitations, possessions, and callings, that they might spread his gospel; receiving *nothing of the Gentiles* among whom they laboured, that they might take off all suspicion of those mercenary views, above which divine grace had so far raised them.

Ver. 8. We therefore ought to receive such, &c.] “ It “ therefore certainly is our duty, who wish well to the “ cause of Christ and to immortal souls, to take such generous, and disinterested, and needy ministers into our “ affectionate care and kind regards; and to be helpful to “ them according to our ability, that we may have the “ pleasure and the honour of bearing a part with them in “ the success of their ministrations, by contributing to “ their maintenance; and so may work together with “ them in propagating the truth of the gospel among the “ Gentiles as well as the Jews.”

Ver. 9. But Diotrophes,] Diotrophes has been taken for a Gentile Christian, who would not receive the Jewish Christians; and it must be acknowledged that it was a common name among the Gentiles: but it is also well known, that Alexander, Philip, Stephen, Æneas, and many other Gentile names, were common among the Jews, and therefore the name of Diotrophes will prove nothing. Besides, the Gentile Christians rarely or ever refused communion with the Jewish Christians; but the Judaizing Christians very frequently refused to join with the Gentile converts; and several of the Judaizers resisted men endued with apostolic authority. *Diotrophes* therefore seems to have been a zealous, bigoted, Judaizing Christian, the

minister of some Christian church near Ephesus; who was out of all patience with such as preached the gospel to the Gentiles, and would neither use them kindly himself, when they passed that way, nor suffer any of his church, if he could help it, to treat them with kindness, and encourage them in that attempt.

Ver. 10. If I come,] *When I come.* See 1 John. iii. 2. 2 Cor. xiii. 2. Diotrophes’s turning out of the church such as displeased him, renders it highly probable that he was bishop or pastor of that church. See the former note.

Ver. 11. Follow not that which is evil,] *Imitate not, &c.* As Diotrophes seems to have been pastor of the church where Gaius lived, and a zealous, conceited, Judaizing Christian, it is not unlikely but he made boisterous pretensions to greater knowledge of God and of the Gospel than St. John had; and lest such glorying should recommend his bad example, and make him pass for a person of high reputation, St. John cautions Gaius against following his example; and recommends to him rather the imitation of such plain honest Christians as kindly received those who travelled about to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. It is very likely that they boasted not of their own knowledge, but behaved well; and that was a much better proof of their understanding the nature of God, and of the gospel of Christ, than any pretensions to uncommon knowledge, without a suitable temper and conduct.

Ver. 12. Demetrius hath good report] Good men are in scripture of tenand justly praised; and the giving of such characters did not proceed from selfishness, flattery, or respect of persons, but from the real truth of the case. When the scriptures condemn persons, it is not from malice or personal resentment, but because of their wickedness; and they applaud no man, but for his holiness, virtue, and piety. *Demetrius* has been taken for a member of that church to which Gaius belonged. Others, however, take *Demetrius* for the bearer of this letter, and one of the most eminent and zealous of the persons who had then got out into those parts, preaching the gospel *gratis* to the Gentiles. This would probably exasperate Diotrophes the more against him, and render it proper for the

not with ink and pen write unto thee :

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak * face to face. Peace be to thee.

Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

* Gr. *mouth to mouth.*

apostle to be more particular and earnest in recommending Demetrius to the peculiar protection and regard of Gaius.

Ver. 14. Greet the friends by name.] St. John's saluting the faithful Christians by name, shewed his paternal and affectionate regard for them, and tended, under the divine blessing, to keep them steadfast in the truth and purity of the gospel. Comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 21, &c.

Inferences.—How desirable, but, alas! how few are the instances of such prosperity of soul and spiritual concerns, as one would wish to be the measure of a proportional state of bodily health and success in temporal affairs! Such Christians as abound in faith and charity towards their pious acquaintance and strangers, and give substantial proofs of it in their lives, are exceeding lovely and greatly beloved, rejoiced in, caressed, and honourably spoken of as worthy of imitation, by all true friends to the gospel of Christ, and especially by his ministering servants. But how should proud, insolent imposers upon churches, and malicious revilers of the uncorrupted gospel and its faithful preachers, be detested, exposed, and censured, as open enemies to it and them, and as injurious and domineering lords over God's heritage, who will neither do good themselves, nor suffer others to do it that would! They are strangers to the true knowledge of God: but all who, from principles of faith and love, seek and do the things that please him, are his children, and ought, for his sake, to assist ministering servants in their Lord's work, that they may bear a part with them in propagating evangelical truth and the good of precious souls. To write such things as these to Christian friends, as occasions offer, is very useful: but how much more delightful and advantageous is it to converse freely together about them! May all religious affection be ever preserved among true believers, and mutual sincere wishes of every kind of happiness, both temporal and spiritual, be cultivated between them, with cordial friendship one towards another! And especially may our love abound to those who have a desire to spread the gospel. And O, that it were more universal! O, that Divine grace would excite more to quit the indulgence of their homes, or their countries, if there be no bond of duty to detain them there, that they may go and preach to the Gentiles! And, though there be no prospect of any requital from them, God will open to them his celestial treasure, and they shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. The inscription and salutation. *The elder, John, unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth, as a faithful member of Jesus Christ. Beloved, I wish, above all things, that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth; and may your success in all temporal things, and your bodily health, bear pace with your spiritual pro-*

sperty. *Note;* (1.) The true prosperity, and that which is most desirable, is the health of the soul. (2.) Bodily health is a singular mercy, especially as it enables us more eminently to improve our spiritual gifts and graces for the good of mankind.

2. He testifies the satisfaction that he felt in the report which he had heard. *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came, and testified of the truth that is in thee, of thy faith and love unfeigned; even as thou walkest in the truth, adorning with all manner of holy conversation thy Christian profession. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.* *Note;* It is a sincere and heartfelt delight to the faithful ministers of Christ, to behold the children whom they have begotten in the gospel, walk worthy of their vocation.

3. He commends his kind and charitable conduct. *Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers; such hospitality and generosity are the general characteristics of thy faithful heart, and have been justly praised by those which have borne witness of thy charity before the church, and gratefully acknowledged the kindnesses which they received: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, and assist those itinerant preachers of the gospel who devote their time and labour to this blessed work of spreading the glad tidings through the earth, thou shalt do well, and act a noble part in thus advancing the blessed cause of our divine Redeemer; because that for his name's sake they went forth, giving up all the world, that they might devote themselves wholly to the ministry, and, with a spirit uninfluenced by any mercenary views, taking nothing of the Gentiles, but preaching the gospel of God freely. We therefore, who wish well to that service, and whom God hath blessed with ability, ought to receive such, and afford them a comfortable maintenance; that we might be fellow helpers to the truth, and, though not ordained to be preachers, may hereby receive a preacher's reward.* *Note;* They who devote themselves to the ministry, foregoing all worldly pursuits for the love of Christ and immortal souls, deserve every kindness at our hands that we can shew them.

2dly, The apostle,

1. Points out a man of a very different character. *I wrote unto the church: but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, and proudly to lord it over them, receiveth us not, pays no regard to our apostolic injunctions. Wherefore if, or when, I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, and severely animadvert upon his imperious and uncharitable conduct, prating against us with malicious words, assuming the most insolent airs, and daring even to cast reproach on the divinely-constituted apostles of the Son of God: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren to any hospitable entertainment in his house, and forbiddeth them that would; and, when any notwithstanding disobey his mandates, and receive, assist, and further in their way those faithful ministers of*

Christ, who travel preaching the gospel, he *casteth them out of the church*, merely for presuming to disobey his wicked commands and usurped authority. *Note*; (1.) Nothing is more contrary to the spirit of a Christian minister, than overbearing arrogance and pride. (2.) They are doubly wicked, who neither will do good themselves, nor suffer those to do it, who are willing.

2. He dissuades Gaius from copying so bad an example. *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good*; let no height of station or office lead you to copy a bad man, but ever imitate the excellent and the generous. *He that doeth good, is of God*, proves that he is born of him, and partakes of his Spirit: *but he that doeth evil, hath not seen God*; whatever pretensions of religion he may make, he is destitute of all experimental knowledge of divine things.

3. He mentions Demetrius as an excellent man, and worthy of imitation. *Demetrius hath good report of all men*;

all who know him bear testimony of his amiable and pious conversation; *and of the truth itself*, every one who would speak the truth, must acknowledge his excellence; and we, who are ministers of truth, declare our full approbation of him: *and ye know that our record is true*, and may be assuredly depended upon. *Note*; It is a noble character indeed, so to behave as to be entitled to universal applause, and to be approved of God, and of all men of truth and integrity.

4. He concludes his epistle with the hopes of a personal interview shortly. *I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee*; but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face, when I can more fully communicate all my mind. *Peace be to thee*; prosperity of every kind attend thee in body and soul. *Our friends salute thee*, joining in all Christian wishes. *Greet the friends with thee by name*, presenting to each my most affectionate remembrances.

•• The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
GENERAL EPISTLE
OF
J U D E.

P R E F A C E.

THE author of this Epistle calls himself by a name which was common to all the apostles, and the rest of the ministers of the Gospel, the servant of Jesus Christ, as St. Paul has done at the beginning of his Epistles to the Philippians and to Titus; and also by a name peculiar to himself, the brother of James; consequently he was a near relation to our Lord Jesus Christ, as will appear by comparing Matth. x. 3. with John, xix. 25. The origin of this Epistle is most apparently divine: it is quoted and received as canonical in the writings of the oldest fathers of the church; and all the Greek manuscripts of this Epistle begin with these words, Jude the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, which can mean no other than Jude or Judas, for the name is the same in Hebrew and in Greek; and he is also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus, Matth. x. 3.

In this Epistle, which, like those of St. Peter, was primarily written to the Jews dispersed in Asia, St. Jude opposes in particular the corruptions of the heretics of that time, of whom the ecclesiastical history gives us a dreadful account. For the devil, the better to proceed in the design which he has ever had of destroying or diminishing the church, has attacked it on all sides, by the most monstrous errors against its doctrines, and by scandalous maxims for corrupting its morals, and opening a door to the most shocking impurities. And hence St. Jude, speaking of these heretics, says, that they defile and corrupt themselves as brute beasts, &c. And he warns the faithful to beware of such people; and to keep so clear from vice, with such zeal for holiness, as to be found faultless through the power and grace of Christ, when he should present them before the presence of his glory: for the nearer we are brought unto God by the redemption we obtain in Christ, the more should we be careful to walk in sobriety and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Heb. xii. 14.

He exhorteth them to be constant in the profession of the faith. False teachers are crept in to seduce them; for whose damnable doctrine and manners horrible punishment is prepared: whereas the godly, by the assistance of the holy Spirit, and prayers to God, may persevere and grow in grace and keep themselves, and recover others out of the snares of those deceivers.

[Date uncertain.]

JUDE^a, the^b servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that^c are sancti-

fied by God the Father, and^d preserved in Jesus Christ, and^e called:

2^f Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the^g common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that^h ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

^a Luke, 6. 16. John, 14. 22. Acts, 1. 13. & 10. 28. & 17. 11, 12. 1 Peter, 1. 5.

^b Rom. 1. 1. James, 1. 1. 2 Peter, 1. 1. ^c 1 Peter, 2. 9. Heb. 3. 1. ^d Tim. 1. 9. Rom. 8. 30.

^e Lev. 22. 8. 1 Peter, 1. 2. ^f John, 6. 39. ^g Rom. 1. 7. 2 Cor. 1. 2. & 13. 14. ^h Jer. 9. 3. P'sal. 1. 27. 1 Tim. 1. 18. & 6. 12. 2 Tim. 1. 13. & 4. 7. Titus, 1. 4. Prov. 23. 26. Rev. 2. 10.

THE design of this epistle is to describe the character of the false teachers, and to point out the divine judgments which persons of such a character had reason to expect. As St. Peter, in his Second Epistle, describes the false teachers as yet to come, which St. Jude mentions as already come, it is obvious that this epistle was written after that of St. Peter: but how long after is very uncertain.

After inscribing his letter to all who were sanctified, and preserved, and called, St. Jude, after the example of his brethren apostles, gave to the faithful his apostolical benediction, ver. 1. 2.—then told them, that he judged it necessary, in the then state of the church, to exhort them strenuously and more particularly to contend for the faith formerly delivered to the holy apostles and prophets, and by them to the disciples of Christ, ver. 3.—because certain ungodly men, under the mask of being inspired, had come in among the faithful, and from the goodness of God in pardoning men's sins, through the merits of Christ, as published in the gospel, had inferred that God would not punish sinners, and by thus perverting the mercy of God, had encouraged their disciples in all manner of lascivious practices. Moreover, when in danger of suffering for their faith, they had not scrupled to deny both God the Father and his Christ, vainly fancying that God would not punish them for so doing, ver. 4.—But, to shew how ill-founded the doctrine of these deceivers was, St. Jude put the faithful in mind how God, having saved the people of Israel from Egypt, afterward utterly destroyed the whole of them in the wilderness for their sin of unbelief, except Caleb and Joshua, ver. 5.—Also, how he bound the rebellious angels with everlasting chains, under darkness, in order to their being punished at the judgment of the great day, ver. 6.—Moreover, he told them, seeing the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha and of the neighbouring cities, who had given themselves up to unnatural lusts, as the false teachers likewise did, are, in the punishment which was inflicted on them, set forth as an everlasting example of God's just indignation against such crimes, ver. 7.—So in like manner, said he, these wicked teachers and their disciples shall assuredly be punished, who, having lost all sense of holiness and virtue, defiled their bodies with unnatural lusts, and despised the office of magistrates, and reviled those who exercised it, because they punished them for their misdeeds, ver. 8.—With

this insulence of the heretical teachers towards the heathen magistrates, the apostle contrasted the behaviour of the Archangel Michael towards the Devil. For that great and holy Angel, when contending with the Devil about the body of Moses, which the Angel was to bury privately, but which the Devil would have revealed, he did not attempt to revile even that apostate spirit, but said to him mildly, the Lord rebuke thee, Satan, ver. 9.—whereas the wicked teachers who are now gone abroad, speak evil of magistrates, the origin and end of whose office they do not understand; and corrupt themselves by the only knowledge they possess; namely, that knowledge of the use of their body, which is suggested to them by their natural appetites, and which they have in common with brute beasts, ver. 10.—The apostle, therefore, declared the misery which was awaiting these impious teachers, whose wickedness, in slaying the souls of men by their false doctrine, he compared to that of Cain who slew his brother; and whose excessive love of money he compared to that of Balaam, who, to obtain the hire which Balak promised him, cursed the Israelites, contrary to his conscience: and whose miserable end, for opposing Christ and his apostles, he compared to that of Korah and his companions, for opposing Moses and Aaron, ver. 11.

These wicked teachers, the apostle told the faithful, were spots in their love-feasts, being guilty of gluttony and drunkenness; so that even if they had taught true doctrine, they would have rendered it ineffectual by their bad example. For which reason, he compared them to clouds without water, and to trees absolutely dead, ver. 12. And because by their wicked practices they disgraced themselves, he called them *raging waves of the sea* *foaming out their own shame*; and *meteors* which were to be extinguished for ever, ver. 13.—Further, to terrify these wicked men, he declared that Enoch prophesied, not to the antediluvians only, but to them also, when he said, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his holy angels, ver. 14.—to inflict condign punishment on all the ungodly, both for their impious speeches, and for their wicked practices, ver. 15.—And, that the faithful might be at no loss to know them, he mentioned it as a trait in their character, that they murmured against God, and complained of the unequal distribution of the good things of this life, as if their share of them was not proportioned

4. For there are certain men¹ crept in un-
 awares, who^k were before of old ordained to
 this condemnation, ungodly men,^l turning the
 grace of our God into lasciviousness, and deny-

¹ Gal. 2. 4. ² Peter, 2. 1—3, 18, 19. & 3. 17. Eph. 4. 14. ² Tim. 3. 6. & 3. 17, 18. ^k Rom. 9. 21, 22. ^l Peter, 2. 8. ² Peter, 3. 3.
³ John, 1. 17. Titus, 2. 11, 12. Acts, 20. 32. with Titus, 1. 16. Heb. 12. 15. ² Peter, 2. 1, 18, 22.

to their merits; for they wished to indulge all their own
 lusts without restraint. And, to persuade their disciples
 to supply them with money for that end, they spake in the
 most pompous manner in their own praise, and pretended
 to have the utmost respect for the rich, and flattered them
 with the hope of salvation, without any regard to their ex-
 perience, character, and actions, ver. 16.—Now, that the
 success of these impostors might not occasion too much
 grief to the faithful, St. Jude, by observing that their rise
 and progress had been foretold, insinuated that they were
 permitted in the church for wise purposes. — But, *beloved*,
 said he, *remember the words which were before spoken by the*
apostles, ver. 17.—how they foretold that before and after
 the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth, scoundrels were
 to arise in the church, who, ridiculing the holy precepts of
 the gospel, would follow the direction of their own un-
 godly lusts, ver. 18.—and, at the same time, would sepa-
 rate themselves from the real disciples of Christ, on pre-
 tence that they were ignorant of the true doctrine of the
 gospel, and void of the Spirit: whereas they themselves
 were mere animal men, utterly deserted of the Spirit of
 God, ver. 19.—But the faithful, shunning to associate with
 these impostors, were to build one another firmly on their
 most holy faith by the means of pious conference; and by
 praying with the holy Spirit, which neither the false
 teachers nor their disciples could do, ver. 20.—They were
 through grace to keep one another effectually in the love
 of God: and then their prayers, dictated by the Spirit,
 would be an evidence to them of God's presence: and,
 being conscious of their loving God, they might on good
 ground expect the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ ex-
 ercised towards them, accompanied with eternal life, ver. 21.
 —And as their love to God would lead them to attempt
 the reformation of those who erred, whether they were
 teachers or private Christians, the apostle desired them to
 make a distinction in their manner of treating them. They
 were to exercise compassion toward those who erred
 through ignorance and weakness; that is, they were to
 instruct and reclaim such by the gentle method of per-
 suasion, ver. 22.—But the others who erred wilfully through
 corruption of heart, they were to save from destruction
 by the power of terror, reproving them sharply, and cen-
 suring them severely, that they might snatch them out of
 the fire of the wrath of God, which was ready to devour
 them. But, in doing them this friendly office, they were
 to shun all familiarity with them, as carefully as they would
 shun touching a garment spotted by the flesh of a person
 who had a plague sore, lest they should be infected by
 their vicious conversation, ver. 23.

Having thus finished what he judged necessary for their
 instruction and direction, the apostle encouraged the faith-
 ful to persevere in the true doctrine and practice of the
 gospel, by a solemn ascription of praise to him, who was
 both able and willing to keep them from falling into error,
 and to present them faultless at the day of judgment with
 exceeding joy to themselves, ver. 24.—even to the only

wife God our Saviour, whose glory as God and Saviour
 will last through all ages. Then to shew his indubitable
 persuasion of all the things which he had written, the
 apostle concluded his epistle with an *Amen*, ver. 25.

Ver. 1. And brother of James,] He might also have
 called himself *the brother of our Lord*, for he was nearly
 related to the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the flesh;
 but though the evangelists have given them that title, yet
 neither Jude, nor his brother James, have ever taken it to
 themselves: perhaps they avoided it out of their great hu-
 mility, or to intimate that, though they had known Christ
 after the flesh, or valued themselves for being related to
 him, yet now henceforth they knew him so no more, nor
 valued themselves so much upon that account, as in their
 being his faithful servants. *Preserved in Jesus Christ*,
 means, “preserved in that hour of temptation, when so
 many false teachers had corrupted the gospel, and such
 numbers of Christians had fallen from the purity of it.”
 As they retained their integrity, they would be preserved
 from the judgments which were coming upon those who
 had fallen away; and they might depend upon it, that, if
 faithful unto death, they should in due time receive their
 reward.

Ver. 3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence, &c.] This
 verse, about the sense of which commentators have strangely
 disagreed, may be thus paraphrased: “Beloved, when I
 was studiously thoughtful about, and earnestly applied
 to the work of sending an epistle to you, concern-
 ing that spiritual salvation, which is common to you
 and me, and all true believers, whether Jews or Gen-
 tiles, and is proposed and recommended in the gospel
 to the acceptance of all sinners, to whom it is preached
 with this assurance, that *whosoever cometh to Christ, he will*
in no wise cast him out, (John, vi. 37.)—I saw this to be
 a point of such vast importance, and so vehemently
 struck at in this day of sad defection and of intriguing,
 as well as of violent methods to overthrow it, that
 I thought it necessary, under divine suggestion, to
 write to you about it, and stir you up by every con-
 sideration relating to your own safety and comfort and
 the glory of Christ and of God in him, to exert your-
 selves, in a humble dependance on divine grace, with
 the utmost vigour, even, as it were, to an agony of
 labour and concern (*επρυμνίζουσα*), in maintaining,
 defending, and practising the pure and uncorrupted
 doctrine of faith in its full extent, with respect to the
 person, offices, grace, and government of the Lord
 Christ, which was once delivered by him to his holy
 apostles, and, by them to the church, consisting of be-
 lievers that are holy in heart and life; and which was
 committed as a trust and treasure to them, that they
 might keep it faithfully, and transmit it to posterity,
 and not suffer it to be altered, or wrested out of their
 hands, by any means whatever. I say there is great
 need that I should write to you about this.”

Ver. 4. For there are certain men crept in, &c.] *The*
creeping

ing the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 I^m will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

6 Andⁿ the angels which kept not their

* first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

7 ° Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after^p strange flesh, ^q are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

^m Rom. 15. 15. Numb. 14. 37. 1 Cor. 10. 5, 10. Heb. 3. 17, 19. with 2 Peter, 1. 12, 13. & 3. 1. ⁿ 2 Peter, 2. 4. John, 8. 44. Matth. 25. 41. & 8. 29. ^o Or *principality*. ^p Gen. 13. 13. & 18. 20. & 19. 5, 24, 26. Deut. 29. 5, 23. Il. 1. 9. & 13. 19. Jer. 20. 16. & 51. 40. 1. Tim. 4. 6. Hosea, 11. 8. Amos, 4. 11. Luke, 17. 29. 2 Pet. 2. 6. ^q Gr. *other*. Gen. 19. 5. Rom. 1. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 6. 7. ^r 1 Cor. 10. 6, 11. 2 Pet. 2. 6. Mat. 11. 24.

creeping in unawares, in St. Jude, has a plain resemblance and reference to the *privily bringing in* mentioned by St. Peter, 2 Pet. ii. 1. Both the words in the original are formed upon the same sentiment, and are meant to describe the craft and subtle insinuation of the new false teachers. The *turning the grace of God into lasciviousness* in St. Jude, answers to the *damnable heresies* in St. Peter. Instead of *ordained*, the word, *πρωτογενεσταινοι* rather signifies *described, or set forth of old*. Doddridge observes well upon this verse, that *πρωτογενεσταινοι* may well signify *described, or put upon record*; that is, “ whose character and condemnation may be considered as described in the punishment of other “ notorious sinners, who were a kind of representatives of “ them:” which interpretation, say he, I prefer to any other, as it tends to clear God of that heavy imputation which it must bring upon his moral attributes, to suppose that he appoints men to sin against him, and then condemns them for doing what they could not but do, and what they were, independent on their own freedom of choice, fated to: a doctrine so pregnant with gloom, and, as I should fear, with fatal consequences, that I think it part of the duty I owe to the word of God, to rescue it from the imputation of containing such a tenet. Dr. Benson very justly observes, that the word *πρωτα* does not denote their sin, but the *condemnation* of them because of their sin; and that *παλαι*, of *old*, does not signify “ from “ all eternity,” but “ from a former time, or a time long “ since past:” and I would propose it as a query, says he, whether *they* have not, in later ages, *turned the grace of God into licentiousness*, who have held that men are decreed unto salvation, absolutely and unconditionally, or without any regard to their virtue and piety; that God sees no sin in believers; that good works are in no sense necessary to salvation; that God loves men never the better because of their holiness, nor ever the worse because of their unholiness. I do not suppose that all who have professed these, and the like opinions, have held the consequences, or even perceived them; but the query is, Whether the opinions do not tend to licentiousness? The last clause of this verse affords a strong proof of the Divinity of our Saviour.

Ver. 5. *Though ye once knew this,*] *Though ye fully, or perfectly.* See ver. 3. The Christians to whom St. Jude writes, had formerly been of the Jewish religion, and were therefore well acquainted with the Old Testament, from their hearing it read in the synagogue every Sabbath-day. It is intimated in the latter clause, that the grand cer-

rupters of the gospel referred to, were guilty of unbelief or disobedience to God; in which if they persisted, all their Christian privileges would not prevent their destruction.

Ver. 6. *And the angels which kept not, &c.*] St. Peter, 2d Epistle, ch. ii. 4. speaks of the *angels that sinned*; St. Jude gives it as an account of their sin, that *they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*. This account of the angels' sin is recorded only in this passage of sacred writ. The very same difference may be observed in setting forth the example of Sodom and Gomorrha; which is common to both epistles. St. Peter speaks only of their *judgment*, and of their being made an example to sinners: St. Jude adds an account of their crime, and, though the images and ideas are the same, yet the turn of expression is very different. Instead of *their first estate* (*αρχη*), Dr. Heylin, after Cudworth, renders it *their principality*. Instead of *their own habitation*, some would understand the word *δωματαριον* in the same sense wherein it is used 2 Cor. v. 2. for the *vestment of glory* wherewith the saints are clothed in the future state. Hence it was, very probably, that Dr. Cudworth was led to interpret it of the celestial body of the angels, which they changed when they fell, for an airy and obscure one. However, be this as it may, St. Jude might design to intimate, either that they left the peculiar Presence, which was their proper habitation; or that they lost their glory with their innocence, as all of them did. Cæcumenius says, “ They left the honour of “ the angelic dignity.” By this instance St. Jude designed to condemn the pride and apostasy of those false teachers and corrupt Christians.

Ver. 7. *And the cities about them in like manner, &c.*] That is, “ In like manner with their neighbours in Sodom “ and Gomorrha.” Dr. Heylin gives the passage a very just turn: *and the adjacent cities who were guilty of the same prostitution, in following unnatural lusts*. The whole verse may be thus paraphrased: “ Utter destruction shall certainly and suddenly come from the Lord upon all such: “ even as it did on the infamously wicked people of Sodom and Gomorrhah, and of the neighbouring cities of “ Adma and Zeboim, in storms of fire and brimstone, “ rained down from heaven upon them for the flagitious “ crimes which they greedily committed. The perpetual “ desolation of that wicked people, and of their cities, the “ evident marks of which remain to this day, is exhibited “ in the sacred history, and in providence, to open view, “ as an example of God's tremendous vengeance, which “ carries

8 Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

10 But these speak evil of those things

which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding them-

¹ 2 Pet. 2. 10, 11. Jer. 23. 25, 28, 32. Exod. 22. 28. Dan. 10. 7, 21. & 12. 7. Rev. 12. 7. Deut. 34. 6. Zech. 3. 1. 2 Pet. 2. 11. Zech. 3. 2. 2 Pet. 2. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 6. & 2. 12. Rev. 17. 6. Rom. 1. 21, 22. 1 Cor. 1. 21. James, 4. 7. Gen. 4. 5, 8, 14. 1 John, 3. 12. 2 Pet. 2. 15, 17. Rev. 2. 14. Numb. xxii—xxiv. Deut. 23. 4. Mic. 6. 5. Numb. xvi. Deut. 11. 6. Pl. 106. 16, 18. Numb. 26. 10. 1 Cor. 11. 21. Ezek. 34. 8, 13. Phil. 3. 18, 19. 2 Pet. 2. 13. James, 5. 5.

“ carries a lively emblem of the everlasting destruction of all the wicked and ungodly in hell-fire.”

Ver. 8. *Likewise also*] *Nevertheless these dreamers also, &c.*] The connection is, “ Though there are so many examples upon record of God’s just displeasure against the wicked; nevertheless, these dreamers also, in like manner with the ancient inhabitants of Sodom, defile the flesh with their lewd practices, despise government, and rail against the persons who are exalted to power and dignity.” Vicious persons are represented in scripture as being *asleep*, Rom. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 34. 1 Theff. v. 6. and here, *as dreaming idle dreams*; turning the grace of God into licentiousness, and promising themselves and their disciples security and lasting happiness in those courses which the gospel condemned. St. Jude had given three instances of God’s inflicting punishment upon his rational creatures for their sin; namely, those of the Israelites, wicked angels, and Sodomites: the crimes were different; ingratitude and reproachful complaints against their supreme Governor, in the Israelites; pride in the fallen angels; and sensuality in the Sodomites. Here, he seems to charge all those crimes upon these corrupt Christians; first, sensuality, then pride, and lastly, reproachful insults and reflections upon the higher powers. Instead of these *filthy dreamers defile the flesh*, Heylin has it, These men, indulging their titchy imaginations, pollute themselves.

Ver. 9. *Michael the archangel,*] St. Peter, 2 Ep. ii. 11. in reproof of the presumptuous and self-willed, who speak evil of dignities, says, that angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord; but here St. Jude has given us the history to which this belongs. See on ver. 6. What the ground of the controversy between the devil and Michael was, may, in the opinion of Archbishop Tillotson and others, be explained by Deut. xxxv. 6. where it is said that God took particular care concerning the burying of Moses in a certain valley; and it is added, *But no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.* Had the devil been able to discover to the Jews the place where Moses was interred, they would afterwards most probably have paid an idolatrous honour to his remains; and it would have gratified his malice to have made him an occasion of idolatry after his death, who had been so great an enemy to it during his life. To prevent this, Michael buried his body secretly; and this was the thing about which he contended with the

devil. Some have supposed that the contention was not about the body of Moses after his death, but when it was exposed upon the water. Instead of *durst not bring against him*, the Greek might be rendered, *did not allow himself to bring against him.* There is no reason to think that Michael was afraid of the devil, when he himself was so much superior in power and dignity. “ But his duty restrained him from it, (says Archbishop Tillotson,) and probably his discretion too. As he would not offend God, in doing a thing so much beneath the dignity and perfection of his nature; so he could not but think that the devil would be too hard for him at railing; a thing, to which as the angels have no disposition, so I believe they have no talent, no faculty at it; the cool consideration whereof should make all men, especially those who call themselves *divines*, and more particularly in controversies about religion, ashamed and afraid of this manner of disputing.”

Ver. 10. *But these speak evil, &c.*] *Whereas these men rail against things which they do not indeed understand; but what things they understand naturally, like animals destitute of reason, in these things they are corrupted.* See 2 Pet. ii. 11, 12, &c.

Ver. 11. *And ran greedily after the error*] *And have been poured out in the error; ἐκχυθῆσαν:* which seems to have much the same sense as the Latin word *palari*, to ramble, or keep no certain path; as liquor when poured out of a vessel, spreads itself, and keeps no direct course. And the proper sense of *παλιμ*, error, is a wandering out of the right way. St. Jude speaks of their having already perished, which affords us a genuine trait of the prophetic spirit, speaking of things certainly future, as if they were past. There is a manifest gradation in the three members of this verse: first, the crime, and then the punishment. See Pl. xxii. 14. Instead of *gainsaying*, Doddridge reads *contradiction*; and others *opposition*.

Ver. 12. *These are spots in your feasts of charity,*] The first writer who describes these *love-feasts* is Tertullian, in his Apologies, ch. 39. Having given an account of the public worship and discipline of the Christians, their great charity and holy lives, and having taken notice of some luxurious suppers among the Heathens, he adds, “ The nature of our supper may be known by its name; it is called by a Greek word which signifies *love*; whatever we spend therein, we look upon it as so much

elves without fear: ^d clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13 ^e Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, ^f to

whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

14 And ^g Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, ^h Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints,

^d 2 Pet. 2. 17. Prov. 25. 14. 1 Tim. 5. 6. Hosas, 10. 1, 2. Heb. 6. 8. & 10. 26. 2 Pet. 2. 18, 22. ^e If. 57. 20. Eph. 4. 14. Phil. 3. 19. 2 Tim. 3. 13. & 4. 3, 4. ^f 2 Pet. 2. 17. Mat. 8. 12. & 22. 13. & 24. 51. 2 Thess. 1. 9. Rev. 14. 10, 11. & 20. 10. & 21. 8. ^g Gen. 5. 18, 22, 24. 1 Chron. 1. 1—3. Heb. 11. 5. ^h Acts, 1. 11. Rev. 2. 7. & 22. 20. Dan. 7. 10. Zech. 14. 5. Mat. 24. 30, 31. & 25. 31. 1 Thess. 3. 13. 2 Thess. 1. 7, 8.

“ gain, seeing we thereby refresh all our poor: nothing vile or immodest is there admitted; we do not sit down before we have prayed to God; every one eats what is sufficient, and drinks with sobriety, as remembering that in the night he must engage in the adoration of God. They converse together, as they who know that the Lord heareth them. After washing their hands, and lighting candles, they sing divine songs, either taken out of the scriptures, or of their own composing, as every one is able. The feast is concluded with prayer.” The reader will find more on this subject in Cave’s or Fleury’s account of the primitive Christians, or in Hallett’s Notes, vol. iii. p. 235. Respecting the word *σπίλεις*, spots, see Parkhurst and Wettstein. The meaning of the next clause, *Feeding themselves without fear*, which Heylin renders well, *indulging their appetites without restraint*, seems to be, that they fed themselves in a voluptuous manner, without the fear of God, or of any scandal or disgrace which they might bring upon the Christian name. In St. Peter it is *εὐφρόνως*, they lived luxuriously, 2 Ep. ii. 13. They indulged to excess both in eating and drinking, and so were spots and blemishes, or a scandal to the Christian name. Instead of whose fruit withereth, some render the Greek word by *in the decline of autumn*: the word *φθινοπώρῃ* properly signifies, “the latter end of autumn,” when it verges towards the winter. St. Jude therefore says, that those corrupt Christians were like trees in the decline of autumn, when they have shed their leaves, and are in a withering condition. Dr. Heylin renders it *withered trees*. Some fig-trees had fruits upon them when they had no leaves: but to shew that these differed from good trees, St. Jude adds, *without fruit*. Here is a remarkable gradation; *first*, they are trees in the decline of autumn, stripped of their leaves and withering; *secondly*, they are without fruit, as well as without leaves; successive summers and winters have passed over them, and they have been continually growing more and more fit for fuel: *thirdly*, they are *twice dead*, or, they are spiritually dead a second time by making shipwreck of their faith: therefore, *fourthly*, they are plucked up by the roots, as hopeless and irrecoverable. See Parkhurst on the word *φθινοπώρῃ*.

Ver. 13. Raging waves of the sea.] The word *ἄγρια*, *raging or wild*, is applied to such herbs or trees as grow up of themselves in the deserts or mountains, by way of opposition to those which are in gardens, or cultivated by the care and industry of man. So several animals are called *ἄγρια*, *wild*, to distinguish them from those which are tame, or manageable by man: and because wild fruits are more bitter and less mild, and wild animals commonly

less gentle than others, hence the word, by a metaphor, is used for any thing that is intractable, fierce or raging; accordingly here, and Wisd. xiv. 1. the word is used for the intractable and enraged waves of a stormy sea; and the corrupt Christians are compared to those troubled unmanageable waves, to intimate their restless, turbulent temper and behaviour among their brethren. See Ephes. iv. 14.—*foaming out their own shame*, that is, “as the raging waves of a tempestuous sea cast out foam, and mire, and dirt; so they, out of their wicked hearts, cast forth wicked words and actions, proclaiming aloud their vices, and glorying in those filthy deeds of darkness, of which they ought to have been ashamed.” The apostle seems to have had his eye upon the words of Isaiah, lvii. 20. See also Rom. vi. 21. Philip. iii. 19. He adds, *Stars that are planets, or that wander*. The Jews used to call those who took upon them to be teachers, by the name of *stars*; and the same word is applied to teachers in the Christian church, Rev. i. 20. But those *false teachers* were only *planets* or *wandering stars*. There are several interpretations of this phrase: some, by *wandering stars*, understand those vapours which run along the surface of the earth, called *ignes fatui*, or false and delusive lights: this would have well suited the delusive light of those false teachers, as it is described by Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, b. ix. l. 634, &c. But the grand objection to this interpretation is, that those delusive vapours are never called *stars*. Some understand by *wandering stars*, the comets; which may be so called, though that is not the most usual sense of the phrase; for by *ἀστὲρ πλανήτης*, *stars that are planets*, the Greeks most commonly meant those five wandering stars which we call *planets*, (they knew of no more,) all which are dark bodies in themselves, and are perpetually in motion from place to place; in both which things they probably differ from the fixed stars: and the false teachers might be compared to them as they were dark in themselves, and as unsteady and wandering from truth and holiness. “As the planets (says Doddridge) seem to have a very irregular motion, being sometimes stationary, and sometimes retrograde, they are proper emblems of persons so unsettled in their principles, and so irregular in their behaviour as these men were. See Cic. *De Nat. Deor.* lib. ii. c. 20. and Parkhurst on the word *πλανήτης*.”

Ver. 14. And Enoch—the seventh from Adam, &c.] Enoch is called *the seventh from Adam*, to distinguish him from another of the same name, who was the son of Cain, Gen. iv. 17. A remarkable fragment of antediluvian history is here preserved to us. Our translation has it,
Enoch

15 ¹ To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them ^k of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their ^l hard *speeches* which ungodly finners have spoken against him.

16 ^m These are murmurers, complainers,

walking after their own lusts; ⁿ and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, ^o having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

17 But, beloved, ^p remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

¹ 2 Cor. 5. 10. Rom. 14. 10. Rev. 20. 12. & 22. 12. & 7. 7. ^k Eccl. 12. 14. Rom. 14. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Mat. 12. 35 ^l 1 Sam. 2. 3. 1st Cor. 31. 18. & 94. 4. Mal. 3. 13. 2 Thess. 1. 7. Rev. 13. 5, 6. ^m 2 Pet. 2. 14, 18. Titus, 3. 3. ⁿ 1st Pet. 17. 10. & 73. 9, 11. 2nd Pet. 2. 18. 1st Pet. 12. 3, 4. Job, 21. 14, 15. ^o Lev. 19. 15. 2 Chron. 19. 7. Job, 32. 21, 22. 1st Tim. 6. 5. ^p 2nd Pet. 2. 2. John, 14. 26.

Enoch—prophefied of these. In the old English version it is, *Enoch—prophefied before of such*. Blackwell takes notice that the words may be translated, *He prophefied against them*; but the word *επιπροφητευω*, with a dative case after it, signifies to *prophefy to*: so that the Syriac and others have well translated the words, but *Enoch prophefied also unto these men*. He prophefied immediately unto the men of his own age, who were abandoned to violence and lust; and foretold, that if they did not repent, God would bring on the flood, and overtake them with his righteous judgments, both temporal and eternal. But there was no occasion for confining the benefit of his prophefy to his own age. The *και*, *even* or *also*, here, is emphatical; *he prophefied ALSO* unto these *Christians*, so called, or said what they might improve to their own advantage, if they pleased. See Rom. xv. 4. Here we may see in what sense they were said to have been described beforehand, ver. 4. as persons who would fall under condemnation; for in the punishment of finners of former times, they might have read their own doom.

Ver. 15. To execute judgment, &c.] God will come to execute judgment upon all men, but he will punish none but the ungodly; and then every mouth shall be stopped, not by might, but by evidence and conviction. Enoch prophefied that God would come, and, with a flood, punish that impious race among whom he lived, as well as punish the impenitent with everlasting destruction. By a parity of reason, St. Jude intimates, that the wicked of his and of all ages may also expect to meet with the due reward of their deeds. This prophefy of Enoch is a remarkable testimony to a future state, given previous to the Mosaic economy.

Ver. 16. These are murmurers, complainers, &c.] Having in the former verse finished the prophefy of Enoch, St. Jude now goes on in other phrases to describe those corrupt *Christians*. Some think that the two words, *murmurers* and *complainers* are synonymous terms, to express the same thought with more strength and vehemence. If there be any difference in their signification, the former may imply their *murmuring* in general, the other the *subject* of their murmuring; they complained of their lot and condition in the world, and of the course of Providence. St. Jude, in writing to such Christians as had been Jews, seems to have had his eye upon the murmurings and complainings of that nation in former ages, which were highly displeasing to God. See 1 Cor. x. 10. The complaining temper of the Jews about this time, appears abundantly from Josephus; and the Judaizing Christians very much

resembled them. A sufficient reason for their murmuring is added in the next clause; since it is no wonder that *they* should murmur and complain, who *walked after their own lusts*; for the plan of divine government is in favour of holiness and virtue; and vice cannot always prosper, or even hope to end well, in such a constitution of things. But further, they were not content to be wicked themselves, they were zealous and active in making profelytes: one of the arts which they made use of for this purpose, was speaking in magnificent phrases, *υπεροψια*, which had no good meaning, if any meaning at all: however, it served to amuse unthinking people, and make them imagine, that those false teachers were let into the mysteries of the gospel, and were acquainted with the deep things of God. See 2 Pet. ii. 18. Further, they had persons in admiration, through the hope of gain: they soothed rich men in their prejudices, and flattered them in their vices, that they might make a prey of them; for they *sought not them but theirs*. See 2 Pet. ii. 3. 14. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Instead of *swelling words*, Dr. Doddridge reads *extravagant things*.

Ver. 17. The words which were spoken before of the apostles, &c.] Many eminent writers believe that the apostles had a meeting upon the great case of the new false teachers, and that they gave jointly, by common consent and deliberation, precepts proper to the occasion, to be communicated to all churches. No single apostle would or could, in this case, call the common injunction his *commandment*; but would certainly call it, in the language of St. Peter, *the commandment of the apostles of our Lord*. St. Paul was an apostle, yet was it no disparagement to him to carry the decree of the council of Jerusalem to the churches of his plantation; and, in writing or speaking, he could not but have called it *the decree of the apostles*. The case might be the same here. We have some evidence to shew that this was the case. That there was a tradition at least in the church, is evident from the *Apostolical Constitutions*, in which there is mention made of a meeting of the apostles upon the very account of these false teachers, so particularly described by St. Peter and St. Jude. In Book vi. ch. 13. these false teachers are described to be such as *fight against Christ and Moses*, pretending at the same time to value both: and thus the false teachers, as described both in St. Peter's and St. Jude's Epistles, communicated with the church, while they corrupted its faith. They were *spots in the church's feasts*, ver. 12. They are ordered to be expelled in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, that the lambs might be preserved sound and *without spot*. They are represented in the *Apostolical Constitutions* as *the false Christians, and*

18 How that they told you ' there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

19 ' These be they who separate themselves, ' sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, ' building up yourselves on your most holy faith, " praying in the

Holy Ghost,

21 ' Keep yourselves in the love of God, ' looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 ' And of some have compassion, making a difference :

23 ' And others save with fear, pulling

^a Acts, 20. 29. ¹ Tim. 4. 1-4. ² Tim. 3. 1-13. & 4. 3, 4. ² Peter, 2. 1. & 3. 3, 5. ^f Prov. 18. 2. ^g Ezek. 14. 7. ^h Hosea, 4. 14. & 9. 10. ⁱ Heb. 10. 25. ^j James, 3. 15. ^k 1 Cor. 2. 14. ^l Col. 1. 23. & 2. 7. ^m Titus, 2. 11, 12. ⁿ 1 Pet. 2. 5. ^o Eph. 2. 20, 22. ^p Eph. 6. 18. ^q Rom. 8. 26, 27. ^r John, 14. 26. ^s Pl. 119. 2, 5. ^t If. 26. 9. ^u 1 John, 4. 16. ^v John, 15. 9, 10, 14. & 14. 21, 23. ^w 2 Tim. 4. 8. & 1. 18. ^x Titus, 2. 13, 14. ^y Heb. 9. 28. ^z Mat. 25. 34. ^{aa} Rom. 6. 23. ^{ab} Ezek. 34. 17. ^{ac} 1 Cor. 9. 20. ^{ad} Gal. 4. 19. ^{ae} 1 Cor. 5. 3, 4. ^{af} Rom. 11. 14. ^{ag} 1 Tim. 1. 20. & 4. 16. ^{ah} 1 Cor. 3. 15. ^{ai} Amos, 4. 11. ^{aj} Zech. 3. 2.

false prophets foretold in the gospel, blaspheming God, and trampling his Son under foot; which agrees exactly with St. Jude's account, that they had been foretold of by the apostles,—that they denied the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ, ver. 4. and 2 Pet. ii. 1. At this meeting, it is said, instructions were given, to be communicated to all churches by their respective apostles and bishops. There were probably then many circular letters sent upon this occasion: the second Epistle of St. Peter, and St. Jude's Epistle, may have been of this sort; and being drawn up on the same occasion, and upon the same instructions, it is no wonder that they are so similar in their expressions. There are in the epistles themselves some marks which seem to confirm the foregoing account. The very word *commandment* used by St. Peter, when he makes mention of the apostles' authority, points out some particular and distinguished precept: for he does not seem to refer to the general preaching or doctrines of the apostles; but to some *special command*, or form of doctrine, relating to the false teachers. But to come nearer our point, the agreement of the two epistles in the description of the false teachers,—it is to be observed, that both St. Peter and St. Jude profess to write as reminding their churches of things with which they had before been acquainted (ver. 5. and 2 Pet. iii. 2.). St. Jude says expressly, that the very subject of this letter had *once already* been known unto them; "I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye *once knew this,*" &c. The Greek word used here, is the same we met with before, "the faith *once delivered;*" and the words, "though ye *once knew this,*" are relative to the same matter; and it appears that the warning against the false teachers, and the prophetic description of them, were sent to the churches, together with the *commandment*. It appears likewise, that both St. Peter and St. Jude wrote their epistles after this commandment had been delivered to the several churches; for they write to them *reminding* them of what they had before received. This being the case, it is most probable that both St. Jude and St. Peter wrote from the common plan communicated to the churches, and drew their description of the false teachers from the same source, but still under the infallible direction of the Holy Spirit of God.

Ver. 18. After their own ungodly lusts.] Ungodly lusts may denote such a life of sensuality, as argues that a man has not the fear of God.

Ver. 19. These be they who separate themselves, &c.] "These are the very men, of whom our blessed Lord and

" his apostles warned you; men that make factions and
" divisions in the church, alienating themselves from the
" true apostles, servants, disciples, and doctrines of Christ,
" and forming separate parties of their own sortment;
" while they are mere sensualists, governed by animal ap-
" petites, lusts, and passions, and are entirely destitute of
" the enlightening, purifying, and sanctifying gifts of the
" Holy Spirit."

Ver. 20. But ye, beloved, &c.] The false teachers corrupted the faith, *turned the grace of God into lasciviousness,* and would have made parties, tearing in pieces the church of God. The Christians, therefore, both here and ver. 3. 17. are exhorted to preserve one another through divine grace in that true, pure, unmixed faith, as it was taught them by the apostles of our Lord. Their faith was called *most holy*, as it did not lead to licentiousness, like the corrupt doctrine of the false teachers, but promoted the most holy tempers and conversation. See 2 Pet. ii. 21. The Christian faith, which makes Christ the All in All, is here considered as the foundation of a building, and they were to build up each other on that foundation: the architect style is often made use of in the New Testament. They were to pray in the Holy Ghost, and, by his influences vouchsafed in answer to their prayers, were to make swifter advances in the divine life. The false teachers were *sensual*, and *had not* the Spirit: most probably they had once had the Spirit, but by departing from the true faith, and falling into vice, they had *quenched the Spirit*, and it was withdrawn from them. But the true Christians, building up one another upon their most holy faith; that is, not having quenched the Spirit by departing from the truth, or falling into vice, were to assemble together frequently, and make use of their spiritual gifts.

Ver. 21. Keep yourselves in the love of God,] The word *ἑαυτῶν* is put for *ἀλλήλων*, *one another*, both here and in ver. 20. See 1 Thess. v. 11. 13. The meaning and connection is, that by building up one another upon their most holy faith, and praying by the aid or inspiration of the Spirit, they should preserve one another in a sincere love to God and goodness, and in that way they might *expect the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

Ver. 22. And of some have compassion, &c.] Moreover, "you are not to deal alike with all who are seduced by
" the false teachers; for some are weak, and easily imposed
" upon. Towards them you are to shew great lenity and
" tenderness; making a difference between them and
" others." There were two sorts of Christians led aside
by

them out of the fire; ^b hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now unto him ^c that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding

joy,

25 ^d To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

¹ Cor. 5. 9, 11. ² Tim. 3. 5. ² Thess. 3. 14. Rev. 3. 4. with Lev. 14. 46. & 15. 4, 17. ¹ If. 64. 6. ^c Rom. 14. 4. & 16. 25. Eph. 1. 4. & 3. 20. & 5. 26, 27. Col. 1. 22. & 3. 4. Phil. 3. 20, 21. Heb. 13. 20, 21. ^d Rom. 16. 27. ¹ Tim. 1. 17. & 2. 3. Titus, 1. 3. & 3. 4. Rev. 4. 8, 11. & 5. 9, 11. & 7. 10, 12. & 15. 3, 4. & 19. 1. Eph. 3. 20, 21.

by the false teachers: the one through mere weakness and imprudence: they being meek and tractable, might easily be reclaimed; they therefore were to be treated with mildness and tenderness, and a difference was to be made between them, and the more vicious and stubborn, mentioned in the next verse; which see.

Ver. 23. And others save with fear,] Those who were more deeply immersed in the errors of the false teachers, and more corrupted with their vices, were to be saved, or reformed by fear; especially if they were also stubborn and intractable. The Christians were to set before them the terrors of the Lord: to denounce against them the judgments of God, which were over their heads, just ready to fall upon them if they did not repent, and that speedily. They were to make this difference between them and the meek and tractable. *Pulling, or snatching them out of the fire,* is a proverbial expression made use of, Amos, iv. 11. Zech. iii. 2. and alluded to 1 Cor. iii. 15. Just as one would hastily take a brand out of the burning, or snatch one's most valuable treasure or dearest friend out of a house on fire; in like manner must notorious sinners be treated to prevent their perishing. Not that men are to punish the incorrigible by legal penalties, unless they disturb the peace of civil society; but they are to be threatened with the divine displeasure. This method of saving men denotes, *first*, That they were to be speedy in attempting to reform them, for fear of losing the opportunity. *Secondly*, They were to use some more rough and disagreeable methods, rather than suffer them to perish. *Fear* may be of service to deter men from vice, and make them look for pardon, and attend to holiness and piety. But, when the love of God is shed abroad in men's hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them, they will act from the nobler principle of love to God and goodness. Some have taken pains to shew, that by the word *garment*, in the next clause, we are to understand the human body; which is often called a *garment*, or compared to a garment: others have given different interpretations of this passage; but whoever reads Leviticus, ch. xiii. xiv. xv. *Isa.* xxx. 22. *lxiv.* 6. and considers that they were *Jewish Christians* to whom St. Jude primarily wrote, will easily discern, that this is a fine allusion to the garments which were polluted by touching the body of a person who is unclean. The meaning is, that the *Jews* of old were carefully to avoid every legal pollution, or ceremonial impurity, which rendered them odious to, and avoided by their neighbours; so *Christians* were most carefully to avoid every moral impurity (1 Thess. v. 22. Rev. iii. 4.). While they endeavoured under grace to save some by gentle methods, and others by fear, they were to take care, lest they themselves should be polluted by their bad example, or infected

by coming near them. Heb. xii. 15. James, i. 27. A physician who attempts to cure the plague, should take care, lest he himself be infected by the persons whom he endeavours to cure.

Ver. 24, 25. Now unto him, &c.] "Now, to conclude with a solemn doxology, which belongs, as to all the Persons in the adorable Godhead, so particularly to our Lord Jesus Christ, whom we have been speaking of under such characters as are peculiarly suitable to your encouragement and relief under all your present troubles (ver. 14, 15. 21.); I would express it in the following lofty and endearing strain:—To Him who has almighty power originally in himself as God, and all office-authority and qualifications as Mediator; and, having graciously undertaken, is as willing as he is able, to preserve all that perseveringly trust in him from apostacy, from stumbling, and from falling into and by the errors of the wicked; and, after their state of warfare is accomplished, to present them to himself, and to his Father, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish (Eph. v. 27.), and should stand with complete acceptance in his immediate presence, when he shall appear in all his glory, and they shall appear with him in glory (Col. iii. 4.), and with triumphant and exultant joy; and all the glorified saints and holy angels shall exceedingly rejoice to all eternity.—To this God our Saviour, who, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is infinitely, originally, essentially and communicatively the only wise God: to him, as well as to those other adorable Persons, be ascribed, as is equally due, all the glory of his divine nature and attributes as God, and of all his love and grace, designs, undertakings, and performances, as likewise all the grandeur of heavenly Majesty as God-man Mediator, together with universal rule and government, might and authority, over all persons and things, in the kingdom of providence and of grace, now, henceforth, and for evermore. In this ascription of glory, may we and all the saints, and angels join, as with one heart and voice! Amen." It seems to me, that the divine Person here most immediately intended, is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is principally spoken of all along in the preceding context, and is often styled, by way of eminence, *The Saviour*, and *God our Saviour*, as in Eph. v. 23. Philip. iii. 20. Tit. ii. 13. 2 Pet. i. 1, &c. and is here called *the only wise God* (ver. 25.), not to the exclusion of the Father and the Holy Spirit, but only of all idols. And as his *presenting* his saints *faultless before the presence of his glory*, manifestly relates to the time of his glorious appearing to judgment, for executing a dreadful sentence on the ungodly, and shewing mercy to his

his faithful saints unto eternal life; so this exactly agrees with the work which is peculiarly ascribed to him, as the Saviour of the body and Head of the church (Eph. v. 23—27.). But I do not find that the *presentation* of the church at the last day is ever ascribed to God the Father. Mr. Jones, in his "Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity," chap. i. art. 41. reasons on this text as follows: "That is, the *only wise God* who is able to present us before the presence of his glory; but *Christ* is to present us, as members of the church in glory, *to himself* (Eph. v. 27.); therefore *He is the only wise God*, to whom also appertains the *presence of glory*; for that is no other than *his own presence; himself*. This is another express instance, that *our God, the only God*, is not "God in one person," but the Unity of the Trinity: for, if you confine this phrase (with the Arians) to the *single person of the Father*, then of course you exclude the person of Christ; and then, it is manifest, you contradict the scripture: for, though it be affirmed in this place, that the *only wise God* is to present us before his *own presence*, yet the same is elsewhere expressed by *Christ's presenting us to himself*; which is no way to be accounted for, unless you believe *Christ* to be a partaker in the being, attributes, and offices of the one, undivided, *only wise God, our Saviour*:—and then there is no further difficulty."

Inferences.—Let those, who have the honour of being numbered among the disciples of Christ, stand at the remotest distance from the evils with which the unhappy creatures described in this epistle are branded by the apostle. And may divine grace preserve all his churches from such spots in their feasts of charity! May our horizon be secured from those dark and gloomy clouds without water; the plantations of God among us be free from the incumbrance and disgrace of those withered and fruitless trees, twice dead, and plucked up by the roots! How illustrious was the prophesy, with which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was inspired; and how precious is that fragment of *antediluvian* history, which is here preserved, and which shall surely be accomplished in its season! The day is now much nearer, when the Lord will come with ten thousands of his saints: may the ungodly remember it, and suppress in time the *speeches* which will then assuredly be reprov'd, and repent of the *deeds*, which, if unrepented of, however forgotten now, will be brought into open view, and draw down upon their heads the destruction which at present seems to linger. That we may have confidence before him at his coming, let us remember the words of the apostle, and implore the influences of the divine Spirit, which sensualists, who walk after their own lusts, quench and stifle, and which they mock and deride. Let us, however, be concerned to edify ourselves in our most holy faith, and to pray in the Holy Ghost, under his influence, direction, and assistance. The security of the heart amid so many temptations, and its richest cordial in all its afflictions, is *the love of God*: but how soon does the celestial flame languish and die, if it be not constantly fed with new fuel! Let it then be our care in humble dependence upon divine grace, to keep ourselves in the love of God; which will be cherished in proportion to that degree of faith and hope, with which we look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life: for what can

so powerfully excite our love to God as such a consideration?

If we do expect it, let us express our regard to the salvation of others, as well as to our own; and apply ourselves to those who seem to be in danger, with such different addresses of awe or tenderness, as their different circumstances and tempers may require. But some way or another let us exert ourselves to pluck them out of the fire, who are in danger of falling into it, and perishing for ever.

A care to preserve our own characters and conscience unpotted, will be necessary to our courage, and hope of success, in such efforts as these. Let us therefore be more frequently looking up to him who is able to keep us from falling, and to improve, as well as maintain, the work he has wrought in us, till we shall be presented blameless before the presence of his glory. Then shall our hearts know a joy beyond what earth can afford, beyond what heaven itself shall have given us in the separate state: then shall God also rejoice over us, and the joy of our compassionate Saviour be completed in the seeing the full accomplishment of the *travail of his soul*. To him who has so wisely formed the scheme, and will faithfully and perfectly accomplish it for every faithful soul, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The apostle opens with,

1. An account of the sacred penman. *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ*, whose highest honour is to minister in the gospel; and brother of James, the son of Alphaeus.

2. The persons to whom it is addressed. *To them that are sanctified by God the Father*, entirely devoted to his service through the influence of his grace; and preserved in *Jesus Christ*, brought into the fellowship of his religion, and guarded by his grace in the midst of a thousand snares; and called to the participation of those gospel privileges which Jesus hath purchased, and God the Father promised to bestow on the faithful followers of his Son. Note; Hope towards God, without holiness, is but delusion.

3. The apostolical benediction. *Mercy unto you* from a pardoning God, and peace flowing from a sense of his reconciliation, and love both to him and towards each other, be multiplied.

4. He exhorts them to hold fast the truth which they had received both in doctrine and practice. *Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, which all believers enjoy through our adored Redeemer and Saviour; it was become needful for me to write unto you, because of the multitude of deceivers, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*, firmly holding fast the unadulterated doctrines of truth, and zealously maintaining them against all heretical opposers. Note; (1.) The salvation of the gospel is a common salvation for Jews and Gentiles, and sinners of every kind without exception. (2.) They who have received the truth, in the light and love of it, need be exhorted still to stand fast against all the wiles of deceivers. (3.) That faith which God, by his inspired servants, once delivered to his saints, for the use of his church to the latest ages, we must contend for, not with anger, or carnal weapons, but with holy zeal, tempered with meekness,

ness, and arguments drawn from the sacred treasury of the scriptures.

5. He describes the false teachers against whom they need be on their guard. *For there are certain men crept in unawares, by craft and subtilty into the church and the ministry, who were before of old ordained or registered to this condemnation, by God's righteous sentence denounced against crimes like theirs, long before they appeared in the world; (see the Annotations;) ungodly men, whose spirit, temper, and conduct, are directly opposite to the divine will and word; turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, perverting the richest doctrines of grace to the vilest purposes of impurity, and abusing them to encourage men in all immorality with the hopes of impunity; denying the only Lord God, in works, if not in words; practical, if not speculative atheists; and rejecting also the gospel testimony concerning the person, character, and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Note; (1.) Deceivers were rife in every age; we need not wonder therefore if such ungodly men are found in our own, perverting the glorious grace of the gospel. (2.) They who are vile upon principle, and plead God's word to countenance their impurities, are of all men most desperately wicked. (3.) When ungodly men meet their appointed condemnation, they receive but the just reward of their deeds.

2dly, The apostle, to enforce his warnings, reminds them of the judgment which God formerly executed on such ungodly men. *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, the perpetual memory of which needs to be preserved; and it is good to be often reminded of these things, that they may be present before our minds, and the impression of them more deep and lively.*

Three awful instances of divine vengeance are enumerated, to warn and deter others from the like crimes. Remember,

1. *How that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not, though he had done great things for them; and if he spared not these, let not the perverters of the gospel, whose crime is so much more aggravated, expect a less fearful doom.* And remember also,

2. *That the angels (though creatures of such superior excellence and dignity, according to original creation,) which kept not their first estate, who were not content with the station allotted them, but left their own habitation, affecting to be as the Most High, and were therefore hurled from those bright regions which were before their blest abode;—these he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, like criminals fast bound in prison, and kept in custody, in spiritual darkness, misery, and black despair, unto the judgment of the great day, when sentence will finally be executed upon them, and their torment be as complete as eternal.* And if God thus punished rebel angels, what severity shall not they meet with, who fight against the word of his truth, and the honour of his Son! Apostates in heaven or earth must perish together.

3. Another instance of God's wrath is produced. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them, Admah and Zeboim, in like manner abandoned to impurity, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, guilty of the most shocking acts of uncleanness, and the most unnatural crimes, are set forth for an example of God's tremendous wrath, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;*

the liveliest image of what the damned must endure in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever. Woe to those who are partakers of their sins! the same fearful vengeance awaits them.

3dly, The apostle describes these seducers as guilty of the same crimes which had brought down wrath both on sinning angels and ungodly men.

1. Their impurities were great. *Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh; sleeping and waking, their minds are ever running after impure objects, dishonouring their bodies by their lewd practices, and drawing in others to gratify their lawless appetites.*

2. They cast off all respect for lawful authority. *They despise dominion, treating the civil government with insolence and contempt; and speak evil of dignities, reviling the persons of magistrates, and those who are high in office. Yet even Michael the archangel, eminent as his rank and station is, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, wicked as he was, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.* And therefore if the devil himself, wicked as he is, was not rebuked with railing, much less ought any magistrates or rulers whom God hath ordained, to be treated with insolence and indignity. *But these seducers speak evil of those things which they know not, ignorant of the excellence and importance of religion and of the scriptures, and of the usefulness of that ministry and magistracy against which they rail: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, governed merely by their sensitive appetites,—in those things they corrupt themselves, giving a loose to all their brutish passions, without fear or shame, till they bring upon themselves swift destruction.* Note; When men live like beasts, they must expect to perish like devils.

3. They copied the vilest examples. *Wo unto them! the most fearful vengeance hangs over them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, filled with his malignant spirit and envy, hatred, and murder toward the righteous, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, ambitious, proud, covetous, and, like that wicked prophet, insatiate after gain; and they have perished in the gainsaying of Core, like those rebels who rose up against Moses and Aaron, and ready with them to be swallowed up in the yawning pit of hell.* Note; Companions with sinners must expect to share their plagues.

4. He describes these deluders under a variety of images. *These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; whether in a way of civil intercourse, or religious communion, they let loose their luxurious appetites, without any fear of that judgment which awaits them: clouds they are without water, that seem to promise rain, but prove like noxious vapours, or noisome fogs, carried about with winds, variable, and tossed about with every blast of error; trees whose fruit withereth, deceiving our expectations and bringing nothing to maturity; without fruit, their specious appearances, like blatted fruit, drop off, and the hypocrite and apostate are detected; twice dead, by nature and grace, plucked up by the roots, and thus irrecoverably ruined; all hope respecting them is become desperate, and they are now only fit fuel for the flames; raging waves of the sea, turbulent, unmanageable, foaming out their own shame, belching forth their blasphemies against Christ, or their reproaches against his cause and people; wandering stars, resembling fiery meteors*

tears

tears that kindle in the atmosphere, and, after a momentary blaze, are extinguished; or, like the comets, wandering wide from the system of truth and holiness; or, like opaque planets, being spiritually dark, possessing no real light in themselves; *to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever*, in that place where total despair completes the misery of the damned, whose worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

4thly, We have,

1. A prophecy of Enoch's, recorded, concerning these men. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, in the line of descent, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, in glorious majesty, swift to avenge the wrongs of his people, and the blasphemies against himself; to execute judgment upon all, who must stand at his bar, and receive from his lips their decisive sentence; and to convince all that are ungodly among them, by the vengeance he will inflict, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed; in defiance of his authority; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* Note; (1.) There is a dreadful day of judgment at hand, when vengeance shall overtake the ungodly. (2.) However impious and stout-hearted sinners may now be, every impenitent heart in that day will tremble, and every hardened face gather blackness. (3.) Though mockers now make light of ridiculing the word, and the ways, and people of God, they will find a fearful reckoning for their hard speeches in the day of recompence.

2. A farther description of these wicked men. *These are murmurers, against God and his providences; complainers, discontented with their condition in life; finding fault with the doctrines and dispensations of the Lord; walking after their own lusts, gratifying every vile and sensual appetite without restraint; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, making a pretended ostentation of their knowledge and piety, while they are in the very depth of error, and in the gall of bitterness; having men's persons in admiration because of advantage; carelling and flattering those, however vile, who are rich, in order to make gain of them.* Note; (1.) Discontent with our lot is, in God's sight, rebellion against his providence. (2.) Men-pleasers, and smooth tongued flatterers of the great, have the sure brand upon them of ministers of Satan.

5thly, The apostle concludes,

1. With his kind admonitions. *But, beloved, be deaf to the arts of these seducers, and remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, which now have received their fulfilment, and should confirm the doctrines which they taught: how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts; scoffing at the genuine religion of Jesus, that without restraint they may give a loose to every lawless passion. And these be they, of whom the apostle spake, who separate themselves; fomenting factions, and, from base and interested motives, forming new sects and parties, while they are utterly sensual, and slaves of*

worldly-mindedness and fleshly lusts; *having not the Spirit, and strangers to his grace and influence.* Note; (1.) The only way to be preserved from the wiles of deceivers, is to cleave to our Bibles. (2.) We must not be ashamed of mocking; remember who will mock last. See Prov. i. 26.

2. With warm exhortations. *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, on the glorious foundation of it, Jesus Christ, continue steadfast in your holy profession, seeking to establish each other in the truth: and, praying in the Holy Ghost, under his gracious teaching and influences, who helpeth our infirmities, keep yourselves in the love of God; use all appointed means to preserve and increase the heavenly fire, and to approve yourselves in all holy obedience and humble resignation; looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life, and that complete felicity, both in body and soul, for which, if you obtain it, you must own yourselves wholly indebted to the riches of his grace. And of some have compassion, making a difference between those who err wilfully, and those who are misled through weakness and the wiles of deceivers, whom with all kindness and tenderness labour to recover from the snare: and others save with fear; using that sharpness, severity, and terror with them, which their more dangerous case requires; pulling them, if possible, out of the fire, which is ready to consume them; bating even the garment spotted by the flesh; detesting all impure conversation, and testifying an unremitting displeasure against sin, and whatever would lead thereto; as the Jews were under the law obliged to shun every touch that communicated defilement, and to burn the garment that had the spot of leprosy.* Note; (1.) Faith in lively exercise, is the great preservative from all delusion. (2.) Prayer must be our daily employment,—spiritual prayer, not the mere task of the lip and the knee, but the warm effusions of the heart, where the Holy Ghost abides. (3.) They who would keep themselves in the love of God, must carefully shun whatever they know must offend him. (4.) We should shew a holy jealousy over our brethren, tenderly desirous to snatch them from the dangers to which they are exposed; kindly warning them; and, where sharpness is needful, faithfully declaring those terrors of the Lord, which may rouse the lethargic conscience.

3. He closes with a solemn doxology. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, that blessed Jesus who alone can preserve you from all evil and apostacy through faith in him; and to present you faultless, perfect and without blame before the presence of his glory, in the great day of his appearing, with exceeding joy, when every tear shall be wiped from the eyes of his faithful people, and eternal triumphs fill their happy souls; to the only wise God our Saviour, in whom dwell all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.* Note; The service of eternity will begin even here below; and every faithful soul will delight to proclaim the Saviour's praise.

••• The Reader is referred to the different Authors mentioned often already.

THE
REVELATION
OF
JESUS CHRIST
TO HIS
APOSTLE JOHN.

P R E F A C E.

THIS prophetic book is allowed to have been written by St. John the evangelist, who was banished to Patmos, an island of the Ægean sea, and there received the visions contained in this book, in the last year of the reign of Domitian, about the year 96, according to Eusebius.

The contents of this sacred book are of a prophetic nature, and describe a series of visions as follows: At the close of the magnificent description of our Lord's appearance to St. John, he is ordered to write the things which he saw, that is, the glorious vision that he then beheld; the things which are, or, the state of the churches at that time; and the things which shall be hereafter, or, the future state of the church to the end of the world. Accordingly, this book may be divided into three parts: The first, containing the introduction, or preface and dedication to the seven churches of Asia, and an account of the glorious vision of our Lord made to St. John, ch. i. The second part, containing the epistles which Christ commanded him to write to the Asiatic churches, relating to their present circumstances, and to the duties thence arising, ch. ii. iii. The third part, which describes the condition of the church in after times, from ch. iv. to the end of the book, begins with a description of the Triune God enthroned, &c. and then represents a sealed book, which is given to the Lamb, who opens the seals one after another, ch. iv. v. And here the scene of prophecy begins, which may be divided into seven periods. The first is that of the seals, ch. vi. vii. The second, that of the trumpets, ch. viii. ix. x. The third is pointed out, first, by measuring the temple, ch. xi. 1—18. secondly, by the state of the church described as a woman clothed with the sun, &c. ch. xi. 19, &c. thirdly, by the faithful being exposed to the ravages of a wild beast, and by an order given to seven angels to pour out seven vials full of the seven last plagues, ch. xii. 3.—xix. The fourth period represents Satan bound for a thousand years, ch. xx. 1—6. The fifth represents him loosed again for a little time, ver. 7—10. The sixth exhibits the general resurrection, and last judgment, ver. 11—15. The seventh, the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, or the happiness of the Jerusalem above; after which follows a solemn conclusion, answerable to the beginning, ch. xxi. xxii. These visions are prophetic of the great corruptions and oppressions which would in different ages be introduced into the church of God, particularly by the spirit of popery; till that antichristian power receive its downfall, first, by the complete reformation of the Christian church here on earth; and, after that, by the universal judgment of the world at the second coming of Christ. The learned Bishop of Bristol has justly observed, that,

“ to explain it perfectly, is not the work of one man, or of one age, and probably it will never all be clearly understood, till it is all fulfilled: not that the book is therefore to be neglected; they who dissuade from the study of it, do it, for the most part, because they have not studied it themselves, and imagine the difficulties to be greater than they are in reality. It is still the sure word of prophecy, and men of learning and leisure cannot better employ their time and abilities than in studying and explaining this book, if they do it, as Lord Bacon advises, with great wisdom, sobriety, and reverence. If therefore we would confine ourselves to the rules of just criticism, and not indulge lawless and extravagant fancies, if we would be content with sober and genuine interpretation, and not pretend to be prophets, nor presume to be wise above what is written, we should more consider those passages which have already been accomplished, than frame conjectures about those which remain yet to be fulfilled. Where the facts may be compared with the predictions, there we have some clew to guide us through the labyrinth; and, though it may be difficult to trace out every minute resemblance, yet there are some strong lines and features, which cannot fail of striking every one, who will but impartially and duly examine them. Such a disquisition, however, is not to be entered upon hastily, but after a diligent perusal of the best authors, both foreign and domestic; and it will be happy, if, out of them all, there can be found one entire system, complete and consistent in all its parts.” Sir Isaac Newton says, “ Amongst the interpreters of the last age, there is scarce one of note who hath not made some discovery worth knowing; but our greatest obligations are owing to three, particularly Mede, Vitringa, and Daubuz.” To these we may add Sir Isaac Newton’s Observations on the Apocalypse, Bishop Newton’s Dissertations, Lowman’s Paraphrase and Notes, Bengelius’s Gnomon, and Burton “ on the Numbers of Daniel and St. John.”

The astonishing events which have happened since the commencement of the French Revolution, have afforded a most ample field for conjecture. Several writers of considerable talent have descanted largely on this subject, as it has reference to the accomplishment of prophecy. But some of them have already been found erroneous. The prophecies relating to these grand occurrences, have not yet so far developed themselves, as to justify any person’s being very confident or positive. But, notwithstanding this, it may be justly expected, that, in a Commentary of such extent, I should notice in some measure the great events of the present period; and therefore I shall, in addition to my regular Annotations, add, as an APPENDIX, a summary of the principal arguments and conjectures of the best English writers who have written on this subject since the year 1789, so far as may be necessary to make my Comment on the Revelation as complete as the present light which the providence of God affords us, will admit.

CHAP. I.

John writeth the Revelation of Jesus Christ to the seven churches of Asia, signified by the seven golden candlesticks. The appearance of Christ: his glorious power and majesty.

[Anno Domini 96.]

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, ^a which God gave unto him, ^b to shew unto his

servants things which must ^c shortly come to pass; ^d and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 ^e Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 ^f Blessed is he that readeth, and they that

^a John, 3. 32. & 8. 26. & 12. 49.

^b Ch. 22. 6. Amos, 3. 7. Pf. 25. 14. & 119. 125. Dan. 12. 10.

^c Ver. 3. Ch. 22. 10. 2 Pet. 3. 8.

Ch. 4. 1. ^d Ch. 22. 6, 16. Dan. 8. 16. & 9. 21—23. John, 7. 17. Pf. 25. 14.

^e 1 Cor. 1. 6. 1 John, 1. 1—3. John, 19. 35. & 21. 24.

Ch. 6. 9. & 12. 17. Ver. 9.

^f Prov. 8. 34. Luke, 11. 28. Mat. 7. 24, 25. James, 1. 25. Ch. 22. 7. & 2. 5, 25. & 3. 3, 8, 19.

CHAP. I.

Ver. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ,] The book opens with the title, or inscription, the scope and design of it;

to foretel things, which should shortly begin to be fulfilled, and succeed in their due season and order, till all were accomplished; and with the blessing pronounced on him who

hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: ⁶ for the time *is* at hand.

4 **J**OHN to the ^b seven churches which are in Asia: ¹ Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from him ^k which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from ^l the seven spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* ^m the faith-

ful witness, *and* the ^a first-begotten of the dead, and ^o the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that ^p loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And ^q hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; ^r to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 ^s Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and ^t they *also* which

⁶ Rom. 13. 11. James, 5. 8. 1 Pet. 4. 7. Ch. 22. 7, 12, 20. ^b Ver. 11. Ch. ii. iii. Acts, 16. 6. & 19. 10. ¹ Rom. 1. 7. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 2. Jude, 2. 2 Cor. 13. 14. ^k Exod. 3. 14. James, 1. 17. Pf. 90. 2. Ch. 16. 5. & 11. 7. & 4. 8. See ver. 8. ^l Zech. 3. 9. & 4. 10. Ch. 3. 1. & 4. 5 & 5. 6. John, 14. 26. 1 Cor. 12. 4—13. ^m Ch. 3. 14. John, 8. 14. & 18. 37. 1 Tim. 6. 13. If. 55. 4. & 43. 10. Pf. 89. 37. ^o Ch. 3. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 20, 23. Acts, 20. 23. Col. 1. 18. ^p Ch. 2. 15. & 17. 14. & 19. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Pf. 89. 27. ^q Heb. 9. 12, 14. 1 John, 1. 7. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Acts, 20. 23. Gal. 2. 20. Ch. c. 9. & 7. 14. Zech. 13. 7. ^r Ch. 5. 10. & 20. 6. Dan. 7. 27. 1 Pet. 2. 5. ^s Rom. 16. 27. 1 Tim. 6. 13—16. 1 Pet. 4. 11. & 5. 11. Heb. 13. 21. 1 Tim. 1. 17. ^t Pf. 50. 3. & 18. 11. Dan. 7. 13. Acts, 1. 11. Mat. 24. 30. & 25. 31. & 26. 64. ^u Zech. 12. 10. John, 19. 37.

who should read and explain it, and on them who shall hear and attend to it. The distinction is remarkable, of *him that readeth*, and of *them that hear*: for books being then in manuscripts, were in much fewer hands; and it was a much readier way to publish a prophecy, or any thing, by public reading, than by transcribing copies. It was the custom too of that age to read all the apostolic writings in the congregations of the faithful; but now this excellent book of the Revelation is seldom read, or only some few parts of it, in the congregations. Instead of *and he sent and signified it*, &c. the Greek might be better rendered *which he signified, sending by his angel*. In the title of prophecy, whence the expressions of this book are chiefly taken, every thing is called *an angel* that notifies a message from God, or executes his will; a prophetic *dream* is an *angel*; the *pillar of fire*, which went before the Israelites, is called *God's angel*. The *winds*, and *flames of fire*, are *angels* to us, when used by God as voices to teach, or rods to punish us: so that God is properly said to reveal *by his angel*, what he makes known either by voice, by dream, by vision, or any other manner of true prophetic revelation. Bishop Bossuet has finely observed, in the preface to his Exposition of the Revelation, "that in the Gospel of St. John we read the life of Christ on earth, as a man conversing with men, humble, poor, weak, and suffering; we behold a sacrifice ready to be offered, and one appointed to sorrows and death: but in the Revelation of St. John we have the gospel of Christ, who was now raised from the dead. He speaks and acts as having conquered the grave, and triumphed over death and hell; as entered into the place of his glory, angels, principalities, and powers being made subject unto him; and exercising the supreme universal power which he has received from the Father over all things in heaven and earth, as our *Saviour*, for the protection of his church, and for the sure happiness of his *faithful servants* in the end." All this he is as *Mediator*, being at the same time, in respect to Deity, "God over all, blessed for ever."

Ver. 2. *Who bare record*] "Who, being honoured with so important a message, failed not faithfully to declare it, but testified the word of God, which, in those prophetic visions, came unto him; and the testimony of Jesus Christ,

(whose messenger the angel was,) exactly reporting *whatever he saw*."

Ver. 4. *John to the seven churches*] The apostle dedicates his book, ver. 4—6. to the seven churches of the Lydian or Proconsular Asia, wishing them grace and peace from God the Father, as the author and giver; from the *seven spirits*, the representatives of the Holy Ghost, as the instruments; and from *Jesus Christ* the Mediator, who is mentioned last, because the subsequent discourse more immediately relates to him. To the dedication he subjoins a short and solemn preface, ver. 7, 8. to shew the great authority of the divine Person who had commissioned him to write the Revelation. Grotius is of opinion, that the nominative case not being varied in the clause rendered *from him which is, and which was*, &c. into the genitive, as the common rules of grammar require, is designed to represent the everlasting veracity and invariableness of God, and the unchangeable majesty of Christ, in the testimony of his gospel, and the glory of his kingdom. The *Holy Spirit*, as is above hinted, is meant by the *seven spirits which are before the throne*. *Seven*, in the language of prophecy, often expresses perfection, and may better be understood of the most perfect Spirit of God, the Author of all spiritual blessings, than of *seven angels*, as a more natural interpretation of the expression in prophecy, as well as much more agreeable to the manner of the gospel blessing, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This too is most consistent with the prohibition of prayer to the angels; and, if we do not take this for the true interpretation, it will be a great difficulty to account for the omission of *the Spirit*, whose dignity must be allowed infinitely superior to that of the highest created angel.

Ver. 5. *The faithful witnesses*] In the original the nominative case is again used by St. John, contrary to the analogy of grammar, to signify, that, as he had intimated the immortality of the Deity, so likewise Christ was no less immutable in his kingdom and in his testimony. Christ is called *the Prince of the kings of the earth*, to encourage them in the profession of Christianity, notwithstanding the opposition made by kings, whom he could easily defeat and destroy in a moment. See John, xiii. 34. xv. 9. 1 John, i. 7.

pierced him: ² and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 ^x I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, faith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, ^y the Almighty.

9 I John, who also am ^z your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was ^a in the Spirit on ^b the Lord's day,

and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, ^c I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send ^d it unto ^e the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And ^e I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw ^f seven golden candlesticks;

¹ Jude, 15. ² Theff. 1. 7—10. Rev. 20. 10, 12. & 22. 12. ³ Ch. 21. 6. & 22. 23. Ver. 11. 4. Ch. 4. 8. & 11. 17. & 16. 5. If. 41. 4. & 44. 6. & 48. 12. Exod. 3. 14. Heb. 1. 12. & 13. 8. ⁴ Gen. 17. 1. If. 9. 6. & 63. 1. Heb. 7. 25. ⁵ Phil. 1. 7. & 4. 14. Rom. 8. 12. ⁶ Tim. 1. 8. & 2. 12. Heb. 10. 34. Ch. 2. 2, 9, 19. & 6. 9. & 12. 10, 11 Ver. 2. ⁷ Acts, 10. 10. Ezek. 3. 12, 14, 24. ⁸ 2 Cor. 12, 1—3. Ch. 4. 2. & 17. 3. & 21. 10. ⁹ Mark, 16. 9. John, 26. 19, 26. Acts, 20. 7. 1 Cor. 16. 2. If. 50. 27. Ch. 4. 1. ¹⁰ See ver. 4, 8, 17, 18. ¹¹ Ver. 4. Ch. ii. iii. Acts, xix. xx. & 16. 14. Col. 2. 1. ¹² Exod. 3. 3. Pf. 111. 2. ¹³ Ver. 20. Zech. 4. 2. Exod. 25. 37. Mat. 5. 14.

Ver. 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds, &c.] This verse contains the great moral which the whole book is designed to illustrate; namely, that, though there should be great opposition made against the cause and kingdom of Christ, yet it should be utterly in vain, and his kingdom should triumph in the most illustrious manner; so that all who had opposed him, should have the greatest reason to mourn; to lament that fatal opposition, by which, instead of prevailing in the least against him, they have only effected their own destruction: and as this series of divine prophecy begins, so it ends with this sentiment, and with the joyful consent of his faithful servants to this glorious truth, which should fill the enemies of Christ with such terror and dismay. Comp. ch. xxii. 20. The last clause, *Even so, Amen*, may be thus interpreted, "Yea, Lord, we repeat our joyful assent; be it so; Come, Lord Jesus, in the clouds of heaven; take to thyself thy great power, and reign: thy faithful people shall lift up their heads with joy and triumph, being assured that their complete redemption is approaching."

Ver. 8. I am Alpha and Omega.] "I was before all worlds, and shall continue the same, when all the revolutions of this world are over, and the final scenes relating to it shall be concluded." This verse affords us a glorious attestation to the Divinity of our great Lord and Saviour; and, though some have endeavoured to weaken its force by interpreting the words as spoken by the Father, every unprejudiced reader must discern that nothing can be more inconsistent with the context. Besides, most of the phrases which are here used, are afterwards applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. See Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3.

Ver. 9. I John.] The apostle, in this and the subsequent verses, mentions the place where the Revelation was given, and describes the manner and circumstances of the first vision: the place was Patmos. Ecclesiastical history tells us, that St. John was here employed in digging in a mine, being banished hither by Domitian the emperor, after he had come unhurt out of a cauldron of boiling oil; but the historical evidence produced for this latter event is very uncertain. Bishop Newton is of opinion, that St.

John was banished by Nero.

Ver. 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day,] That is, the day which we in general call Sunday; denominated the *Lord's day*, in memory of his resurrection from the dead. That the primitive Christians set this day apart for religious worship, appears both from St. Paul's Epistles, and from Justin Martyr's Apology, Ignatius, Tertullian, &c. It should be observed, that this Revelation was given on the Lord's day, when the apostle's heart and affections, as we may reasonably suppose, were peculiarly sublimed by the meditations and devotions of the day, and rendered more capable of receiving divine inspiration. The heavenly visions were vouchsafed to St. John, as they were before to Daniel, (ch. ix. 20.) after supplication and prayer; and there being two kinds of prophetic revelation, in a vision, and a dream, the Jews accounted a vision superior to a dream, as representing things more perfectly, and to the life; so that this book is represented as the highest degree of prophetic revelation.

Ver. 11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega,] Dr. Doddridge's note here deserves to be particularly remarked: "That these titles (says he) should be repeated so soon, in a connection which demonstrates that they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the 8th verse; and I cannot forbear recording it, that this text hath done more than any other in the Bible toward preventing me from giving into that scheme, which would make our Lord Jesus Christ no more than a deified creature." Whether these seven were the only Asiatic churches, we do not presume to inquire; doubtless they were the principal. See on ch. ii. 1. It is certain, the epistles to these churches contain many things of universal concern; and as there is plainly an intention to represent the regard of Christ to ministers and churches, by his walking among golden candlesticks, and holding stars in his right hand, the number seven may be mentioned as it seems best to harmonize with some other parts of this book; namely, with the seven spirits, seven seals, seven trumpets, &c. See on ver. 4.

Ver. 12. Seven golden candlesticks,] The original word here

13 And ^a in the midst of the seven candlesticks *one* like unto ^b the Son of man, clothed with ^c a garment down to the foot, and ^d girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 ^e His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes *were* ^f as a flame of fire;

15 And ^g his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and ^h his voice as the found of many waters.

16 ⁱ And he had in his right hand seven

stars: ^j and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: ^k and his countenance *was* as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, ^l I fell at his feet as dead. And he ^m laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 ⁿ I am he that liveth, and ^o was dead; and behold, ^p I am alive for evermore, Amen; ^q and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 ^r Write the things which thou hast seen,

^a Mat. 18. 20. & 28. 30. Ch. 2. 1. Zech. 1. 8. Ezek. 46. 10. Col. 1. 27. ^b Dan. 10. 5, 6. & 7. 11. Ezek. 1. 26. Ch. 14. 14. & 15. 6. ^c Exod. 28. 4, 40. & 39. 1, 27. Ch. 19. 8. ^d 2 Cor. 5. 21. ^e If. 11. 5. Dan. 10. 5. Ch. 15. 6. ^f Dan. 7. 9. Micah, 5. 2. Pl. 90. 2. Prov. 8. 23—31. Song, 5. 11. If. 9. 6. ^g Dan. 10. 6. Ch. 2. 18, 23. & 19. 12. Song, 5. 12. ^h Ch. 10. 1. Dan. 10. 6. Ezek. 1. 7. & 40. 3. Song, 5. 15. Ch. 2. 18. ⁱ Ezek. 43. 2. & 1. 24. Ch. 14. 2. & 19. 6. Dan. 10. 6. Heb. 12. 26. John, 5. 15, 28. ^j Hag. 2. 23. Ch. 2. 1. Eph. 4. 1. Mat. 5. 14. ^k 2 Cor. 8. 23. & 5. 20. ^l Ch. 2. 12, 16. & 19. 15, 21. If. 40. 2. Eph. 6. 17. Heb. 4. 11, 12. Deut. 32. 42, 43. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9. ^m Song, 5. 15. Ch. 10. 1. Pl. 4. 6. Acts, 26. 11. Exod. 15. 10. ⁿ Dan. 8. 17. 18. & 10. 10. Ezek. 1. 28. Josh. 5. 14. Mat. 17. 6. Acts, 9. 4, 6. ^o Song, 2. 6. & 8. 3. If. 41. 10. See ver. 8. 11. If. 41. 4. & 44. 6. & 48. 12. ^p John, 1. 4. & 5. 21, 26. 1 John, 5. 20. Job, 19. 25. Rom. 6. 9. ^q Mal. 20. 28. Rom. 5. 8, 10. & 6. 10 & 8. 3, 33, 35. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. ^r Pl. 21. 4. Rom. 6. 9. Heb. 7. 25. John, 14. 19. Col. 3. 3, 4. with ch. 4. 9, 10. & 5. 14. & 10. 6. & 15. 7. ^s Ch. 3. 7. If. 22. 21, 22. Pl. 68. 18, 20. Mat. 28. 18. John, 17. 2. Rom. 14. 9. Ch. 20. 1. Deut. 32. 39. ^t Dan. 2. 29. If. 30. 8. Hab. 2. 2. Ch. 4. 1. Acts, 26. 16. Ver. 12.

here used for *candlesticks*, answers almost constantly to the Hebrew one used for the golden candlesticks, or chandeliers, in the tabernacle and temple.

Ver. 13. *One like unto the Son of man, clothed, &c.*] The clothing here mentioned, is something like the Jewish high-priest's; and Christ is described much in the same manner as the divine appearance in Daniel's vision; Dan. vii. 9. The girdles were a kind of fast, which went over the neck like a tippet, were crossed on the breast, and then went round the lower part of it two or three times, like a modern circingle, and from hence they fell down almost to the feet. They were sometimes embroidered, and at other times fringed with gold. The priests were required, for coolness and decency, to wear linen garments, and gird themselves higher than others; (see Ezek. xlv. 17, 18.) And this is one of the many allusions to the temple, and its forms and customs, with which we shall find this book so greatly to abound. See Exod. xxxix. 5.

Ver. 14. *His head and his hairs were white like wool,*] *The hairs of his head, &c.* The word λευκός, which we translate *white*, properly signifies "of great lustre." Thus ch. xx. 11. *I saw a great white throne*, that is, "a throne with "glorious lustre." This being an appearance of the *Shechinah*, is to be considered, as that always was, a representation of the divine Presence, Majesty, and Glory. Therefore the glory in which the *Shechinah* appeared in ancient prophecy, is very properly applicable to it.

Ver. 15. *Unto fine brass,*] The original word χαλκοβένον, signifies some kind of fine copper or brass; the inferior kind of *auri calcum*, in use among the Romans. See Dan. x. 6. and Parkhurst on the word.

Ver. 16. *He had in his right hand seven stars:*] *The candlesticks, or churches, were round about him:* he, in the midst of them, held in his right hand the *stars*; that is, the angels or bishops of the churches: *stars* are the hieroglyphics used to express both rulers and teachers. They may therefore, with great propriety, be used symbolically,

for the bishops or pastors of the church. See on Jude, ver. 13.

Ver. 17. *And when I saw him, I fell at his feet, &c.*] "I have just been describing the appearance of Jesus Christ to me, with which I was favoured on the Lord's day, while I was engaged in such devout sentiments as were suitable to the time and occasion: and I now add, that when I saw him in this awful, this glorious and resplendent form, I was perfectly overwhelmed with the majesty of his appearance, so that I fell down at his feet dead; and he immediately condescended to raise me up, with great indulgence; for he laid his right hand upon me, and said to me, Fear not, John, for I appear to thee for purposes of mercy; I am, indeed, as I have proclaimed myself, *the First and the Last*, possessed of divine perfections and glories, from eternity to eternity the same."

Ver. 18. *Amen;*] This seems to have been the exclamation of St. John, testifying his joyful assent to the noble truths which precede; after which the discourse is continued in the person of Christ. We have often observed that the word *Adns*, here rendered *hell*, signifies, "The unseen world." Our English, or rather Saxon word, *hell*, in its original signification, though it is now understood in a more limited sense, exactly answers to the Greek word, as it denotes a *concealed*, or *unseen place*; and this sense of the word is still retained in the eastern, and especially in the western counties of England: to *hellow* a thing, is to cover it.

Inferences.—With what sublimity does this wonderful book open! which, though pregnant with inexplicable mysteries, is, at the same time, pregnant with instruction; which the weakest of Christ's humble disciples may peruse with sacred complacency and delight. For surely we are not to imagine *that divine book* to be unfit for our perusal, and undeserving our regard, concerning which its divine

Author.

and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter ;

^b Ver. 16. Ch. 2. 1. Mal. 2. 7. Mat. 5. 14. 2 Cor. 8. 23.

20 The mystery of the seven ^b stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the ^c seven

^c Zech 4. 2. Mat. 5. 14—16. Phil. 2. 15, 16. Ver. 16, 12, 13.

Author expressly declares, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that bear the words of this prophecy!* Thanks be to our Heavenly Father, that he gave it to his Son Jesus Christ: Thanks to the Son of God, that he gave it to his servant John, to be transmitted down to future generations.

Let us attentively view the divine glory of the Father, and of his only-begotten Son, who is the brightness of that glory, and the express image of his person, and of the Holy Ghost, who is here represented by the seven spirits *before* the throne. From us, and from all created nature, let there be glory to him that is, and that was, and that is to come, and to the First-born from the dead, who is superior to all the kings of the earth, and to all the angels of heaven, who is so intimately united with the Father in divine perfections and glories, that he also is the *Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End*: that he also is *Almighty*; able, by his mighty power, to subdue all things to himself; and is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Never let us be unmindful of the condescension of the *Son of God*, in becoming for our redemption and salvation, the *Son of man*. Let the great things that he has done for us, and the great things he has taught us to expect from him, be ever familiar to our minds. How astonishing was that love, which engaged him to wash from their sins in his own Blood all persevering believers! How glorious is that exaltation to which he is raising them! rendering them, even in the present world, kings and priests to God, and inspiring them with the ardent hope of an immutable kingdom, and an everlasting priesthood in the temple of their God above. This is the sublime and transcendent happiness of all who perseveringly with lively faith look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. This illustrious Personage is coming in the clouds, and our eyes shall see him: too often already have we pierced him; let us mourn over our sins at present, that we may not pour forth floods of unprofitable tears in that awful day, as all the tribes of the earth shall do, who have dared to set themselves against the kingdom of Christ; a kingdom which shall then be triumphant over all opposition, the last of its enemies being vanquished and destroyed.

In the mean time, what unspeakable happiness can our blessed Redeemer confer on his faithful servants, while suffering in his cause! How wretched was Cæsar on his imperial throne, compared with this despised and persecuted disciple of Christ, in his old age banished to the desolate island of Patmos! *There* his Lord condescended to visit him, opened his eyes to prophetic visions, and diffused around him celestial glories. May we in no case be ashamed of the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ, a zeal for which was so graciously acknowledged, so gloriously rewarded.

It was on the *Lord's day* that the apostle was *in the Spirit*: how often has the Spirit of God visited his people at that sacred season, visited them as well in their secret retire-

ments as in the public assembly; when the hand of Providence, as in the instance before us, and not their own negligence, and indifference to divine ordinances, occasioned their absence from them!

Let our souls again bend, in humble veneration, to Him who is the *First and the Last, the Alpha and the Omega*. And if we have heard in effect his awful voice proclaiming himself by these illustrious and divine titles, let us *turn*, as it were, to *behold him*; and by these marvellous visions in which he manifested himself to St. John, let us endeavour to form some imperfect ideas of our blessed Lord, and the magnificence and glory with which he appears to the inhabitants of the heavenly regions. Every circumstance, not excepting the minutest and most inconsiderable, attending this appearance of Christ to his beloved apostle, seems designed to convey some divine truth, some important lesson, for the contemplation and instruction of future ages. It was, in general, beyond all question, intended to impress us with the highest reverence of our glorified Redeemer, that we may pay him our humble and devout adoration, and thus, in some degree, anticipate the pleasure with which we hope to appear in his immediate presence above.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The book opens,

1. With a preface, declaring its sacred contents. *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which comes from him, as the great Prophet of his church, and which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; some of them to be quickly accomplished, and the rest in order till the end of time: and he sent and signified it by his angel, whom he employed on this errand, unto his servant John, who bare record of the word of God, and had before, in his gospel and epistles, spoken of the glory and offices of the incarnate Word, and was one of the faithful witnesses of the testimony of Jesus Christ, of his gospel, and of all things that he saw; the miracles, life, death, and resurrection of the great Redeemer, and those amazing visions which are here recorded.*

2. A blessing is pronounced on the hearers, readers, and observers of this book. *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that bear the words of this prophecy, attentively marking the prophecies here revealed, and inquiring into the mind of the Spirit; and keep those things which are written therein; retaining them in their memory, and directed by them in their practice: for the time is at hand, when their fulfilment will begin.* Note; (1.) They who diligently study the scriptures, will find the happy fruit of their labours. (2.) The shorter the period of time allotted to us is, the greater diligence should we give to improve it.

2dly, The apostle,

1. Addresses the seven churches which are in Asia; and adds his benediction, *Grace be unto you in all its fulness of blessings, and peace in your consciences from a sense of redeeming love, flowing from him which is, and which was,*

golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

4 Ch. 2. 1, 8, 12, 18. & 3, 1, 7, 14. 2 Cor. 5. 20. Mal. 2. 7.

and which is to come, from the eternal Father, in his nature and perfections unchangeably the same for ever and ever: and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, even that Holy Ghost whose gifts and graces are various and perfect; and from Jesus Christ, through whom, as Mediator, all the blessings of the triune God descend upon his faithful people; who is the faithful Witness, the anointed Prophet to declare the Father's will; and the First-begotten of the dead, who rose, as our glorious High-priest, with his own blood to appear in the presence of God for us; and the Prince of the kings of the earth, exalted to the mediatorial throne, and become the Head of all principalities and powers, as the universal King, to protect his faithful people, and subdue their enemies.

2. He ascribes glory to the incarnate Jesus. *Unto him that loved us with the most unparalleled affection, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, which he shed to redeem us from all iniquity; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, invested us with dominion over all the power of evil, and consecrated us for his blessed service, to offer those spiritual sacrifices which are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; to him, even to this most amiable and adorable Jesus, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* Note; (1.) Jesus by his blood hath atoned for our sins; and this blood alone can cleanse our guilty souls from all sin. (2.) Every child of God is now consecrated to the highest office and dignity; is heir to a throne of glory, and has access with boldness into the holiest of all through the atoning blood. (3.) They who know the divine Redeemer, and are interested in his love, will be ceaseless in their habitual adorations of him.

3. With rapture the apostle looks forward to the glorious coming of Jesus as the eternal Judge; and, as seeing him present for the comfort and joy of his people, cries out, *Behold, with wonder and delight, he cometh with clouds in awful majesty, surrounded with angels and archangels, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; and every eye shall see him, seated on the throne of judgment; and they also which pierced him, with impious and bloody cruelty nailed him to the tree; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, whose guilt unpardoned now shall stare them in the face, and horrors unutterable seize upon their consciences; while with transport the faithful shall welcome his arrival, approving and applauding all his righteous decisions; and are now wishing for the day of his appearing; even so, Amen! come quickly.* Note; (1.) A day of judgment will spread terror through the wicked world. Woe then to those who have pierced the Redeemer, whether in his own person, or in the insults shewn to his people: they shall receive a fearful recompense. (2.) Blessed and happy are they who, in the prospect of this day, can comfortably say, *Even so, Amen!*

4. The great Judge describes his own transcendent honour. *I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the*

Ending, saith the Lord, the sum and substance of the scriptures, possessing all perfections, and accomplishing all my pleasure; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty, the self-existent and incomprehensible Jehovah, able to save or destroy to the uttermost.

3dly, We have the glorious vision which appeared to the divine man of this book.

1. He calls himself *John, your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; for all his servants follow him with their cross to glory, and must expect, and be content patiently to suffer for his great name's sake.* He was now in banishment in the isle of *Patmos*, for his fidelity to his blessed Master; and, though removed far from earthly comforters, still he found that presence of God, which made his lonely abode a paradise of delights. He was in the Spirit on the Lord's day; whilst on that holy day, observed by the Christian church, in memory of the Saviour's resurrection, he was employed in sacred meditation and prayer, he felt the descending power of the Holy One, and was filled with prophetic inspiration. Note; They who on the Lord's day employ in spiritual exercises their time and thoughts, retiring from the world and all its cares and avocations, will find a blessed intercourse with heaven, and experience that communion with God, which is a foretaste of eternal blessedness.

2. He declares what he heard and saw. A great voice, as of a trumpet behind him, awakened his attention, and he heard distinctly the voice of Jesus, saying, *I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last; and commanding him to write what in vision he was about to see and hear, and send it to the seven churches of Asia, whose names are specified.* Turning to see whence the voice proceeded, a glorious Personage meets his astonished sight, whose majesty he describes. *I saw seven golden candlesticks, seven branches springing from the same stem, like that which stood in the tabernacle of old, the emblems of that light of truth and fire of love which Jesus sends into the midst of his churches and people, and which they in their conversation hold forth to the world. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one stood, as the priest when he came to trim the lamps, like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, not unlike the priestly vestment; and girt about the loins with a golden girdle, far surpassing the costly girdle of the ephod, and intimating how ready and able he is to discharge his sacerdotal office on the behalf of his believing people: his head and his hairs were white like wool, as the Ancient of days, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire, piercing and penetrating into the inmost secrets of men's souls, and darting lightning against his foes; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, mighty to support the concerns of his church and people, and to tread down their enemies; and his voice as the sound of many waters, spreading to the distant corners of the earth his blessed gospel word, and*

terrible

CHAP. II.

What is commanded to be written to the angels (that is, the ministers) of the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira: and what is commended, or found wanting in them.

[Anno Domini 96.]

UNTO the ^a angel of the church of ^b Ephesus write; These things saith ^c he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, ^d who

walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

² I know thy ^f works, and thy labour, and ^g thy patience, and ^h how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

^a See ch. 1. 20. Acts 20. 17, 28. ^b Acts xix. Eph. i. 17. ^c Ch. 1. 16, 20. 2 Cor. 3. 5. Phil. 4. 13, 19. ^d Ch. 1. 11, 13, 20. Lev. 26. 12. Ch. 21. 3. Ezek. 46. 10. ^e Ver. 9. 13, 19. Ch. 3. 1, 8, 15. & 10. 1, 6. & 11. 4. Heb. 13. 17. & 4. 13. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Mat. 7. 23. ^f 1 Thes. 5. 12. 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Cor. 15. 10, 38. ^g Rom. 15. 1, 4. Heb. 6. 10, 12. ^h 1 John 4. 1. Gal. 1. 8. 2 Cor. 11. 13. Eph. 4. 14. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2. ⁱ 2 Thes. 3. 13. Gal. 6. 9. Heb. 12. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 4—10.

terrible in his providences and judgments as the roaring waves. And he had in his right hand seven stars, the faithful bishops and pastors of his church, whom he upholds and preserves, and who shine bright in the lustre of his grace; and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, even the word of his law and gospel, pricking sinners to the heart, and hewing down all opposition; and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength, reviving as the light and warmth of its invigorating beams. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead, overcome with the brightness of his glory. And he laid his right hand upon me, to revive my intimidated mind by his mighty grace, saying unto me, Fear not, I am the First and the Last, the great Origin, and ultimate End of all things. I am he that liveth, essentially possessed of life in and of myself; and was dead, in that human nature which I assumed; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen! so it is, infallibly certain and true: and have the keys of hell and of death, to save or to destroy, according to his sacred pleasure and divine perfections,—to unlock the gates of the grave to my faithful people, and shut up the wicked in the prison of eternal darkness. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, until the end of time; and the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels, or messengers, of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches. May we by faith behold the same Jesus, and feel the enlivening influence of his presence with our souls!

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1.] The second and third chapters contain the seven epistles to the seven churches of Asia; which are particularly addressed, because, as is commonly believed, they were under St. John's immediate inspection. He constituted bishops over them. He resided much at Ephesus, which is therefore named the first of the seven. The main subjects too of this book are comprised in *sevens*; seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven

vials; as *seven* was also a mystical number throughout the Old Testament. There are likewise in these epistles several innate characters, which are peculiar to the church of that age, and cannot be so fully applied to the church of any other age: They have, therefore, rather a literal, than a mystical meaning; but, notwithstanding this, they contain most excellent spiritual and moral precepts and exhortations, commendations and reproofs, promises and threatenings, which may be of infinite use to the church in all ages. The form and order of the parts is nearly the same in all the epistles—First, a command to write; then some character and attributes of the speaker, taken from the vision in the first chapter, and appropriated to the matter of each epistle; then commendations or reproofs, with suitable promises or threatenings; and then, in all, the same conclusion, *He that hath an ear, let him hear, &c.*

The first epistle is addressed to the church of Ephesus, as it was the metropolis of the Lybian Asia, the place of St. John's principal residence, and one of the most celebrated cities in Asia: but though once so magnificent and glorious, it is now become a mean village, with scarcely a single family of Christians dwelling in it. So strongly has the denunciation in ver. 5. been fulfilled! See Acts xix. 1.

Unto the angel—of Ephesus] That is, the bishop, or presiding officer of the church. There was an officer of the synagogue, who had the name of angel; and, from his office of overlooking the reader of the law, he was called *episcopus*, or bishop.

Ver. 2. I know thy works, &c.] Our Saviour having begun with telling the angel, that *He holds the seven stars in his right hand*, (that is, “directs the angels or bishops of “the seven churches,”) and that *He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, or lamp-stands*; that is, views, considers, protects, and governs them; it is no wonder that he should know here, and in every one of the rest, what is done therein!

Ver. 3. And hast borne,] “And I know thou hast sustained, with exemplary fortitude, the trouble they have “given thee; and hast exercised invincible patience “under all thy sufferings and trials in my cause; and “thou

4 Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because ^k thou hast left thy first love.

5 ^l Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and ^m will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that ⁿ thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 ^o He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; ^p To him that overcometh will I give to eat of ^q the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith ^r the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 ^s I know thy works, and tribulation, and

^k Hof. 4. 16. with Jer. 2. 2. Gal. 1. 7. & 3. 3. Phil. 2. 21. 2 Tim. 1. 14 & 2. 18. ^l Ch. 3. 3. 19. Jer. 3. 14. 22. Hof. 14. 1. 8.
^m Mat. 21. 40, 41, 43. Jer. 9. 12. Ch. 3. 16. Mat. 8. 12. ⁿ Ver. 15. Rom. 12. 9. Pl. 97. 10. Gal. 5. 19—21. Rom. 1. 26—31.
^o Ver. 11, 17, 29. Ch. 3. 6, 13, 22. & 13. 9. see Mat. 11. 15. ^p 2 Tim. 4. 7. 1 John 5. 4. Rom. 8. 37. 2 Cor. 10. 3. 4. & 6. 4—10.
^q Eph. 6. 10—20. 1 Tim. 6. 11—14, 20. Gal. 6. 9. ^r Ch. 22. 2, 14. John, 15. 1. & 14. 6. & 11. 25. & 1. 4. & 5. 26. & 6. 32—57. 1 John, 5. 11, 12. Gen. 3. 22. and 2. 9. ^s See ch. 1. 8, 11, 17, 18. ^t See ver. 2, 13, 19. Ch. 3. 1, 8, 15. Isa. 54. 11, 12. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. John, 16. 33. 1 Cor. 4. 10—13. Heb. 10. 32—34.

“ thou hast laboured constantly and tenaciously for my name’s sake, and to establish the faith of my people; and hast not fainted under thy toils or tribulations.”

Ver. 4. Thou hast left thy first love.] Not quite forsaken, but remitted and relaxed the former love and zeal; which is condemned, and for which they are dreadfully threatened; because the angel and his church, notwithstanding their zeal against the false apostles, by giving way to them at last, or from other causes, had, in a measure, forsaken their first love which they bore to the Lord Jesus. It is very plain, that these epistles, though inscribed to the governors of the churches, are directed to the churches themselves, as represented by them, just as the Jewish church was represented by Joshua their high-priest, Zech. iii. 1. But it is not improbable, that where some of the churches are blamed, there might be in their ministers some faults, correspondent to those charged upon the society; and particularly that the zeal of this minister of Ephesus might be declining.

Ver. 5. Will remove thy candlestick out of his place.] As this threatening is addressed to the church of Ephesus, though much better than some other churches, it is reasonable to believe, that, like other denunciations, it was also intended to awaken the rest. It intimates how terrible a thing it would be to have the gospel taken away from them: and indeed it has been executed upon them all in a very awful manner; for, ruined and overthrown by heresies and divisions within, and by the arms of the Saracens from without, Mahometanism prevails throughout those countries, which were once the glory of Christendom; their churches turned into mosques, and their worship into superstition.

Ver. 6. The deeds of the Nicolaitans.] Some have thought that these heretics derive their name from *Nicolas*, one of the seven deacons; but that name was so common among the Jews, that no stress can be laid on an argument drawn from thence. The substance of what ancient writers say concerning them is, that they taught the lawfulness of lewdness, and idolatrous sacrifices, esteeming those things indifferent in their own nature; and that their practices were suitable to such principles. See ver. 14, 15. 1 John i. 3, &c.

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Ver. 7. He that hath an ear, &c.] See on Matth. xi. 15. By *him that overcometh*, is here meant, him who lives in the spirit of holiness, who, through grace, conquers every evil temper, and publicly confesses the name of Jesus Christ before his enemies to the end, and even unto martyrdom, if called thereunto. The word which we render *to give*, implies, throughout this book, a power granted to act or do something very remarkable, which depended not before upon, and was not in the power of the receiver. The phrase *Εύλον ζωής*, *the word, or tree of life*, is a Hebraism, to signify an *immortal tree*, and symbolically, immortality itself. So wisdom is said to be a *tree of life*, Prov. iii. 18. that is, bringing to man long life and immortality; and Prov. xi. 30. the *fruit of the righteous* is said to be a *tree of life*; that is, “Immortality is the reward or effect of his following wisdom.” See ch. xxii. 2.

Ver. 8. Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna] Smyrna was the nearest city to Ephesus, and for that reason probably was addressed in the second place. The town now remaining is situated on lower ground than the ancient city, and lies about 45 miles north of Ephesus. It is called by the Turks *Esmir*, and is celebrated, not so much for the splendour and pomp of the buildings, as for the number, wealth, and commerce of the inhabitants. The Turks have herein fifteen mosques, and the Jews several synagogues. Among these enemies of the Christians, the Christian religion exists, though in a small degree. Smyrna still retains the dignity of a metropolis. Frequent plagues and earthquakes are the great calamities of the place; but the Christians are here more considerable, and in better condition, than in any other of the seven churches. As our Saviour was about to foretel of the angel’s sufferings and death, he here gives himself that title which shews that he also suffered, and died, and rose again; as if he should say, “Thou and others are like to suffer for my name’s sake; but have a good courage; for in my death and resurrection I have given you an earnest of a glorious resurrection, to crown your sufferings and death.”

Ver. 9. And poverty (but thou art rich); &c.] “I know the humble opinion thou hast of thyself, and thy poverty”

6 B

poverty (but 'thou art rich'); and *I know* the blasphemy of them which "say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

10 * Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried;

and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 † He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt † of the second death.

* Jam. 2. 5. H-b. 10. 34. 2 Cor. 6. 10. Mat. 19. 21. & 6. 20. Luke, 12. 21. 1 Tim. 6. 6, 18. 1 Pet. 1. 4. † Rom. 2. 17-29. & 9. 6. 32. & 10. 2, 3. Phil. 3. 7. Ch. 3. 9. Gal. 6. 12, 13. John, 8. 44. † If. 41. 10, 14. & 43. 1, 2. Mat. 10. 22, 28. & 24. 9, 13. 1 Cor. 10. 25. 2 Tim. 2. 5. & 4. 7, 8. Jam. 1. 2, 12. Ch. 3. 12, 11. & 22. 5. † See ver. 7. 17, 26. ch. 3. 5, 12, 21. & 21. 7. & 13. 19. † Ch. 20. 6, 14. & 21. 8.

"poverty in temporal respects; but thou art rich in grace, and in all its genuine effects, and art daily laying up for thyself an increasing treasure in heaven." With respect to the next clause, we may observe, that it is folly and hypocrisy for any one now to call himself a *Jew*, if he mean by that to signify that he is one of the chosen people of God, and a true worshipper; seeing that real Christians are now that people, the true and spiritual Israel, and consequently the only people who have a right to the written promises of God, and the privileges of the true worshippers in the visible church. The blasphemy, therefore, of these pretended Jews consisted in this, that they lied against God, by pretending to worship him truly: for his will being now to be worshipped through and with his Son, to worship him wilfully otherwise, is to worship him in vain,—to be guilty of a lie against God. It appears from the history of those times, that the Jews were then great enemies to the *Christians*; and in Smyrna more particularly, perhaps, than any where else, at least in any of these churches. It should seem therefore by this, that Polycarp, who is generally thought to be the bishop here addressed, and his flock, did already, and would hereafter, meet with great vexation from these men. If they were as vexatious and malicious at this time as they were at that of his martyrdom, they were the most bitter and cruel enemies he ever had; incensing the Heathens against him, and shewing themselves the most forward persecutors. The epistle of his church, which gives an account of his martyrdom, takes notice of it; for we read, that "the Jews especially, as is their custom, shewed their forwardness in contributing to it." We may just observe further, that the Jews of those times, being, if not the tormentors, yet the principal accusers of the Christians before the Pagans, did thus the work of *Satan*, who, according to his name, is *the accuser of the brethren*. In this sense they were *of the synagogue*, or secret council of *Satan*.

Ver. 10. *Fear none of these things, &c.*] This chiefly concerns Polycarp, the *angel*, who is here comforted, and foretold of his future sufferings; but it does not exclude the rest of his flock, who are comprised under the shepherd. His constancy in martyrdom proves that he followed this advice. The next clause concerns chiefly the members of his church; and the event was suitable: for many of them were cast into prison, tormented, exhibited upon the theatre, and thrown to the lions; and the persecution ceased not till Polycarp had, by his death,

put an end to it; "who, by his martyrdom, stopped the persecution, putting, as it were, a seal over it," as they express it in the account of his martyrdom. The *ten days* signify *ten years*, according to the usual stile of prophecy; and the greatest persecution which the Christian church ever endured, was that under Diocletian, which lasted ten years, and grievously afflicted all the Asiatic, and indeed all the eastern churches. This character can apply to none of the other general persecutions; for none of them lasted so long as *ten years*. As the commendatory and reproofing parts of these epistles exhibit the present state of the churches, so the promissory and threatening parts foretel something of their future condition; and in this sense, and no other, can these epistles be said to be prophetic. It is added, *Be thou faithful unto death, &c.* *Faithful* here signifies *brave, constant, and patient*: our religion being a warfare, words from war are used to express what concerns it. See 2 Tim. iv. 7. Polycarp fully answered their expectation, when, being solicited to apostatize, he said thus: "Eighty-six years have I served him, and he never wronged me: how then can I blaspheme my King, who hath saved me?" Therefore, as soon as he entered the *stadium*, there came a voice to comfort him, saying, "Be strong, O Polycarp, and shew thyself a man." That the primitive martyrs had miraculous comforts and assistances of the Holy Ghost, is fully proved by Mr. Dodwell, *Cyprian, Dissert. xii. sect. 42*. The *crown*, as a symbol of reward and encouragement for constancy, is suitable to the notion of martyrdom, as a fight or combat for victory. It implies likewise, that this reward shall partly consist of power and dominion over others; therefore these martyr conquerors are to reign with Christ, ch. xx. 4.

Ver. 11. *Shall not be hurt of the second death.*] This is in pursuance of the title, ver. 8. For Christ having power over death and hell, and having raised himself, he has of course power to raise the martyrs: and then it is plain that the *second death* shall have no power over them. Memorable to this purpose is the saying of an ancient emir, in the times of the last crusade, who, asking of certain captive Christians, by his interpreters, whether they believed in Jesus Christ? and the captives replying that they did so believe, "Then," said the emir, "take comfort; for since he died for you, and was able to rise again, he is also well able to save you."

Ver.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write ; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges ;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat is : and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, ^d even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where ^e Satan dwelleth.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel,

to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written,

^a Joh. 5. 13. Num. 22. 23. Ver. 16. Ch. 1. 16. & 19. 15, 21. Deut. 32. 42, 43. Heb. 3. 14. & 4. 14. & 10. 23. ^d Gen. 6. 9. Luke, 22. 28. & 12. 8. ^e 1 Sam. 2. 30. ^b See ver. 2. Heb. 4. 13. Ver. 9. ^c 2 Tim. 1. 13. Deut. 32. 16, 17. Lev. 17. 7. Ch. 11. 7, 8. & 17. 6. ver. 9. ^f Num. 25. 1, 3. & 31. 16. Ezek. 44. 7. Acts, 15. 1, 20, 29. 2 Cor. viii. x. v. 2 Peter, 2. 15. Jude, 11. Phil. 3. 18, 19. ^g See ver. 6. Jer. 44. 4. ^h Ver. 5. Ch. 3. 2, 3, 19. Jer. 3. 13, 14, 22. & 31. 18—20. ⁱ Ch. 1. 16. & 11. 5. & 19. 15. 21. If. 11. 4. & 49. 2. Eph. 6. 17. 2 Thef. 2. 8. Heb. 4. 11, 12. ^k See ver. 7. Ch. 21. 7. & 13. 9. ^l If. 62. 8, 9. & 65. 13. John, 4. 32 & 6. 33, 49, 58. ^m Exod. 28. 8. Eph. 1. 6, 7. If. 1. 1. & 43. 25. & 44. 22. Eph. 1. 6, 7. ⁿ If. 56. 5. & 62. 2, 4, 12. Ch. 3. 12. 1 John, 3. 2.

Ver. 12. To the angel of the church in Pergamos] Pergamos, formerly the metropolis of the Hellepontic Mysia, and the seat of the Attalick kings, is, by the Turks, with some little variation, still called *Bergama*, and has its situation about 64 miles to the north of Smyrna. Here are good buildings, but more ruins: The place is almost wholly occupied by the Turks, very few families of Christians being left, whose state is very deplorable. Here is only one church remaining, dedicated to St. Theodorus: and that the name of Christ is not wholly lost and forgotten in Pergamos, is owing to the care of the metropolitan of Smyrna, who continually sends a minister to perform the sacred offices. The cathedral church of St. John is buried in its own ruins, its *angel* or bishop removed, and its fair pillars adorn the graves of its destroyers, the Turks, who are estimated to be two or three thousand souls in number. Its other fine church, called *Santa Sophia*, is turned into a mosque, and daily profaned with the blasphemies of Mahomet. There are not, in the whole town, above a dozen or fifteen families of Christians, who till the ground to gain their bread, and live in the most abject and sordid service. There is the less reason to wonder at the wretched condition of this church, when we consider that it was the very *throne of Satan*, ver. 13. that they ran greedily after the error of Balaam, ver. 14. and that they held the impure doctrine of the Nicolaitans. It was denounced to them to repent, or else Christ would *come unto them quickly, and fight against them*, ver. 16. as the event proves that he has done.

Ver. 13. *Even where Satan's seat is :*] *Satan's throne*; the place where he has great power. It is probable, that the Heathens were there particularly furious against the Christians. Now, where there are persecutions, there *Satan dwelleth* and reigneth. See ch. xii. 10. The church of Pergamos, to incite them to future fidelity and a holy conduct, is here commended for things which they had done; for having courageously maintained their faith in

the time of persecution, which is here pointed at by a particular instance; namely, when *Antipas suffered martyrdom*. It is likely that many of that church suffered then, and that Antipas their bishop, by his death, put an end to the persecution, as Polycarp did afterwards.

Ver. 14. *The doctrine of Balaam,*] As *Balaam* has the same signification in Hebrew which *Nicolas* has in Greek, and both signify "conquerors of the people," (which name might probably have been given to Balaam, on account of the influence which he had in the place where he lived;) it seems most likely that the peculiar *doctrines of Balaam* and of the *Nicolaitans* were the same; or the latter might be more strenuous in justifying and propagating their doctrine, and acting upon it. As if he said, "Balaam taught Balak to lay a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, and thou hast also those who hold the doctrine of the Balaamites." See Numb. xxxi. 15, 16. Jude, ver. 11.

Ver. 16. *Will fight against them*] He does not say that he will fight against the church, but the *Nicolaitans*; therefore *repent*, that is, "Be wise, and separate yourselves from those seducers, or else you shall be involved in their damnation, as Balaam was in the destruction of the Midianites." In the last phrase, *with the sword of my mouth*, the metaphor or allegory is still carried on, and the symbols suit the title of our Saviour in the beginning of the epistle, ver. 12. and further allude to the sword whereby the angel of God would have hindered Balaam in his intended journey.

Ver. 17. *Will I give to eat of the hidden manna,*] Hereby the reward of him that conquers in the combat for Christ is described. As Balaam went on in his error through the greediness of gain, so here Christ promises, by way of antidote, the true riches to *him, who shall, in the strength of grace, resist and conquer all internal and external temptations to idolatry and vice, notwithstanding the counsel of these Balaamites*. Ac-

which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

18° And unto the angel of the church in

Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brags;

° Ch. i. 11. & 2. 1, 8, 12.

° See ch. i. 5, 14, 15.

According to the notion of the ancients, and especially the Hebrews, temporal riches consist in meats and drink, in having plenty of the fruits of the earth, and much cattle, with all things necessary and convenient to human life. The *hidden manna* is the unknown meat; the riches well preserved in heaven. It is incorruptible food, the treasure not subject to theft or decay; and that is immortal life, not to be taken away by any means, when once bestowed upon the faithful faint; the necessary sustenance of life being here put for the life itself. As therefore David, upon the undertaking the combat with Goliath, had riches promised him, and accordingly ate at the king's table; so Christ promises to his champion heavenly riches; and the accomplishment of these promises is set forth in ch. xxii. 1, 2, &c. It is called *hidden manna*: now, of the manna that fell, some was designed for common use, and some was laid up in the ark as a memorial. That which was common was corruptible, and they who ate thereof died, even though it were bread that came down from heaven; see John, vi. 32.; but that which was laid up and hidden in the ark, remained miraculously to future generations. It is God alone who keeps, and consequently gives the true bread from heaven; and that is such manna as was hidden in the ark, incorruptible food, whereof they who perseveringly partake shall never hunger, but shall be immortal. This *hidden manna* is therefore the symbol of immortality; but an immortality consisting of such a life, and means to preserve it, as are wonderful and transcendent, beyond our present imagination. See ch. xix. 12. The next expression makes up an *hendyades*, that is, two phrases joined by a conjunction to express one thing, as thus, *I will give him a new name, written upon a white stone*; for the stone is only given for the sake of the new name written upon it. A white stone is either the same, or at least equivalent to tables of stone, upon which the decalogue is said to have been written. Stone, and that too whitened, was the first and most ancient matter used to write upon. See Deut. xxvii. 2, 3. A new name signifies the same thing as freedom, and a change of condition. New names were given upon change of condition. Abram and Sarai received new names from God; our Saviour changed Simon's name for Peter, and Christians take a new name at baptism. The expressions, according to our stile and notions, amount to this, "I will give him a new diploma, or character, to enfranchise him, and thereby grant him new privileges, change his condition, and make him immortal. He shall attain to that immortal life, whose glories and felicities no man can fully conceive, and none shall fully conceive but those who enjoy it;" for so much is implied in the expression immediately following. It is here to be observed further, that our Saviour's joining the manna to the new name, that is,

riches, or maintenance, to liberty, is according to the principles of the Mosaic law, by which no servant was to be set at liberty without some liberal provision, to set him up at first for himself: so that the master was not only to give him liberty, but also some goods or maintenance;—manna, with his new name. What we have given above, appears to be a rational interpretation of the difficult passage before us: there have been several others offered, and the reader may think it an omission if we do not mention that of Dr. Ward, in whose opinion (Disc. 11. 59.) this expression of a white stone, &c. alludes to an ancient custom among the Romans, by which they cultivated and preserved a lasting friendship between particular persons or families. The method of doing this was usually by a small piece of bone or ivory, and sometimes of stone, shaped in the form of an oblong square, which they called a *tessera*. This they divided lengthwise, into two equal parts, upon each of which one of the parties wrote his name, and interchanged it with the other. And by producing this when they travelled, it gave a mutual claim, to the contracting parties and their descendants, of reception and kind treatment at each other's houses; for which reason it was called the *hospitable tessera*. Hence came the proverbial expression of *breaking the hospitable tessera*, which was applied to those who violated their engagements. But our translators, by rendering it a white stone, seem to have confounded it with the *calculus*, or small globular stone, which was made use of in balloting, and on other occasions. The original words do not specify the manner or form, but only the use of it, as the Greek glossaries abundantly prove. By this allusion, therefore, the promise made to the church of Pergamos seems to be to this purpose, That the faithful among them should hereafter be acknowledged by Christ, and received into a state of perpetual favour and friendship; and to this sense the following words very well agree, which describe this stone, or *tessera*, as having in it a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. For, as the name in the Roman *tessera* was not that of the person who wrote it, but of his friend who possessed it; so it was known only to the possessor, who, doubtless, kept it both privately, and with great care, that no other person might enjoy the benefit of it, which was designed only for himself and his family.

Ver. 18. Church in Thyatira] Thyatira was situated at a distance of about 48 miles to the south-east of Pergamos. See Acts, xvi. 14. At present the city is called by the Turks Akhisar, or "The white castle," from the great quantities of white marble there. Only one ancient edifice is left standing; the rest, even the churches, are so destroyed, that no vestiges of them are to be found. The principal inhabitants are Turks, who have here eight mosques, while not so much as one Christian church is still remaining. So terribly have the divine judgments been poured upon this church for its abominations!

Ver.

19 'I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 'Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to

commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space 'to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 "Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

¹ See ver. 2. 9, 13. Rom. 13. 10. Gal. 5. 6. Jam. 2. 26. 2 Cor. 9. 1, 12. ² Pet. 3. 18. ³ Ver. 4. 14, 15. Ch. 17. 1, 2. 2 Kings, 16. 31. ⁴ Pet. 3. 9. Amos, 4. 6—11. Ezek. xvi. xx. xxiii. Ch. 9. 20, 21. Luke, 13. 1—9.

⁵ Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. Mat. 13. 23. Psa. 92. 13, 14. Acts, 15. 20, 29. 1 Cor. v. viii. x. Exod. 34. 15. ⁶ Rom. 2. 4, 5. ⁷ Ch. 17. 16. & 18. 4. Ezek. 16. 35—43. & 20. 30—36. & 23. 10. 32.

Ver. 19. I know thy works, &c.] "I know and approve thy works of piety, which are many, and which, I am well apprised, are the effects of ardent love to me; and I am well acquainted with the service thou art performing for my cause and interest, and with thy faith and thy patience; and that, with respect to thy works, the last are more, greater, and better than the first. Very far art thou from that declining state of religion, of which I have had reason elsewhere to complain."

Ver. 20. Because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,] Because thou sufferest thy wife Jezebel, is the Complutensian reading, which is more allusive to the symbol drawn from the history of Ahab, whose wife seduced him, than the common reading. Ahab is condemned above all other kings of Israel for doing ill, or, as it is said, *for selling himself to do evil*: he made himself a slave to this purpose, by suffering his wife Jezebel to do infinite mischief in introducing idolatry. By which it is plain, that the fault of the angel of this church was, that although he did his duty in all other respects, and rather increased in faith and diligence, yet he had suffered some to creep into the church, into his bosom, and there to sow the tares of the pernicious doctrine of the Gnostics, who are here represented by the symbol of Jezebel, with the college of false prophets about her, whom she maintained to introduce idolatry in Israel, and corrupt the doctrine of God's laws by little and little; and whereas the former kings of Israel had chiefly been guilty of schism, she caused her husband and the whole nation to fall into idolatry insensibly. It has been thought by many learned writers, that there was in this church some great and powerful woman, who, having been corrupted herself, (as it was the practice of the Gnostics to insinuate themselves into the favour of women,) did afterwards harbour and encourage those false prophets, whereby they had opportunities to seduce the faithful, which the governor of this church did not endeavour to hinder as he ought. *She called herself a prophetess*; and it is well known that the Gnostics, from their very first appearing, using arts and forceries, found means to give potions to seduce women, and thereby throw them into fits like prophetic extasies; in which, being prepossessed with fancies and enthusiastic doctrines, they delivered strange conceits to deceive both themselves and others. The committing fornication, and eating things sacrificed to idols, went together; for

in Canaan, the remnant of the idolatrous nations, deprived of their laws, erected tippling-houses; hence the harlots frequented such houses, and worshipping still their gods secretly, sacrificed to them, and then invited the Israelites to eat and drink with them, and to commit iniquity. See Prov. vii. 6, &c. Thus they communicated in idolatry. See chap. xii. 8.

Ver. 21. And I gave her space] And I gave her time. This alludes to the history of Jezebel. God first sent Elijah to Ahab to pronounce a severe judgment upon him; upon which Ahab shewed tokens of repentance, and so God put off his punishment. By these means the like punishment pronounced against Jezebel was also put off. Thus God gave her time to repent, which she did not; but, instead of that, seduced her sons to the same sins. See 1 Kings, xxi. 23—29. According to the Mosaic law, the punishment of idolatrous seducers was not to be delayed at all; but God sometimes shewed mercy; and now much more under the Christian dispensation, though that mercy often produces the contrary effects, as in this Jezebel. See Eccles. viii. 11.

Ver. 22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed,] This again alludes to the same history. Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel, by his mother's ill instruction and example, followed her ways; and God punished him, by making him, or permitting him to fall down, as is supposed, from the top of the terrace over his house, and so to be bed-ridden for a long time under great anguish, designing thereby to give him time to repent; but when, instead of that, he sent to consult Baalzebub, 2 Kings, i. 2, 3. Elijah was sent to pronounce a final doom against his impitence. Thus the son of Jezebel, who had committed idolatry with, and by her advice, was long cast into the bed of affliction, and, not repenting, died; and Jehoram his brother succeeded him. All this while Jezebel had time and warning enough to repent; and though she could not prevail with Jehoram to continue in the idolatrous worship of Baal, yet she persisted in her own way, notwithstanding God's warning. The sacred writer, therefore, here threatens the Gnostic Jezebel to make that wherein she delighteth, as adulterers in the bed of lust, to be the very place, occasion, and instrument of her greatest torment. So in Isaiah, the bed is made a symbol of tribulation, and anguish of body and mind. See Isa. xxviii. 20. Job, xxxviii. 19.

Ver.

23 And *I will kill her children with death ; and all the churches shall know that † I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts : † and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known † the depths of Satan, as they speak ; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 † But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

26 † And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, † to him will I give power over the nations :

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him † the morning star.

29 † He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

* 2 Sam. 12. 14. 2 Kings, 9. 22. & 10. 6. Ezek. 9. 6. † Psal. 7. 9. Jer. 11. 20. & 17. 10. & 20. 12. 1 Sam. 16. 7. 1 Chron. 28. 9. & 29. 17. Acts, 1. 24. Rom. 8. 27. † Ch. 13. 10. & 20. 12. & 22. 12. Rom. 2. 6. & 14. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Gal. 6. 5. 2 Thes. 1. 6—10. † 2 Cor. 2. 11. Ch. 17. 5. † 1 Cor. 8. 20. 2 Tim. 1. 13. Acts, 15. 10, 20, 28, 29. Phil. 3. 16. Ch. 3. 3, 11. 2 John, 8. † See ver. 7, 11, 17. Ch. 3. 5, 12, 21. John, 6. 29. 1 John, 3. 23. Tit. 2. 11—14. Mat. 10. 22. & 24. 13. Gal. 6. 9. † Mar. 19. 28. Luke, 22. 28, 29. 1 Cor. 6. 3. Pf. 2. 8, 9. & 49. 14. Dan. 7. 22, 27. & 2. 44. 45. Pf. 149. 6—9. Ch. 12. 5. & 19. 15. Mat. 28. 18. Pf. cx. † Ch. 22. 16. Num. 24. 17. 11a. 49. 6. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Luke, 1. 68. † See ver. 7. Mat. 11. 15. & 13. 9, 43. Heb. 12. 25. 26.

Ver. 23. And I will kill her children with death ;] That is, “I will certainly destroy her offspring and memory, and thereby ruin her designs.” Jezebel’s two sons, being both kings, were both slain ; and, after that, all the seventy sons of Ahab, 2 Kings, x. 1. in all which the hand of God was very visible. In the same manner God predicts here the destruction of the heretics and heresies referred to. See ver. 16. It should seem by the expression, *I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts*, that these heretics lurked about, and sowed their pernicious doctrines secretly. But our Saviour tells them that it was in vain ; for he had power to bring their deeds to light, having that divine power of searching into the wills and affections of men ; and hereby he would shew both them and us, that he is, according to his title, *The Son of God*, and hath such eyes to pry into their actions, that, like a fire, they will search into every thing, and burn up the chaff which cannot stand his trial : so that the *depths of Satan*, mentioned in the next verse, to which this alludes, (Christ assuming here this title on purpose,) shall avail nothing to those who think, by their secret craft, to undermine the Christian religion. He will not only bring to light, but baffle all their evil intentions. See ch. xvii. 9.

Ver. 24. I will put upon you none other burden.] This is a commendation of the sound part of the church, that there is no new exhortation or charge to be given them ; no new advice, but to persevere as usual. See Rom. xv. 14, 15. The expression of *burden* is taken from the history of Ahab, 2 Kings, ix. 25. *The Lord laid this burden on him* : a word often used by the prophets to signify a prophecy threatening heavy things to be fulfilled. See on If. xiii. 1. and Numb. iv. 19.

Ver. 25. Till I come.] That is, either in judgment upon these corrupters, or at the great consummation of all things. See the next verse.

Ver. 26. Will I give power over the nations :] This is suitable to the title of the Lord Jesus in the beginning of this Epistle, where he calls himself *the Son of God*, which

implies the possession of regal and universal power ; and that the Jews so understood it, is plain from John, i. 49. which passage, as well as our Saviour’s promise here, plainly allude to the second Psalm. Wherefore our Saviour, after this promise, shews that it is in the same manner that he will give power, as he received it of his Father ; who, by declaring him his Son, declared him his Heir in universal power and dominion. How he means that this promise shall be accomplished, is fully shewn, chap. xi. 4 and xxi. 7.

Ver. 27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron ;] “Obtain an absolute dominion over them, either by conversion, or else by destruction.” See Pf. ii. 9. Lam. iv. 2.

Ver. 28. And I will give him the morning star.] This is one of Christ’s titles, ch. xxii. 16. which he takes upon him, to signify that he is the first Prince of the resurrection ; and so this is as much as if he had said, “I will give him power to be the *morning-star*, even as I am myself.” A *star*, in the symbolical language, signifies a king, prince, or ruler. But our adorable Saviour is both a Star and a Sun. See Mal. iv. 2. We may mark the opposition between the threatening to the idolatrous Jezebel, and the reward promised to the saints. She was the first destroyed and extirpated out of memory for her sin. The martyrs and faithful confessors shall be the first glorified and rewarded for their constancy in the faith. Again, we may observe the gradual increase of this reward ; first, to *have power over the nations*, — to conquer ; then, to *rule them* ; next, to subdue all opposition, and destroy all enemies ; and, lastly, to *rule and reign*, quietly, even before the rest of the saints.

Inferences.—Let the ministers of Christ rejoice, that they are as stars in the right-hand of their Redeemer. “Support them, O Lord, by thy almighty power, and guide all their motions by thine infinite wisdom.” Let all the churches of Christ remember, that he walks in the midst of

CHAP. III.

The angel of the church of Sardis is reproved, exhorted to repent, and threatened if he do not repent. The angel of the church of Philadelphia is approved for his diligence and patience. The angel of Laodicea is rebuked for being neither hot nor cold, and admonished to repent. Christ standeth at the door, and knocketh.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND ^aunto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he

that ^b hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars; ^c I know thy works, that thou hast ^d a name, that thou livest, and art dead.

² Be watchful, and ^e strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for ^f I have not found thy works perfect before God.

³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.

^a Ch. 1. 11, 20. & 2. 1, 8, 12, 18. Ver. 7, 14. Mal. 2. 7. Mat. 24. 31. 2 Cor. 5. 20. ^b Ch. 1. 4. John, 1. 14, 16. & 3. 34. If. 11. 2, 3. & 61. 1. Ch. 4. 5. & 1. 16, 20. & 2. 1. ^c Ver. 8. 15. Ch. 2. 9, 13, 20. Heb. 4. 13. ^d Ezek. 33. 31. Mat. 13. 20—22. Heb. 6. 4, 5. If. 58. 2. 2 Tim. 3. 5. 1 Tim. 5. 6. Tit. 1. 16. Eph. 2. 1, 5. ^e 1 Pet. 5. 8. Ch. 16. 15. Mat. 24. 43. & 25. 13. Luke, 12. 39, 40. & 21. 36. ^f Heb. 12. 12, 13. 2 Pet. 1. 4—10. Eph. 5. 14. Rom. 13. 11—14. ^g Ver. 1. Pl. 78. 35—37. Heb. 5. 12. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 3. ^h Rom. 6. 17. & 16. 17. Phil. 3. 16. 2 Tim. 1. 13. 1 Tim. 6. 20. Ch. 2. 5, 16, 25. & 3. 11.

of the golden candlesticks; may they be pure gold; may their lamps shine with unfulfilled lustre, that their Father may be glorified, and their Saviour delighted with the survey.

He sees our labour, our patience, our fidelity, and our zeal. May he see that we cannot bear those who would corrupt our religion, without exerting ourselves to silence their false pretensions, and to guard the churches, to which we are related, especially from the venom they might diffuse over them! In all these respects, may we daily approve ourselves to him in a more perfect manner! But, alas! does he not perceive in many of us, what he complained so early of in the church of Ephesus; that we have lost our first love, and that much of that zeal with which we set out in religion, is declined? If so, let us take the alarm; for dreadful indeed would it be, to have our candlestick removed out of its place; to have the gospel and all its privileges taken away from us. To prevent this awful judgment, let us recollect from whence we are fallen; if we are indeed in a backsliding and declining state; and humbly and heartily repent, and vigorously exert ourselves against the enemies of our salvation; that overcoming the difficulties of this howling wilderness, we may be received to the enjoyments of the heavenly country; and when we can no longer share in the bounties of Providence in this inferior state, be feasted with the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Again, let us direct our eyes to that glorious person, who is the First and the Last; and who, though it may appear incompatible with that divine title, was once dead, and is alive again; and since he is awfully represented as with a sharp sword going out of his mouth, let us be greatly concerned, that we do not incur his displeasure by our irregular conduct, lest he smite, or even destroy us. Let us observe and imitate what he commends in some of the churches whom he addresses; their humility in being sensible of their poverty, when enriched by his grace; their patience, their diligence, and the resolution with which they retained the honour of his name, notwithstanding the throne of Satan was in the midst of them, and the rage of persecu-

tion had destroyed Antipas before their eyes; that blessed, that triumphant hero, whose fidelity and constancy his divine Saviour commemorates with approbation, and even with satisfaction and pleasure. Who would not be ambitious of dying in the same manner, were it ever so severe and terrible, to be thus honoured and celebrated by our Lord Jesus Christ, or any of his faithful apostles? Let us not be terrified at the apprehension of what we may suffer from the malice of Satan, and by his instruments, even though not merely imprisonment, but death itself, were to await us. It is only for a limited time that he can occasion tribulation to any of the faithful people of God; and our blessed Lord will never be unmindful of that gracious promise, *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.* O! let us by faith survey that innumerable company, who, though they have fallen by the stroke of the first death, have been, and shall for ever be, unhurt by the second,—that blessed society who are encircled with immortal crowns, which their triumphant Leader, whom they followed with such undaunted fortitude, has bestowed upon them; who, though they partake no longer of the bread that perisheth, nor are feasted with earthly viands, are yet eating of the hidden manna; who have received the white stone, in token of their absolution; and while the names and memory of many of them have sunk into oblivion, and the honours attending others are of little consequence, they are known in the heavenly regions by a new name, conferred as a mark of favour and distinction by the King of kings and Lord of lords. We are drawing on to the completion of that blessed hope. And that we may not be disappointed, may we, by divine grace, be preserved from the artifices of those who call themselves the people of God, while they are indeed of the synagogue of Satan, and from whatever, like the doctrine of Balaam, would ensnare our consciences, and defile our souls!

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The first epistle is directed to the angel of the church of Ephesus. We have,

1. The preface, informing us who dictated what the apostle wrote, even that glorious Personage that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and who walketh in the midst of the

¹ If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast ^k a few names even in Sardis

¹ 2 Pet. 3. 10. Ch. 16. 15. 1 Thess. 5. 2, 6. Mat. 24. 42, 43. Luke, 12. 39, 40. Mark, 13. 35—37.

^k Mat. 7. 13. & 20. 16. Act. 1. 19

Gen. 6. 5, 12. Jude, 23.

the seven golden candlesticks. Note; The Lord Jesus is he who makes his ministers bright stars: he gives them purity of doctrine and holiness of life, and enables them to shine to his own glory. May we each be upheld by his almighty arms, and be fed with oil from the living source, shining brighter and stronger till we come to the eternal temple above.

2. The contents.

[1.] The epistle contains matter of great commendation. *I know and approve thy works, and thy labour, as a minister of zeal, and the works of the church in general, as exemplary; and thy patience under persecutions; and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, abhorring their principles and practices, and removing them from communion with you: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars, detecting their impostures, and demonstrating the falsehood of their pretended commission from Christ: and hast borne many conflicts, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured with fidelity, and hast not fainted.* Note; They who are put in trust with the ministry, may expect many trials. They have need of peculiar faith and patience, that they may persevere in their labours, and not faint.

[2.] We have a needful rebuke and admonition. *Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love, and grown colder of late in affection to me and my ways. And such a backsliding in heart the Lord Jesus observes, and cannot but be highly displeased with. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* Note; (1.) They who are fallen, should remember how much they have lost, and with grief and shame consider their ways, conscious of their danger of eternal loss. (2.) They who truly repent, will return to their first works, and then they will return again to a sense of the divine grace and love. (3.) The churches that neglect Christ's admonitions, may expect to be visited with his judgments.

[3.] A word of encouragement is added. *But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate; their idolatrous, vicious, and impure principles and practices.* Note; True Christians will maintain a holy hatred to all the ways of sin.

3. The conclusion. Where we have, (1.) A solemn call to attention. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* Note; The scriptures are of general use for all ages; and what was written of old, was written for our instruction, as well as for those to whom it was more immediately addressed. (2.) A gracious promise. *To him that overcometh, and perseveres unto the end, manfully fighting under my banners against sin, Satan, and the world, will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God; admitting him to all the blessings and happiness of the celestial paradise, in-*

initely surpassing that from which Adam for his transgression was rejected. Note; In Christ Jesus, and by his grace, we may be advanced to much higher glories than even man in innocence enjoyed.

2dly, The form of the second epistle is similar. We have,

1. The preface, to the church of Smyrna. *These things saith the First and the Last, the Creator and Judge of all, the Origin and End of all things; who was dead, and is alive, who was delivered for our offences to make the one great atonement, and is raised again for our justification.*

2. The contents. (1.) Their commendation. *I know thy works, and tribulation, how zealously thou hast laboured, and how much thou hast suffered; and thy poverty (but thou art rich); for whatever the faithful lose for Christ, and the gospel's sake, shall procure them much more substantial treasures in a better world. And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogues of Satan, who, while they pretended a peculiar covenant-title to God's favour, were, in fact, Satan's emissaries, and the bitter enemies of the spiritual Israel.* (2.) Warning is given them of approaching trials. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer, so as to be terrified from the path of duty: behold, the devil, by cruel persecutors his instruments, shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and your faith and constancy proved in the furnace of affliction; and ye shall have tribulation ten days,—that is, for so many years.* (See the Annotations.) Note; God's people need not fear the malice of their most envenomed persecutors. If he be for them, no matter who may be against them. (3.) An encouraging promise is added. *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life; and then, though it be won by martyrdom, our gain will be unspeakably great.*

3. The conclusion. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; what encouragements there are to fidelity, and how watchful God is over his believing people: He that overcometh in the holy warfare, and is finally victorious over his spiritual foes, shall not be hurt of the second death, has nothing to fear, has every thing to hope for in eternity.*

3dly, We have in the third epistle, as before,

1. The preface, to the angel of the church of Pergamos. *These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; the sword of his word and his providences, to defend the faithful, and cut off all enemies and apostates.*

2. The contents. (1.) Notice is taken of their perilous situation. *I know thy works, and behold with satisfaction whatever is excellent among you; and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, environed with enemies; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, amid the fire of hottest persecution, even in these days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth, and manifests his bloody rage against my loyal subjects.* Note; Steady fidelity in perilous days,

which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5^m He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the ^a book of life, but

¹ Ch. 4. 4. & 6. 11. & 7. 9, 13. & 14. 4. & 19. 8. Mat. 13. 43. Pf. 45. 13, 14. 2 Cor. 4. 17. Zech. 3. 4, 7. Rom. 8. 17. Eccl. 9. 9. Jud. 1. 21. ² Ch. 1. 7, 11, 17, 26. Ver. 12, 21. ³ Phil. 4. 3. Exod. 32. 32. Ch. 20. 12. & 13. 8. & 17. 8. & 21. 27. Il. 4. 3. Pf. 87. 6. & 69. 28. Ezech. 13. 9.

days, is doubly commendable. (2.) A reproof is given them for what was amiss. *But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.* Some such seducing teachers were among them, who inculcated the lawfulness of eating idol-sacrifices, and of fornication. *So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate; and countenance their impure and abominable practices.* Note; God hates all impurity; and they who make light of fornication, will feel the heavy wrath of an offended God, which it provokes. (3.) They are warned to repent. *Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly in judgment, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth; and no sword is so fatal to the body as the denunciations of his wrath are to the guilty soul.* Note; By speedy repentance alone we can prevent the threatened judgments. And not only must we cleanse our hearts from the love of sin, but separate ourselves from all communion with scandalous offenders, lest we become by connivance partakers of their guilt and ruin.

3. The conclusion. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh, faithful in the arduous conflict, will I give to eat of the hidden manna, feeding him with the abundant grace and consolations of my Spirit and my gospel in this world, and in the world to come with the joys of heaven: and will give him a white stone, absolving him from all his iniquities; and in the stone a new name written, the name of a child of God and heir of glory, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*

4thly, The fourth epistle is directed to the angel of the church of Thyatira.

1. The preface describes the Son of God, who dictates to the sacred penman. *These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, infinite in wisdom and knowledge, discerning the secrets of all hearts; and his feet are like fine brass, almighty to support his faithful people amidst every danger, and to tread his enemies and theirs into the dust.*

2. We have the contents. [1.] They are highly commended. *I know thy works, and am pleased with them; and thy charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first; that in all divine graces and good conversation thou art increasing with the increase of God, growing more exemplary and eminent.* Note; It is well for us when he who knoweth our hearts, bears witness that our last works are more than the first. [2.] They are reprov'd for what was blameable among them. *Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess (probably some woman of eminence among*

them, who pretended to inspiration, and had her abettors, and followers,) *to teach, and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols, perverting their souls, and leading them to corporal and spiritual idolatries and impurities. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not; therefore behold swift vengeance shall overtake her and her adherents: I will cast her into a bed of languishing and misery, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation; the partakers of her sins shall partake of her plagues, except they repent of their deeds, and prevent the threatened judgments: and I will kill her children with death, as surely as the sons of Ahab perished by the sword of Jehu: and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and can discover every hidden principle and secret of the soul, distinguishing the hypocrite from the faithful; and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* Note; (1.) They who abuse the patience of God, and harden themselves in sin, instead of repenting of their iniquities, will bring aggravated guilt and ruin upon their souls. (2.) God's omniscience cannot be deceived, nor his justice eluded; the faithless professor will be detected and sentenced at his impartial tribunal. [3.] He encourages the faithful among them. *But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, abhorring all such impure principles and practices, which impostors influenced by deep Satanical subtilty, seek to inculcate, I will put upon you none other burden, nor add any farther injunctions or restraints than those revealed in my word. But that which ye have already, the doctrines and precepts of the gospel which you have embraced, hold fast till I come, to take you to my eternal rest, and deliver you from all your temptations for ever.* Note; (1.) The Lord knows how to separate between the precious and the vile, and will secure his faithful people amidst all the arts of deceivers. (2.) They who would meet Christ with comfort at his coming, must hold fast his truth in principle and practice, and never be moved away from the hope of the gospel.

3. The conclusion. *And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, patiently and faithfully persevering in the profession and practice of the gospel, to him will I give power over the nations, when he shall sit with me on my throne at the great day; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, breaking in pieces all the wicked of the earth; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received, in my office-capacity, a kingdom of my Father: he shall share my glory, and reign with me for ever; and I will give him the morning-star, so that he shall shine bright in the eternal glory as the stars for ever and ever. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.* Lord, open thou mine ears, and make me earnestly take heed to the things that are spoken!

° I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6^p He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7⁹ And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is

⁹ Mat. 10. 32. Luke, 12. 8. ⁹ Ch. 2. 7, 11, 17, 29. Ver. 22. Mat. 11. 15. Ch. 13. 1. ⁹ See ver. 1. Ch. 2. 1. & 1. 20. ⁹ Luke, 13. 5. Heb. 7. 25. Acts, 3. 14. If. 6. 3. John, 14. 6. 1 John, 5. 20. Ver. 14. Ch. 1. 5.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. Unto the angel of the church in Sardis] Sardis, once the renowned capital of Cœsus, and of the rich Lydian kings, is now no longer worthy the name of a city. It lies about thirty-three miles to the south of Thyatira, and is called by the Turks *Sart*, or *Sard*, with little variation from the original name. It is a most sad spectacle, and sufficient to draw tears on the sight of its ruins; for it is now no more than an ignoble village, with low and wretched cottages of clay; nor has it any other inhabitants besides shepherds and herdsmen, who feed their flocks and cattle in the neighbouring plains: yet the great extent and grandeur of the ruins abundantly shew how large and splendid a city it once was. The Turks themselves have only one mosque, a beautiful one indeed; perverted to their use from a Christian church. Very few Christians are to be found here; and they with great patience, or rather senseless stupidity, sustain a miserable servitude; and, what is yet more miserable, are without a church or a minister among them. Such is the deplorable state of this once most glorious city; but *her works were not found perfect*, that is, they were found blameable before God. She was dead even while she lived, and mere show is punished accordingly. The bishop to whom this epistle is directed, is supposed to have been Melito, whose Apology for the Christians, presented to the emperor Antoninus, is celebrated. *Who hath the seven Spirits*, means, "Who presides over and orders the dispensations of the Spirit with respect to his various gifts and graces, and produces thereby such wonderful events as shall astonish all future ages." *Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead*, means, "Though thou art said to be alive, yet thou art dead." This angel is rebuked for not being active and zealous in his office, and is therefore, in our Saviour's judgment, accounted as a dead man: negligence in duty is a kind of moral death. But our Saviour here means more particularly to rebuke the *hypocrisy* of the Sardian church in general, which, with an external zeal for religion, possessed very little, if any, of the vital power of it.

Ver. 2. That are ready to die:] By this *death* we must understand the death of their faith, since, when men lose their faith, they are dead to Christ. When our Saviour says in the beginning, *that he hath the seven Spirits*, that is, the Spirit of God in all his active powers, he there lays a foundation, upon which the whole epistle is built, which runs throughout in the same allegory. *I have not found thy works perfect*, means, "I have found the greatest deficiency in thy works." *Before God* is emphatical; for God is here opposed as a witness and judge to them. He did not approve what was commended by them. Short-sighted man may be deceived; the Omniscient God never can be deceived.

Ver. 3. Remember, therefore, &c.] Reflect again and again what doctrine thou hast received and heard from the

apostles of the Lord; for this is a plain reference to the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; from which, as from a fountain, all the streams of sound Christian doctrine have flowed; and from the simplicity of which doctrine the Sardians had swerved.

Ver. 4. Thou hast a few names] Names are here used for the persons called by them. This symbol therefore seems to allude to the *diptychs* or *matricula* used in the primitive church, in which were registered the names of all the faithful; whence St. Luke uses this very phrase, Acts, i. 15. and St. John hereafter, ch. xi. 13. and this is according to the Mosaic institution in the book of Numbers, and the constant use of the Israelites afterwards, to keep exact accounts of the genealogies. The phrase, *which have not defiled their garments*, is a Hebrew symbolical phrase, arising from the pollutions contracted upon the garments, which rendered men defiled under the Mosaic law, and incapable to appear before God in his temple. Here therefore it signifies, that, corrupt and indolent as the general state of the church of Sardis was, these had not polluted themselves with the abominations by which so many had contracted gross defilements. The allegory is continued in the remaining part of the verse, and the reward suited to the communication just given. *They shall walk*, signifies here, as in ch. xxi. 24. *shall abide, prosper, flourish*, and be every way happy. The reason of this symbol is to be taken from the notion of the word *ἁγῶς*; *holy*; for they who sanctified themselves to perform any acts of religion, clothed themselves in *white*, which was also the habit of nobles and priests. *With me*, is fulfilled and explained in ch. xx. 4.—*For they are worthy*: "As they have been distinguished by their fidelity and zeal, I will distinguish them by my special favour, and raise them, ere long, to those seats of complete glory, where they shall walk with me in white robes, and be of the number of my joyful and triumphant train; for they are worthy of such distinguished honour, as they have been especially careful to keep themselves from those evils which have been generally prevailing around them." Vitringa and many others are of opinion, that here is an allusion to the custom of the Sanhedrim, when they examined the candidates for the high priesthood. To the man they judged worthy, they gave a white garment; but, if unqualified, he was sent out from among them in mourning.

Ver. 5. And I will not blot out his name] The same allegory is pursued. This is elsewhere stiled to *cast out the name* (Luke, vi. 22.)—to reject, to excommunicate, by blotting the name out of the *matricula*, or catalogue of Christ's faithfuls, which is here called *the book of life*; none but saints who are in it being to expect eternal life. See ch. xx. 12. xxi. 27.

Ver. 7. Church in Philadelphia] So called from Attalus Philadelphus, its builder. It is distant from Sardis about twenty-

holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and

are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

If. 22. 22. Ch. 1. 5, 18. & 5. 5. & 6. 1-12. & 8. 1. & 22. 16. Luke, 1. 32. Mat. 16. 19. & 18. 18. & 28. 18. John, 17. 2. Job, 32. 14. Ch. 2. 2, 9, 13. 19. Ver. 1. 15. Acts, 14. 27. 1 Cor. 16. 9. 2 Cor. 2. 12. Col. 4. 3. 2 Thess. 3. 1. Eph. 2. 13-22. If. 56. 5. & 55. 11. John, 10. 16, 23. 1 Pet. 1. 5. Phil. 2. 13. & 4. 13. Ch. 2. 2, 9, 13. 2 Tim. 2. 13. with Mark, 8. 33. & 14. 71. Ch. 2. 9. John, 8. 44. Prov. 16. 7. If. 49. 23. & 60. 14. Ver. 2. Rom. 15. 4. 2 Pet. 2. 9. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Ch. 2. 10. Pl. xci. cxxi. Ch. 22. 7, 12, 20. James, 5. 8. Phil. 4. 5. 2 Pet. 3. 10-14. Ch. 1. 3. & 2. 5, 16, 25. Ver. 3, 4. Ch. 16. 15.

twenty-seven miles to the south-east, and is called by the Turks *Alab-shahr*, or "the Beautiful City," on account of its delightful situation; standing on the declivity of the mount *Imolus*, and having a most pleasant prospect on the plains beneath, well furnished with divers villages, and watered by the river *Paestolus*. It still retains the form of a city, with something of trade to invite people to it, being in the road of the Persian caravans. Here is little of antiquity remaining, besides the ruins of a church dedicated to St. John, which is now made a dunghill to receive the offals of dead beasts. However, God has been pleased to preserve some in this place to make profession of the Christian faith, there being above two hundred houses of Christians, and four churches. Next to Smyrna, this city has the greatest number of Christians, and Christ has promised a more particular protection to it. Doddridge observes upon the expressions *he that is holy, he that is true*, that this being so peculiarly the prerogative of God, it is to be admired that no greater stress should have been laid upon it, in proof of the *Deity* of our blessed Redeemer, &c. See ch. vi. 10. The expression *he that hath the key of David*, is an allusion to *Isai. xxii. 22.* where the prophet promises to *Eliakim*, under the symbol of *the key of the house of David*, the government of the whole nation. See *Job, xii. 14.* *Rev. i. 18.* The words that follow, shew that Christ's power is absolute. David is very often, in the prophets, a type of the Messiah. See *Jer. xxx. 9.*

Ver. 8. Behold, I have set before thee an open door.] St. Paul uses this symbol to signify the free exercise and propagation of the gospel; *Acts, xiv. 27.* *1 Cor. xvi. 9.* but at the same time this shews, that the liberty here used, is in a more limited degree than when other symbols are employed; and therefore it is said here, that this angel has but a little strength. See *ch. iv. 1. xix. 11.* Thus this expression coincides with the allegory, which was begun with the key of David. One *Demetrius* is named in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, as ordained by St. John bishop of Philadelphia; and in *3 John, ver. 12.* one of that name is commended; but whether it be the same person is doubtful. *And hast kept my word* signifies "hast endured persecution for my sake, and kept the faith manfully." The word *Λογος*, in this book, has a peculiar reference to

martyrdom. *Vitringa* and others give the following turn to this verse. "I know thy works, and, on that account, I, who have the keys of the kingdom of heaven, have taken care that a door for freely preaching the gospel should be opened before thee, and which I will take care that thy enemies shall not close upon thee, because thou hast but a little strength; notwithstanding which, thou hast kept my word," &c. See *ch. ii. 13.*

Ver. 9, 10. Make them of the synagogue of Satan;] See *ch. ii. 9.* Here we have the Jews mentioned again, who, through hatred to Christ, moved the Heathens to persecute the Christians; and it is likely that the persecution, in which the faith of this angel had been tried, like that at Smyrna, was contrived by them. Some understand the 9th verse, of the state of humiliation and subjection of the Jews to the Christian church; and others, of their future conversion to the faith. It has been, however, well observed, that were we more particularly acquainted with the history of those seven churches, in the times immediately succeeding the date of these epistles, we might, perhaps, find many remarkable illustrations of several passages in them, and of this among the rest. Supposing, for instance, that persons of considerable rank and dignity in Philadelphia were converted to Christianity, and the interest of the synagogue here spoken of was so weakened, or the Heathen populace of the place were so prejudiced against them, as that the chief members of the synagogue should find it necessary to court the protection of the Christians, for the security of their persons or effects, it will throw considerable light upon the place. The like observation may be applied to the clause in *ver. 10. I will keep thee from the hour of temptation,* &c. Dr. Smith (in his learned and accurate account of these parts, p. 134, &c.) has observed, that Philadelphia was the last of all the seven cities here spoken of, which fell into the hands of the Turks; for whereas the rest were subdued by *Urchan* and *Amurath*, Philadelphia held out till the time of *Bajazet*; so that the remains of this society were preserved, when those of the rest were ruined. The *hour of temptation*, which should come upon all the world, according to some, relates to the persecution under *Trajan*, which was greater and more extensive than the preceding persecutions under *Nero* and *Domitian*.

12 ^c Him that overcometh will I make ^d a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and ^e I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him my new*

name.

13 ^f He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14 ^g And unto the angel of the church ^h of the Laodiceans write; These things saith ⁱ the Amen, the faithful and true witness, ^j the beginning of the creation of God: ~

^a See ch. 2. 7, 11, 26. Ver. 5, 21. ^b 1 Kings, 7. 15, 21. Gal. 2. 9. 1 Cor. 3. 16. John, 10. 28, 29. Ch. 21. 4. & 22. 3-6. ^c If. 4. 5. & 62. 12. Pf. 87. 6. Ch. 2. 17. & 14. 1. & 21. 2, 10, 12. & 22. 4. ^d 2 Tim. 2. 19. If. 62. 4. & 60. 19, 20. with Heb. 12. 22. Gal. 4. 26. ^e See ch. 2. 7. ^f See ch. 1. 11. & 2. 1. ^g Or *Laodicea*. ^h 2 Cor. 1. 20. Ch. 1. 5. & 19. 11. & 22. 6. & 3. 7. If. 55. 4. & 65. 16. Prov. 8. 6-9. John, 14. 6. & 8. 14. & 18. 37. 1 John, 5. 20. ⁱ Col. 1. 15-18. Prov. 8. 22-31. John, 1. 1-3. & 5. 21, 25. Jer. 31. 22. Ch. 2. 5. 1 Cor. 15. 20-23, 45. Eph. 2. 10. & 3. 9.

Ver. 12. Will I make a pillar] As a pillar is both an ornament and a support of the building, so these martyrs and confessors shall accordingly have greater power, and thus bear the weight of government in the New Jerusalem more than others. The allegory is here continued from buildings, and perhaps there may be an allusion to the two pillars of Solomon's temple, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, 1 Kings, vii. 13, &c. *He shall go no more out*, plainly implies an eternal state to be enjoyed in the New Jerusalem. He goes on, *and I will write upon him the name of my God*: it was usual to grave inscriptions on pillars: here the apostle intimates the graving the name of *God*, as under his divine auspices the victory was gained; as likewise the name of *New Jerusalem*, to signify that the victor belonged to it, and was free of it. Few texts in the whole New Testament are more illustrated by antiquity than this. Great numbers of inscriptions are yet remaining, brought from the Grecian cities of Europe and Asia, and some from islands in the neighbourhood of Patmos, in which the victories of eminent persons are commemorated. Some of these were placed near the temples of their idol deities, others in the temples themselves, to signify their being put under the particular protection of those deities; whose names were therefore inscribed upon them, as well as the names of the conquerors, and of the cities to which they belonged, together with the names of the generals by whose conduct the victory was gained. See Isai. lxii. 12. Ezek. xlviii. 35. It is observable, that during the persecuted state of the church, Christ is constantly called the *Lamb*, or denominated by such symbols as express the same state; but on his entrance into the New Jerusalem, he changes it, and puts on his *new, secret, or wonderful name of King of Kings and Lord of Lords*; and that is, because he has then wholly changed his state, and entered upon a *new one*; a secret never yet thoroughly known here below, but wonderful, great, and glorious. Because the true worshippers of Christ have never yet been wholly free from persecution, Christ has never yet shewn us his new name; wherefore those here spoken of, on whom he bestows it, are such as shall be made partakers of the same state wherein he hath it as mediatorial King.

Ver. 14. The church of the Laodiceans] *Laodicea* lay south of Philadelphia in the way to Ephesus; and if you inspect the maps, you will find the seven churches to lie in a kind of circular form; so that the natural progress was from Ephesus to Smyrna, from Smyrna to Pergamos, from Pergamos to Thyatira, from Thyatira to Sardis, from Sardis to

Philadelphia, from Philadelphia to Laodicea, and from Laodicea round to Ephesus again; which is the method and order that St. John has observed in addressing them, and was probably the circuit that he took in his visitation. That there was a flourishing church in Laodicea in the primitive times of Christianity, is evident from St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, wherein frequent mention is made of the Laodiceans; as well as from this Epistle of St. John. But the doom of Laodicea seems to have been more severe and terrible than that of almost any other of the churches: for it is now utterly destroyed and forsaken of men, and is become an habitation only for wolves, foxes, and jackals, a den of dragons, snakes, and vipers: and that because the Lord hath executed the judgment that he hath pronounced upon her; that all the world might know and tremble at the fierce anger of God against impenitent, negligent, and careless sinners and apostates. For such was the accusation of the *lukewarm* Laodiceans, who grew proud and self-conceited, thinking themselves much better than they really were. Wherefore because they were *neither hot nor cold*, they were loathsome to Christ, and he therefore assured them, that *he would spit them out of his mouth*, ver. 15, 16. The ruins shew it to have been a very great city, situated upon six or seven hills, and encompassing a large space of ground. Some notion may be formed of its former greatness and glory from three theatres and a circus, which are remaining, one of which is truly admirable, as it was capable of containing above thirty thousand men; into whose area they descended by fifty steps: The city is now called *Eski Hisar*, or the *Old Castle*; and though it was once the mother church of sixteen bishopricks, yet it now lies desolate, not so much as inhabited by shepherds; and, so far from shewing any of the ornaments of God's ancient worship, it cannot now boast an anchorite's or hermit's chapel, where God's name is praised and invoked. Such is the state and condition of these seven churches, and there cannot be a stronger proof of the truth of prophecy, nor a more effectual warning to other Christians. The first bishop of Laodicea ordained by the apostles, is said to have been Archippus, in the Apostolical Constitutions. See Col. iv. 17. *The Amen*, is one of God's titles in Isaiah, lxxv. 16. (in the Hebrew). That prophecy seems to be applied to the Messiah, and therefore relates to our case. The words which follow, are synonymous, explaining this; for the *faithful and true Witness* is the same as *the Amen*. The confession and promises of Christ are true, and certain to every persevering believer: he was firm

15 ^k I know thy works, that ^l thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 ^m So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, ⁿ I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art ^o wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and

naked:

18 I counsel thee to ^p buy of me ^q gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and ^r white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and ^s anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19 ^t As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: ^u be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 ^v Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:

^k Ch. 2. 9, 13, 19. Ver. 1. ^l 1 Kings, 18. 21. 2 Kings, 17. 33. Zeph. 2. 5. Hosea, 7. 8. ^m Luke, 12. 48. 2 Peter, 2. 21, 22. Zech. 11. 8. Lev. 18. 28. Amos, 6. 8. Pf. 81. 12. Ezek. 20. 39. Mat. 24. 51. ⁿ Prov. 13. 7. Jer. 2. 23, 25, 31. Hosea, 12. 8. Luke, 18. 11. 1 Cor. 4. 8. ^o Eph. 2. 1—3. Titus, 3. 3. If. 1. 3—6. & 59. 4—15. Rom. 3. 9—20. ^p Mat. 13. 44, 46. & 25. 9. ^q 2 Cor. 9. 15. John, 3. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 1 Peter, 1. 18, 19. Mat. 20. 28. Prov. 8. 17, 18, 19, 21. John, 1. 12. 1 Peter, 1. 2—4. Col. 2. 10. ^r Ver. 4. 5. Ch. 19. 8. & 7. 13, 14. If. 61. 10. & 45. 24. & 46. 12, 13. Rom. 13. 14. & 10. 4. & 5. 19. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Col. 3. 10—12. Eph. 4. 24. Titus, 2. 11, 12. ^s Prov. 2. 1—7. & 4. 5, 7. & 1. 23. Eph. 1. 17, 18. & 3. 18, 19. Col. 1. 9. & 2. 2. ^t Deut. 8. 5. Job, 5. 17. Prov. 3. 12. Heb. 12. 5, 6. James, 1. 12. John, 16. 8. ^u If. 1. 18, 19. & 26. 9. Hosea, 14. 1. Jer. 3. 13, 14, 22. Ch. 2. 5. Ver. 3. ^v Pf. 24. 7, 9. & 81. 10. Prov. 23. 26. Eph. 5. 14.

firm and unmoved in his confession, and he will never fail his faithful faints in what he has promised, and sealed with his blood. Instead of *the beginning of the creation of God*, Fleming renders it *the efficient cause of God's creation*; and the word *αρχη* has frequently that signification. The meaning is, that the whole creation was produced by him, and he is the Head and Governor of all that he has made.

Ver. 15. *I would thou wert cold or hot.*] This is not to be understood absolutely, but comparatively; as when our Saviour says, *If any one come to me and bateth not his father, &c.* the meaning is, not that a Christian should absolutely *bate his father*, but that he should love Christ above him, or any worldly consideration. So here Christ does not approve of coldness in religious matters absolutely; but declares that lukewarmness therein is a worse disposition than absolute coldness: the reason of this is plain; because that faint heat here expressed to be in the angel of Laodicea, is a false and deceitful principle, which makes a man presume upon himself, as if he were good enough, and hinders him from aiming at genuine Christian experience and holiness of heart: whereas flat coldness is plain and sensible, and does not fill a man with such false notions; but makes him rather immediately, upon feeling the truth of it through grace, ready to hearken to the admonitions of Christ. So that in reality, when exactly compared, it is a better disposition than lukewarmness, which must of necessity bring along with it negligence and hypocrisy, by making them seem wise and good in their own conceits; and it is plain from what follows, that the Laodiceans were so.

Ver. 16. *I will spue thee out of my mouth.*] The allegory is continued, for lukewarm things, as water, provoke to vomit, according to the observation and prescription of the ancient physicians. See Celsus *de Re. Med.* lib. i. c. 3.

Ver. 17. *Because thou sayest, I am rich, &c.*] This *angel*, or his church, is quite the reverse of the *angel* of Smyrna: ch. ii. 9. Here is a beautiful gradation in the words before us. It is something to be *rich*, more to be *increased with goods*, and still more to be *in want of nothing*; this is preferred with equal beauty in the latter part of the verse:

the whole alludes to their spiritual state and spiritual goods. According to the common language of scripture, they only are *wretched and miserable*, who are oppressed with sins; Matth. xi. 28. they are *poor*, who lose their own soul; Matth. xvi. 26. they are *blind*, who see not their own sins; John, ix. 40, 41. and they are *naked*, who are utter destitute of true holiness; see ch. xvi. 15. xvii. 16.

Ver. 18. *I counsel thee, &c.*] “I counsel thee, that, with a humble sense of thy condition, so extremely unhappy, thou apply to him, who alone is capable of helping thee: and as I require no price or equivalent for my treasures, but only a conviction of such an incapacity to make an adequate return for them; I advise thee in that way to buy of me a full supply for all thy necessities; blessings more desirable than *gold tried in the fire*, that thou mayest indeed be rich before God in holiness and good works; *white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed*; adorned with every Christian grace and virtue, which can render thee lovely in the sight of God; putting on the Lord Jesus Christ. And whereas thou art blinded with such unhappy self-conceit, come, and anoint thy eyes with my sovereign eye-salve, that thou mayest see; for the illuminating grace of my Spirit will bring thee to right sentiments of thyself and of thy state, and teach thee to judge of objects according to their real worth.”

Ver. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.*] “Behold, I have stood for a long time, and I still stand at the door, and knock; waiting for admittance into your hearts. If any man hear my voice with a due regard, and open the door; if he welcome me with affection due to such a Friend and such a Saviour, how mean soever his circumstances in life may be, and how faulty soever his character may formerly have been, I will enter into his house, and, like some princely guest, will bring my own rich and delightful entertainment along with me; I will sup with him, and he shall sup with me; I will treat him with the most endearing and familiar friendship, accept the tokens of his affection, and give him the most solid evidences of mine.” See Luke, xiv. 15, &c. John, x. 2, &c.

Ver.

⁷ if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 ² To him that overcometh ² will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also

overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 ^b He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

⁷ Luke, 12. 37. John, 14. 21, 23. Song, 5. 1. 1 John, 1. 3. If. 21. 6. Eph. 3. 19. ² Ch. 21. 7. & 2. 7, 12, 17, 26. Ver. 5, 11. 1 Tim. 4. 7, 8. ^a Rom. 5. 21. & 6. 23. Mat. 19. 28. Luke, 22. 30. Rom. 8. 17. 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3. 1 Tim. 2. 12. Ch. 2. 26, 27. & 1. 6. & 5. 10. with John, 17. 4, 5, 21, 22, 24. Heb. 1. 3. & 8. 1. ^b Mat. 11. 15. & 13. 9, 43. Ch. 13. 9. & 2. 7, 11, 17, 29.

Ver. 21. Will I grant to sit with me in my throne,] The accomplishment of this promise is declared, ch. xx. 4. We only observe, that notwithstanding this angel is described with the worst character of all the seven, yet the most glorious of all the promises is applied to him; to shew, that, upon repentance, the way to glory lies open to him by overcoming, as well as to the rest. Now, though the attributes of the promises be mentioned, distributing to each of the seven angels, some one, some another, different, as to the symbols, from the rest; yet all these, in the application, as the titles of Christ are to be taken, shall be collectively bestowed and concentrated in each of those respective persons who have obtained them by overcoming. De Dieu observes, that the thrones in the east are broad and wide, something like a bed, raised a little above the earth, and adorned with tapestry; so that, besides the feat peculiar to the king, others, whom he designs to honour, have sufficient room to be seated on the throne with him. See ch. v. 9, 10.

Inferences.—Alas! how common is the character of the church of Sardis, and of those who have only a name to live, while they are dead? But the more general the prevalence of such an indolent temper is, the more let us emulate the distinguished honour of those few names in Sardis, which had not defiled their garments; that we may walk with them; and with Christ, in white raiment; that we may arrive at that happy state of everlasting purity, of everlasting festivity, of everlasting triumph, which our divine Master has encouraged us to expect. We know not how unexpectedly he may come upon us: let us be always ready, always strenuous in maintaining a holy war against the enemies of our salvation; and then we shall conquer, we shall triumph; our name shall remain in the book of life; it shall be confessed by Christ before his Father and his holy angels: we shall share with him in his triumph over all the rebellious nations, in that day, when we shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel: we shall for ever wear the lustre of the morning star; yea, we shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father.

On the other hand, let us not indulge in a vain conceit of our own wisdom, and riches, and sufficiency; but let us thankfully hearken to that kind invitation, which our Lord gives the Laodiceans, to come and purchase *that* of him, without money, and without price, by which we may be truly and substantially enriched; *that* by which we may attain to real knowledge and true discernment; and may be clothed with ornaments and glories, which shall render us amiable in the eyes of God. How long has our compassionate Saviour been waiting upon us! How long has he stood knocking at the door! And O, for what guests

hath he been excluded, who have filled our hearts and taken the throne in them, while the entrance has been denied to the *Lord of glory and of grace!* Let us humble ourselves in the dust before him, and entreat that he would now enter as into his own habitation; that he would do us the honour to sup with us; that he would cause us to sup with him; opening to us the stores of his love and bounty, and causing our souls to rejoice in his salvation. “Awaken us, O blessed Jesus, to give thee a most cheerful admittance; and rather shew thy love to us by chastisements and rebuke, than suffer us to forfeit it, by continued insensibility and negligence. Holy and true, who hast the key of David, exert thy power in opening our hearts: and O, set before us an open door of service; and give us to use it to the utmost, for thy glory. Strengthen us to keep the word of thy patience, and make us unshaken in our attachment to thee, in every hour of temptation, which may come upon the earth, that none may take away our crown.”

Whatever our trials may be, let us rejoice in this, that they will be only for a short duration; for our Lord is coming quickly: whatever our combat may be, let us arm ourselves with faith in those glorious promises, which our Lord makes to them that persevere and overcome.

Have we not experienced the pleasure of filling a place in the house of God on earth? But this sacred satisfaction, and the holy season which affords it, are quickly over; let us long for the blessed time, when, if faithful, we shall be fixed as immovable pillars in the temple of God above. And O, may we now continually wear engraven on our hearts, the name of our God, and of his heavenly city, and the new name of our triumphant Redeemer, as a token for good, that we shall bear the inscription in bright and everlasting characters above. But even this most expressive promise was not equal to all the purposes of a Saviour's love: that nothing, therefore, might be wanting to enkindle the most generous ambition, he has been pleased to speak of our sitting down with him upon his throne, as he is seated on his Father's throne, if we overcome. O, who would grudge to resign, not merely the accommodations of life, but even an earthly throne, in the hope of one so much more radiant, exalted, and permanent! Fear not, little flock of faithful saints! It is your Father's, and your Saviour's good pleasure to give you the kingdom; and he animates you to pursue it with such compassionate earnestness, as if he could hardly enjoy it himself, unless it were communicated to you.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The fifth epistle is directed to the church in Sardis.

1. It comes from him that hath the seven spirits of God; who,

CHAP. IV.

John seeth the throne of God in heaven. The four and twenty elders. The four beasts full of eyes before and behind. The elders lay down their crowns, and worship him that sat on the throne.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AFTER this I looked, and, behold, ^a a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a

trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately ^a I was in the spirit: and, behold, ^a a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 ^a And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* ^a a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne *were* four

^a Ch. i.—iii. ^b Ezek. 1. 7. Mat. 3. 16. Acts, 7. 56. & 10. 10. with Ch. 9. 1. If. 65. 17. & 66. 22. Dan. 8. 10. Luke, 10. 18. Ch. 12. 7. ^c Ch. 1. 10, 19. & 22. 6. & 11. 12. ^d Ch. 1. 10. & 17. 3. & 21. 10. Ezek. 3. 12, 14, 22. ^e If. 6. 1. Ezek. 1. 26. & 10. 1. Exod. 24. 9. Dan. 7. 9. with Jer. 17. 12. Ezek. 43. 5. 7. ^f Exod. 15. 11. Job, 37. 22. Pf. 89. 7, 8. If. 6. 3. ^g Ch. 10. 1. Ezek. 1. 28. If. 54. 9, 10. Gen. 9. 12, 13, 16.

who, as the divine Mediator, hath all the variety and fulness of the gifts and graces of the Spirit to bestow; and who hath the seven stars, guiding and directing his ministering servants, and giving them all their light and influence.

2. The contents are melancholy. [1.] *I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead; amidst all thy specious appearances of religion, I know that thy professions in general are hypocritical, and many who have a name among the members of the church, are really dead in trespasses and sins, and others cold and lukewarm. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, before all vital godliness be utterly departed: for I have not found thy works perfect before God; they are but as the carcase, when the spirit is fled; thy duties lifeless; thy services insincere. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. Note; (1.) A form of godliness will avail nothing if the power of it be lost. (2.) They who feel their souls under decays, need to watch with holy jealousy, and cry to God for quickening influences to revive his work in their hearts. (3.) The way to recover from our backslidings, is to consider how we departed; what God's word has said of the sin and danger of such a conduct; to repent of our unfaithfulness; and still to cleave to those promises that preserve the soul from despair, and encourage us to return to God. [2.] He sharply threatens them: *If therefore thou shalt not watch, but goest on careless and secure, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Note; Christ's appearing at death or judgment will be very terrible and surprising to the backslider in heart; when too late he will be startled from the slumbers of security. [3.] He encourages the few faithful among them: Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, cold and careless as the generality of the professors are, which have not defiled their garments; who have kept themselves unspotted from the world, and maintained a becoming purity of doctrine and manners amidst abounding ungodliness; and they shall walk with me in white, as sacred priests and triumphant conquerors, decked with glory, honour, and immortality; for they are worthy, and meet for my inheritance among the saints in light.**

3. The conclusion. *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; shining in splendid robes of righteousness and victory; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels, in the great day of my appearing to judge the world. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. Note; They who fight manfully and faithfully under Christ's banner, will be acknowledged by him with most distinguished favour and honour, when he shall come to reward their fidelity.*

2dly, The sixth epistle is directed to the angel of the church of Philadelphia. We have,

1. The preface. *These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, who by nature is essential truth and holiness, the substance of all the prophecies and promises, the true Messiah; he that hath the key of David, on whose shoulders the government rests; he that openeth the gates of the grave and the kingdom of heaven to his faithful people, and no man shutteth; no creature can exclude such saints of God from his eternal glory; and shutteth up the wicked in the dreadful prison of eternal torment, and no man openeth, or can open the gates of the impassable gulph, to release the damned from thence.*

2. The contents. [1.] *I know thy works, and regard thee with delight and approbation: behold, I have set before thee an open door, that my word should run, and have free access, and be glorified; and no man can shut it, I give thee a power and opportunity of spreading my gospel; which none of thy enemies can shut against thee; for thou hast a little strength, and a measure, though it be small, of grace and spiritual attainments; and hast kept my word with fidelity and steadfastness, and hast not denied my name, nor revolted from the profession of the faith amid the wiles of deceivers, and the persecutions of avowed enemies. Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie,) behold, with thankfulness and delight, I will make them, who, under pretence of zeal for Judaism, corrupt the doctrines of Christianity, and whose practice is as vicious as their principles are erroneous, to come and worship before thy feet; abased into the dust, and brought to take shame to themselves; and to know that I have loved thee, with distinguished favour and*

and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw white raiment; and they had on their heads four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in crowns of gold.

^a Num. 1. 5-16. & 14. 17-19. 1 Chron. xxiv. xxv. Ch. 7. 4-9. Gal. 4. 5, 28, 31. 7. 9, 14. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Exod. 28. 40. 2 Tim. 4. 8.

¹ Ch. 3. 21. & 1. 6. & 5. 10. & 3. 4, 5. & 6. 11. &

and regard. *Note*; Sooner or later the bitterest persecutors of God's faithful people shall be made to know how dear they are to him, and be covered with everlasting confusion in the view of their malice against them. [2.] A gracious promise is given to the faithful. *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience*, and maintained the profession of the unadulterated gospel, amid the malignant opposition of envenomed foes, *I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation*, that thou shalt not apostatize from the truth under those fiery persecutions, which shall, under the bloody Heathen Emperors of Rome, come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, and shew who are true and false professors. *Note*; (1.) They who steadily cleave to Christ, shall be kept in the most dangerous days. (2.) We must prepare for temptation; it will come, and if we are unprepared, we shall be in imminent danger. [3.] He adds a glorious encouragement. *Behold, I come quickly*; the time therefore of suffering cannot but be momentary; *hold that fast which thou hast*, with holy resolution, cleaving to the word of truth, *that no man take thy crown*; or, by fraud or violence, seduce or intimidate thee from the faith of the gospel, and rob thee of the reward of fidelity. *Note*; A sense of the speedy coming of Jesus for our help, is the greatest support under every affliction.

3. The conclusion. *Him that overcometh*, who is through my grace finally a conqueror, *will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out*; he shall be admitted into the eternal presence of God in glory, and there shall be ever with the Lord, enjoying that beatific vision. *And I will write upon him the name of my God*, to whose grace he is indebted for the conquest, *and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God*; even that new Jerusalem which shall soon be represented to thee, O John, in a most glorious vision: *and I will write upon him my new name*, acknowledging him for my faithful saint, and bringing him to share in all the glories of my kingdom. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches*; and well worthy is it of our deepest and most serious attention.

3dly, The last epistle is directed to the angel of the church of Laodicea. We have,

1. The preface. *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness*, whose testimony is infallible, who neither can nor will deceive his people, or fail of the accomplishment of his prophecies; *the beginning of the creation of God*; the author of life and being to every creature; the head of vital influences to his believing people, having in all things the pre-eminence, and possessing universal dominion in heaven and earth.

2. The contents. [1.] A melancholy account is given of their state. *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot*, but lifeless and lukewarm: *I would thou wert cold or hot*; either be sincerely zealous, or make no profession,

rather than disgrace it by an unsuitable conduct. [2.] A threatening is added: *So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth, as loathsome and nauseous*. [3.] The cause of their declension is remarked. *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing*; endowed perhaps with spiritual gifts, abounding probably in worldly wealth, and thoroughly self-righteous and conceited; and thus they flattered themselves with high imaginations of their own excellence; *and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*; insensible to thy spiritual wants and poverty; ignorant of all true wisdom; destitute of real grace and righteousness; and exposed to the storms of divine wrath. *Note*; (1.) Nothing is more fatal to the soul, than a vain conceit of our own excellencies. (2.) Many flatter themselves as confident of heaven, whose ways lead down to death and hell. [4.] He gives them the kindest advice. *I counsel thee to buy of me*, that is, to come to me to receive freely out of my fulness the supply of every want, *gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich*; the gold of my spirit, wisdom, and grace, and all the spiritual measures which I bestow on my faithful followers; *and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear*: apply to me for an interest in my infinite merit and sanctifying grace, that thou mayest be absolved before God, and adorned with every virtue and heavenly disposition which can render thee lovely in his sight: *and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see the things which make for thy everlasting peace, and all the mysteries of gospel-grace, no longer blinded by ignorance, prejudice, and worldly lusts*. *Note*; They who would be spiritually rich, and wise unto salvation, must come to Christ to buy out of his fullness; and, blessed be his name, the purchase is to be made without money and without price; for he freely gives to the miserable and the destitute. [5.] A gracious encouragement is given them to repent. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten*; the reproofs of my word, and the corrections of my providence, are the rod of love: *be zealous therefore*; cast off this lukewarm spirit; let the fire of zeal and love kindle in your hearts; *and repent of your past unfaithfulness*. *Behold*, such is my patience and condescension, *I yet stand*, waiting to be gracious, *at the door of your hearts, and knock*: if any man hear my voice, attend to my calls and warnings, *and open the door in faith, to receive me with eager welcome into his soul, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me*, honouring him with my presence, and love, and blessed communion. *Note*; Christ, by his providences, word and Spirit, knocks at the door of our hearts; and they who welcome him in, and cleave to him perseveringly, shall find him not only as a guest that tarrieth for a night, but whose communion shall make them blessed to all eternity.

3. The conclusion. *To him that overcometh the corrup-*
tions

5 And ^{*} out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before

the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea

^{*} Exod. 20. 18. Pfal. 68. 35. Jer. 25. 30. Joel, 3. 16. Amos, 1. 2. Ch. 8. 2, 5. & 10. 3. & 11. 19. & 14. 2. & 16. 18. & 19. 6. Exod. 19. 16. Psal. 18. 13, 14. ¹ Ch. 1. 4. & 1. 1. & 5. 6. Mat. 3. 11. Acts, 2. 3. 1 Cor. 12. 4. &c. Exod. 37. 23. Zech. 4. 2. John, 6. 63. ^m Exod. 38. 8. 1 Kings, 7. 23. Ch. 15. 2. & 7. 14. Heb. 10. 19. 1 Pet. 1. 19. Zech. 13. 1.

tions of his nature, and the temptations of the world, *will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his throne;* to such infinite and transcendent glory and dignity shall he be exalted in the great day of my appearing, and shall come to reign with me triumphant over every foe for ever and ever. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches;* for these things are written for our learning to the latest ages; and blessed are they who attend to the warnings, reproofs, exhortations, encouragements, and instructions here revealed, and feel their mighty influence.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. After this I looked, &c.] After these things I saw and beheld a door opened in heaven. Doddridge. After the vision in the former chapters, relating to *the things which are*, other visions succeed of *the things which must be hereafter*. The scene is laid in heaven, and the scenery is drawn in allusion to the encampment of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Numb. i. and ii. The *sounding of the trumpet* probably alludes to the custom of the Jewish church, where, upon opening the gates of the temple, the priests sounded the trumpets, to call the Levites and stationary men to their attendance. God is represented (ver. 2, 3.) sitting on his throne, as in the tabernacle or temple, much in the same manner as the prophet Ezekiel has described him, ch. i. 26—28. Next to the tabernacle encamped the Priests and Levites; and next to the *throne* (ver. 4.) were four and twenty elders sitting, answering to the princes of the four and twenty courses of the Jewish priests; clothed in white raiment, as emblems of their purity and sanctity; and having on their heads crowns of gold; for Christ hath made them kings and priests unto God, ch. v. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, &c. ver. 5. the usual concomitants of the divine presence; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, answering to the golden candlestick with seven lamps, which was before the most holy place in the tabernacle. There was also before the throne, ver. 6. *a sea of glass like unto crystal*, answering to the great molten sea or laver in the temple of Solomon; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, that is, before and behind the throne, and on each side of the throne, were four beasts, or rather *four living creatures*, (*Zoa*) representing the heads of the whole congregation in the four quarters of the world, and resembling the cherubim and seraphim in Ezekiel's and Isaiah's visions, (Ezek. i. 10. x. 14. Isa. vi. 2, 3.) or rather resembling the four standards or ensigns of the four divisions of tribes in the camp of Israel,

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according to the traditionary description of them by the Jewish writers. The first living creature was like a *lion*, ver. 7. which was the standard of *Judah*, with the two other tribes in the *eastern* division. The second like a *calves* or *ox*, which was the standard of *Ephraim*, with the two other tribes in the *western* division. The third had a *face as a man*, which was the standard of *Reuben*, with the two other tribes in the *southern* division. And the fourth was like a *flying eagle*, which was the standard of *Dan*, with the two other tribes in the *northern* division. And this traditionary description agrees also with the four faces of the cherub, in Ezekiel's vision. Of these living creatures, and of the elders, the constant employment is to celebrate, in hymns of praise and thanksgiving, the great and wonderful works of creation, grace, and providence, ver. 8—18.

Ver. 2. Immediately I was in the spirit:] This phrase signifies to be under a strong and supernatural impulse, caused by the miraculous operation of the Spirit of God, acting on the imagination in such a manner as to open extraordinary scenes, which had not any exact, external archetype; and it is much illustrated by the view presented to Ezekiel, when he sat in his house among the elders of the people, who probably saw nothing but the prophet himself, as one in a trance or extacy, or whose thoughts were so attentively fixed as to be insensible of what passed around him. We are not therefore to imagine, that the Person sitting on the throne, or the four living creatures, or the four and twenty elders, were real beings existing in nature, though they represented, in a figurative manner, things which did really exist. And though it is possible that aerial scenes might, by divine or angelic power, have been formed, it seems much more probable that all which passed, was purely in the imagination of St John. This will keep us, in our interpretation, clear of a thousand difficulties, not to say absurdities, which would follow from a contrary supposition; namely, that there is in heaven an animal in the form of a *lamb* to represent Christ; that there are such living creatures as are here described, &c. This observation is made once for all, and may be applied as occasions present. The representation of the throne of God in this verse, is very agreeable to several descriptions of the ancient prophets, as Isa. vi. 1—3. Ezek. i. 26. x. 1. Dan. vii. 9.

Ver. 3. And he that sat was to look upon, &c.] Many interpreters have observed a mystical meaning in the colours and properties of the precious stones here mentioned. Thus, in the *jasper*, which Grotius supposes a diamond, he finds an emblem of the invincible power of God. Daubuz, who considers it only as a stone of a white and bright shining colour, looks upon it as a symbol of good-will and favour. Thus again, the *Sardine stone*, which is of a *red colour*, with some, signifies the active

6 D

power

of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

^a Ezek. i. 5—25. & 10. 8—23. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 11. 1 Tim. iii. Tit. i. Heb. 13. 17.

power of God; with others, it is a symbol of anger and displeasure in God, and therefore of destruction; to teach men, that if they obey his oracle, he will shew them the brightness of his countenance; but if they despise it, he will at last shew them the redness of it, or his fiery anger: and thus the beautiful green of the emerald is supposed to signify great good-will and favour. But the application of these mystical meanings seems, to say the least of it, extremely uncertain. We may observe, concerning the prophetic style of scripture, what L'Abbe Fleury has justly remarked concerning the poetical: "We are not to imagine that each circumstance has a particular application; the whole figure generally tends to one point only, or directly means but one thing; the rest is added, not to make a part of the comparison, but to point, in a more lively manner, the thing whence the comparison is taken." We have sufficient reason, however, with the whole body of commentators, to consider the rainbow here as a representation of God's faithfulness to his covenant and promise; God himself having appointed it as a standing and perpetual token of his covenant with man. See Gen. ix. 13—15.

Ver. 4. Seats:] Thrones: and so wherever it occurs. The four and twenty elders may be considered as representatives of the church, paying homage at the throne in the name of the rest.

Ver. 5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings] There is an observable difference in the several descriptions of the throne of God in the prophets: The glory, or Shechinah, in the temple, is represented as under the wings of the cherubim, 1 Kings, viii. 6, 7. In Isaiah's vision, the glory of the Lord is represented as sitting on a throne, and above it stood the seraphim, (Is. vi. 1. 2.) that is, "above the place on which the throne was set, as attending ministers to him who sat upon the throne." In Ezek. i. 22. there is the likeness of a firmament over the heads of the living creatures, whom the prophet elsewhere calls the cherubim; that is, the cherubim were represented as bearing up a crystal vault or seat, on which the throne of Jehovah was placed, over their heads, and which they supported with their wings. This different description will be explained by an easy observation, that the Shechinah, or glory of the God of Israel, is represented in the temple as the presence of a king in his palace; his throne is supposed seated in an apartment of state, and the cherubim are so placed as to form a canopy of state, under which he sits. In the vision of Isaiah, Jehovah is represented as sitting on his throne or bed of justice, held in open court, in the porch, or at the gate of his palace; then the cherubim appear as attending ministers of the court, to receive and execute the orders of it. In the vision of Ezekiel, Jehovah is represented as going forth in solemn procession, and having his throne or chair of state borne up on the wings of cheru-

bim, as the great kings of the East were used to be borne on the shoulders of their servants. See on ver. 1.

Ver. 6, 7. Before the throne—a sea of glass, &c.] Several interpreters understand this crystal sea to be an emblem of the known rite of receiving converts into the Christian church by baptism; of the purity which that sacrament signifies, and of the blood of Christ, by which they are washed and cleansed from their sins. Doubtless it has an allusion to that purity, which is required in all persons who have the honour and happiness of a near approach to the presence and throne of God. The four living creatures are said to be in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne; that is, (according to Daubuz.) their bodies being under the throne to support it, seemed to be in the midst of the throne, and their heads without, seemed to be round about the throne. Some suppose, that the four living creatures represent all the Christian ministers. In the Note on the first verse, we have given Bishop Newton's and Mr. Mede's idea of these living creatures; and in the former Notes, where the cherubim are mentioned, have expressed our own sentiments respecting them. Lowman observes, that "these living creatures seem taken from the cherubim in the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, and in the most holy place, which are plainly designed for a representation of the angels, who ever are described in scripture as attendants on the glory of God, Psa. lxxviii. 17. The great use of angels in this vision, and their great number, ch. v. 11. make it probable, that as the four and twenty elders are placed about the throne, as representatives of the Jewish and Christian churches, now united into one; so the four living creatures or cherubim are alike representatives of the angels who are round the throne of God, and minister to him; and so (according to a great author) the form of the cherubim expresses the great understanding and power of the angels." Spencer, de Leg. Heb. lib. iii. cap. 5. This will also serve to shew how proper this representation was of the cherubim in the holy place, to signify that they are to be considered only as the servants and ministers of the one true God. Dr. Doddridge observes, that these four animals, of a very extraordinary form, seem to have been intended as hieroglyphical representations of the angelic nature; for it is well known, that the ancients dealt much in hieroglyphics, by which natural and moral truths were expressed. There can, I think, be no doubt (continues the Dr.) that the living creatures of St. John are the cherubim described by Ezekiel, ch. i. which therefore should be carefully compared with this representation. To consider this appearance as an emblem of Deity, which is the scheme of Mr. Hutchison and his followers, appears to me a very great absurdity. But upon this head we refer to Dr. Sharpe's learned Dissertation on the cherubim.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about *him*; and *they were* full of eyes within: and † they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

o If. 6. 2. Ezek. 1. 6. 2 Tim. 4. 2. P Ver. 6. Tit. 1. 9. 1 Tim. 4. 16. Mat. 13. 52. Eph. 3. 4. † Gr. *they have no rest.* 9 If. 62. 1, 6, 7. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Acts, 20. 18, 24, 31. Gal. 4. 19. Mat. 23. 37. 10 If. 6. 3. Exod. 15. 11. Ch. 1. 4, 8, & 11. 17. & 16. 5. & 19. 1—6. Deut. 32. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 4. 12. 1 Pet. 4. 11. & 5. 3. Jer. 10. 10. Ch. 1. 4, 18. & 5. 4. & 10. 6. & 15. 7. 11 Ch. 5. 14. Pl. xciv—c. cxxxv. cxxxvi. Ver. 9, 4. Ch. 5. 9, 12. & 15. 3, 4. Pl. xxix. xc.ii c. cxxxvi. cii—cv. cvii. Neh. 9. 5. Gen. 1. Exod. 20. 11. Prov. 16. 4. Rom. 11. 36.

Ver. 8. *They were full of eyes within*:] To signify their quick discernment of every object around them; as their wings were to express their readiness to execute the divine commands; quick to discern, and prompt to perform. The anthem which they sung is that which Isaiah tells us he heard the seraphim sing, ch. vi. 3. and it is observable, that many other hymns recorded in this book are borrowed from the old Testament.

Ver. 10. *Fall down,—and cast their crowns before the throne*,] By both actions testifying their high reverence, and paying their duty to the King of kings.

Ver. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, &c.*] Some read and point the verse thus: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive the glory, and the honour, and the power: For thou hast created all things; and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.* The last might be rendered, *For thou hast created all things, and through thy will they were*,—[that is, “ were brought into existence,”] and were formed; i. e. had their several shapes and qualities assigned to them. And thus God is declared to be the author of the existence of matter, as well as of the form, or outward appearance, of all things in the world. See Isaiah, lxvi. 2.

Inferences.—And should not we likewise fall down with the glorified spirits, and pay some homage to the Sovereign Majesty of heaven, though we may not equal theirs? For ever adored be the divine grace, that a door is opened in heaven, in consequence of which, even before we enter, we are allowed to look in; and thus to confirm our faith and to animate our devotion, which, alas! after all, is too ready to decline and languish. That it may be greatly invigorated, let us look up to the throne, and to him that sitteth thereupon; and rejoice to see that peaceful emblem with which the seat of his glory is surrounded, the rainbow of vivid and pleasant green; signifying, that the majestic Being who fills it, is the covenant-God of all his believing and obedient people.

Let us contemplate the blessed angels, the ministers of God, who do his pleasure, represented here under hieroglyphical characters, as possessed of amazing strength and courage, resolution and patience; of the sublimest reason, and the most deep and penetrating sagacity, active and pure as flames of fire; and with these lofty ideas in our minds, let us ardently pray that the will of God may be so done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Let us also remem-

ber the elders here mentioned, the representatives of the church, seated on glorious thrones, clothed in that white raiment which is the righteousness of the saints, and adorned with crowns of glory. And let us especially consider, how the angels and the saints are employed; they rest not day nor night from breathing out the most ardent devotions; they feel nothing of that weariness and languor with which we are too frequently invaded in this state of mortality; but they cry continually, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art, and wast, and art to come; they give glory, and honour, and thanksgiving to him that sitteth on the throne. And infinitely worthy is he to receive it: he who is the Almighty Creator, he who is the ever-present, and ever-gracious Supporter of all! Thou art worthy, O Lord, thou alone art worthy; and though thou withholdest from us the face of thy throne, while we dwell in these tabernacles of clay, yet as we are thy creatures, thy rational creatures, we partake of thy protection and bounty; and, feeble as our faculties are, and dark as the world is in which we dwell, we are able to discover thee as our almighty Creator, our constant Preserver, our never-failing benefactor. And, as such, may we daily worship and adore thee with our feeble voices in this state of mortality; that when we are duly prepared, we may begin a nobler song, and join in the sublimer anthems and hallelujahs above. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, St. John being prepared for further discoveries by what he had already seen, a door is opened to him in heaven; and the voice of Jesus, which he had heard before, solemn as the trumpet which was heard of old from Sinai's top, calls him to come up thither, that he might be informed of the great events of Providence relative to the church. Instantly the sacred rapture seized his spirit, and the glorious vision presents itself to his view.

1. He saw a throne of majesty and judgment, compassed with a rainbow beautiful as the emerald, an emblem of that propitiousness and kindness, and of that covenant-relation to his believing people, which the blessed God is pleased to acknowledge in the midst of his transcendent glory.

2. Upon the throne sat the eternal Jehovah, the Antient of days, the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; shining like the jasper and sardine stone, with brightness infinitely

CHAP. V.

The book sealed with seven seals; which only the Lamb that was slain is worthy to open. Therefore the elders praise him, and confess that he redeemed them with his blood.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I saw in the ^a right hand of him that sat on the throne ^b a book written within

^a Ch. 4. 3. & 3. 21. 11. 110. 1. & 118. 15, 16. Acts, 4. 28. 11. 46. 10. ^b Ezek. 2. 9, 10. Ch. 10. 4, 8, 9. John, 17. 22. 11. 8. 16, & 29. 11. Dan. 12. 4, 9. & 8. 76. Mat. 11. 27. Deut. 31. 31. ^c 11. 29. 11. & 41. 22, 23, 26. Jer. 49. 19. ^d 11. 40. 13, 14. & 41. 28. John, 1. 18. Rom. 11. 34. Ver. 13.

surpassing those precious stones which glittered on the high-priest's breast-plate, inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and every divine perfection.

3. Around the throne were four-and-twenty elders seated, clothed with white raiment, and on their heads they had crowns of gold; the representatives of the whole body of the faithful saints, now consummately perfected in holiness, admitted to their eternal rest, brought into God's immediate presence, enjoying that beatific vision, and crowned with glory, honour, and immortality.

4. Out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices, signifying the mighty and powerful energy of the gospel-word, which spread like lightning through the world, or of those tremendous judgments which he executes on the earth.

5. There were seven lamps burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God, the emblem of the variety and perfection of the gifts and graces which the Holy Ghost bestows.

6. Before the throne was a sea of glass, like unto crystal, in allusion, as is supposed, to the molten sea, where the priests washed (Exod. xxx. 18—21.); the figure of Christ's blood, which cleanseth from all sin.

7. In the midst of the throne, and round about it, were four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind; the first like a lion, the second like an ox, the third with the face of a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle; and these seem to represent the angelic hosts. See the Annotations. However, others consider them as representing all the ministers of the gospel; but the reader must be left to judge for himself.

2dly, The four living creatures, like the seraphim, (Isa. vi. 2.) had six wings, and they were full of eyes within, deep read in the knowledge of God and of themselves, and quick to penetrate, discern, and judge: and with ceaseless adorations they worship the eternal, unchangeable, holy, and triune Jehovah.

When these angelic hosts or ministers led the song of heaven, the elders who represented the church triumphant, joined in their adorations, casting their crowns before the throne, and, humbly prostrate, ascribed eternal glory, honour, and power to the ever-living Jehovah, the Creator and Ruler of all, by whose sovereign pleasure every creature exists, and is designed to shew forth his praise. *Note*; (1.) All things are of God, and for God: his own glory is the end of all his works, and should be the design of ours. (2.) God's saints on earth are called upon

and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And ^a no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

to join the services of heaven, and to unite in the same sacred ascriptions of praise to him that liveth for ever and ever. (3.) The highest are the humblest beings: they who approach nearest to the throne, are most deeply sensible, that to grace alone they owe their unutterable bliss, and therefore cast down their golden crowns before their Lord, and say, Thou, and thou alone, art worthy to receive the glory.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. And I saw in the right hand, &c.] Future events are supposed by St. John, as well as by Daniel and other prophets, in a beautiful figure, to be registered in a book, for the greater certainty of them. This book is in the right hand of God, to denote that as he alone directs the affairs of futurity, so he alone is able to reveal them. This book, through the abundance of the matter, was written within and on the back side, as the roll of the book which was spread before Ezekiel, (ii. 10.) was written within and without. Lucian, in like manner, mentions books written on the backs, or outer side: see also Juvenal, sat. i. 5. Grotius and others would have it written within and on the back side, sealed, &c. It was sealed to signify that the divine plans were inscrutable, (Isa. xxix. 11. and sealed with seven seals, referring to so many signal periods of prophecy. In short, we should conceive of this book, that it was such a one as the ancients used,—a volume, or roll of a book, or, more properly a volume, consisting of seven volumes; so that the opening of one seal laid open the contents of only one volume. All creatures are challenged, ver. 2. to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof; but, ver. 3. no one, (*οὐδεις*), in heaven, or earth; or under the earth;—neither angels, nor men, nor departed spirits, were any of them qualified to comprehend or communicate the secret designs of God. St. John wept much at the disappointment, ver. 4. however, he is comforted, ver. 5. with the assurance, that still there was one who had power and authority to reveal and accomplish the counsels of God,—the Son of God: and he alone was found worthy to be the great Revealer and Interpreter of his Father's oracles, ver. 6, &c. and he obtained this privilege by the merits of his sufferings and death: whereupon, the whole church, ver. 8, &c. and all angels, ver. 11, &c. and all creatures, ver. 13, &c. sing praises to God and the Lamb, for such glorious manifestations of divine providence and grace. All this is by way of preface or introduction, to shew the great dignity, importance, and excellence of the prophecies here delivered.

Ya.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had

been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying,

* With ch. 4. 1. 2 Cor. 11. 28. Jer. 9. 1. † Ch. 4. 4, 10. Ver. 14. ‡ John, 20. 13. Mat. 28. 5. If. 52. 1. & 60. 1. Phil. 4. 4. Pf. 149. 2. § Gen. 49. 9, 10. Ch. 12. 16. Rom. 8. 27. Pf. 89. 27. ¶ Heb. 11. 10. & 7. 25. John, 5. 20. & 3. 32. & 1. 18. Ch. 1. 1. & 6. 1. Luke, 24. 27, 44. †† Ch. 7. 21. & 7. 17. & 4. 5. & 1. 20. & 2. 1. Mat. 28. 20. ††† If. 53. 7, 10. John, 1. 29, 35. Acts, 8. 32. 1 Pet. 1. 19. Heb. 9. 14. Ver. 6, 12. Ch. 7. 14. & 12. 11. & 13. 8. Mat. 20. 28. Lev. i-v. xvi. Numb. xv. xxviii. xxix. †††† Mat. 28. 18. John, 17. 2. Phil. 2. 9-11. Dan. 7. 14. Pf. 132. 17. Heb. 3. 4, 6. 1 Sam. 2. 10. Luke, 1. 69. ††††† Zech. 3. 9. & 4. 10. Ch. 4. 5. & 1. 4. John, 3. 34. Col. 2. 3, 9. 2 Chron. 16. 9. Pf. 34. 15. †††††† Ch. 4. 4-11. & 14. 2. & 8. 3, 4. Pf. 141. 2. * Or incense. † Ch. 14. 3. Pf. 96. 1. & 40. 3. If. 42. 10. & 44. 23.

Ver. 4. And I wept much] “And as I had an earnest desire to know the contents, and had pleased myself with a secret expectation that some extraordinary discovery was to be made to me and to the church from thence, it grieved me exceedingly, inasmuch that I wept abundantly, because no one was found worthy to open and read the book; nor, indeed, so much as to look into it.”

Ver. 5. And one of the elders saith, &c.] This might well be translated, *And the first of the elders*; the first speaking in the name of all the rest. The following expression shews, that the prophesy in Gen. xlix. 9, 10. concerning Judea, was fulfilled in a more sublime sense in Christ the Son of God; and, at the same time, points out his genealogy according to the flesh. See Heb. vii. 13, 14. If. liii. 2. Hosea, xiv. 6. Rom. xv. 12.

Ver. 6. *Stood a Lamb, as it had been slain,*] *As having been slain, or who had been slain for sacrifice,* and wore the recent marks of slaughter. Our Saviour is declared by the Baptist to be *the Lamb of God*, because to be sacrificed to him as a *Lamb*, to take away the sins of the world. Christ is represented by the two different symbols of a *Lion* and a *Lamb*, to express his victory over sin and death, and his sacrifice of himself to obtain that victory: —“A *Lion*,” says a commentator, “because he arose victorious from the dead; a *Lamb*, because he offered himself holy, harmless, and without spot for us.” *Horns*, in the symbolical language, signify regal power; and, when they are numbered, so many monarchies; that is, power extending over so many monarchies. As the *seven lamp sconces* in the first vision, signified seven churches, and the seven stars seven bishops, or deputy governors therein; and as these are said to be under the care of the Son of man walking among them, and he is said to have these seven stars in his hand, to denote his power over them (all which shewed the dominion of Christ in his church); so these seven horns shew his power without, against his enemies; that he shall obtain dominion, and is going to take possession of a kingdom in this period; which extends itself universally over seven monarchies, and is equal in number to the

seven heads of the dragon, his enemy, whom he is to fight and overcome; and he will then settle his church in the same dominions. Christ is therefore here exhibited according to the state of things present; for, after his conquest of the beast, he appears not with *horns* defined by any number, but as having *many crowns*, ch. xix. 12. The next symbol of the *seven eyes*, &c. is taken from Zech. iii. 9. and shews that Christ, as mediatorial King, is invested with divine power and the providence of the world, and that he has the ministers thereof necessary to that purpose. See If. xi. 2.

Ver. 7. *And he came and took the book,*] Daubuz understands the delivering of this book into the hands of Christ, as an act of inauguration or investiture into his regal power and authority, as mediatorial King; and shews that many of the expressions here used, are taken from the ceremonies of solemn investitures. But it should seem that his plan of interpreting does not well suit with the date of this vision, which was given to St. John many years after the period of our Lord's ascension, at which time this learned commentator supposes it to commence.

Ver. 8. *Having every one of them harps, and golden vials,*] *Harps* were a principal part of the temple music: *vials* were also of common use in the temple service; but they were not like those small bottles which we now call *vials*, but like *cups*, or *little bowls*, on a plate, in allusion to the censers of God in which the priests offered incense in the temple. These censers were a sort of cups, which, because of the heat of the fire burning the incense, were often put upon a plate or saucer, something resembling a tea-cup and saucers. To offer incense to God, or before his presence in the temple, was an act of honour and religious worship peculiar to the priest's office; and the prayers of the church are often compared to it. See Pf. cxli. 2. So that these expressions well represent the whole heavenly church of saints and angels offering a very high act of religious worship and adoration unto Christ. Some read here, *golden bowls full of perfumes*.

Ver. 9. *And they sung a new song,*] Excellent in its kind, and composed on a much greater occasion, and in much sublimer

⁹ 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;

¹⁰ And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

¹¹ And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

¹² Saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is

the Lamb that was slain ² to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

¹⁴ And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

⁹ Ch. 4. 11. Heb. 2. 10. Phil. 2. 6—11. Pf. 110. 7. ¹ Mat. 20. 28. & 26. 28. Rom. 3. 25. & 5. 15—21. 1 Cor. 6. 20. & 7. 23. Eph. 1. 7. Acts, 20. 28. Heb. 9. 12, 14. & 10. 10, 12. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Col. 1. 14. Ch. 14. 4, 6. 1 John, 1. 7. & 2. 2. Ch. 7. 9, 14. ² Eccl. 10. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Ch. 1. 6. & 20. 6. & 22. 5. Gen. 32. 24. Eph. 2. 18. 1 John, 5. 4. Rom. 8. 37. Luke, 19. 17, 19. ³ Dan. 7. 10. Deut. 33. 2. 2 Kings, 6. 16, 17. Pf. 34. 7. & 68. 17. & 103. 20. & 148. 2. Heb. 12. 22. Ch. 7. 11. & 4. 4, 6. ⁴ Ver. 9. Zech. 13. 7. II. 9. 6. ⁵ Ch. 4. 11. & 7. 12. & 19. 1. John, 17. 2. Mat. 28. 18. 2 Cor. 3. 9. Heb. 1. 2. & 2. 8, 9. Phil. 2. 10. Pf. 145. 10. 1 Tim. 1. 17. Jude, 25. ⁶ Pf. 96. 11, 12. & xcvi. c. cxvii. cxlv. cxlviii. 1 Chron. 29. 11. Rom. 9. 5. & 11. 36. & 16. 27. Gal. 1. 5. Eph. 3. 21. Phil. 4. 20. Luke, 2. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 6. 2 Tim. 4. 18. Heb. 13. 21. 1 Pet. 4. 11. Ch. 7. 10, 12. 2 Pet. 3. 18. Jud. 25. ⁷ Ch. 4. 9, 10. & 7. 10, 12. & 19. 1, 4, 6, 14. Heb. 13. 8.

sublimier strains of divine harmony, than those which the priests and Levites sung in the temple of Jerusalem; saying, Worthy art thou to take the book from the hand, as it were, of God the Father; for thou, O blessed Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, wast slain to expiate our guilt; and thou hast redeemed us to God by thy precious Blood, from the dominion and indwelling of sin, the tyranny of Satan, the curse of the law, and the wrath of a justly incensed Deity; whose servants and children we are now become in consequence of thy kind and gracious interposition, and the efficacy of thy divine Spirit. And we are now assembled round the throne out of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, near and afar off, sacred and prophane, learned and barbarous: thy power and thy mercy have rescued us from all our bondage and misery.

Ver. 10. And hast made us—kings and priests,] "We are robed in purity and majesty; we are crowned with gold; (ch. iv. 4.) and here we appear in those priestly offices which we perform with the splendor of princes; and we shall reign on earth. The Christian cause shall prevail through all ages; while the happy souls who have passed courageously through their trials upon earth, come hither in their appointed seasons, and share the honours of thy triumphant kingdom." Christ and his church reign on earth, when the truth and purity of the Christian religion prevail against the opposition and corruption of the world. It is thus that the kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, is set up in it, and the spiritual powers of his throne are established; which lays no claim to any coercive power of outward force incompatible with the dominion which alone consists in willing submission and voluntary obedience. But the latter clause has probably particular reference to the first resurrection and the consequences thereof, on which I shall enlarge hereafter.

Ver. 13. And such as are in the sea,] As the inhabitants of the watery element are necessarily mute, we are not

to understand by this, that they seemed to grow vocal in the praises of Christ upon this occasion; but rather that *heaven, earth, and sea* are used to signify, that all nature in its different ways concurred in the acclamation; that is, that the whole constitution of it contributed to furnish out matter of praise; just as inanimate as well as rational creatures are called upon to praise God in several of the Psalms, especially in Pf. 148.

Ver. 14. And the four beasts said, Amen,] It was the custom in the temple worship for the singers to make pauses. "In every Psalm, (say the Talmudists,) the music made three intermissions. At these intermissions the trumpets sounded, and the people worshipped!"

Inferences.—It should fill us with unutterable joy, when we lift up our eyes to the throne of God, that we there discern the Lamb wearing the marks of slaughter. We should then gratefully remember his dying love; for it is his precious Blood which cleanses us from all sin, and emboldens our addresses to God, conscious as we are that our guilt is attended with great aggravations. Surely, had it been questioned with respect to the great atonement to be made for our transgressions, as it was with respect to the opening of these seals, Who is worthy to complete this gracious undertaking? we should have seen with unspeakable anguish, that none in heaven, or on earth, would have been found equal to the task. But here likewise the Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed. How divinely is he furnished for the high station that he sustains, and for all the glorious services assigned to him! What amazing power, what adorable wisdom is implied in the seven horns, and seven eyes, with which he is here delineated? and O! what love, in submitting to be slain, that he might redeem us to God by his blood! With the prayers of the saints, which come up before God as incense, may they ever mingle their most ardent praises for this divine condescension! And out of gratitude to their Redeemer, let them rejoice

CHAP. VI.

The opening of the seals in order, and what followed thereupon.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I saw when the Lamb^a opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were^b the

noise of thunder, ' one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw and beheld^d a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

3 And when he had opened the second

^a Ch. 5. 5, 9 & 1. 1. ^b Ch. 4. 5. & 11. 19. ² Thes. 3. 1. ^c Ch. 4. 6. ^d Ch. 19. 11. ^e Psal. 45. 3-5. ^f Ch. 5. 5, 9. ^g Ch. 4. 6. ^h Act. 4. 13. ⁱ Eph. 6. 19, 20. ^j Act. 20. 24. & 21. 13. ^k Merk. 3. 17. ^l 2 Cor. 10. 4. ^m Heb. 4. 12. ⁿ Act. 2. 37, 41. & 4. 4. & 5. 14. ^o Ch. 19. 11. ^p Zech. 1. 8, 10 & 6. 2, 3. ^q Rom. 1. 16. ^r Psal. 45. 3-5. ^s Heb. 2. 9. ^t Zech. 6. 11. ^u Ch. 14. 14. ^v Rom. 15. 19. ^w 2 Cor. 2. 14. & 10. 4, 5. ^x Act. 1-xix. ^y 1 Cor. 15. 25.

to see the glorious change in his humanity, from his humiliation and sufferings on earth, to his exaltation and reward in heaven: and let them ardently long for the happy season, when the full choir of the faithful, from every nation, and people, and tongue, shall unite in this joyful acclamation, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing.—In this world the faithful disciples of Christ are only a little flock; but when they stand together upon the heavenly mountain, they shall appear ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; and all the harmony of their voices, and all the ardour of their souls, inconceivably improved as all their powers will be, shall be united on this happy occasion. Form us, O Lord, we intreat thee, for this divine employment; and teach us, in some measure, to anticipate its pleasure in these regions below. Even now, in spirit and intention, we prostrate ourselves before thee, and lay down the crowns which faith, as it were, hath already received, at thy feet; giving glory to him who sitteth upon the throne, and celebrating the victories and honours of the Lamb.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, We have,

1. The prophetic volume, which was in the hand of him that sat on the throne, containing the events which in succeeding ages should befall his church. *It was written within and on the back side*, like Ezekiel's roll. Or, *on the back side* may be joined with the following clause, *as sealed there with seven seals*; not probably all on the outside; but as there were seven parchment rolls, one under the other, when the first seal was opened, and the volume unrolled, then the second seal and volume appeared. All things are known to God from the beginning; but they are inscrutable by us till they are accomplished, or he is pleased to reveal them to us.

2. The proclamation issued forth by a strong angel: *Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?* But no creature was found in heaven, earth, or hell, capable of penetrating into, or of retelling the events of futurity. This is God's prerogative alone.

3. The grief of the apostle at finding no creature who dared essay the arduous task. He wept bitterly that he could not gain a knowledge of the things contained in the book, apprehending them to be of signal importance.

4. One of the elders kindly observed his tears, and cheered his affected heart, saying, *Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the mighty Lord and Saviour,*

the root of David, not only after the flesh his offspring, but, as God, the source of all honour and blessedness to his faithful people, *hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.* Note; God's people often needlessly afflict themselves with fears: were their eyes more steadily fixed upon their great Redeemer, their tears never need to flow.

2dly, Behold the wonderful Personage appears, who is alone found worthy to unloose the seals, and unfold this sacred volume.

1. He is described as a Lamb that had been slain, and, by his own blood, having taken away the sins of the world, stood as our great High Priest, just before the throne, within the circle of the elders and the living creatures, as the great Intercessor for mankind, and especially for those that believe, pleading continually the oblation which he once offered in his own body on the tree. He had seven horns, denoting the perfection of his power and dominion as the universal King over his church, to protect his people, and push his enemies till he has consumed them: and his seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth, represent the treasures of wisdom, grace, and knowledge, which, as the great Prophet, he possesses, and dispenses to all his ministers and members, according to their various wants. He came, as fully qualified in the virtue of his all sufficient merit, and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne, who readily gave it to him, acknowledging thereby, that he was worthy to unloose the seals, and reveal the mysterious contents.

2. Instantly all heaven resounds with praise; the church triumphant in heaven begin to sing, angels repeat the sound, and every creature joins the sacred choir, and echoes loud allelujahs.

[1.] The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb with humble adoration, their hearts, like their golden lyres, tuned to their Redeemer's praise; and vials full of the most grateful incense, even the prayers of the saints, breathed before him their sweet perfume. United in sacred chorus, high they raised their voices, and uttered this most glorious song, saying, *Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof*; qualified fully for the discharge of thy mediatorial office; for *thou wast slain* for our transgressions, and *hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*; that we might be delivered from the bondage of sin, Satan, and death, and be restored to favour and communion with the Most High; and *hast made us unto our God, now fully reconciled to us, kings and priests; and*

seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red : and power was given to him that sat

^f Ch. 4. 6, 7. 2 Cor. 6. 4, 5. 1 Cor. 4. 9—13.
² Tim. 3. 21, 12.

^h Zech. 1. 8. & 6. 2. Ch. 12. 3, 4. Mat. 10. 17, 18, 34, 35. & 24. 9. Joh. 16. 2, 33.

we shall reign on the earth, exalted to the highest dignity and honour, and raised superior to all our spiritual enemies. Who can, without some glow of the same sacred rapture, read their song; or not long to join with them before the throne?

[2.] The angels, who, without the circle of the living creatures and the elders, in shining ranks innumerable compassed round the throne, joined their adorations, and cried, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

[3.] The whole creation echoes back the sound. All in heaven, earth, and sea, whether angels, the spirits of the just departed, or the living here below, creatures animate and inanimate, all, all utter forth their united praises, *saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!* The same divine glory is ascribed to each of the sacred Persons, as being one in essence, and alike the objects of every creature's worship and adoration.

[4.] The four living creatures close with their solemn *Amen*; and the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the church, with humble prostration, fall down and worship him that liveth for ever and ever. Oh when shall I join this heavenly choir, and with them, in heart and lip, unite in these eternal praises of God and the Lamb!

CHAP. VI.

Ver. 1, 2. And I saw, &c.] St. John had seen, in the former part of his vision, a representation of the majesty, glory, power, and supreme authority of God; and also the sealed book, in which were contained the orders of the divine Providence concerning the church and world, delivered to Christ the Lamb of God, to open and reveal it, for the encouragement of the church in patience and faithfulness; together with the adoration of the church on this solemn occasion. Now this revelation of Christ begins with a prophetic representation of the future state of the church and world, so far as the wisdom and goodness of God thought fit to make it known for the consolation of his faithful people. This chapter contains the *first grand period* of prophecy, (divided into seven seals or lesser periods,) and the description of the state of the church under Heathen Rome, from the time of the date of the prophecy to about the year of Christ 323. See ch. viii. 1. Each of the prophetic descriptions is in part some figurative or hieroglyphical picture and motto, or some representation in the style and figurative expressions of ancient prophecy, describing some particular dispensation of Providence, proper and peculiar to the several successive states of the church and empire, during the space or time contained in this period: In which therefore we may hope to find both a wise and kind intention, in making

8

known these dispensations of Providence to the church, and an useful and profitable meaning of this first period of prophetic revelation. As the seals are opened in order, so the events follow in order too. The first seal or period is memorable for conquest, and was proclaimed by the *first of the living creatures*, who was like a lion, and had his station in the East. According to Lowman, the person represented, ver. 2. is the Lord Jesus Christ, who had received a kingdom from the Father, which was to rule all nations. See ch. xix. 11. 12. Psa. xlv. 3, &c. But, according to Bishop Newton, this first period commences with Vespasian, who, from commanding in the East, was advanced to the empire; and Vespasian, for this reason, was regarded, both by Romans and foreigners, as "that great prince, who was to come out of the East, and obtain dominion over the world." They went forth to conquer: for they made an entire conquest of Judea, destroyed Jerusalem, and carried the Jews captive into all nations. As these prophecies were written a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, they properly begin with some allusion to that memorable event; and a short allusion was sufficient, our Saviour himself having enlarged so much on all the particulars. The bow, the white horse, and the crown, are proper emblems of victory, triumph, and royalty; and the proclamation for conquest is fully made by a creature like a lion. This period continued during the reigns of the Flavian family, and the short reign of Nerva, about twenty-eight years.

Ver. 3. 4. And when he had opened the second seal,] The second seal or period is noted for war and slaughter; and was proclaimed by the *second living creature*, which was like an ox, and had his station in the West: and in the account hereof, Bishop Newton, Lowman, &c. nearly agree. The second period, says the former, commenced with Trajan, who came from the West, being a Spaniard by birth, and was the first foreigner who was elevated to the imperial throne. In his reign, and that of his successor Adrian, there were horrid wars and slaughters, and especially between the rebellious Jews and the Romans. The Jews about Cyrene slew of the Romans and Greeks two hundred and twenty thousand men, with most shocking circumstances of barbarity; in Egypt and Cyprus two hundred and forty thousand more. But the Jews in their turn were subdued by Lucius and other generals sent against them by Trajan. These things were transacted in the reign of Trajan; and in the reign of Adrian was their great rebellion under their false Messiah, Barchochab, and their final dispersion, after fifty of their strongest cities, and nine hundred and eighty-five of their best towns had been demolished, and after five hundred and eighty thousand men had been slain by the sword, besides an immense multitude who had perished by famine, sickness, and other casualties; with great loss and slaughter too of the Romans, inasmuch that the emperor forbore the usual flatterations in his letters to the senate. Here was another illustrious

thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

5 And when ¹ he had opened the third seal, I heard the ^k third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a ^l black horse; and he that sat on him had ^m a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, * A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a

penny; and ^o see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of ^o the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a ^p pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him. And power was given [†] unto them over the fourth part of the earth, ^q to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

¹ Ch. 5. 5, 9. ^k Ch. 4. 6, 7. Mat. 10. 16, 17. Eph. 5. 15—17. ^l 1 Cor. 14. 20. ^o Zech. 6. 2, 6. Gen. 14. 1, 2. Lam. 4. 7, 8. Amos, 8. 7, 8. ¹ Sam. 3. 1. ² 1 Cor. 11. 19. ² Peter, 2. 7. ^m Or *scale*. Gal. 5. 1. Acts, 15. 10. Pl. 58. 2. ^o The *chaenix* contained near a pint and a half English. [†] Ch. 9. 4. Mat. 25. 4. Il. 5c. 1. ^p Or *green*. Mark, 6. 39. with Zech. 6. 3. Ch. 20. 6, 14. ^q Or *to him*. ^q All manner of calamities temporal and spiritual. Jer. 15. 2. & 16. 4, 16. Ezek. 5. 15—17. & 14. 21. Lev. 26. 22, 26. Lam. v. 10. Ezek. 4. 16.

illustrious triumph of Christ over his enemies; and the Jews and the Romans, both the persecutors of Christians, were remarkably made the executioners of divine vengeance upon one another. The *great sword* and the *red horse*, ver. 4. are expressive emblems of this slaughtering and bloody period; and the proclamation for slaughter is fitly made by a creature like an *ox* that is destined for slaughter. This period continued during the reigns of Trajan and his successors, by blood or adoption, about ninety-five years. See 2 Kings, iii. 23, 24.

Ver. 5, 6. When he had opened the third seal, &c.] The third seal or period is characterized by the strict execution of justice and judgment, and by the procuration of corn, oil, and wine; and was proclaimed by the third living creature, who was like a *man*, and had his station in the South. The *measure of corn* mentioned, ver. 6. is, in the original, a *chaenix*, which was a man's daily allowance, as a *penny* was his daily wages; so that if his daily labour could earn no more than his daily bread, without other provision for himself or his family, corn must needs bear a very high price. But whatever may be the capacity of the *chaenix* (which is difficult to be determined), yet such care, and such regulations, imply at least some scarcity; and scarcity obliges men to exactness in the price and measure of things. In short, the intent of the prophecy is, that corn should be provided for the people; but it should be distributed in exact measure and proportion. This third period commences with Septimus Severus, who was an emperor from the *South*, being a native of Africa. He was an enacter of equal and just laws, and was very severe and implacable to offences; he never would grant a pardon even for petty larcenies, as neither would Alexander Severus in the same period. These two emperors were also no less celebrated for the procuring of corn, and oil, and other provisions, and for supplying the Romans with them after they had experienced a want of them. Of Septimus Severus it is said, that for the provision of corn, which he found very small, he so far consulted, that at his death he left a certain rate or allowance to the Roman people for seven years; and also of oil, as much as might supply, not only the uses of the city, but likewise of all Italy which might want it, for the

space of five years. Of Alexander Severus it is also said, that he took such care in providing for the Roman people, that the corn which Heliogabalus had wasted, he replaced out of his own money; the oil also, which Septimus Severus had given to the people, and which Heliogabalus had lessened, he restored wholly as before. The colour of the *black horse*, ver. 5, befits the severity of their nature and their name; the *balances* are the well-known emblem of justice, as well as an intimation of scarcity; and the proclamation for justice and judgment, and for the procuration of corn, oil and wine, ver. 6, is fitly made by a creature like a *man*. This period continued during the reigns of the Septimian family, about forty-two years. See Lam. v. 10.

Ver. 7, 8. And when he had opened, &c.] The fourth seal or period is distinguished by a concurrence of evils, war and famine, pestilence and wild beasts, and was proclaimed by the fourth living creature, which was like an *eagle*, and had his station in the north. These are the same *four* sore judgments with which Ezekiel, ch. xiv. 21. threatened Jerusalem, the *sword*, and the *famine*, and the *noisome beast*, and the *pestilence*: for, in the Oriental languages, the *pestilence* is emphatically styled *death*. These *four* were to destroy the *fourth* part of mankind; and the image is very poetical of *death riding on a pale horse, and hell, or the grave, following with him*, ready to swallow up the dead corpses. This period commences with Maximin, who was an emperor from the north, being born of barbarous parents in a village of Thrace. There was not a more cruel animal upon earth. The history of his and several succeeding reigns is full of wars and murders, mutinies of soldiers, rebellions of subjects, and deaths of princes. There were more than twenty emperors in the space of fifty years, all or most of whom died in war, or were murdered by their own soldiers or subjects. Besides lawful emperors, there were, in the time of Gallienus, thirty tyrants or usurpers, who came all of them to violent and miserable ends. Here was sufficient employment for the *sword*; and such wars and devastations must necessarily produce *famine*; and the *famine* is another distinguishing calamity of this period. In the reign of Gal-

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held :

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them ; and it was said unto 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.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake ; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood ;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together ; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the

[†] Ch. 5. 5, 9. [‡] Heb. 9. 12. 24. & 13. 10. Ch. 8. 3. & 9. 13. & 14. 18. with Lev. 4. 7. [§] Ch. 1. 9. & 12. 11, 17. & 19. 10. & 20. 4. John, 16. 2. [¶] Gen. 4. 10. Heb. 12. 24. ^{||} Psa. 9. 12. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 3. Ch. 16. 5, 6. & 19. 2. & 17. 18. Luke, 18. 8. 9. Deut. 32. 36—43. Ver. 12—17. Zech. 1. 12. Job, 24. 12. [∞] See Ch. 3. 5. & 7. 9, 14. & 14. 13. Jude, 24. Eph. 5. 27. [∞] Mat. 10. 17, 18, 34. 35. John, 16. 2. Acts, 14. 22. 2 Tim. 3. 12. [∞] Isa. 13. 9, 10, 13. & 34. 4. & 29. 6, 7. & 24. 23. Jer. 4. 23, 24. Ezek. 32. 7. 8. Job, 2. 2, 10, 30, 31. & 3. 15. Hag. 2. 6, 7, 21, 23. Mat. 24. 29. Ch. 11. 13. & 16. 18. Acts, 2. 20. [∞] Or green figs. [∞] Jer. 51. 25. & 3. 25. & 4. 24. If. 2. 14, 17. Ch. 16. 20. Hof. 4. 13. [∞] Psa. 76. 12. & 149. 8. & 110. 5, 6. Isa. 2. 12, 19.

Ius, the Syrians made such incursions, that not one nation subject to the Romans was left unwasted by them ; and every unwall'd town, and most of the wall'd cities, were taken by them. In the reign of Probus also there was a great famine throughout the world, which was the occasion of his armies mutinying and slaying him. The usual consequence of famine is the pestilence ; and the pestilence is the third distinguishing calamity of this period. This pestilence, arising from Ethiopia, pervaded all the Roman provinces, and for fifteen years together incredibly exhausted them. It raged so furiously, that five thousand men died in one day. When countries lie thus uncultivated, uninhabited, unfrequented, the wild beasts multiply, and come into the towns to devour men, which is the fourth distinguishing calamity of this period ; and we read that five hundred wolves entered into a city together, which was deserted by its inhabitants, where the younger Maximin happened to be. The colour of the pale horse is very suitable to the mortality of this period ; and the proclamation for death and destruction is fitly made by a creature like an eagle, which watches for carcases. This period continued from Maximin to Dioclesian ; about fifty years.

Ver. 9—11. When he had opened the fifth seal, &c.] This and the following seals have nothing extrinsecal, like the proclamation of the living creatures, to determine from what quarter we should expect their completion ; but they are sufficiently distinguished by their internal marks and characters. The fifth seal or period is remarkable for a dreadful persecution of Christians, who are represented, ver. 9. lying under the altar (for the scene is still in the tabernacle or temple) as sacrifices newly slain, and offered unto God. The word of God and the testimony which they held, is a description of faithful Christians, who persevered unto death in the Christian faith and worship, notwithstanding all the difficulties of persecution. See ch. xx. 4. They cry aloud, ver. 10. for the Lord to judge and avenge

their cause ; that is, the cruelties exercised upon them were of so barbarous and atrocious a nature as to deserve and provoke the vengeance of the Lord. White robes are given to every one of them, ver. 11. as a token of the triumph which they had gained over death and all its terrors ; and they are exhorted to rest for a season, till the number of martyrs should be completed, when they shall receive their full reward. This representation is a strong proof, among a multitude of others, of the immediate happiness of departed saints, and cannot consist with the dangerous, as well as uncomfortable opinion, of the insensible state of departed souls till after the resurrection. There were other persecutions before, but this was by far the most considerable ; the tenth and last general persecution, which was begun by Dioclesian, and continued by others, and lasted longer, and extended farther, and was sharper and more bloody than all the preceding ; and therefore this was particularly predicted : so that this became a memorable æra to the Christians under the name of “ The æra of Dioclesian ;” or, as it is otherwise called, “ The æra of martyrs.”

Under the altar, &c.] This bears an allusion (as we said in the preceding note) to the temple service. In the temple was the altar for victims, at the foot of which was poured the blood of the sacrifices, which blood, being deposited within sight of the sanctuary, was supposed to put God, as it were, in mind of the sacrifice offered to him. Much more did the souls, that is, the spirits of the martyrs, placed in the sight of Christ, promote the same great end ; and as the blood of Abel called for vengeance, so did the spirits or souls of the martyrs.

Ver. 12—17. I beheld—when he had opened the sixth seal, &c.] The sixth seal or period produces mighty changes and revolutions, which, according to the prophetic style, are expressed by great commotions in the earth, and in the heavens. The very same images, the very same expressions are used by the other prophets concerning the mutations and alterations of religions and governments ; and why

great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16^d And said to the mountains and rocks,

^d If. 30. 31. Hof. 10. 8. Jer. 8. 3. Luke, 23. 30. Job. 3. 21. Ch. 9. 6. ^e Ver. 10. Gen. 3. 15. & 49. 9, 10. Deut. 32. 36—43. Pl. 2. 9. & 21. 8—12. & 110. 5, 6. Mat. 24. 44. & 26. 64. If. 13. 6—17. Zech. 1. 14. Ch. 16. 14.

Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb :

17^e For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

may they not therefore, with equal propriety and fitness, be applied to one of the greatest and most memorable revolutions that ever was in the world,—the subversion of the Heathen religion, and establishment of the Christian, which was begun by Constantine the Great, and completed by his successors? The series of the prophecy requires this application, and all the phrases and expressions will easily admit it. *And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, (ver. 12.) and lo, there was a great earthquake, or rather a great concussion, (σεισμός);* for the word comprehends the shaking of the heavens as well as of the earth. The same phrase is used, Haggai, ii. 6, 21. concerning the first coming of Christ; and this shaking, as the apostle says, Heb. 12. 27. *signifieth the removing of those things which are shaken;* and so the prophet Haggai explains it. And where was ever a greater concussion, or removal, than when Christianity was advanced to the throne of Paganism, and idolatry gave place to the true religion? Then follow the particular effects of this general concussion, ver. 12—14. Isaiah speaks much in the same manner concerning Babylon and Idumea, ch. xiii. 10. and xxxiv. 4.; and Jeremiah concerning the land of Judah, ch. iv. 23, 24.; and Ezekiel concerning Egypt, ch. xxxii. 7.; and Joel concerning Jerusalem, ch. ii. 10. 31.; and our Saviour himself also concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, Mat. xxiv. 29. Now, it is certain, that the fall of any of these cities or kingdoms was not of greater concern and consequence to the world, nor more deserving to be described in such sublime figures, than the fall of the Pagan Roman empire, when the great lights of the Heathen world—the sun, moon, and stars,—the powers civil and ecclesiastical, were all eclipsed and obscured; the Heathen emperors and Cæsars were slain, the Heathen priests and augurs were extirpated, the Heathen officers and magistrates were removed, and their temples were demolished. It is customary with the prophets, after they have described a thing in the most symbolical and figurative diction, to represent the same again in plainer language; and the same method is observed here, ver. 15, 16, 17.; *and the kings of the earth, &c.* that is, Maximin, Galerius, Maxentius, Licinius, &c. with all their adherents and followers, were so routed and dispersed, that they hid themselves in dens, &c. expressions used, as in other prophets, (If. ii. 19. 21. Hof. x. 8. Luke, xxiii. 30.) to denote the utmost terror and consternation. This is therefore a triumph of Christ over his Heathen enemies, and a triumph after a severe persecution; so that the time and all the circumstances, as well as the series and order of the prophecy, agree perfectly with this interpretation. Galerius, Maximin, and Licinius, made even a public confession of their

guilt, recalled their decrees and edicts against the Christians, and acknowledged the just judgments of God in their own destruction. The reader, desirous to enter more fully into the meaning of this wonderful chapter, will do well to consult the cotemporary historians; as it is impossible, in the compass of notes like these, to mark out all the particulars which well deserve observation. Mr. Burton observes upon this chapter, that “as commentators have been differently affected by reading the account of the apocryphical visions, so they have struck out applications of various events to them. The very doubts of those, much better qualified to judge of these things than I dare presume to be, are sufficient to impose a silence upon me with regard to the application of particular events. Time, the grand revealer of all secrets, must unravel the deep mystery of these wonders. We have as yet but a dawn of those important truths, to lead us on from strength to strength; we must at present, like the wondering Israelites, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord: in the mean time, it becomes us to seek after him, if haply we may find him. The general plan of the Revelation is evidently marked out to us as a solid foundation; and some strong outlines already appear, though at a distance from us, to shew that a beautiful and well-proportioned superstructure is now opening to our view, whose Builder and Maker is God. As far as reason will justify our application, and we derive our knowledge from the holy scripture, that pure fountain of all human knowledge, our conduct is safe and commendable; but we no sooner lose sight of that, than we become vain in our imaginations, and our foolish heart is darkened. The seven seals, in this chapter, seem to have the apocryphical number seven for a ground work, from which to calculate the rise of their several events, and of their completions. But I am inclinable to think, that both the sixth and seventh seals are yet to be opened; since, from the apocryphical descriptions given in this chapter, they seem to be reserved for those dreadful events which are to be revealed in the very last day, and which exceed our past experiences as much as they do the strength of our imagination.”—We will conclude our notes on this chapter with Mr. Lowman’s remark, “that this part of history is very proper to the general design of the whole Revelation;—to support the patience, and encourage the perseverance of the church, by such an instance of God’s power and faithfulness in the protection of the Christian religion, and punishment of its enemies. We see in this period,

C H A P. VII.

An angel sealeth the servants of God in their foreheads, even an innumerable multitude, which stand before the throne, clad in white robes, and with palms in their hands. Their robes were washed in the blood of the Lamb.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND after^a these things I saw^b four angels standing on the four corners of

^a Ch. iv—vi. ^b Pl. 34. 7. Heb. 2. 14. ^c Eph. 4. 14. Dan. 7. 2. & 8. 8. If. 27. 8. Jer. 49. 36, 37. & 51. 8. & 4. 11, 12. ^d Christ. Acts, 7. 30, 31. Ch. 1. 13. & 10. 1. & 8. 3. Mal. 4. 2. Ezek. 44. 2, 3. & 46. 9, 10. ^e John, 6. 27. & 3. 34. & 7. 37—39. Eph. 1. 13. & 4. 30. 1 Tim. 2. 19. John, 10. 14. ^f Ver. 1, 3. Ch. 8. 7—12.

“ during the persecution of Heathen Rome, the church
“ in a state of trial and suffering, yet preserved and pro-
“ tected, and finally obtaining a state of peace and safety,
“ when all the power of their persecutors was totally de-
“ stroyed by God’s over-ruling providence. Thus this
“ history verifies the general truth of all the prophecies,
“ and the particular predictions of each of them severally :
“ —a strong encouragement to the patience and constancy
“ of the true church !

Inferences.—To whatever event the seals may refer, it is certain, that the representations here made are very awful, and very instructive. Let us consider ourselves as invited to *come up and see*, and let us observe the memorable spectacle with attention. Let the view of the white horse, and his rider, who went forth conquering and to conquer, lead us to reflect on the peaceful purposes of our blessed Saviour’s appearance, and the rapidity of his conquests ; and engage us frequently to pray for the further prosperity of his kingdom, that kingdom of righteousness, love, and happiness. When we think of the terrible effects of *war, of famine, and of pestilence*, represented by the three following horses, and their riders here mentioned, let it excite our thankfulness, that not one of this dreadful *triumvirate* is comparatively sent forth against us in our land, though our national crimes have indeed deserved that they should invade us with united terrors ; that peace should be entirely taken from our land, that our *bread and water* should be received by *weight and measure*, and that the dead should lie unburied in our streets, the food of the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the earth : nor can any thing more justly excite our gratitude and thankfulness, than that the terrors and the guilt of *sanguinary persecution* are not to be found in the midst of us. The history of its horrors and ravages in other nations, and in other ages, may sometimes be an exercise of our faith ; and we may be ready to cry out with *the souls under the altar, How long, O Lord, holy and true, wilt thou not avenge the blood of thy saints upon the earth ?* But let us wait with patience ; let us not form a hasty and inconsiderate judgment. The dead, who *die in the Lord*, and those who have been persecuted to death for his sake, and in his cause, are incomparably more *happy* than those who are the happiest among the living. The white robes, and golden crowns, with which they are adorned, are an abundant compensation, not only for every lighter suffering, but even for the slow fire, and the rack, those most dreadful instruments of torture. And though their mali-

the earth, holding^c the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw^d another angel ascending from the east, ^e having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, ^f to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

icious and implacable enemies may bitterly insult over them for a while, yet the triumphing of the wicked is for a short time, their guilty spirits will soon be summoned before the great Avenger of blood ; and the day is coming when they shall be publicly brought forth, to suffer the utmost demands of his justice ; even that day, when all the figurative descriptions here used shall be fully answered, in their literal meaning ; *when the sun shall indeed be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood ; when the volume of heaven shall be rolled up as a scroll, and its stars shall fall from their orbs.* It is no wonder, that ungodly sinners fly from this alarming and tremendous scene with wild consternation and confusion ; no wonder, that they rend the very heavens with their cries, and call upon the mountains to fall upon them, and the rocks to cover them : for O ! what were the sudden and irresistible crush of a rock, or a mountain, when compared with the weight of the wrath of the Lamb, and with the *fire and brimstone of this second death.* O ! that by the expectation of this awful day, men of all ranks and conditions may be influenced to make their application to him, while he yet appears in the displays of his grace and mercy ; to *kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and they perish from the way, even when his wrath is only beginning to be kindled.* (Psalm ii. 12.)

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The six first seals contain the events relative to the church under the Heathen emperors, till, in the reign of Constantine, Paganism was utterly subverted, about the year 323.

On the Lamb’s opening the first seal, one of the living creatures, with a voice loud as the thunder, summoned the apostle’s attention, and bade him come and see the vision. When, lo ! a white horse appeared, and one sat thereon, carrying a bow, and a crown on his head ; and he went forth conquering and to conquer. This, in a spiritual sense, represents the ministration of the gospel, which brings joy, and peace, and triumph to the soul, of which the white horse may be considered as an emblem. The bow of Jesus, like that of Jonathan, returns not empty : the arrows of the gospel, through the power of the Spirit, become effectual to subdue the souls of sinners : his crown may denote his victories and dignity : he must prevail : and, in spite of all opposition, his gospel shall go on conquering and to conquer ; till in the hearts of his faithful servants every corruption is subdued ; till throughout the world his truth is diffused ; and to the latest ages he will continue his conquests, till the kingdoms of the earth shall become

3 Saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have ^h sealed the

servants of our God in their foreheads.

4 And I heard the number of them which

^a Ch. 6. 6. & 9. 4. If. 27. 8. & 65. 8. Pl. 76. 10. Mat. 24. 22. 2. 22. Song, 1. 11. Gal. 5. 22, 23. Exod. 12. 13, 23.

^b Ezek. 9. 4. Ch. 14. 1—4. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Eph. 1. 13. & 4. 30. 2 Cor.

become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ. Hasten, O Lord, that happy day!

2dly, The second seal being opened, he has a summons repeated from the second living creature, to come and see. And behold, another horse which was red; and one armed with a sword sat thereon, to whom power was given to take peace from the earth. And this seems to prefigure the bloody wars which, during the reigns of Trajan and Adrian, consumed innumerable multitudes of Jews and Romans, the common persecutors of Christianity. *Note*; (1.) Persecutors of God's people shall have blood given them to drink. (2.) The Lord can set his enemies at variance among themselves, and make often one wicked nation to be the scourge of his vengeance upon another.

3dly, The third seal opens, and another summons bids him come and see; when, lo! a black horse, the emblem of famine, appeared, and one with a pair of balances sat on him; when one of the beasts cried, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. The famine would fall chiefly on the poor, who, for the price of a whole day's labour, could but just procure bread for their subsistence. *Note*; When one judgment is not effectual to lead sinners to repentance, a second follows at its heels.

4thly, The fourth seal being opened, the fourth living creature bids him come and see: when, behold, a pale horse; death sat thereon, and the grave attended him to devour the corpses of the fallen; or hell, to receive their souls. By war, by famine, by pestilence, and the beasts of the earth, permission is given them to slay even the fourth part of the earth: and history informs us of the dreadful desolations which wasted the Roman empire, from the reign of Maximin to Dioclesian, in righteous vengeance for their bloody persecutions of the Christians. *Note*; (1.) Death marches as a conqueror through the earth; and, when attended with hell at his feet, is indeed the king of terrors. (2.) God's quiver is never exhausted; and, when he contends, he must prevail.

5thly, On opening the fifth seal a new scene is disclosed. The souls of the martyrs, who had been slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, appear at the altar of incense; and they unite in their fervent supplications, saying, *How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not display these persecutions, and judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?* In answer to their prayer, and in token of their acceptance, *white robes*, the emblems of righteousness and honour, were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, *that they should rest yet for a little season*, patiently expecting their final triumphs over all their foes, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled; and then a period should be put to the bloody persecutions of the Pagan emperors, by the accession of Constantine, about the year 323. *Note*; (1.) The blood of martyrs,

and the sufferings of the persecuted, cry for vengeance to a holy God, and it will surely come upon the heads of their enemies. (2.) The time for the exercise of faith and patience is a little season; but the glory which shall follow, will be eternal.

6thly, On opening the sixth seal, a dreadful earthquake seemed to threaten universal destruction. The luminaries of heaven grew dark as sackcloth; the stars dropped from their spheres, as when the storm shakes down the untimely figs; the heaven itself departed as a scroll; every island and mountain fled affrighted; and universal consternation seized all ranks and degrees, from the king upon the throne to the meanest slave, who sought for shelter in dens and caves, and in their horror wished to be for ever covered under the rocks and mountains, from the face of him that sat upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for now by woeful experience they felt his terrible vengeance, which they could neither fly from nor resist.

This vision seems to represent the utter and irrecoverable overthrow of Heathenism, when that wonderful revolution was brought about in the empire, and, under Constantine, idolatry was abolished, the idols of Paganism destroyed, and all those who had before been the inveterate enemies of the Christian name, covered with confusion.

And what is here presented in vision, will be most emphatically verified in the great day of the perdition of ungodly men; when, trembling before the intolerable wrath of an offended Judge, in vain the mountains and rocks will be invoked to fall on the sinner's guilty head: naked and defenceless, he must be exposed to all the furious blasts of vengeance, and sink down into everlasting burnings, under black unfathomable despair! Lord, gather not my soul with sinners!

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1. And after these things] The former chapter concluded the *first grand period*, and the sufferings of the church under the persecution of the Heathen Roman empire. The *second grand period* of prophecy begins, and is contained in the events which attend the founding of the trumpets; an account whereof is given in the 8th and 9th chapters. In this chapter, it is conceived, that we have an account of a little pause or interval, to describe the state of things, for a short time, between the two periods. *After these things*, that is, after the prophetic vision which represented the first period, St. John saw, in other visions, what is related in this chapter. This seems a representation of a state of peace and tranquillity throughout the earth, especially in the Roman empire, and of the great number of persons, in every nation, who came in to the profession of Christianity; of the encouraging protection which was given to the Christian church; of thankful acknowledgments for the goodness and power of God, by the whole church, in such eminent instances of favour and protection; and, finally, of the happy state of all the faithful confessors

were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

5 ^k Of the tribe of Judah *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Reuben *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Gad *were*

sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Nephtholim *were sealed twelve thousand.* Of the tribe of Manasses *were sealed twelve thousand.*

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were sealed twelve*

¹ Ch. 14. 1. Gen. 15. 5. Ezek. 13. 9. If. 4. 2, 3. Pf. 87. 6. Acts, 2. 41. & 4. 4. & 5. 14. & 6. 7. Rom. 11. 5, 7, 16. Ezek. xlvii. xlviii. Gen. 32. 23. ² Dan and Ephraim are not mentioned, because they had been ringleaders in idolatry. Judges, xvii. xviii. ³ Kings, 11. 28—33. Hosea, 4. 17.

confessors and martyrs, who, after a short time of tribulation for the faith of Christ, and constancy in his religion, have attained to a state of everlasting rest, in happiness and glory. Thus wisely does this part of prophecy promote the principal design of the whole, to encourage the faith and patience, the hope and constancy of the people of God, under all opposition and suffering. It seems designed to shew, with the certainty of prophetic revelation, that as God directs all things in the world by his providence, so he will direct them to serve the designs of his goodness to his faithful saints; and that the great revolutions of the world shall often be in favour of true religion, and for its protection, and to assure the faithful, that all they suffer for the sake of truth and righteousness, shall soon be rewarded with a state of peace, honour, and happiness. See on ch. i. 1. and the next note.

Ver. 2, 3. And I saw another angel, &c.] This chapter, says Bishop Newton, contains a description of the state of the church in the time of Constantine; of the peace and protection which it should enjoy under the civil powers; and of the great accession which should be made to it both of Jews and Gentiles. *Four angels* are ordered by another angel to *restrain the four winds* from blowing with violence on any part of the world; to shew that these were quiet days, wherein the former wars and persecutions should cease, and peace and tranquillity be restored for a season. *Winds* are emblems of commotions, and very properly, as they are the natural causes of storms. See Jer. xlix. 36, 37. To *hold the winds* that they should not *blow*, is a very proper prophetic emblem of a state of peace and tranquillity. Eusebius and Lactantius, who were cotemporary writers, bear their testimony to this completion of the prophecy; and some medals of Constantine are still preserved, having on the reverse,—*Beata tranquillitas*, “Happy tranquillity.”

The *other angel* spoken of in ver. 2. seems to have been Christ himself, who is spoken of as a *mighty angel* (ch. x. 1.), and the *angel of God's presence* (If. lxiii. 9.), and is called by way of eminence, *his angel that bears his name*, and the *Angel*, or *Messenger of the covenant* (Exod. xxiii. 20—23. Mal. iii. 1.), and who rose as the *Sun of righteousness* and the *Day-spring from on high* (Mal. iv. 2. Luke, i. 78.), and came from *Judea*, the *eastern part of the Roman empire*. He appeared with an eminent ensign of honour, as having the *seal of the Living God* upon himself, with power to seal his servants; and spoke with the authority of a God in commanding the other four angels to refrain from executions of judgments, till he had done this important work of sealing. Now, to whom can all this be so properly applied, as to Christ himself? He is the Head and Lord of all the angels, and is in his office-capacity sealed

by God the Father (John, vi. 27.); and he only, together with the Father and the Spirit, *knows his sheep* (John, x. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19.); and so he only, exclusive of all creatures, had a certain knowledge of them, and sufficient power and authority to seal them with his Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13). And as in sealing his believing people, he acts in the character of *Mediator*, and makes use of gospel ministers in that work, he is fitly represented as *an angel*; and they may be supposed to have been included with himself in a subservient way of operation, when he said, *Hurt not the earth, &c. till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.*

Ver. 4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed:] “And hereupon, I heard a declaration of the number of those who were thus sealed by the Holy Ghost: and they who were thus perfectly known to Christ, and sealed by his Spirit, were figuratively expressed by one hundred and forty-four thousand, a large *determinate* being put for an *indeterminate* number, as multiplied by *twelve*, a square root, and then by a *thousand*, to be an emblem of all the *Jews* of that age, who were converted to Christianity in its life and power, and built upon Christ, the foundation which was laid in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, and who would make a brave and bold profession of the pure gospel in the Christian church, and who now formed the truly spiritual *Israel* sprung from *Jacob*, who, on his having power with God, was called *Israel* (Gen. xxxii. 28.). From him sprung the heads of the *twelve tribes*, whose posterity formed the visible church according to God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. xvii. 7—9.) till the commencement of the Christian dispensation.” Perhaps this may also represent the beauty and stability of the Christian church keeping to the apostolical purity of faith and worship.

Ver. 5. Of the tribe of Judah, &c.] As the spiritual church of Christ was first formed out of the Jewish church and nation, so here the spiritual Israel is first mentioned; but the twelve tribes are not enumerated here in the same method and order as they are in other places of holy scripture. *Judah* has the precedence, because from him descended the Messiah; *Dan* is entirely omitted, and *Ephraim* is not mentioned, because they were both the principal promoters of idolatry; and therefore *Levi* is substituted in the room of the one, and *Joseph* is mentioned instead of the other. The children too of the bond women, and of the free women, are confounded together, there being in Christ *Jesus neither bond nor free*. Besides some of all the tribes of Israel, there was an *innumerable multitude of all nations and tongues, clothed with white robes, and having palms* in

thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

8. Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, ¹ a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, ^m clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, ⁿ Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 ^o And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces,

and worshipped God,

12 Saying, ^p Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And ^q one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they ^r which came out of great tribulation, and ^s have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they ^t before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 ^u They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on

¹ Gen. 12. 3. & 22. 18. & 49. 10. Pf. 2. 8. & 22. 27—31. & xiv. xlvii. lxxvi. lxxvii. lxxii. lxxxvii. c. & 110. 2. 3. If. 2. 2, 3. & 43. 6. & 49. 12—26. & 52. 15. & 53. 12. & lx. lxxii. & 25. 6. Jer. 3. 17. Zech. 8. 22. & 2. 11. Rom. 15. 9—12. Ch. 5. 9. & 17. 15. ^m Ch. 6. 11. & 5. 10. & 1. 5, 6. & 3. 4, 5, 18. Ver. 14. Ch. 14. 4. & 15. 2. Pf. 92. 13, 14. 2 Peter, 3. 18. ⁿ Pf. 3. 8. & 115. 1. If. 47. 15. Jer. 2. 23. Hosea, 13. 4, 9, 11. Acts, 4. 12. Ch. 5. 9, 10. John, 1. 29, 36. Eph. 1. 3—11. ^o Ch. 5. 11, 12. Pf. 34. 7. & 103. 20. & 148. 2. ^p Ch. 5. 12, 13. & 19. 1. 1 Chron. 29. 10—13. Mat. 6. 13. 1 Tim. 1. 17. ^q Ch. 5. 5. & 4. 4, 10. ^r Ch. 15. 2. & 13. 7. & 6. 9—11. Acts, 14. 22. ^s If. 1. 18. Zech. 3. 3—5. Heb. 9. 14. & 10. 9. Rom. 5. 9. Eph. 5. 25—27. 1 John, 1. 7. Ch. 1. 5, 6. ^t Pf. 134. 1, 2. Ch. 21. 3. & 22. 3—5. If. 4. 5, 6. 2 Cor. 6. 16. ^u If. 49. 9, 10. Pf. 121. 6. Mat. 13. 6, 21. Song, 1. 6. If. 4. 6. & 32. 2. & 25. 4.

in their hands, ver. 9, 10. who received and embraced the gospel; and, as Sulpitius Severus remarks, it is wonderful how much the Christian religion prevailed at this time. The historians who have written of this reign, relate how even the most remote and barbarous nations embraced Christianity, Jews as well as Gentiles. One historian in particular asserts, that, at the time when Constantine took possession of Rome, after the death of Maxentius, there were baptized more than twelve thousand Jews and Heathens, besides women and children. (See on ver. 10.) The angels also, ver. 11, 12. join in the celebration of God upon this occasion; for, *if there is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth*, much more may those heavenly spirits rejoice at the conversion of so many multitudes as were brought to God out of the countries and nations who embraced Christianity. One of the elders, after this, (ver. 13—17.) explains to St. John some particulars relating to this innumerable multitude of all nations. They have *palms in their hands*, as tokens of victory and triumph over tribulation and persecution: they are arrayed in white robes, as emblems of their sanctity and full acceptance with God, through the merits and death of Christ: they are, like the children of Israel, arrived at their Canaan, or land of rest; and they shall no more suffer *hunger*, or *thirst*, or *heat*, as they did in the wilderness of this world: they are now happily free from all their former troubles and molestations, and their Heathen adversaries shall no more prevail against them. This period we may suppose to have continued, with some little interruption, from the reign of Constantine the Great to

the death of Theodosius the Great; that is, about seventy years.

Ver. 10. *And cried with a loud voice,*] “ This vision, especially when compared with the former in the 4th and 5th chapters, is to be understood, I conceive, (says Mr. Lowman,) of the church in heaven. As heaven seems to be the proper scene of the vision, so the innumerable company of saints with whom the angels join in the following words, in the presence of God and the Lamb, is most naturally to be understood, I think of those who, having been *faithful unto death*, had received the crown of immortal life in the state of heavenly happiness. And, I question whether the praises of the church on earth will answer the prophetic description, or the intention of the prophetic spirit, in the great encouragement it designed to give to faithfulness and constancy. To understand it of the heavenly church, appears to me a natural sense of the expressions; a sense proper to the design of the prophecy, as it represents the faithful martyrs and confessors, once so great sufferers on earth, now blessed saints in heaven.”

Ver. 13. *What are these which are arrayed, &c.*] “ Who, think you, are these excellent persons that appear so gloriously apparelled with glittering spotless robes; and from what condition, and how is it that they attained to all this glory?”

Ver. 14. *They which came out of great tribulation,*] That is, faithful confessors, who had endured in the cause of true religion.

Ver.

them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne ^x shall feed them, and shall lead

them unto living fountains of waters: ^y and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

^x Pl. 23. 1. & 36. 8. If. 25. 6, 8. John, 10. 10, 11. & 4. 14. & 7. 38. If. 12. 3. & 49. 9, 10. ^y If. 25. 8. & 30. 19. & 35. 10. & 51. 11. & 60. 10. Ch. 21. 4.

Ver. 16. Nor any heat.] That is, nor any burning, or scorching heat,—inconvenient heat.

Ver. 17. For the Lamb, &c.] Interpreters are not agreed in the proper meaning of this description. Some understand it of the peaceful and prosperous state of the church on earth; and certainly, in some cases, very strong expressions of prophetic style are to be softened to a sense which will agree to a happy state of the church in this world. But others, who observe the force of these expressions, and how much they agree with the descriptions of the *new heavens* and *new earth*, ch. xxi. understand it of the happy state of the church for *one thousand years*, which they also suppose to be a resurrection state of the martyrs. I shall only observe, says Lowman, that as the time of the *one thousand years* is, according to the order of this prophecy, very distant from the time to which this part of it refers, I can by no means suppose the spirit of prophecy designed that this description should be applied to the state of the millennium; and though the description may be softened to such a sense, as may represent the peaceful and prosperous state of the church under Constantine, yet I think it rather refers to the complete happiness of the martyrs and confessors in heaven. See on ver. 10.

Inferences.—With what kindness, care, and tenderness does God indulge his people, by giving them seasonable respites from the troubles of this evil world! Yea, so great is his favour toward them, that, for their sakes, he mercifully averts public judgments from those nations of the earth that permit them to live in peace and safety; and when, through the corruption of mankind, persecutions and dangerous errors threaten the faithful, he will take effectual care of them; and has a vast many thousands of them here below, who own, honour, and serve him. How should it animate their faith, patience, and courage, under all their tribulations for Christ, to think of the glorious, final, and eternal issue of them to persevering believers. God, in the riches of his grace, will abundantly more than compensate their severest hardships for his sake. Innumerable multitudes of them, from among all nations, shall shine in the brightest robes of purity, righteousness, and glory, being made white by the blood of the Lamb; and they shall triumph, as with palms of victory, joy, and praise in their hands; and shall worship God with unwearied and uninterrupted pleasure in his heavenly temple above. God himself, as sitting on his throne of glory, will dwell, in the most immediate and delightful manner, among them, to banish all uneasiness far from them; and he, as the original fountain, and Jesus Christ as the purchaser and immediate bestower of all possible blessedness, will refresh and completely satisfy them with the most refined and transporting, substantial, and noble enjoyments, ever fresh and flowing, to the utmost of their enlarged capacities and desires. And O, with what cheerful acclamations in heaven will they disclaim all merit of their

own, and ascribe the entire glory of their salvation to the free grace of God through the atoning sacrifice of his Son! And with what harmonious concert will all the holy angels join in celebrating the praises of God's perfections, and of his works of nature, providence, and grace! To whom, together with the Lamb, be ascribed all glory for ever and ever. Amen.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The winds and storms of persecution are now for a while hushed in peace, and the church enjoys undisturbed tranquillity, while ministering angels, at the command of the great Angel of the covenant, who bore the impress of the living God, and seals his believing people with the Holy Spirit of promise, refrain for a while the desolating judgments which had before destroyed the earth.

2dly, The saints, who are here sealed out of the twelve tribes, are the emblems of the faithful saints of God converted to the power of Christianity out of the Jewish church. The tribes of Dan and Ephraim, as ring-leaders in idolatry, are omitted, a brand of just reproach being set upon them for such apostasy from God. *Note*; God's people are always in some glorious measure sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

3dly, We have a glorious scene of the happy state of the church, either during the millennium, as some suppose, or when the faithful shall have finally entered into their eternal rest.

1. They are a great multitude which no man could number; the blessed fruit of the preaching of the gospel over all the world.

2. They stand before the throne and before the Lamb, with holy boldness and sure acceptance, *clothed with white robes*, the emblems of honour, joy, and purity, *and palms in their hands*, in token of their glorious victories obtained over all their foes; for all God's faithful saints shall assuredly be finally triumphant over their foes.

3. They lifted up their voices in loud hallelujahs, crying, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb*; all glory, praise, and adoration be ascribed to Him who has graciously regarded us, and exalted us to such dignity and happiness, mean and miserable as we once were—let it be ascribed to the grace and blood of the Lamb, who gave himself to be slain for our redemption.

4. The angelic hosts stood round about the throne, encompassing the elders and living creatures, and immediately joined in their adorations; and falling on their faces, *worshipped God, saying, Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* The inhabitants of heaven have all one mind and employment, ceaseless in the praises of their common Lord. May we now delight to join their songs, and prepare hereby for the happy service of eternity!

4thly, While St. John, with holy rapture, beheld the heavenly

CHAP. VIII.

At the opening of the seventh seal, seven angels had seven trumpets given them: another angel putteth incense to the prayers of the saints on the golden altar. Four angels found their trumpets, and great plagues follow.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

^a Job, 4. 16. with Ch. 7. 10. or Isa. 54. 13, 14. Pl. 119. 165.
^e Ch. 7. 2, 2. & 15. 7. 8. & viii. xi. xvi. Mat. 18. 10. Luke, 1. 19.
 3. 6, 7. ^f Christ. Ch. 7. 2. & 10. 1. Acts, 7. 10, 32.
 13. 10. & 9. 24. & 7. 25 Rom. 8. 34. ^g Mat. 20. 28. Eph. 5. 2. & 1. 6, 7. & 5. 25—27.
 Pl. 141. 2. Luke, 1. 10. Acts, 10. 4, 11. If. 52. 9. & 65. 24.

2 And I saw the ^h seven ^e angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven ^a trumpets.

3 And ^e another angel came and ^f stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him ^g much incense, that he should ^{*} offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 ^h And the smoke of the incense, *which*

^b Ch. 7. 4, 11. & ii. iii. & 5. 1. & vi. Ver. 1. Ch. 15. 2, 7, 8. & xvi.
^d Num. 10. 9, 10. 2 Chron. 29. 25—28. Jer. 6. 1. & 4. 19. Amos,
 Exod. 30. 7. 1 Kings, 7. 50. Ch. 5. 8. & 6. 9 & 9. 13. & 14. 18. Heb.
 * Or add it to the prayers. ^h Exod. 30. 7.

venly vision, one of the elders questions him, whether he understood what he saw, and knew who these were, and whence they came? With humble acknowledgment of his ignorance, and desire of information, he replied, *Sir, thou knowest.* The elder thereupon kindly undertook to inform him.

1. *These, says he, are they who came out of great tribulation, through various afflictions and the fire of persecution, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb:* they owe their exaltation and glory to that precious blood of his, which he permitted to be shed for their sakes. *Therefore, being thus redeemed to God by him, and having been enabled to approve their fidelity to their divine Master in the midst of the greatest extremities, they now receive a rich equivalent for all that they have suffered; for they are before the throne of God.*

2. He informs him of the distinguished dignity and glory to which these once-suffering saints are admitted. They are admitted to the immediate presence of the Eternal Majesty, *and serve him day and night, in his celestial temple, without ceasing: and he that sitteth on the throne, shall dwell among them for ever, as the author and source of their eternal felicity. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, knowing no more those painful cravings, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; no fire of persecution, nor furnace of affliction or temptation, shall there be ever apprehended: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, possessed of all dominion and power, shall feed them with his rich provision, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, to refresh and comfort their souls, which from his presence shall drink in pleasures as out of a river: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; no sin, no sorrow shall be there, nor one salt tear trickle down their faces; but unutterable and uninterrupted consolations shall be their eternal happy portion. Bring me, dear Lord, to share this blessedness among thy saints in light!*

CHAP. VIII.

Ver. 1.] This chapter opens the second grand period of this prophecy which begins upon the opening of the seventh seal, and is distinguished by the sounding of seven
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trumpets. This period of the trumpets is of much longer duration, and comprehends many more events than any of the former seals. It comprehends indeed seven periods, distinguished by the sounding of seven trumpets, and contains a prophetic description of the state of the world and church for a considerable space of time after the empire became Christian, during the continuance of the empire in the successors of Constantine, ch. viii—x. It describes the great devastation of the Roman empire by the several nations which broke in upon it, and finally put an end to it: it describes a time of great calamity, a state of new trials: it shews the church what it was to expect in new dangers and opposition after it should be delivered from the persecution of the Heathen Roman Government: and when the Christian religion should have the protection of the laws, and the favour of the emperors, the church would still have great need of caution, watchfulness, patience, and constancy; and there would be still this encouragement to faithfulness and perseverance, that though the opposition in this period of time would be great, yet neither should this prevail against the cause of truth and righteousness. The Christian faith and religion should be preserved, and in the end triumph over this opposition, as it had before over the former opposition from the Heathen emperors of Rome; and thus the general design and use of the prophecy is fully answered, to direct and encourage the constancy of the Christian Church in faith and patience, whatever opposition it may meet with from the world.

There was silence in heaven] Most interpreters agree that this *silence in heaven for half an hour*, is an allusion to the manner of the temple worship; for, while the priest offered incense in the holy place, the whole people prayed without in silence, or privately to themselves, Luke, i. 10. On the day of expiation, the whole service was performed by the high-priest; to which particular service Sir Isaac Newton has observed an allusion: "The custom," says he, "on other days was to take fire from the great altar in a silver censer; but on this day of expiation, for the high-priest to take fire from the great altar in a golden censer: and when he was come down from the great altar, he took incense from one of the priests who brought it to him, and went with it to the golden

came with the prayers of the faints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer,¹ and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth :² and there were voices, and thunder-

ings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed¹ hail and fire mingled with blood, and

¹ Ezek. 10. 2. Luke, 12. 49. Mat. 10. 34. Jer. 23. 29. & 51. 17. If. 66. 6, 14—16. Deut. 32. 41—43. Ezek. 10. 6, 7. ² Ch. 4. 5. & 11. 19. & 16. 18. If. 30. 30. & xxiv. xxxiv. Pl. 18. 13. Jer. 25. 30. 2 Sam. 22. 7—9. ¹ Exod. 9. 24, 25. If. 30. 30. & 28. 2. & 29. 6. & 32. 19. Ezek. 28. 22, 23. Ch. 16. 21. Pl. 11. 5, 6. & 18. 13.

“ altar; and while he offered the incense, the people “ prayed without in silence;—which is the *silence in heaven for half an hour.*” It is true, on the day of expiation the high-priest did all the service himself; he used a golden censer, and took his hands full of incense; yet I doubt not but the mention of a *golden censer*, and *much incense*, refers to the glory and perfection of the heavenly worship, as well as to the peculiar service of the high-priest. But see the Note on ver. 6, for my own opinion on this point.

Ver. 2—5. *And I saw the seven angels which stood before God, &c.*] “ And I saw the seven angels which I have “ before mentioned, and which then stood before the “ throne of God; and seven trumpets were given to “ them, that they might each of them successively sound “ an alarm; which I understood to be the symbol of some “ very important and awakening events, which were, in “ order of time, to succeed those which had been expressed “ by the seals. And while they were preparing to execute the orders they had received, *another angel*, whom “ I understood as a typical representation of the great “ High-Priest of the church, came and stood before the “ altar which I saw in this celestial temple, having a “ golden censer; and there was given to him much fragrant incense, consisting of a variety of excellent perfumes mingled together, that he might present it with “ the prayers of all the faints, upon the golden altar which “ was before the throne; just as the Jewish high priest “ used to burn incense on the golden altar in the temple, “ while the people were praying in the courts of it at the “ hour of morning and evening sacrifice. And the smoke “ of the perfumes went up in a thick and odoriferous “ cloud, together with the prayers of the faints, from the “ hand of the angel as he stood before God; and seemed “ thereby emblematically to signify, how grateful to the “ Divine Being those prayers were which proceeded from “ holy hearts, being recommended by the intercession of “ that great High-Priest, whom this glorious angel had “ the honour, on this occasion, to represent; as Aaron “ and his sons did in the Jewish tabernacle of old. And “ when the angel had performed this office, in order to “ shew the awful manner in which God would avenge “ the injury, which his praying people upon earth received “ from its tyrannical and oppressive powers, he took the “ censer, and, advancing towards the brazen altar of “ burnt offerings, he filled it with fire of the altar, and “ threw it upon the earth; and as soon as this action was “ performed, there were long and terrible voices, and “ thunders, and lightnings, which seemed to break out “ from the Shechinah, the glorious token of the Divine “ Presence; and there was also the sudden and violent

“ shock of an earthquake, which seemed to shake the “ foundation of the world.” There was no fire upon the golden altar, but that which was in the censer, in which the incense was burnt; so that we must necessarily, by this fire of the altar, understand that of the brazen altar, though it is not expressly declared to be so; and this may intimate, that in some other places the same words may, by comparing different circumstances, have different ideas annexed to them.

Ver. 6. *And the seven angels—prepared themselves to sound.*] As the seals foretold the state and condition of the Roman empire before, and till it became Christian, so the trumpets foreshow the state and condition of it afterward. The *sound of the trumpet*, as Jeremiah observes, ch. iv. 19. and as every one understands it, is the *alarm of war*; and the sounding of these trumpets is designed to rouse and excite the nations against the Roman empire; called *the third part of the world*, as perhaps including the third part of the world, and being seated principally in Europe, the third part of the world as believed at that time. We may just observe, that the *ensensers* here mentioned, were the same with the *vials full of odours* mentioned ch. v. 8. The offering of incense on the golden altar, seems to determine this allusion to the constant offering of incense in the temple, and not to the service peculiar to the high-priest on the day of expiation; and fully shews the propriety of this vision in not expressly representing the high-priest. Indeed many interpreters, and that with good reason, understand the *angel*, ver. 3. as an emblem of *Christ*, the great High-Priest of his church. As the golden altar made a part of the scene, there was a propriety in its appearing to be used; and the time of praying was the hour of incense. This vision may probably be designed to intimate, that, considering the scenes of confusion represented by the trumpets, the faints should be exceedingly earnest with God to pour out a spirit of wisdom, piety, and zeal upon the church, and preserve it safe amid these confusions.

Ver. 7. *There followed hail, &c.*] See the note on ver. 2—5. Here is probably an allusion also to one of the plagues of Egypt, which was a destroying storm and tempest. See Exod. ix. 23. It is a just observation of Sir Isaac Newton, that, in the prophetic language, tempests, winds, or the motions of clouds, are put for wars; thunder, or the voice of a cloud, for the voice of a multitude; and storms of thunder and lightning, hail and overflowing rain, for a tempest of war, descending from the heavens and clouds politic. In like manner, the earth, animals, and vegetables, are put for the people of several nations and conditions: trees and green grass express the beauty and fruitfulness of a land; and, when the earth is an emblem of nations and dominions, may signify persons of higher

they were cast upon the earth : ^m and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grafs was burnt up.

8 And the second angel sounded, ⁿ and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea : and the third part of the sea

became blood ;

9 And ^o the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died ; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there ^p fell a great star from heaven, burning as it

^m If. 2. 12, 13. & 40. 7. Ch. 16. 2. Ver. 9, 10, 12. with ch. 9. 4. Zech. 13. 8, 9. ⁿ Jer. 51. 28. Dan. 7. 3. Ch. 16. 3. Exod. 7. 17—20.
^o Zech. 13. 8. If. 2. 16. Ch. 18. 19. & 16. 3. Ver. 7, 10, 12. P If. 14. 12—15. Jude, 13. Ch. 1. 20. & 9. 1. & 6. 13. & 12. 4. If. 19. 4, 8. Hosea, 13. 15, 16. Exod. 7. 20, 21.

higher rank, and those of common condition. Whether it was the intention of the prophetic style to be so particular, is not easy to determine ; but it seems plain that it is designed to express some great calamities brought on the empire, when it is represented as a storm, destroying not only the *green grafs* which is more easily blasted, but also a great part of the *trees* which are supposed more likely to withstand the violence of the storm ; and it seems to point out these calamities as the effect of war and bloodshed throughout the Roman empire in the beginning of this period. Accordingly, says Bishop Newton, at the sounding of the first trumpet, the barbarous nations, like a *storm of hail and fire mingled with blood*, invade the Roman territories, and destroy the *third part of trees*, that is, the trees of the third part of the earth ; and the *green grafs*, that is, both old and young, high and low, rich and poor, together. Theodosius the Great died in the year 395 ; and no sooner was he dead, than the Huns, Goths, and other barbarians, like *hail* for multitude, and breathing fire and slaughter, broke in upon the best provinces of the empire, both in the East and West, with greater success than they had ever done before. But by this trumpet were principally intended the irruptions and depredations of the Goths, under the conduct of the famous Alaric, who began his incursions in the same year 395 ; first ravaged Greece, then wasted Italy, besieged Rome, and was bought off at an exorbitant price ; besieged it again in the year 410. Took and plundered the city, and set fire to it in several places, sparing neither religion, nor dignities, nor age, nor crying infants. “ Among other calamities,” says Philostorgius, (Hist. Eccles. l. ii. c. 7.) “ dry heats, with flashes of flame and whirlwinds of fire, occasioned various and intolerable terrors ; yea, and hail greater than could be held in a man’s hand, fell down in several places, weighing about eight pounds.” Well, therefore, might the prophet compare these incursions of the barbarians to “ hail, and fire mingled with blood.”

Ver. 8, 9. *As it were a great mountain burning, &c.*] In the style of prophecy, a *mountain* signifies a kingdom, and the strength of it, its metropolis or capital city. See Jer. li. 25. 27. 30. 58. Great disorders and commotions, especially when kingdoms are moved by hostile invasions, are expressed in the prophetic style, by *carrying*, or *casting mountains into the midst of the sea*. See Pl. xvi. 2. The *sea*, in the Hebrew language, is any collection of waters : now as *waters* are expressly made a symbol of *people* in this prophecy, ch. xvii. 15. the sea may well represent the collection of many people and nations into one politic body or empire : and when a sea is considered as an empire, the living creatures in that sea will be the people or nations,

whose union constitutes that empire. See Ezek. xxix. 3, &c. *Ships*, from their use in trade, are a proper representation of the riches of a people ; and as they are of use in war, especially to the maritime nations, they are proper emblems of strength and power. As ships were of both uses in the Roman empire, they may well be understood both of the riches and power of that empire. Thus we have a description, in this part of the second period of prophecy, of a judgment to come on the empire, in which the capital should suffer much ; many provinces should be dismembered, as well as invaded, and the springs of power and riches in the empire should be very much diminished : and accordingly we find in history, that this was indeed a most calamitous period. The year 400 is marked out as the most memorable and calamitous that had ever happened during the empire. The Alans, Vandals, and other barbarous people, in the year 406, made the most furious irruptions into Gaul, passed into Spain, and thence into Africa ; so that the maritime provinces became a prey to them ; the riches and naval power of the empire were much diminished, and almost quite ruined : but the heaviest calamities fell upon Rome itself, besieged, and oppressed with famine and pestilence. After Alaric and his Goths, the next ravagers were Attila and his Huns, who, for the space of fourteen years, shook the East and West with the most cruel fear, and deformed the provinces of each empire with all kinds of plundering, slaughtering, and burning. They first wasted Thrace, Macedon, and Greece, putting all to fire and sword, and compelling the Eastern emperor, Theodosius, to purchase a shameful peace. Attila then turned his arms against the Western emperor, Valentinian III. ; entered Gaul with seven hundred thousand men, took, plundered, and set most of the cities on fire. But, at length, being vigorously opposed, he fell upon Italy, took and destroyed Aquileia with several other cities, slaying the inhabitants, and laying the buildings in ashes ; and filled all places between the Alps and Apennines with depopulation, slaughter, servitude, burning, and desolation. Such a man might properly be compared to a *mountain burning with fire* ; who really was, as he called himself, *the Scourge of God*, and *the terror of men* ; and boasted that he was sent into the world by God for this purpose ; that, as the executioner of his just anger, he might fill the earth with all kinds of evils : and he bounded his cruelty and passion by nothing less than blood and burning.

Ver. 10, 11. *There fell a great star from heaven, &c.*] *Stars*, in prophetic style, are figurative representations of many things. Among others, they signify *kings and kingdoms*,—eminent persons of great authority and power.

were a lamp; and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called ^a Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the

stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

^a Deut. 29. 18. Amos, 6. 12. & 5. 7. & 8. 10. Heb. 12. 15. Jer. 9. 15. & 23. 15. Exod. 15. 23. Ruth, 1. 20. ^b If. 13. 10. Ezek. 32. 7. Amos, 8. 9. Exod. 10. 21, 23. Ch. 16. 8, 9. or Mal. 4. 2. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Ch. 1. 20. with 2 Cor. 4. 4. 2 Tim. 3. 1—5. 2 Theff. 2. 9—11. ^c Pf. 103. 20. Heb. 1. 14. with ch. 1. 20. & 14. 6. & 19. 17. Amos, 3. 6, 7. ^d Amos, 9. 1, 12. & 11. 14.

See Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10. Isai. xiv. 12. Rivers, and fountains of waters to supply them, may be considered as necessaries to the support of life. The drying up of rivers and fountains of waters, expresses a scarcity of things necessary. See Hosea, xiii. 15. Isai. xxx. 5. There seems also an allusion to Exod. vii. 20, 21. Here then we have a prophesy, which aptly expresses a judgment to come on the feat of the Roman empire, which should destroy the power of it in its spring and fountain, and cut off all its necessary supports; as when rivers and fountains, so necessary to life, are infected, and become rather deadly, than fit for use. At the sounding of the third trumpet, says Bishop Newton, a great prince appears like a star shooting from heaven to earth; a similitude not unusual in poetry. His coming is therefore sudden and unexpected, and his stay but short. The name of the star is called Wormwood, and he infects a third part of the rivers, &c. ver. 11. that is, he is a bitter enemy, and proves the author of grievous calamities to the Roman empire. The rivers and fountains have a near connection with the sea, and it was within two years after Attila's retreat from Italy, that Valentinian was murdered; and Maximus, who had caused him to be murdered, reigning in his stead, Genferic, the king of the Vandals, having settled in Africa, was solicited by Eudoxia, the widow of the deceased emperor, to revenge his death. Genferic accordingly embarked with three hundred thousand Vandals and Moors, and arrived upon the Roman coasts in June, 455, the emperor and people not expecting him. He landed his men, and marched directly to Rome, which being deserted by its inhabitants, fell an easy prey into his hands. The city was abandoned to the cruelty and avarice of his soldiers, who plundered it fourteen days together. He then set sail for Africa, carrying with him immense wealth, and an innumerable multitude of captives, together with the empress Eudoxia and her two daughters, and left the state so weakened, that, in a little time, it was utterly subverted. Some critics understand rivers and fountains, ver. 10. with relation to doctrines; and in this sense the application is still very proper to Genferic, who was a most bigoted Arian, and during his reign most cruelly persecuted the orthodox Christians.

Ver. 12. The fourth angel sounded, &c.] At the sounding of the fourth trumpet, the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, that is, the great lights of the Roman empire, were eclipsed and darkened, and remained in darkness for

some time. See Jer. xiii. 16. Isai. xiii. 10, 11. Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8. Genferic left the western empire in a weak and desperate condition. It struggled hard, and gasped as it were for breath, through eight short and turbulent reigns, for the space of twenty years, and at length expired under Momillus, in the year 476. This change was effected by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, who, coming to Rome with an army of barbarians, caused himself to be proclaimed king of Italy, and put an end to the very name of the Western empire. After a reign of sixteen years, he was overcome in the year 493, by Theodoric, who founded the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, which continued about sixty years. Thus was the Roman sun extinguished in the Western empire: but the other lesser luminaries, the moon and stars, still subsisted; for Rome was still allowed to have her senate, and consuls, and other subordinate magistrates, as before. These lights shone more faintly under barbarian kings, than under Roman emperors; but they were not totally suppressed and extinguished, till after the kingdom of the Ostrogoths was destroyed by the lieutenants of the emperor of the East, and Italy became a province to the Eastern empire. Longinus, in the year 566, by authority received from the emperor Justin II. changed the whole form of the government, and in every city of note constituted a new governor, under the title of duke. He himself presided over all; and, residing at Ravenna, was called "the Exarch of Ravenna," as his successors were also. Rome was thus degraded to the same level with other places; and, from being the queen of cities, and empress of the world, was reduced to a poor dukedom, and made tributary to Ravenna, which she had used to govern.

Ver. 13. I beheld, and heard an angel flying through, &c.] Notice is here proclaimed by an angel, that the three other trumpets will sound still greater and more terrible plagues, and are therefore distinguished from the former by the name of woes. They are not woes of a light or common nature, but such in the extreme; for the Hebrews having no superlative degree, in the manner of other languages, express their superlative by repeating the positive three times, as in this place. The design of this messenger is to raise our attention to the following trumpets; and the following we shall find to be more strongly marked than the foregoing. The foregoing relate chiefly to the downfall of the Western empire; the following relate chiefly to the
downfall

CHAP. IX.

At the sounding of the fifth angel, a star falleth from heaven, to whom is given the key of the bottomless pit: he openeth the pit, and there come forth locusts like scorpions. The first woe passed. The sixth trumpet soundeth. Four angels are let loose, that were bound.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND ^a the fifth angel sounded, and I saw ^b a star fall from heaven unto the earth:

^a Ch. 8. 2, 7, 8, 10, 11. ^b Ch. 8. 10. If. 14. 12. with ch. 1. 20. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. 2 Thess. 2. 3, 8. 2 Tim. 3. 1—5. ^c Ch. 13. 2. with 1. 18. Mat. 16. 19. ^d Luke, 8. 31. Ch. 17. 8. & 20. 1, 10. Ver. 2, 11. ^e Gen. 19. 28. Exod. 10. 21, 23. Ch. 8. 12. & 16. 8—10. 2 Thess. 2. 9—11. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Mat. 24. 24. If. 14. 31. Pl. 18. 8. ^f Exod. 10. 15. Joel, 1. 4. & 2. 2—11. 2 Tim. 4. 3. & 3. 1—6. ^g Ver. 10, 11. Ch. 13. 1, 2, 7, 12—16. & 17. 2. Dan. 7. 8, 11, 20, 21. & 11. 36—39.

downfal of the Eastern empire. The foregoing are described more succinctly, and contain a less compass of time; the following are set forth with more particular circumstances, and are of longer duration, as well as of larger description. Mr. Burton observes, "The seven trumpets fall next under our consideration; which, I conclude, are governed by the above-mentioned apocalyptic number, seven, four of which seem to me to have already sounded; but the three remaining ones, called the woe trumpets, I look upon as yet to be sounded; though we seem hastening towards them. For, however the imaginations of men, warmed with a pious zeal for solving all scriptural difficulties, may have induced them to believe any past events to have answered to the apocalyptic descriptions; the imagery appears to me too strong for any one event that has yet happened, properly to be applied to. I am therefore inclined to think, that the fifth, sixth, and seventh are yet to sound. What induces me to think so, is, that in the vision of the prophet Habakkuk, a similar description seems to be given to this dreadful one now under our consideration; which has an apparent reference to those events that are to take place in the very last days.—Hab. i. 6. *For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs.* Ver. 7. *They are terrible and dreadful; their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves.* Ver. 8. *Their horses also are swifter than the leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves: and their horsemen shall spread themselves, and their horsemen shall come from far; they shall fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat.* Ver. 9. *They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand.* Ver. 10. *And they shall scoff at the kings, and the princes shall be a scorn unto them: they shall deride every strong hold, for they shall bear dust, and take it.* This description must awaken our attention, and seems to answer to the tremendous warriors of this chapter. But, bad as the bulk of the giddy multitude may at this time appear, the bottomless pit, I hope, is not yet opened upon us; since, most probably, that will be a time dreadful beyond the power of imagination to conceive, and may be that very hour of temptation, which our Saviour has declared shall one day come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth, and

and ^c to him was given the key of the ^d bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and ^e there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke ^f locusts upon the earth: ^g and unto them was

from which Christ has most graciously promised to those who have kept the word of his patience, that he will keep them, Rev. iii. 10. Whereas, although, through the great prevalency of sin, the multitude of the wicked already, at times, seem to ride triumphant; yet, God be thanked, there are not wanting many individuals, who are ready to stand forth in defence of religion, and many, who, in their words and works, set forth all its praise." See the Appendix to the Revelation, for other views of this subject.

Inferences and REFLECTIONS.—While we prepare ourselves, with silent admiration, to attend the discoveries here opening upon us, let us rejoice in the symbolical representation of the intercession of Jesus, our great High-Priest, shadowed forth, in so beautiful and expressive a manner, by the angel standing at the altar with the golden censer, and much incense. Behold, how the prayers of all the saints ascend before God with acceptance! See the method we are to take, if we desire that ours should be acceptable to him; and, encouraged by such a view, let us offer them up, not only with humility, but with cheerful confidence, though we are conscious of their great unworthiness.

To what wretchedness are they exposed, who oppress and injure those, that, through their great Representative, have such an interest in the court of Heaven! The hail and the fire shall, at the divine command, powerfully plead their cause; the mountains shall be torn from their bases, and cast into the midst of the sea; the sun, the moon, and the stars shall be darkened in their orbs, and all nature be thrown into convulsive agonies, ere God will suffer his faithful saints to be overborne; or fail to punish, with becoming severity, those who continue to persecute or evil entreat them.

Let such awful representatives as these remind us of the sovereign almighty power of God, whom all the hosts of heaven worship with reverence; and at whose awful word, when he gives forth his voice, hailstones and coals of fire descend (Pl. xviii. 13.); at whose rebuke the pillars of heaven tremble, and the foundations of the earth are shaken; who speaks to the sun, and it shineth not; who darkeneth the moon, and scaleth up the stars. Who would not fear thee, O thou King of nations, so terrible in the judgments which thou executest on the earth? Deliver us, we entreat thee, from the multiplied and accumulated miseries of those who

continue

given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nei-

ther any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they

^a Ch. 7. 3. & 6. 6. Mat. 24. 24. 1 Pet. 3. 13. Pf. 72. 16. & 110. 3. If. 3. 10. Ezek. 9. 4. Exod. 12. 23. ^b Erod. 12. 13, 29. Ezek. 9. 6. with ch. 7. 3, 4. & 14. 1. Eph. 4. 30. ^c Dan. 11. 40. or 7, 8, 20, 21. & 11. 36. 2 Tim. 3. 1-5. Ch. 13. 2, 7, 16, 17. & xvii.

continue obstinately to oppose thee; and conduct us at length to thy heavenly presence; though it should be through days of darkness, and waters of bitterness, and seas of blood! Amen.

CHAP. IX.

Ver. 1. I saw a star fall from heaven] Stars, in the language of prophecy, signify angels; see ch. i. 20. The angels of the heavenly host, as well as the angels or bishops of the churches, seem to be called stars in scripture; as when at the creation, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy, Job, xxxviii. 7. In like manner, when the abyss or bottomless pit is shut up, it is represented in this prophecy, as done by an angel coming from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit. These expressions are so nearly the same, as well as upon the same subject, that they may be well taken in the same sense, and so used to explain each other. The expression, then, a star fallen from heaven, or an angel come down from heaven, with a key to open the bottomless pit, seems naturally to mean the permission of the divine Providence for these evil and calamitous events, which are described to follow from opening the bottomless pit, which could not have happened but by the permission of the divine Providence, and according to the will and holy orders of the divine government. For the providence of God could as surely have prevented the temptations of Satan, and the powers of darkness, as if Satan and his angels had been fast locked up and secured in a safe prison; so that he sends an angel, his messenger, with the key of the bottomless pit, to open the prison, and permit them to go out;—to teach, that they can only act so far as they have leave and permission, and can always be restrained and shut up again at the good pleasure of the supreme Governor of the world. The abyss, or bottomless pit, is explained in this prophecy itself to be that place where the devil and Satan are shut up, that they should not deceive the nations: ch. xx. 1-3. The abyss seems also to be used in the same sense, when the devils besought Christ that he would not command them to go out into the deep; αβυσσος: and Grotius observes, that this abyss is the same with what St. Peter calls hell, or Tartarus, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Now this prison of Satan and of his angels by a righteous judgment of God is permitted to be opened for the just punishment of apostate churches, who would not repent of their evil works. We may therefore say, with the Bishop of Meaux, "Behold, something more terrible than we have hitherto seen; hell opens, and the devil appears, followed by an army of a stranger figure than St. John has any where else described." And we may observe from others, that this great temptation of the faithful was to be with the united force of false doctrine and persecution. Hell, in this sense, does not open of itself; it is always some false teacher

that opens it; by which means Satan is loosed, and deceives the nations. Instead of the bottomless pit, some render it the well of the abyss, or bottomless gulph. Mahomet is the star, and the Saracens the locusts

Ver. 2. There arose a smoke out of the pit,] As a great smoke hinders the light, so do errors the understanding. St. John keeps to the allegory, says Grotius: a smoke takes from us the sight of the stars. Smoke, especially when proceeding from a fierce fire, is also a representation of devastation. Thus when Abraham beheld the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the smoke of the country went up, as the smoke of a furnace. The great displeasure of God is represented by the same figurative expressions of smoke and fire, Pf. xviii. 7, 8.

Ver. 3. Locusts upon the earth:] See Judges, vi. 5. Joel, i. 6. Bishop Newton interprets this part of the prophecy as follows: "At the sounding of the fifth trumpet, a star fallen from heaven, meaning the impostor Mohammed, opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, and the sun and the air were darkened by it; that is, a false religion was set up, which filled the world with darkness and error; and swarms of Saracens, or Arabian locusts, overspread the earth. A false prophet is very fitly typified by a blazing star, or meteor. The Arabians likewise are properly compared to locusts, not only because numerous armies frequently are so; but because swarms of locusts often arise from Arabia. In the plagues of Egypt, to which constant allusion is made in these trumpets, the locusts are brought by an east wind (Exod. x. 13.), that is, from Arabia, which lay eastward of Egypt; and in the Book of Judges, ch. vii. 12. the people of Arabia are compared to locusts or grasshoppers for multitude; for, in the original, the word for both is the same. As the natural locusts are bred in pits and holes of the earth, so these mystical locusts are truly infernal, and proceed with the smoke from the bottomless pit."

Ver. 4. It was commanded them that they should, &c.] This verse demonstrates, that these were not natural, but symbolical locusts. The like injunctions were given to the Arabian soldiers. When Yezid marched to invade Syria, Abubeker charged him expressly not to destroy the palm-trees, nor to burn any fields of corn, nor to cut down fruit-trees, nor do mischief to any cattle, unless what they killed for eating. Their commission is, to hurt only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads; that is, those who are not the true servants of God, but are corrupt or idolatrous Christians. Now from history it appears, that in those countries where the Saracens extended their conquests, the Christians so called were generally guilty of idolatry in the worshipping of saints, if not of images; and it was the pretence of Mohammed and his followers, to chastise them for it, and to re-establish the unity

should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 ¹ And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 ^m And the shapes of the locusts *were* like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold,

and their ⁿ faces *were* as the faces of men.

8 And they had ^o hair as the hair of women, and their ^p teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

9 ^q And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the ^r sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had ^s tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their

¹ If. 2. 19. Ch. 6. 16. Job, 3. 21. & 7. 15. Jer. 8. 5. Hosea, 10. 8. Luke, 23. 30. ^m Joel, 2. 4. & 1. 4. 6. Jer. 5. 8. Nah. 3. 12, 17.
ⁿ Eph. 4. 14. ^o Sam. 4. 6. Dan. 7. 8. ^p If. 3. 24. ^q Joel, 1. 6. & 2. 5, 6. Micah, 3. 5. ^r Ch. 17. 13. & 13. 2 ^s Joel, 2. 5.
 Ch. 13. 5. Dan. 8. 7, 8, 11. ^t If. 9. 5. Eph. 4. 14. ^u Theff. 2. 9—11.

unity of the Godhead. The parts which remained most free from the general infection were Savoy and Piedmont; and it is very memorable, that, when the Saracens approached these parts, they were defeated with great slaughter by the famous Charles Martel, in several engagements.

Ver. 5—9. *But that they should be tormented five months, &c.] But that they should torment, &c.* one hundred and fifty years, from the year 612 to the year 762. See on ver. 10. As the Saracens were to hurt only the corrupt and idolatrous Christians, so these they were not to kill, but only to torment; and were to bring such calamities upon the earth, as should make men weary of their lives, ver. 5, 6. Not that it could be supposed that the Saracens would not kill many thousands in their incursions; on the contrary, their angel has the name of the *destroyer*, ver. 11. They might kill them as individuals, but still they should not kill them as a political body,—as a state or empire. They might greatly harass and torment both the Greek and the Latin churches, but they should not utterly extirpate the one or the other. They besieged Constantinople, and even plundered Rome; but they could not make themselves masters of either of those cities. They dismembered the Greek empire, of Syria, Egypt, &c. but they were never able to subdue the whole. As often as they besieged Constantinople, they were repulsed. They attempted it in the year 672, in the reign of Constantine Pogonatus; but their ships were destroyed by the sea-fire invented by Callinicus; and after seven years fruitless pains, they were obliged to raise the siege. They attempted it again in the reign of Leo Isauricus, in the year 718, but were forced to desist by famine and pestilence, and losses of various kinds. In the following verses, 7, &c. the nature and qualities of these locusts are described, partly in allusion to the properties of natural locusts and the description given of them by Joel, and partly in allusion to the habits and manners of the Arabians, to shew that not real, but figurative locusts are here intended. The first quality mentioned is, their being *like unto horses prepared unto battle*, which is described also in Joel, ii. 4. Many authors have observed, that the head of a locust resembles that of a horse. The Italians therefore call them *cavalette*, or, as it were, *little horses*. The Arabians too have in all ages been famous for their horses and horsemanship: their strength

is well known to consist chiefly in their cavalry. Another distinguishing mark and character is, their having *on their heads as it were crowns like gold*; which is an allusion to the head-dress of the Arabians, who have constantly worn turbans or mitres, and boast of having those ornaments for their common attire, which are the *crowns* and diadems of other people. The *crowns* likewise signify the kingdoms and dominions which they should acquire: and in the space of about eighty years, or thereabouts, they subdued Palestine, Syria, both Armenias, almost all Asia Minor, Persia, India, Egypt, Numidia, all Barbary, even to the river Niger, Portugal, Spain; they added also a great part of Italy, as far as to the gates of Rome; and moreover, Sicily, Candia, Cyprus, and other islands of the Mediterranean. It is worthy of observation, that mention is not made here, as in the other trumpets, of the *third part*; forasmuch as this plague fell no less without the bounds of the Roman empire than within it, and extended itself even to the remotest Indies. They had also *faces as the faces of men, and hair as the hair of women*; and the Arabians wore their beards, or at least mustachoes, as men; while the hair of their heads was flowing, or plaited like that of women. Another property, described in Joel, i. 6. is *their having teeth as the teeth of lions*; that is, strong to devour: and it is wonderful “how the locusts bite and gnaw all things, (as Pliny says,) even the doors of the houses.” They had also *breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron*: and the locusts have a hard shell or skin, which has been called their armour. This figure is designed to express the defensive, as the former was the offensive arms of the Saracens. *And the sound of their wings, &c.* is a comparison similar to that used, Joel, ii. 5. and Pliny assures, that they fly with so great a noise of their wings, that they may be taken for birds. Their *wings, and the sound of their wings*, denote the swiftness and rapidity of their conquests; and it is astonishing, that in less than a century the Saracens erected an empire, which extended from India to Spain. Moreover, they are thrice compared to *scorpions*, ver. 3. 5. 10. *and had stings in their tails*; that is, they should draw a poisonous train after them; and wherever they carried their arms, there also they should distil the venom of a false religion. See the next note. Some read the last clause, *Of chariots, when many horses are rushing into battle.*

Ver.

power *was* to hurt men five months.

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* * Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name * Apollyon.

12 ^u One woe is past; *and*, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

13 ^x And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a ^y voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose ^z the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 ^a And the four angels were loosed,

^t Dan. 11. 36—39. & 7. 8, 11, 20, 21, 24, 25. ² Theff. 2. 3, 4, 8. Ch. xiii. xvii. & 11. 7. ^{*} That is *destruction, and a destroyer of both Jews and Gentiles.* ^u Ch. 8. 13. & 11. 14. ^x Ch. 8. 2, 7—9, 12. Ver. 1. ^y Ch. 8. 3, 5. & 14. 14, 18. Mat 28. 18. Eph. 1. 20, 22. Prov. 8. 15, 16. Exod. 30. 1, 6. ^z Dan. 11. 40—43. with ch. 16. 12. ^a Dan. 11. 40—43. Ch. 16. 12. 1 Sam. 23. 26.

Ver. 10, 11. And their power was to hurt men five months,] See on ver. 5. where it is said, as well as here, that they were to hurt and torment *five months*, in conformity, no doubt, to the type; for locusts are observed to live *five months*, that is, from April to September. But of those locusts, it is said, not that their duration or existence was only *five months*, but their *power of hurting and tormenting men continued five months*. Now these months may either be months commonly so taken, or prophetic months, consisting each of thirty days, as St. John reckons them, and so making one hundred and fifty years, at the rate of each day for a year; or, the number being repeated twice, the fums may be thought to be doubled; and *five months and five months*, in prophetic computation, will amount to three hundred years. If these months be taken for common months, then, as the natural locusts live and do hurt only in the five summer months, so the Saracens, in the five summer months too, made their excursions, and retreated again in the winter. It appears that this was their usual practice; and particularly when they first besieged Constantinople, in the time of Constantine Pogonatus. For from the Month of April to September they pertinaciously continued the siege, then departed for the winter, and in spring renewed their attacks; and this course they held for seven years. If these months be taken for prophetic months, or *one hundred and fifty years*, it was within that space that the Saracens made their principal conquests. Their empire might subsist much longer; but their power of hurting and tormenting men was exerted chiefly within that period. Their greatest conquests were made between the year 612,—when Mohammed first *opened the bottomless pit*, and began publicly to teach and propagate his imposture,—and the year 762, when the caliph Almanfor built Bagdad, and called it the *city of peace*. Syria, Persia, India, the greatest part of Africa, Spain and some other parts of Europe, were subdued in the intermediate time. But when the caliphs fixed their seat at Bagdad, then the Saracens ceased from their excursions and ravages like locusts, and became a settled nation; their power and glory began to decline, and their empire to moulder away: then they had no longer, like the prophetic locusts, *one king over them*, Spain having revolted in the year 756, and set up another caliph, in opposition to the house of Abbas. If these months be taken *doubly*, or for *three hundred years*, then the whole time that the caliphs of the Saracens reigned with a temporal dominion at Damascus and Bagdad together, was three hundred years, viz. from the year 637 to the year 936 inclusive, when their empire was

broken into several principalities or kingdoms. So that, let these *five months* be taken in any possible construction, the event will still answer, and the prophecy will still be fulfilled; though the second method of interpretation and application appears much more probable than either the first or the third. It is added, that *they had a king* (ver. 11.). The same person should exercise temporal as well as spiritual sovereignty over them; and the caliphs were their emperors, as well as the heads of their religion. The *king* is the same as the *star*, or *angel of the bottomless pit*, ver. 1. whose name is *Abaddon* in Hebrew, and *Apollyon* in Greek, that is, *the destroyer*. It has been thought, that this has some allusion to the name of *Obodas*, the common name of the kings of that part of Arabia whence Mohammed came; as *Pharaoh* was the common name of the kings of Egypt; and such allusions are not unusual in the style of scripture. However that be, the name agrees perfectly well with Mohammed and the caliphs his successors, who were the authors of all those horrid wars and desolations, and openly taught and professed that their religion was to be propagated and established by the sword.

Ver. 12. One woe is past, &c.] This is added, not only to distinguish the woes, and to mark more strongly each period; but also to suggest, that some time would intervene between this first woe of the Arabian locusts, and the next of the Euphratean horsemen. The similitude between the locusts and Arabians, is indeed so very great, that it cannot fail of striking every curious observer; and a farther resemblance is noted by Mr. Daubuz, “That there hath happened in the extent of this torment a coincidence of the event with the nature of the locusts. The Saracens have made inroads into all those parts of Christendom where the natural locusts are wont to be seen and known to do mischief, and no where else; and that too in the same proportion. Where the locusts are seldom seen, there the Saracens stayed little; where the natural locusts are often seen, there the Saracens abode most; and where they bred most, there the Saracens had their beginning and greatest power. This may be easily verified by history.”

Ver. 13—15. The sixth angel sounded,] At the sounding of this *sixth trumpet*, a voice proceeded from the *four horns of the golden altar* (for the scene was still in the temple), ordering the angel of the sixth trumpet to *loose the four angels, &c.* and they were loosed accordingly. Such a voice proceeding from the *four horns of the golden altar*, is a strong indication of the divine displeasure, and plainly intimates, that the sins of men must have been very great, when the altar,

which were prepared * for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay ^b the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision,

* Or at. ^b Ch. 8. 7, 9, 11, 12. These things represent the prodigious and terrible armies of the Turks, and perhaps also of the Saracens.

altar, which was their sanctuary and protection, called aloud for vengeance. *The four angels* are the *four sultans*, or *four leaders* of the Turks and Othmans. For there were four principal sultanies or kingdoms of the Turks bordering upon the river Euphrates; one at Bagdad, founded by Togrul-Beg, or Tangrolipix, in the year 1055; another at Damascus, founded by Tajjuddaulas, or Duca, in the year 1079; a third at Aleppo, founded by Sjarfuddaulas, or Melech, in the same year; and the fourth at Iconium in Asia Minor, founded by Sedyduddaulas, or Cutlu-Mufes, or his son, in the year 1080. These four sultanies subsisted several years afterwards; and the sultans were bound, and restrained from extending their conquests further than the river Euphrates, by divine Providence, and by the croisades of the European Christians in the latter part of the eleventh, and in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But when an end was put to the croisades in the thirteenth century, then *the four angels in the river Euphrates were loosed*. Soliman Shah, the first chief and founder of the Othman race, retreating with his three sons from Jingiz-Chan, would have passed the river Euphrates with his Tartars, but was drowned; the time of *loosing the four angels* being not yet come. Discouraged at this dreadful incident, two of his sons returned to their former habitations; but Ortogrul, the third, with his three sons, Condoz, Sarubani, and Othman, remained some time in those parts; and, having obtained leave of Aladin the sultan of Iconium, he came with 400 of his Turks, and settled in the mountains of Armenia. From thence they began their excursions; and the other Turks associating with them, and following their standard, they gained several victories over the Tartars on one side, and over the Christians on the other. Ortogrul dying in the year 1288, Othman his son succeeded him in power and authority; and in the year 1299, and, as some say, with the consent of Aladin himself, he was proclaimed sultan, and founded a new empire; and the people afterwards, as well as the new empire, were called by his name. For, though they disclaim the appellation of *Turks*, and assume that of *Othmans*, yet nothing is more certain, than that they are a mixed multitude, the remains of the four sultanies above mentioned, as well as the descendants particularly of the house of Othman. In this manner, and at this time, *the four angels were loosed*, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men; (ver. 15.) that is, the men of the Roman empire, and especially in Europe, the supposed third part of the world. The Latin, or Western empire, was broken to pieces under the four first trumpets; the Greek or Eastern empire was cruelly hurt and tormented under the fifth trumpet; and under the sixth, it was to be slain and ut-

and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third ^b part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke,

terly destroyed. Accordingly, all Asia-Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Thrace, Macedon, Greece, and all the country which belonged to the Greek or Eastern Caesars, the Othmans have conquered. For the execution of this great work it is said, that they were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year; which will admit either a literal or a mystical interpretation; and the former will hold good, if the latter should fail. If it be taken literally, it is only expressing the same thing by different words; as *people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*, are jointly used in other places; and then the meaning is, that they were prepared to execute the divine commission at any time; any hour, or day, or month, or year, that God should appoint. If it be taken mystically, and the *hour, and day, and month, and year*, be a prophetic hour, day, month, and year, then a year, according to St. John's account, (who uses Daniel's computation,) consisting of three hundred and sixty days, is three hundred and sixty years; and a month consisting of thirty days, is thirty years; and a day is a year; and an hour, in the same proportion, is fifteen days; so that the whole period of the Othman's *slaying the third part of men*, or subduing the Christian states in the Greek and Roman empire, amounts to three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. Now it is wonderfully remarkable, that the first conquest of the Othmans over the Christians was in the year of the Christian æra 1281, and the year of the Hegira 680; for Ortogrul, in that year, crowned his victories with the conquest of the famous city of Kutahi from the Greeks. Compute three hundred and ninety-one years from that time, and they will terminate in the year 1672; and in that year Mohammed the fourth took Cameniec from the Poles; whereupon prince Cantemir has made this memorable reflection: "This was the last victory by which any advantage accrued to the Othman state, or by which any city or province was annexed to the ancient bounds of the empire." Here then the prophecy and the event exactly agree in the period of three hundred and ninety-one years; and if more accurate and authentic histories of the Othmans were discovered, and we knew the very day wherein Kutahi was taken, as certainly as we know that whereon Cameniec was taken, the like exactness might also be found in the fifteen days. Dr. Lloyd, bishop of Worcester, in his interpretation of this passage, foretold, many years before it happened, "that peace would be concluded with the Turks in the year 1698, which accordingly came to pass; and that they should no more renew their wars against the Popish Christians." See Prince Cantemir's History, b. iii. p. 265. and Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times, vol. i. p. 204.

Ver. 16—19. *The number of the army, &c.*] A description

and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not

of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their forceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

* Ver. 10. If. 9. 15. Eph. 4. 14. Mat. 24. 24. † Ch. 2. 11. & 6. 6. & 7. 2. ‡ Jer. 5. 3. If. 1. 5, 6. Deut. 31. 29. 2 Chron. 28. 22. Hosea. 4. 17. § Lev. 17. 7. Deut. 31. 17. & 32. 17, 21. 2 Kings, 22. 17. Pl. 106. 37. Jer. 25. 6, 7. & 30. 9, 14. Pf. 115. 4-8. & 135. 15. —18. —Ezek. 5. 23. & 21. 36-39. Ch. 13. 4, 8, 15. & 14. 9. & 17. 2, 5. & 18. 2. 1 Cor. 10. 20. ¶ Dan. 9. 21, 25. Ch. 13. 7, 17. & 17. 2, 5. & 18. 3.

scription is here given of the forces, and of the means and instruments by which the Othmans should effect the ruin of the Eastern empire. Their army is described as very numerous,—*myriads of myriads*; and when Mohammed the second besieged Constantinople, he had 400,000 men in his army, besides a powerful fleet of thirty larger, and two hundred lesser ships. They are described too, chiefly, as *horsemen*; and so they are described also by Ezekiel and Daniel; as it is well known that their armies consisted chiefly of cavalry, especially before the order of Janizaries was instituted by Amurath the first. The Timariots, or horsemen, hold lands by serving in the wars, are the strength of the government, and are accounted in all between seven and eight thousand fighting men: some indeed say that they are a million: and, besides these, there are spahis and other horsemen in the emperor's pay. In the vision, that is in appearance, and not in reality, they had *breast-plates of fire, and of hyacinth, and brimstone*. The colour of fire is red, of hyacinth blue, and of brimstone yellow: and this has had a literal accomplishment: for the Othmans, from the first time of their appearance, have affected to wear such warlike apparel of scarlet, blue, and yellow. Of the spahis particularly, some have red, and some have yellow standards; and others red or yellow, mixed with other colours. In appearance too, *the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions*, to denote their strength, courage, and fierceness; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone, ver. 17.—A manifest allusion to great guns and gunpowder; which were invented under this trumpet, and were of such signal service to the Othmans in their wars: for by these three was the third part of men killed; by these the Othmans made such havoc and destruction in the Greek or Eastern empire. Amurath the second broke into Peloponnesus, and took several strong places by means of his artillery. His son Mohammed, at the siege of Constantinople, employed such great guns, as were never made before. One, we are told, was so large, as to be drawn by seventy yoke of oxen, and by two thousand men: two more discharged a stone of the weight of half a talent; but the greatest of all discharged a ball of the weight of three talents, or about three hundred pounds. For forty days the wall was battered by these guns, and so many breaches were made, that the city was taken by assault, and an end put to the Grecian empire. They had power to hurt by their tails, &c. ver. 19. In this respect they very much resemble the locusts; only the dif-

ferent tails are adapted to the different creatures; *the tails of scorpions to locusts, the tails of serpents, with a head at each end, to horses*. By this figure it is meant, that the Turks draw after them the same poisonous train as the Saracens; they profess and propagate the same imposture; they do hurt not only by their conquests, but also by the spreading of their false doctrine; and wherever they establish their dominion, there too they establish their religion. Many, indeed, of the Greek church remained, and are still remaining among them; but are subject to a capitation tax for the exercise of their religion; are burthened with the most heavy and arbitrary impositions; are compelled to the most servile drudgery; are abused in their persons, and robbed of their property; but notwithstanding these and greater persecutions, some remains of the Greek church are still preserved among them, as we may reasonably conclude, to serve some great and mysterious ends of Providence.

Ver. 20, 21. *The rest of the men, &c.*] That is, the Latin church, which escaped these calamities pretty well. From the whole it is evident, that these calamities were inflicted upon the Christians for their idolatries. As the Eastern churches were first in the crime, so they were first likewise in the punishment. At first, they were visited with the plague of the Saracens; but this working no change of reformation, they were again chastised by the still greater plague of the Othmans; were partly overthrown by the former, and were entirely ruined by the latter. What churches were then remaining, which were guilty of the like idolatry, but the Western, or those in communion with Rome? And the Western were not at all reclaimed by the ruin of the Eastern; but persisted in the worship of saints, and even in the worship of images, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; and the world is witness to the completion of this prophecy to this day, *Neither repented they of their murders, their persecutions and inquisitions; nor of their forceries, their pretended miracles and revelations; nor of their fornication, their public stews and uncleanness; nor of their thefts, their exactions and impositions on mankind: and they are as notorious for their licentiousness and wickedness, as for their superstition and idolatry*. As they, therefore, refused to take warning by the two former woes, the third woe, as we shall see, will fall with vengeance upon them.

Inferences.—It is exceedingly natural to reflect, while reading this representation, how exactly the mightiest princes,

CHAP. X.

A mighty strong angel appeareth, with a book open in his hand; he sweareth by him that liveth for ever, that there shall be no more time. John is commanded to take and eat the book.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I saw ^a another mighty angel come down from heaven, ^b clothed with a

cloud: and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2 And he had in his hand ^c a little book open: and he ^d set his right foot upon the-sea, and *his* left foot on the earth,

3 And ^e cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried,

^a Christ. Ch. i. & 8. 3. & 9. 13. Dan. 10. 5, 6. & 12. 7. ^b Ch. 1. 7. & 4. 3, 5. & 1. 15, 16. & 14. 14. Gen. 9. 6, 13, 17. Pf. 104. 3, 26—28. Dan. 10. 5, 6. Pf. 97. 2. Mat. 17. 2. ^c Ch. 5. 1, 5. & vi. & 8. 1. or Rom. 1. 16, 17. Col. 1. 26, 27. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 6. ^d Ma. 28. 18. Prov. 8. 15, 16. Eph. 1. 20—22. Pf. 97. 1. Il. 59. 19. Ch. 13. 1, 11. Pf. 2. 8. ^e Joel, 3. 16. Amos, 3. 8. Il. 31. 4. & 5. 30.

princes, and most savage destroyers of mankind execute the plan of divine Providence; even while they are intending nothing but the gratification of their own ambition, and avarice, and cruelty. The angel of God holds the keys of the bottomless pit; and it is by divine permission that these voracious locusts issue forth and infest the earth. The ministers of God's pleasure bind the messengers of destruction, and loosen them, at the divine command. And the season, wherein they should ravage the world, is here limited to a year, to a day, to an hour. **ABADDON, APOLLYON**, the great and mighty destroyer, cannot effect the least of his mischievous and ruinous purposes without the permission of the Preserver and Redeemer of mankind, and cannot go beyond his limits. And even the mischief which he does, is intended and over-ruled to subserve the wisest and kindest designs. But, O, how grievous it is to think of that degree of obstinacy and perverseness which so generally prevails in the world, and which renders men so incorrigible under the most painful chastisements that Satan is permitted to inflict. Send forth, O Lord, the gentle influences of thy Spirit, and melt those hearts which will not be broken by the weightiest strokes of thy vengeance; and deliver us from a temper so much resembling that of *hell*, and so evidently leading down to those dreadful abodes; the temper of those who are hardened by correction, and, in the time of their affliction and misery, increase and multiply their transgressions against thee.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The fifth trumpet is supposed to refer to the rise of the impostor Mahomet, who is the star spoken of in the first part of the chapter, infecting the earth like a pestilential meteor with his abominable falsehoods: permission being given him to open the bottomless pit, a cloud of errors, black as the darkness of hell itself, immediately burst out, and covered the East; innumerable multitudes of Saracens, thick as locusts, under his banners, rushed forth: they chiefly consisted of cavalry, and made dreadful incursions into the empire, with turbans like crowns on their heads; wore long hair like women; were strong as lions; defended with armour, weapon-proof; and rushed with irresistible fury on their foes. **Satan**, the angel of the bottomless pit, the great destroyer of men, was at their head: and such was the misery which they every where spread through the apostate church, that death appeared preferable to life. *Note*; (1.) The heaviest judgments upon the world are these,—when God lets loose the great deceiver; and, because men turn away

from the truth, he gives them up to strong delusions, to believe a lie. (2.) Hereby and important errors, like the scorpion's sting, infuse baleful poison into the soul. (3.) Satan, and all his emissaries, are under a divine restraint; God saith unto them, Hitherto shall ye come, and no further. (4.) Whatever prevalence of delusion there may be, those who perseveringly cleave to Christ, shall be preserved in the most trying times.

One woe is now past; two more are yet to come. 2dly, On the sounding of the sixth angel, the voice of Christ is heard from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, the emblem of the prevalence of his intercession for his believing people in the four parts of the earth: his command to the sixth angel is, that he should loose the four angels that were bound in the great river Euphrates, and let them have power for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men. This may be referred to the successors of Mahomet, who carried their arms far and wide through Egypt, Africa, Spain, &c. their forces were innumerable and invincible, chiefly consisting of cavalry, and breathing forth threatening and slaughter through the earth; and, like scorpions, they infused their poisonous tenets wherever their arms prevailed. Yet all these heavy judgments reclaimed not those who bore the Christian name, but dishonoured it by the vilest abominations; nor did they repent of their idolatries, the worship of demons, and of images unable to hear or answer their stupid votaries; but continued in the practice of murder, forcery, fornication, and theft, and all those miscalled pious frauds which priestcraft invented to beguile the superstitious: therefore more deadly woes are yet in store for them. *Note*; (1.) God sends his judgments that sinners may turn from the evil of their ways. (2.) They who under God's visitations harden their hearts, must inevitably perish at the last.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1—11. I saw another mighty angel come down, &c.] St. John, in the conclusion of the last chapter, having touched upon the corruption of the Western church, proceeds now to deliver some prophecies relating to this lamentable event: but before he enters upon this subject, he, and the church with him, are prepared for it by an august and consolatory vision. *Another mighty angel came down*, described somewhat like the angel or Personage in the last three chapters of Daniel, and in the first chapter of this book. *He had in his hand a little book*; (*ver. 2.*)

^f seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I ^g was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, ^h Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5 And the angel whom I saw ⁱ stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that ^k liveth for ever and ever, who ^l created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that ^m there should be time no longer:

7 But in ⁿ the days of the voice of the

seventh angel, when ^o he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

8 And ^p the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go ^q and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, ^r Take it, and eat it up; and ^s it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 ^t And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had

^f Ch. 8. 6. & 15. 7. & xvi. ^g Ch. 1. 4, 11. & ii. iii. Dan. 8. 26. & 12. 4. Deut. 29. 29. ^h Heb. 13. 8. Mat. 28. 18. Ver. 2. ⁱ Dan. 12. 7. Gen. 14. 22. Heb. 6. 13. Exod. 6. 5. ^j Jer. 10. 10. Ch. 1. 18. & 4. 9, 10. & xiv. & 15. 7. ^k Ch. 4. 21. Acts, 4. 24. ^l Gen. i. ii. Exod. 20. 11. Jer. 32. 17, 27. Ch. 14. 7. ^m Ezek. 7. 2—12. & 12. 28. If. 13. 22. Dan. 12. 7. Ch. 16. 17. ⁿ Ch. 11. 15. ^o —18. Dan. 12. 7. & 7. 14, 27. with If. xlix. lx. lxi. lxx. lxxvi. Jer. xxxi. xxxiii. Ez. xxxiv—xlvi. Hefes, ii. iii. Zach. xiv. &c. Ch. xiv—xxii. ^p Ver. 4. If. 30. 23. not ch. 4. 1. & 1. 10—13. ^q Ezek. 3. 17. Mat. 17. 5. Ch. 1. 1. ^r Ezek. 2. 8. & 3. 1—3. Jer. 15. 16. Col. 1. 23. ^s John, 15. 6. 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15. ^t Hab. 3. 1, 6. Pl. 119. 103. & 19. 10. Jer. 15. 16. Job, 23. 12. ^u Pf. 119. 59, 60. Gal. 9. 10. Eas. 23. 21. Ezek. 5. 3. & 2. 10.

this little book (βιβλακιδιον), or *codicil*, was different from the βιβλιον, or *book*, mentioned before, ch. v. 1. and it was *open*, that all men might freely read and consider it. It was indeed a *codicil* to the larger book, and properly comes under the sixth trumpet to describe the state of the Western church after the description of the state of the Eastern: and this is with good reason made a separate and distinct prophesy, on account of the importance of the matter, as well as for engaging the greater attention. *The angel set his right foot upon the sea*, &c. (ver. 2.) to shew the extent of his power and commission; and *when he had cried aloud, seven thunders uttered their voices*. St. John would have written down those things which the seven thunders uttered, but was forbidden to do it, ver. 4. As we know not the subjects of the *seven thunders*, so neither can we know the reasons for suppressing them; and to pretend to know either, is to be *wise above what is written*. Then (ver. 5, 6.) *the angel lifted up his hand*, &c. like the angel in Dan. ^{iii.} 7. and *sware by him that liveth for ever and ever*, the great Creator of all things, *that there should be time no longer*, or rather, *that the time should not be yet*; but it shall be in the days of the seventh trumpet, that *the mystery of God shall be finished*, and the glorious state of the church be perfected, agreeably to the good things which he promised to his servants the prophets, ver. 7. This is said for the consolation of Christians, that though the little book describes the calamities of the Western church, yet they shall have a happy period under the seventh trumpet. St. John is then ordered to *eat the little book*, as the prophet did, Ezek. ^{iii.} 3. upon the like occasion: and he *ate it up*, (ver. 10.) he thoroughly considered and digested it, and found it to be, as he was informed it would be, ver. 9. *Sweet as honey in his mouth*, but *bitter in his stomach*. “The knowledge of future things at first was pleasant, but the sad contents

“of the little book afterwards filled his soul with sorrow.” These contents, however, were not to be *sealed up* like those of the *seven thunders*; this little book was to be published, as well as the larger book of the Apocalypse; and as it concerned kings and nations, so was it to be made public for their use and information. Sir Isaac Newton observes, that this description of an angel *coming down from heaven*, ver. 1. is in the form in which Christ appeared in the beginning of this prophesy; and it may further direct us to understand this *mighty angel*, of Christ; that he appeared having a *little book open in his hand*. He also observes, that by the *earth* the Jews understand the great continent of all Asia and Africa, to which they had access by land; and by the *isles of the sea* they understood the places to which they sailed by sea, or the several parts of Europe; and here in this prophesy the earth and sea are put, according to him, for the nations of the Greek and Latin empires.

Ver. 10. *And ate it up*, &c.] See Jer. xv. 16. Our blessed Saviour uses the same metaphorical expression with the prophet and St. John, when he speaks of himself as the *bread of life*, in many passages of the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. The author of the *Observations* on sacred scripture remarks, “that, delicious as honey is to an eastern palate, it has been thought sometimes to have produced terrible effects. So Sanutus tells us, that the English who attended Edward I. into the holy land, died in great numbers as they marched in June to demolish a place; which he ascribes to the excessive heat, and their intemperate eating of fruits and honey. This, perhaps, may give us the thought of Solomon, according to the literal sense, when he says, *It is not good to eat much honey*, Prov. xxv. 27. He had before, in the same chapter, mentioned, that an excess in eating honey

eat it my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must

prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

1 Chron. 25. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 4. Ch. 14. 6. with 11. 9. & 13. 7.

“ occasioned sickness and vomiting; but if it was thought sometimes to produce deadly effects, there was a greater energy in the instruction. However that may be, this circumstance seems to illustrate the prophetic passage before us, where the book is said to be *in the mouth sweet as honey*, but *bitter* after it was down; producing pain bitter as those gripings which the army of Edward felt in the holy land, from eating honey to excess: for of such disorders as are the common effects of intemperance with regard to fruits in those climates, Sanutus appears to be speaking; and the bloody flux, attended with violent pains in the bowels, is well known to be their great complaint.” See *Observations*, p. 161.

The prophesy before us was to reveal the providences of God during the period of the *seventh angel*; in which, as there was a revelation of great opposition to true religion, and persecution of the faithful professors; so was there also a revelation of divine protection during the time of trial, and of the sure accomplishment of the promised glorious and happy state of the church in the end. The meditation of such a state of providence might well occasion a mixture of joy and grief in the apostle’s mind, as it is likely to do in the minds of all who so understand and consider it.

Inferences.—If other parts of this chapter should seem to be less pregnant with important practical instructions, perhaps the design was, that we might be engaged to fix our entire and undivided attention on the awful words of this illustrious angel; whose appearance is described in colours so exceedingly beautiful and striking; with the radiance of the sun streaming from his countenance; the variegated colours of the rainbow encircling his head; of a stature so vast and majestic, that he at once bestrode the earth and the sea; with his hand solemnly lifted up to heaven; with a voice awful as thunder, appealing to the venerable name of God, the Creator of the heavens, of the earth, of the sea, and of all their various inhabitants, in order to add the sanction of an inviolable oath to a declaration, which in itself, from such a divine messenger, was worthy of absolute and entire credit; a declaration, *that time should be no longer*: which is a certain truth, in the most sublime and interesting sense of which the words are capable. Time, as distinguished into days, and weeks, and months, and years, by the revolution of the heavenly luminaries, when the most resplendent of these are extinguished in their orbs, as they quickly will; *when the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood*; time shall then, I say, be absorbed in an immeasurable eternity. And O, *what an eternity!* An eternity, either of perfect and inconceivable felicity, or hopeless and remediless misery.—But, besides this general construction, there is an important sense in which the proclamation of this celestial herald shall be fulfilled, with regard to individuals; that time shall be no longer; the time of divine patience in waiting upon us; the time in which we shall be con-

tinued under the sound of the gospel, and the offers of mercy, and the means of salvation; the time in which we shall be conversant with these scenes of mortality, and with the persons who are here most familiar to us, at least in the present circumstances of their being. The period, during which we are to inhabit this earth, and enjoy our spiritual advantages, or our worldly possessions and pleasures, is confined within very narrow limits. The oath of this mighty angel is, perhaps, just ready to be accomplished, and time is closing, and eternity is opening upon us. O that we may consider time and all its concerns as very shortly to vanish, that our thoughts and our cares may be directed more and more to our own eternal interest, and to that of our fellow-creatures! The Judge is even at the door: let us endeavour therefore to be ready, let us improve every transient moment to the purposes for which it was given us; and in these views of the brevity of time, and the importance of preparing for eternity, let us detest all the pleasures and allurements of sin; for they will soon appear like the *mysterious morsel of the apostle, bitter as wormwood in the belly*, though with deceitful and fatal indulgence we may, for a few moments, have *rolled* them, like a sweet morsel, *under our tongues*; vainly desiring to prolong those pleasures, which can serve only to add more keen and exquisite sensibility to our future pain.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Another vision intervenes between the sixth and the seventh trumpet, as before between the sixth and seventh seal.

1. A glorious angel, even the same divine Personage whose voice was heard before, giving the angels their commission, (chap. vii. 2.) comes down from heaven clothed with a cloud; and around his head the rainbow glowed, the token of his mindfulness of his covenant with his faithful saints, even in the darkest ages: his countenance was like the sun, cheering the hearts of his people; and his feet as pillars of fire, firm to support the interests of his sacred cause, and terrible to tread down her enemies. In his hand he held a little book, the last volume of the roll which he had opened, and was about to reveal the contents of it; and, setting one foot on the earth, and the other on the sea, to intimate his universal dominion, he uttered his voice loud as the lion roars, and instantly seven mighty thunders, the emblems of the judgments about to follow, echoed back the sound. Being about to minute down the articulate denunciations uttered by these thunders, St. John is restrained by a voice from heaven, saying, *Seal up those things, and write them not.*

2. The angel that stood on the earth and on the sea, then lifted up his hand to heaven, and, with a solemn oath, swore by the great Creator of all things, *that there should be time no longer*; but that when the time, and times, and half a time, (Dan. xii. 7.) are expired, the 1260 years of the reign of Antichrist, then an end shall be put to the Antichristian tyranny for ever; and that within the period of the

CHAP. XI.

The two witnesses prophesy: they have power to shut heaven, that it rain not: the beast shall fight against them; and kill them: they lie unburied, and, after three days and an half, rise again. The second woe is past. The seventh trumpet soundeth.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND there was given me a ^areed like unto a rod: and the ^bangel stood, say-

ing, Rise, and 'measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But 'the court which is without the temple * leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot ' forty and two months.

3 And 'I will give *power* unto my 'two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand

^a Ezek. 40. 3. & 42. 16. Zech. 2. 1, 2. Ch. 21. 15, 16. If. 8. 26. & 34. 16. Acts, 17. 11. John, 5. 39. Pf. 110. 2. & 45. 6. Gal. 6. 16. Ch. 10. 1, 5. Mat. 17. 5. ^b Ezek. 21—xliv. xlvii. xlviii. Ch. 21. 15—17. 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Eph. 2. 21, 22. 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. ^c Ezek. 40. 17, 19, 20. & 42. 20. 2 Tim. 3. 5. Phil. 3. 18, 19. Dan. 7. 8, 11, 20, 24, 25. & 11. 36—39. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. 2 Tim. 3. 1—6 & 4. 3, 4. 2 Thess. 2. 3—12. Ch. xiii—xviii. * Gr. cast out. ^d 1260 years. Ch. 13. 5. & 12. 6. Ver. 3, 14. Ch. 10. 6. Daniel, 7. 25. & 12. 7, 11, 12. Numb. 14. 34. Ezek. 4. 5. James, 5. 17. with Luke, 21. 24. ^e Or I will give unto my two witnesses that they may prophesy. 1 Cor. 12. 12. Eph. 4. 12. ^f Deut. 17. 6. & 19. 15. Mat. 18. 16. Luke, 24. 28. Acts, 1. 8. 2 Cor. 13. 1.

the seventh trumpet, the mystery of God should be finished, his design of grace accomplished, and his great salvation spread from pole to pole; as of old had been shewn to his prophets, (Dan. vii. 25—27. xii. 6, 7. Zech. xiv. 9.)

2dly, The same voice which he had heard from heaven,

1. Commands him to go and take the volume out of the angel's hand, who stood on the earth and sea, who gave it to him, and bid him eat it up, and digest the awful contents therein revealed; telling him, that, though sweet in his mouth, it would make his belly bitter; desirable as it was to know the events of futurity, yet the awful desolations about to come upon the earth, and the sufferings of the church, could not but inwardly grieve and afflict him.

2. The apostle obeyed, and found the word true which had been spoken; sweet as the book was in his mouth, even as honey, his belly was made bitter as gall, and the burthens he foresaw deeply afflicted him; but he must not conceal the secrets communicated to him; he is commanded to prophesy concerning the events which must successively come to pass before many people, and nations, and tongues, and kings. *Note*; Preachers must first themselves digest, and be deeply affected with, the truths which they deliver to others.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1.] From this to the nineteenth chapter, we have the *third* and longest *period* of this prophesy, distinguished by the *seven vials*, as the former periods were by *seven trumpets*, and *seven seals*. As this is a period much more extensive than either of the foregoing, it seems to have a more full and copious description; and the state of it is represented by several prophetic images; as by measuring the temple; by the prophesy of two witnesses; by the vision of a woman flying into the wilderness; ch. xi. xii. the representation of one wild beast rising out of the sea, and of another coming out of the earth; ch. xiii. So that there are two distinct representations of the state of the church during this period; and another representation of the persecuting power from whence this afflicted state of the church should proceed: and in the end of this, as in each period, we have a representation of the church's

deliverance out of its afflicted state. In particular, the afflictions of the church are to end with this period in the most happy and glorious state of peace and prosperity, of truth, purity, and protection; and are not to be renewed in a very short time by a new period of troubles and afflictions to try the faith and patience of the faints, as in the former periods. It appears therefore, that the representation of the *two witnesses*, of the *woman in the wilderness*, and of the *beast*, are several exhibitions of the same time or period, in different views. The time for the witnesses to prophesy in sackcloth, is a thousand two hundred and threescore days, ch. xi. 3. The woman is nourished in her place in the wilderness for a time, and times, and half a time, or three years and a half; equal to one thousand two hundred and sixty days, according to the ancient year of three hundred and sixty days; and so the prophesy itself interprets it, ver. 6. It is further observed concerning the period of the *beast*, that power was given to him to continue *forty and two months*, a time equal to three years and a half, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days. These are therefore to be looked upon as different descriptions of the same period, for the more distinct explication of the prophesy, and the greater certainty of its true meaning. The days in question must be interpreted of years, as is not only agreeable to the general style of prophesy, but to the plan of the particular prophesy before us. The order of the prophesies of this book shews, that these *one thousand two hundred and sixty days* contain the whole time of the *third period*, or all the time wherein the *witnesses prophesy*, the *woman* is in the wilderness, and the *beast* has power given unto him; that is, all the time of the last state of the church's sufferings, to that glorious state of the church, when Satan shall be shut up in the bottomless pit for a thousand years. In this period the *seven vials of God's wrath* are to be poured out, and all the historical events that relate to them accomplished. This period is to last till the mystery of God shall be finished: these events are too many, and the times in which they are to be accomplished too long, to be comprised within one thousand two hundred and sixty natural days. The order of the periods shews, that this third is not to begin until the two former are passed; until the nations which had destroyed the Roman empire had divided it among themselves; till the imperial

two hundred *and* threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the ^btwo olive trees, and the ^ctwo candlesticks ^dstanding before the God of the earth.

5 ^eAnd if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth

their enemies : and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 ^fThese have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and ^ghave power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

^a Zech. 4. 2, 3, 6, 11, 14. Jer. 11. 6. Ps. 52. 8. & 93. 14. Rom. 11. 17. ^b 1 Kings, 17. 1. Ps. 134. 1. ^c 1 Cor. 15. 58. ^d 2 Tim. 4. 2. ^e 1 K. 11. 4. ^f Jer. 5. 12, 14, & 23. 29. Hof. 6. 5. Zech. 1. 6. ^g 2 Kings, 1. 10, 12-13. Jer. 1. 10. If. 44. 26. Ch. 13. 10. ^h 2 Kings, 1. 10, 12. Numb. 16. 29-35. ⁱ 1 Kings, 17. 1. James, 5. 17. Mat. 16. 19, 20. John, 10. 23. ^j Exod. vii-xii. xiv. Jer. 1. 10. If. 45. 11.

imperial government of Rome was passed away, as the preceding forms of government were before it; and till another form should be established in Rome, which, on some accounts, should be called the seventh; and, on others, the eighth form of government: when Rome, once the powerful mistress of the world, after she had lost her dominion, and, as it seemed, without hope of recovery, should be restored to power and empire again, which was to continue during the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of this period, and then to be utterly overthrown, and never to rise again. Now, as a great variety of concurrent circumstances shew the beginning of this period to have been about the year 756, when the popes were invested with the temporal dominion of Rome, in which only time the several descriptions of this period do all exactly agree, the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of this prophecy are to last so long as this dominion is to continue: which seems evidently to shew, that we are not to understand one thousand two hundred and sixty natural days as the time of this period, but so many prophetic days, or years. See the following notes. See also the Appendix for other views of this subject.

And the angel saith,] That is, the angel mentioned in the foregoing chapter, whom some commentators interpret of Luther. In the former part of this chapter, from the 1st to the 14th verse, says Bishop Newton, are exhibited the contents of the little book mentioned in the preceding chapter. In this verse St. John is commanded to measure the inner court,—the temple of God, &c. to shew, that, during all this period, there were some true Christians who conformed to the rule and measure of God's worship. This measuring might allude more particularly to the reformation from popery, which fell out under this sixth trumpet; and one of the moral causes of it was, the Othmans taking Constantinople, which occasioned the Greek fugitives to bring their books with them into the more western parts of Europe, and proved the happy cause of the revival of learning; as the revival of learning opened men's eyes, and proved the happy occasion of the reformation. But, though the inner court, which includes the smaller number, was measured, yet the outer court, which implies the far greater part, was left out, (ver. 2.) and rejected, as being in the possession of Christians only in name, but Gentiles in worship and practice, who profaned it with heathenish superstition and idolatry: And they shall tread under foot the holy city; they shall trample upon and tyrannize over the church for the space of forty and two months.

Ver. 3. I will give power unto my two witnesses, &c.] The sacred writer assures us that God would raise up some true and faithful witnesses, to preach and protest against the innovations mentioned in the preceding verse: and there were Protestants long before ever the name came into use. Of these witnesses there should be, though but a small, yet a competent number; and it was a sufficient reason for making them two witnesses, because that number is required by the law, Deut. xix. 15. and approved by the gospel, Matth. xviii. 16. and upon former occasions, two have often been joined in commission, as Moses and Aaron in Egypt; Elijah and Elisha in the apostacy of the ten tribes; and it is observable also, that the principal reformers have usually appeared in pairs; the Waldenses and Albigenses; John Hus and Jerome of Prague; Luther and Calvin; Cranmer and Ridley, and their followers: not that (I conceive) any two particular men, or two particular churches, were intended by this prophecy; but only that there should be some in every age who should bear witness to the truth. They should not be discouraged, even by persecution and oppression; but, though clothed with sackcloth, and living in a mourning and afflicted state, should yet prophesy; should yet preach the sincere word of God, and denounce the divine judgments against the reigning idolatry and wickedness. And this they should continue to do, as long as the grand corruption itself lasted;—for a space of a thousand two hundred and threescore days. It is the same space of time with the forty and two months, ver. 2. For forty and two months, consisting each of thirty days, are equal to a thousand two hundred and threescore days, or years in the prophetic style; and a thousand two hundred and threescore years, (as we have seen before in Dan. xii. 11, 12.) is the period assigned for the tyranny and idolatry of the church of Rome. A character is then given of those witnesses, and of the power and effect of their preaching; ver. 4-6. These are the two olive-trees, &c. that is, "They, like Zerubbabel and Joshua, Zech. iv. are the great instructors and enlighteners of the church." Fire proceeded out of their mouths, &c. (ver. 5.) that is, "they are like unto Moses and Elijah, (Numb. xvi. 2 Kings, i.) who called for fire upon the enemies of Jehovah." But their fire was real; this is symbolical, and proceeds out of the mouths of the witnesses, denouncing the divine vengeance on the corrupters and opposers of true religion; much in the same manner as it was said to Jeremiah, ch. v. 14. I will make my words in thy mouth fire, &c. It is added by St. John, These have power to shut heaven, &c. ver. 6. that is, "They are like Elijah, who foretold a want of rain in
" the

7 And when they shall have ° finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their ° dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called ° Sodom and Egypt, where also ° our Lord was crucified.

9 ° And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and ° shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 ° And they that dwell upon the earth

shall ° rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 ° And after three days and an half ° the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and ° great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, ° Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies ° beheld them.

13 And the same hour was there a ° great

° Ver. 3. Luke, 24. 48. & 13. 32. 2 Tim. 4. 7. Acts, 20. 21, 24.
2 Theff. 2. 9. ° Ezek. 37. 11. Acts, 26. 11. John, 16. 2. ° Ch. 14. 8, 7. 15, 18. & 18. 2, 10. Ver. 13. ° Gen. 13. 13 & 18. 20.
& 19. 5. Ezek. 16. 50. Exod. 1. 13, 14. & 12. 12. Jer. 12. 13. Ch. 16. 19 & 18. 18, 21. Acts, 9. 4. Luke, 13. 33, 34. Ch. 16. 6. &
18. 24. Heb. 6. 6. & 10. 29. & 13. 12. ° Ch. 5. 9. Obad. 12, 13. ° Pf. 79. 3. Jer. 7. 23. Ch. 19. 17. ° Ver. 6. Pf.
17. 14. Phil. 3. 19. Ver. 7. Ch. 12. 12. & 13. 8. ° Judges, 16. 25. Esth. 9. 22. ° 1 Kings, 18. 17 & 21. 20. Acts, 7. 5. 1. & 19. 6.
° Ver. 9. Hof. 2. 6. a. Gen. 22. 14. ° Gen. 2. 7. Ezek. 37. 5, 9, 10, 14. ° Acts, 5. 5, 12. Pf. 64. 9. Luke, 9. 7. John. 2. 9. ° Song,
2. 10, 11. Pf. 24. 3. & 15. 1. & 65. 4. & 37. 6. If. 40. 31. & 60. 8. Ch. 12. 5. ° Ch. 19. 2. Pf. 112. 10. 2 Kings, 2. 1, 5, 9—11. ° Ch.

° Ch. 13. 1, 2, 7, 11. & 17. 8, 14. & 18. 24. & 16. 6. Dan. 7. 21.
° Ch. 14. 8, 7. 15, 18. & 18. 2, 10. Ver. 13. ° Gen. 13. 13 & 18. 20.
° Acts, 9. 4. Luke, 13. 33, 34. Ch. 16. 6. &
° Pf. 79. 3. Jer. 7. 23. Ch. 19. 17. ° Ver. 6. Pf.
° 1 Kings, 18. 17 & 21. 20. Acts, 7. 5. 1. & 19. 6.
° Acts, 5. 5, 12. Pf. 64. 9. Luke, 9. 7. John. 2. 9. ° Song,
° Ch. 19. 2. Pf. 112. 10. 2 Kings, 2. 1, 5, 9—11. ° Ch.

“ the days of Ahab, 1 Kings, xvii. 1. James, v. 17. and
“ it rained not by the space of three years and six months;
“ which, mystically understood, is the same space of time
“ as the forty and two months, ver. 2. and the thousand two
“ hundred and threescore days, ver. 3. which were allotted
“ for the prophesying of the witnesses.” During this time
the divine protection and blessing shall be withheld from
those men who neglect and despise their preaching and
doctrine. *They have also power over the waters, &c.* ver. 6.
that is, they are like Moses and Aaron, who inflicted
plagues on Egypt; and they may be said to *smite the earth
with the plagues* which they denounce; as, in scripture
language, the prophets are often said to do those things,
which they declare and foretel. But it is most highly prob-
able, that these particulars will receive a more literal ac-
complishment, when the plagues of God, and the vials of
his wrath, (ch. xvi.) shall be poured out upon men, in
consequence of their having so long resisted the testimony
of the witnesses.

Ver. 7—12. *When they shall have finished, &c.] Or, When
they shall be about to finish their testimony, the wild beast that
ascendeth out of the abyss, &c.* After the description of the wit-
nesses, their power and offices, follows a prediction of those
things that shall befall them at the latter end of their mi-
nistry: and their passion, death, resurrection, and ascension,
are copied from our Saviour's, who is emphatically styled,
The faithful and true Witness, ch. iii. 14. but with this dif-
ference, that his were real, theirs are figurative and mysti-
cal. *When they shall be about finishing their testimony, the beast
that ascendeth out of the abyss,—the tyrannical power of
Rome, (of which we shall see more hereafter,) shall make
war, &c.* ver. 7. *The beast, indeed, shall make war* against
them all the time that they are performing their ministry,
but, *when they shall be near finishing it, he shall so make war
against them as to overcome them, and kill them.* They shall
be subdued and suppressed; be degraded from all power
and authority; be deprived of all offices and functions,

and be politically dead, if not naturally so. In this low
and abject state they shall lie some time, ver. 8. *in the street
of the great city,—in some conspicuous place within the ju-
risdiction of Rome, which spiritually is called Sodom,* for cor-
ruption of manners; and *Egypt, for tyranny and oppres-
sion of the people of God; where also our Lord was cruci-
fied.* Spiritually, being crucified afresh in the sufferings of
his faithful martyrs. Nay, to shew the greater indignity
and cruelty to the martyrs, *their dead bodies shall not only
be publicly exposed, (ver. 9.) but they shall be denied even
the common privilege of burial: and their enemies shall
rejoice and insult over them, ver. 10. and shall send mutual
presents and congratulations one to another, for their deli-
verance from these tormentors, whose life and doctrine
were a continual reproach to them.* But *after three days
and a half, ver. 11.* that is, in the prophetic style, *after
three years and a half, (for no less time is requisite for all
these transactions,) they shall be raised again by the Spirit of
God, and, ver. 12. shall ascend up to heaven: they shall not
only be restored to their pristine state, but shall be further
promoted to dignity and honour: and that by a great voice
from heaven;—by the voice of public authority. At the
same hour there shall be a great earthquake,—there shall be
great commotions in the world; and the tenth part of the
city shall fall, as an omen and earnest of a still greater fall:
and seven thousand names of men, or seven thousand men of
name, shall be slain, and the remainder in their fright shall
acknowledge the great power of God.* Some interpreters
are of opinion, that this prophecy of the death and resurrec-
tion of the witnesses received its completion in the case of
John Huss and Jerome of Prague; others refer it to the
Protestants of the league of Smalcald. Some again think
it applicable to the horrid massacre of the Protestants at
Paris, and other cities of France, in the year 1572: others
imagined, that the persecution carried on by Lewis XIV.
against the Protestants of France, in the year 1685, would
be the last persecution. And others again apply it to the
poor

earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain ^b of men seven thousand: and the remnant ^c were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The ^k second woe is past; and, behold, ^l the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the ^m seventh angel sounded; and there were ⁿ great voices in heaven, saying, ^o The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 ^p And the four and twenty elders, which

sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, ^q We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because ^r thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 ^s And the nations were angry, and thy wrath 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

^a Gr. names of men. Gen. 6. 4. Ch. 3. 4. ^b Ch. 16. 9. Exod. 12. 38. Pf. 64. 9. Josh. 2. 9. Luke, 5. 25. & 7. 16. ^c Ch. 8. 13. & 9. 12. ^d Ch. 15. 1. & xvii. & 14. 8. ^e Ch. 8. 2, 6—12. & 9. 1, 13. ^f If. 27. 13. & 44. 23. Ch. 13. 20. & 16. 17. & 19. 2, 6. & 22. 10. Eph. 3. 21. Luke, 5. 5. 6. 9, 10, 23, 24, 32. ^g Dan 7. 11, 22, 27. & 2. 44. Pf. 72. 8. Ch. 7. 9, 10. & 10. 7. & 15. 4. & 19. 6. If. xix. lv. lx. lxii. &c. & 66. 8. Rom. 11. 12, 15, 25. Ch. 20. 4. If. 9. 7. & 21. 23. ^h Ch. 4. 4, 10. & 5. 8, 14. & 19. 4. ⁱ Ch. 1. 4, 6. & 4. 8—11. & 7. 10, 12. & 5. 9, 12, 13. & 14. 3. & 12. 10. & 15. 3. 4. & 19. 1—7. ^j If. 52. 10. Pf. 98. 1—3. & 110. 2. & 89. 25, 27. & 72. 8. 16—9. If. 63. 1—6. ^k Ch. 16. 2. & 20. 4, 12. & 6. 10, 11. Deut. 32. 36—43. Pf. 99. 2. Dan. 7. 26. 2 Thett. 2. 8. Ch. xvii. xviii. Esck. xxxviii. xxxix.

poor Protestants in the vallies of Piedmont, imprisoned, murdered, or banished, in the year 1686. In all these cases there may be some resemblance before us, of the death and resurrection of the witnesses: but though these instances sufficiently answer in some respects, yet they are deficient in others; and particularly in this, that they are none of them the last persecution: others have been since, and probably will be again. Besides, as the two witnesses are designed to be the representatives of the Protestants in general, so the persecution must be general too. We are now living under the sixth trumpet; and the empire of the Euphratean horsemen, or Othmans, is still subsisting: the beast is still reigning, and the witnesses are still, in some times and places more, in some less, prophesying in sackcloth. It will not be till toward the end of this testimony, and the end seems to be yet at some distance, that the great victory and triumph of the beast, and the suppression, resurrection, and exaltation of the witnesses, will take effect. When all these things shall be accomplished, then the sixth trumpet will end; then the second woe shall be past, ver. 14. the Othman empire shall be broken in the same manner that Ezekiel (ch. xxxviii. xxxix.) and Daniel (ch. xi. 44, 45.) have predicted; the sufferings of the witnesses shall cease, and they shall be raised and exalted above their enemies: and when the second woe shall be thus past, behold the third woe, or total destruction of the beast, cometh quickly: some time intervened between the first and second woes; but upon the ceasing of the second, the third shall commence immediately. It appears then, that the greater part of this prophecy relating to the witnesses, remains yet to be fulfilled. But possibly some may question whether any part of it has been fulfilled; whether there have been any such persons as the witnesses; any true and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, who have in every age professed doctrines contrary to those maintained by the Pope and church of Rome? The truth of the fact may be made appear by an historical deduction; and it can be proved, that there have constantly been such witnesses, from the seventh century down to the reformation, during the most flourishing pe-

riod of Popery. Those who are desirous of seeing this deduction, may find it in Flaccius Illyricus, in the Centuriators of Magdeburg, in Uther, in Alix, in Spanheim, in Calmet, in Mosheim, and in all the ecclesiastical writers.

Ver. 15—18. *The seventh angel sounded, &c.*] At the sounding of the seventh trumpet, the third woe commences; which is rather implied than expressed, as it will be described more fully hereafter. The third woe brought on the inhabitants of the earth, is the ruin and downfall of the antichristian kingdom; and then, and not till then, according to the heavenly chorus, the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the Lord, &c. St. John is rapt and hurried away, as it were, to a view of the happy millennium, without considering the steps preceding and conducting to it. At the same time the four and twenty elders, or the ministers of the church, ver. 16—18. are represented as praising and glorifying God, for manifesting his power and kingdom more than he had done before: they give likewise an intimation of some succeeding events; as, the anger of the nations, Gog and Magog, ch. xx. 8. and the wrath of God, displayed in their destruction, ch. xx. 9. and the rewarding of all the good, as well as punishing of the wicked, ver. 12, &c. Here we have only a summary account of the circumstances and occurrences of the seventh trumpet; but the particulars will be dilated and enlarged upon hereafter. Thus are we arrived at the consummation of all things, through a series of prophecies, extending from the apostle's days to the end of the world. It is this series which has been our clue, to conduct us in our interpretation of these prophecies; and though some of them are dark and obscure, considered in themselves, yet they receive light from others, preceding and following. Altogether they are, as it were, a chain of prophecies, whereof one link depends on and supports another. If any parts remain yet obscure and unsatisfactory, they may perhaps be cleared up by what the apostle himself has added by way of explanation. See the Appendix for other views of this subject.

which * destroy the earth.

19 ' And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ^u seen in his temple the

ark of his testament: and ^r there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

* Or corrupt. ^c Ch. 15. 5, 8. Ver. 15. Ch. 20. 4. Rom. 11. 12, 15, 25. Ezek. xl—xlviii. Zech. xiv. If. lx. ^o Numb. 4. 5. Heb. 9. 4. 1 Cor. 2. 2. Phil. 3. 8. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Epil. 3. 8, 9. Col. 1. 27. Zech. 12. 10. ^a Theff. 2. 3. ^r Ch. 4. 5. & 8. 5. & 10. 3. & 16. 18, 21. & xvi. xviii. xix. Dan. 12. 1.

Ver. 19. And the temple of God, &c.] Bishop Newton, with Grotius, is of opinion, that this verse should introduce the twelfth chapter, as it appears to begin a new subject: it is much in the same spirit with the vision of Isaiah, (ch. vi. 1.) and of our divine prophet, ch. iv. 1, 2. The temple of God was opened in heaven, &c. that is, more open discoveries were now made, and the mystery of God was revealed to the prophet. *Lightnings and voices, &c.* are the usual concomitants of the divine presence, and especially at giving new laws and new revelations: see Exod. xix. 16, &c. Rev. iv. 5. and viii. 5. and with as much reason they are made in this place the signs and preludes of the revelations and judgments which are to follow. It is no just objection, that a new subject is supposed to begin with the conjunction *and*; for this is frequent in the style of the Hebrews; some books, as Numbers, Joshua, and the two books of Samuel, &c. begin with the Hebrew particle *vau*, or *and*.

Inferences.—Long has the court of God's temple been trodden under foot by the Gentiles, and a party of very corrupt and degenerate Christians (if they at all deserve the name, though they proudly arrogate to themselves the title of the *Catholic church*) been introducing and countenancing all the sopperies and absurdities of *pagan superstition*, as well as more than the horrors of *pagan cruelty*, so as indeed to have disgraced not the *gospel* alone, but *human nature* itself. A wise and gracious Providence hath raised up *witnesses* for the truth in all ages; and it is a signal honour to bear a faithful and courageous testimony against these enormous corruptions, though it were unto bonds and imprisonment, and even at the expence of life. Those noble and heroic confessors God hath remarkably supported; and even when they have been in a state of mourning and oppression, they have borne their *testimony* and *professed*; their prayers have been remembered before God, and many have been *smitten*, who *injured* and oppressed them. But, notwithstanding this, *the beast* continued his *war* upon the saints, and their oppressions increased, until, in many places, they have been cast down, and trodden in the dust, and *their blood hath been poured out like water on the earth*. Thus has the *great city*, the metropolis of the world, once faithful and celebrated, become even as *Sodom* and *Egypt*, or even as *Jerusalem*, where *Christ* himself, our divine Master, was *crucified*. Thus have the enemies of the truth triumphed over the servants of the Lord, and have erected trophies of their victory. But, thanks be to God, their triumph shall not be perpetual; Christ our Redeemer will revive his expiring cause, in a manner as glorious and wonderful as a resurrection from the dead: he will glorify his faithful people; he will cause the earth to tremble, and shake down the towers of the enemy; and when the *first and second woes* are past, will

bring upon them a *third* and more terrible *woe*. In the faith of this triumphal event let us rejoice; and let us consider it as approaching, when *the seventh angel shall sound*, and when all *the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*. Let our prayers do all that the most earnest prayers can do, towards promoting this great event. O Lord God Almighty, who art, and art to come, we beseech thee to take to thyself thy great power and reign; for the proudest of the enemies who oppose thy kingdom reign, and even live, only by thy permission. Overbear, by thy superior rebuke, the rage of the angry nations; and give patience to thy afflicted servants, that they may never resign the hope of the reward, which thou wilt at length confer upon thy faithful people,—not only on the prophets, and most eminent and distinguished of the saints, but on all those that fear thy glorious and tremendous name; on the small, as well as on the great; when the destroyers of the church, and of the earth, shall be destroyed together. *Amen.*

REFLECTIONS.—1st, A general description is given of the state both of the true and the antichristian church during 1260 years, from the time that the temporal power of the Pope arose, about 756.

1. St. John is commanded to measure the temple of God, and the altar, and the worshippers; for, in the worst of times, and the darkest days, God would still maintain his own cause; and all his servants who would improve the light bestowed upon them, should be preserved from the general apostacy. The outer court he may not measure; that is left to the Gentiles, to those who indeed profess to bear the Christian name, but by the idolatry, superstitious, and frauds which they encourage and maintain, are returned in reality to the worship of Paganism, Popery being Heathenism revived: and during forty-two months, or 1260 years, these Gentile Papists shall tread the holy city under foot, and exercise their tyrannical government over the professors of the Christian name.

2. During the prevalence of the antichristian tyranny, God will not leave the world without warning, nor the corrupters of his worship without witness; a succession of faithful ministers shall arise, a few indeed, here spoken of but as two, and clothed in sackcloth, deeply affected with the miseries of the church, and the persecutions of the faithful. *These are the two olive trees, &c.* like Zerubbabel and Joshua (*Zech. iv. 6—14.*), whom God will supply with the continual influences of his grace, and endue with light and zeal to remonstrate against the corruptions of the antichristian church. And if any attempt to hurt them, the word of the Lord, which proceedeth out of their mouths as fire, denounces spiritual and eternal death upon them. These have power, like Elijah, to shut up heaven, and to bring the heaviest plagues, like those of Egypt, on their

CHAP. XII.

A woman clothed with the sun, travaileth: the great red dragon standeth before her, ready to devour her child. When she is delivered, she fleeth into the wilderness. Michael and his angels fight with the dragon, and prevail. The dragon, being cast down unto the earth, persecuteth the woman.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND there appeared a great ^a wonder in heaven; ^b a woman ^c clothed with the

^a Or *sign*. Gen. 22. 14. Luke, at. 25. ^b Gal. 4. 26, 27. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Eph. 5. 25. Song, i—viii. ^c Rom. 13. 14. If. 60. 19. Ps. 24. 11. Mal. 4. 2. Mat. 5. 16. & 22. 11. ^d Gal. 6. 14. & 4. 9, 10. & 5. 1—4. or Song. 7. 1. Tit. 2. 11, 12. ^e Ch. 1. 20. & 2. 14. Eph. 2. 20. Prov. 4. 4—9. ^f Gal. 4. 19. 1 Cor. 4. 15. Mat. 28. 10. If. 54. 1. & 60. 22. & 66. 8. Acts, ii—xx. Ch. 6. 2. ^g Or *sign*. ^h Ch. 13. 12. & 10. 2. & 17. 3, 9, 10, 12. & 6. 4, 10, 11. & 16. 5, 6. & 18. 24. Dan. 2. 40. & 7. 7, 19. & 11. 30—35. ⁱ Ch. 9. 10. Dan. 8. 10. with ch. 2. 20. 1 John, 2. 19. Ch. 17. 18.

their enemies; even the spiritual plagues of a famine of the word, obduracy of heart, and all the dreadful judgments which, in answer to their prayers, God will inflict on their persecutors, and which they denounce upon them, not from a spirit of revenge, but for the vindication of God's injured honour.

3. The witnesses shall be slain, while they are performing their testimony, though God will always raise up others, and avenge their blood on their persecutors; and their dead bodies shall be forbidden burial, and be insulted in the streets of that great city, spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified, Rome papal being as notorious for filthiness as Sodom, and, like Egypt, the cruel oppressor of God's people, and red with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, which is, as it were, afresh to crucify him.

Some suppose that this slaying of the witnesses by the antichristian beast and his adherents, is yet to come; and that the *three days and a half*, refer not to the time and times and half times, or 1260 years, the whole period of popery, but to some more dreadful persecution, and general prevalence of the power of antichrist, which, towards the close of this period, will be permitted; and that for a short space the inhabitants of the papal countries will congratulate each other, as if they had now finally triumphed over those who troubled their consciences with remonstrances against their impieties, idolatries, and all their abominations. See the Annotations and the Appendix.

4. After three days and an half, at the close of the period of 1260 years, the witnesses are miraculously raised to life, to the terror of their enemies; not the same persons, but others, endued with their spirit, boldness, and zeal; and God, in testimony of his approbation, caught them up to heaven in the sight of their enemies, not literally, but figuratively; he exalted them to a state of eminent dignity and safety, above all the malice of their foes: and thereupon a great earthquake shook down a great part of the city of the beast, and seven thousand men were slain; a vast number of his dependants and abettors, men of note and influence, fell, and his jurisdiction was in part demolished; while the remnant, affrighted by these prodigies, renounced their idolatries and superstitions, and, converted to the faith of Jesus, glorified God. Note: (1.) The enemies of God's witnessing servants shall one day.

sun, and ^d the moon under her feet, and upon her head ^e a crown of twelve stars:

2 ^f And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another ^g wonder in heaven; and behold ^h a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his ⁱ tail drew the third part of the

with confusion, behold their exaltation, and know that God hath sent them. (2.) When God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants thereof should learn righteousness; and they who fly to God for refuge, and give him glory, shall be saved from fear of evil.

2dly, The seventh trumpet sounds, and lo, the third and the last woe is denounced, when the Mahometan and papal powers, the Eastern and Western antichrists, are to be utterly destroyed. On which,

1. Loud acclamations of joy fill all the courts of heaven; the wished for time is come, when Jesus shall erect his throne, and all nations shall bow before the sceptre of his grace, owning him as their rightful King, who shall reign over his faithful saints for ever and ever. And for this, the four-and-twenty elders pour forth their thanks to the Lord, and, in humble adoration, prostrate themselves before his throne, ascribing praise to the eternal and almighty Jesus, that he hath now signally made bare his arm, avenging the deaths of his martyred servants, and, in return for the indignation shewn by the antichristian persecutors, has poured forth his vials of wrath upon them; while his faithful ministers and people now receive their glorious reward; they see their foes become their footstool; and enjoy peace, comfort, mutual communion, and free liberty of all gospel ordinances, in their highest purity. And every gracious soul, looking forward to this happy season, cannot but pray that God would hasten it in his good time.

2. The temple of God was opened in heaven; the exercise of the true evangelical worship was now restored; and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament, intimating the peculiar manifestations of God's presence to all his people, the boldness they will have to approach the holiest of all, and the sweet communion which they shall enjoy with the Lord, seeing him, as it were, face to face.

3. And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail, as if the dissolution of all things was at hand; intimating the entire demolition of all the church's enemies. Note; Though the struggle be long and sharp, the gospel shall be finally triumphant, and the truth at last prevail over all opposition.

CHAP. XII.

Ver. 1.] We come now to a second representation of the same third period of prophecy; that is, a state of the church.

stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And ^k she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of

iron: and ^l her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6 And ^m the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

^l Pet. 5. 8. John, 8. 44. Exod. 1. 16. ^k Mat. 2. 1. Acts, 2. 41, 47. & 4. 4. & 5. 14. & 6. 7. & ii—xix. 1 Cor. 12. 22. Pl. 2. 9. Ch. 2. 26, 27. & 19. 15. II. 9. 6, 7. ^l Mark, 16. 19. Pl. 9. 1. & cxlix. Dan. 7. 22, 27. ^m Ch. 11. 2, 3. John, 16. 33. Ver. 14. 2 Tim. 3. 11. with Pl. 87. 5, 6. Mat. 16. 18. Jer. 3. 15.

church and world, in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, or while the *woman*, who fled into her place in the wilderness, was nourished there for a *time, and times, and half a time*. See ver. 6 and 14. As the former representation, ch. xi. in which the *witnesses* were to prophesy, shewed that true religion should be preserved among a few faithful confessors, though in a constant state of severe persecution; so this represents the state of the church, under the figure of a woman persecuted so as to fly into desert places to hide herself, yet preserved and fed there, notwithstanding all the endeavours of a furious *serpent*, ready to destroy her. This plainly describes an afflicted and persecuted state of the church in general, during this period; in which false and idolatrous worship will greatly prevail, and the faithful profession of the true religion will expose men to great danger. That, however, still the true worshippers of God should be preserved, though in an obscure state, and be enabled, notwithstanding all opposition, to keep and maintain the truth unto the end. Bishop Newton observes, that most of the best commentators divide this book of *Revelation* into two parts;—the *book sealed with seven seals*, and the *little book*. But it happens unluckily, that, according to their division, the lesser book is made to contain as much, or more than the larger; whereas, in truth, the *little book* is nothing more than a part of the *sealed book*, and is added as a codicil, or appendix to it. We would also (continues the Bishop,) divide the *Revelation* into two parts, or rather the book so divides itself: for the former part proceeds, as we have seen, in a regular and successive series, from the apostle's days to the consummation of all things. Nothing can be added, but it must fall somewhere or other within the compass of this period: it must, in some measure, be a resumption of the same subjects; and this latter part may most properly be considered as an enlargement and illustration of the former. Several things which were only touched upon, and delivered in dark hints before, require to be more copiously handled, and placed in a stronger light. It was said, that the *beast* should make war against the *witnesses*, and overcome them: who, or what the *beast* is, we may reasonably conjecture indeed, but the apostle himself will more surely explain. The transactions of the seventh trumpet are all summed up and comprised in a few verses; but we shall see the particulars branched out, and enlarged into as many chapters. In short, this latter part is designed as a supplement to the former; to complete what was deficient, to explain what was dubious, to illustrate what was obscure: and as the former describes more particularly the destinies of the Roman empire, so this latter describes more especially those of the Christian church.

A woman, clothed with the sun,] It was a well known custom, at the time of this prophecy, to represent the several virtues, and public societies, by the figure of a *woman* in some peculiar dress; many of which are to be seen on the Roman coins. In particular, *salus*, the emblem of *security* and *protection*, is represented as a woman, standing upon a globe, to represent the safety and security of the world under the emperor's care. The consecration of the Roman emperors is expressed on their coins by a *moon* and *stars*; to signify a degree of glory superior to any on earth. Never was any image more expressive of honour and dignity than this in the vision before us. To stand in the midst of a glory, made by the beams of the sun; and upon the moon, as above the low condition of this sublunary world,—and to wear a *crown* set with the *stars* of heaven, as jewels; is something infinitely more sublime than any thing whereby antiquity has represented its societies, its virtues, or deities. The reader may further observe in this representation, if he please, with Mr. Mede, the church shining round about, by the faith of Christ the *Sun of righteousness*; treading under foot the rudiments of the world, whether Jewish shadows, or Gentile superstitions; and glorious, with the ensigns of the apostolical offspring. Or, he may consider, with Mr. Waple, that the apostolical doctrine is the chief ornament, crown, and glory of the church. But, however he shall choose one or other of these more particular allusions, this will remain a sure general meaning, That the blessings of true religion, in the revelation of Jesus Christ, as taught by his apostles, that is, of the true Christian faith, deserve the highest esteem and honour, however they may be despised by the world. See on ver. 6.

Ver. 2. And she being with child cried, &c.] *And she crieth in sorrow and travail, having a child to bring forth.* The metaphor of a mother blessed with a fair posterity, is very proper to represent the public happiness, by an increase both of numbers and strength. It is an easy figure to consider the church as a mother, and the converts to truth and righteousness, the true worshippers of God, as her children. See on ver. 6.

Ver. 5. And her child was caught up, &c.] Grotius, with great probability, thinks that these expressions allude to the preservation of Joath, in the time of Athaliah's usurpation, when she put to death all the rest of the royal family; 2 Kings, xi. 2, 3.

Ver. 6. And the woman fled] Bishop Newton, explaining this and the foregoing verses, observes, that St. John resumes his subject from the beginning, and represents the church, ver. 1, 2. as a *woman*, and a mother bearing children unto Christ. She is *clothed with the sun*;—invested with

7 ^a And there was war in heaven: ^a Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And ^p prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And ^a the great dragon was cast out, that

old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength,

^a Mat. 16. 24. Eph. 6. 12. ^o Dan. 10. 13, 21. & 12. 1. Jude, 9. ^l If. 55. 4. Heb. 2. 10. Ver. 3, 9. Ch. 1. 20. Mat. 16. 24. & 10. 17, 18. John, 16. 2, 3. ^p Ver. 11. Ch. 6. 10—17. Pf. 37. 10. & 110. 2—6. Dan. 11. 35. Luke, 10. 18. ^q Ver. 3. Ch. 20. 2, 3. Gen. 3. 1, 4. 2 Cor. 11. 3. Job, 1. 6. & 2. 1. 1 Pet. 5. 8. ^r Luke, 10. 18. John, 12. 31. Ch. 6. 10—17. Pf. 110. 5, 6. ^s Ch. 11. 15. & 14. 1—4. & 16. 20, 24. & 19. 1—7. Obad. 21. Pf. lxxii. xcvi—c. cx. cxlii. ^t If. lii. lix. lx—lxxiii.

with the rays of Jesus Christ, the *Sun of righteousness*; having the moon, the Jewish new moons and festivals, as well as all sublunary things, under her feet; and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; an emblem of her being under the light and guidance of the twelve apostles. And she, being with child, cried, *travailing in birth*, &c. St. Paul has made use of the same metaphor, and applied it to his preaching and propagating the gospel in the midst of persecution and tribulation, Gal. iv. 19. But the words of St. John are much stronger, and more emphatically express the pangs and struggles which the church endured from the first publication of the gospel, to the time of Constantine the Great; when she was in some measure eased of her pains, and brought forth a deliverer. At that time (ver. 3.) *there appeared a great red dragon*, &c. This is a well known symbol of the *Devil and Satan*, and of his agents and instruments. We find the kings and people of Egypt, who were the great persecutors of the primitive church of Israel, distinguished by this title in Pf. lxxiv. 13. Ifai. li. 9. Ezek. xxix. 3. and with as much reason and propriety may the people and emperors of Rome, who were the great persecutors of the primitive church of Christ, be called by the same name, as they were actuated by the same principle; for that the Roman empire was here figured, the characters and attributes of the dragon plainly evince. He is a *great red dragon*; and purple, or scarlet, was the distinguishing colour of the Roman emperors, consuls, and generals; as it has been since of the popes and cardinals. His *seven heads* (as the angel, ch. xvii. 9, 10. explains the vision,) allude to the seven mountains upon which Rome was built, and to the seven forms of government which successively prevailed there. His *ten horns* testify the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided; and the *seven crowns upon his heads*, denote that at this time the imperial power was in Rome,—the “high city, seated on *seven hills*, which pre-“sides over the whole world,” as Propertius describes it, lib. iii. eleg. xi. ver. 57. His *tail also*, ver. 4. *drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth*; that is, he subjected the third part of the princes and potentates of the earth; and the Roman empire, as we have shewn before, is represented as the *third part of the world*. He stood before the woman who was ready to be delivered, to devour her child, &c. and the Roman emperors and magistrates kept a jealous eye over the Christians from the beginning. As Pharaoh laid snares for the male children of the Hebrews, and Herod for the infant Christ, the Son of Mary; so did the Roman dragon for the mystic Christ, the son of the church, that he might destroy him even in his infancy.

But notwithstanding the jealousy of the Romans, the gospel was widely diffused and propagated, and the church brought many children unto Christ, and in time such as were promoted to the empire. *She brought forth a man child*, &c. ver. 5. As the word rendered *child*, properly signifies a son, it could not possibly signify any thing but a male; but the addition of the word *man* or *male* to it, might be intended to express the vigorous constitution of the child, and what may be called a *masculine form*, which may or may not be ascribed to the male sex. It was predicted that Christ should *rule over the nations*, Pf. ii. 9. but Christ, who is himself invisible in the heavens, ruleth visibly in the Christian magistrates, princes, and emperors: it was therefore promised before to Christians in general, ch. ii. 26, 27. *He that overcometh*, &c. But it should seem that Constantine was here particularly intended, for whose life the *dragon* (or Galerius,) laid many snares; but he providentially escaped them all, and, notwithstanding all opposition, was *caught up to the throne of God*;—was not only secured by the divine protection, but was advanced to the imperial throne, called *the throne of God*; for, *there is no power but of God*, &c. Rom. xiii. 1. He too *ruled all nations with a rod of iron*, for he had not only the Romans, who before had persecuted the church, under his dominion, but he also subdued the Scythians, Sarmatians, and other barbarous nations, who had never before been subject to the Roman empire. And Spanheim informs us, that there are still extant medals and coins of Constantine with these inscriptions, “The subduer of the barbarous nations;”—“The conqueror of all nations;”—“Every where a conqueror;” and the like. What is added in this verse, of *the woman’s flying into the wilderness*, &c. is said by way of *prolepsis*, or anticipation; for the *war in heaven between Michael and the dragon*, and other subsequent events, were prior in order of time to the flight of the woman into the wilderness: but before the prophet passes on to a new subject, he gives a general account of what happened to the woman afterwards, and enters more into the particulars in their proper place.

Ver. 7—12. *And there was war in heaven*, &c.] It might reasonably be presumed, that all the powers of idolatry would be strenuously exerted against the establishment of Christianity, and especially against the establishment of a Christian on the imperial throne; and the struggles and contentions between the Heathen and Christian religions are represented by *war in heaven*, between the angels of darkness and the angels of light, *Michael* the archangel being at the head of the latter. Michael and the good angels were the invisible agents, under the great Jehovah,

and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And 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.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe 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.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed

¹ Job, 1. 9. & 2. 5. Zech. 3. 1. Mat. 10. 18. John, 16. 2. ² 2 Cor. 10. 3—5. Rom. 8. 33, 34, 36, 37. Eph. 6. 16. Luke, 14. 26. Act, 20. 24. Heb. 11. 35—38. ³ Pf. 95. 11. Il. 49. 17. Ch. 13. 20. & 14. 1—4. & 15. 2—4. ⁴ Ch. 8. 13. & 11. 10. & 10. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Mr. 12. 47. ⁵ 2 Pet. 3. 8. Heb. 10. 37. Luke. 18. 8. Ch. 22. 12, 20. ⁶ John, 16. 33. ⁷ 2 Tim. 3. 12. Gen. 3. 15. Pf. 37. 14. Ver. 4, 5. ⁸ Exod. 19. 4. Deut. 32. 12, 12. Il. 40. 31. & 63. 9. & 60. 8. Ver. 6. Pf. 91. 1—16. ⁹ Dan. 7. 25. & 12. 7, 11. Ch. 11. 2, 3. Ver. 6. ch. 13. 5. i. e. 1260 years. ¹⁰ Pf. 42. 7. & 14. 4, 5. & 18. 4. Eph. 4. 14. ¹¹ 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11. Il. 8. 7. & 23. 2. & 59, 19. ¹² Ver. 9, 12. Ch. 1. 7. Pf. 17. 14. with Gen. 4. 11. Numb. 16. 30.

on one side, and the devil and his angels were on the other. The visible actors in the cause of Christianity, were the believing emperors and the ministers of the word, —the martyrs and confessors; and the supporters of idolatry were the persecuting emperors and heathen magistrates, together with the whole train of priests and sophists. This contest lasted several years, and the final issue of it was, (ver. 8, 9.) that the Christian religion prevailed over the Heathen. Our Saviour said, upon his disciples casting devils out of the bodies of men, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven*, Luke, x. 18. In the same figure Satan fell from heaven, and was cast out into the earth, when he was thrust out of the imperial throne: and his angels were cast out with him, ver. 9. Not only all the heathen priests and officers, civil and military, were cashiered; but their very gods and demons, who before were adored, became the subjects of contempt and execration. It is very remarkable, that Constantine himself, and the Christians of his time, described his conquest under the same image; as if they had understood that this prophecy had received its accomplishment in him. Moreover, the picture of Constantine was set up over the palace-gate with the cross over his head; and under his feet *the great enemy of mankind, who persecuted the church by the means of impious tyrants, in the form of a dragon*, transixed with a dart through the midst of his body, and falling headlong into the midst of the sea; in allusion, as it is said expressly, to the divine oracles in the books of the prophets, where the evil spirit is called the *dragon*, and the *crooked serpent*. Upon this victory of the church, there is introduced, ver. 10. a triumphant hymn of thanksgiving for the depression of idolatry, and the exaltation of the true religion. It was not by temporal means of arms that the Christians obtained this victory, (ver. 11.) but by spiritual; by the death of their Redeemer; by their constant profession of the truth, and by their patient suffering of all kinds of tortures, even unto death; and the blood of the martyrs has been often called

the seed of the church. This victory is matter of joy and triumph to the blessed angels and glorified saints in heaven (ver. 12.): but still new woes are threatened to the inhabitants of the earth. For though the dragon was deposed, yet was he not destroyed; though idolatry was depressed, yet was it not wholly overthrown: there were still many Pagans intermixed with the Christians, and the devil would excite fresh troubles; because he knoweth that he hath but a short time; that is, it would not be long before the pagan religion would be totally abolished, and the Christian religion prevail in all the Roman empire. The expression, ver. 10. of the accuser of the brethren, &c. is taken from Job and Zechariah; where the scriptures, speaking after the manner of men, represent Satan as accusing good and pious men before God. This he does by aggravating their faults and imperfections, and by exciting wicked men to raise false accusations against them; as was notoriously done against the primitive Christians. Mr. Daubuz observes, that the accuser, according to the custom of the Eastern nations, and in some cases by the law of Moses, was appointed to be the executioner. See Deut. xiii. 9. So that when the church is no longer in danger of persecution for the profession of Christianity, Satan is said to be thrown down, as having lost the power of accusing and executing such as make open profession of it.

Ver. 13—17. And when the dragon saw, &c.] When the dragon was thus deposed from the imperial throne, and cast unto the earth, he still continued to persecute the church with equal malice, though not with equal power. He made several attempts to restore the pagan idolatry in the reign of Constantine, and afterwards in the reign of Julian; he traduced and abused the Christian religion, by such writers as Hierocles, Libanius, and others of the same stamp and character; he rent and troubled the church with heresies and schisms; he stirred up the favourers of the Arians, to persecute and destroy the orthodox Christians. But the church was still under the protection of the empire,

up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the ^f dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to ^g make war with the

remnant of her seed, ^h which keep the commandments of God, and ⁱ have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

^f 1 Pet. 5. 8. John, 8. 44. ^g 1 Sam. 18. 8. ^h Ch. 13. 2, 5—7, 16, 17. & 16. 6. & 17. 6. & 18. 20. & 19. 2. & 9. 5—11. & 11. 7. Dan. 7. 21, 24, 25. & 11. 30—36. ⁱ Deut. 12. 32. Mat 23. 20. ^j 1 John, 5. 21. Ch. 14. 12. ^k Ch. 6. 9. & 19. 10. ^l 1 Cor. 2. 1, 2. ^m 1 John, 5. 10. If. 8. 16, 20.

empire, (ver. 14) and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle:—as God said to the children of Israel, “*Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle’s wings,*” &c. Exod. xix. 4. so the church was supported and carried, as it were, upon an eagle’s wings. But the similitude is the more proper in this case; an eagle being the Roman ensign, and the two wings alluding probably to the division that was then made of the eastern and western empire. In this manner was the church protected, and these wings were given, *that she might fly into the wilderness,*—into a place of retirement and security, *from the face of the serpent;*—not that she fled into the wilderness at this time, but several years afterwards;—and *there she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time;* that is, three prophetic years and a half; which is the same period with the thousand two hundred and threescore days or years before mentioned, ver. 6. So long the church is to remain in a desolate and afflicted state, during the reign of antichrist; as Elijah, while idolatry prevailed in Israel, was secretly fed and nourished *three years and six months in the wilderness;* 1 Kings, xvii. xviii. Luke, iv. 25. 26. But before the woman fled into the wilderness, *the serpent cast out of his mouth water,* &c. ver. 15. with intent to drown, or wash her away. *Waters,* in the style of the Apocalypse, ch. xvii. 15. signify *people and nations;* so that here was a great inundation of various nations, excited by the dragon, or the friends and patrons of the old idolatry, to oppress and overwhelm the Christian religion. Such appeared plainly to have been the design of the dragon, when Stilicho invited the barbarous Heathen nations, the Goths, Alans, Suevi, and Vandals, to invade the Roman empire, hoping to raise his son Eucherius to the throne; who, from a boy, was an enemy to the Christians, and threatened to signalize the beginning of his reign with the restoration of the Pagan, and the abolition of the Christian religion. Nothing indeed was more likely to produce the ruin and utter subversion of the Christian church, than the irruptions of so many barbarous Heathen nations into the Roman empire. But the event proved contrary to human appearance and expectation; *the earth swallowed up the flood;* (ver. 16.) the barbarians were rather swallowed up by the Romans, than the Romans by the barbarians; the Heathen conquerors, instead of imposing their own, submitted to the religion of the conquered Christians; and they not only embraced the religion, but affected even the laws, the manners, the customs, the language, and the very name of Romans. This course not succeeding according to probable expectation, the dragon did not therefore desist from his purpose, (ver. 17.) but only took another method of persecuting the true sons of the church, as we shall see in the next chapter. It is said, *that he went to make war with the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments,* &c. which implies that

at this time there was only a remnant; that corruptions were greatly increased, and “the faithful were diminished from among the children of men.”

Inferences, and REFLECTIONS.—Whatever concealed and unknown wonders may be intimated in some parts of this grand and awful vision, in others it contains very obvious and important instructions.—While we are beholding this emblematical representation of the Christian church, let us adore the great original *Sun of righteousness,* who has decked her with his glorious beams, and will at length cause every faithful member of this blessed society, to *shine forth as the Sun in his Father’s kingdom.* And let us be desirous of treading this changeable and uncertain world under our feet. Let us thankfully own the hand which has crowned the church with the apostles, as with a diadem; and, taught by their precepts, and inspired by their example, let us prepare ourselves for that sacred war, to which we are called, the war against the devil and his confederate hosts. It is, indeed, under a very formidable type that he is here represented:—his cruelty, his subtilty, his experience in all the arts of destruction, are painted out with dreadful propriety, in *the old serpent, the great dragon;* but, formidable as his violence, or artful and potent as the confederacy of infernal spirits may be, here is a victory gained over him, which calls for the congratulation of all the armies of the Lord: *the dragon and his angels are cast out;* the saints are enabled to triumph over him, feeble and impotent as they are. But, in what way are they able to overcome him? *It is by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.* Instructive and edifying admonition! Let this be our confidence, even the banner of the cross, the blood of the Saviour, who died upon it; and, in this signal, we shall come off conquerors too; faith in him shall be our shield; the word of God shall be our sword, the sword of the Spirit; and Satan, thus resisted, shall flee before us, (James, iv. 7.): thus, vain will be the floods of temptation, which he may attempt to throw out of his mouth, to debauch our principles, or practices; they shall be entirely swallowed up. And though the church be for a while in the wilderness, it shall be happily sheltered, and tenderly nourished, even all the faithful saints of God, till the time which he has appointed for its triumph. In the mean while, however the sons of malice, under the instruction and influence of the great *accuser of the brethren,* may defame them: however persecution may attack and harass them; let them be courageous and undaunted, not loving their lives even to the death, in the cause of Christ; for then they shall rise again to certain victory and glory; nor shall death bring down their heads so low, as to render them unworthy of wearing a crown of life.

CHAP. XIII.

A beast riseth out of the sea with seven heads and ten horns, to whom the dragon giveth his power. Another beast cometh up out of the earth; causeth an image to be made of the former beast, and that men should worship it, and receive his marks.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a ^a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the ^b name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw ^c was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the ^d dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw ^e one of his heads as it were

^a Dan. 7. 1, 3, 7, 8, 20, 23, 24. Ch. 12. 3. & 17. 7—12. & 11. 7. 2 Thess. 2. 3—12. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. 2 Tim. 3. 1—6. & 4. 3, 4. ^b Or names. Ch. 17. 5. Ver. 5, 6. If. 65. 7. Ezek. 20. 27, 28. ^c Dan. 7. 4—6, 21, 24, 25. Ch. 17. 6. Ver. 7. Ch. 18. 24. & 16. 6. & 12. 17. ^d Ch. 12. 9, 3. 2 Thess. 2. 7, 4. Ch. 16. 10. & 7. 18. ^e Ch. 12. 3. Ver. 1. Ch. 17. 7, 10, 11. ^f Gr. slain. ^g Ver. 8. Ch. 17. 2, 8, 13, 17. 2 Thess. 2. 3—12. 2 Tim. 3. 1—6. & 4. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 3. 1—3. Luke, 2. 1. ^h Ch. 9. 20. & 18. 18. Ver. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 20. 2 Thess. 2. 4. Dan. 11. 36—39. Ch. 18. 18. & 11. 2. Pf. 89. 8. ⁱ Dan. 7. 2, 20, 25. & 11. 36—39. ^j Or to make war. ^k Dan. 7. 25. & 11. 36—39. 2 Thess. 2. 4. 1 Tim. 4. 1—3. 2 Tim. 4. 1—6. & 4. 3, 4. ^l John. 1. 14. Heb. 8. 2. Ch. 21. 3. Mat. 16. 18. ^m Dan. 7. 21, 25. Ch. 11. 7. & 17. 6. & 18. 24. 2 Thess. 2. 10, 3.

* wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and ^f all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they ^g worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

5 ^h And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him ^j to continue ⁱ forty and two months.

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

7 ^m And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

CHAP. XIII.

Ver. 1.] In this chapter we have a further account of the state of the church and world, in *the third period*. The representation of the *wild beasts*, in this vision, refers to the same times with the two former visions, of the *witnesses* prophesying in sackcloth, and the *woman* flying into the wilderness. *Power is given unto the beast to continue, or to make war, and prevail forty and two months.* This vision gives a more distinct account of the manner and means by which the true church and worshippers of God should be persecuted, and so greatly oppressed, as is represented by the woman's flying into the wilderness, and the slaying of the witnesses: so that this representation, in conjunction with the two former, will afford us a sufficient description of the state of providence and the church, with the useful lessons of caution, patience, and faithfulness, in times of great corruption and danger: which seem to be the principal intentions of the Spirit of prophecy, in the whole of these revelations. See the following note.

Ver. 1—8. And I stood upon the sand, &c.] Here the beast is described at large, who was only mentioned before, ch. xi. 7. And a *beast* in the prophetic style, is a tyrannical, idolatrous person or empire. The kingdom of Christ is never represented under the image of a *beast*. As the prophet, Dan. vii. 2, 3. beheld *four great beasts*, representing the four great empires, *come up from a stormy sea* (that is, from the commotions of the world); so St. John, ver. 1. saw this *beast*, in like manner, *rise up out of the sea*. He was said, chap. xi. 7. to *ascend out of the abyss, or bottomless pit*; and it is said, ch. xvii. 8. that he shall *ascend out of the abyss, or bottomless pit*; but here he is said to *ascend*

out of the sea; so that the *sea*, and *abyss*, or *bottomless pit*, are in these passages the same. No doubt is to be made that this beast was designed to represent the Roman empire; for thus far both ancients and moderns, Protestants and Papists, are agreed: the only controversy is, whether it was Rome *pagan* or *Christian*, imperial or papal. St. John saw this *beast rising* out of the sea, but the Roman empire was risen and established long before St. John's time; and therefore this must be the Roman empire, not in its then present, but in some future shape and form; and it arose in another shape and form, after it was broken to pieces by the incursions of the northern nations. The beast had *seven heads and ten horns*; which are well known marks of the Roman empire; the *seven heads* alluding to the *seven mountains* whereon Rome was seated, and to the *seven forms of government* which successively prevailed there; and the *ten horns* signifying the *ten kingdoms*, into which the Roman empire was divided. It is remarkable, that the *dragon had seven crowns upon his heads*, ch. xii. 3. but the beast has *upon his horns ten crowns*; so that there has been in the mean while a revolution of power, from the *heads* of the dragon to the *horns* of the beast; and the sovereignty, which before was exercised by Rome alone, was now transferred and divided among ten kingdoms: but the Roman empire was not divided into ten kingdoms till after it was become Christian. Although the heads had lost their crowns, yet they still retained *the names of blasphemy*. In all its heads, in all its forms of government, Rome was still guilty of idolatry and blasphemy. Imperial Rome was called, and delighted to be called, *the eternal or heavenly city, the goddess, and the goddess of the earth*; and she had her temples and altars

8 ⁿ And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in ^o the book of life of the ^p Lamb slain ^q from the foundation of the world.

^a Ver. 3. ^o Ch. 3. 5. & 17. 8. Phil. 4. 3. Ch. 20. 12. & 21. 27. If. 4. 3. Dan. 12. 1.

^p John, 1. 29, 36. Ch. 5. 6—13. & 7. 17.

^q Eph. 1. 4. or 1 Pet. 1. 19, 20.

altars with incense and sacrifice offered up to her: and how papal Rome likewise has arrogated to herself divine titles and honours, will be shewn in the following part of this description. As the fourth beast, Dan. vii. 7. was without a name, and *devoured and brake in pieces* the three former; so *this beast* is also without a name, (ver. 2.) and partakes of the nature and qualities of the three former; having the *body of a leopard*, which was the third beast, or Grecian empire; and the *feet of a bear*, which was the second beast, or Persian empire; and *the mouth of a lion*, which was the first beast, or Babylonian empire; and consequently this must be the same as Daniel's *fourth* beast, or the Roman empire. But still it is not the same beast, the same empire entirely, but with some variation. *And the dragon gave him his power*,—or his armies; and *his seat*,—or, his imperial throne, and great authority, or jurisdiction over all the parts of his empire. The *beast*, therefore, is the successor and substitute of the *dragon*, or of the idolatrous heathen Roman empire: and what other idolatrous power has succeeded to the heathen emperors in Rome, all the world is a judge and a witness. The dragon, having failed in his purpose of restoring the old heathen idolatry, delegates his power to the *beast*; and thereby introduces a new species of idolatry, nominally different, but essentially the same;—the worship of angels and saints, instead of the gods and demi-gods of antiquity. Another mark whereby the beast was peculiarly distinguished, was, *one of his heads, as it were wounded*, &c. ver. 3. It will appear hereafter that this head was the sixth head; for five were fallen, ch. xvii. 10. before St. John's time: and the sixth head was that of the Cæsars or emperors; there having been before, kings, and consuls, and dictators, and decemvirs, and military tribunes with consular authority. This sixth head *was as it were wounded unto death*, when the Roman empire was overturned by the northern nations, and an end was put to the very name of emperor in Momyllus Augustulus; or rather, as the government of the Gothic kings was the same as that of the emperors, with only a change of the name, this head was more effectually *wounded to death*, when Rome was reduced to a poor dukedom, and made tributary to the exarchate of Ravenna. But, not only one of his heads was wounded to death, but his *deathly wound was healed*. If it was the sixth head which was wounded, that wound could not be healed by the rising of the seventh head; the same head which was wounded must be healed; and this was effected by the pope and people of Rome revolting from the exarchate of Ravenna, and proclaiming Charles the Great, Augustus and emperor of the Romans. Then the wounded imperial head was *healed* again, and has subsisted ever since. At this time, partly through the pope, and partly through the emperor, supporting and strengthening each other, the Roman name again became formidable: and *all the world wondered after the beast, and they worshipped the dragon which gave power to the beast*, &c. ver. 4. No kingdom or empire was like that of the beast; it had not

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a parallel upon earth, and it was in vain for any to *resist* or *oppose* it; it prevailed and triumphed over all; and *all the world*, in submitting thus to the religion of the beast, did in effect submit again to the religion of the dragon; it being the old idolatry with only new names: for the worshipping of demons and idols is in effect the worshipping of devils. Wonderful as the beast was, his words and actions are no less wonderful, ver. 5—8. He perfectly resembles the *little horn*, Dan. vii. 8. 21. 25. On comparing the passage in the prophet with this before us, we find, that not only the same images, but also the same words, are employed; and the portraits being so perfectly alike, it might fairly be presumed, if there were no other argument, that they were both drawn for the same person: it is the Roman beast, in his last state, or under his seventh head. *And he hath a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies*: and what can be greater things and blasphemies than the claims of being “Universal bishop,” “Infallible judge of all controversies,” “Sovereign of kings,” “Vicegerent of Christ,” and “God upon earth?” He hath also *power to continue*, or rather, to *practise*, to prevail, and prosper *forty and two months*. It does not follow, that the beast is *to continue*, or *to exist* for no longer a term; but he is *to practise*, *to prosper*, and *prevail forty and two months*, as the holy city, ch. xi. 2. *is to be trodden down of the Gentiles forty and two months*, which are the one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or years, of the reign of antichrist. But if by the *beast* be understood the heathen Roman empire, that empire, instead of subsisting one thousand two hundred and sixty, did not subsist four hundred years after the date of this prophecy. After this account of the blasphemies of the beast, there follows a specification of particulars. *He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God*; (ver. 6.) blasphemy against God may not only consist in speaking dishonourably of the Supreme Being; but likewise in attributing to the creature what belongs to the Creator; which is often the sense of the word in scripture; as in Isai. lxv. 7. *He blasphemeth the name of God*, by assuming the divine titles and honours to himself, as it is expressed in Wild. xiv. 21. *He blasphemeth the tabernacle of God, his temple, and his church*, by calling true Christians, who are the house of God, schismatics and heretics, and anathematizing them accordingly. *He blasphemeth them that dwell in heaven, angels and glorified saints*, by idolatrous worship and impious adoration; and disgraces their acts, and vilifies their memories, by fabulous legends and lying wonders. *It was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them*, ver. 7. And who can make any computation, or even frame any conception, of the number of pious Christians who have fallen a sacrifice to the bigotry and cruelty of Rome? In the war of the Albigenses and Waldenses, there perished of these poor people, in France alone, *a million!* From the first institution of the Jesuits to the year 1480, that is, in little more than thirty years, *nine hundred thousand* Christians were slain. In the Netherlands alone, the Duke of Alva boasted, that within a few

6 I

years

9 ' If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 ' He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity : he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. ' Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

11 And ' I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth ; and he had ^x two horns like a lamb, and he ^y spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, ^z and causeth the earth

^x See ch. 2. 7, 11, 24, &c. ^y 1f. 33. 1. Mat. 7. 2. Exod. 21. 23—25. Gen. 9. 5, 6. Ezek. 39. 10. Mat. 26. 52. Ch. 11. 13. & 14. 7—20. & xvi—xix. 2 Theff. 2. 8. 2 Tim. 3. 8, 9. Dan. 7. 11, 22, 26. & 11. 45. ^z Ch. 14. 12. Heb. 10. 36, 37. & 6. 12. Hab. 2. 3. Pl. 27. 13. ¹ Ch. 11. 7. & 17. 8. 2 Theff. 2. 4—9. Ch. xv. v. Ver. 2. ² Mat. 28. 18. John, 1. 29, 36. ³ Ch. 2. 3, 4. Ver. 2. Ch. 11. 7. & 17. 6. ⁴ Ver. 14—17. 2 Theff. 2. 4.

years he had dispatched to the amount of thirty-six thousand souls by the hand of the common executioner. In the space of scarcely thirty years, the inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of tortures, one hundred and fifty thousand Christians! No wonder that the *beast* should, by these means, obtain an universal *authority over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*, and establish his dominion in all the countries of the western Roman empire; and that they should submit to his decrees, and adore his person, except the faithful few, whose names, as citizens of heaven, are enrolled in the registers of life. Let the Roman catholics boast, therefore, that theirs is the *Catholic church, and universal empire*; this is so far from being any evidence of the truth, that it is the very brand infix'd by the spirit of prophecy.

Ver. 9, 10. *If any man have an ear, &c.*] It was customary with our Saviour, when he would have his auditors pay a particular attention to what he had been saying, to add, *He who hath ears to hear, &c.* St. John, as our Lord's amanuensis, repeats the same admonition at the end of each of his seven epistles to the seven churches, ch. ii. iii. and here, in the conclusion of his description of the beast, *if any man have an ear, &c.* and certainly the description of the beast is deserving of the highest attention, upon many accounts; and particularly, because the right interpretation of this book turns upon it, as one of its main hinges. It is added by way of consolation to the church, that these enemies of God and Christ, represented under the *beast*, shall suffer the law of retaliation, and be as remarkably punished and tormented themselves as they punished and tormented others, ver. 10.—*Here is the patience and faith of the saints.* Of all the trials and persecutions of the church, this would be the most severe, and exceed those of the primitive times, both in degree and duration. See as above.

Ver. 11—18. *I beheld another beast, &c.*] From the description of the *ten horned beast*, or Roman state in general, the prophet passes to that of the *two horned beast*, or Roman church in particular. *The beast with ten crowned horns*, is the Roman empire, as divided into ten kingdoms; *the beast with two horns like a lamb*, is the Roman hierarchy, or body of the clergy regular and secular. This beast is called the *false prophet*, ch. xix. than which there cannot be a stronger or plainer argument to prove that false doctors or teachers were particularly designed. For *the false prophet* no more than the *beast* is a single man, but a body or succession of men, propagating false doctrines, and teaching lies for sacred-truths. As the first *beast* rose up out of the sea, that is, out of the wars and tumults of the world;

so this *beast* (ver. 11.) *groweth up out of the earth*, like plants, gradually, silently, and without noise. *He had two horns like a lamb*; he had, both regular and secular, the appearance of a lamb; he pretended to derive his powers from the Lamb of God, and to be like the lamb, all meekness and mildness. But *he spake as a dragon*; he had a voice of terror like the Roman emperors, in usurping divine titles, in commanding idolatry, and in persecuting and slaying the true worshippers of God, the faithful servants of Jesus Christ. He is an ecclesiastical person, but intermixeth himself much in civil affairs. He is the prime minister, adviser, and mover of the *first beast*, or the beast before mentioned:—*He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him*, ver. 12. He holdeth *imperium in imperio*, an empire within an empire; claims a temporal authority as well as a spiritual; and enforces canons and decrees with the sword of the civil magistrate. As the first beast concurs to maintain his authority, so he, in return, confirms and maintains the sovereignty and dominion of the first beast over his subjects; and *causeth the earth, and them who dwell therein, to worship the first beast, &c.* He supports tyranny, as he is by tyranny supported: he enslaves the consciences, as the first beast subjugates the bodies of men. Such is the power and authority of the beast. We shall now see what courses he pursues to establish it. *He doeth great miracles, &c.* (ver. 13.) He pretends, like other false prophets, to shew signs and wonders, and even to call fire from heaven, as Elias did, 2 Kings, i. 10. 12. His impostures too are so successful, that *he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, &c.* (ver. 14.) In this respect he resembles St. Paul's *man of sin*, 2 Theff. ii. 9. or rather, they are one and the same character, represented in different lights, and under different names. It is farther observable, that he is said to perform his miracles *in the sight of men*, in order to deceive them; and *in the sight of God*, to serve his cause, or promote his religion. Now miracles, visions, and revelations, are the mighty boast of the church of Rome; the contrivances of an artful cunning clergy, to impose upon an ignorant or credulous laity. Even *fire* is pretended to come down from heaven, as in the case of St. Anthony's fire, and other instances cited by Brightman, and other writers on the Revelation; and in solemn excommunications, which are called *thunders* of the church, and are performed with the ceremony of casting down burning torches from on high, as symbols and emblems of *fire from heaven*. Miracles are thought so necessary, that they are reckoned among the notes of the Catholic church: but if these miracles were all real,

and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 ^a And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to ^b them that dwell on the earth, ^c that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 ^d And he had power to give ^e life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and ^f cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, [†] to receive [‡] a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 [§] Here is wisdom. Let him that hath

^a Ch. 12. 9. & 16. 14. & 19. 20. Mat. 24. 24. 2 Theff. 2. 9, 10. Deut. 13. 2. 1 Kings, 18. 38. 2 Kings, 1. 10, 12. ^b Ver. 3, 8. Ch. 17. 15. ^c Dan. 7. 25. 2 Theff. 2. 4, 11, 12. Dan. 11. 36—39. Ver. 3, 4. ^d Dan. 7. 25. & 11. 36—39. 2 Theff. 2. 4. Ch. 17. 2—5. ^e Gr. *breath*. ^f Dan. 7. 21, 22. Ch. 11. 2, 7. & 17. 6. & 16. 5, 6. & 18. 20, 24. 2 Theff. 2. 4. [†] Gr. *to give*. [‡] Ch. 14. 9, 11. & 19. 20. & 20. 4. & 15. 2. with 7. 3. & 14. 1. Exod. 13. 3, 9, 16. Prov. 6. 21. [§] Ch. 15. 2. & 17. 9. with ch. 2. 17. Hosea, 14. 9. Pf. 107. 43.

we might from thence learn what opinion we ought to frame of them: and what then shall we say, if they are all fictions and counterfeits? They are so far from being any proof of the true church, that they are rather the proof of a false one; and, as we see, the distinguishing mark of antichrist. The influence of the *two horned beast*, or corrupted clergy, is farther seen, in persuading and inducing mankind to make an image of the beast, &c. that is, an image and representation of the Roman empire, which was wounded by the sword of the barbarous nations, and revived in the revival of a new emperor in the West. He had also power to give life and activity unto the image of the beast, ver. 15. It should not be a dumb and lifeless idol, but should speak and deliver oracles, as the statues of the heathen gods were feigned to do; and should cause to be killed as many as would not worship and obey it. This image and representation of the beast, most probably, is the Pope. He is properly the idol of the church. He represents in himself the whole power of the beast, and is the head of all authority, temporal as well as spiritual. He is no more than a private person, without power, and without authority, till the *two-horned beast*, or the corrupted clergy, by choosing him Pope, give life unto him, and enable him to speak and utter his decrees, and to persecute even to death as many as refuse to submit to him, and worship him. As soon as he is chosen Pope, he is clothed with the pontifical robes, and crowned, and placed upon the altar; and the cardinals come and kiss his feet, which ceremony is called *adoration*. They first elect, and then they worship him, as in the medals of Martin V. where two are represented as crowning the Pope, and two kneeling before him, with this inscription, *Quem creant, adorant*: "Whom they create, they adore." He is the principle of unity to the ten kingdoms of the beast, and causeth, as far as he is able, all who will not acknowledge his supremacy to be put to death. In short, he is the most perfect likeness of the ancient Roman emperors; is as great a tyrant in the Christian world, as they were in the Heathen; presides in the same city; usurps the same powers; affects the same titles; and requires the same universal homage and adoration. So

that the prophecy descends more and more to particulars, from the Roman state or ten kingdoms in general, to the Roman church or clergy in particular; and still more particularly to the person of the Pope, the head of the state as well as the church, the king of kings, as well as bishop of bishops. Other offices the *false prophet* performs to the beast, in subjecting all sorts of people to his obedience; by imposing certain terms of communion, and excommunicating all who dare, in the least article, dissent from him. He causeth all, both small and great,—to receive a mark, &c. (ver. 16, 17.) We must recollect, that it was customary among the ancients, for servants to receive the mark of their master; and soldiers, of their general; and those who were devoted to any particular deity, of the particular deity to whom they were devoted. These marks were usually impressed on their right hand, or on their foreheads, and consisted of some hieroglyphic character, or of the name expressed in vulgar letters, or of the name disguised in numerical letters, according to the fancy of the imposer. It is in allusion to this ancient practice and custom, that the symbol and profession of faith in the church of Rome, as subserving to superstition, idolatry, and tyranny, is called the *mark or character of the beast*; which character is said to be received in their forehead, when they make open profession of their faith; and in their right hand, when they live and act in conformity to it. If any dissent from the stated and authorized forms, they are condemned and excommunicated as heretics, and in consequence of that, they are no longer suffered to buy or sell;—they are interdicted from traffic and commerce, and all the benefits of civil society. Thus Hoveden informs us, that "William the Conqueror would not permit any one in his power to buy or sell any thing, whom he found disobedient to the apostolic see." So the canon of the council of Lateran, under Pope Alexander III. made against the Waldenses and Albigenses, enjoins, upon pain of anathemas, "that no one presume to entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or exercise traffic with them." The synod of Tours in France issued the like interdiction, as did Martin V. in his bull after the council of Constance.

understanding count the number of the beast : ber is six hundred threescore and six.
for it is the number of a man ; and his num-

In this respect the false prophet *spake as the dragon*. For the dragon, Dioclesian, published a like edict, "that no one should sell or administer any thing to the Christians, unless they had first burnt incense to the gods." Popish excommunications are therefore like heathen persecutions. Mention having been made of the *number of the beast*, or, *the number of his name*, (for they are both the same,) the prophet proceeds to inform us what that number is, leaving us from the *number* to collect the *name*. *Here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding, &c.* (ver. 18.) It is not therefore a vain and ridiculous attempt to search into this mystery; but, on the contrary, it is recommended to us upon the authority of an apostle. For it is the *number of a man*, it is a method of numbering practised among men; as *the measure of a man*, ch. xxi. 17. is such a measure as men commonly use. It was a practice among the ancients to denote names by numbers; of which many instances might be given, if it were necessary to prove it. It has likewise been the usual method in all God's dispensations, for the Holy Spirit to accommodate his expressions to the customs, fashions, and manners of the several ages. Since then this art and mystery of numbers was so much used by the ancients, it is less wonderful that the beast also should have his *number*; and there was this additional reason for this obscure manner of characterizing him in the time of St. John,—that no other manner would have been safe. *His number is six hundred and sixty-six*. Several names might be cited which contain this number: but it is evident that it must be some Greek or Hebrew name; and with the name also, the other qualities and properties of the beast must all agree. The name alone will not constitute an agreement; all other particulars must be perfectly applicable, and the name also must comprehend the precise number, six hundred and sixty-six. No name appears more proper and suitable, than that famous one mentioned by Iræneus, who lived not long after St. John's time, and was the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John. He says, "that the name *Lateinos* contains the number *six hundred and sixty-six*." *Lateinos*, with *ei*, is the true orthography; as the Greeks wrote the long *i* of the Latins, and as the Latins themselves wrote in former times. No objection therefore can be drawn from the spelling of the name, and the thing agrees to admiration. For, after the division of the empire, the Greeks and other Orientalists called the people of the Western church, or church of Rome, *Latins*, and they *latinize* in every thing: mass, prayers, litanies, canons, decretals, bulls, are conceived in *Latin*: the Papal councils speak *Latin*: women themselves pray in *Latin*; nor is the scripture read in any other language under Popery than *Latin*. In short all things are *Latin*; the Pope having communicated his language to the people under his dominion, as the mark and character of his empire. They themselves, indeed, choose rather to be called *Romans*, and more absurdly still, *Roman Catholics*: and probably the apostle, as he has made use of some Hebrew names in this book, (ch. ix. 11 xvi. 16.) so might he in this place likewise allude to the name in the Hebrew language.

Now Romiith is the Hebrew name for the *Roman beast*, or *Roman kingdom*; and this word, as well as the former word, *Lateinos*, contains the just and exact number of *six hundred and sixty-six*.

LATEINOS.

Λ — 30
Α — 1
Τ — 300
Ε — 5
Ι — 10
Ν — 50
Ο — 70
Σ — 200

666

ROMIITH.

ר — 200
י — 6
ב — 40
ו — 10
י' — 10
ת — 400

666

It is really surprising that there should be such a fatal coincidence in both names in both languages. And, perhaps, no other word, in any language whatever, can be found to express both the same number, and the same thing.

Inferences.—Whoever is the *beast* intended, and whatever be meant by *his image*, his character beyond all controversy is very odious and detestable; for he is represented as blaspheming the name of God and his tabernacle, and as making war with the saints. There have arisen such impious monsters in the Christian church; and none among them have been more openly and enormously wicked and profane, than those who have made the loudest pretensions to be the *vicegerents of Christ*, and invested with his whole authority. Many of the saints of God have seemed to have been overcome by his antichristian tyranny; many have been led into captivity; many have been slain with the sword: but those who took them captive, continuing impenitent, shall be taken, and the slayers slain. But let us be not troubled and offended, to discern these usurpations in the course of divine Providence prevailing, and the time actually come, in many parts of the world, in which men can neither buy nor sell, nor are permitted to enjoy any other natural or civil privilege, if they will not give up their names to the beast, receive his mark, and implicitly submit to his authority. The prophecy justly removes all offence which might be taken at the event; and, discerning its accomplishment, we may embolden our hopes, that the triumphs of divine justice over these ministers of the *dragon*, as they are also *foretold*, will be fulfilled with the like punctuality. And O, may the church of God be secured from their artifices, and fortified against their terrors; and, in his own due time, may he break the *jaw-bone of the wicked*! May he utterly disarm all the power and policy of those who take counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed; and, though their confederacies may seem to mock all human opposition, yet, at his appearance, they shall melt away as snow before the sun, when the time to remember *Sion, yea, the set time is come*. (Psal. cii. 13.)

CHAP. XIV.

The Lamb standeth on mount Sion with his company. An angel preacheth the gospel. The fall of Babylon. The harvest of the world, and putting in of the sickle. The vintage and wine press of the wrath of God.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I looked, and, lo, ^a a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and ^b with him an

^a John, 1. 29, 36. Ch. 5. 6—13. & 7. 9, 10, 14, 17. Pf. 2. 6. Heb. 12. 22, 24. ^b Ch. 7. 4—8. & 17. 13. & 19. 14. Luke, 12. 8. Heb. 4. 14. & 10. 23. & 12. 23, 24. ^c Ch. 1. 15. & 19. 1—7. & 11. 15. & 12. 10. with Mat. 7. 28. Mark, 1. 22. John, 7. 26. ^d Acts, 2. 37. & 24. 25. ^e Ch. 5. 8. & 15. 2. 1 Chron. 25. 1—7. Pf. 68. 25. ^f Ch. 5. 9. & 7. 16, 12. & 15. 3, 4. & 19. 1—7. & 4. 4—20. Pf. xcvi.—c.

hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And ^c I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as ^d the voice of a great thunder: and I heard ^e the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And ^f they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts,

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Another vision, relative to the same events as the foregoing, appears to St. John.

1. A beast rises out of the sea, with seven heads, ten horns, and crowns upon his horns, and names of blasphemy thereon; like a leopard, with the feet of a bear and the mouth of a lion, denoting the fierceness, cruelty, and strength of the antichristian, idolatrous, and blasphemous state, which should arise out of the commotions that had shaken the empire. To this beast, that is, to the Pope and his adherents, the devil would delegate his power and authority, enabling the man of sin to work his lying miracles, and establish his seat and capital at Rome, where, during the reign of Paganism, Satan especially dwelt.

2. A deadly wound was given to the beast; which some refer to the sacking of the city of Rome by the Goths, and the removal of the supreme authority from thence during the exarchate of Ravenna; and others, to the blow which the church of Rome received at the Reformation; and this wound was healed; either Rome itself, under the Papal government, rose to unexpected greatness, and was held in veneration by the wondering world; or, this may refer to the recovery of the Papal interests since the reformation; and which, it is supposed by some, will flourish for a very short time, as much as ever, before the final downfall of Popery.

3. The people, who wondered after the beast, worshipped the dragon; the idolatrous worship of the church of Rome being, in fact, the adoration of Satan himself; and they worshipped the beast, his delegate, ascribing divine honours and titles to the Pope, exalting him above all princes and potentates, and ascribing to him a kind of omnipotence upon earth: while he, by horrid blasphemies, assuming the very prerogatives of the most High God, pretended, by the plenitude of his power to forgive sins, to alter God's revealed will, to have dominion over men's consciences, and to enact canons equally binding as, or more obligatory than, the laws of God himself; blaspheming his name, and his tabernacle the church, and those that dwell in heaven, the citizens of the New Jerusalem, the faithful whom he anathematizes, or the saints and angels whose names he uses in his idolatrous worship. During the period of 1260 years his dominion will endure, and he will be permitted by divine Providence to make war with the saints who refuse to submit to his tyrannical yoke, and to overcome them. And all the inhabitants of the earth shall be so deluded with his artifices, or intimidated with his terrors,

that they shall worship him, and submit to his idolatrous decrees; that is, all, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain in promise from the foundation of the world, or, in other words, all who do not perseveringly yield to be saved by grace.

4. For the comfort of God's people, a solemn note of attention is added, and they are called to hear. This antichristian power, which enslaves and destroys others, shall as surely be subdued and destroyed in its turn; and God's saints, now with patience enduring their persecutions, must with faith confidently expect that this will be the issue. *Note*: It requires much faith and patience, in suffering times, to hold fast the promises of God, and wait their fulfilment.

2dly, Another beast, or the same power under another form, appears, like a lamb with two horns, the symbol of his dominion temporal and spiritual, who, with all pretended meekness and humility, has all the pride and rage of the old dragon, exercising all the power of the first beast, and causing all the earth to worship him, and own his universal, temporal as well as spiritual, jurisdiction, with lying miracles supporting his idolatrous worship, deceiving the inhabitants of the earth, and leading them to erect the image of the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed, and pay their adoration to the idol, blindly and implicitly submitting to the authority of the Pope, and the constitutions of Paganism revived in the church of Rome; giving life to the image of the beast, enforcing all the canons and laws of his idolatrous worship, by excommunications, fire, and sword; making it death to refuse obedience to the Papal power; setting a mark upon all the votaries of the beast, and excluding those who would not submit to make profession of this system of error and blasphemy, from all intercourse with the worshippers of the beast, as unworthy of every blessing of society. *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man, and his number is six hundred threescore and six*; concerning which see the Annotations and the Appendix. However dark and mysterious these prophetic hints may be, one thing we are sure of, which is plain and obvious, that God will always maintain his own cause in the world in defiance of opposition, and that all the enemies of his church shall finally become her footstool.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1.] The description of the melancholy state of the church and world, during this third period, in the foregoing.

and the elders: and ^a no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were ^b redeemed from the earth.

4 ⁱ These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which ^k follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These ^{*} were redeemed from

among men, *being* the ¹ first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And ^m in their mouth was found no guile: for they are ⁿ without fault before the throne of God.

6 And I saw ^o another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having ^p the everlasting gospel

^a Judges, 12. 6. ¹ Cor. 2. 14. Mat. 11. 25, & 13. 11. ^b Ch. 5. 9. ¹ Pet. 1. 18, 19. *Il.* 35. 10. & 51. 1. & 44. 23. ¹ Rom. 12. 2. ² Cor. 11. 2. Mat. 25. 1. Ch. 17. 1, 5, 14. ^k Mat. 16. 24. Ch. 7. 17. & 17. 14. & 3. 4. John, 10. 4, 5. Ezek. 1. 12. & 46. 10. ⁹ Gr. *were bought.* ¹ James, 1. 18. ¹ Cor. 16. 15. Rom. 16. 5. & 8. 23. ^m Pl. 32. 2. Zeph. 3. 13. ⁿ Jer. 50. 20. Song, 4. 7. ¹ John, 3. 9. Luke, 1. 6. Tit. 2. 14. Col. 1. 22. Jude, 24. Ezek. 1. 4, 14. ^o Ch. 8. 13. ² Tim. 4. 2. *Il.* 62. 1, 6, 7. ^p Mat. 10. 27. & 28. 19. Mark, 16. 15. Luke, 21. 33. ¹ Pet. 1. 25. Ch. 10. 11. & 13. 7, 8.

going chapters, might be apt somewhat to discourage good Christians and the faithful worshippers of God; for though God, by a spirit of prophecy, had before revealed this suffering state to the church, and so it was represented as what the wisdom of the divine Providence thought fit to allow, and what was therefore reconcilable to the goodness and power of the great Governor of the world;—yet it was a very useful design of these revelations to subjoin proper principles of consolation and encouragement to such a mournful account of temptation, danger and sufferings. This seems to be the intention of the chapter before us, in which the scene of the prophetic vision is changed from earth to heaven, from a view of the church under the persecution of the beast, to a view of the church in the presence of the Lamb, delivered from the state of corruption and oppression so much to be expected from this evil world, and arrived at a state of complete and most perfect religion and happiness in the future world. This vision then represents the sure destruction of the enemies of truth and righteousness in the end, however they may prevail for a time. It shews the great reward of the faithful and the dreadful punishment of the apostate in the day of trial. Thus this part of the prophecy unites the strongest principles of warning, caution, encouragement, and hope, than which nothing could be more proper or useful for the church in such a state of providence; or more suitable to the general design of the whole prophecy, which is to encourage the constancy and patience of the saints in all their trials. When we consider the present chapter in this view, it will shew a more easy, natural, and proper connection between this vision and the foregoing than is generally observed; and make the whole plan and design appear more regular than it is usually thought to be. Such is Mr. Lowman's opinion of the intention of this chapter. But Dr. Newton, the learned Bishop of Bristol, understands it in a different, and, I think, a very just light.

Ver. 1—5. I looked, and, lo, a Lamb, &c.] After the account of the rise and reign of the beast (says Bishop Newton), the Spirit of prophecy delineates, by way of opposition, the state of the true church during the same period, its struggles and contests with the beast, and the judgment of God upon his enemies. Our Saviour is seen, *ver. 1.* as the true Lamb of God, not only with horns like a lamb, *standing on mount Sion*, the place of God's true worship, but *with him an hundred forty and four thousand*, the same number that was mentioned (*ch. vii. 4.*), the genuine offspring of the twelve apostles apostolically multi-

plied, and therefore the number of the church, as six hundred and sixty-six is the number of the beast: and as the followers of the beast have the name of the beast, so these have *the name of God*, and, as some copies add, *of Christ, written in their forehead*;—being his professed servants, and the same as *the witnesses*, only represented under different figures. The angels and heavenly choir, *ver. 2, 3.* with loud voices and instruments of music, sing the same *new song*, or Christian song which they sung, *ch. v.* And *no man could learn that song but the hundred forty and four thousand*; they alone are the worshippers of the one true God through the one true Mediator Jesus Christ: all the rest of mankind offer up their devotions to other objects and through other mediators. *These are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins*; *ver. 4.* They are pure from all the stains and pollutions of spiritual whoredom or idolatry, with which the other parts of the world are miserably debauched and corrupted. *These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*; they adhere constantly to the religion of Christ in all conditions and in all places; whether in adversity or prosperity; whether in conventicles and deserts, or in churches and cities. *These were redeemed from among men*;—rescued from the corruption of the world, and are consecrated as *the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb*; an earnest and assurance of a more plentiful harvest in succeeding times. *And in their mouth was found no guile*; *ver. 5.* They handle not the word of God *deceitfully*; they preach the sincere doctrine of Christ; they are as free from hypocrisy as from idolatry; *for they are without fault before the throne of God*: they resemble their blessed Redeemer, who did no sin, *neither was guile found in his mouth*; (*1 Pet. ii. 22.*) and are, as the apostle requires Christians to be, *blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation*; *Phil. ii. 15.* But possibly it may be asked, Where did such a church ever exist, especially before the reformation? And it may be replied, that it has existed not in idea only: history demonstrates, that there have, in every age, been some true worshippers of God, and faithful servants of Jesus Christ: and as Elijah did not know the seven thousand men who had never bowed the knee to Baal, so there may have been more true Christians than were always visible.

Ver. 6, 7. I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, &c.] Such is the nature and character of the true Christian church in opposition to the wicked antichristian kingdom; and three principal efforts have been made to-

wards

to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have

9 Mat. 10. 27. If. 58. 1. Hosea, 8. 1. Acts, 20. 21, 24, 27. xvi. xviii. 1 Pf. 146. 5, 6. Acts, 14. 15. Exod. 20. 11. 2 Theff. 2. 8. 3 Ch. 13. 7, 8, 14—17. & 17. 2, 13, 15. Jer. 3. 6. Ezek. 16. 15—34. & xxxiii. 4, 8, 12, 15, 16. 2 Job, 21. 20. Pf. 75. 8. If. 51. 17. Jer. 25. 15. Ch. 16. 19. & 18. 6. & 19. 20. & 20. 10. Pf. 11. 6. 2 Theff. 1. 9. Mat. 25. 41. & 13. 49, 50. with Gen. 19. 24. Jude, 7. 1 Prov. 1. 7. Pf. 89. 7. & 96. 7. Ch. 15. 3, 4. & 11. 15—18. & 19. 2. & If. 21. 19. Jer. 51. 8. Ch. 8. 2. & 11. 8. & 16. 19. & 17. 18. & 18. 10, 21. 2 Pet. 3. 9. Jer. 44. 4. 1 Ch. 13. 2 Theff. 1. 9. Mat. 9. 43, 44.

wards a reformation at three different times, represented by three angels appearing one after another. Another angel, besides those who were employed in singing, is seen flying in the midst of heaven, and having the everlasting gospel to preach unto every nation and people, so that during this period the gospel should be preached, which is styled the everlasting gospel; being, like its divine Author, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; (Heb. xiii. 8.) in opposition to the novel doctrines of the beast and the false prophet, which shall be rooted up; Matth. xv. 13. The flight of the angel admirably represents the swiftness with which the gospel was disseminated and spread over the world. This angel is farther represented, as saying with a loud voice, "Fear God, &c." ver. 7. Prophecy mentions things as come, which will certainly come. See John, xii. 31. But what this angel more particularly recommends, is the worship of the great Creator of the universe; worship him, &c. It is a solemn and emphatical exhortation to forsake the reigning idolatry and superstition; and such exhortations were made in the first and earliest times of the beast. Several of the Greek emperors, the council of Francfort in the year 794, the Carolin books, the council of Paris in the year 824, Claude bishop of Turin, Agobard archbishop of Lyons, and many other bishops of Britain, Spain, Italy, Germany, and France, opposed the adoration of saints, angels, and images; and this public opposition of emperors and bishops in the eighth and ninth centuries appears to be meant particularly by the loud voice of the first angel flying aloft, and calling upon the world to worship God. In another respect too, these emperors and bishops resemble this angel, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto every nation; for in their time, and greatly by their means, the Christian religion was propagated and established among the Saxons, Danes, Swedes, and many other northern nations.

Ver. 8. There followed another angel, saying, Babylon, &c.] By Babylon was meant Rome, as all authors of all ages agree; but it was not prudent to denounce the destruction of Rome in open and direct terms; it was for many wise reasons done covertly under the name of Babylon, which

was the great idolatres of the earth, and enemy of the people of God in former, as Rome has been in later times. By the same figure of speech that the first angel cried, The hour of his judgment is come, ver. 7. this second angel proclaims, that Babylon is fallen: the sentence is as certain as if it was already executed. For greater certainty too it is repeated twice, as Joseph says that the dream was doubled, Gen. xli. 32. The reason is then added, of this sentence against Babylon, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath, or rather, the inflaming wine of her fornication. Hers was a kind of Circean cup with poisoned liquor, to intoxicate and inflame mankind to spiritual fornication. St. John, in these figures, follows the ancient prophets. In the same manner, and in the same words, did Isaiah foretel the fate of the ancient Babylon; (If. xxi. 9.) and Jeremiah has assigned much the same reason for her destruction; Jer. li. 7. As by the first angel calling upon men to worship God, we understand the opposers of the worship of images in the eighth and ninth centuries; so by this second angel proclaiming the fall of mystic Babylon, or Rome, we understand particularly Peter Valdo, or those who concurred with him,—the Waldenses and Albigenes; who were the first heralds of this proclamation, as they first of all in the twelfth century pronounced the church of Rome to be the apostolic Babylon, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, and, for this cause, not only departed from her communion themselves, but engaged great numbers also to follow their example, and laid the first foundation of the Reformation. Rome then began to fall; and as the ruin of Babylon was completed by degrees, so likewise will that of Rome; and those holy confessors and martyrs first paved the way to it.

Ver. 9—13. The third angel, &c.] Not only the capital city, not only the principal agents and promoters of idolatry shall be destroyed; the commission of the third angel proceeds farther, and extends to all the subjects of the beast whom he consigns over to everlasting punishment. If any man worship the beast, and his image, and receive his mark, &c. (ver. 9.) if any man embrace and profess the religion of the beast, or, what is the same, the religion

no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

12 ^b Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, ^c Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord * from henceforth: ^d Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and ^e their works do follow them.

14 And I looked, and behold ^f a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat ^g like unto the Son of man, having on his head ^h a golden crown, and in his hand ⁱ a sharp sickle.

15 And ^k another angel came out of the temple, ^l crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, ^m Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ⁿ ripe.

16 ^o And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

^b Ch. 1. 9. Hab. 2. 10. 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7. Ch. 12. 17. Heb. 6. 12. & 10. 32—36. ^c Ch. 19. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 18, 58. Phil. 3. 9. 1 Thess. 4. 14. Heb. 11. 13. with 2 Pet. 1. 11. ^d Or from henceforth saith the Spirit, Yea. ^e Luke, 16. 25. If. 57. 1, 2. 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7. Heb. 4. 9. Ch. 6. 10. 11. 1 Thess. 4. 17. ^f Pl. 19. 11. 1 Cor. 15. 58. 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. ^g If. 19. 1. Pl. 97. 2. Ch. 1. 7. & 10. 1. & 20. 11. Eud. 24. 10. ^h Ch. 1. 13. Pl. 80. 17. Zech. 13. 7. John, 1. 14. Ezek. 1. 26. Dan. 7. 13. Mat. 16. 13. ⁱ Pl. 21. 3. Heb. 2. 9. Ch. 19. 11. & 17. 17. & 6. 2. ^j Ver. 15—17. Joel, 3. 13. Jer. 51. 33. ^k Ch. 1. 20. & 16. 17. 2 Cor. 5. 20. or Pl. 103. 20. Heb. 11. 14. ^l If. 62. 1, 6, 7. & 45. 11. Ch. 6. 10. ^m Joel, 3. 13. Mat. 13. 39. Jer. 51. 33. If. 63. 4. & 34. 8. Ch. 15. 1, 2. Dan. 7. 22, 26, 27. ⁿ 1 If. 62. 2 Sam. 22. 7. Neh. 9. 27. Ver. 19. Ch. xvi. 2 Thess. 2. 8. ^o Or drink.

religion of the Pope, *the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God*, or rather, *of the poisonous wine of God*, ver. 10. His punishment shall correspond with his crime. As he drank of *the poisonous wine* of Babylon, (ver. 8.) so he shall be made to taste of *the poisonous wine* of God, *which is poured out without mixture*, or, according to the Greek, (τὴ κεκρασμένην ἀκρατῆν) *which is mixt unmixt*,—the poisonous ingredients being stronger, when mixt with mere or unmixt wine, in the cup of his indignation, &c. By this *third angel following the others with a loud voice*, we may understand principally Martin Luther and his fellow-reformers, who, *with a loud voice*, protested against all the errors of the church of Rome, and declared them to be destructive of salvation to all who still obstinately continue in the practice and profession of them. This would be a time of great trial;—*Here is the patience of the saints*, &c. ver. 12. And it is very well known, that it was a time of great trial and persecution; the reformation was not introduced and established without much bloodshed; there were many martyrs in every country. But they were comforted with a solemn declaration from heaven, “*Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth*,” (ver. 13.) if they die in the faith and obedience of Christ, and more especially if they die martyrs for his sake;—*Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours*; for immediately upon their deaths, they enter *into rest*,—*and their works do follow them*; they enjoy *now some recompence*, and, in due time, at the day of *judgment, they shall receive the full reward of their good works*.” It is most probable that St. John, or rather the Holy Spirit by St. John, alludes to a passage in the Old Testament, where the same divine Spirit has made the like declaration, Isai. lvii. 1, 2. But the greatest difficulty of all is to account for the words *from henceforth*; for why should *the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord*, be restrained to this time, and commence from this period rather than any other, when they are at all times and at all periods equally blessed, and not more since this time than before? The difficulty in a great measure ceases, if we

apply this prophecy to the Reformation. For from that time, though the *blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord* has not been enlarged, yet it has been much better understood, more clearly *written* and promulgated than before; and the contrary doctrine of *purgatory* has been exploded and banished from the belief of all reasonable men. This truth was, moreover, one of the leading principles of the Reformation. What first provoked Luther’s spirit, was the scandalous sale of indulgences: and the doctrine of indulgences having a close connection with the doctrine of purgatory, the refutation of the one naturally led him to the refutation of the other; and his first work of reformation was his ninety-five Theses or Positions against indulgences, purgatory, and the dependent doctrines. So that he may be said literally to have fulfilled the command from heaven, of writing, *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth*: and from that time to the present, this truth has been so clearly asserted, and so solidly established, that it is likely to prevail for ever. The word rendered *from henceforth*, may signify *immediately*: that is, from the time of their death, or immediately after their dissolution: and it is observable, that the apostle adds, *their works follow with them*, (μετ’ αὐτῶν); and not that they should come many thousand years after them; than which there cannot be a more strong refutation of the doctrine of purgatory. But, be this as it may, we may conceive that the word rendered *from henceforth*, relates not so much to the *blessedness of the dead*, which is always the same; as to the writing and promulgating of the doctrine, in opposition to purgatory, by Luther and the Protestant reformers.

Ver. 14—20. *I looked, and behold a white cloud, &c.*] As the voices of these three warning angels had not their due effect, the judgments of God will overtake the followers and adherents of the beast; which judgments are represented under the figures of *harvest* and *vintage*, figures not unusual in the prophets, and used particularly by Joel, who denounces God’s judgments against the enemies of his people in the like terms; Joel, iii. 13. What particular events are signified by this *harvest* and *vintage*, it appears

17 And ° another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 P And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and 4 cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, 7 Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and 7 gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

20 1 And the wine-press was trodden 2 without 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.

° Ch. 11. 1, 7. & xvi. xviii.

P Ver. 15. Ch. 6. 9, 10. & 11. 5. & 16. 18.

7 See ver. 15. Pf. 132. 8. & 121. 6—9. If. 62. 1, 6, 7.

4 See ver. 17, 19. If. 45. 11.

1 Deut. 32. 32, 33. If. 63. 1—4. Ch. 13. 16. & 10. 15—21. & 11. 13. with 6. 12—17.

2 Lam. 1. 15.

If. 63. 3. Ch. 17. 19. & 11. 13, 18.

7 Ch. 11. 8. & 21. 27. & 22. 15. & 20. 9. If. 66. 24.

appears impossible for any man to determine: time alone can with certainty discover, for these things are yet in futurity:—only it may be observed, that both these signal judgments will as certainly come, as harvest and vintage succeed in their season. It is said, ver. 20. that *the blood came even unto the horses' bridles*, which is a strong hyperbolic way of speaking, to express a vast slaughter and effusion of blood: a way of speaking not unknown to the Jews; for the Jerusalem Talmud, describing the woeful slaughter which the Roman emperor Adrian made of the Jews at the destruction of the city of Bitter, says, that *the horses waded in blood up to the nostrils*. The stage where this bloody tragedy is acted, is *without the city, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs*: the measure of *Stato della Chiesa*, or the state of the Roman Church, or St. Peter's Patrimony; which, reaching from the walls of Rome to the river Po, contains 200 Italian miles, which make exactly 1600 furlongs; a furlong being one *eighth* of a mile.

Inferences.—How delightful is a view of Christ as the Lamb on mount Sion among his glorified saints, and of their singing with inimitable strains of melody, the praises of redeeming love! These have distinguishing marks of the children of God, who own and honour him, and are owned and honoured by him: these are they that were finally redeemed from the earth. They were pure from the superstitious and idolatrous worship of the Papists; and follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes, and are a kind of first-fruits consecrated to him and his Father; they were sincere in their profession of his name, and were holy and without blame in love, and free from guilt and condemnation, through faith in the merit of Christ: in these patience had its perfect work; and they conscientiously obeyed the commandments of God, and maintained the uncorrupted doctrines of Christ, with a humble trust in him for all salvation; and these shall be blessed from the time of their death, and for ever afterwards, as has been declared by an immediate voice from heaven, and by the infallible Spirit of prophecy. How thankful should we be, that, after a long night of Popish darkness, the everlasting gospel was preached in its purity, and with great success at the reformation! What a blessing is this to the church of Christ! and what a humbling and vexatious stroke upon antichrist, and sure preface of her utter downfall! This shall be as certainly ac-

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complished in God's time, as it is now foretold. And, ah! how dreadful will the portion of their cup be, who have drunk of the wine of her fornication, by joining in her idolatrous worship! They shall drink of the cup of God's wrath without mixture; and their torment shall be incessant for ever and ever. The Lord Jesus, who appeared on a bright cloud with a glorious crown, will espouse the cause of his church and people, and come forth in righteousness against their antichristian enemies, by gradual dispensations of Providence, in which he will cut them down, as with a sickle in harvest; till, at length, he will make a full end of them, as the grapes of a vintage are cut off, and cast into and trodden in a wine-press, till all their juice is squeezed out. Thus shall it be done in God's time to the idolatrous and tyrannical church of Rome; and the slaughter of them will be great and terrible beyond expression. How should we rejoice in faith and hope of the glorious, though awful manifestation, that will then be made of God's righteous judgments, to open a way for the prosperous and happy state of the church, which shall succeed it.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, Dark and gloomy as the former scene appeared, the sun now arises to dispel the night of idolatry, ignorance, and error.

1. The Lamb of God is seen on mount Zion with all his glorified saints, sealed in their foreheads, in opposition to those who had the mark of the beast, over whom they are made triumphant: innumerable multitudes as the drops of the ocean, with voices united, raising a chorus as loud as thunder, yet melodious as the trembling harps which mingled with their concert, sung that song of praise which none but the finally redeemed from the earth can learn.

2. The character of these happy souls is given. They are virgins, not defiled with the idolatries of the great whore; they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, faithful to his gospel doctrines, and observant of his ordinances; they are a peculiar people, even the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb, sanctified to his service, and without guile before the throne of God, uncorrupted by error of doctrine or immorality of conduct, and perfected in holiness. Blessed and happy are they who shall be found to answer these characters of the redeemed from the earth!

2dly, Three angels, or messengers, are sent from heaven to proclaim the fall of Babylon.

6 K

1. One,

CHAPTER XV.

The seven angels with the seven last plagues. The song of them that overcome the beast. The seven vials full of the wrath of God.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I saw ^a another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, ^b seven ^c angels having the seven ^d last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were ^e a sea of glass mingled with fire: and ^f them that had gotten

the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, ^g stand on the sea of glass, having ^h the harps of God.

3 ⁱ And they sing ^k the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, ^l Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; ^m just and true *are* thy ways, thou ⁿ King of saints.

4 ^o Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy:

^a With ch. 12. 7. & 11. 14—18. 2 Thess. 2. 8. ^b Ch. 7. 20. & 5. 6. & 8. 2. 6. & 10. 3. & xvi. ^c Ch. 8. 2, 6. & 16. 1—17. & 21. 9. Ver. 6. ^d Ch. 11. 14. & 16. 17. & 14. 10. & xvi. ^e Ch. 4. 5, 6. & 7. 14. Mat. 3. 11. If. 4. 4. ^f Ch. 15. 15, 17. & 7. 4—10. & 14. 1—5. & 11. 11, 12. Ezek. 37. 10. ^g Rom. 5. 1—5. & 8. 1, 13. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Phil. 3. 9. ^h Ch. 5. 8. & 14. 2. ⁱ Ch. 5. 9, 10. & 7. 10, 12. & 14. 3. & 19. 1—7. ^k Exod. 15. 1—18. Ch. 5. 9—12. ^l Ps. 111. 2. & 139. 14. & 86. 8. ^m Ps. 145. 17. Deut. 32. 4. Pf. 111. 3—9. Mic. 7. 20. Ch. 16. 5—7. Hosea, 14. 9. ⁿ Jer. 10. 7, 10. Ch. 17. 14. & 19. 16. ^o Jer. 10. 7. Exod. 15. 2, 7, 11, 15, 16. Hosea, 3. 5. If. 60. 5. Pl. 86. 8—10.

1. One, bearing the everlasting gospel through the midst of heaven, cries aloud to all people, nations, and languages, to fear, worship, and glorify God, the great Creator, in opposition to all idols; his judgments upon his enemies speedily approaching. And this may refer either to past times; or to the future period, when, before the final overthrow of Popery, a noble army of preachers of the pure gospel, animated with holy zeal, shall be raised up to plead the cause of God and truth.

2. Another angel followed, crying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*; and the cause of her doom is assigned, because she intoxicated the nations with her fornications and idolatries, which provoke the fearful wrath of God against her.

3. A third angel followed, denouncing the most terrible woes on the antichristian party, who shall henceforth persist in this idolatrous religion: the eternal torments of hell, intolerable as envenoms, must be their portion, in the presence of the holy angels, who will applaud the righteous judgment of God and of the Lamb, who inflicts it upon them; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest, day nor night. How fearful the scene! how loudly does it preach to us, *Flee from idolatry!*

4. *Here is the patience of the saints*; the blessed issue and effect of it: *here in glory are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus*, in opposition to all the corruptions of deceivers and persecutors; great and eternal will be their reward.

3dly, For the farther encouragement of the church, we have,

1. A voice from heaven, declaring the blessedness of all who die in the faith and favour of Jesus, whether martyrs or others; their sufferings are all ended, they enter upon the beginnings of their eternal rest, and their works of piety and goodness, though so ill requited here, shall follow them into the presence of God, shall be acknowledged there in the most condescending manner, and, through the riches of divine mercy, recompensed with eternal glory.

2. A new vision succeeds under the figure of the harvest and vintage. The Lord Jesus appears seated on

a cloud, with a golden crown, and holding a sharp sickle in his hand; and an angel, the representative of the ministers of Jesus, cried to him in prayer out of the temple, that he would put in his sickle, and execute vengeance on the wicked, whose provocations made them ripe for judgment: in answer to their cry, the sickle is thrust into the earth. A second angel with another sharp sickle appears, and a third from out of the temple cries to him to put in his sickle, and gather the grapes of the earth into the wine press of the wrath of God; and the blood came out of the wine-press up to the horses' bridles, for the space of one thousand and six hundred furlongs. These judgments may refer either to the great destruction which shall be made of the enemies of Christ's church, in the day when the Papal tyranny shall be destroyed, and the most dreadful slaughter be made of all the adherents of the beast; or to the final day of judgment, the perdition of ungodly men. In either case, it is the comfort of the faithful, that however many or inveterate their enemies may be, they shall inevitably be rooted out at the last, and perish for ever. See the Annotations and the Appendix.

CHAPTER XV.

Ver. 1.] The prophecy proceeds in this and the following chapters to open further the appointed punishment of Rome, for her oppression of the truth, and persecution of the saints. This chapter represents the solemn manner in which preparation is made for the execution of these judgments, as the next describes that execution. The happy state of God's faithful servants, and the joyful thanksgivings with which they celebrate the goodness of God in the protection of their cause, are very elegantly represented, to encourage their constancy and perseverance.

Ver. 1—8. I saw another sign in heaven, &c.] God's judgments upon the kingdom of the beast, or antichristian empire, are hitherto denounced and described only in general terms, under the figures of *harvest* and *vintage*. A more particular account of them follows under the emblem of *seven vials* which are called *the seven last plagues of God*, &c. *ver. 1.* These seven *last plagues* must necessarily fall

for ^p all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, ^q the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And ^r the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, ^s clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And ^t one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden ^u vials full of the wrath of God, who ^v liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple ^w was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and ^x no man was able to enter into the temple, ^y till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

^p If. 66. 23. Pf. 72. 8. Zech. 2. 11. & 14. 9—21. ^q Ch. 11. 13. Numb. 1. 50. 2 Chron. 29. 7. Exod. 25. 27. ^r Ver. 1, 7. Ch. xvi. & 21. 9. ^s Ch. 1. 13. 11. 13. 3. Eph. 6. 14. Luke, 12. 35, 36. 1 Pet. 1. 13. Exod. 23. 6, 8. Ezek. 44. 17, 18. ^t Ch. 4. 6—9. & 5. 6, 8, 10. & 6. 1, 2. & 18. 4—7. ^u Ver. 1. Ch. xvi. Pf. 75. 8. 1 Sam. 15. 3. Jer. 25. 15, & 48. 10. ^v Ch. 1. 18. & 4. 9, 10. & 5. 14. & 10. 6. 2 Thess. 1. 9. ^w If. 6. 4. Pf. 18. 8, 14. with 1 Kings, 8. 10. Exod. 40. 34, 35. ^x Jer. 7. 27. & 15. 1. Lam. 3. 44. Rom. 11. 33. Pf. 36. 6. ^y i. e. not at all. Gen. 3. 7. Pf. 112. 8. & 110. 1. Acts, 3. 21.

fall under the seventh and last trumpet, or the third and last woe trumpet; so that as the seventh seal contained the seven trumpets, the seventh trumpet contains the seven vials. Not only the concinnity of prophesy requires this order, (for otherwise there would be great confusion, and the vials would interfere with the trumpets, some falling under one trumpet, and some under another :) but moreover, if these seven last plagues and the consequent destruction of Babylon, be not the subject of the third woe, the third woe is no where described particularly, as the two former woes are. Before the vials are poured out, the scene opens with a preparatory vision, which is the subject of this chapter. As seven angels sounded the seven trumpets, so seven angels are appointed to pour out the seven vials; angels being the peculiar ministers of Providence: and, in order to shew that these judgments are to fall upon the kingdom of the beast, the true worshippers of God and faithful servants of Jesus, *who had escaped victors from the beast, and never submitted to his tyranny or religion*, are described, ver. 2, 3, 4. like unto the children of Israel after their deliverance and escape out of Egypt. For as the children of Israel, (Exod. xv.) having passed through the Red Sea, stood on the shore, and, seeing their enemies overwhelmed with the waters, sung the triumphant song of Moses; so these, having passed through the fiery trials of this world, *stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire*, which was mentioned ch. iv. 6. and, seeing the vials ready to be poured out upon their enemies, sing a song of triumph for the manifestation of the divine judgments; which is called *the song of Moses, and the song of the Lamb*, the words being in a great measure taken from the song of Moses, and other parts of the Old Testament, and applied in a Christian sense. After this, *the most holy place of the temple is opened*, ver. 5. and, *the seven angels come out of the temple*, ver. 6. (to denote that their commission is immediately from God,) clothed like the high-priest, but in a more august manner, *in pure and white linen*, to signify the righteousness of these judgments; and having *their breasts girded*, to shew their readiness to execute the divine commands; *with golden girdles*, as emblems of their power and majesty. A vial then is given to each of the seven angels, by one of the four living creatures, ver. 7. the representatives of the church; by which it is intimated, that it is in vindication of the church and true

religion that these plagues are inflicted. Moreover, *the temple was filled with smoke*, &c. ver. 8. in the same manner as the tabernacle when it was consecrated by Moses, and the temple when it was dedicated by Solomon, (Exod. xl. 34, 35. 1 Kings, viii. 10, 11, 12. 2 Chron. v. 13, 14. 1 Sai. vi. 4.) were both *filled with a cloud and the glory of the Lord*; so that neither Moses nor the priests could enter therein: a further proof of the majestic presence and extraordinary interposition of God in the execution of these judgments.

Inferences and REFLECTIONS.—Let us now raise our eyes and our hearts above the low and sordid scenes of mortality, to those happy and exalted spirits *who are described as standing before the crystal sea, with golden harps in their hands*. Let us attentively hearken to those broken and imperfect echoes of *the song of Moses, and of the Lamb*, which a gracious God causes to descend, as it were, to this world of ours, and which sometimes sweetly mingle themselves with the clamor of strife, with the din of folly, with the groans of misery. Happy and glorious is their condition now, who are freed from all these evils, and who triumph over all their enemies; whom, as it was said to Israel of the Egyptians, *having beheld, they shall see them no more for ever*: (Exod. xiv. 13.) They are now acknowledging their great Deliverer, singing everlasting praises to his name, and celebrating the wonders of his works, and the righteousness and truth of all his ways. O Lord Almighty, O thou King of saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy holy name? Let the nations come, and worship in thy presence; let them pay thee their humble reverence and homage, before the vials of thy wrath are poured out: those vials, which, terrible as their contents are, the benevolent spirits of heaven prepare themselves, at thy command, to pour forth with pleasure; applauding, in their responsive hymns, thy righteous judgments. even when the forest and most dreadful plagues torment the worshippers of the beast and his image; even when their *seas and their rivers are turned into blood*. Whatever be the calamities, whether past or future, to which any of these particulars may refer, surely they are big with terror to those wretches who, on any pretence, are pouring forth the blood of thy prophets and thy saints. They are worthy of having blood given them to drink, and, accord-

CHAP. XVI.

The angels pour out their vials full of wrath. The plagues that follow thereupon. Christ cometh as a thief. Blessed are they that watch.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I heard ^a a great voice out of the temple, saying to the ^b seven angels, 'Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

² And the first went, and poured out his vial ^d upon the earth; ^e and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men ^f which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

³ And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead *man*: and every living soul died in the sea.

⁴ And the third angel poured out his vial

upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

⁵ And I heard the ¹ angel of the waters say, 'Thou art righteous, O Lord, ¹ which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

⁶ For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

⁷ And I heard ⁿ another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

⁸ And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

⁹ And men were ^{*} scorched with great heat, ^p and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and ^q they repented not to give him glory.

^a Ch. 8. 5, 13. & 15. 1. & 1. 10. & 9. 13. & 11. 12. & 13. 3, 4. ^b Ch. 15. 1, 6, 7. & 21. 9. ^c 1 Sam. 15. 3. Jer. 48. 10. Ezk. 9. 5, 6. Ch. 14. 9—11. ^d Ch. 8. 7. Pl. 17. 14. ^e Exod. 9. 9—11. Isa. 1. 5, 6. ^f Ch. 13. 15—17. & 14. 9—11. ^g Ch. 8. 1, 9. Exod. 7. 17, 19, 20. Ezek. 16. 38. ^h Ch. 8. 10, 11. Exod. 7. 17, 19, 20. Ver. 6. ⁱ Ver. 4. ^k Ch. 11. 17, 18. & 15. 3. & 19. 2. Pl. 97. 2, 8. & 58. 10, 11. 2 Thess. 1. 5—9. ^l Ch. 1. 4, 8. & 4. 8. & 11. 17. ^m Ch. 13. 7, 15. & 11. 7. & 18. 20, 24. & 17. 6. Mat. 23. 34. & 7. 2. Jer. 51. 35. If. 49. 25. & 51. 22, 23. ⁿ Ch. 6. 9 & 14. 10. & 19. 1, 2 & 15. 3. & 13. 10. ^o Ch. 8. 12. & 17. 16. Lev. 26. 16. If. 5. 30. & 34. 8—10. & 66. 15. Ch. 9. 17, 18. ^p Ver. 11, 21. 2 Chron. 28. 22. Jer. 5. 3. 2 Kings, 6. 33. If. 8. 21. & 1. 5. ^q Ver. 11. Ch. 9. 20, 21. & 11. 13. Josh. 7. 19. Jer. 13. 16. Amos, 4. 6—12. Dan. 5. 22, 23.

^{*} Or burned. ^r Ver. 11, 21. 2 Chron. 28. 22. Jer. 5. 3. 2 Kings, 6. 33. If. 8. 21. & 1. 5.

ingly, thou hast a dreadful draught in reserve for them. And, though some of them may have laid down their hoary heads in peace, which, we might rather have expected, would have been brought to the grave with blood, the day of thy vengeance will surely come: a vengeance so terrible, that nothing but a zeal for thy violated law, and thine injured gospel, would make the very sight of it supportable to those whose cause shall then be pleaded, and whose blood shall be visited on their tormentors and murderers.

CHAP. XVI.

Ver. 1. I heard a great voice, &c.] In obedience to the divine command, the seven angels pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth: and as the trumpets were so many steps and degrees of the ruin of the Roman empire, so the vials are of the Roman church. The one, in polity and government, is the image of the other: the one is compared to the system of the world, and has her earth, and sea, and rivers, and sun, as well as the other; and this is the reason of the similitude and resemblance of the judgments in both cases. Rome Papal has [chap. xi. 8.] been distinguished by the title of spiritual Egypt, and resembles Egypt, in her punishments as well as in her crimes, tyranny, idolatry, and wickedness.

Ver. 2. The first went, and poured his vial, &c.] The first vial is poured out upon the earth; and so the hail and fire of the first trumpet, ch. viii. 7. were cast upon the earth. It produces a noisome and grievous sore, and in this respect

resembles the sixth plague of Egypt; Exod. ix. 10. This is inflicted upon the men who had the mark of the beast; which is to be understood of the others also, where it is not expressed. Whether these sores and ulcers are natural or moral, the event will shew.

Ver. 3—7. The second angel poured out his vial, &c.] This vial is poured out upon the sea, and the sea becomes as the blood of a dead man, or as congealed blood; and, in like manner, under the second trumpet, ch. viii. 8. the burning mountain was cast into the sea, &c. The third vial (ver. 4.) is poured upon the rivers, &c. and in like manner under the third trumpet, ch. viii. 10. the burning star fell upon the rivers, &c. There is a close connection between the two vials; and the effects are similar to the first plague of Egypt, Exod. vii. 17. Seas and rivers of blood manifestly denote slaughter and devastation; and hereupon, ver. 5, 6. the angel of the waters celebrates the righteous judgments of God in adapting and proportioning the punishment of the followers of the beast to their crime; for no law is more just and equitable, than that they who have been guilty of shedding the blood of saints and prophets, should be punished in the effusion of their own blood. Another angel out of the altar declares his assent in the most solemn manner, ver. 7.

Ver. 8, 9. The fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, &c.] As the fourth trumpet affected the sun, ch. viii. 12. so likewise the fourth vial is poured out upon the sun. An intense heat ensues, &c. ver. 9. Whether by this intense heat of the sun, is meant literally uncommon sultry seasons;

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come 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. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

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

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great

^f Ch. 13. 2. & 11. 8. & 17. 18. & 18. 19. ^g Exod. 10. 21—23. Ch. 9. 2. & 17. 10. & 18. 11—19. ^h If. 8. 21, 22. ⁱ Mat. 8. 12. & 13. 42. & 22. 13. ^j Ver. 9. 21. Ch. 9. 20, 21. ^k 2 Tim. 3. 13. ^l 2 Kings, 6. 33. ^m Dan. 5. 22, 23. ⁿ If. 8. 7. Ch. 9. 14. ^o Jer. 50. 35. & 51. 32. ^p Ch. 17. 15. ^q If. 44. 27. & 42. 15. & 11. 15. & 41. 2, 25. ^r 1 John, 4. 1, 2. ^s Ver. 14. with Exod. 8. 2—6. ^t Ch. 12. 9. & 13. 1, 2, 11, 12. & 19. 20. & 20. 10. ^u John, 8. 44. Ch. 2. 10. & 13. 13, 14. & 19. 20. ^v James, 3. 15. ^w 2 Thess. 2. 9. ^x Luke, 12. 39. ^y Mat. 24. 21. ^z 2 Pet. 3. 10. ^{aa} 1 Thess. 5. 2, 3. ^{ab} Luke, 12. 39. ^{ac} Mat. 22. 12, 13. ^{ad} 2 Cor. 5. 3. ^{ae} God. ^{af} Josh. 3. 2, 11—14. Ch. 11. 17. & 17. 14. & 19. 17—21. with Judges, 4. 16. & 5. 19—21. ^{ag} If. 37. 36. ^{ah} Pl. 110. 5, 6. ^{ai} Eph. 2. 2. ^{aj} Ver. 1. Ch. 11. 19. & 14. 17. & 15. 5. & 21. 22.

sons; or figuratively, a most tyrannical exercise of arbitrary power, by those who may be called the sun in the firmament of the beast—the Pope, or emperor—time must discover. Men shall be tormented, and complain grievously; they shall, like the rebellious Jews, *fract themselves*, &c. Isai. viii. 21. They will not have the sense or courage to repent, and forsake their idolatry and wickedness, though sufficient grace is offered to them. When the events shall take place, and these things shall all be fulfilled, not only these prophecies of the vials shall be better understood, but also those of the trumpets, to which they bear some analogy and resemblance. See as above.

Ver. 10, 11. *The fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat, &c.*] The fifth vial is poured out upon the seat or throne of the beast, and his kingdom becomes full of darkness, as Egypt did under her ninth plague, Exod. x. 21. This is some great calamity which shall fall upon Rome itself, and shall darken and confound the whole antichristian empire. But still the consequences of this plague are much the same as those of the foregoing; for the sufferers, instead of repenting of their deeds, are hardened like Pharaoh, persist in their blasphemy, and obstinately withstand all attempts of reformation.

Ver. 12—16. *The sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, &c.*] Whether by Euphrates be meant the river so called, or only a mytic Euphrates; and whether by the kings of the East be meant the Jews in particular, or any eastern potentates in general, can be matters only of conjecture, till the event shall make the determination. Whoever they be, they appear to threaten the ruin and destruction of the kingdom of the beast, and therefore of the agents or emissaries of Popery;—of the dragon, ver. 13, 14. the representative of the devil; and of the beast, the representative of the antichristian empire; and of the false prophet, the representative of the antichristian church; as disagreeable, as loquacious, as sordid,

as impudent as frogs. These are employed to oppose the kings of the East, and to stir up the princes and potentates of their own communion to make their united and last effort in a religious war. Of necessity these must be times of great trouble and affliction; so that an exhortation is inferred, ver. 15. by way of parenthesis, of the suddenness of these judgments, and of the blessedness of watching, and of being clothed, and prepared for all events. This parenthesis has led our translators, as well as several others, to render the following words, ver. 16. *And he gathered them together*, when the true construction is, *And they gathered them together*; the evil spirits and agents before mentioned, gather all the forces of the Popish princes together, into a place called in the Hebrew tongue *Armageddon*, that is, the *Mountain of Destruction*. That *Armageddon* had been a place remarkable for slaughter, appears from Judges, v. 19. 2 Kings, ix. 27. 2 Chron. xxxv. 22. Zech. xii. 11. To express the certain destruction of the antichristian powers, they are described as brought together to this mountain.

Ver. 15. *Keepeth his garments*] This may be an allusion to what that Jewish officer, called *the man of the mountain*, (that is, of the Lord's house) used to do, when taking his round in the temple to examine the watch: if he met with any asleep, they were beaten by the provost, and had their garments taken away, and burnt; or, according to others, this officer had the liberty to set fire to their garments. Perhaps, in this case, the person might be obliged to appear in the fragments of his burnt garments the next day, which would be a great disgrace. See Ainsworth on Numb. xviii. 4, 5.

Ver. 17—21. *The seventh angel poured out his vial, &c.*] The seventh vial is poured into the air, the seat of Satan's residence, who is emphatically styled, *the prince of the power of the air*, Ephes. ii. 2. and is represented, ver. 13. as a principal actor in these latter scenes; so that this last period

will

voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, ² It is done.

18 ^b And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, *and* so great.

19 And ⁱ the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance be-

fore God, ^k to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 ^l And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 ^m And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every stone* about the weight of a talent: ⁿ and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

^a John, 19. 30. Ch. 10. 6, 7. & 21. 6. ^b Ch. 4. 5. & 8. 5. & 11. 19, 23. ^c Ch. 11. 8, 13. & 14. 3. & 17. 18. & 18. 2. ^d Pf. 75. 8. Ch. 14. 8—11, 19. 20. & xviii. & 19. 17, 21. ^e Theff. 2. 8. ^f Tim. 3. 9. ^g Jer. 25. 15, 16. ^h If. 51. 23. & 49. 26. ⁱ Ch. 6. 14. & 11. 13. ^j 2. 14—17. ^k Exod. 9. 23—26. ^l Joshua, 10. 11. ^m If. 30. 26—30. ⁿ Ezek. 38. 22. ^o Ch. 8. 7. & 11. 19. ^p Ver. 9, 11. ^q If. 8. 21. ^r Ch. 11. 18. ^s 2 Kings, 6. 33. ^t Jer. 5. 3. ^u If. 1. 5. ^v Mat. 3. 12.

will not only complete the ruin of the kingdom of the beast, but will also shake the kingdom of Satan every where. Upon the pouring out of this vial, a solemn proclamation is made *from the throne* of God himself: *It is done*; in the same sense as the angel affirmed, ch. x. 7. *that in the days of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God should be finished*. Of this vial, as of all the former, the completion is gradual, and the immediate effects and consequences are voices, &c. ver. 18—21. These portend great calamities. *Voices*, and *thunders*, and *lightnings*, are the usual attendants of the Deity, especially in his judgments. *Great earthquakes*, in prophetic language, signify great changes and revolutions; and this is such a one as men never felt and experienced before. Not only the *great city is divided into three parts*, or factions, *but the cities of the nations fall* from their obedience. Her sins are remembered before God, and, like another Babylon, she will soon be made to *drink of the bitter cup of his anger*, ver. 19. Nay, not only the works of men, *the cities, fall*; but even the works of nature, *the islands fly away, and the mountains are not found*; (ver. 20.) which is more than was said, ch. vi. 14. *that they were moved out of their places*; and can import no less than an utter extirpation of idolatry. *Great hail* too, ver. 21. signifies the judgments of God, and these are uncommon judgments. Diodorus speaks of hailstones which weighed a pound or more. Philostorgius mentions hail that weighed eight pounds. But these are *about the weight of a talent*, or about a hundred pounds; a strong figure to denote the greatness and severity of these judgments! But still the men continue obstinate, and blaspheme God for the hail; they remain incorrigible under the divine judgments, and will be destroyed before they will repent, or be reformed. See as above. “The seven vials poured out,” says Mr. Burton, “are to be the seven last plagues; (see Rev. xv. 1.) “for in them is to be filled up the wrath of God.” Here, as in every other part of the Apocryphical descriptions, the number seven seems to be the prevailing number by which to calculate their appearance. As yet the five first vials only, I apprehend, are poured out, and the two last are yet to come. It becomes us therefore to draw a veil over the judgments that are still future, lest by our rashness we provoke a judgment upon ourselves: it becomes us likewise, as men actuated by reason, seriously to reflect on the part we are to act, while the judgments of God are

visibly upon the earth. God’s promises are ever conditional with respect to us; and distant events are never pointed out to us with any degree of certainty, but for very apparent and wise reasons, that the *almost* may become an *altogether Christian*; and that the infidel and unbeliever may be afforded an opportunity of shunning the folly of impiety; and by being guarded against the means of exercising fruitless endeavours to thwart the divine decrees, he may not thereby *add sin to sin*, but learn betimes to repent of his impious folly, and become *wise unto salvation*.

Inferences and REFLECTIONS.—How manifestly righteous are the judgments of God, which shall be executed, in due season, upon antichristian idolaters and persecutors, and all the wicked and ungodly of the earth! They act under the influence of unclean diabolical spirits, which deceive the nations, and set them as in battle-array against the Almighty: and, instead of being reformed by one and another judgment, they obstinately persist in their iniquitous courses, and blaspheme the name of God, as though he dealt unjustly in punishing them. But, how long soever he may bear with them, he will call their sins to remembrance, and pour out the vials of his righteous wrath upon them. And, ah! how dreadful are the calamities, which he, sooner or later, will inflict upon them! They are as grievous and tormenting as the forest ulcers; as nauseous and mortal as seas and rivers of blood; as distressing as the most scorching heat of the sun, which burns up all before it; as dolorous as the thickest darkness; as exposed to every invading misery, as a country that has no barrier for its defence; and as terrifying and overwhelming, as inexpressible tempests of thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and the heaviest storms of hail, beyond all that ever was felt on the earth. In this manner shall the worshippers of the beast, and all antichristian enemies, drink of the wrath of God, till, at length, they, together with the whole kingdom and power of Satan, shall be utterly destroyed. And who must not say that they are worthy of all this, as a just return upon them for the blood of the saints, which they have shed; and for all their abominable idolatries, and other multiplied corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners? God will be applauded, as holy, righteous, and true, in these executions of wrath; and his church

CHAP. XVII.

A woman arrayed in purple, and scarlet, with a golden cup in her hand, sitteth upon the beast, which is great Babylon, the mother of all abominations. The interpretation of the seven heads and the ten horns. The victory of the Lamb. The punishment of the whore.

[Anno Domini 95.]

AND there came ^a one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and ^b talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee ^c the judgment of the

^d great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

² ° With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

³ ^f So he carried me away in the spirit into ^e the wilderness: and I saw ^h a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

^a Ch. 15. 1, 6, 7. & 16. 2-4, 8, 10, 12, 17. & 21. 9.

^b Ch. 4. 1. & 21. 9, 10. Ver. 3. Ch. 6. 1, 2, 5, 7.

^c Ch. 11. 13. & 14. 8-12,

14-20. & xvi. xviii. xix.

^d Ezek. xxiii. Nah. 3. 4.

Ch. 11. 8. & xiii. 2. Theff. 2. 3-12. 2 Tim. 3. 1-6. 1 Tim. 4. 1-3. Ver. 3-6, 15.

Jer. 51. 7. Ver. 15.

Jer. 51. 13. Ver. 15.

^e Ver. 13. 17. Ch. 18. 3, 9. & 13. 3, 4, 8, 12. & 14. 8. & 11. 2.

Jer. 51. 7. 2 Tim. 3. 1-6 & 4. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 4.

1 Tim. 4.

1-3. Dan. 11. 36-39.

^f Ch. 1. 10. & 21. 10. & 4. 2. Ezek. 3. 12, 14. Acts, 8. 39.

^h Ch. 18. 2. If. 13. 21. & 34. 14. with If. 5. 1.

Song, 4. 12. & 5. 1. & 6. 2.

ⁱ Ch. 13. 1, 5, 7. Ver. 6-18.

must say *Amen* to his judging thus, concerning all that oppressed and tyrannized over them during the reign of the beast! With what sudden and unexpected surprize will this tremendous day of the Lord come, like a thief in the night! Blessed are they that shall then be found upon their watch, and appear with spotless robes of righteousness and honour before him.

CHAP. XVII.

Ver. 1.] The former vision represented a very afflicted state of the church; the true worshippers of God, few in number, driven out from society, flying into desert places for safety from persecution, prophesying in sackcloth, in a state of oppression and mourning, and often put to death for their testimony to the truth: yet the time of this afflicted state is limited to 1260 years; at the end of which period the oppressive persecuting power shall be destroyed; and purity, truth, and righteousness, which were oppressed and persecuted, shall flourish in a state of great safety, peace, and happiness. This is a much longer period of prophecy than either of the foregoing. To make the true meaning of it more clear, one of the angels who poured out the cup of God's wrath, is sent to St. John as a messenger, more fully to explain it; and we may justly look upon his interpretation as a sure key, which will warrant an application of the several representations; and so far as an angel from heaven explains it, we may be satisfied we have the true meaning of it: so that by the help of this explication in the prophecy itself, we have a sure interpretation of some of the more important parts of the vision, and of such as will make the interpretation of the rest very likely and probable.

Ver. 1-6. And there came one of the seven angels, &c.] As the *seventh seal*, and the *seventh trumpet*, contained more particulars than any of the former seals or trumpets; so the *seventh vial* contains more than any of the former vials: and the more you consider, the more admirable you will find the structure of this book in all its parts. The destruction of the antichristian empire is a subject of such importance and consequence, that the Holy Spirit has thought fit to represent it under a variety of images.

Rome has already been characterized by the names of *spiritual Egypt*, and of *Babylon*; and having seen how her plagues resemble those of *Egypt*, we shall now see her fall compared to that of *Babylon*. It was declared in general, *Babylon is fallen*, &c. ch. xiv. 8. but this is a catastrophe deserving a more particular description, both for warning to some, and for consolation to others. But before the description of her fall and destruction, there is premised an account of her state and condition, that there may be no mistake in the application. Rome was meant, as all, both Papists and Protestants, agree; and among the Papists are no less names than those of Baronius, Bellarmine, &c. and it appears almost to demonstration, that not Pagan but Christian, not imperial but papal Rome, was here intended. *One of the seven angels* calleth to St. John, ver. 1. Most probably this was the *seventh angel*; for under the *seventh vial* great *Babylon* came into remembrance before God, ch. xvi. 19. and now St. John is called upon to see her condemnation and execution:—*Come hither*, &c. So ancient *Babylon*, which was seated on the great river *Euphrates*, is described, Jer. li. 13. and from thence the phrase of *sitting upon many waters* is in some measure taken; and signifies, according to the angel's own explanation, ver. 15. ruling over many *people and nations*. Neither was this an ordinary prostitute; she was the great whore, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, ver. 2. as the prophet says of Tyre, *Isaiah*, xxiii. 17. Nay, not only the kings, but inferior persons, the inhabitants of the earth, have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication; as it was said of ancient *Babylon*, Jer. li. 7. *Fornication*, in the usual style of scripture, is idolatry; but if it be taken even literally, it is true that modern Rome openly allows the one, as well as practises the other. Ancient Rome does in no respect so well answer the character; for she ruled more with a *rod of iron*, than with the *wine of fornication*. Her ambition was for extending her empire, and not her religion. She permitted even the conquered nations to continue in the religion of their ancestors. She may be said rather to have been corrupted by the importation of foreign vices and superstitions, than to have established her own in other countries. As *Ezekiel* was conveyed

4 ¹ And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and * decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, ^k having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication :

5 And ¹ upon her forehead *was* a name written, ^m MYSTERY, ⁿ BABYLON THE

GREAT, THE MOTHER OF † HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman ^o drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, ^p I wondered with great admiration.

¹ Ver. 18. Ch. 13. 7, 12, 16. Dan. 11. 38. & 7. 8, 24.

* Gr. gilded.

^k Jer. 51. 7. Mat. 23. 25. 2 Theff. 2. 3, 4, 9. 2 Tim 3. 2—5.

Ch. 11. 8. & 13. 5, 6, 12. & 14. 8. & 18. 6. Dan. 7. 25. & 11. 36—39. ¹ If. 3. 9. Ch. 7. 3. & 14. 1. & 13. 16. ^m 2 Theff. 2. 7. 2 Tim. 3. 1—5. ⁿ Ch. 11. 8. & 14. 8. & 18. 2. with If. 14. 12—17. & 47. 6. 7, 12, 13. Jer. 50. 38. 2 Theff. 2. 9. Dan. 7. 25. & 11. 16—19. 2 Tim 3. 1—6, 13. 1 Tim 4. 1—3. Ch. xiii. & 19. 2. † Or fornications. ^o Dan. 7. 21, 25. Ch. 11. 7. & 14. 13. & 13. 7. & 16. 6. & 18. 20, 24. ^p Ch. 13. 1, 11. Hab. 1. 13.

veyed by the Spirit to Jerusalem, (ch. viii. 3.) so St. John is carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness, (ver. 3.) for there the scene is laid, being a scene of desolation. When the woman,—the true church,—was persecuted and afflicted, she was said to fly into the wilderness, ch. xii. 14. and, in like manner, when the woman, the false church, is to be destroyed, the vision is presented in the wilderness. *A woman sitting upon a beast*, is a lively and significative emblem of a church or city directing and governing an empire. In painting and sculpture, as well as in prophetic language, cities are often represented in the form of women; and Rome itself is exhibited in ancient coins as a woman sitting upon a lion. Here the beast is a scarlet-coloured beast, for the same reason that the dragon is called the red dragon, ch. xii. 3. to denote his cruelty, and in allusion to the distinguishing colour of the Roman emperors and magistrates. The beast is also full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns; so that this is the very same beast which was described in the former part of ch. xiii. and the woman in some measure answers to the two horned beast or false prophet; and consequently the woman is Christian, not Pagan Rome, because Rome was become Christian before the beast had completely seven heads and ten horns; that is, before the Roman empire was divided into ten kingdoms. *The woman was arrayed too in purple and scarlet colour*, (ver. 4.) this being the colour of the popes and cardinals, as well as of the emperors and senators of Rome. Nay, the mules and horses which carry the popes and cardinals are covered with scarlet cloth; so that they may properly be said to ride upon a scarlet coloured beast. The woman is also decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls: and who can sufficiently describe the pride, and grandeur, and magnificence of the church of Rome in her vestments and ornaments of all kinds? The mitre of Paul II. which was set with diamonds, sapphires, emeralds, chrysolites, jaspers, and precious stones of all sorts, is one instance; and another conspicuous instance was in the Lady of Loretto, the riches of whose holy image, and house, and treasury, were far beyond the reach of description. There silver could scarcely find an admission; and gold itself looked but poorly among such an incredible number of precious stones. Moreover, the woman, like other harlots, who give philtres and love potions to inflame their lovers, has a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornications; to signify the specious and alluring arts wherewith the bewitches and entices men to idolatry, which is

abomination and spiritual fornication. It is an image similar to that in Jer. li. 7. Yet farther to distinguish the woman, she has her name inscribed upon her forehead, (ver. 5.) in allusion to the practice of some notorious prostitutes, who had their names written on a label upon their foreheads, as may be collected from ancient authors. The inscription is so very particular, that we cannot easily mistake the person;—*Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots*, or rather, *of fornications and abominations of the earth*. Her name *Mystery* can imply no less than that she deals in mysteries; her religion is a mystery, a mystery of iniquity; and she herself is mystically and spiritually Babylon the great. But the title of *mystery* is in no respect proper to ancient Rome, more than to any other city; neither is there any mystery in substituting one heathen, idolatrous, persecuting city for another; but it is indeed a mystery, that a Christian city, professing and boasting herself to be the city of God, should prove another Babylon in idolatry, and in cruelty to the people of God. She glories in the name of *Roman Catholic*; well therefore may she be called *Babylon the Great*: she affects the style and title of *Our holy Mother Church*; but she is, in truth, *the mother of fornications, and abominations of the earth*. Neither can this character, with any propriety, be applied to ancient Rome; for she was rather a learner of foreign superstitions, than the mystery of idolatry to other nations; as appears in various instances. It may be concluded therefore, that this part of the prophecy is sufficiently fulfilled, though there should be reason to question the truth of what is asserted by some writers, that the word MYSTERY was formerly written in gold upon the forefront of the pope's mitre. Scaliger affirms it, upon the authority of the Duke de Montmorency: Francis Le Moyne and Brocardus confirm it, appealing to ocular inspection; and when King James objected this, Lessius could not deny it. If the thing be true, it is a wonderful coincidence of the event with the letter of the prophecy; but it has been much controverted. It is much more certain, (and none of that communion can deny it,) that the ancient mitres were usually adorned with inscriptions. Infamous as the woman is for her idolatry, she is no less detestable for her cruelty: which are two principal characteristics of the antichristian empire: *she is drunken with the blood of the saints*, (ver. 6.) This may indeed be applied to pagan and to Christian Rome; for both have, in their turns, cruelly persecuted the saints and martyrs of Jesus; but the latter is more deserving the character, as she has far exceeded the former,

7 And the angel said unto me, ¹ Wherefore didst thou marvel? ² I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 ³ The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and ⁴ go into perdition: and ⁵ they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not ⁶ written in the book of life from

the foundation of the world, when they behold ⁷ the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

9 And ⁸ here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. ⁹ The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and*, the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

¹ With If. 40. 27. Luke, 24. 5. Mark, 16. 6. ² Ver. 1, 8—18. ³ Ch. 13. 1, 11. & 11. 7. & 9. 2, 3. Dan. 7. 2, 20. ⁴ Dan. 7. 11, 26. & 11. 45. ⁵ 2 Thess. 2. 3, 8. Ch. 13. 10. & 14. 8—11, 15—20. & xvi. xviii. & 19. 15—21. & 20. 10. ⁶ Ch. 13. 3, 4, 7, 8, 12. ⁷ Ch. 13. 8. & 20. 12. & 21. 27. & 3. 5. If. 4. 3. Dan. 12. 1. Phil. 4. 3. Luke, 10. 20. ⁸ Ch. 9. 1—11. & 13. 1, 11, 14. Ver. 3. ⁹ Ch. 13. 18. Eccl. 1. 17. ¹⁰ Ver. 3, 7. Ch. 13. 1. & 12. 3. Dan. 7. 17, 23.

former, both in the degree and duration of her persecutions. It is very true, as has been hinted before, that if pagan Rome has destroyed her *thousands* of innocent Christians, Christian Rome has slain her *ten thousands*. For, not to mention other outrageous slaughters and barbarities, the crusades against the Waldenses and Albigenses, the murders committed by the Duke of Alba in the Netherlands, the massacres in France and Ireland, will probably amount to above ten times the number of all the Christians slain in all the ten persecutions of the Roman emperors put together. St. John's *admiration* also plainly evinces that Christian Rome was intended; for it could be no matter of surprize to him, that a heathen city should persecute the Christians, when he himself had seen and suffered persecution under Nero: but, that a city professedly Christian, should wanton and riot in the blood of Christians, was a subject of astonishment indeed; and well might he, as it is emphatically expressed, *wonder with great wonder*.

Ver. 7—14. *And the angel said unto me, &c.*] It was not thought sufficient to represent these things only in vision, and therefore the *angel* undertakes to explain the *mystery*, the mystic sense or secret meaning of the *woman* and of the *beast* that carrieth her: and the angel's interpretation is indeed the best key to the Revelations; the best clue to direct and conduct us through this intricate labyrinth. The mystery of the *beast* is first explained. The beast is considered first in general, ver. 8. under a three-fold state or succession, as existing, and then ceasing to be, and then reviving again, so as to become another and the same:—*he was, and is not, and yet is*, or, according to the Alexandrine and other copies, *and shall come*;—*shall ascend out of the bottomless pit*. A *beast*, in the prophetic style, is an idolatrous, tyrannical empire: and the Roman empire was idolatrous under the heathen emperors; and then ceased to be so, for some time, under the Christian emperors; and then became idolatrous again under the Roman pontiffs, and so has continued ever since. It is the same idolatrous power revived again, but only in another form; and all the corrupt part of mankind, whose names were not enrolled as good citizens in the registers of heaven, are pleased at the revival of it: but in this last form, *it shall go into perdition*; it shall not, as it did before, cease

for a time, and revive again, but shall be destroyed for ever. After the general account of the beast, follows an explanation of the particular emblems, with a short preface, intimating that they are deserving of the deepest attention, and are a proper exercise and trial of the understanding, ver. 9. See 13, 18. The *seven heads* have a double signification:—they are, primarily, *seven mountains*, on which the *woman* sitteth,—on which the capital city is seated, which all know to be the situation of Rome. It is observed too, that new Rome, or Constantinople, is situated on seven mountains, but these are very rarely mentioned, and mentioned only by obscure authors, in comparison of the others; and besides the seven mountains, other particulars also must coincide, which cannot be found in Constantinople. It is evident therefore, that the city seated on the *seven mountains* must be Rome; and a plainer description could not be given of it, without expressing the name, which there might be several wise reasons for concealing. As the *seven heads* signify *seven mountains*, so they also signify *seven kings* reigning over them: ver. 10, 11. And they are *seven kings*, or *kingdoms*, or *forms of government*, as the word *basileis* imports. *Five are fallen*; five of these forms of government are already past; and *one is*;—the sixth is now subsisting. The *five fallen*, are *kings*, and *consuls*, and *dictators*, and *decemvirs*, and *military tribunes with consular authority*; as they are enumerated by the two greatest Roman historians, Livy and Tacitus:—the sixth is the power of the *Cæsars* or emperors, which was subsisting at the time of the vision. An end was put to the imperial name in the year 476, by Odoacer king of the Heruli: he and his successors assumed the title of kings of Italy; but though the name was changed, the power still continued much the same. This therefore cannot well be called a new form of government; it may rather be considered as a continuation of the imperial power, or as a renovation of the kingly authority. Consuls are reckoned but one form of government, though their office was frequently suspended, and after a time restored; and in the same manner *kings* may be counted but one form of government, though the name was resumed after an interval of so many years. A new form of government was not erected, till Rome fell under the obedience of the Eastern emperor; and the emperor's lieutenant,

11 ^b And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

12 And the ^c 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.

13 ^d These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 ^e These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and ^f they that are with him *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, ^g The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

^a Ver. 8. ² Theff. 2. 7. ^c Dan. 2. 42. & 7. 7, 20, 24. Ch. 12. 3. & 13. 1. ^d Prov. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 7. Ch. 13. 3, 4, 7. ^e Ch. 21. 7. & 13. 7. & 16. 14. & 19. 15—21. & 14. 8—20. Dan. 7. 21, 22, 25, 26. & 2. 44. Pf. 2. 8, 9. & 21. 8—12. & 170. 5, 6. Ch. 6. 12—17. ^f 1 Tim. 6. 15. Ch. 19. 16. & 1. 5. Prov. 8. 15, 16. Deut. 10. 17. Dan. 4. 35. ^g Ch. 14. 1, 4. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Heb. 3. 1. Rom. 8. 30. Jsa. 50. 43, 45. ^h 1f. 8. 7. Ch. 13. 3, 4, 7, 8. with 5. 9. & 7. 9. Ver. 1.

tenant, the exarch of Ravenna, dissolved all the former magistracies, and constituted a duke of Rome, to govern the people, and to pay a tribute to the exarchate of Ravenna. Rome had never experienced this form of government; and this was, perhaps, *the other*, which, in the apostle's days, *was not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* For Rome was reduced to a dukedom, tributary to the exarch of Ravenna, by Longinus, who was sent exarch in the year 566, or 568; and the city revolted from the Eastern emperor to the Pope in the year 727, which is a *short space*, in comparison of the imperial power which preceded, and lasted above five hundred years; and in comparison of the papal power which followed, and has now continued above a thousand years. But still it may be doubted, whether this is properly a new form of government, Rome being still subject to the imperial power, by being subject to the Greek emperor's deputy, the exarch of Ravenna; and according as you determine this point, *the beast that was, and is not, (was, while idolatrous, and was not, while not idolatrous,)* will appear to be the *seventh* or *eighth*. If you reckon this a new form of government, the beast that *now is*, is the *eighth*; if you do not reckon this a new form of government, the beast is *of the seventh*; but whether he be the *seventh* or *eighth*, he is the last form of government,—*and goeth into perdition.* It appears evidently, that the sixth form of government, which was subsisting in St. John's time, was the imperial; and what form of government has succeeded to that in Rome, and has continued for a *long space* of time, but the papal? The beast, therefore, upon which the woman rideth, is the Roman government in its last form: and this, all must acknowledge, is the papal, and not the imperial. Having thus explained the mystery of the *seven heads*, the angel proceeds to the explanation of the *ten horns*, which, says he, (ver. 12.) are *ten kings, who have received no kingdom as yet*; and consequently they were not in being at the time of the vision: and indeed the Roman empire was not divided into ten kingdoms, till some time after it was become Christian. *But they receive power as kings one hour, or rather, at the same time, or for the same length of time with the beast.* It is true in both senses, they rise and fall together with the beast; and, consequently, are not to be reckoned before the rise and establishment of the beast; and accordingly, when a catalogue was produced of these ten kings or kingdoms in the notes upon Daniel, they were

exhibited as they stood in the eighth century, which is the time of the rise and establishment of the beast. Kingdoms they were before, but they were not before kingdoms or horns of the beast, till they embraced his religion, and submitted to his authority: and the beast *strengthened* them, as they again *strengthened the beast.* It is upon the seventh, or last head of the beast, that the horns were seen growing together, that is, upon the Roman empire in its seventh or last form of government; and they are not, like the *heads*, successive, but contemporary kingdoms:—*These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast;* ver. 13. which is easily understood and applied to the princes and states in communion with the church of Rome. However they may differ in other respects, yet they agree in submitting implicitly to the authority of the Roman church, and in defending its rights and prerogatives against all opposers. But where were ever ten kings or kingdoms, who were all unanimous in their submission to the Roman empire, and voluntarily contributed *their power and strength*, their forces and riches, to support and maintain it? *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them,* ver. 14. They shall persecute the true church of Christ; but the true church shall in the end prevail and triumph over them; which particulars have been fulfilled in part already, and will be more fully accomplished hereafter.

Ver. 14. *Called, and chosen, and faithful.*] This is supposed to be a reference to the military custom of the Greeks, who used to call the people together, when any expedition was designed; out of whom there were some selected to serve in the action intended, who swore fidelity to their leader. Others have imagined, that this is an allusion to Matth. xx. 16. xxii. 14. Be this as it may, the apostle's meaning might be, "*Those that are with him, and have the honour to fight perseveringly under his banner, are not only called to arm themselves in this glorious cause, but chosen to act in his service; and they are faithful to the engagement into which they enter.*" See 2 Pet. i. 10. Isai. xxxiv. 2. 6, 7.

Ver. 15—18. *The waters which thou sawest, &c.]* In the former part of this description, (ver. 1.) the *whore* is represented like ancient Babylon, sitting upon many waters, and these waters are here said expressly to signify *peoples, and multitudes, &c.* So many words in the plural number, fitly denote the great extensiveness of her power and jurisdiction; and it is a remarkable peculiarity of Rome, dif-

16 And the ¹ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these [†]shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For ¹God 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.

18 And the woman which thou sawest ^{is} that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

¹ Ver. 2, 10, 13. ² Ch. 11. 13. Job, 9. 12, 22. 2 Sam. 13. 15. Pf. 27. 2. Dan. 7. 5. Ch. 28. 8, 9, 18. Lev. 21. 9. Il. 13. 17, 18. Jer. 50. 41. Ezek. 16. 28—44. Ch. 16. 12. [†] Pf. 105. 25. Ch. 18. 6, 7, & 10. 7. or ver. 13. Rom. 1. 26. ^{is} Thel. 2. 10—12. ^{is} Ch. 11. 8. & 14. 8. & 16. 19. & 18. 2. Luke, 2. 1. Ch. 13. 2. & 12. 3.

ferent from all other governments in the world, that her authority is not limited to her own immediate subjects, and confined within the bounds of her own dominions, but extends over all kingdoms and countries professing the same religion. She herself glories in the title of the *Catholic* church, and exults in the number of her votaries, as a certain proof of the true religion. But notwithstanding the general current in her favour, the tide shall turn against her; and the hands, which helped to raise her, shall pull her down. *The ten horns shall hate the whore*, (ver. 16.) that is, by a common figure of the whole for a part, *some* of the ten kings; for others, (ch. xviii. 9.) shall bewail her, and lament for her, and (ch. xix. 19.) shall fight and perish in the cause of the beast. Some of the kings who formerly loved her, grown sensible of her exorbitant exactions and oppressions, shall hate her; shall strip, expose, and plunder her, and utterly consume her with fire. Rome therefore will be finally destroyed by some of the princes who are reformed, or shall be reformed from Popery: and as the reigning powers of France have contributed greatly to her advancement, it is not impossible, nor improbable, that some time or other they may also be the principal authors of her destruction. France has already shewn some tendency towards a reformation, and therefore may appear more likely to effect such a revolution. Portugal, in destroying the society of the Jesuits, notwithstanding the interposition of the papal power in their behalf, shews how possible such a revolution may be, even in the most bigoted countries: and such a revolution may reasonably be expected, because this infatuation of popish princes is permitted by divine Providence only for a certain period, until the words of God shall be fulfilled, ver. 17. and particularly the words of the prophet Daniel, vii. 25, 26, &c. *They shall be given into his hand, until a time, and times, and the dividing of time; but then, as it immediately follows,—the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end.* Little doubt can remain after this, what idolatrous church can be meant by the *whore of Babylon*; but, for the greater certainty, it is added by the angel, ver. 18. *The woman which thou sawest, is that great city.* He had explained the mystery of the beast, and of his seven heads and ten horns; and his explanation of the mystery of the woman is, *That great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* And what city, at the time of the vision, reigned over the kingdoms of the earth, but Rome? She has too, ever since, reigned over the kings of the earth, if not with temporal yet at least with spiritual authority. Rome therefore is evidently and undeniably *this great city*: and that Christian and not heathen, papal

and not imperial Rome was meant, has appeared in several instances, and will appear in several more. See as above.

Inferences and REFLECTIONS.—Easily might we have apprehended, that *Rome* had been here designed, though it had not been so particularly described by its situation on *seven hills*, or by the empire it then possessed over all the kingdoms of the world. The *harlot* might be sufficiently distinguished by her names of *blasphemy*, by her *cup* of enchantment, by her titles, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. Yea, she might be known by this single character, of having made herself drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And is it heathen Rome, to whom these characters are more remarkably applicable? The apostle would not then have wondered with so great admiration, that idolatry and persecution should prevail, where the former had raged for so many ages, and the latter almost from the very beginning of Christianity; and to such a degree, in the days of Nero, who, as their own historian tells us, had, thirty years before this, added mockeries and insults to torment; that Christians were dressed up in the skins of wild beasts, and so exposed to be worried on the theatre: a method which has, indeed, figuratively speaking, been every where practised, and must be practised, if Christianity is to be made ridiculous, or odious. But, the true occasion of the apostle's astonishment was, that *Rome* professing Christianity, *Rome* setting up for the head of the Christian world, should have emulated and exceeded any pagan city, and even itself in its pagan state, in its idolatries, and in its cruelties. And it is a fact indeed wonderful, that God should suffer this. Nevertheless, the beauty and glory of his providences shall at length be apparent. The kings of the earth, though, like Nebuchadnezzar, (Isa. x. 7.) they meant it not, are now fulfilling the plan of divine Providence; a plan that shall at length appear wise and harmonious, though the permission of all these absurdities and horrors make a part of it. And when the words of God are fulfilled, they who with one mind have given their power and strength to the beast, in order to support the harlot, shall be as unanimous in hating her, and making her desolate and naked; shall be ready to devour her flesh, and consume her in her own fires. Fierce and savage as the beast may at present appear, its war with the Lamb shall be utterly in vain; for the Lamb is always victorious, and will assert his grand imperial titles, LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS. May we all lift under his banner: may we be faithful, faithful even to death; since then

C H A P. XVIII.

Babylon is fallen. The people of God are commanded to depart out of her. The kings of the earth, with the merchants and mariners, lament over her. The faints rejoice for the judgments of God upon her.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND after ^a these things I saw ^b another angel come down from heaven, having great power; ^c and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, ^d Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3 ^e 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, ^f and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the ^g abundance of her

delicacies.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ^h Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

6 ⁱ Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.

7 ^j How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow; and shall see no sorrow.

8 ^k Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: ^l for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

^a Ch. xv—xvii. ^b Ch. 14. 6, 8. & 1. 20. ^c Ezek. 43. 2. 1f. 60. 1—3. 2 Cor. 3. 8. 2 Theff. 2. 8. ^d If. 13. 19, 21. & 14. 23. & 21. 9 & 34. 9—4. Jer. 50. 39 & 51. 8, 37, 64. Ch. 14. 8. & 16. 4. 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2. with Lev. 17. 7. & xi. Mark, 5. 2. ^e Ch. 14. 8. & 17. 2. If. 47. 15. Jer. 51. 7. ^f Ver. 11—19, 23. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 3. ^g Or power. ^h Gen. 19. 12. If. 48. 20. & 52. 11. Jer. 51. 6, 50. & 50. 8. Zech. 2. 6, 7. 2 Cor. 6. 17. 2 Chron. 28. 9. Ezra, 9. 6. Jer. 51. 9. Ch. 16. 9. Gen. 19. 13. ⁱ Ch. 13. 10. Pf. 137. 8. Jer. 50. 15, 24. & 51. 24, 49. 2 Tim. 4. 14. Ch. 14. 10. Jer. 16. 18. & 17. 18. Exod. 21. 23, 24. & 22. 4—9. ^j 2 Theff. 2. 4, 8. Zeph. 2. 15. If. 47. 5—8. Ezek. 28. 2—10. If. 22. 12—14. & 5. 11—14. ^k Ver. 10, 17, 19. If. 47. 9—11. & 66. 15. Ch. 13. 10. & 17. 16. Jer. 51. 6. 2 Theff. 2. 8. ^l Ch. 15. 7. & 14. 10. & 11. 17. Jer. 50. 31, 34.

all the rage of men, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues, if it were united against us, could not prevent his giving us a crown of victory, and a part in his everlasting triumphs!

C H A P. XVIII.

Ver. 1.] In the former chapter, the angel interpreter has given us a key to the meaning of the prophecy, which describes this third and most lasting period, wherein the faints were to suffer for their faith and constancy; that they might expect a time of temptation and suffering; that they might be more careful through grace to confirm their faith and patience, and encourage each other to perseverance. This chapter represents *another angel* sent from heaven, to reveal the sure judgments of God on these enemies of the pure Christian religion; to foretel their sure destruction, and that in as eminent a manner as God ever appeared to punish Babylon and Tyre, the ancient enemies of true religion. This part of the prophecy is very fit and proper for the general design of it; to caution good Christians against the corruption of the times in which they live; and to give them consolation in all their sufferings through confidence in the protection of God, and through hope of deliverance in a proper time, and of a glorious reward in the end.

Ver. 1—8. I saw another angel, &c.] After the account of the state and condition of spiritual Babylon, here follows a description of her fall and destruction, in the same sublime and figurative style as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel have foretold the fall of Babylon and Tyre, the

types and emblems of this spiritual Babylon. A mighty and glorious angel descends from heaven, and proclaims (as in chap. xiv. 8.) the fall of Babylon, and, together with her punishment, the crimes which deserved it; her idolatry and wickedness. It is farther added, that after her fall she shall be made a scene of desolation, and become the habitation of hateful birds and beasts of prey; as the prophet also predicted concerning ancient Babylon, *Ifai. xiii. 21. Wild beasts of the desert shall lie there,—and satyrs shall dance there:* where the word which we render *satyrs*, the Septuagint translate *demons*, or *devils*. But if this fall of Babylon was effected by Totilas king of the Ostrogoths, as Grotius affirms; or by Alaric king of the Visigoths, as the bishop of Meaux contends; how can Rome be said ever since to have been *the habitation of devils*, &c. unless they will allow the popes and cardinals to merit these appellations? The word rendered *delicacies*, ver. 3. (*εὐωχῶν*) seems to signify such *luxury* of diet as cherishes wantonness, and disposes to acts of unchastity; and may well represent the manner in which the Roman clergy have pampered themselves, and the effects it has produced; as well as the idolatries which have been established and maintained to support that luxury. *Another voice* is also heard from heaven, (ver. 4.) exhorting all Christians to forsake the communion of so corrupt a church, lest they should be *partakers of her sins, and of her plagues*; and at the same time denouncing that her punishment should be great and extraordinary, in proportion to her crimes. But was there any such necessity for forsaking the church of Rome in

†

9 And ^m the kings of the earth, who, have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, ⁿ shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the ^o smoke of her burning,

10 ^p Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for ^q in one hour is thy judgment come.

11 ^r And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 ^s The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all ^t thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 ^u And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and ^v slaves, and souls of men.

14 ^x And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed

from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 ^y The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, ^z Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For ^a in one hour so great riches is come to nought. ^b And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

18 And cried when they ^c saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ^d What city is like unto this great city!

19 ^e And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, ^f wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! ^g for in one hour is she made desolate.

20 ^h Rejoice over her, *thou* heaven, and *ye* holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

^m Ver. 3, 7. Ch. 16. 14. & 17. 2, 17. ⁿ Ezek. 16. 16, 17. & 27. 30—32. & 3. 14. Pl. 58. 10. Jer. 50. 40. ^o Ver. 18. Ch. 14. 11. & 19. 3. Gen. 19. 28. ^p Num. 16. 4. Pl. 21. 9. Ch. 14. 8. ^q Ver. 8, 17, 19. Pl. 47. 9, 11. Ch. 17. 1. Jer. 51. 8. ^r Ezek. 27. 27—36. & 26. 15—21. Ver. 3. Ch. 17. 17. & 13. 17. ^s Ezek. 27. 5—24. 1 Kings, 10. 11, 12. Ch. 17. 4. ^t Or *weet*. ^u Prov. 7. 17. Pl. 23. 5. Ezek. 27. 13—22. Pl. 4. 7. Pl. 21. 13. ^v Or *boats*. Ezek. 27. 13. 2 Pet. 2. 3. ^w Luke, 16. 25. Ch. 16. 20. & 12. 8. ^x Ver. 3, 9—24, 19, 23. ^y Ver. 10, 11. Ch. 17. 4. Ezek. 27. 31. ^z Ver. 8, 10. Ch. 17. 4. Pl. 47. 9, 11. Jer. 51. 8. Lam. 4. 6. ^a Pl. 23. 14. Ezek. 27. 29. ^b Ver. 9. Ch. 14. 11. & 19. 3. Gen. 19. 28. Pl. 34. 9, 10. ^c Ver. 10. Ezek. 27. 32. with ch. 13. 4. Pl. 23. 8. ^d Josh. 7. 6. 1 Sam. 4. 12. 2 Sam. 13. 9. Neh. 9. 1. Job, 2. 12. Ezek. 27. 9, 31. Ver. 10. 16. ^e Ver. 3, 23. ^f Ver. 8, 10, 17. Pl. 47. 9, 11. Jer. 51. 8. Lam. 4. 6. ^g Pl. 44. 23. & 49. 13. Jer. 51. 48. Ch. 19. 2. Pl. 50. 11—13. Luke, 11. 47, 50.

the days of Alaric, or Totilas, before she had yet degenerated again into idolatry? Or what were then her notorious crimes, deserving of such exemplary punishment, unless Rome Christian was to suffer for the sins of Rome Pagan? *She saith in her heart, (ver. 7.) like ancient Babylon, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow; but notwithstanding, she shall be utterly burned with fire, &c. ver. 8.* These expressions can imply no less than a total destruction by fire; but Rome has never yet been totally destroyed by fire: the moit that Alaric and Totilas did, was burning some parts of the city; but if only some parts of the city were burnt, it was not an event important enough to be ascribed to the *Lord God* particularly, and to be considered as a strong exertion of his judgment.

Ver. 9—20. And the kings of the earth, &c.] In the very solemn manner described in the verses before us, by an angel, and by a voice from heaven, is declared the fall of Rome, and her destruction by fire; and then are set forth the consequences of her fall, the lamentations of

some, and the rejoicings of others. *The kings of her communion, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, bewail and lament her fall, (ver. 9, 10.)* But what kings were they, who lived deliciously with old Rome, and had reason to lament her fall? *The merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, (ver. 11—17.)* for there is an end of all traffic and commerce with her, whether spiritual or temporal; for it is intimated, ver. 13. that they make merchandise of the *souls* as well as of the *bodies* of men. *The ship-masters, &c. weep and wail, (ver. 17, 18, 19.)* for they can no longer import or export commodities for her, or convey strangers to and fro; for there is an end of all her *costliness*. These lamentations are similar to the lamentations over Tyre in Ezek. xxvi. xxvii. and are equal to the most mournful strains of the Greek poets over Thebes or Troy. In all, they *stand afar off, (ver. 10. 15. 17.)* as if they were unable or afraid to help and assist her. In all, they cry, *alas! alas!* (ver. 10. 16. 19.) which is the third *woe*, or *alas*, mentioned, ch. viii. 13. xi. 14.; for as the fall of the Othman empire is the end of the *second woe*, so the fall

21 ¹ And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast *it* into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 ² And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft *he be*, shall be found any more in thee; and the found of a mil-

stone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 ¹ And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: ^m for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy forceries were all nations deceived.

24 ⁿ And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

¹ Exod. 15. 5. Neh. 9. 11. Jer. 51. 63, 64. Ch. 12. 8. & 16. 20. 2 Theff. 2. 8. ^k If. 24. 8, 9. Jer. 7. 34. & 16. 9. & 25. 10. Ezek. 26. 13. No joy, no business, no inhabitants, shall be in Rome. ^l If. 24. 8. Jer. 7. 34. & 16. 9. & 25. 10. ^m If. 23. 8. Ver. 3, 9, 11. Ch. 17. 25, 13; 17. & 13. 3, 4, 5, 14. 2 Tim. 3. 2-6. & 4. 3, 4. 1 Tim. 4. 1-4. 2 Kings, 9. 22. Nahum, 3. 4. ⁿ Ch. 17. 6. & 19. 2. & 13. 2, 7. & 11. 7, 2. Dan. 7. 21, 25. Mat. 23. 29-35.

fall of Rome is the completion of the *third woe*. In all, they lament the suddenness of her fall, (ver. 10. 17. 19.) *for in one hour is her destruction come*. At the same time her destruction is matter of joy and triumph, ver. 20. *to the holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged them on her*: but what reason had the Christians to rejoice over the calamities brought on Rome by Alaric or Totilas, in which they themselves were the principal sufferers? And how were these calamities any vindication of their cause, or of the cause of true religion?

Ver. 21—24. *A mighty angel took up a stone, &c.*] Farther to confirm the sudden fall and irrecoverable destruction of Rome, an emblem is given, similar to that in Jer. li. 63, 64. *A mighty angel casteth a millstone into the sea*, ver. 21. declaring, that *with the same violence this great city shall be cast down*, and shall never rise again. Her utter desolation is farther described, ver. 22, 23. in phrases similar to those of the ancient prophets (Isai. xxiv. 8. Jer. vii. 34. xvi. 9. xxv. 10. Ezek. xxvi. 13.). There shall be no more *musicians* for the entertainment of the rich and great; no more *tradesmen* or artificers, to furnish the conveniences of life; no more *servants* or *slaves*, to grind the mill, or to supply the necessaries of life: nay, there shall be no more *lights*, no more *bridal songs*; the city shall never be peopled again by new marriages, but shall remain depopulated for ever. For which utter desolation, there are assigned these reasons, (ver. 23, 24.)—her *pride* and *luxury*; her *superstition* and *idolatry*; her *tyranny* and *cruelty*. Her punishment shall be as severe and exemplary as if she had been guilty of all the persecutions that ever were upon the account of religion; for by her conduct she had approved, imitated, and surpassed them all. But Rome has never yet been depopulated and desolated in this manner: she was taken indeed and plundered by Alaric king of the Visigoths in the year 410, by Genseric king of the Vandals in the year 455, by Totilas king of the Ostrogoths in the year 546, and by others since: but yet she is still standing and flourishing, and is honoured by many nations as the metropolis of the Christian world; she still resounds with *singers* and *musicians*; she still excels in *arts* which serve to pomp and luxury; she still abounds with *candles* and *lamps*, and *torches*, burning even by day as well as night; and consequently this prophecy has not yet been, but remains yet to be fulfilled. Before we con-

clude our comment on this chapter, we cannot but take notice of the remarkable force and beauty of the words rendered, *Thus with violence shall, &c. be thrown down*, ver. 21. The original signifies literally, *shall be hurried away with violence*; intimating, that if it fell by its own weight, its fall would not be rapid enough.

Inferences and REFLECTIONS.—From the particular detail which is here given us, of the various commodities in which Babylon traded with its merchants, we may surely take an incidental occasion to reflect upon the rich bounty of divine Providence to the children of men, in giving them such a variety of good things, which tend not only to their necessary support, but their ornament and delight. To whatever pernicious purposes vanity and luxury may abuse *the silver and the gold, the gems and the pearls, the fine linen, and silk, the purple and scarlet, the ivory and marble, the cinnamon and the myrrh*, as well as the more important blessings of *wheat and oil, of kine, and sheep, and horses*, all are the gifts of God; and, if wisely and properly used, may justly excite our thankfulness to him; and it is on ourselves, and not on him, that we are to charge it, if what should have been for *our welfare*, becomes a *trap*, and our *treasures* be turned into *idols*. Nor is the wise disposition of Providence to be disregarded, in causing many of these things to be the peculiar products of different countries, denying to some what he has given to the rest, that so traffic and commerce may be encouraged, and, by it, society and intercourse extended among different nations, and provision made for that spread of *divine knowledge*, which had, in many instances, been almost impossible, if human industry, quickened by necessity, and the prospect of gain, had not invented those arts of navigation, to which *Great Britain*, above all other nations, is so much indebted, and without which, indeed, our beautiful and fruitful island had been a desert, inaccessible to men.

But, though this oblique reflection may profitably be made, the great object to which we are directed by this chapter, is the certain and final *ruin of Babylon*, which, how highly soever exalted, how superbly soever adorned, how luxuriously soever regaled, *shall fall, shall fall as a millstone cast into the sea*. Strong is the Lord God who judgeth her; and it is impossible she can withstand the force of his omnipotent arm. Long has she, in a meta-

phorical

CHAP. XIX.

God is praised in heaven for judging the great whore, and avenging the blood of his saints. The marriage of the Lamb. The angel will not be worshipped. The fowls called to the great slaughter.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND ^a after these things ^b I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

² ^c For true and righteous *are* his judgments: ^d for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and ^e hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

^a Ch. xviii. & 4. 1. & 7. 1. & 16. 1—11.

^b Ch. 4. 11. & 5. 9—13. & 7. 10, 12. & 12. 10. & 11. 15—18. 1 Tim. 1. 17.

^c Ch. 15. 3.

& 10. 5, 7. Deut. 32. 4. & 33. 27.

^d Deut. 32. 42, 43. Ch. 17. 1, 2. & 18. 3, 9, 23.

^e Ch. 16. 6. & 18. 20, 24. & 13. 10. Dan. 7.

21, 26. ^f See ver. 1.

^g Ch. 14. 11. & 18. 9, 18. Gen. 19. 28. If. 34. 9, 10. & 13. 20. 2 Thess. 1. 9. Pl. 106. 18.

^h Ch. 4. 4, 6, 9. 10. & 5. 6, 8, 14. 1 Chron. 16. 36. Neh. 8. 6.

ⁱ Ch. 1. 1, 15. & 14. 2. & 11. 15, 17. & 12. 10. & 4. 8. Pl. 47. 1, 2, 5, 6. & 97. 1. & 96. 11—13. & 98. 7—9.

^k Ezek. 1. 24. & 43. 2.

^l Pl. 134. 1, 2. & 135. 1. & 115. 13. Ch. 11. 18. & 20. 12.

^m Pl. xciv—c. cxvii. cxlv.—cl.

phorical sense, been the hold of every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird; and God will make her so in another, even in a literal sense, when he shall appear to remember and punish those iniquities, which have reached unto heaven; among which, various and detestable as they have been, shedding *the blood of the prophets and the saints* must be reckoned as most enormous. Let no triumph of the antichristian powers, for the present, shake our faith in these most certain and indubitable prophecies; and let that charge never be forgotten, "*Come forth from her, O my people, and be separate.*" Blessed be God, that a separation has been begun, that it has been so long supported, and that so many attempts to bring back God's Israel into captivity have been defeated. May the boundaries of the Reformation be extended! may the purity of the reformed churches be more and more advanced, and all remainders of superstition, persecution, and imposition, be taken away. And, to conclude all, let those who are now living deliciously, and glorifying themselves in the forgetfulness of God, abusing the various gifts of his bounty to his dishonour, and saying in their hearts, that *they shall see no sorrow*, remember how suddenly their state may be changed; how quickly they may sink into the depths of misery, proportionable to the height of their abused prosperity; and experience a torment and sorrow, which will be doubly bitter in the remembrance of their former condition. Let such, therefore, in whatever rank of life they are, according to the words of Daniel to the most illustrious king of Babylon, Dan. iv. 27.) *Break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, if it may be a lengthening out of their tranquillity; and give glory to God, before all their cheerful light be exchanged for darkness, and all the harmony of their music for weeping and wailing, groaning and lamentation for ever.*

³ ⁱ And again they said, Alleluia. ⁴ ^a And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

⁴ ^b And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

⁵ ⁱ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

⁶ ^k And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

⁷ ^l Let us be glad and rejoice, and give

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 1.] The prophecies relating to the third period, concluded with a severe punishment of Rome, for her pride, luxury, superstition, and idolatry; and especially for her cruel persecution of all who were found faithful to their duty in preserving the purity of the Christian doctrines and worship. When Rome thus fell, like ancient Babylon, to rise no more, the heavenly church is introduced as a choir to praise God for his righteous judgments. This excellent hymn of praise, sung by the united voices of angels and saints, the whole assembly of heaven, strongly represents to all Christians, and to every church on earth, what grateful sense they ought to have of God's faithfulness in their protection, and in punishing the persecutors of truth and religion. Though for wise reasons, and for a limited time, God may permit the righteous and faithful to suffer many things from the enemies of truth and righteousness, yet the final event of things shall surely shew God's faithfulness in the blessing of his people, and justice in the punishment of his enemies:—a sufficient reason for consolation, gratitude, and praise.

Ver. 1—10. And after these things I heard a great voice, &c.] Instead of *I am thy fellow-servant, &c.* ver. 10. Doddridge renders it, *I am a fellow-servant with thee, and with thy brethren, who keep the testimony.* Here the whole church, agreeably to the exhortation of the angel, ch. xviii. 20. join in praises and thanksgivings to almighty God for his *truth and righteousness*, in judging this idolatrous city; (ver. 1, 2.) his *truth*, in fulfilling his promises and threatenings; and his *righteousness*, in proportioning her punishment to her crimes. *And her smoke rose up for ever and ever;* (ver. 3.) which intimates, that she should be made as signal a monument of divine vengeance, as Sodom and Gomorrah. Isaiah has said much the same thing of Edom, ch. xxxiv. 9, 10.—*And the streams thereof shall*

honour to him: ^m for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted ⁿ that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, ^o Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, ^p These are the true sayings of God.

10 ^q And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it not*: ^r I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship

God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

11 And ^s I saw heaven opened, and behold ^t a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called ^u faithful and true, and ^v in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes ^{were} ¹ as a flame of fire, and on his head ^{were} ² many crowns; and ³ he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 ^b And he ^{was} clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called ^c The Word of God.

14 ^d And the armies which ^{were} in heaven

^m Mat. 22. 1—14. & 25. 1—10. Luke, 14. 16—23. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Eph. 5. 31. Ch. 21. 2, 9. Hosea, 2. 19, 20. Ezek. 16. 8. If. 62. 5. & 54. 5, 6. ⁿ Pf. 45. 14, 15. & 132. 9. If. 45. 24, 25. & 61. 10. Ch. 3. 5, 18. Mat. 22. 12. Rom. 3. 22. & 5. 19. & 10. 4. & 13. 14. 2 Cor. 5. 21. Phil. 3. 9. Ezek. 16. 10. Eph. 5. 26. ^o Luke, 14. 15—24. Mat. 22. 4. Ch. 14. 13. Pf. 89. 15. ^p Ch. 21. 5. & 22. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 15. ^q Ch. 22. 8, 9. Acts, 10. 25, 26. & 14. 15. 1 John, 5. 21. ^r Ch. 22. 9. & 1. 9. & 12. 17. 1 John, 5. 10. ^s With ch. 4. 1. & 11. 19. & 15. 5. ^t With ch. 6. 2. Zech. 1. 8. ^u Ch. 1. 5. & 3. 14. John, 14. 6. ^v Ch. 15. 3, 7. & 16. 14. & 17. 14. Pf. 96. 10, 11. ^w Ch. 1. 14. & 2. 13. ^x Pf. 27. 3. & 77. 8. Ver. 16. ^y John, 1. 18. Judges, 13. 18. If. 9. 6. with ch. 2. 17. ^z If. 63. 2, 3. Pf. 58. 10. ^{aa} John, 1. 1, 14. 1 John, 1. 1. & 5. 7. Heb. 4. 12. ^{ab} 2 Thess. 1. 7, 10. Jude, 15. Ch. 14. 1. & 17. 14. & 4. 4. & 7. 4, 9, 14. Song, 1. 9.

shall be turned into pitch: in the genuine editions of the Chaldee paraphrase it is, *And the rivers of Rome shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch*:—it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever. The Jews, by *Edom*; understand Rome; and the tradition of their rabbins may receive some confirmation from these words of the apostle. Such an event too may appear the more probable, because the adjacent countries are known to be of a sulphureous and bituminous soil; there have, even at Rome, been eruptions of subterraneous fire; so that the fuel seems to be prepared, and waits only for the breath of the Lord to kindle it. But God is praised not only for the destruction of the great seat of idolatry, but also, ver. 5—8. for the manifestation of his kingdom, as in ch. xi. 17. and for the happy and glorious state of the reformed Christian Church. She is now no longer an *harlot* tainted with idolatry, but a *spouse*, prepared for her Lord Christ: and she is no longer arrayed, like an harlot, in *purple and scarlet colour*; but, like a decent bride, in *fine linen, clean and white*, as the properest emblem of her purity and sanctity. Christ has now, as St. Paul expresses it, Ephes. v. 26, 27. *sanctified and cleansed his church*, &c. So great is the felicity of this period, that the angel orders it to be particularly noted, ver. 9. and *blest* and happy are they who shall be living at that time, and be worthy to partake of this marriage-feast! St. John was in such a rapture and extasy at these discoveries, that, not knowing or not considering what he did, *he fell down at the angel's feet, to worship him*, (ver. 10.) See what has been said on the subject of *prostration*, Acts, x. 26. The case of St. John's throwing himself at the feet of the angel here, and ch. xxii. 9. is to be viewed in a somewhat different light from the transaction referred to in the *Acts*: St. John did nothing at all but what was conformable to the usages in his own country, when the people of it designed innocently

to express great reverence and gratitude. It is astonishing therefore that so many learned men should have looked upon it as an idolatrous prostration. That they should not at all consider the Eastern usages, is no wonder; they have been, in common, unhappily neglected; but the attempt of the apostle to repeat the prostration (for he would have done it a second time,) sufficiently shewed, one would imagine, that the apostle did not think the angel rejected it as an idolatrous piece of respect. What a strange interpretation must that be, which supposes that St. John,—a *Jew* by descent,—that is, a mortal enemy by birth to all idolatry;—a zealous preacher against it, through a very long life; who finished one of his Epistles with these very words, *Little children, keep yourselves from idols*, as desirous to have this perpetually fixed on their memories, whatever else they forgot,—should, when suffering in Patmos for the Lord Jesus, and when blessed with the influences of the prophetic spirit, attempt to commit an *idolatrous* action, and to repeat that attempt, in opposition to the checks of a celestial teacher.—Nothing, surely, can be more inconceivable; at the same time, nothing is easier than the true interpretation. Smitten with veneration for his angelic instructor, and full of gratitude towards him for what he had shewn him, *he fell*, according to the custom of his nation, *at his feet*, to do him reverence. “*See thou do it not*, said the angel; it is not to me these thanks are due: I have in this been only fulfilling the orders of *him*, who is *my Lord*, as well as yours. *Worship God*, therefore, to whom in justice you ought to ascribe these illuminations.”

Ver. 11—21. *I saw heaven opened, &c.*] It was said by the angel, speaking of the kings subject to the beast, *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, &c.* ch. xvii. 14. and this vision is added by way of enlargement and explanation of that great event. *Heaven is opened*, and our Saviour cometh forth, riding

up

followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 ^a And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and ^b he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and ^c he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 ^b And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 And I saw an angel ^d standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to ^e all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and

the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh ^f of all *men*, both free and bond, both small and great.

19 ^m 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 ⁿ the beast was taken, and with him ^o the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. ^p These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 ^q And the remnant were slain with the

^a Ver. 21. Ch. 1. 16. & 2. 12, 16. If. 11. 4. Numb. 24. 17—19. ^b Ch. 2. 27. & 12. 5. Pf. 2. 9. ^c If. 63. 2, 3, 6. Ch. 14. 19, 20. & 16. 19. Nah. 1. 6. ^d Pf. 72. 1—17. Ch. 17. 14. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Prov. 8. 8, 15, 16. Mat. 28. 18. Eph. 1. 20—23. Phil. 2. 9—11. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Pf. 45. 3. ^e Ch. 8. 13. & 14. 6. ^f Ezek. 39. 17—20. Jer. 7. 33. & 12. 9. 1 Sam. 17. 44. If. 25. 6. & 34. 1—8. Ch. 16. 14. Zeph. 1. 7. with Titus, 2. 13. Pf. 24. 8, 10. & 110. 5, 6. ^g Ch. 6. 15. & 13. 16. ^h Ch. 16. 14, 16. & 18. 9. & 17. 13, 14. Dan. 7. 21, 25, 26. Joel, 3. 2, 12. ⁱ Ch. 13. 1—8. & 17. 3, 7—13, 17. ^j Ch. 13. 11—17. ^k Ch. 20. 10, 14. & 21. 8. & 14. 8—11. Dan. 7. 11, 25, 26. & 11. 45. with Gen. 19. 14. Numb. 16. 33. ^l Ch. 17. 14, 16. ^m 2 Thess. 2. 8. If. 66. 14—16, 24. Ver. 15, 17, 18.

upon a white horse, as a token of his victory and triumph over his enemies. He is described in such characters as are appropriated to him in this book, and in the ancient prophets. On his head also were many crowns, to denote his numerous conquests and kingdoms, which were now become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, &c. ch. xi. 15. As the Jewish high-priest wore the ineffable name of Jehovah on his forehead, so he had a name written, which none could perfectly comprehend but himself; and his name is called, *The Word of God*; ver. 12, 13. His armies are mounted upon white horses like himself, and are clothed in fine linen, white and clean, as emblems of their victory and sanctity. This title, "*The Word of God*," makes it evident that the person designed in this vision, is the same person whom St. John in his Gospel calls by the same name: so that Jesus Christ himself is represented as riding at the head of an army, to take vengeance on the enemies of his religion and faithful servants: and HE is the $\Lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\varsigma$, the WORD, that was with God, and was God (John, i. 1.), the eternal and supreme God, of the same substance with the Father, and of equal power and glory, majesty and eternity,—over all, God blessed for ever (Rom. ix. 5.). But $\Lambda\omicron\gamma\omega\varsigma$, or *The Word*, may have here also three other significations; it may signify words, actions, and commands; and Christ is also *The Word of God* in all these respects. I. He is his *Word*, because, before his incarnation, and much more since, he has been the great *Angel* of God, to men: II. Because he is the *Minister* of God the Father, to perform all works of creation, preservation, and redemption: III. As to the word signifying command, Christ is in that respect two ways the *Word of God*;—*First*, as he is the grand executor of all God's commands; *secondly*, as he is himself the chief commander, and sitting as mediatorial King upon the throne of God at his right hand;—the *Prince of the creation*, the *King of*

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kings, and *Lord of lords*. This account not only shews why Christ is called THE WORD OF GOD in general, as being the eternal Word, Wisdom, and Son of the Father; but why he is so called particularly in this place: I. Being the *Word*, as He is the great *Angel*, or *Messenger of the covenant*, he brings now the greatest errand;—the perfection of the covenant in the resurrection, first of the saints, and then of all the dead: II. Being the Word of God, as He is the great *Minister*, he comes now to perform the most magnificent of God's works: III. As he is the grand *Executor* of the divine commands, he commands and rules the universe in a peculiar sense as the great Mediator, and therefore is in this respect *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*. In ver. 16. Christ is further described as a general, at the head of the armies of heaven, about to engage his enemies; whom he is presently after said to subdue. It was a common custom among the ancient Heathens to represent their idols and the statues of their kings and heroes as dressed in royal or splendid vestments, on which, and more particularly on the thigh parts of which, inscriptions were drawn or engraved. Many instances of this practice might be given from ancient history. Consequently, the figure of a person dressed in such a vesture with an inscription thereon, was quite familiar to the ancients: and therefore, probably, for this reason among perhaps others, the adorable Jesus was pleased to appear to St. John in a manner familiar to the people of that age, in an imperial robe, with the inscription of King of kings, and Lord of lords, on the thigh part thereof, as being the only potentate, the Lord God of heaven and earth. This is the opinion of Grotius and other eminent commentators. We may here observe, that the title of *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*, is much affected by the Eastern monarchs; and by antichrist himself, the Pope being styled *king of kings*, and *lord of lords*. An angel standing in the sun, &c. ver. 17.

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sword of him that sat upon the horse, which fowls were filled with their flesh. *sword* proceeded out of his mouth: and all the

and so conspicuous to all, in lofty strains, taken from the ancient prophets, and particularly from Ezek. xxxix. 17, 18. *calletb the fowls to the great slaughter of Christ's enemies.* These enemies are *the beast, and the false prophet*, —the antichristian powers, civil and ecclesiastical, with their *armies gathered together*, (ver. 19.) their adherents and followers, combined and determined to support idolatry, and oppose all reformation. But the principals, as deserving of the greatest punishment, *are taken and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone*, ver. 20. and their followers are *slain with the word of Christ, the sword which proceedeth out of his mouth*, and all the fowls are filled with their flesh; ver. 21. Their substance is seized for other persons, and for other uses. In a word, the design of this sublime and figurative description is, to show the downfall of Popery, and the triumph of Christianity: the true word of God will prevail over superstition and idolatry; all the powers of antichrist will be completely subdued; and the religion of Rome, as well as Rome herself, will be totally destroyed.

Inferences.—Let us learn by what we have here been reading, to adore the Lord God omnipotent, who reigneth over all, and who displays the truth and righteousness of his judgments in his vengeance on the enemies of his church, even when he inflicts on them *a torment, the smoke of which rises up for ever and ever.* In the certain assurance, that in due time he will plead his own cause, and rescue and exalt his people, let all his servants and people praise him, even all that fear him, both small and great, and labour to live that divine life of gratitude and joyful thanksgiving on earth, which may anticipate the pleasures and employments of the heavenly world. The time will at length come, when all of such a character shall celebrate *the marriage-day of the Lamb*; yea, when the whole society shall appear in his presence as *one chaste virgin* whom he has espoused to himself; and whom, with unutterable delight, he places in his more immediate view, not only as arrayed in robes of pure and shining linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, but as perfectly free from spot, or blemish, or any such thing. He will admit them all to feast in his own presence; yea, to dwell for ever with him; *so shall we ever be with the Lord.* These are the true sayings of God. And, though a consciousness of our own utter unworthiness of such honours might be ready to detract from the credibility of these divine assurances, or at least prevent us from giving so clear an assent to them as we might otherwise do, yet *let God be true, and every man a liar.*

And in the mean time, in the mingled scenes of adversity and prosperity which attend the Israel of God, let us direct our believing eyes to him, who is faithful and true; to him, who both administers justice and wages war in righteousness. Let us reverence his penetrating eyes, which are like a flame of fire. Let us rejoice in the diadems placed upon his head, to signify the extent of his dominion; and read with awe the inscription upon *his vesture, and his thigh, The Word of God, the King of kings, and the*

Lord of lords. As such let us pay our homage to him; and let the favour of lords, and kings, be as nothing to us, where *his favour or his honour* is concerned. The proudest of earthly potentates oppose his dominion in vain; in vain do they marshal their captains, and their mighty men; vain is the strength of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the combinations of bond and free, though Satan himself abet their rebellion, and inspire them with subtilty, and arm them with rage; their subtilty shall be defeated, their rage shall be repelled. The sword of the Lord shall devour them. The birds of prey shall at his pleasure be feasted with their carcases; and the sad catastrophe of their bodies shall be only an imperfect emblem of the anguish and misery of their spirits, when plunged with the *evil spirit that deceived them*, they sink deep into the lake that burns for ever, and feel the terrors of the *second death.* Be wise now therefore, O ye kings, and be instructed, ye judges of the earth, serve the Lord with fear; and, sensible of his uncontrollable dominion, and your own weakness and imperfection, even while ye rejoice before him, rejoice with trembling. (Psal. ii. 10, 11.)

REFLECTIONS.—1st, A command being given in ver. 20. of the former chapter, to the saints of God, to rejoice over Babylon fallen, we have, in this chapter, their song of praise on that occasion. They cried, *Alleluia*, ascribing salvation, and glory, and honour, and power to the Lord their God; acknowledging his righteous judgments in the vengeance executed on the great whore, for her lewdness, idolatry, and cruelty; and they repeated loud *Alleluia*s, while the *smoke of her torment arose up for ever and ever.* The four living creatures, and the elders, the representatives of the ministers and church of the faithful, hereupon joined in their adorations before the throne, and joyfully cried, Amen! *Alleluia!*

2dly, The song of triumph over Babylon being ended, a voice from the throne enjoins the whole host of the saints to unite in the praises of their common Lord: and instantly innumerable voices, loud as cataracts of water, or mighty thunders, poured forth their *Halleluia*s: *For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*; since the antichristian powers are broken, his kingdom of grace is extended through the earth. *The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready*; therefore *let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him.* This includes the conversion of the Jews, who will now be brought into the church and be publicly joined to the Lord as his people.

1. The dress of the Lamb's wife is described. She is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; which signifies the righteousness of saints, implanted in them by the Holy Spirit of God, whereby the church of the faithful becomes meet for the bosom of her Lord.

2. They are declared blessed, who are invited, and come to the marriage-supper of the Lamb; partaking of all the privileges and ordinances of the gospel, and admitted to the happiest communion with Jesus, and joined to the Lord in one spirit.

3. The angel closes with a solemn assurance of the truth of

CHAP. XX.

Satan bound for a thousand years. The first resurrection: they blessed that have part therein. Satan let loose again. Gog and Magog. The devil cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. The last and general resurrection.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

^a Ch. 11. 15, 17. & 1. 18. ¹ Pet. 3. 22. ^{Mat.} 8. 29. ^{Pf.} 76. 10, 13. ^{Luke,} 8. 31. & 11. 21, 22. ^b Ch. 12. 9. ^{Mat.} 16. 23. ^{John,} 6. 70.
^{Ch.} 2. 10. ² Pet. 2. 4. ¹ Pet. 5. 8. ^{Job,} 2. 1. ^c With ^{Dan.} 6. 17. ^{Mat.} 27. 66. & 8. 29. ^d Ch. 16. 14, 16. ^{Ver.} 8. ^e ^{Pf.} 90. 4.
 & 105. 8. ² Pet. 3. 8. ^f ^{Ver.} 7—10. ⁸ ^{Dan.} 7. 9, 18, 22, 27. & 12. 4. ¹ ^{Cor.} 6. 2. ^{Mat.} 19. 28. ^{Luke,} 22. 30.

2 And he laid hold ^b on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And ^c cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, ^d that he should deceive the nations no more, till ^e the thousand years should be fulfilled: ^f and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 ^g And I saw thrones, and they sat upon

of this revelation, which should not fail of its accomplishment; on which, St. John, overcome with the brightness of his glory, fell at his feet, not considering what he did: but the angel rebuked him for his inconsiderate design. He owns himself unworthy of that honour, which was due to God alone; observing that, glorious as he appeared, he was but the apostle's fellow-servant, bearing testimony to the same Jesus, and now revealing what the Saviour dictated to him, who inspired the prophets, and sent him to deliver this message to John for the church's use and comfort.

3dly, The Lord Jesus appears in majesty to execute vengeance on the beast and his adherents, now assembled to make their last efforts.

1. A most magnificent description is given of the Captain of our salvation. He is seated on a white horse, the emblem of victory: he is called *faithful and true*, performing all his promises to his faithful people, and in righteousness executing vengeance on his enemies. His eyes, bright as the flame, pierce into the secrets of the soul; and his many crowns of gold denote his universal dominion: his name and nature, as Jehovah, none can comprehend; his bloody vesture bespeaks his conquest over his slaughtered foes; and one of the names, whereby he hath revealed himself, is, *The Word of God*. Close behind him follow his faithful warriors, his saints arrayed in robes of righteousness and garments of salvation: from his mouth proceeds the sharp sword of his denunciations of vengeance, before which his foes must fall: as a potter's vessel before an iron rod, so shall they be broken in pieces; and as grapes laid in the wine-press, so shall he trample them in his fury; and on his vesture, where it hung down over his thigh, was this illustrious motto wrought, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

2. A call is given to all the fowls of the air, to assemble on this dread occasion, and feast on the corpses of all the antichristian host, both great and small, who are now about to perish together.

3. The army of the ungodly, Papist, Pagan, and Mahometan, assembles under the conduct of the beast; the battle is joined, the victory decisive; the beast and false prophet, who wrought the lying wonders, are taken; and the ringleaders in the antichristian apostacy, are cast together into the burning lake; and all their adherents fall by the sword of him that sat on the white horse, and the

fowls are gorged with their carcases. And now, all foes being subdued, the glorious millennium commences, when the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1.] This chapter represents a new state of the church, upon its deliverance from the persecution and corruption of the third period, or during the reign of the two beasts, or 1260 prophetic days or years. That long state of oppression is to be followed by a long continuance of peace and prosperity. A fourth period is described, which, among other characters, is to last for a thousand years. The two first periods ended in a deliverance of the church; but those deliverances were of short continuance, and attended with considerable defects; but now, after the church shall have passed through this third trial of faith and patience, it is to attain a state of very great prosperity, and to remain in it for a considerable length of time. This is that happy state of the church, which, from the continuation of it for a thousand years, is usually called the *Millennium*. The description we have of it in this chapter, is very short, contained in the first six verses: interpreters, however, have abundantly supplied what they thought wanting in the prophetic account,—out of their own invention, it is to be feared, rather than from sure and well-grounded principles of judgment. No wonder then that they have differed so much about the true meaning of a prophecy, in which they have mixed so many of their own imaginations; so that the disputes seem not so much what is the intention of the Spirit of prophecy, as which of the interpreters has the finest or the warmest imagination. Let us then carefully endeavour to distinguish what the Spirit of prophecy plainly intends, from what uncertain conjectures or doubtful reasonings may suggest to our minds, for a more distinct and particular account.

Ver. 1—6. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, &c.] After the destruction of the beast, and the false prophet, there still remains the *dragon*, who had delegated his power unto them; *that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan*, ver. 2. but he is bound by an angel,—an especial minister of Providence; and the famous *millennium*, or the reign of the saints upon earth for a thousand years, commences. *Binding him with a great chain, casting him into*

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them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* ^h the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and ⁱ they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But ^k the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the ^l first resurrection.

6 ^m Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but ⁿ they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

^h Ch. 6. 9. & 13. 4, 12, 15—17. & 15. 2. ⁱ 1 Pet. 2. 9. Ch. 11. 11, 15. Rom. 11. 15. Dan. 2. 44. & 7. 18, 22, 27. Pl. lxxii. cxxiv. If. xii. xxv. xxxv. xlix. lx—lxvi. Jer. xxxi. xxxiii. Ezek. xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxviii. xl—xlvi. Micah, iv. v. Hosea, 1. 10, 11. & ii. iii. Amos, 9. 11—15. Joel, 3. 17—21. Obad. 20, 21. Zeph. iii. Zech. ii. x. xii. xiv. Rom. 11. 2—32. Ch. 5. 10. & 1. 6. Ver. 6. Ch. xxi. xxii. ^k See ver. 8, 9. ^l Ch. 11. 11, 15. Rom. 11. 15. Ezek. 37. 2—14. Col. 3. 1. John, 5. 25. & 11. 25. Eph. 2. 6. & 5. 14. ^m Dan. 12. 12. If. 4. 3. Ch. 3. 11. & 21. 8. Ver. 14. ⁿ If. 61. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Rom. 8. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 12. Ch. 1. 6. & 5. 10. & 6. 9—11.

the bottomless pit, shutting him up, and setting a seal upon him, (ver. 3.) are strong figures, to shew the strict and severe restraint which he should be laid under, *that he should deceive the nations no more* during this whole period. Wickedness being restrained, the reign of righteousness succeeds; and the martyrs and confessors of Jesus, not only those who were beheaded, or suffered any kind of death under the Roman emperors, but also those who refused to comply with the idolatrous worship of the beast and his image, are raised from the dead, and have the principal share in the felicities of Christ's kingdom upon earth, ver. 4. *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*, ver. 5. so that this was a peculiar prerogative of the martyrs and confessors, above the rest of mankind. *This is the first resurrection*, a particular resurrection, preceding the general one at least a thousand years. *Blessed and holy too is he who hath part in the first resurrection*; ver. 6. He is *holy* in all senses of the word; *holy*, as separated from the common lot of mankind; *holy*, as endowed with all holy and virtuous qualifications; and none but such are admitted to partake of this blessed state:—*On such the second death hath no power*. The *second death* is a Jewish phrase for the punishment of the wicked after death. The Chaldee paraphrase of Onkelos, and the other paraphrases of Jonathan Ben Uziel, and of Jerusalem, on Deut. xxxiii. 6. *Let Reuben live, and not die*, say, "Let him not die the second death, by which the wicked die in the world to come." The sons of the resurrection therefore shall not die again, but shall live in eternal bliss, as well as enjoy all the glories of the millennium;—*be priests of God and Christ, and reign with him a thousand years*. Nothing is more evident than that this prophecy of the millennium, and of the first resurrection, has not yet been fulfilled, even though the resurrection be taken in a figurative sense. For, reckon the thousand years from the time of Christ, or reckon them from the time of Constantine, yet neither of these periods, nor indeed any other, will answer the description and character of the millennium, the purity and peace, the holiness and happiness of that blessed state. Before Constantine, the church was indeed in greater purity, but was groaning under the persecutions of the heathen emperors: after Constantine, the church was in greater prosperity, but was soon shaken and disturbed by heresies, schisms, incursions, devastations, corruptions, idolatry, wickedness, and cruelty. If Satan was then bound,

when can he be said to be loosed? Or how could the *saints* and the *beast*, *Christ* and *antichrist*, reign at the same time? This prophecy therefore remains yet to be fulfilled, even though the resurrection be taken only for an allegory; which yet the text cannot admit, without the greatest torture and violence. For with what propriety can it be said, that some of the dead *who were beheaded, lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years, but the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*, unless the *dying* and *living again* be the same in both places;—a proper death and resurrection. Indeed, the *death* and *resurrection* of the witnesses, ch. xi. appear, from the concurrent circumstances of the vision, to be figurative; but the *death* and *resurrection* here mentioned, must, for the very same reasons, be concluded to be real. If the martyrs rise only in a spiritual sense, then the *rest of the dead* rise only in a spiritual sense; but if the *rest of the dead* really rise, the martyrs rise in the same manner. There is no difference between them; and we should be cautious and tender of making the first resurrection an allegory, lest others should reduce the second into an allegory too, like those whom St. Paul mentions, 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. In the general, that there shall be such a happy period as the millennium, is the plain and express doctrine of Dan. vii. 27. Psal. ii. 8. Isai. xi. 9. Rom. xi. 25, &c. and of all the prophets, as well as of St. John; and we daily pray for the accomplishment of it, in saying, *thy kingdom come*. But of all the prophets, St. John is the only one who has declared particularly, and in express terms, that the martyrs shall rise to partake of the felicities of this kingdom; and that it shall continue upon earth a thousand years: and the Jewish church before him, and the Christian church after him, have farther believed and taught, that these thousand years will be the seventh millenary of the world. A pompous heap of quotations might be produced to this purpose, both from Jewish and Christian writers; but to enumerate only a few of both sorts: among the Jewish writers, are rabbi Ketina, and the house of Elias: among the Christian writers, are St. Barnabas in the first century, Justin Martyr in the second century, Tertullian in the beginning of the third, and Lactantius in the beginning of the fourth century. In short, the doctrine of the millennium was generally believed in the three first and purest ages; and this belief was one principal cause of the fortitude of the primitive Christians: they even coveted martyrdom,

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of

the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

o Job, 1. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Ver. 3, 10. p With Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix. Ch. 16. 14. & 11. 17. & 12. 17. q With If. 3. 8. Ezek. 38. 9.
 Hab. 1. 6. r Mat. 16. 16. Ch. 2. 3. Micah, 2. 13. Ezek. 48. 35. Ch. xxi. s With If. 30. 33. & 37. 36. Ezek. 38. 23. & 39. 6, 9, 10.
 t Theff. 1. 8. Jude, 1, 7. u Gen. 19. 24, 25. Mat. 25. 47. Dan. 7. 11. Ch. 14. 10, 11. & 19. 20. Ver. 15.

martyrdom, in hopes of being partakers of the privileges and glories of the martyrs in the first resurrection. Afterwards this doctrine grew into disrepute for various reasons: some, both Jewish and Christian writers, have debased it with a mixture of fables. It has suffered by the misrepresentations of its enemies, as well as by the indifferences of its friends: it has been abused even to the worst purposes; it has been made an engine of faction. Besides, wherever the influence and authority of the church of Rome have extended, she has endeavoured by all means to discredit this doctrine; and indeed not without sufficient reason, this kingdom of Christ being founded on the ruins of antichrist. No wonder, therefore, that this doctrine lay depressed for many ages; but it sprang up again at the Reformation, and will flourish together with the study of the Revelation. All the danger is, on the one side of pruning and lopping it too short; and, on the other, of suffering it to grow too wild and luxuriant. Great caution and judgment are required, to keep in the middle way. We should neither, with some, interpret it into allegory; nor, with others, indulge an extravagant fancy, nor explain too curiously the manner and circumstances of this future state: it is safest and best faithfully to adhere to the words of scripture, and to rest contented with the general account, till time shall accomplish and clear up all the particulars.

Ver. 7.] The following verses of this chapter to ver. 11. inform us, that the happy days of the church, prophesied of in the foregoing vision, will at length have their period: though they are to continue for a long time, and are not to expire till after a thousand years: yet then there shall be one attempt more against the purity of religion, and against the peace and prosperity of the church. Satan is to be released for a little time, or season; but in that little season he shall deceive many; and so far seduce them, as to prevail upon them to join with him in his apostacy. This new attempt against truth and righteousness, shall end in the utter ruin of the enemies of Christ and his religion: they shall be totally defeated, and their obstinate wickedness punished with everlasting destruction. This state of the church and world, so different from the preceding, deserves to be considered as a new period, which will therefore be the fifth in order.

Ver. 7—10. When the thousand years are expired, &c.] At the expiration of the thousand years, the restraint will be taken off from wickedness.—Satan shall be loosed, and

make one effort more to re-establish his kingdom. As he deceived our first parents in Paradise, so he will have the artifice to deceive the nations after the millennium, to shew, that no state or condition on earth is secured from sinning. The nations whom he shall deceive, are described as living in the remotest parts of the world,—in the four quarters, or more literally, in the four angles or corners of the earth; and they are distinguished by the names of Gog and Magog, and are said to be as numerous as the sand of the sea, ver. 8. Gog and Magog seem to have been formerly the general names of the northern nations of Europe and Asia, as the Scythians have been since, and the Tartars are at present. In Ezekiel there is a famous prophesy concerning Gog and Magog; and this prophesy alludes to that in many particulars. Both that of Ezekiel, and this of St. John, remain yet to be fulfilled; and therefore we cannot be absolutely certain that they may not both relate to the same event; but it appears more probable, that they relate to different events. The one is expected to take effect before, but the other will not take effect till after the millennium. Gog and Magog, in Ezek. xxxviii. 6—15. xxxix. 2. are said expressly to come from the north quarters, and the north parts; but in St. John they come from the four quarters; or corners of the earth. Gog and Magog in Ezekiel bend their forces against the Jews re-settled in their own land; but in St. John they march up against the saints and church of God in general. Gog and Magog in Ezekiel are, with very good reason, supposed to be the Turks; but the Turks are the authors of the second woe, which is past before the third woe; and the third woe long precedes the time here treated of. It may therefore be concluded, that Gog and Magog, as well as Sodom, and Egypt, and Babylon, are mystic names in this book; and the last enemies of the Christian church are so denominated, because Gog and Magog appear to be the last enemies of the Jewish nation. Who they will be we cannot pretend to say with any degree of certainty: but whoever they will be, they shall come up from the four corners of the earth, on the breadth of the earth, and shall compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, the new Jerusalem, with the saints encamping round it, as the Israelites encamped around the tabernacle in the wilderness. But they shall not succeed in their attempts; they shall not be able to hurt the church and city of God, but shall be destroyed in an extraordinary manner, by fire from heaven, ver. 9. And the devil himself, the promoter and leader of this new apostacy and rebellion against

11 ^a And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, ^{*} from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 ^r And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, ^{*} which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, ^a according to their works.

^a Mat. 25. 31. Acts, 17. 30, 31. John, 16. 11. Pl. 89. 14. & 97. 2. ^{*} Dan. 2. 35. 2 Pet. 3. 7—11. Ch. 6. 14. & 16. 20. ^r John, 5. 21. 2 Theff. 4. 15—17. Rom. 14. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Dan. 7. 10. Heb. 4. 13. Jer. 17. 10. & 32. 19. Mal. 3. 16. ^{*} Dan. 12. 1. Ch. 3. 5. & 13. 8. & 17. 8. Phil. 4. 3. ^a Eccl. 12. 14. Jer. 17. 10. Ch. 2. 23. & 22. 12. Rom. 2. 6. See ver. 13. ^r 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. 1 Theff. 4. 15, 17. Ch. 6. 8. John, 5. 28, 29. ^{*} Or *the grave*. ^c Mat. 25. 31—46. & 16, 17. Jer. 32. 19. See ver. 12. ^d 1 Cor. 15. 26, 54, 55. with ch. 2. 23. & 21. 8. Ver. 6. ^e Ch. 21. 8. & 22. 15. & 19. 20. Mat. 25. 41, 46. & 3. 12. Mark, 9. 43, 48.

against God and his Christ, shall not only be confined as before, but shall be *cast into the lake of fire and brimstone*, where he shall be punished, together *with the beast and false prophet, for ever and ever*, ver. 10.

Ver. 11.] The course of these prophecies, after many important visions describing the state of the church and world in this present life, brings us at last to the great and final judgment, when the whole scene and mystery of Providence and Grace shall be finished. Then the great doctrine, which runs through the whole of these prophecies, will be fully verified, that truth and righteousness shall surely prevail in the end against error and all iniquity; eternal happiness shall be the reward of the faithful, and everlasting destruction the punishment of the wicked.—This is represented as a *sixth* period of Providence, after which there will be, in the *seventh*, an everlasting *sabbath*; a state of eternal rest and happiness for all the righteous, and of the most perfect worship of God in the praises and devotions of the heavenly church.

Ver. 11—15. *I saw a great white throne, &c.*] *Great*, to shew the largeness and extent; *white*, to shew the justice and equity of the judgment; and *one sitting on it*, that is, the Son of God; for *the Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son*, John, v. 22. The expression, that it was *he from whose face the earth and heaven fled away*, is inconceivably great; it is so plain, that it does not need, and so majestic and grand, that it exceeds commentary and paraphrase: it shews us, that this is properly the end of the world. The *dead*, both *small and great*, of all ranks and degrees, as well those who perished at sea, and were buried in the waters, as those who died at land, and were buried in graves, are all raised, and stand before the judgment-seat of God, where *they are judged every man according to their works*, as exactly as if all their actions had been recorded in books; ver. 3. They who are found not worthy to be enrolled in the registers of heaven, are *cast into the lake of fire*; whither also were cast *death and hell*, or *the grave*, which are here personified, as they are likewise in other places of holy scripture. It may seem strange that *death* should be *cast into the lake of fire*, which is *the second death*; ver. 14. But the meaning is, that *temporal death*, which hitherto had exercised dominion over the race of men, shall be totally abolished, and, with re-

13 ^b And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and ^{*} hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and ^c they were judged every man according to their works.

14 ^d And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

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

spect to the wicked, be converted into *eternal death*. Then, as St. Paul says, shall be *brought to pass that which is written*, &c. 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.

Inferences and REFLECTIONS.—What a glorious time of light, liberty, love and peace, purity, joy and triumph, shall the church of true believers enjoy upon earth, after many years of darkness, trouble, and oppression! The Lord Jesus will bind and shut up Satan, that old serpent, the devil, as in prison: the cause of truth and holiness shall revive with great power, spirituality, and splendor: and they, who, with the constancy, patience, and spirit of martyrs, had courageously renounced all idolatry, wickedness, and error, and maintained a good profession of Christ and of his gospel in the worst of times, shall, together with their successors of the same spirit, live and reign with him, under his protection and smiles, for a thousand years upon the earth. And O with what honour and acceptance will they then appear, like royal priests to him, and to God the Father through him! But how vain would it be to expect an everlasting continuance of such a happy state on this earth! At the expiration of the thousand years, Satan will, in some measure, be let loose again for a little while, and be permitted to go forth, once more, to deceive the nations throughout the world, and gather all his numberless forces together from among them, who may be compared to *Gog and Magog*, those last enemies of *Israel*, to attack and disturb the saints, the beloved city of the Lord. But, blessed be God, this regained power and last effort will be very short, and certainly end in the utter destruction of the devil, and of all his adherents, who shall be consumed by fire from heaven, and cast into everlasting flames with him: for Christ will set his throne for judgment, and the present frame of the earth and aerial heaven shall be dissolved at his appearing. Then there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, whosoever they were buried, in the earth or in the sea; and the final judgment of all mankind will, upon trial out of the books which shall be opened, publicly and unalterably determine the eternal state of every one of them for inexpressible happiness, or misery, according to their respective works, whether they be good or bad. Then all the ungodly, whose bodies were dead, and whose souls had been in a separate state, shall, according

CHAP. XXI.

A new heaven and a new earth. The heavenly Jerusalem, with a full description thereof: she needeth no sun; the glory of God is her light: the kings of the earth bring their riches unto her.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND I saw^b a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more^c sea.

2 And I John saw^d the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And^e I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4^f And God shall wipe away all tears from

^a Ch. 19. 20. & 20. 10. ^b If. 65. 17. & 66. 22. ^c 2 Pet. 3. 13. ^d Acts, 3. 21. ^e Rom. 8. 21. ^f Pf. 102. 26—28. ^g Ch. 20. 11. ^h If. 57. 20. ⁱ Jude, 13. ^j If. 52. 1. & 54. 5. & 61. 10. & 62. 4, 5. ^k Gal. 4. 26. ^l Ch. 3. 12. ^m Ver. 10. ⁿ Heb. 12. 22. & 11. 10. & 13. 14. ^o 2 Cor. 12. 2. ^p Ch. 19. 7, 8. ^q Ver. 9, 10, 18—20. ^r Ch. 10. 4, 8. & 12. 10. ^s Lev. 26. 11, 12. ^t Ezek. 37. 27. & 43. 7. ^u 2 Cor. 6. 16. ^v Ch. 7. 15. ^w Ch. 7. 17. ^x If. 25. 8. & 60. 20. & 35. 10. & 51. 11. & 65. 18—25. ^y 2 Cor. 15. 26, 34. ^z Ch. 20. 14. & 22. 3.

according to the just sentence passed upon them for their evil deeds, be cast into everlasting burnings. But O the happiness of the righteous; as described in the following chapter!

CHAP. XXI.

Ver. 1.] We are now come, in the course of these prophecies, to the consummation of all things. This vision stands in the prophecy, after the last attempt of the enemies of religion had been defeated; after the dead, small and great, had appeared before God's judgment-seat, and were judged according to their works; after the wicked were doomed to everlasting punishment, and all who were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire. The order of the prophecies seems to point out to us, that the *new heaven* and *new earth* represented in this vision, signify that state of unchangeable perfection and heavenly happiness, to which the true and faithful servants of the living God shall be advanced, when all their trials and sufferings in this life shall be ended. Nothing could be more proper to the useful design of these Revelations, than such a conclusion of them, with so affecting a representation of the final, complete, and everlasting happiness of all the true worshippers of God, the faithful servants of Jesus. This is a powerful motive to present and constant patience; a firm foundation of present hope; a strong encouragement to zeal in the cause of true religion, and constancy in the uncorrupt faith of Jesus. It is a very ancient observation, "That happiness is the reward of virtue in the end;" but here is a *sure word of prophecy*, which beforehand acquaints us what will be the last period and state of things: the present world, for a few years,—a very few in comparison of eternity,—will be a state of various sorts of trials and troubles; of evils caused by wicked men; of evils wherewith the righteous Governor of the world punishes their wickedness; but the unchangeable purpose of God has appointed another state of things, when the dead shall be raised, and judged according to their works. All the faithful servants of God will then enjoy a state of eternal life, in perfect peace and security, in complete prosperity and happiness. It is with great advantage that this encouragement is given the church in such a prophecy: an observation of the faithful and punctual accomplishment of the former parts of this prophecy in times past, for several hundred years, serves much

to confirm our faith and hope in as exact a performance of what remains. It must be owned, several interpreters of good reputation understand the following vision, as a description of the happy state of the church during the one thousand years in which it shall reign with Christ; or, of the full and complete reformation of the Christian church during the last period upon earth: but as there seems nothing in the prophetic description to confine it to this meaning, so the order of the prophecies, the principal design of them, and the description itself, greatly favour the judgment of those learned authors, who understand these last visions as alluding to the future state of happiness in heaven after the general resurrection and last judgment. Thus, this *seventh* and *last period* concludes the whole plan of Providence, and finishes it in an endless *Sabbatism*.

Ver. 1—8. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, &c.] A new heaven and a new earth succeed in the room of the *first heaven* and *first earth*, which passed away at the general judgment, ch. xx. 11. In the new earth there is this remarkable property, that *there is no more sea*; which, how it is to be effected, time must discover; but it is evident from hence, that this new heaven and earth are not designed to take place, till after the general judgment; for at the general judgment, *the sea gave up the dead which were in it*, ch. xx. 13. Many understand the expression figuratively, that there shall be *no trouble* or *commotions* in this new world. In this new world too, the *new Jerusalem* appears in full glory, ver. 2. It is described, as *coming down from God out of heaven*; it is a city whose Builder and Maker is God; and is *adorned as the bride of the Lamb*;—the true church of Christ: and the new Jerusalem, the true church of Christ, subsists as well during the millennium, as after it. At the commencement of the millennium, it was said, *The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready*, (ch. xix. 7.) At the conclusion of the millennium, Gog and Magog went up against the *beloved city*: and here it is represented as the metropolis of the new heaven and the new earth. The new Jerusalem shall be the habitation of the saints of the first resurrection, and it shall also be the habitation of the saints of the general resurrection. The church of Christ shall endure through all times and changes in this world, and likewise in the world to come; it shall be glorious upon earth during the millennium, and shall be more glorious still,

their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And ^h he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for ⁱ these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, ^k It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. ^l I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 ^m He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I ⁿ will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 ^o But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

9 ^p And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me,

saying, ^q Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 ^r And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me ^s that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 ^t Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12 And had ^u a wall great and high, and ^v had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and ^w names written thereon, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had ^x twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15 And he that talked with me had ^y a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth ^z four-square, and the

^a Ch. 4. 2, 9. & 20. 11. John, 1. 22.

^b Ch. 19. 9. & 22. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 15. 2 Tim. 2. 11. Titus, 3. 8. Numb. 23. 19.

^c Ezek. 30. 8.

Ch. 16. 17. Pf. 33. 9. Ch. 1. 8. & 22. 13. If. 41. 4. & 43. 6.

^d If. 55. 1. & 12. 3. & 44. 3, 4. John, 4. 10, 14. & 7. 37. Ch. 22. 1, 17.

Pf. 36. 8, 9. & 16. 11. ^e Ch. 2. 7, 11, 17, 26. & 3. 5, 7, 21. Rom. 8. 17, 32. 1 Cor. 3. 22. ^f Zech. 8. 8. & 13. 9. 2 Sam. 7. 14. Heb.

8. 10. 2 Cor. 6. 18. Pf. 50. 7. ^g John, 3. 36. & 12. 42. Mt. 10. 28. Gal. 5. 19—21. Eph. 5. 5. 1 Tim. 1. 9, 10. Ch. 22. 15. & 20. 14. 15.

If. 3. 11. Pf. 9. 17. Prov. 14. 32. Heb. 12. 14. ^h Ch. 17. 1. & 15. 1, 7. & 16. 1. ⁱ Ver. 2. Ch. 19. 7. If. 54. 5. & 62. 4, 5. Eph.

5. 23—32. 2 Cor. 11. 2. Hosa. 2. 19, 20. ^j Ch. 1. 10. & 17. 3. Ezek. 3. 12, 14. & 40. 2. If. 2. 2, 3. Micah, 4. 1, 2. ^k Ver. 1. Gal.

4. 26. Heb. 12. 22. If. 65. 18, 19. Ezek. xlvi. ^l If. 60. 1, 2, 19, 20. Ezek. 1. 26, 27. & 48. 35. Pf. 4. 6. & 27. 1. & 36. 9. Ch. 22. 5.

Ver. 23. ^m If. 26. 1. & 60. 18. Pf. 125. 2. Zech. 2. 5. ⁿ Ezek. 48. 31—35. If. 54. 11, 12. Numb. 24. 5. Pf. 34. 7. Heb. 2. 14. Ch.

5. 11. & 7. 11. ^o Gal. 6. 16. Heb. 3. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 9. ^p Mat. 16. 18. If. 14. 32. & 28. 16. Heb. 11. 10. 2 Cor. 3. 11. Ephes. 1. 19, 20.

^q Ezek. 40. 3. Zech. 2. 1. Ch. 11. 1. If. 8. 20. Mat. 28. 20. Acts, 17. 11. John, 5. 39. 2 Tim. 3. 15—17. ^r If. 33. 20. Ephes. 3. 14.

Ezek. 48. 16—35. Luke, 14. 23. John, 14. 2.

still, in the new earth, after the millennium, to all eternity. The earth shall then become as heaven, or rather, it shall be a heaven upon earth, God dwelling visibly among men ver. 3. *And there shall be no more death*; ver. 4. which cannot come to pass, till death be totally abolished, ch. xx. 14. *He who sat upon the throne as a judge of the world*, ch. xx. 11. declares (ver. 5.) *Behold, I make all things new*; he is the author of this second, as well as of the first creation; and he commands these things to be *written* for the edification and consolation of his church, with a firm assurance of their truth and certainty. In ver. 6, 7, 8. he pronounces this period to be the *consummation* of all things, when the promises of God, and the desires of his faithful servants, shall all be fully accomplished; *The righteous shall inherit all things*, but the profligate and immoral *shall have their portion in the lake of fire and brimstone*; which is a farther confirmation that these things cannot take effect till after the general judgment.

Ver. 9—27. *There came unto me one of the seven angels, &c.*] A more particular description is now given of the new Jerusalem. *One of the seven angels* (and most pro-

bably the same who had, ch. xvii. 1, &c. shewed John the mystic Babylon and her destruction,) now sheweth, by way of contrast, the new Jerusalem and her glory. For this purpose, he carried him away in the Spirit, &c. (ver. 10.) in the same manner as the prophet *was brought in the visions of God*, Ezek. xl. 2. to see the frame of the city and temple: and this description of the new Jerusalem is an assemblage of the sublimest and richest imagery of Ezekiel and other ancient prophets. The *glory of God*, or the divine *Shechinah*, illuminates the city, ver. 11. It has a *wall great and high*, to shew its strength and security; and *twelve gates with angels* for guards, *three on the east, three on the north, three on the south, and three on the west*, (ver. 12, 13.) to shew that people of all climates and nations may have access to it. *On the twelve gates are written the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel*, as on the *twelve foundations* are inscribed the *names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*, (ver. 14.) to signify, that the Jewish and the Christian church are now united, and *built upon the foundation of the apostles, &c.* Ephes. ii. 20. The angel has a *measuring reed*, (ver. 15.) as the angel had likewise, Ezek. xl. 3. and the

length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, ° of the angel.

18 ^d And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 ° And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chakcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonix; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprusus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the ^s street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

22 ^h And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 ⁱ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

24 ^k And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and ^l the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

25 ^m And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: ⁿ for there shall be no night there.

26 ° And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

27 ^p And there shall in no wise enter into

^c Ver. 9. with ch. 13. 18. ^d If. 54. 11, 12. Ch. 4. 2. Ver. 11. ^e Pet. 1. 4. If. 43. 3. ^f Pet. 1. 7. Ver. 21. Eph. 3. 8. Prov. 8. 18, 19. ^g If. 54. 23, 12. Excd. 28. 17—21. ^h Pet. 2. 4, 5. See ver. 14. ⁱ Mat. 13. 45, 46. John, 10. 7, 9. & 14. 6. Eph. 2. 18. ^j Ch. 22. 2. ^k 1 Cor. 13. 12. & 15. 28. If. 8. 14. Pf. 91. 1. John, 4. 23. with Col. 2. 17. Heb. 10. 1. ^l If. 60. 19, 20. & 30. 26. & 24. 23. ^m 1 John, 1. 5, 7. Ver. 11. Ch. 22. 5. Zech. 14. 7. Pf. 73. 25, 26. ⁿ 1 Cor. 15. 28. ^o If. 60. 3—5. & 66. 12, 19. & 2. 3. Pf. 36. 9. & 27. 1. John, 12. 35. ^p If. 49. 22, 23. & 45. 15, 14. & 60. 3, 10, 16. & 66. 12. Pf. 72. 10, 11. Ch. 11. 15. ^q If. 60. 11, 20. Ch. 3. 8. John, 10. 7, 9. & 14. 6. & 6. 37. ^r If. 60. 20. Zech. 14. 9. Ch. 22. 5. ^s If. 60. 6—8, 11—17. Pf. 22. 27—30. & 71. 8—17. Zech. 2. 11. ^t Joel, 3. 17. Zech. 14. 21. Ezek. 44. 9. If. 52. 1. & 60. 21. & 62. 12. Ver. 8. Ch. 22. 14, 15. If. 35. 8. ^u 1 Tim. 4. 1. ^v 2 Thess. 2. 11, 12. Hab. 1. 13. Jer. 44. 4.

the measures of the city and walls are formed by the multiplication of twelve,—the number of the apostles, ver. 17.—*The city lieth four-square, the length as large as the breadth*, ver. 16. according to the pattern of Jerusalem in Ezek. xlvi. 16. and the length, and breadth, and height of the walls and buildings, are every way of the same beauty, strength, and proportion. It is built and garnished with precious stones, ver. 18—21. as the richest emblems of Eastern wealth and magnificence; the stones resembling those on Aaron's breast-plate, to denote that the *Urim* and *Thummim*, the light and perfection of God's oracle, are there. It has one remarkable peculiarity, ver. 22. that there is no temple therein, for the whole is the temple of God and the Lamb. *The glory of God and the Lamb shines in it*, ver. 23. with a lustre far superior to the sun. And all they who are saved, walk continually in the light of it; for the gates are never shut, and no night is there, ver. 24—27. It is the centre of glory and honour; all the wicked are excluded, and only the faithful saints are admitted.

Inferences.—Who can conceive the immense felicity and glory of the church triumphant in heaven! All the images of light, beauty, honour, and grandeur, and of riches, safety, and delight, which we are acquainted with, are but faint representations of it. It is all new and surpassing every thing that can be found, or imagined, in the present frame of the universe. It is the holy city of the living God,

shining in all his glory; a city built on Christ, who was laid, as its only foundation, by the ministry of the twelve apostles; and its inhabitants consist of the whole number of the faithful saints as collected together, and brought into it from all nations of the earth; its gates being open to them, who were typified by the twelve tribes of Israel. It is a state of complete and immortal bliss, absolutely secure and free from all darkness, pain, and uneasiness of every kind, and from death itself; those former things being passed away: and it is enlivened with all the joys and honours of a public solemnization of Christ's marriage with his church: it is inexpressibly more glorious than the most splendid city of beautiful, strong, and lofty walls, erected on solid foundations, and all embellished as with the most precious glittering stones; and magnificently adorned, as with gates of the most costly pearl, at which angels stand, like officers of state; and as if its streets were all over paved with the finest polished gold. All the riches and grandeur of the greatest monarchs, and of all nations of the earth, are so far exceeded by it, swallowed up in it, and cheerfully resigned for it, as not worthy to be compared with its heavenly treasures. It is illuminated, honoured, and blessed with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, as shining with amiable and divine majesty on their throne of glory, and as the beginners and perfectors of its happiness; insomuch that it needs no creature-enjoyments, like the sun and moon; nor any ordinances,

it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but

they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

1 Phil. 4. 3. Ch. 3. 5. & 13. 8. & 17. 8. & 20. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 19. Rom. 8. 30. Luke, 10. 20. If. 4. 1.

like the temple at Jerusalem, to assist its heavenly entertainments: for God in Christ will be their God, and the everlasting fountain of all that is great and good; and they shall inherit all things, to the utmost of their wishes, as the gift of his free grace; and shall live together in holy, harmonious, and transporting fellowship with God, and Christ, and one another, in its ever-shining and unclouded light. But, alas! all that are ashamed of, or afraid to own the Lord, and every unbeliever and liar, with all other impenitent sinners who are abominable in God's sight, shall be utterly excluded from the heavenly state, and have their portion in everlasting burnings, which is the second death. These are the true and faithful sayings of God, which shall certainly have their full accomplishment, to the insupportable misery of impenitent sinners, and the consummate joy of the saints, for ever and ever.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, *The last glorious period* now commences, of the heavenly felicity of God's saints; if that may be so called, which, though it has a beginning, never will have an end.

The blessedness of this heavenly state is described under the most august representations.

1. A new heaven and a new earth arise, where there is no sea; all storms, calamities, and troubles, being at an end, and an eternal rest remaining for the people of God.

2. A glorious city appears in view, such as earth never beheld, the new Jerusalem, whose maker and builder is God, beautiful as a bride adorned to meet the bridegroom, the emblem of the church of the faithful, who will then be consummately perfect in holiness and happiness for ever.

3. The unutterable felicity of God's saints is described by a voice from heaven, declaring, (1.) The residence of God in the midst of his people, admitting them into the nearest relation with his blessed Self, taking them for his own, and offering himself as their eternal portion. (2.) He will for ever banish sin, sorrow, and death from the celestial mansions; the former imperfect state is passed away, and that of perfect happiness is come.

4. The certainty of this bliss and blessedness is confirmed by the word of him that sitteth on the throne, *Behold, I make all things new.* And again he said, *Write, for these words are true and faithful.* And he added, *It is done,* the work of redemption is completely finished. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end,* the Author and Finisher both of the old and new worlds, and of the happiness of my faithful saints; and am unchangeably existent, from eternity to eternity the same. *I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely;* I open the springs, and they shall flow in abundance; and let every humble soul that desires it, freely come and quench his thirst.

5. The dreadful ruin of the wicked shall be as sure as the happiness of the saints: they are described as *fearful,* ashamed of the cross of Christ, and dreading the sufferings

of his service; *unbelieving,* distrustful of his promises, and rejecting his word; *abominable,* the slaves of corrupt affections: all these, as well as *murderers, whoremongers, forcerers, idolaters, and all liars,* are doomed to suffer endless torment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. Woe to those on whom these sins are found; they are assuredly brands for the burning.

2dly, One of the ministering spirits who had lately been employed in pouring out the vials of wrath, leads the enraptured John to a nearer view from a neighbouring mountain, of the glorious city, the emblem of the church, the Lamb's wife, which he saw descending from heaven.

The glory of God, the divine Shechinah, was visible in the midst of her, affording her the brightest light, Jesus the Sun of righteousness shining upon her. A vast high wall encompassed her: and angelic guards waited at her gates, which were inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes: all of which denoted her invincible defence and security. The gates stood three on each side, looking to the four quarters of the heavens, open for the faithful who should come from all lands. The twelve foundations of the walls bore the names of the apostles on whom the church is built, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Cornerstone. The city being measured, appeared four-square, to signify the perfection, stability, and uniformity of the church above: it was fifteen hundred miles on each side, intimating the vast extent; and the height of the walls proportionable to its length and breadth, even one hundred and forty-four cubits: the building of the wall of it was of jasper; and the city was of pure gold like crystal, denoting its magnificence, durability, and glory; and the foundations were garnished with every precious stone, far brighter than those which glittered in the high-priest's breast-plate (Exod. xxviii. 15—21): and the gates were each of one massy pearl; and the street of the city was of burnished gold, polished like crystal. Every thing excellent and dazzling in the sight of mortals, is here heaped together with amazing profusion; and yet how faintly can all these images convey the delights, blessedness, and perfection of the heavenly state, where such good things are prepared as pass man's understanding!

3dly,

1. No temple was found in this celestial city, immediate communion with the eternal God being here enjoyed, which renders needless all the present ordinances of approach to God.

2. No sun nor moon was wanted, where the uncreated Light himself abode: the glory of God and the Lamb, one in essential union with the Father and Spirit, is the light thereof.

3. There all the nations, saved through the atoning blood of Jesus, walk in the light of the Lord; and the potentates, who through grace partake of his salvation, bring thither their glory and honour, counting that they reign indeed when made kings and priests unto God in this eternal state of blessedness.

4. The

CHAP. XXII.

The river of the water of life. The tree of life. The light of the city of God is himself. The angel will not be worshipped. Nothing may be added to the word of God, nor taken therefrom.

[Anno Domini 96.]

AND he shewed me ^a a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the ^b throne of God and of the Lamb.

² In the midst of ^c the street of it, and on either side of the river, ^d was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: ^e and the

leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

³ And there shall be no more curse: ^f but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and ^g his servants shall serve him:

⁴ And they shall see his face; and ^h his name shall be in their foreheads.

⁵ And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: ⁱ and they shall reign for ever and ever.

⁶ And he said unto me, ^j These sayings are faithful and true: and the ^k Lord God of

^a Ezek. 47. 1—10. Zech. 14. 8. Pf. 36. 8, 9. John, 7. 38, 39. & 16. 11. & 4. 10, 14. Hab. 2. 14. Gen. 26. 19, 22. ^b Ch. 3. 21. & 4. 3. & 5. 6. & 7. 17. ^c Ch. 21. 21. Ver. 1. ^d Gen. 2. 9. Ezek. 47. 7, 12. Pf. 92. 12—14. Ch. 2. 7. John, 11. 25. ^e Exod. 15. 26. Mal. 4. 2. Pf. 107. 20. ^f Gal. 3. 13. Rom. 8. 1. 16. 11. 23. Zech. 14. 11. Gen. 3. 16.—19. ^g Ch. 21. 3. Ezek. 48. 35. ^h Ch. 4. 8. & 19. 5. ⁱ Mat. 5. 8. ^j 1 Cor. 13. 12. ^k 1 John, 3. 2. Pf. 17. 15. John, 17. 24. ^l Ch. 3. 12. & 14. 1. Exod. 28. 36, 38. Heb. 4. 14. & 10. 23. Eph. 4. 13. ^m Ch. 21. 23, 25. Pf. 36. 9. & 27. 1. 16. 60. 1, 19, 20. Zech. 14. 6, 7. John, 8. 12. ⁿ Ch. 3. 21. & 5. 10. & 20. 4. Rom. 8. 17. ^o 2 Tim. 2. 12. ^p 2 Cor. 4. 17. Rom. 5. 17. Dan. 7. 27. ^q Ch. 1. 1, 3. & 19. 9. & 21. 5. ^r 1 Tim. 1. 15. ^s Ver. 16. Heb. 1. 1. Joel, 2. 28. Ch. 1. 1. 2 Tim. 3. 16.

4. The gates stand open continually by day, and there is no night there, nor fear of invading foes. All that has ever appeared valuable and glorious among the nations here, is found there with infinitely surpassing excellence; and every thing defiling is forbidden admission: no liar, no idolater, can enter there, but only those whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb. Note; Into the present church upon earth, hypocrites will inculpate themselves; but in heaven nothing unholy or impure can possibly be admitted.

CHAP. XXII.

Ver. 1—5. And he shewed me a pure river, &c.] The first five verses of this chapter are a continuation of the description of the new Jerusalem. It is farther described with the river of life, and the tree of life, ver. 2. as if paradise was restored and improved. A river flowing through the midst of the streets, and trees growing on either side of the river, are wonderfully pleasing and agreeable objects, especially in the hot eastern countries. Of the fruits there is such plenty, that all may freely partake of them at all seasons; and the very leaves are for the healing of the nations; by all which is signified, the blessedness of immortality, without any infirmities. Then, too, there shall be no more curse, as there is in this present world, ever since the fall of man: but the blessed inhabitants shall enjoy the so-much-talked-of beatific vision; shall live in the light of God's countenance, and serve him, and reign for ever, ver. 4, 5. See Ezek. xlvi. 1, &c. Both the waters of life, and the tree of life, are emblems of immortality: They that eat of the tree of life shall live for ever. Gen. iii. 22. The trees of life are so planted in this description, that all the inhabitants may come at the fruit of them freely, and without hindrance. They yield their fruits so plentifully, and so constantly, that there can be no want even in so large and populous a city; and even the leaves have a sovereign virtue against all sorts of indisposition. The

continual succession of fruits shews the endless duration of the happiness of the saints, which is maintained by the continual effusions of the divine grace and favour. As to the division of the growth of the fruits by months, I think (says Daubuz,) that this arises from the ancient custom of making distributions every month, of meat and drink to servants, or such as depend for their maintenance upon rich men. The kings of Israel settled such distributions to be monthly; and so contrived, that the tributes which were to serve for that purpose, were laid on by monthly accounts. See 1 Kings, iv. 7, 27. Instead of there shall be no more curse, ver. 3. Bishop Sherlock would read, every curse shall cease. This part of the description of the new Jerusalem seems to point out to us how much greater the happiness of this state will be, than was the happiness of the first paradise. In this state, the faithful servants of Christ shall be in no danger of forfeiting their happiness, and losing paradise, as our first parents did: in this paradisaical state, they shall be a kingdom of priests unto God for ever. This evidently describes a state of happiness incomparably above the condition of this world; and only to be enjoyed in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Ver. 6, &c.] The prophetic part of this book ends in a perfect happiness of the faithful, great above all imagination, certain as the word of prophecy, and lasting without end; a powerful encouragement and persuasive to constancy in the profession and practice of pure Christianity, whatever difficulties or dangers might attend it. What follows, to the end, is the conclusion of the whole book, or a sort of epilogue, which confirms the truth of the prophecies contained in these Revelations; shews the importance and use of them; and is well fitted to leave them with strong impressions on the hearts of readers, to preserve them from a compliance with any corruptions of the Christian faith and worship, and to encourage their constancy in the ways of truth and righteousness.

He said unto me, These sayings, &c.] In the conclusion, the

the holy prophets sent his angel ^p to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 ^q Behold, I come quickly: ^r blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John ^s saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, ^t I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And ^u he saith unto me, ^v Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 ^w He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: ^x and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 ^y And, behold, I come quickly; and ^z my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 ^a I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 ^b Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have ^c right to ^d the tree of life, and may enter in through ^e the gates into the city.

15 ^f For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

16 ^g I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am ^h the root and the offspring of David, and ⁱ the bright and morning star.

17 And the ^j Spirit and ^k the bride say, Come. And let ^l him that heareth say, Come. ^m And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For ⁿ I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, ^o If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the ^p plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, ^q God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and ^r from ^s the things which are written in this book.

20 ^t He which testifieth these things saith,

^p Pf. 25. 14. Amos, 3. 7. ^q Ver. 6, 12, 16, 20. Mat. 25. 31. Heb. 10. 37. ^r 2 Theff. 1. 8. Heb. 9. 28. Ch. 3. 11, 20, & 16. 15. & 1. 7. ^s Ch. 1. 3. & 3. 11. ^t John, 19. 35. & 21. 24. ^u 1 John, 1. 1—3. ^v 3 John, 12. ^w Ch. 19. 9, 10. Acts, 10. 25, 26. & 14. 13—15. with Mat. ^x Ch. 10. 27. Ezek. 2. 7. Ch. 1. 13. with ch. 10. 4. Dan. ^y 8. 26. & 12. 4, 9. ^z Ezek. 3. 27. Dan. 12. 10. ^a 2 Tim. 3. 13. Mat. 15. 14. Hosea, 4. 17. Pf. 81. 12. ^b Rom. 8. 1. Ch. 7. 14, 15. Ver. 3. ^c Job, 17. 9. Prov. 4. 18. Mat. 24. 13. Eph. 5. 27. ^d See ver. 7. ^e If. 40. 10. & 61. 11. Mat. 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6. & 14. 12. Ch. 20. 12. ^f If. 41. 4. & 44. 6. & 48. 12. Ch. 1. 8, 11. & 21. 6. ^g Mat. 7. 21. & 5. 3—9. ^h 1 John, 3. 23. Ch. 2. 7. & 1. 3. Ver. 7. Dan. 12. 13. If. ⁱ 3. 10. Rom. 2. 7, 10. ^j Or privilege, or power. John, 1. 12. ^k Ch. 2. 7. Ver. 2. Song, 2. 3. John, 11. 25. & 14. 19. Gal. 2. 10. ^l Ch. 21. 12, 13, 21, 25. John, 10. 7, 9. & 14. 6. ^m 2 Pet. 1. 11. Eph. 2. 18. ⁿ Ch. 21. 8, 27. ^o 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19—21. Eph. 5. 5. ^p Col. 3. 6. Phil. 3. 2. & 3. 18, 19. Ch. 9. 20, 21. Mat. 7. 6. & 22. 13. ^q Ch. 1. 11, 11. Deut. 18. 15. Mat. 28. 20. ^r 1 Pet. 3. 22. ^s Ch. ^t 5. 5. If. 11. 1, 10. Rom. 15. 12. Jer. 23. 5, 6. If. 9. 6, 7. Mat. 22. 42, 45. John, 1. 14. ^u Mal. 4. 2. Zech. 6. 12, 13. ^v Ch. 1. 4. & ^w 29. 10. ^x Ch. 19. 7. & 21. 2, 9, 10. ^y Ch. 2. 7, 11, 17, 20. & 13. 9. Mat. 11. 15. & 13. 9, 43. ^z If. 55. 1—7. Ch. 21. 6. John, ^a 7. 37—39. Pf. 81. 10. & 34. 8. Mat. 11. 28. John, 6. 37. & 3. 16. ^b Ver. 16, 17, 20. Ch. 1. 5. & 3. 7, 14. ^c Deut. 4. 2, 9. & 5. 32. ^d Pf. 132. Prov. 30. 6. Mat. 15. 9. ^e Ch. 2. 22, 23. & 13. 10. & 14. 9—11. & xvii. xviii. & 19. 20, 21. & 20. 10, 15. ^f Exod. 32. 33. ^g Pf. 69. 28. Ch. 13. 8. & 17. 8. & 21. 27. Ver. 15. ^h Ch. 1. 3. & 2. 7, 11, 17, 26—28. & 3. 4, 5, 12, 21. & 7. 9—17. & 14. 13. ⁱ Ch. 2. 1. Ver. 10—19.

the angel ratifies and confirms all the foregoing particulars by a repetition of the same solemn assurance which he had given, ch. xix. 9. and xxi. 5. that *these sayings are true and faithful*; and he was commissioned by the same God, who had inspired the ancient prophets, to *shew the things that must shortly be done*; which would very soon begin in part to be fulfilled, and in process of time would all be completed. *Behold, I come quickly*, says he, ver. 7. For we may observe, that the angel speaks sometimes in his own person, and sometimes in the person and character of Christ, whose ambassador and representative he was. Christ is said to *come* upon any notable and illustrious manifestation of his providence; and all these are but so many steps, to prepare the way for his last coming to

judgment. A blessing too is pronounced (as in ch. i. 3.) upon those who *keep the sayings of this book*; and, as Vitringa devoutly wishes, “May the Lord bestow his grace and favour upon us, who have employed some time and pains in the study and explication of this book, that some part of this blessing also may descend to us!”

Ver. 8—21. *John saw these things, and heard, &c.*] St. John testifies himself to have been the person who *saw and heard these things*; and in his extasy falling into the same mistake which he had committed, ch. xix. 10. he is gently corrected in the same manner by the angel, who orders him, ver. 10. *not to seal up this prophecy*, as Daniel’s was (ch. xii. 4—9.); *for the time is at hand*;—some of the particulars would very soon be accomplished, as indeed all would in their due

7 Surely I come quickly; 8 Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 9 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

7 Ver. 7, 10, 12. 2 Pet. 3. 2. Ch. 1. 7. 8 Song, 8. 14. & 2. 17. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 9. 28. 16. 23. 2 Cor. 13. 14. Gal. 6. 18. Eph. 6. 23, 24. Phil. 1. 2. & 4. 23. Col. 1. 2. 1 Thess. 1. 1, &c.

9 Ch. 1. 4, 11. Rom. 16. 24. 2 Cor.

due season: which he farther enforces, ver. 11—15. with promises and threatenings, of rewards to the righteous, and of vengeance to the wicked. It was not thought sufficient to represent the angel speaking in the person of Christ, but Christ himself is also introduced, ver. 16. speaking in his own person, confirming the divine authority of this book, and attesting it to be properly *his revelation concerning the churches: The Spirit and the bride*, ver. 17. (that is, *the spiritual bride*,—the true church of Christ,) therefore receives it, and ardently wishes for its completion. The book being of this importance, a solemn adjuration is added by Christ himself, that no man presume to add any thing to it, or take any thing from it, ver. 18, 19. *He who testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly*, ver. 20. He not only attests them to be true, but will also come speedily to accomplish them: to which St. John answers, and in him the whole church, *Amen. Even so; Come, Lord Jesus!* He closes all with the usual apostolical benediction, ver. 21. wishing *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* to the churches of Asia in particular, and to all Christians in general. The conclusion is truly excellent, as well as all other parts of this book; and nothing could be contrived to leave these things with a stronger impression upon the minds of the readers. In the whole, from first to last, appears the majesty of the divine Revealer,—the *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the author and finisher of every good work*, and of this more particularly. This is *the sure word of prophecy, whereunto Christians*, as St. Peter says, *do well to take heed and attend*. 2 Pet. i. 19. Attention then to this book is recommended to us, upon the authority of St. Peter, as well as of the writer, St. John: a double blessing, as we have seen in the book itself, is pronounced upon those who shall study and observe it; first in ch. i. 3. and here again, ch. xxii. 7. Emboldened by which blessings, with Nehemiah we would pray, “Remember us, O my God, concerning this also, and spare us according to the greatness of thy mercy!” Neh. xiii. 22. We would observe with the pious and excellent Dr. Doddridge, our faithful and useful companion through the writings of the New Testament,—How sweetly and delightfully the canon of scripture concludes, leaving as it were the music of heaven upon the attentive ear! O thou blessed Root and Offspring of David! O thou *bright and morning star!* impress on all our hearts these thy gracious words which thou hast condescended to speak from the throne of thy glory! thereby as it were to aid the weakness of our faith in those which thou didst deliver while dwelling in mortal flesh: then did the compassionate Saviour proclaim from an eminence in the temple, to a crowded assembly, on a day of peculiar solemnity, *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*; John, vii. 37. And now, behold he makes the same proclamation from his celestial temple; he points as it were to the fountain-head of happiness, to the springs of the water of life near the throne of God; and says, *whoever will, let him come,*

let him take, let him freely take of this living water, ver. 17. Yea, and not content with speaking this language by his Spirit only, he calls on his *bride*, to lift up her melodious voice, to publish this kind invitation. He calls on every one who hears it, to echo it back, as if the excess of his goodness overcame him, as if it were necessary to his happiness that men should accept of their own salvation.

With what sacred observance should these books be guarded, which contain a message of such infinite importance! of what dreadful curses are they worthy, who presume to add to what is already perfect, or to take away from that, which is in every part divine! ver. 18. God forbid that any of us should ever presumptuously attempt to do it! And may we be preserved from those mistaken interpretations, in consequence of which we might teach the world, as by His authority, any thing which He has not dictated; or deny any thing which carries with it the stamp of such an authority! Have pity, O Lord, upon our weakness! Impute not prejudices which thou knowest we do not allow; and give us a greater penetration of mind, to understand the true sense of thy word; a simplicity of heart to receive it; an integrity, so far as the duty of our stations requires, to declare, and a zeal to inculcate and defend it.

While we are thus employed,—or employed in any other services which Providence may assign us;—whatever labours may exercise; whatever difficulties may surround; whatever sorrows may depress; whatever malice, misrepresentation, or calumny may vex us; may it be our pleasure to hear the Lord of our love proclaiming, “Behold, I come quickly:—I come to put a period to the trials and suffering of my servants. I come, and my reward of grace is with me, to recompense with royal bounty every work of faith and labour of love. I come to receive my faithful persevering people to myself, to dwell for ever in that blissful world, where the sacred volume which contains the important discoveries of my will shall be no more necessary; but knowledge, and holiness, and joy, shall be poured in upon their souls, in a more immediate, a more noble, and a more effectual manner;” *Amen! even so, come, Lord Jesus!* hasten the blessed hour to us, and to all the churches, so far as it may consist with thy wise and holy counsels; and, in the mean time, may thy grace be with us, to keep alive the remembrance of thy love, and the expectation of thy coming, in our hearts; and to animate us to a temper and conduct which may suit the blessings we have already received, and the nobler felicity after which thou hast taught us to aspire! *Amen, and Amen.*

Inferences.—Let us again contemplate the *new Jerusalem* with new and growing delight. Let us raise our eyes to the *water of life, which issues from the throne of God and the Lamb: to the tree of life, which grows on its banks, and produces such a variety of fruit, both for food and refreshment,*

and for the healing of the nations; to that more excellent paradise, in which there shall be no curse, where, from the throne of God and of the Lamb, shall be scattered ten thousand blessings on all his servants; who shall there serve him, with everlasting, with increasing delight, being admitted to see his face, and exulting in their having the name of God written upon their foreheads: which they reckon a brighter and nobler ornament, than the most glorious crown, or diadem, without such an inscription, could be. These are the words of truth and faithfulness; and, as such, may our faith embrace them, and our souls ever rest upon them.

O that we may feel our thirst after this water of life, our hunger after this fruit of the tree of life, powerfully and perseveringly excited. We shall then, in both respects, be satisfied in the proper season; and, in the mean time, God will send us some refreshments, during our continuance in the wilderness. And O, may divine love, and every genuine regard to God and the Lamb, prevail and govern in our hearts; and may our lives be devoted to that service, in which we hope our eternity will be employed. Have we not already, as it were, received the mark of God in our foreheads? Have we not solemnly enlisted ourselves to fight under the banner of Christ? Have we not, in repeated and most affecting solemnities and ordinances of his own institution, declared our desire of being for ever devoted to him? O let us ever remember the sacred engagement. Let holiness to the Lord be written on our hearts, as well as on our foreheads. Let all our affections, and all our faculties, all our possessions, and all our pursuits, be consecrated to God. To bear this name and inscription, will now, even in this dark and benighted world, shed a glory around us. It will be as a sacred guide to our ways, it will cheer and animate our hearts, it will bring down to us many a delightful foretaste of that world, where (if faithful), in his light we shall see light, and where we shall reign with him for ever and ever.

Again, Let us be very thankful, that the words of this prophecy are not sealed from us; but that truths, in which we have so important a concern, are so plainly published and proclaimed. The time is near, when a seal will be set on the characters of men: blessed be God, he who is now unrighteous and polluted, may be purified and reformed, justified and saved. Adored be that grace, that waits so long upon sinners! But the divine long-suffering towards them will have its period: yet a little while, and Jesus comes, to render to every man according to his works. May we then be fixed in a world of immutable holiness and happiness!

The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, has discovered to us many evangelical truths in this mysterious book. He has directed our eyes to himself, even to the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood; and has shewed us the saints in glory, laying down their crowns in his presence, and ascribing the praise of all their salvation to him; but he has shewn us nothing that is inconsistent with the necessity of real and universal holiness. Yea, he himself proclaims those alone to be entitled to enter the gates of the new Jerusalem, and to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, who do God's commandments. Let us not, therefore, deceive ourselves with vain words, nor attend to any who would sophisticate the word of God, and, fixing their view only on some detached passages of

it, enervate, by their unguarded interpretations, its general scope and meaning. Let us, in reviewing scripture, observe what God commands and requires, and compare it with what he forbids, that we may thereby impartially judge and try ourselves. And how free soever we may be from any of the grosser crimes here enumerated, such as fornication, murder, and idolatry, let us not allow ourselves in the love and practice of any thing inconsistent with the immutable rule of righteousness and truth; as well knowing every allowed and continued indulgence of that kind, to be utterly irreconcilable with a well grounded hope of inheriting eternal life. May it please thee, O Lord, to inscribe all these laws upon our hearts; that our joy, in the hope and prospect of the promised blessedness, may rise in proportion to our acquaintance with thy unerring word, and to the impartiality and diligence with which we trace the actions of our lives and the affections of our hearts by a comparison with it, and reduce them to a holy conformity to its precepts.

REFLECTIONS.—1st, The angelic guide further leads the apostle to view some other emblematical glories of this celestial city.

1. He shews him a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God, and of the Lamb, the figure of those eternal consolations, and that vital influence, immediately derived from communion with the Fountain of eternal bliss.

2. The tree of life, the emblem of Jesus the Lord of life and glory, here spread its branches on both sides the river; or several in a row were planted on the river's bank, yielding perpetual fruit, new every month; and the very leaves are for the healing of the nations; intimating the rich provision of unceasing delights which is here made for the faithful, and their perfect preservation in soul and body from all decay or infirmity.

3. No curse can there enter; the eternal felicity and impeccability of the saints are secured; and before the throne of God and of the Lamb they shall pay their unceasing adorations, enjoy the beatific vision of the God of glory, and bear his bright image on them, as visibly as if his name was engraven on their foreheads.

4. No night is there; nor need they the sun or a candle, where the Lord God is their everlasting Light: and they shall reign with him for ever and ever. O blest abode! my soul, aspire after it, and eager press for an entrance into this everlasting kingdom of thy God and Saviour.

2dly, We have,

1. A solemn ratification, given by the angel, of the certainty of these events. These sayings are faithful and true: he was sent expressly from the Lord Jesus to reveal to St. John the things which would begin shortly to be accomplished, and continue fulfilling until the end of time.

2. The Lord Jesus himself speaks, or the angel speaks as his representative: Behold, I come quickly; prepare to meet me; the whole period of time is comparatively short and momentary: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book, faithfully adheres to the gospel word, and confidently expects the fulfilment of the promises.

3. Overcome with what he heard and saw, and scarcely himself through rapture, St. John fell before the angel; but again is reproved and prevented: angels are but our fellow-servants.

4. The

4. The Lord, or his representative angel, again addresses him, and bids him not seal up the prophecies of this book, but deliver them to the church, the time for their fulfilment now approaching: and when they are accomplished, men's everlasting state will be fixed unchangeably. He who in the great day is found filthy and unjust, must remain so for ever under the wrath of God; and he that is found righteous in the Lord, and made holy by his Spirit, shall be eternally blessed.

5. The adorable Jesus repeats his assurance for the comfort of his faithful people. *Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be, whether good or bad. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last;* the great Origin of all things, and the ultimate End for which all things were created; and what I say may be depended upon as the words of invariable fidelity: hear them therefore with attention and regard. And, since my nature and perfections are immutable, see that the necessary change be made in yourselves in order to your obtaining that happiness of which your sins may now render you incapable. And it will shortly appear how *blessed are they that do his commandments*, and approve their fidelity to God, *that they may have right, through the promise, to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*, partaking of all the inconceivable blessedness prepared for the faithful: while those who shall be found disobedient, unholy, or profane, shall be eternally excluded from these bright mansions. *For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie; whoever lives and dies under the guilt of any of these things, perishes irrecoverably.*

6. The Lord Jesus confirms to him what the angel had told him. *I Jesus, your Lord and Master, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in, or concerning, the churches;* and their future state and condition. *I am the root and the offspring of David;* as God, his root; as man, his offspring; *and the bright and morning star,* leading my faithful people in paths of everlasting peace.

7. *The Spirit and the bride say, Come,* welcome the Sa-

viour, and wait the fulfilment of his promise. *And let him that heareth, even every faithful soul, take up the word and say, Come. And let him that is athirst for spiritual blessings, come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely;* and out of these wells of salvation, the scriptures, let him draw the living streams of grace and consolation. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, now the canon of revelation is complete, by new pretended visions, or wilful perversion of their meaning, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book,—an awful sanction, which guards the sacred records, and binds the heaviest vengeance upon those who dare, by base adulterations, add thereto, or diminish therefrom*

3dly, The Lord Jesus closes his Revelation,

1. With a solemn confirmation of the whole. *He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely, I come quickly, certainly and speedily, for the comfort and salvation of my faithful people.*

2. The apostle, in the name of all the saints, professes his confidence in the promise. *Amen! Lord, I believe; fulfil it in due season. Even so be it; come, Lord Jesus, and bring to us complete and final salvation!*

3. He concludes with his benediction. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!* May you experience the riches of his free and unmerited favour and love; be strengthened by his Spirit mightily in the inner man, to stand faithfully in the evil day, comfortably and confidently persevering in the truth; may you, when all your conflicts end, enter into that eternal state of rest and blessedness which is here revealed. *Amen!* Such are my prayers for thee, Reader; may we now, without ceasing, be found uniting our supplications before a throne of grace; and together may we meet around a throne of glory, and spend a happy eternity in the praises of our adored Jesus! *Amen!*

TO THE ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF EVERY GOOD WORK, BE EVERLASTING PRAISE AND GLORY!

A P P E N D I X
TO THE
C O M M E N T A R Y
ON THE
R E V E L A T I O N :

Vol. H.

[a]

C O N T E N T S
OF
T H E A P P E N D I X.

S E C T I O N I.

SUBJECT of inquiry. Origin, nature, and application of symbolical language.

S E C T I O N II.

The prophecies true, because many have been already fulfilled: instanced in the capture, overthrow, and desolation of Babylon. These facts demonstrate a prophetic spirit, which could proceed only from God. Prophecies unfulfilled cannot be always future: the event must overtake the prediction:—we have reason to believe that some are fulfilling in the present day. Antichrist defined: it includes the Papal, Mahometan, and Infidel powers. This Appendix includes chiefly an account of the first and the last.

S E C T I O N III.

Papal Antichrist considered under four distinct heads: namely, Superstition and Idolatry; Apostacy; Blasphemy and Arrogance; Cruelty.

S E C T I O N IV.

Infidel Antichrist the offspring of Papal Antichrist: engendered by the corruptions and inhumanities of Popery, and made instrumental in the hand of God in retaliating upon her priests and supporters the blood which she has shed. Origin and progress of modern infidelity:—occasion of the Revolution in France:—effects which have resulted from it:—progress of immorality.

S E C T I O N V.

Acts of Revolutionary cruelty sanctioned by the Legislatures of France.

S E C T I O N VI.

Infidelity, having lived its day, and been made instrumental in the hand of God in punishing corrupt and apostate professors, destined to perish. Commencement of the 1260 days mentioned by St. John. Popery obtained its enormous power, and Mahometanism began, in the year 606; Infidelity at a subsequent period; all must expire together. The complexion of the times proves that we are living towards the close of the 1260 days, or years. Many predictions yet unaccomplished: namely, the restoration of the Jews;—a grand confederacy of the enemies of Christ;—the battle of Armageddon; the Millennium, and Gog and Magog. Remarks on Gog and Magog, and on the grand confederacy. On the pouring out of the fourth vial, the fifth vial, the sixth vial. Observations on the downfall of Turkey, and on the present situation and restoration of the Jews.

SECTION VII.

The pouring out of the seventh vial. Coincidences between the predictions of Daniel, Joel, Zechariah, and St. John, on events which are yet future. Diversity of opinions on subordinate particulars. Conjectures on the accomplishment of those prophecies, which will finally issue in the destruction of Popery, Mahometanism, and Infidelity. This will be at the end of the 1260 years, which, if rightly dated, will terminate in the year 1866; at which time the restoration of the Jews will probably commence. The prophecies immutable, and urge us to prepare to meet our God.

P R E F A C E
TO THE
A P P E N D I X.

TO dismiss this Commentary, which is now brought nearly to a close, without noticing the great transactions which are at this moment passing before us in the world, would, it is highly probable, be considered by many as an unjustifiable omission, and expose the author to the imputation of neglect. Being unwilling to incur the displeasure of his numerous and respectable subscribers, and being at the same time fully convinced that these are no common days, he has been induced to take a survey of the events which are rising up in rapid succession, and to consider them in relation to those prophecies which refer to the latter days, and as leading immediately to those awful commotions which shall precede that reign of righteousness which Christ shall establish on the earth.

In prosecuting this inquiry, the author has had recourse to the most modern publications on the prophecies, which the present period has afforded: in these he has found much to admire, and much to disapprove. It is not his province either to adopt implicitly whatever may appear plausible, or to enter into an elaborate refutation of what he may deem erroneous: his object is to give the reader some idea of the opinions to which the extraordinary transactions of Europe have given rise in the present day. And therefore, without attempting either to vindicate or condemn what others have advanced, he has only endeavoured to select from the whole mass, an epitome of that theory which, in his judgment, appears most probable. The modern publications to which he chiefly alludes, are those written by Mr. Bicheno, Dr. Mitchell, Mr. Whitaker, Mr. Galloway, Mr. Kett, and Mr. Faber. From their pages he has taken the liberty occasionally to select in sentiment, and sometimes in language, particulars in which they seem rather to agree than differ, but which, he is well aware, nothing but the flight of time can determine to be right.

To record the motley opinions which have been given on some dubious predictions, would be by no means a difficult task. But such a register must be more amusing than profitable; it might afford a momentary gratification to the curious; but would entitle our pages to the dishonourable appellation of being the vehicle of discord.

That the prophecies contained in the book of Daniel, and of the Revelation, are big with the fate of nations, is a truth admitted by all; and hence the interest which we feel in the final issue. It has, however, been a matter of no small regret with the author, to observe, that, while many able writers have attempted to illustrate these prophecies, a tincture of political partiality has been but too visible in their various interpretations. Such partialities, in the estimation of the judicious inquirer after truth, cannot fail to place them below the dignity of their subject; insomuch that the most striking excellencies of their observations, instead of impressing conviction on the mind, are perused with suspicion and jealousy, and thereby lose their force.

The

These political partialities we have passed over in silence. Our province confines us to the predictions and their accomplishment; and our primary object has been to notice the probable period and issue of present events, as they stand connected with prophetic warnings, and with that future destiny which awaits the church of God. Whether the data and calculations on which we have proceeded, are true or false, nothing, perhaps, but time can fully determine. But how much siever we may appear hereafter to have been mistaken in subordinate particulars, of this we may rest ourselves assured, that the great period of consummation is at hand,—that it is even at the door.

Towards the close of this Appendix the reader will perceive, that we have frequently had recourse to some parts of the theory which Mr. Faber has adopted, whose learned Dissertation on the Prophecies we strongly recommend. According to the sentiments of this acute and ingenious author, the final overthrow of the Mahometan, Papal, and Infidel powers, will most probably take place about the year 1866, because, as the 1260 prophetic years, at the expiration of which they are to perish, are presumed by him to have commenced in the year 606, 1866 must be the time of their completion. By the Infidel or Atheistical Power or King, he alludes to and understands the present prosperous Usurper of France. But when he speaks of the downfall of these antichristian powers in 1866, he repeatedly assures us, that it is not the individual Buonaparte whom he means, nor in fact any other individual whomsoever; but the successor, or successors, of those who now wield the Mahometan, Papal, and Infidel sword, and who shall be living at that period. This observation, in justice to Mr. Faber's sentiment, the reader is particularly requested to bear in mind.

As this Appendix necessarily embraces a variety of objects, that the connection may be preserved, the author has been obliged to take a retrospective but transient survey of those causes, which, in all probability, have led to present events; and which are now preparing the way for those which are as yet only viewed at a distance. This circumstance will enable the reader to trace the dependence of future events upon the present, and of the present upon the past. These respective links, it is obvious, must present us with some divisions in the materials. Of these we have readily availed ourselves, and divided the subject into sections, before each of which a table of contents will be given.

Whether these things may tend to advance the reader in the scale of speculative knowledge, or not, is only a subject of a secondary consideration; it is of infinitely greater importance that we be hereby taught to consider our latter end, and urged to prepare to meet our God. The end of life will be to us the end of all sublunary concerns; and, whether we live to behold any of the great transactions which are about to overtake the world, or die before the period shall arrive which God has appointed; of this we are assured, that it shall be well with the righteous.—That GOD may in mercy grant to the writer, and the reader, a portion in that inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is the earnest prayer and sincere desire of the author.

APPENDIX.

SECTION I.

Subject of inquiry. Origin, nature, and application, of symbolical language.

THE astonishing events which of late years have taken place in the world, in conjunction with those actions that are at this moment subverting thrones, demolishing empires, and deluging Europe with human blood, naturally induce the inquiring and serious among mankind to ask,—Whether or not these strange transactions have any connection with prophetic warnings?—Whether they are to be ranked among those fleeting bubbles of life which are rising and bursting by millions in an hour;—or, whether they are links in that chain of providential occurrences which leads onward to the renovation of the world, and which must be completed in the final consummation of things. Pious men have watched these transactions with peculiar attention, and explored the secret springs from which they have derived their energy:—they have compared them with the language of prophecy, and have seen much reason to conclude, that God is about to shake terribly the nations of the earth.

The impartial inquirer after information and truth, cannot indeed but be struck with wonder, on a perusal of the many volumes which have lately been written on the prophetic parts of the scriptures, and with that want of coincidence in interpretation which prevails in many passages of their works. But should any one be induced to infer from hence that these commentaries are altogether no better than mere conjecture, founded upon probabilities which are rather imaginary than rational, he would at once discover a want of just discrimination, and prove himself to be but a superficial inquirer after truth.

But how diversified soever the opinions of men may be, we must not forget that they are diversified only on subordinate particulars;—on such prophecies as are wrapped up in futurity;—or, on such points as are but partially revealed. On the leading features all parties seem to have agreed: they unite in asserting, that the revelations which were made to St. John, in the island of Patmos, have an evident relation to the most important transactions which should take place in the civilized and moral world, though their views may have been various on their particular application.

Among these momentous events, it is uniformly admitted, that the church of Christ has invariably claimed the peculiar care of God. In these prophecies of St. John, her vicissitudes are marked with peculiar exactness, while her oppressors are delineated with symbolical accuracy. The corruptions which have crept within her pale, by which she has unhappily been debauched;—the unnatural alliances which she has formed with the kingdoms of this world;—her being made subservient to the artifices of ambitious and designing men; together with the judgments of God upon her for her spiritual fornications and adulteries, as well as upon those by whom she has been polluted,—are all noted in the comprehensive vision before

us, and imperiously direct our views to the great affairs of mankind.

But while we contemplate the book of Revelation as containing an epitome of these important facts, we cannot but feel ourselves peculiarly interested in the nature of that enigmatical language in which these facts are expressed. This therefore has a prior claim to our attention; and before we can hope to form any adequate conceptions of the contents of this book, it will be necessary that we first contemplate the nature of those figures, which, at first view, appear to be almost unintelligible.

The mode of expression which the Holy Ghost, in different parts of the sacred volume has thought proper to adopt, is highly figurative and symbolical; but in no part is this mode so uniformly followed as in *the book of Revelation*. The writings of St. John bear a strong resemblance to the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians and Chaldeans; and he conducts our researches through those various figures which were adopted by those ancient nations long before the use of letters was known.

“Hieroglyphics,” says a celebrated Lexicographer, “were certain images or figures, which, for the greater veneration, the ancients called sacred. They were much used by the Egyptians to express the principal doctrines of their divinity, and other moral and political sciences, which were represented on stones, obelisks, or pyramids.”

“However dark or fanciful,” says Mr. Bicheno, “the style of the prophets may now appear to many, it was anciently of common and approved use, and well understood, in general, by those to whom the prophecies were originally addressed; and however it may appear to those who have never studied the subject, is, like other languages, reducible to rule, and capable of having its meaning ascertained (a).—“Let those on whom this objection (the obscurity of language) has made any impression, consider, that figurative language must be not only as intelligible as any other, provided the being who uses it explains the symbols he employs, but even more accurate and more impressive than that of mere words and letters; because these are at best but arbitrary symbols;—whereas emblematical representations bear in nature a resemblance to the objects which they are employed to represent; and it is on the facts of the Scriptures themselves supplying a key to the emblems in this book, that the following Commentary proceeds (b).”

“The subject of this prophetic history,” says another energetic modern writer, “is a narrative of future events, clearly and elegantly expressed, and perfectly defined; indeed, more so than in any other known history. It is delivered too in a language which excels all others ever yet invented by the ingenuity of man, in conciseness, and yet copiousness of expression; in simplicity and perspicuity, and yet with grandeur and sublimity. It is

(a) Signs of the Times, page 217.

(b) Whitaker's Preface to *Brief Com. on the Revelation*, p. 2.

“ingeniously

“ ingeniously composed of hieroglyphics, symbols, and allegories taken from the natural, to represent to the mind the things of the moral world. And as in all languages each word has a certain meaning affixed to it by human compact; so in this, each figure has a literal and moral sense annexed to it, and to which it refers with the nicest accuracy, and indeed with absolute certainty. Other languages, being founded in human agreement, may be changed according to the caprice of man; hence the great variety of them in the world. But the language of prophecy is derived from the symbols of things in the natural world, and its meaning established in moral objects, and bears a proper similitude and representation of their respective symbols; neither of which admitting of change, the language itself must be unchangeable, and must continue as long as those objects shall endure. And as in all probability it was the primæval language, perhaps that of Paradise, so it will continue to the end of time; the more especially as it has pleased God, in his wisdom, to deliver the prophecies in it, which are, from the tenor of his holy word, to be useful and necessary to the salvation of man, down to the awful consummation of all things.

“ That this language was understood by the ancients, will not be denied. The inscriptions yet remaining on the Egyptian temples, obelisks, and pillars, are monuments of this truth. The learned and wise of foreign nations, formerly travelled into Egypt to acquire a knowledge of it, and we may trace evident marks of it yet in the latest of the oriental poets. And that the patriarchs themselves well understood it, is easily demonstrated. To give one instance among many: when God was pleased to reveal to Joseph his future exaltation, he did it by a dream in *hieroglyphic language*. When Joseph told this dream to his father, in which the *sun*, and *moon*, and *eleven stars*, had been represented as doing obedience to him, Jacob perfectly understood the literal meaning, and immediately interpreted it as a language with which he had been acquainted. The *sun*, the *moon*, and the *eleven stars*, he instantly applied to *himself*, to his *wife*, and his *eleven sons*. This is undeniably evident from the language which he made use of to Joseph on the occasion, *What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I, and thy mother, and thy brethren, indeed, come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? Now if the ancients understood this hieroglyphic dialect, if Jacob could thus readily interpret its mysterious figures into their literal meaning, what reason can be assigned, why it cannot be revived and understood as well as the Latin, Greek, or Hebrew?—There is none. And therefore the conclusion is incontestable, that the events described in it, may be, when they have come to pass, as perfectly understood, as any events described in any other obsolete language whatever (c).”*

“ The first and most natural way of communicating our thoughts by marks or figures, is by tracing out the images of things. Thus it appears, that formerly, to express the idea of a man or horse, the form of these was delineated. This is called picture writing. It was in this manner, when the Europeans first discovered

“ America, that the Mexicans recorded their laws and their history. But the inconvenience and imperfection of this sort of writing being great, men were put upon improvement, and hence *hieroglyphics* and *symbols*. By this contrivance, that writing which was but a simple painting, became a pictured character. The first step towards bringing this sort of writing to perfection, was, by making *the principal circumstance in the subject stand for the whole*. Thus a battle, or two armies in array, was described by two hands, one holding a shield and the other a bow; while a siege was signified by a scaling-ladder, &c. The second and more artful method of contraction was, by putting the instrument of the thing, whether real or metaphorical, for the thing itself. Thus *an eye*, eminently placed, represented God’s omniscience; *an eye* and a *sceptre*, a monarch; a ship and pilot, the Governor of the universe, &c. A third and still more artificial method of abridging picture-writing, was to make one thing stand for another, when any real or supposed analogy or resemblance existed. Thus the universe was designated by a serpent in a circle, whose variegated spots signified the stars.

“ The Egyptians (says the Bishop of Worcester,) cultivated this species of hieroglyphic writing more than any other people, while the splendor and fame of that mighty kingdom excited a veneration for it in the rest of the world. Hence it was, that the learning of those times, which spread from Egypt as from its centre, took a strong tincture of the hieroglyphic spirit. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Israelites, especially, who were bred up in that country at the very time when this sort of learning was at its height, should carry with them this treasure, among their other spoils, into the land of Canaan.

“ Thus originated the symbolic language and writing. And hence it is, in condescension to the ways of men, that this kind of style is so often used by the sacred writers (d).”

As all nature was ransacked for appropriate similitudes to represent their thoughts; the Egyptians, and others who drew from that fountain, found it necessary, as objects began to multiply, to analyze their symbols into various classes. The first of these the Egyptians and Chaldeans confined exclusively to the heavenly bodies. The visible luminaries they imagined to represent the invisible Deity, his angels, and ministers, in proportion, to that splendor which they exhibited to the eye. And, fancying to themselves that some mystical connection subsisted between the invisible heavens, the heavens which were visible, and the natural and civil world, they found it exceedingly easy to transfer the analogy to the potentates and powers who presided over the habitable globe. Hence the sun became the representative of a king or father, in proportion to the extensiveness of the scene. The moon became the symbol of the next in dignity; while the stars, which were both extensive in their number, and various in their lustres, furnished them with an endless variety, to designate the different subordinate authorities in the state.

Descending from the heavens to the earth, they drew a second train of symbols from *animals, mountains, seas, and rivers*, and applied them in their vocabularies, agreeably

(c) Galloway on the Prophetic or Anticipated History of the Church of Rome, vol. ii. p. 24—26.

(d) *Signs of the Times*, page 17, et seq.

to those magnitudes, qualities, and affinities, which they wanted to express. Thus a *lion*, which was admitted by all to be the monarch of the forest, or an *eagle*, which held dominion among the feathered tribe, became, for the same reason, a symbol of an earthly king, or ruling potentate; while the *scorpion*, on account of his poison and constant readiness to inflict a wound, became an appropriate similitude of an inveterate and deadly enemy. At the same time, as all collective bodies surveyed in their collective capacities, may be considered as *one whole*, a wild and ravenous beast, in connection with its terrible actions, was considered as bearing a striking resemblance to a tyrannical and oppressive kingdom; and was deemed sufficiently expressive, when they had no occasion to descend to minute particulars.

A *third species* of symbols was derived from the arts, the customs, or contrivances of men. Thus the attire in which an individual was presumed to be arrayed, became descriptive of his condition in life in the estimation of men, and sometimes even embodied those virtues or vices which were presumed to predominate in the soul. It was with an eye to this mode of expression, that a *helmet* became emblematical of defence, a *girdle* of strength, and a *breast-plate* of that fortitude which knew no fear, even in the face of danger.

A *fourth sort* of symbols is compounded of simple ones, and may be explained by the same rule as the former. Thus a *lion*, when simply considered, is the symbol of a king; but if, in the description, *claws*, *great teeth*, or other instruments of destruction peculiar to that beast, be added, it instantly loses the leading features of the former symbol, and becomes a striking representative of a tyrant, or of his tyranny. If to this figure we find the *addition of wings*, rapid conquests are thereby denoted, or, perhaps, some extraordinary exaltation. If, instead of wings, we find the addition of *horns*, the symbol becomes more complex, and the intricacy increases in proportion to their number. For as these horns are all presumed to originate in one beast, they may be considered as secretly connected; while, from their distinct manner of existence, it is evident that they have a local independence in point of dominion, however much their actions, influenced by one common principle, may have originated in the same source, and may be tinged with the same common shade.

These are symbols which cannot be considered as exclusively confined to any one particular age or country: with the variation of diminutive circumstances, they seem common to all nations. An advancement in the scale of civilization has tended to refine, but not to destroy these modes of communication. *Rhetoric* is indebted to it for its noblest figures; and, in fact, without it, comparative illustration would be nearly banished from the earth. It is to this mode of expression, that *heraldry* stands indebted for its existence; and even *astronomy* retains to the present moment those arbitrary figures which distinguish the celestial signs.

There are, however, some symbols which may be considered as peculiar to the sacred writings, because they are taken from the history, the rites, and customs, which had been established among the Jews, and which were not to be found in any other nation upon the earth. Thus *Egypt* and *Babylon*, into which their ancestors had been carried, and in which they had been held in captivity, and had seen

the idolatrous rites practised therein, were viewed by all their posterity as appropriate symbols to represent an imperious, oppressive, and idolatrous nation; while the name of Jerusalem, and of Zion, in which the worship of God had been established, stood on the opposite side, as proper emblems to represent the church under all the divine dispensations. At the same time, as the temple was that particular place in which they assembled to perform their worship, it became a proper symbol to characterize all those who openly professed an attachment to the living God. As this temple then stood for the *visible* or *professing church*, in like manner as *Jerusalem* and *Zion* stood for the true church of genuine believers; and as this language became general wherever the worship of God was established, so the shutting or closing of the gates of this temple evidently implied the suppression of public worship, and indicated, that the pious could no longer have public access to God. Hence it also follows as a natural consequence, that the opening of the temple or its gates, indicated the restoration of liberty of conscience, and implied the removal of those restraints which the shutting of the gates had imposed (e).

That this symbolical language abounds in the sacred writings, it is almost as needless to assert, as it would be useless to prove. *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, *Joel*, and, in fact, all the prophets, have delivered most of their predictions to the world in this manner. It has been revived again under the Gospel dispensation, in the epistles of *St. Paul* to the churches, in those of *St. Peter*, and that of *St. Jude*, but more particularly in the *Revelations* which were delivered to the beloved disciple. It is in this book, and in this language, that many past events have been foretold; in which the final overthrow of *the beast* and *the false prophet* has been predicted, and in which we are taught to behold the awful punishments which God will finally inflict upon the enemies of his faithful followers, by giving them *blood to drink, for they are worthy*.

SECTION II.

The prophecies true, because many have been fulfilled: instanced in the capture, overthrow, and desolation of Babylon. These facts demonstrate a prophetic spirit which could proceed only from God. Prophecies unfulfilled, cannot be always future: the event must overtake the prediction:—we have reason to believe that some are fulfilling in the present day. Antichrist defined: it includes the Papal, Mahometan, and Infidel powers. This Appendix includes chiefly an account of the first and the last.

THE language of prophecy is a point of but secondary consideration; it is the accomplishment of predictions in which we are more immediately interested: and in proportion as the evidence in favour of fact appears conspicuously to the mind, it yields to prophecy a rational assent, which no

(e) For a further elucidation of the symbolical language, see "Signs of the Times," p. 219—234. "New Exposition of the Revelation," by J. Mitchell, M.D. vol. i. Preface. Ditto, vol. ii. p. 6, 7. Galloway, vol. ii. p. 27, 28. Faber's "Dissertation on the Prophecies," vol. i. chap. ii. Ditto, vol. ii. p. 25, 26. Whitaker, Preface to his "Commentary on the Revelation." Kett's "History the Interpreter of Prophecy," vol. i. p. 29.

subordinate circumstances can shake. In addition to this, when we behold events coming forward to correspond with the predictions of former ages, we are furnished with a firm foundation on which we may rest our faith on what is future. A recollection of what is past, directs us how to appreciate what is future, and instructs us to wait with patience and resignation to the divine will, from a full conviction that the word of God shall not return to him void, but that, notwithstanding intervening obstacles, the divine purposes shall finally receive their ultimate accomplishment.

That ancient prophecy has been fulfilled, a few instances will be sufficient to convince us. The events and their predictions have such a striking coincidence, that even obstinacy itself must hesitate in refusing its assent.

If we turn to the thirteenth chapter of Isaiah, from the 19th to the 22d verse, we read the following words: *And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces; and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged.* Such is the plain but dreadful language of the prophet! And for the full accomplishment of this awful denunciation, probably, the following paragraph from a celebrated historian will be deemed sufficient evidence.

"About this time (*Anno 293*.) *Seleucus* built *Seleucia* on the *Tigris*, at the distance of forty miles from *Babylon*. It was placed on the western side of that river, over against the place where *Bagdad* now stands on the eastern side, which soon grew to be a populous city. For *Pliny* tells us, that it had in it 600,000 inhabitants. For, by reason of the breaking down of the banks of the *Euphrates*, the country near *Babylon* being drowned, and the branch of that river which passed through the midst of the city being shallow and rendered unnavigable, made the situation of *Babylon* by this time so very inconvenient, that, when the new city was built, it soon drained the other of all its inhabitants. For it being situated much more commodiously, and by the founder made the metropolis of all the provinces of his empire beyond the *Euphrates*, and the place of his residence whenever he came into these parts, the *Babylonians* in great numbers left their old habitations, and flocked to *Seleucia*. And besides, *Seleucus* having called this city by his own name, and designed it for an eminent monument thereof in after-ages, gave it many privileges above the other cities of the East, the better to make it answer this purpose; and these were a farther invitation to the *Babylonians* to transplant themselves to it. And by these means, in a short time after the building of *Seleucia*, *Babylon* became wholly desolated, so that nothing was left remaining of it but its walls. And therefore *Pliny* tells us, 'That it was exhausted of its inhabitants, and brought to desolation by the neighbourhood of *Seleucia* on the *Tigris*, which *Seleucus Nicator* built there on purpose for this end.' And *Strabo* saith the same; as doth also *Pausanias* in his *Arcadics*, where he tells us,

" 'That *Babylon*, once the greatest city that the sun ever saw, had in his time (about the middle of the second century,) nothing left but the walls.' These remained long after. For the space within being made a park by the *Parthian kings*, for the keeping of wild beasts in it for their hunting, the walls were kept up to serve for a fence to the inclosure; and in this state it was in *Jerome's* time, who lived in the fourth century. For he tells us, 'That, excepting the walls, which were repaired for the inclosing of wild beasts that were kept there, all within was desolation;' and in another place, 'That *Babylon* was nothing else, in his time, but a chace for wild beasts, kept within the compass of its ancient walls, for the hunting of the king,' that is, of *Persia*. For, after the *Parthians*, there reigned in *Jerome's* time, over those countries, a race of *Persian kings*, and continued there to the time of the *Saracen* empire, by which they were extinguished.

"When or how these walls became demolished, is nowhere said, no writer for several hundreds of years after *Jerome's* time speaking any more of this place. The first after him that makes mention of it is *Benjamin*, a Jew of *Tudela* in *Navarre*, who, in his Itinerary, which he wrote near 600 years since, (for he died in the year of our Lord 1173,) tells us, that he was upon the place where the old city formerly stood, and found it then wholly desolated and destroyed: only he saith, 'some ruins of *Nebuchadnezzar's* palace were then still remaining, but men were afraid to go near them, by reason of the many serpents and scorpions that were then in the place.' *Texeira*, a Portuguese, in the description of his travels from *India* to *Italy*, tells, 'That there was nothing then remaining of this old and famous city, but only some few footsteps of it; and that there was no place in all that country less frequented than that tract of ground whereon it formerly stood.' And *Rosvolf*, a German traveller, who passed that way in the year of our Lord 1574, tells us the same thing. His words are as followeth: 'The village of *Elugo* lieth on the place where formerly old *Babylon*, the metropolis of *Chaldea*, did stand. The harbour lieth a quarter of a league off, whereunto those use to go that intend to travel by land to the famous city of *Bagdad*, which is situated farther to the east, on the river *Tigris*, at a day and a half's distance. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled; and so bare that I should have doubted very much, whether this potent and powerful city (which once was the most famous one in the world, situated in the pleasant and fruitful country of *Shinar*), did stand there, if I should not have known it by its situation, and several ancient and delicate antiquities, that still are standing hereabout in great desolation. First, by the old bridge, which was laid over the *Euphrates*, whereof there are some pieces and arches still remaining, built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable. Just before the village of *Elugo*, is the hill whereon the castle did stand, in a plain, whereon you may still see some ruins of the fortification, which is quite demolished and uninhabited. Behind it, and pretty near to it, did stand the tower of *Babylon*. This we see still, and it is half a league in diameter, but is so mightily ruined and low, and so full of venomous reptiles, that have bored holes through it, that one may not come near it within half a mile,

a mile *, but only in two months in the winter, when they "come not out of their holes. Among these reptiles, "there are some which, in the Persian language, are called "eglo by the inhabitants, that are very poisonous: they "are bigger than our lizards." These ruins mentioned by "Rowolf, are, no doubt, the same which Benjamin of Tudela saith were the ruins of the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, "that is, the old palace, which stood on the eastern side "of the river; for it is of that only that Benjamin and "Rowolf speak. Of the ruins of Babylon on the western "side, where the new palace stood, which Nebuchadnezzar himself built, neither of them takes any notice (f)".

All these circumstances put together clearly shew, that the words which we have already quoted from the prophet, have been fulfilled with a dreadful exactness. Even the minutest circumstances of the prophecy have received their literal accomplishment, so that scarcely a vestige remains in the present day, to gratify the eye of curiosity, or to reward the traveller for his toils. The fragments which have escaped the wrecks of time, are but barely sufficient to identify this seat of desolation, and to remind the spectator of the awful judgments of God.

There is another prophecy relating to the fate of Babylon, which in the order of time, as to its accomplishment, precedes that which we have just surveyed. But since we have no design, in these instances, to enter into an historical detail, we have only to note the prediction in connection with its accomplishment. They are sufficient to convince us that the almighty Governor of the universe superintends the affairs of mortals;—that he breaks down and builds up;—that he giveth the kingdoms of the earth to whomsoever he will;—and that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

In Jeremiah (li. 37—42.) we have the following prophecy: *And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions; they shall yell as lions' whelps. In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the Lord. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he-goats. How is SHESHACK taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitudes of the waves thereof.*

Cyrus, by whom this prophecy received its fulfilment, was born, according to Prideaux and Calmet, about 602 years before Christ, and became the monarch of Persia when he was about 43 years of age: consequently he could not have ascended the throne till nearly one hundred years after this prophecy had been delivered.

Pursuing those victories which invariably attended his arms, we are told by the historian, that, after the taking of Sardis, Cyrus continued some time in Lesser Asia, during which he subdued all the nations which inhabited the country from the Euphrates to the Egean sea. Having ac-

complished his work in these regions, he marched into Syria and Arabia, pursuing the same mode of conduct, and with the same successes which had heretofore accompanied his exertions. And, having established his dominion over these conquered territories, he re-entered Assyria, and directed his march immediately towards Babylon. This happened in the ninth year after he had conquered Sardis, and in the sixteenth of the reign of Belshazzar king of Babylon.

The conquest of this extraordinary city, however, he found to be a work of much more difficulty than he had been led to imagine *. To subdue it by a regular siege

was

* The city of Babylon, according to Herodotus, was perfectly square, being one hundred and twenty furlongs every way, that is to say, fifteen miles, or five leagues square; and its whole circuit four hundred and eighty furlongs, or twenty leagues. The walls of it were built with large brick cemented with bitumen, a thick glutinous substance which issued from the earth in that neighbourhood: it was a cement much stronger than lime, and it acquired additional strength in proportion to its being exposed to the action of the elements.

The walls of the city thus built with brick, and cemented with bitumen, were eighty-seven feet in thickness, three hundred and fifty in height, and four hundred and eighty furlongs in circumference. "They who allow them (says Calmet,) to be no more than fifty cubits high, speak of them according to the condition they were in after Darius the son of Hystaspes had commanded them to be demolished to the height we are mentioning, as a punishment for the rebellion of the Babylonians."

This astonishing wall, which encompassed the city, was itself encircled with a deep ditch, that was filled with water, and walled up with brickwork on both sides. Of this ditch we may form some adequate conception from this circumstance:—it was a cavity that yielded all the clay out of which the bricks were made that formed the enormous walls of which we have already spoken.

To this city there were no less than one hundred gates, and as many bridges across the ditch which encircled all. And, of course, as the city was square, twenty-five gates and bridges lay on each of the four sides. All these gates, with the posts and upper parts of the entrances, were of massy brass. "Between every two of these gates, (says Calmet,) at particular distances, there were three towers, and three between each angle of this great square: the towers were raised ten feet higher than the walls, which is to be understood of those places only where they were necessary; for the city, being encompassed in several places with marshes, which were always full of water, and defended the approach to it, there was no need of towers on those sides; so that their number did not consist of above two hundred and fifty; whereas, if they had been carried on throughout, there must have been many more of them."

The streets, which were fifty in number, cut each other at right angles. They all led from one side of the city to the other; and consequently, being parallel with the walls, each street was fifteen miles in length. They were one hundred and fifty-one feet in width, and, being directed in straight lines, they were so laid out, that every gate opened immediately into one of them. "There were four other streets, which were adorned with houses only on one side, having the ramparts on the other. These made the whole compass of the city along the walls, and were each two hundred feet wide."

The other fifty streets crossing each other at right angles, formed six hundred and seventy-six squares, each of which having four furlongs and a half on each side, covered an extent of ground two miles and a quarter in circumference. The fronts of these squares were filled up with houses, some three, and some four stories high, and these were decorated with all the

[b 2]

embellish-

* Calmet, quoting the same passage, says, "half a league."
(f) Prideaux's Connection, vol. ii. p. 586—588. For a further account of this remarkable prophecy, see this Commentary on the above passage of Isaiah, and on Rev. ch. xviii. See also Calmet on the article Babylon, and Rollin's Ancient History, vol. ii.

was almost impossible, because the walls were not only high, but actually impregnable. The inhabitants, secure within their walls, supplied with a prodigious quantity of stores of every kind, and furnished with provisions sufficient to support them for twenty years, derided Cyrus from their battlements, for making an attempt which they were confident must end in his own disgrace. The invaders, however, were not to be thus intimidated; Cyrus encouraged his men to persevere in their arduous undertaking; and they began with drawing a line of circumvallation round the city, making the ditch both broad and deep. In the meanwhile, with the assistance of palm trees, which

embellishments of taste and art; while the interior parts of the squares were occupied with conveniences, courts, and gardens.

This amazing city was divided into two equal parts by the river Euphrates, which had a free passage through the midst of it, from north to south. Across this river, a bridge of admirable construction was erected, to maintain a communication between the two parts of the city. This bridge was one hundred and twenty-five paces in length, supported by arches; and about thirty feet in breadth. At the two extremities were erected two palaces: that on the east side was called the old, and that on the west, from the period when it was constructed, was denominated the new. The old palace, on the eastern side of the river, occupied no less than four of the squares of which we have spoken; while that on the western side engrossed no less than nine. The former, according to *Diodorus*, was thirty furlongs in circumference, and the latter not less than sixty.

To fortify the city against all possible assaults, *Nitocris*, the mother of *Belshazzar*, who managed the public affairs of the kingdom, while her infamous son devoted himself to every species of low dissipation and debauchery, caused the works which *Nebuchadnezzar* had left unfinished, to be completed with all possible dispatch. Those which required most attention, were the banks of the Euphrates as it passed through the city. To accomplish this, she caused the river, during a season, to be turned into another direction; and, availing herself of the favourable opportunity during the absence of the water, she not only walled up the banks of the river on each side, but sunk beneath its native bed a *sub-terranean* or *sub-aquatic* vault or passage; and by this means established an uninterrupted communication between the old palace and the new. This passage was twelve feet in height, and fifteen in breadth. Above, it was covered with a strong arch, upon which was spread a layer of bitumen, not less than six feet in thickness. Upon this bitumen, which petrifies, and hardens into stone with the water, she turned in the river, while the vault or gallery which lay beneath, was not only preserved in a state of security, but kept perfectly dry. The use for which this secret passage was intended, is obvious. As the palaces were on opposite sides of the river, through the establishment of this communication they were capable of affording relief to each other, in case of any unforeseen disaster. And, even if an enemy should obtain a conquest of the one, the fugitives would still be able to find an asylum in the other. These precautions were however of no avail. The city was taken by surprise, as may be seen above; and it was forgotten in the moment of confusion, that they had provided themselves with such a mode of retreat.

Of the far-famed tower of Babel, the top of which was designed to reach to heaven, and the fame of which has actually reached to the ends of the earth, no account needs be given. Civilized nations have been uniformly taught to consider it as one of the wonders of the world.

Of the hanging gardens, for which Babylon is scarcely less known to fame than for her wonderful tower, it may not be amiss to speak a few words. These gardens extended over an area of four hundred feet square. They were composed of several

grew in the vicinity to the height of one hundred feet, he erected towers somewhat higher than the walls, designing if possible to carry the city by storm. Finding, however, this mode of conquest extremely hazardous, he abandoned the design, and adopted a resolution to starve the inhabitants into a surrender. Two years were wasted in this fruitless attempt; for, at the end of that time, success appeared to be at as great a distance as ever, which induced him to have recourse to stratagem.

It was well known to Cyrus, that the day was fast approaching, in which the Babylonians held a sumptuous feast, and probably celebrated the anniversary of their god-

large terraces rising in regular succession behind one another; so that the highest was raised to the height of three hundred and fifty feet, an elevation that equalled the wall which inclosed the city. From one of these terraces to another, the visitant ascended by steps which were ten feet wide, till he obtained the full elevation, and found himself in a most romantic region, which afforded him a commanding prospect, at once enchanting to the eye, and regaling to every sense.

This astonishing structure was supported by enormous vaults built one upon another, in such a manner, that every separate part should add to the general strength of all. And to prevent even the possibility of a failure, the whole edifice was inclosed with a strong wall, no less than twenty-two feet thick. When raised to its proper height, the entire fabric was covered over with large flat stones sixteen feet long and four feet wide. Over these flat stones they then placed a thick layer of bitumen and rushes, as a security against the inclemency of the weather; and upon this they laid two rows of brick, strongly cemented together; after which the whole was covered in a compact manner with large plates of lead. Such were the precautions which the architects took to prevent the arches below from receiving any injury from the descending moisture.

Upon this massy pile they heaped an enormous quantity of earth, inasmuch that the largest trees might take root; and, by spreading their branches to the sun, exhibit to the astonished spectators below, the strange appearance of a pendent forest waving in the sky. On the most elevated of these terraces, by means of an aqueduct, a constant supply of water was drawn from the river Euphrates, which they distributed through every part of the garden. By these means shrubs and flowers of the most exquisite beauty attained a state of unexampled perfection: in short, it became a region of astonishment and delight.

"It has been affirmed, (says Calmet,) that *Nebuchadnezzar* undertook this wonderful edifice out of complaisance to his wife *Amytis*, the daughter of *Alyages*, who, being a native of *Media*, retained strong inclinations for mountains and forests."

It is remarkable, however, that on these gardens the Scriptures are perfectly silent. They speak of *willows* being on the banks of the rivers, and of the captive Israelites *hanging their harps upon them in the midst thereof* (*Psalms*, cxxxvii. 2.); and *Isaiah* speaks of *Babylon* as a *valley of willows* (*ch. xv. 7.*); but in their captivity they had but little inclination either to survey the works of art, or perhaps to contemplate even the beauties of nature.

On the whole, when we reflect on the accumulated wonders which this city exhibited, and the wealth which must have been lavished to procure that perfection which we have but partially noticed, we cannot be surpris'd at finding *Babylon* denominated, *the glory of the kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldaeans' excellency, and the praise of the whole earth*. Well then might the downfall of this mighty city be a subject of prophecy, and well might its fate have been handed down to all generations*.

* For a further account of this city, its glory, and distresses, see Calmet: *origines*, *Babylon*, and *Cyrus*. See also *Prid. Conn.* and various others to whom they refer.

deſs *Sheſback*; and that, on this occaſion, they abandoned themſelves to every ſpecies of licentious mirth. This he thought a favourable moment to attempt the city by ſurpriſe. He accordingly, on the arrival of this fatal day, diſpatched a party of his men, to the head of a canal which opened a paſſage from the river Euphrates into an extenſive lake on the weſtern ſide of the city, directing them, that, at a given hour, they ſhould cut down the great dam, and turn the courſe of the river through the canal into this reſervoir. In the interim, collecting his forces together, he divided them into two parties, ſtationing one at the place where the river entered the city, and the other where the water iſſued from it, directing them, under the command of two leaders, *Gobrias* and *Gadates*, to enter the city that night by the channel of the river, as ſoon as they ſhould find it fordable; and that having effected an entrance they ſhould immediately march toward the palace, the great ſcene of drunkenneſs, diſſipation, impiety, and diſorder. And, on the arrival of that hour in which the great dam was to be broken down, he opened the head of thoſe deep trenches which he had previously made, turning into them the remaining part of the water which flowed in the river. By the mutual operation of theſe cauſes, about midnight, the bed of the river becoming nearly dry, his two parties found an eaſy entrance into the city. On their entrance, as if to facilitate their enterpriſe, they found thoſe enormous gates which led to the river, and which on all other occaſions had been invariably ſhut, lying perfectly open; while the inſatuated inhabitants, relying upon the protection of their goddeſs *Sheſback*, whoſe orgies they were then celebrating, were abandoning themſelves to every ſpecies of abomination.

It was on this awful night, we are told by Daniel, (chap. v. 1—4.) that *Belſhazzar the king made a great feaſt to a thouſand of his lords, and drank wine before the thouſand. Belſhazzar, while he taſted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and ſilver veſſels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jeruſalem, that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein. Then they brought the golden veſſels that were taken out of the temple of the houſe of God, which was at Jeruſalem; and the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them. They drank wine, and praized the gods of gold, and of ſilver, of braſs, of iron, of wood, and of ſtone.*

While theſe iniquitous libations were pouring out, the troops of Cyrus, within the city, were directing their march toward the palace. Agreeably to the declaration of *Iſaiah*, (chap. xlv. 1, 2.) *The two-leaved gates were opened before him, and the gates were not ſhut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places ſtraight: I will break in pieces the gates of braſs, and cut in ſunder the bars of iron.* Both parties, having met near the palace, concentrated their forces, and, ſeizing the guards by ſurpriſe, prepared to carry this citadel by aſſault. But the way was already opened before them; the propheſies reſpecting Babylon were now to receive their accompliſhment; the power of the Almighty appeared conſpicuouſly in their behalf, *in going before them, in breaking in ſunder the gates of braſs, in making the inhabitants of Babylon roar together like lions, in making their feaſts in their heat, and, in taking Sheſback, and making them drunken, that they might rejoice, and ſleep a perpetual ſleep, and not wake.*

It was in this tremendous moment of internal riot and debauchery, and of external deſtroyation already within

their gates, but of which *Belſhazzar* and his companions were perfectly unconſcious, while polluting the ſacred veſſels of the temple with their impious rites, that there came forth amidſt this horde of noble drunkards, *Fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over againſt the candleſtick, upon the pleaſter of the wall of the king's palace; and the king ſaw the part of the hand that wrote.* The conſternation which ſuch a phænomenon muſt have occaſioned, it is difficult even to conceive, and totally impoſſible to deſcribe. In conſequence of it, *the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, ſo that the joints of his loins were looſed, and his knees ſmote one againſt another.* (Dan. v.)

On this alarming occaſion, the aſtologers, the ſoothſayers, the Chaldeans, and the wiſe men, were inſtantly ſummoned, to read and interpret what this myſterious hand had legibly written in an unknown character. But the application was made in vain. The conſternation ſoon drew *Nitocris*, the queen-mother, to the banqueting-houſe, who, from her previous knowledge of captive *Daniel*, recommended him to the king's notice as a perſon moſt likely to read the writing, and to make known to the terrified monarch the interpretation of theſe ominous but unknown characters, which were viſible upon the wall (g).

Daniel, like a faithful ſervant of the living God, on hearing the occaſion of this unexpected ſummons, reproved the abandoned monarch with his prodigality, impiety, and vices, and immediately proceeded to decypher the characters which had occaſioned the alarm. *This is the interpretation of the thing. God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finiſhed it. Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Perſians.* (Dan. v.)

The event followed cloſely upon the prediction, for the chapter concludes with the record of this awful fact: *In that night was Belſhazzar the king of the Chaldeans ſlain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threeſcore and two years old.* History corroborates this dreadful truth: for, according to *Prideaux*, who follows *Herodotus*, the ſlaughter of the guards was immediately followed by an attack upon the palace. Scarcely could the king, and his companions in iniquity, have recovered from the aſtoniſhment which Daniel's interpretation muſt have given, before they found themſelves aſſaulted by thoſe invading foes whom they had been accuſtomed to deſpiſe. The noiſe without the palace walls, ſoon awakened the attention of thoſe within them; and, on their opening the gates to inquire into the occaſion of the diſturbance, the ſoldiers of Cyrus entered without moleſtation, and verified the words which Daniel had but juſt ſpoken. “Belſhazzar they found with his drawn ſword, at the head of thoſe who were at hand to aſſiſt him.” But reſiſtance was ineffectual. He was ſlain while valiantly fighting for his life, together with thoſe who were with him; and with him ended the Babyloniſh empire.

The concluding paſſage which we have quoted from Daniel, expreſſly ſays, that *Darius the Median took the kingdom*; and this, according to *Prideaux*, actually was the

(g) “The reaſon why none of the wiſe men of Babylon were able to read the writing, was becauſe the words were written in the old Hebrew characters, now called the Samaritan, with which the Babylonians were totally unacquainted.” (See *Prid. Conn.* vol. i p. 127.)

case. "For Cyrus, so long as his uncle Darius lived, allowed him a joint title with himself in the empire, although it was all gained by his own valour, and, out of deference to him, yielded him the first place of honour in it. But the whole power of the army, and the chief conduct of all affairs, being still in his hands, he only was looked on as the supreme governor of the empire which he had erected; and therefore there is no notice at all taken of Darius in the canon of *Ptolemy*; but, immediately after the death of *Belshazzar* (who is there called *Nabonadius*), Cyrus is placed as the next successor, as in truth and reality he was; the other having no more than the name and the shadow of sovereignty, excepting only in *Media*, which was his own proper dominion." (b)

In the passage which we have quoted from *Jeremiah*, we read as follows: *The sea is come up upon Babylon: she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof* (*Jer. li. 42.*). This also, on the present occasion, received nearly a literal accomplishment. We have already noticed, that, on the night in which the troops of *Cyrus* entered the city, he detached a party of his men to cut down a dam, by means of which the course of the water was directed through a canal into an adjacent lake. After the conquest of the city, no measures were taken, either by the conquerors or the vanquished, to repair the breach. In consequence of this negligence, all the country on that side became completely inundated; and the current being permitted to run in this channel a considerable time, so far widened the breach, that it became at length irreparable, without an expence nearly as enormous as that which the building of the bank first occasioned. The consequence was, that by this means a whole province was lost to *Babylon*. And the little current which ran through the city, in process of time, became so small and so shallow, that all navigation was nearly at an end. This contributed not a little to the future ruin of the place.

Alexander indeed, intending to make *Babylon* the metropolis of his empire, endeavoured to remedy the evil which the inundation had occasioned, and began accordingly with forming a new bank on all the western side. But *Babylon* had been doomed to perish. He carried on his work about the space of four miles; when, finding some unexpected difficulties arising from the nature of the soil, his labours were suspended. Obstacle succeeded to obstacle, till his death put an end to this and all his other designs, and consigned *Babylon*, according to the destinies of heaven, to be an habitation for wild beasts and serpents. The swamps and bogs which thus began to gather round about her, were the presages of those approaching days, when dragons should howl in her pleasant palaces, and she should be blotted from the list of empires, to be trodden no more by the foot of man.

Thus has this prophecy also been awfully fulfilled with dreadful minuteness. Not all the precautions which had been taken by the ancestors of *Belshazzar*, were sufficient to avert the fate of *Babylon*. On the contrary, its calamities overtook it agreeably to the prediction of the prophet, at a time when they were made drunken, to sleep a perpetual sleep, to wake no more. Thus was *Shefback* taken, and thus

was the praise of the whole earth surprised! And thus did *Babylon* become an astonishment among the nations! (i)

That the preceding sketches of history were in every respect conformable to the predictions which preceded them, will scarcely admit of any doubt. *Porphyry*, the avowed enemy of Christianity, admits the striking coincidence which these and other prophecies of *Daniel* exhibit to the world; and from that perfect agreement which he perceived between the predictions and the events, attempted to prove, that the accounts were written subsequent to the events. In fact, so full was he of this persuasion, that he directed his attention to the completion of the prophecies of *Daniel*, even in their minutest circumstances; flattering himself, that, in proportion as the correspondence could be traced, the prophetic authenticity of *Daniel's* narratives would become questionable, so that the whole would appear in no stronger light than a simple relation of past events.

But, unfortunately for that cause which he espoused, his exertions terminated in an issue exactly the reverse of what he intended. For, failing in his grand point of proving the posterior date of the writings ascribed to *Daniel*, his record of those events which he had traced with so much precision, not only deserted him, but became evidence against their author.

To demonstrate the coincidence between the predictions ascribed to *Daniel* and their various events, he had recourse to the best historians then extant; (k) such as *Callinicus*, *Sutorius*, *Diodorus Siculus*, *Hieronimus*, *Polybius*, *Psephodius*, *Claudius Theon*, and *Andronicus Alypius*; and from them made evident proof that all that is written in the eleventh chapter of *Daniel*, was truly, in every particular, acted and done in the order as there related; and, from this exactness of completion, endeavoured to infer the assertion before mentioned, namely, that these prophecies were written after the facts were done, and therefore are rather historical narratives relating to things past, than prophetic predictions foreshewing things afterward to come. But *Jerome* turns the argument upon him, and with infinitely more strength of reason infers, that this way of opposing these prophecies gives the greatest evidence of their truth, in that what the prophet foretold is hereby allowed to be so exactly fulfilled, that he seemed to unbelievers not to foretel things to come, but to relate things past.

What then shall we say to these things? Necessity compels us to yield our assent to facts which are thus attested by the accumulated evidence both of friends and foes. The whole stream of history concurs to establish the predictions of the prophets, while the records of chronology assign those dates which cover the attempts of *Porphyry* with disgrace.

These facts thus established, it demonstrably follows, that a genuine spirit of prophecy did exist. This spirit of prophecy must have been either natural, or supernatural, it being impossible that we can ascribe it to any other mode of being. In what light soever we view prophecy, it is self-

(i) For further particulars relative to this prophecy, see *Herodotus* and *Xenophon*, *Prileaux*, *Conn.* and *Calmet's* *DiB.* See also this *Commentary* on *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*, together with the various authors there referred to. See also *Rollin's* *Ancient Hist.* vol. ii.

(k) *Prid. Conn.* vol. iii. p. 216. et seq.

(b) *Pridcaux*, *Conn.* vol. i. p. 131.

evident, that a competent knowledge of those events which are about to be described, whether we consider them as past, present, or future, is absolutely necessary to enable any man to communicate to the world any adequate ideas respecting them. But as that which is future, has to the human mind no existence, it is utterly impossible that it should be able to communicate those ideas which are necessary to enable any man by his natural powers to look through a train of contingencies, to pronounce with certainty upon those events which are lodged in futurity. The plain consequence therefore is, that the human faculties, in point of *real knowledge*, are necessarily confined to things past, and to things present; futurity therefore belongs exclusively to God.

That God possesses this power of looking through contingencies with certainty, to those events which are future to us, arises from the nature of his existence. Nothing can be lodged in futurity to a Being to whom successive existence does not apply; and consequently, as successive duration must be inapplicable to God, futurity, with all its contingencies, and all its certainties, must stand unveiled before him.

As then this divine Being must possess every species of knowledge, and of power, in absolute perfection, it follows, that he must be capable of communicating a knowledge of what is future, to his intelligent creatures; and that he has done it, we appeal to those prophecies, which, by the mouths of *Isaiab, Jeremiah, Daniel, and St. John*, he has revealed to the world in plain language, without symbol, without hieroglyphic, and without figure. And that those predictions which these men professed to have received from God, were actually what they declared them to be, we appeal to those facts which we have given in detail;—facts which have accomplished the predictions that preceded them, even in their minutest circumstances.

That figurative language can be no objection to the argument before us, we may be fully convinced by applying to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and to the interpretation given of it by Daniel, and recorded in the second chapter of his prophecy: and that subsequent events actually corresponded with the interpretation given, the reader may be convinced by consulting this Commentary on that chapter, together with those authors to whose writings he is there referred. The fourth chapter of the same prophetic book furnishes us with an example still more striking, in which the prediction and the event are both recorded, as proofs of God's indignation against pride; so that, taken in all their circumstances, this prophecy and its accomplishment may be considered as the most extraordinary phenomenon that was ever recorded among the annals of mankind.

In chapter the seventh, we find a train of historical visions, which were represented to Daniel in *symbolical language*, and were then explained by *one of them that stood by*, and have since been verified by those facts which have been introduced into the Commentary on that and other chapters. These events have demonstrated, that the predictions which preceded them must have been genuine, and, consequently, that the language in which they were delivered, though perfectly figurative, contained no objection whatever to the certainty of the thing declared. For, since all our conceptions of things must de-

pend upon previous communication; and since that which is both future and contingent can afford none;—since God alone is both omniscient and omnipresent, and therefore alone capable of infinite comprehension, it follows, that a spirit of prophecy can only originate with him. And consequently, as this spirit of prophecy is visible in the writings of his servants the prophets, the genuineness of which has been demonstrated by subsequent events, the argument is conclusive, that this spirit must have been communicated by God, both in those express declarations which we have already noticed, and in that symbolical language which is to be found in the writings of Daniel, and which abounds in those of St. John in the book of Revelation.

An unshaken confidence in the sacred records, must unavoidably be accompanied with a firm belief, that many prophecies remain yet unfulfilled. And therefore this consequence can admit of no dispute, namely, that they must receive their fulfilment in some period or other. And whether the strange commotions which of late years have agitated the world, and laid empires in the dust; and the calamities which have lately overtaken the abettors of the apostate Papal church, may not be considered as judgments inflicted on her, as retaliations for that blood which she has wantonly shed; and consequently, whether the whole train of events may not be objects of prophetic observation, may be well worth an attentive consideration.

As all prophecy must, in some time or other, receive its accomplishment, it is not more improbable that some part may take place in our day, than in some future year, when the present generation of men shall be swept from the earth. The objections which we may frame on these grounds, will be of equal avail with our posterity, and, if permitted to operate in all their force, will militate against the accomplishment of predictions in every age of the world. Prophecies cannot point to a period which will be always future. The progressive movements of time must finally overtake the event; and to know with precision how far we have reason to believe that the present occurrences of the world may be considered as the accomplishment of prophecy, we must endeavour to trace the coincidence between them, to mark the iniquities which the prophetic spirit condemns, to notice the punishments which it has threatened to inflict, and to trace the analogy to the present day.

That the calamities which have been inflicted upon the church of Rome since the commencement of the French Revolution, have been many and dreadful, the facts themselves declare; but whether the atrocities that have been committed on these occasions, tremendous as they have been, are unprecedented in point of barbarity, when viewed as detached from all extraneous circumstances, may well admit of many doubts.

“ The annals of the Christian world, as well as those
 “ of the Pagan, discover to us little more than the history
 “ of ambition, superstition, and bloodshed. The career
 “ of the kingdom of Christ began in piety towards God,
 “ and in love and peace to all mankind. But systems of
 “ error, superstition, and oppression, soon interrupted its
 “ progress, and perverted its principles. Christianity has
 “ been converted into a system of commerce; and many
 “ of those called the ministers of Christ, have been a cor-
 “ poration

“poration of traders in the souls and liberties of mankind.

“Were I to attempt to define the character of *Antichrist*, I should say, *It is all that which opposes itself to the kingdom of Christ, whether it flows from the ecclesiastical or the civil powers.* Whatever in religion is destructive of union among Christians,—which leads to dominion over conscience,—to hinder free inquiry after truth, or any way oppresses and persecutes men for matters cognizable only by God,—is *antichristian*. Wherever there is intolerance; wherever we find conditions of communion among Christians imposed, which Christ hath not clearly enjoined; wherever creeds and modes of worship are enforced by human power, and men are made to forfeit any of their civil rights, or are stigmatized on these accounts, there is that spirit which is not of God. Wherever one Christian, or sect of Christians, assumes the seat of authority and judgment in the church of Christ, whether they call for fire to destroy those who dissent from them, or only exclude them from their communion and affection, there is a portion of that spirit of Antichrist, which has so long opposed itself to the benign principles of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace,—which has been the cause of so many evils to humanity, and the occasion of making the inconsiderate esteem the amiable religion of Jesus as a source of mischief instead of benevolence. Alas, how much of this spirit remains among us all! How few have learned, that, in *Jesus Christ circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.* (l)

To this enlarged definition of Antichrist St. John, in his Epistles, seems to have given full countenance, in the following words. *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time (m). Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son (n). And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God: And this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world (o). For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist.* (p)

From these, and multitudes of passages similar to these which we have quoted, it must be evident to the most superficial reader of the prophetic parts both of the Old Testament and the New, that there are several strong intimations, and several direct and express predictions, concerning a certain power, or office, or person, or succession of persons, that should become visible in the world, and either arrogate to themselves the place and office of Christ, or exercise a direct enmity and opposition to him and his religion. Such then is the *Antichrist*, or such are the many *Antichrists*, spoken of in the New Testament. The charac-

ters and properties of these powers or persons; the dignity which they were to assume; the means by which they were to recommend themselves to the notice of mankind; the arts which they were deceitfully and basely to practice; and the persecutions they were to carry on in their various departments, to oppress the true followers of Jesus Christ, and obtain adherents to their abominations, are all clearly represented in various passages of Scripture.

“The term *Antichrist* is an epithet generally meaning any power or person acting in any respect in opposition to Christ and his doctrines. Its particular meaning is to be collected from those passages of Scripture in which it occurs. It may either signify one who assumes the place and office of Christ, or one who maintains a direct enmity and opposition to him. (q)

It is with these views before him, of the extensive nature and dominion of Antichrist, that the author last quoted concludes, and probably with much propriety, that the *Papal*, the *Mahometan*, and *Infidel powers* of the present day, are only different branches or forms of Antichrist; and that all are expressly foretold in Scripture, as being permitted to arise in different ages of the world, for the purposes of punishment to the guilty, and for the trial of the church of Christ. And hence, from the various descriptions given in Scripture, when taken in the aggregate, he concludes as follows: “That it clearly appears, that a power, sometimes represented as *the little horn, the man of sin, the Antichrist, the beast, the star fallen from heaven, the harlot, the false prophet, the dragon*, or, as the operation of false teachers, was to be expected to arise in the Christian world, to persecute, oppress, and delude the disciples of Christ, corrupt the doctrines of the primitive church, enact new laws, teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and establish its detestable dominion over the minds and consciences of mankind.” (r)

As, then, “Antichrist,” as Calmet observes, “is the name of that man of sin who is to precede the second coming of our Saviour, and who is represented in the Fathers as *the epitome of every thing that is most impious, cruel, and abominable*,” we cannot but include, as Mr. Kett has done, the *Papal*, the *Mahometan*, and the *Infidel powers* in our definition, though we shall confine our future observations to the *first* and *last* of these branches.

With this definition of Antichrist before us, that it is *an epitome of every thing that is most cruel, impious, and abominable*, let us turn our attention to the *Papal* and *Infidel powers*, and see how far they answer the description here given of that Antichrist which should come into the world. The *Papal* power, having had a prior existence, has a prior claim upon us; of this therefore we will take a brief survey in four distinct lights, and arrange our observations under the following heads; namely, her *superstition and idolatry*; her *apostacy*; her *blasphemy and arrogance*; and, finally, her *cruelty*.

(q) See Kett's Hist. Interp. of Pro. vol. i page 277; also Hurd's Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies, as cited by him.

(r) See Kett, vol. i. p. 294. See also Calmet on the word Antichrist, and Prid. Conn. vol. iii. p. 215—219.

(l) Bicheno, Signs of the Times, p. 5.

(m) 1 John, ii. 18.

(n) 1 John, ii. 22.

(o) Chap. iv. 3. (p) 2 John, 7. See also 2 Theff. ii. 1—10. 1 Tim. iv. 1—3. 2 Tim. iii. 1—5. 9. 13. iv. 3, 4. Rev. xiii. xviii. 1—8. xix. 2 Pet. ii. iii. and Jude.

SECTION III.

Papal Antichrist considered under four distinct heads; namely, superstition and idolatry; apostacy; blasphemy and arrogance; cruelty.

LET us turn our attention, first, to the origin and progress of *superstition and idolatry.*

“ The Christians of the West were the descendants of those barbarians who had subdued that part of the Roman empire under the first four trumpets. The last mention of them before this, was when the *Heruli*, under *Odoacer*, subdued Italy, and set up their kingdom in the year 476, at which time the fourth trumpet sounded.

“ Though these barbarians had been converted to Christianity long before that event, yet such was their propensity to their ancient heathenish and idolatrous rites and customs, that all these fooleries were adopted under the name of Christianity. Instead of worshipping their demons, or great men, who, they supposed, were translated after death among the gods, they worshipped the apostles, and added to their number many primitive saints, both *male and female*. They called them *divi*, or *diva*; such as *divus Peter*, *divus Paulus*, *diva Maria*, the mother of God, &c. They made images of them of gold, and silver, and brass, and wood, and stone, according to the several ranks of those by whom they were to be worshipped. The great and wealthy had gold, and silver, and brass; the meaner and poorer ranks had wood and stone.

“ Though these images had neither sense nor motion, they vainly persuaded themselves, as their heathen ancestors had imagined before, that these saints, who, they supposed, had received the divine nature, presided over and dwelt in those images. They bowed down before them, and paid to them divine adoration, in violation of the first table of the holy law of God. They continued to indulge the same bloody and cruel spirit of murder which they had indulged when professed heathens; they ran to war and devastation upon the slightest occasions; they practised sorceries, and attempted to destroy one another by enchantments and poisonings, and believed in false miracles; they attributed to pieces of wood, to supposed relics of saints, whether buttons, bones, or rags, a divine and protecting influence: they had recourse to their priests (who were become like the heathen magicians), for spells to drive away unclean spirits, for the cure of diseases, for amulets to protect them from danger, instead of making an application to the living God, who, through Jesus Christ, is the Saviour and protector of all mankind. They committed fornication with impunity, which, in the idiom of Scripture, comprehends adultery; by which the principal ties of civil society were always weakened, and sometimes burst asunder: robbery, and the invasion of their neighbour's property, they frequently indulged in the commission of, thus breaking all the commands of the second table.” (s)

“ If (says Mr. Gibbon,) in the beginning of the fifth

“ century, Tertullian or Lactantius had been suddenly raised from the dead, to assist at the festival of some popular saint or martyr, they would have gazed with astonishment and indignation on the profane spectacle which had succeeded to the pure and spiritual worship of a Christian congregation. As soon as the doors of the church were thrown open, they must have been offended with the smoke of incense, the perfume of flowers, the glare of lamps and tapers, which diffused at noon-day a gawdy, superfluous, and, in their opinion, sacrilegious light: if they approached the balustrade of the altar, they made their way through the prostrate crowd, consisting for the most part of strangers and pilgrims who resorted to the city on the vigil of the feast, and who already felt the strong intoxication of fanaticism, perhaps of wine: their devout kisses were imprinted on the walls and pavement of the sacred edifice; and their fervent prayers were directed, whatever might be the language of their church, to the bones, the blood, or the ashes of the saints, which were usually concealed by a linen or silken veil from the eyes of the vulgar.

“ These Christians frequented the tombs of the martyrs, in the hope of obtaining from their powerful intercession, every sort of spiritual, but more especially of temporal blessings: they implored the preservation of their health, and the cure of their infirmities; the fruitfulness of their barren wives, or the safety and happiness of their children: whenever they undertook any distant or dangerous journey, they requested that the holy martyrs would be their guides and protectors on the road; and, if they returned without having experienced any misfortune, they again hastened to the tombs of the martyrs, to celebrate, with grateful thanksgivings, their obligations to the memory and relics of those heavenly patrons.

“ The walls were hung round with symbols of the favours which they had received; eyes, and hands, and feet, of gold and silver; and edifying pictures, which could not long escape the abuse of indiscreet or idolatrous devotion, represented the image, the attributes, and the miracles of the tutelar saint. The same uniform spirit of superstition might suggest, in the most distant ages and countries, the same methods of deceiving the credulity, and of affecting the senses of mankind; but it must be ingenuously confessed, that the ministers of the Catholic church imitated the profane model which they were impatient to destroy. The most respectable bishops had persuaded themselves, that the ignorant rustics would more cheerfully renounce the superstitions of Paganism, if they found some resemblance, some compensation, in the bosom of Christianity. The religion of Constantine achieved, in less than a century, the final conquest of the Roman empire; but the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals.” (Chap. xxviii.)

Such was the leprosy which afflicted the church in this early period; almost every limb of it appears to have been tainted with the dreadful contamination: political expediency became a plea with those who retained some remnants of their primitive integrity; so that corruption advanced onward without controul, and almost without opposition.

(s) See New Exposition of the Revelation by J. M. M.D. vol. i. p. 163. et seq.

position. Even *Augustine*, whose mind might have been supposed superior to these abominations, seems to have been, for some time, an abettor of the prevailing superstitions. They had excited the honest indignation of one *Fauftus*, who had presumed to declare, that "the orthodox were become like the Heathens; that they had metamorphosed the idols of the Pagans into martyrs, whom they had learned to worship with the same kind of invocation." This roused the unhallowed zeal of *Augustine*; and, kindling his anger against *Fauftus*, induced him to inveigh in bitter terms against his attempts to oppose the growing evil, or to stem the wild torrent of a barbarous age.

It is, however, but an act of justice to the memory of *Augustine* to state, that the movements of his mind soon took a different turn, inasmuch that he became a zealous opposer of those follies which he had previously taken occasion to defend. "Satan (says he,) has dispersed every where a crew of hypocrites under the habit of monks, gadding about every country: some sell the limbs of martyrs, (if they be martyrs,) and all seek, all exact, either the expences of a profitable poverty, or the reward of a pretended holiness."

"They powdered the bones and skulls of those (observes *Sardianus*, a Heathen,) who had been condemned by a legal course of justice; they made gods of them, prostrating themselves unto them; these they called martyrs; and some, deacons, and solicitors of their prayers with the gods."

Of the Egyptian monks, from whom the models for these unchristian and superstitious institutions were taken, Mr. Gibbon, in his 27th chapter, gives the following description: "The actions of a monk, his words and even his thoughts, were determined by an inflexible rule or a capricious superior; the slightest offences were corrected by disgrace or confinement, extraordinary fasts, or bloody flagellations; and disobedience, murmur, or delay, were ranked amongst the most heinous sins. A blind submission to the commands of the abbot, however absurd or even criminal they might seem, was the ruling principle and the first virtue of the Egyptian monks; and their patience was frequently exercised by the most extravagant trials. They were directed to remove an enormous rock, assiduously to water a barren staff that had been planted in the ground, till, at the end of three years, it should vegetate and blossom like a tree; to walk in a fiery furnace, or to cast their infants into a deep pond; and several of these saints or madmen have been immortalized in monastic story, by their thoughtless and fearless obedience."

Such was the early picture of this abominable communion, which styles itself *Catholic*, and hurls its impious anathemas upon all those that are not within its pale! We will now turn our thoughts to the succeeding age, and examine whether the clouds had begun to disperse, or had acquired a more impenetrable gloom.

It was upon the death of *Sabinianus*, that *Boniface* the third ascended the papal throne, in the beginning of the year 606; and one of his first acts, an act which took place this very year 606, was to procure from the tyrannical usurper *Phocas*, a grant of the title of *Universal Bishop, and Supreme Head of the Church*; the identical title, which

Gregory only a few years before, and that in the lifetime of *Boniface* himself, had stigmatized as a badge of the precursor of Antichrist*.

It is from this memorable year then that we are led to date the 1260 days, during which the two witnesses mentioned in Rev. xi. 3. were to prophesy in sackcloth: for when the Roman bishop was appointed supreme head of the church, and when all the churches, in consequence of that appointment, were placed under his spiritual dominion, the saints were most undoubtedly delivered into his hands. Prior to this time, his authority had only been acknowledged from motives of respect which had no connection with compulsory measures; but from this moment the face of things was changed. Henceforth his merciless tyranny armed the secular power against the faithful; so that with his unholy curses, and the bloody sword, they were hunted with implacable animosity to the extremities of the earth. We have no intention to insinuate that barbarity commenced immediately with this investiture or assumption of power; because that hung for a season in the rear, and was only exhibited as the front became more formidable. But certain it is, that, from this moment, the decisions of the Pontiff became as arbitrary as his dominion was extensive; both were without limits, and soon acted without controul.

Scarcely had one year elapsed from the establishment of this complicated empire, before that very idolatry which had been opposed by the zeal of *Serenus*, and censured, either by the policy or the piety of *Gregory*, was publicly authorized by the sovereign Pontiff. The ancient Paganism, formerly the general sink of all the abominations of Paganism, was now restored, though under a different name, to its original destination. "The mediatory demons of corrupted Christianity occupied the vacant places of the mediatory demons of the Gentiles; and instead of Jupiter and his kindred deities, the virgin mother of Christ, and all his martyred saints, received the blind adoration of the revived *ten horned beast*. The holy city was now trodden under foot by a new race of Gentiles, differing from their Pagan predecessors in name rather than in nature; and the witnesses began to prophesy in sackcloth during the long period of 1260 years; the same period, in short, as that during which the saints were given into the hand of *the little horn*." (†)

"As to the religious worship of the *pagan dragon* by the subjects of the *papal beast*, (says *Daubuz*,) it appears in the perfect conformity and substitution of the present Romish worship, to that of the ancient Pagans." This perfect conformity has been made out very plainly: First, because the ancient Romans and the new Roman Catholics have similar objects of worship, though with other names; and have adopted the same ceremonies. Both of these idolatrous communions had and have these five distinguish-

* This dissonance of opinion seems to have been an unfortunate slip between these partners in infallibility. How both *Boniface* and *Gregory* could be infallible under these circumstances, I must confess I have not ingenuity enough to discover:

—————"the bold impostor
Looks not more silly when the cheat's found out."

(†) See *Faber's Dissertation on the Prophecies*, vol. i. p. 220. et seq.

ing characteristics: *First*, a supreme God; *secondly*, angels or inferior gods; *thirdly*, human souls canonized or deified; *fourthly*, relics and monuments of dead men; and, *fifthly*, images.

Neither is the similarity more striking between the objects of adoration, than between the ceremonies which the ancient Pagans established, and which these new idolaters have adopted. *Holy water* has succeeded to the *aque lustrales* of their predecessors, and *patron saints* to the *lares* and *penates*; *canonization* to the *apotheosis*; the Pope to the supreme Pontiff; the *cardinals*, *monks*, and *nuns*, answer to the *flamines*, *auspices*, *augures*, and *vestales*; the *altars* to the like *pagan altars*; the *burning lamps*, to the *immortal fires* in the temples; *processions* to the *pomps*; *shrines* to the *chariots of the gods*; *rogations* to the *ambarvalia*; *carnivals* to the *Bacchanalia*; in short, the family likeness runs through almost every feature.

It is a circumstance still more surprising, that, in addition to the above coincidences, even the *identical idols*, with their appurtenances, which were worshipped when Paganism was triumphant in Rome, were at this moment worshipped by these degenerate professors of Christianity. At Rome, and in other places, the very idols and temples of the Heathens, by only changing the name, have been used in the corrupted church. "In the Pantheon, *Cybele* was succeeded by the *Virgin Mary*, and the Pagan deities by Christian martyrs. Idolatry still subsisted; but the objects of it were changed." (u) "Thus, at Rome, the statue of *Jupiter Capitolinus* is become a *St. Peter*, by only changing the *thunderbolt* into *two keys*. At Bourdeaux, an old statue of *Jupiter on an eagle* became a *Christ ascending into heaven*. Even the Pope himself neglects his title of Bishop, to take upon him that of *Pontifex Maximus*, which is merely Roman and Pagan." (v)

In those barbarous ages which we have just contemplated, in which tyranny and ignorance strengthened each other, it is not a matter of much astonishment that superstition and idolatry should prevail. The conduct of Popes and councils, from the infancy of the papal dominion, led the victims of its delusion to the verge of that vortex into which they have since been plunged. It has been the common style of councils, ever since that of Nice, which was held in 325, to publish their decrees under the title of things divinely inspired. The opinion of *Constantine*, concerning the decree of the 300 bishops who attended the above council, was, "That it ought to be looked upon as the sentence of God himself;" and likewise of all councils, that "whatsoever is decreed in the holy councils of bishops, the same is to be attributed to the will of God." Cardinal Julian, in his harangue to the deputies of the Bohemians in the council of Basil, tells them, "That the decrees of councils are not less to be believed than the Gospel; for it is they that give authority to the Scriptures." The 82d canon of the sixth council in Trullo, A. D. 707, ordains, "That the image of Christ, as the Lamb of God, should be received

"among the rest of the venerable images." The 73d canon of the same council ordains, that "adoration should be given to Christ by the figure of the cross; and, to shew their reverence to it, that it should never be engraven on the church-floor lest it should seem to be trampled under foot, or triumphed over."

These councils sometimes contradict, and even condemn each other. The fifth general council, called by *Justinian*, condemned the fourth general council of *Calcedon*: the council that was called by Charlemagne in the West overturned the second general council of Nice. It was thus that these *infallible impostors*, while professing themselves to be influenced by the Holy Spirit, involved themselves in the most obvious absurdities. They admitted the Almighty to be immutable, and that they were all actuated by his Spirit; while the decisions of their councils, contradicting one another, too plainly discovered to all, the daring impositions which they had practised upon mankind. (w)

Were we to trace the progress of this detestable usurpation and dominion, instead of running through a few pages of an appendix, we should fill a volume. It may be sufficient that we notice a few of those hasty strides, by which this apostate power erected its fatal engines over the bodies and souls of men.

We have already seen the character of this church so early as the year 476; and we have seen also, that in the year 606 Boniface obtained from Phocas that right of dominion for her, which she has since exercised, and through which the afflicted members of Christ's mystical body have been obliged to mourn. It was in the year 755, or 758, that Popery obtained a still more complete establishment; for, in one of those years, Pepin king of France, having taken the apostolic see under his immediate protection, conferred upon it the *exarchate of Ravenna*. In the year 774, the Pope obtained a greater part of the kingdom of Lombardy. In 787, the worship of images, which had been established in 626, was fully confirmed by the second council of Nice; and in 817, the emperor Louis finally confirmed the Pope in his Italian dominions. In the year 1074, Gregory the seventh strictly forbade the marriage of the clergy. In the year 1059, Robert Guiscard assumed the title of duke of *Apulia and Calabria*; and afterwards did homage to the Pope, as his superior lord, for those dominions which were afterwards erected into the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In the year 1137, the same feudal submission was made by Don Alonzo of Portugal. In 1213, John king of England declared his monarchy a fief of the apostolic see. Arragon, Austria, Sardinia, and Corsica, laboured under the same fatal delusion, and acknowledged themselves, in this dark period of ignorance and imposture, feudatories of the papal chair. But it was in the pontificate of Innocent the third, which lasted from 1198 to 1216, that the most daring steps were taken. He contrived to convert the *Saladine tenth*, which was a tax originally levied upon the whole Latin empire for the purpose of defraying the expences of the holy war, to the uses of the pious successors of St. Peter! "He may boast (says Gibbon,) of the two most signal triumphs over sense and humanity, the establishment of tran-

(u) See chronological table affixed to *Mojheim's Ecclesiastical History* by *Maclaine*.

(v) See *Whitaker's Commentary on the Revelation*, together with the various authors to whom he refers, p. 277, et seq.

(w) See *New Exposition on the Revelation* by J. M. M. D. vol. ii. p. 57, 58, together with the authors to whom he refers.

“substantiation, and the origin of the inquisition.” And, finally, to complete the aggrandizement of the church of Rome, in the period between 1274 and 1277, she bowed to reluctant submission the neck of Constantinople her ancient rival. (x)

Such were the progress and dominion of imposture, and such were the artifices which this degenerated communion adopted to enslave and terrify mankind! The strange effects which such principles, when established in the mind, must have had upon the conduct of the deluded throng, it may not be so difficult to imagine as to describe. A few instances may, nevertheless, be necessary to set this point in its proper light, before we entirely dismiss the subject.

“The first introduction (says Mr. Gibbon,) of a fym-
“holic worship was in the veneration of the cross and of
“relics. The saints and martyrs, whose intercession was
“implored, were seated on the right hand of God; but
“the gracious, and often supernatural favours, which, in
“the popular belief, were showered around their tombs,
“conveyed an unquestionable sanction of the devout pil-
“grims, who visited, and touched, and kissed these lifeless
“remains, the memorials of their merits and sufferings.
“*The scruples of reason or piety were silenced by the strong evi-
“dence of visions and miracles; and the pictures which speak,
“and move, and bleed, must be endowed with a divine energy,
“and may be considered as the proper objects of religious adora-
“tion!* Before the end of the sixth century, images made
“without hands were propagated in the camps and cities
“of the eastern empire: they were the objects of wor-
“ship, and the instruments of miracles; and in the hour
“of danger or tumult, their venerable presence could re-
“vive the hope, rekindle the courage, or repress the fury
“of the Roman legions.” (y)

Fortunately for these impostors, both the miracles which they performed, and the visions which they communicated, always spoke a language that either suited their conveniency, or aggrandized their power. Two points were carefully secured in all these performances,—a concealment of the fraud, and the delusion of the people.

“In a treatise (says Mr. Whitaker,) which I now have
“before me, published so lately as the year 1756, and
“entitled, ‘The miraculous Power of the Church of
“Christ asserted through each successive Century, from
“the Apostles down to the present Time,’ the writer
“quotes the declaration of a certain foundress, who dis-
“fused her lustre through the sixteenth century, in the
“following words: ‘She declares, that our Lord was
“many times pleased to let her see him in the sacred host.
“In particular, going one day to receive the blessed sacra-
“ment, she saw him in great majesty, in the hands of the
“priest, in the host which he was going to administer to
“her. At the same time she understood by a vision, that
“this same priest was in a state of sin, which troubled her
“exceedingly. But, says she, our Lord himself said unto
“me, that I should pray for him; and told me that he
“had suffered what I had seen, that I might under-
“stand what power and force the words of consecration

“have; and that God would not be kept from thence,
“how wicked soever the priest were who pronounced
“them.’” (a) This was a miracle of the most valuable
kind: the reasons for its preservation are so obvious, that
they need not be mentioned.

Of one John Francis Regis, a Jesuit, who had been cano-
nized, the same author writes as follows: “This blessed
“man was called to receive the crown of life on the last
“day of the year 1640; since which time numberless
“miracles have been wrought at his relics, even by the
“very dust of his tomb. This dust, it is added, is carried
“into all the provinces of the kingdom, and is carefully
“preserved as an universal remedy against all disorders.
“We congratulate ourselves (say twenty archbishops and
“bishops, in a letter to Pope Clement XI. on the same
“occasion,) that it hath pleased God to raise in our days
“an apostolical man among us, endued with the grace of
“miracles. *We are witnesses, that before the tomb of St.
“John Francis Regis, the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf
“hear, the dumb speak, &c.*” (b) We cannot but observe,
that, how efficacious soever the dust of Regis might have
been in some cases, it was incapable of curing all sorts of
blindness;—it could not cure that of these deluded de-
votees.

Magdalene Arnauld, a religious woman of St. Mary’s at
Puy, aged fifty, was reduced to the last extremity by a
dropsy joined with a palsy. When the physicians thought
she could not live half an hour, a relic of the above saint,
Regis, was put into her hands. After she had kissed it
with devotion, she said, “Great servant of God, my only
“desire in this world is to accomplish the adorable will
“of God. Obtain for me from God one year more, to
“make a holy preparation for death, and to satisfy the
“divine justice by penance.” Having said this, she ap-
plied the relic to her stomach: that moment she found
herself cured; the monstrous swelling was absolutely dis-
persed. (c)

“*In point of devotion to the virgin, real defects are far
“more to be feared than real excesses.* She (that is, the
“Virgin,) surpasses in greatness both heaven and earth;
“and while the heavenly powers stand before the throne
“with fear and trembling, and covering their faces, she
“presents mankind to Christ, and it is through her that
“we obtain the pardon of our sins.”—“God will always
“honour her as queen of heaven, and has inspired the
“church to pay her extraordinary honours; so that if we
“can but render her our advocate with her Son, we can-
“not put our eternal interests into better hands.” (d)

“We must never begin nor end the day without put-
“ting ourselves under her protection, by saying some short
“prayer in honour of her. In the second place, we must
“keep her festivals; and, in the third place, be particu-
“larly attentive to the rosary or beads.” (e)

Lytelton, in his Life of Henry II. vol. iv. p. 332, has
furnished the world with the following anecdote: “His
“illness did not prove mortal; and the same false religious

(x) See Faber’s Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 81, 82.

(y) Decline and Fall, vol. ix. p. 114—120. as quoted by Faber, vol. ii. p. 259.

(a) See his Commentary on Rev. p. 239.

(b) Whit. Commentary on Rev. p. 240.

(c) Whitaker, p. 241.

(d) See Whitaker, p. 317, together with a popish pamphlet, published in London, 1798, from whence the above passages were taken.

(e) Ibid. p. 318.

“notions

“ notions made him ascribe his recovery to the protection of St. Roque Madour in the Quercy, whom he had invoked in his danger; and addressed to her a vow, that if his health was restored, he would go in pilgrimage to her shrine, which, as soon as he found himself able to bear a journey, he piously performed.” (f)

That this apostate church actually countenances the unholy practices of its deluded devotees, the following idolatrous compositions will not permit us to entertain a moment's doubt.

“ Holy Mother of God, who hast worthily merited to conceive him whom the whole world could not comprehend; by your pious intervention wash away our sins; that, being redeemed by thee, we may be able to ascend to the seat of everlasting glory, where thou abidest with thy Son for ever.”

The following is part of a prayer to the Virgin, for the repeating of which Pope Celestine granted three hundred days of pardon! “ Comfort a sinner, and give not thine honour to a stranger or the cruel, I pray thee, Queen of Heaven. Have me excused with Christ thy Son, whose anger I dread, and thoroughly fear his wrath, for against thee only have I sinned. O Virgin Mary, be not estranged from me, thou who art full of heavenly grace. Be the guardian of my heart; impress me with the fear of God, bestow on me integrity of life, and give me honesty of manners: and grant that I may avoid sin, and love what is righteous, O Virgin sweetness: there never has been, neither is there such.”

To St. George.

“ O George, renowned martyr, praise and glory become thee, who hast had a rich portion of warfare; by whom the royal damsel, presenting herself in sorrow before the voracious dragons, was saved even in soul: we beg thee from the bottom of our hearts, that, with all me faithful, we may be joined to the citizens of heaven, being washed from our uncleanness, &c.”

To St. Alban.

“ We now beg you, patron, illustrious preacher, who art our true glory, loose the crimes of thy servants by thy supplications.” (g)

Doxology recommended by an indulgence of Leo X.

“ To the holy and undivided Trinity; to the crucified human nature of Jesus Christ; to the prolific purity of the most blessed and most glorious Virgin Mary; and to the community of all saints, be everlasting praise, honour, power, and glory from every creature, &c.”

In the office of praise for Easter. “ Rejoice, Queen of Heaven, because He whom thou hast merited to bear, is risen, as he said. Protect; O Lord, thy people, and preserve them with perpetual defence, who confide in the patronage of thine apostles, Peter and Paul, and the other apostles.”

In the other parts of the Romish ritual are scattered such idolatrous expressions as the following: *Queen*;—*Mother of mercy*;—*our Life*;—*Sweetness*;—*Hope*.—*O pious,*

O merciful, O sweet Virgin Mary;—*Creator*; *Mother of grace*;—*sweet Parent of mercy*;—*Star of the sea*;—*benevolent Mother of God*;—*perpetual Virgin*;—*propitious Gate of heaven*;—*Daughter of the eternal Father*;—*Spouse of the eternal Spirit*;—*Mother of our Creator*;—*Refuge of sinners*;—*Advocate of all Christians*;—*Queen of angels*;—*Health of the weak*;—*Comfort of the afflicted*;—*Help of Christians*;—*Queen of saints.* (h)

These instances of idolatry, which might be easily multiplied into thousands, are surely sufficient to demonstrate, that the devotion which tolerates and even enforces the use of them, must partake more of depravity than of the religion of Jesus Christ. They discover to us an abyss of iniquity, and tell us, in language too plain to be misunderstood, that before such worship can be cordially adopted, the mind must be intoxicated with error;—it must be completely drunk with the wine of the fornication of this idolatrous harlot.

To complete these abominable impositions, even the express commands of God are mutilated, especially in those parts which forbid idolatry. “ A copy of the offices and litanies composed in honour of the Virgin Mary, a composition particularly recommended, I have (says Mr. Whitaker,) now before me, printed at Antwerp in 1703. This has been published by the command of Pope Pius V. with indulgences and prayers appointed by that Pontiff, and hymns revised by Urban VIII. These indulgences are various, for saying various parts of the office: and, among other things prefixed to the office, is a very defective copy of the ten commandments, from which the second is entirely omitted, as also the greater part of the fourth; and the tenth is divided into two, to preserve the due number.” (i) Such are the impious subtleties to which imposture is obliged to have recourse, to keep the multitude in ignorance, and to conceal itself from vulgar eyes! On this point it will perhaps be needless to adduce any additional proof. We will therefore dismiss this subject with a full persuasion that the reader must be satisfied, that superstition and idolatry have most dreadfully prevailed in the Romish church. Let us now turn our thoughts to her

APOSTACY.

Amid that parade of ceremonious worship, with which Popery for so many ages deluged Europe, and other portions of the globe, it may not be amiss to inquire into the state of morals, as exhibited by those sons of infallibility.

“ The prelates (says Dr. Eveleigh, in his third Bampton Sermon,) who filled the apostolical chair about the ninth and tenth centuries, have furnished the enemies of Christianity, no less than the enemies of the abuses of it, with inexpressible matter of invective. They seem to have been permitted by Providence to prove the extreme folly, as well as blasphemy, of those pretensions to infallibility, which have been made for the bishops of that see.”—“ There was a succession (says Stillingfleet,) of not less than fifty bishops, so remarkable for their wickedness, that Annas and Caiaphas, (setting only aside their condemning of Christ,) were saints in com-

(f) Whitaker, p. 319.

(g) Whitaker, p. 121, 122, in which he adduces his authorities.

(h) See Whitaker, p. 327—332, et seq in which he has cited his authorities.

(i) Whitaker, p. 325.

“ parison

“ parison of them. The prelates and clergy were, in general, as ignorant and profligate as can well be conceived; and the Popes were not men, but devils.”

Mosheim, when speaking of the plan which Gregory the Seventh had formed for raising the church above all human authority, says, that that Pontiff had many kinds of opposition to encounter, but none more unfurmoutable than that which arose from the two reigning vices of *Concubinage* and *Simony*, which had infected the whole body of the European clergy. The Roman Pontiffs, from the time of *Stephen the Ninth*, had combated with zeal and vehemence these monstrous vices, but without success. For though it be true, that, in the methods which Gregory took to extirpate those vices, he violated not only the laws of religion, but also the dictates of natural equity and justice, and, under the mask of pious zeal, committed the most crying and abominable enormities; yet it is certain, on the other hand, that these vices produced the most unhappy effects both in church and state; and a suppression of them became absolutely necessary. There were indeed among the clergy several men of piety and virtue; but there was also a prodigious number of ecclesiastics throughout Europe, not only of priests and canons, but also of monks, who lived in the bonds of a criminal love, kept, under the title of wives, mistresses whom they dismissed at pleasure, &c. and who not only spent, in the most profuse and scandalous manner, the revenues and treasures of the churches and convents to which they belonged, but even distributed a great part of them among their illegitimate children. (*k*)

Strong and dreadful as these testimonies are, and detestable as the scene of iniquity is which they unfold, a still more horrid picture is given of the Popes themselves through several succeeding centuries. *Jurieu*, in his eighth and ninth chapters on the accomplishment of prophecy, has furnished us with the following accounts.

“ It is from the tenth century that we must begin the history of the abominations of the Popes. Pope Formosus died in the year 897. By means of a faction of villains, his seat was filled by one called Boniface, who had twice before been deposed; once while a deacon, and once while a priest. This Boniface, turned out of the chair by another faction, gave place to Stephen VII. who made himself famous by a remarkable action in causing the body of *Formosus* to be digged out of its grave, and a process to be made against him, upon this pretence, that he had suffered himself to be translated from another bishoprick to that of Rome, contrary to the canons; and so his body was thrown into the Tiber. The historians who have written the lives of the Popes characterize him as a profligate wretch, and make him to have governed only fifteen months*. Two Popes followed, of whom the one sat in the chair but four months, and the other only three weeks. After this, came John IX. who continued three years. One Benedict succeeded him on the one hand; whilst a vile

(*) See Whitaker, p. 348—350.

* Admitting the claims and conduct of Formosus to have been infallible, we shall be at a loss to account for the actions of Boniface upon the same principle. The difficulty will not be rendered less, if we invert the order. This is clear: both could not have been infallible.

“ fellow, named *Sergius*, on the other, did also exercise the pontifical power, as appears by the records of those times. Leo V. followed upon the death of Benedict, who, at the end of forty days, was imprisoned by another Pope, named *Christophorus*, who had the chair but seven months. Here are at least seven or eight Popes in that number of years, because they turned out and strangled one another. This *Christophorus* was turned out by another most atrocious character named *Sergius*, of the faction of the marquis of Tuscany. We ought here to peruse the confession of *Baronius* himself, who, entering upon the tenth century, calls it the leaden, the iron age, a century of horror and darkness. At this time ruled those two most notorious strumpets, *Theodora*, a Roman dame, most infamous for her lewdness, and her daughter *Marofia*, wife to *Albertus* marquis of *Hetruria*, and concubine of this Pope *Sergius*, who, at the same time, kept the mother and the daughter, to reward them for raising him to be Pope by their influence and authority. One *Anathasius* succeeded him, of whom there is no account. After him came *Lando*, who, to oblige the infamous *Theodora*, preferred a priest of *Ravenna*, named *John*, to the bishopric of *Bologna*, and afterward to be archbishop of *Ravenna*. But *Theodora*, not finding it for her convenience to have her gallant at such a distance from her, quickly made away with *Lando*, and made this *John X.* by name bishop of *Rome*. Some historians say, that this *John* was the son of Pope *Sergius* by *Marofia*, *Theodora*'s daughter. This Pope then was the son of a Pope, and kept his grandmother to be his concubine. This monster possessed the chair sixteen years, and left it by a violent death; for *Marofia*, who is reputed by some authors to have been his mother, caused him to be put into prison, and there to be stifled under a bed. She then made *Leo VI.* Pope in his room, who survived but six months, and died in prison of a violent death, as his predecessor did. Several who followed in succession had the good fortune to be almost buried in silence.

“ It was otherwise with *Octavian*, son of *Albertus* marquis of Tuscany, who was made Pope at seventeen years of age. His crimes were very enormous, but they are well known also by all the learned world. In him did *Rome* see another *Nero*, a second *Heliogabalus*. The *Lateran Palace* became the most public bawdy-house in Europe; an honest woman could not with any safety perform her devotions in the most public places; for women were ruined even in the churches. Besides this, he offered incense to the devil, and invoked *Jupiter* and the other gods of the Pagans. This monster in debauchery was deposed by the emperor *Otho*; but he formed a party, and raised an insurrection by which much blood was shed. *Otho*, however, remained master; but, on his departure to Germany, the prostitutes at *Rome* set *Octavian* again upon the chair, and thrust out that Pope whom the emperor had made.

“ *Otho* again prevailed; but, on his death, another wretch, who called himself *Boniface VII.* seized *Benedict VI.* and caused him to be strangled in prison. Another tyrant of the family and faction of the marquis of Tuscany, named *Benedict VII.* turned out this *Boniface VII.* who was forced to save himself at *Constantinople*; whither he carried all the moveables, and at

“ much

“ much of the treasures of *St. Peter* as he could, with
 “ him. Some time after, he again returned to Rome,
 “ and put himself once more in the chair, in which he
 “ found one named John XIV. whom he threw into
 “ prison, and there starved to death. Eight months after
 “ this, he himself dies, and is dragged through the streets
 “ to be thrown on a common dunghill. Behold these are
 “ the gods of the Papacy !” (l)

“ The eleventh century (says Baronius,) began with a
 “ report, which spread itself far and near, that Antichrist
 “ was come, and that we should soon see the end of the
 “ world. It was the horrible villanies which had been
 “ seen in the church, and which still continued there, that
 “ gave occasion to this report. From this period until the
 “ middle of the century, the Roman chair was filled with
 “ men every whit as vile and monstrous as their prede-
 “ cessors. But the marquises of Tuscany disposed of the
 “ Popedom as they thought proper; sometimes bestowing
 “ it upon their kindred, and at other times selling it to
 “ strangers. It was in this century, that there was one
 “ Pope but of ten years old, the son of Albertus, count
 “ of Tuscany. He was called Benedict IX. and was one
 “ of the vilest monsters that ever sat in the papal chair,
 “ or afflicted the world. Cardinal Benno assures us, that he
 “ was a forcerer, and that he sacrificed to devils in the
 “ woods. When this Benedict had reigned peaceably for
 “ ten years, another faction of villains created another
 “ Pope under the name of Silvester III. Benedict then
 “ sold his share in the papacy to one named John, and
 “ retired to his house to live in privacy. He, however,
 “ returned again within a few months, and once more set
 “ himself up for Pope, without attempting to depose the
 “ other two; so that Rome had three Popes at one time in
 “ three distinct churches, all infallible, and all acting in
 “ opposition to one another! These three wretches
 “ might longer have enjoyed the honours and profits of
 “ the papacy, if a fourth, more cunning than they, had
 “ not persuaded them to part with their dignity in his
 “ favour, on condition that they might retain those church
 “ revenues which they before enjoyed. This *Gratian*, for
 “ such was the name of this priest, did not long enjoy
 “ the benefit of his purchase; Clement II. took his place:
 “ he, however, continued in it but nine months; for, at
 “ the end of that period, he was poisoned by *Damasus II.*
 “ who succeeded him. This *Damasus*, at the end of
 “ twenty-three days, was himself poisoned by one Gerard
 “ Brazuta, who was kept in pay for such work by the holy
 “ see; for Cardinal Benno tells, that he had poisoned
 “ seven or eight successively.” (m)

From this period the scene began to change; not indeed
 from vice to virtue, but from debauchery to rapine and
 blood. Inhumanity, with its concomitant horrors, so
 far triumphed over common vices, that it became the
 predominant evil; and the others were surveyed as matters
 of indifference which excited little or no surprize. But

inhumanity will appear before us, when we view Popery
 in another light.

After giving us a list of men, or rather of monsters, who
 were heretical, simoniacal, perjured, poisoners, murderers,
 adulterers, sodomites, luxurious, drunkards, and, in short,
 whatsoever may be deemed detestable in the human cha-
 racter, the author whom we have already quoted, tells us
 that Innocent VIII. was debauched beyond measure. Im-
 mediately after this, we find Alexander VI., whose enor-
 mities were sufficient to efface the memory of those of his
 predecessors. He purchased the Popedom with money; he
 lived in incest with the famous Lucretia, who was his
 own daughter, and whom he married to his own son *Cesar*
Borgia. Soon after, came Leo X. “ It is notorious that
 “ he did not so much as believe a God: he one day
 “ told Cardinal Bembo, *That this fable of Jesus Christ*
 “ *had done them good service.*” (n) “ All this is the least
 “ part of what might be said on this head. It is an
 “ ocean of iniquity which cannot be drawn dry. In a
 “ word, we must know, that there hath not been a throne
 “ in the world defiled with such abominations. We find
 “ above twenty-five Popes convicted or accused of magic.
 “ Cardinal Benno reckons up several in less than fifty
 “ years.” (o) In short, all flesh, in this eleventh century,
 seems to have corrupted its way, so that “ a deluge was
 “ not sufficient to wash away the filth; their horrid sins
 “ called for the fire of Gomorrah.” (p)

(q) “ The twelfth century, which comes next, forms a
 “ prominent feature in this awful picture. *St. Bernard*
 “ says, that the portraiture of these times was made up
 “ of fornications, adulteries, incests, detestable villanies,
 “ and acts of the utmost filthiness. There was no order
 “ of men that was sound. And *Honorius* of Aurun ranks
 “ in order, princes, monks, priests, nuns, and nunneries,
 “ and all orders of men, giving a particular account of their
 “ horrid abominations.”

Of the thirteenth century let the following instance de-
 cide the character. “ In the year 1245, (says Matthew
 “ Paris,) the council of Lyons, which is reckoned among
 “ the general ones, was held. At the conclusion of this
 “ council, Cardinal Hugo preached a sermon; in which,
 “ addressing himself to the citizens of Lyons, he had the
 “ following passage: ‘ *My friends, since we came into this*
 “ *city, we have been good benefactors to you, and brought you*
 “ *in very great gain. For, on our coming hither, we found*
 “ *but three or four bawdy-houses; but at our going away we*
 “ *leave but one: it is true it reacheth through the whole city,*
 “ *from the east gate to the west gate.*’ The corruption of
 “ manners must have been worse than that of Sodom,
 “ when impudence gets into the pulpit of Jesus Christ:
 “ or rather, that must be the pulpit of Antichrist,
 “ where men take the liberty to speak such abominable
 “ jests.” (r)

In the fourteenth century, one *Alvares Pelagius*, a de-
 fender of Pope John XXII. describes the morals of the
 church in the following language. He sets forth the cloy-
 sters as “ Places of prostitution, in which debauchery,
 “ gluttony, idleness, drunkenness, luxury, filthy converse,
 “ impure discourses, &c. did reign.” He especially sets

(l) “ To this day (says Mr. Whitaker, p. 357, after having
 “ quoted largely from *Jurieu*.) the Romanists continue the
 “ blasphemous practice of calling the Pope ‘ *the Lord God* ;’ as
 “ appears from a confession of faith found in the pocket of a
 “ priest during the late rebellion in Ireland, and reported by Sir
 “ R. Musgrave.”

(m) See *Jurieu*, as cited by Whitaker, p. 356, et seq.

(n) P. 361.
 (q) 366.

(o) P. 363.
 (r) *Jurieu*, as cited by Whitaker, p. 367.

forth the horrid sin of Sodom, as a sin which reigned even in the quires of the most august and venerable churches. (s)

Of the chastity which prevailed in the fifteenth century, we may form some estimate by that venerable assembly the council of Constance. "In the catalogue of those who attended on this council, we find 450 women of pleasure, and 320 jugglers and stage-players. Fornication in that age was a mere trifle. *Aeneas Sylvius*, who was afterwards Pope under the name of Pius II. confesseth it "without the least shame." (u)

In the sixteenth century, the Reformation unveiled such scenes of wickedness as are too well known to require repetition. Cornelius Musse, bishop of Bitonto, declared publicly in the midst of the council of Trent, "That there was no filthiness, how monstrous soever, no villany, no impurity, with which the people and clergy were not defiled." (v)

"It is in the present age, that the Bishop of Bellay hath set forth the cloisters as the receptacles of idle drones, who live on the charge of the public. It is in our days, and within these twenty years, that the behaviour of all the convents of Cordeliers in France, hath been discovered. The Factum of the Nuns of Provence hath told us, that these wretches turn the nunneries which are committed to them, into infamous places to game and drink in, where they converse very lasciviously with the nuns, where both words and actions are licentious, where the highest debaucheries are committed," &c. &c. with other expressions and facts too bad to be mentioned. (w)

Such is the general character of these detestable impostors, who, boasting themselves the legitimate successors of the apostles, as the Jews of old boasted themselves the descendants of Abraham, from generation to generation, have lulled one half of the Christian world into the most abject servitude, and practised their impious delusions on mankind. These were the men who had the effrontery to affirm without a blush, that the true method of salvation was revealed to them alone, and that by virtue of their indulgences, and superior interests at the court of heaven, their passport would procure felicity for the departed souls of all their dupes. Events, through a series of generations, have sufficiently proved that ignorance kept pace with the imposition; the supplies were large, and credulity swallowed all. The abominations which have been adduced from different centuries, are so expressive as to require no comment. They speak a language which no man can misunderstand, and supersede the necessity of further evidence, to prove the apostacy of the Romish church.

BLASPHEMY AND ARROGANCE.

But it is not in superstition, idolatry, and apostacy alone, that this church is become corrupt. One evil frequently generates another; the vices associate; and, in the case before us, this degenerate church has added arrogance and blasphemy to her other enormities.

Bishop Burnet, in his History of the Reformation, gives us the following account of a pretended miracle. There

was a famous imposture discovered at Hales in Gloucestershire, where the blood of Christ was pretendedly shewn in a phial of crystal, which the people sometimes saw, but sometimes they could not see it. On this account they were instructed to believe, that so long as they were in mortal sin, of which the invisibility of this blood was an infallible sign, they were incapable of so signal a favour. Terrified with the most fearful apprehensions of impending wrath, they bribed saints and relics with petitionary writings, and the holy priest with the currency of this world, after which they were permitted to have a sight of this miraculous blood. This prodigy of the age, on a nearer inspection, when monkery in this country became a bankrupt, was found to be nothing more than the blood of a duck, which the impostors contrived to renew every week. The phial which contained it, constituted the fraud. On one side, it was thick, and prevented the eye of the devotee from penetrating beyond its surface; but, on the opposite side, the glass being thin, was quite transparent. Its situation was near the altar, and was so contrived, that a partner in the juggle standing behind, could secretly turn either side outward which circumstances required. In short, when they had drained the pilgrims who resorted thither of all they had brought with them, they repaid them with a view of the transparent side; while the defrauded dupes returned to their habitations highly satisfied with their expenditure and reimbursement! (x)

A trick, nearly related to the former, is recorded by the same author. "For their images, some of them were brought to London, and at St. Paul's Cross broken in the sight of the people, that they might be fully convinced of the juggling impostures of the monks. There was one in particular, the crucifix of Boxley in Kent, commonly called the *Road of Grace*, to which many pilgrimages had been made. This extraordinary image had been frequently seen to stir itself, to bow, to lift itself up, to shake its head, hands, and feet, to roll its eyes, move its lips, and bend its brows. These miraculous gesticulations were looked on by the abused multitude as the effects of a divine power. They were, however, fully convinced of the contrary; for, when these fraudulent practices were discontinued, the secret springs were shewn, by which all these motions had been made."

"The church, (says Innocent III.) who is my spouse, does not, at her marriage, come to me empty-handed; she has bestowed a precious, an invaluable dowry on me; an absolute power in spirituals, an extensive authority in temporals. She has given me the mitre, for the ensign of my spiritual; and the crown, of my temporal jurisdiction; the mitre as priest, the crown as king; constituting me *His Vicar*, who bears this inscription written on his thigh and his vestment,—King of kings and Lord of lords." (y)

That Popery, from the idolatry which it has countenanced, and the blasphemy which it has used, has opened the door to infidelity, recent events have awfully proved; and, probably, few things have contributed more to establish this fact, than that contempt with which her advocates have been obliged to treat the holy Scriptures, to

(s) Page 368.
(w) P. 372.

(u) P. 368.

(v) P. 370.

(x) See Burnet's Hist. of the Reformation, vol. i. p. 243.
(y) Whitaker, p. 254.

which the Protestant churches have uniformly appealed. "The Popes (observes Mosheim,) permitted their champions to indulge themselves openly in reflections injurious to the dignity of the sacred writings, and, by an excess of blasphemy almost incredible (if the passions of men did not render them capable of the greatest enormities), to declare publicly, that the edicts of the Pontiffs, and the records of oral tradition, were superior, in point of authority, to the express language of the holy Scriptures." (z)

"In the seventeenth century, Alphonso Mendez, the Catholic patriarch of Ethiopia, accepted, in the name of Urban VIII. the homage of the emperor of Abyssinia and his court.—I confess (says the emperor, on his knees,) that the Pope is the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter, and the sovereign of the world: to him I swear true obedience, and at his feet I offer my person and kingdom."

"That the Pope did blasphemously arrogate to himself the authority and dominion which the Abyssinian emperor abjectly yielded him, the words of Pope Pius V. in his bull against Queen Elizabeth will not permit us to entertain a moment's doubt. The following is the language which he presumptuously delivered on that occasion from his apostolical chair. "He who reigneth on high, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, hath committed the one holy, Catholic, and Apostolical Church, out of which there is no salvation, to be governed with plenitude of power by one only on earth; namely, by Peter the prince of the apostles, and by the successor of Peter, the Roman Pontiff. *This one, he hath constituted a prince over all nations, and all kingdoms; to pluck up, to waste, destroy, plant, and build.* Supported (he says,) by the authority of him who had seen fit to place him, however unequal to so great a charge, in this supreme throne of justice, he declares, in the plenitude of his apostolical authority, the said Elizabeth laid under a sentence of anathema, deprived of all right and title to her kingdom; her subjects absolved from all oaths of allegiance to her; and those who obey her, involved in the like sentence of anathema." (a)

But it is not merely in dethroning princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance, that his pretended Holiness displays his arrogance; his presumption and blasphemy pretend to command a higher tribunal. The Pope makes no scruple of plucking Eternal Justice from its awful seat, and dictating to him who inhabiteth eternity, what subjects shall inherit his eternal kingdom. In the second volume of Burnet's History of the Reformation, there is preserved a collection of the chief indulgences which were in the English offices. The following are taken from "The Book of the Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, for the use of Sarum, printed at Paris in 1526."

Folio 38.

"To all them that be in a state of grace, that shall say devoutly this prayer before our blessed Lady of Pity, she will shew them her blessed visage, and warn them the day and hour of death; and, in their last end, the angels of God shall yield their souls to heaven; and he shall

"obtain *five hundred years* and so many Lents of pardon, granted by five holy fathers, Popes of Rome."

Folio 42.

"Our holy Father Sixtus IV. Pope, hath granted to all them that devoutly say this prayer before the Image of our Lady, the sum of *eleven thousand years of pardon.*" Such is the reward which this blasphemous Pontiff held forth to all those who would break the second commandment.

Folio 50.

"These be the fifteen *Oo's* the which the holy virgin St. Bridget was wont to say daily before the holy rood in St. Paul's church at Rome: who so says this a whole year, shall deliver *fifteen souls out of purgatory* of his next kindred, and convert other *fifteen sinners* to a good life; and other *fifteen righteous men of his kind* shall preserve in good life; and what ye desire of God ye shall have it, if it be to the salvation of your souls."

Folio 54.

"To all them that before this Image of Pity shall say five Pater-nosters, and five Ave-Marias, and a Credo, piteously beholding those arms of Christ's passion, are granted *thirty-two thousand seven hundred and fifty-five years of pardon*; and Sixtus the IVth, Pope of Rome, hath made the fourth and the fifth prayer, and hath doubled his foresaid pardon."

Folio 56.

"This epistle of our Saviour sendeth our holy Father Pope Leo to the emperor, Carolo Magno; of the which we find it written, 'Who that beareth this blessing about him, and saith it once a day, shall obtain *forty years of pardon, and eighty Lentings*, and he shall not perish with sudden death."

Folio 57.

"This prayer was made by St. Austin, affirming who that says it daily, kneeling, shall not die in sin; and, after this life, shall go to the everlasting joy and bliss."

Folio 58.

"Our holy Father the Pope, John the Twenty-second, hath granted to all them that say devoutly this prayer following, between the elevation of our Lord, and the three Agnus Dei, *ten thousand years of pardon.*"

Folio 61.

"Our holy Father Sixtus IV. hath granted to all them that be in a state of grace, saying this prayer following immediately after the elevation of the body of our Lord, *clean remission of all their sins perpetually enduring.* And John III. Pope of Rome, at the request of the Queen of England, hath granted to them that devoutly say this prayer before the Image of our Lord crucified, as many days of pardon as there were wounds in the body of our Lord in the time of his bitter passion, the which were *five thousand four hundred and sixty-five.*"

Folio 65.

"These five petitions and prayers made St. Gregory, and hath granted unto all them that devoutly say these five prayers, with five Pater-nosters, five Ave-Marias, and a Credo, *five hundred years of pardon.*"

[d]

Folio

(z) Mosheim, vol. iv. p. 213.

(a) Kett's "History the Interpret." p. 20.

Folio 66.

“ These three prayers be written in the chapel of the Holy Cross in Rome. Who that devoutly say them, they shall obtain *ten hundred thousand* years of pardon for deadly sins, granted of our holy Father John the Twentieth, Pope of Rome.” (b)

“ It is in the Pope himself (says Jurieu,) that we have an exact accomplishment of the scripture predictions which paint forth the seat of Antichrist, as the seat of pride. He will be styled, *Our most holy Lord:—Our Lord God the Pope:—His divine Majesty:—The victorious God and Man in his See of Rome:—Vice God:—The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world:—The most holy who carrieth the most holy.*”

We will finally close this article with an extract from a prayer of *Becket*, addressed to the Pope, in which the reader may perceive that he prays to him, and implores his assistance, in phrases of Scripture which are exclusively appropriate to God: “ Rise, Lord, and delay no longer; let the light of thy countenance shine upon me, and do unto me according to thy mercy, and to my wretched friends who faint under too heavy a burden. Save us, for we perish. Let us not be confounded among men. Let not our adversaries insult over us, yea, the adversaries of the church of Christ. Let not our fortune be turned into derision by this nation and people, because we have invoked thy name to our assistance. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ make unto thyself a great name. Repair thy glory, clear up the honour of thy reputation, which, upon the return of that excommunicated and perjured schismatic John of Oxford, is by his false report certainly sunk in these parts.” (c)

It was language like this, blasphemously addressed to the Pope, which probably contributed towards that canonization which this *Saint* afterwards obtained: of some of his miracles we have already hinted, and the legend can furnish us with volumes. This is the man, who could thus shamefully prostitute addresses which belong only to God, to flatter the ambitious vanity of an impostor; and who has to this day a festival kept to his memory in the Romish church.

When our Lord declared (Luke, v. 20.) to the sick man, *Thy sins are forgiven thee*, the Jews took the alarm, and accused him of blasphemy: and the only method which he adopted to repel the charge, was, by appealing to that authority which they refused to acknowledge, though the visible effects of his power were then exhibited before their eyes. It is but natural to infer from hence, that, if our Lord had not possessed that power of which the Jews supposed him destitute, the charge would have been just. What then shall be said in behalf of his Holiness? His boasted infallibility only darkens the enormity of his character; his blasphemy appears without a covering; and he stands, encircled with his pretensions and actions, loaded with infamy before the world.

CRUELTY.

It is not only of idolatry, with apostacy, and with blasphemy, that Popery stands accused; she has trodden under

her feet the dictates of humanity, and polluted her hands in blood. To delineate with accuracy the inhuman butcheries of which she has been guilty; to mark the territories she has depopulated; the victims she has massacred; the plains she has fertilized with the blood of their inhabitants, when mingled with the ashes of their habitations,—instead of an Appendix,—would require the volumes of this Commentary. Our limits are necessarily circumscribed, and therefore our extracts must be few.

To mature inhumanity into a system, time and depravity are essentially necessary; the Papacy has had the command of both, and its abettors have turned them to their advantage. That no branch of the papal Antichrist might remain destitute of pollution, Pope Clement VIII. contrived by the following oath, taken by all bishops at their consecration, and by all metropolitans at their instalment, to poison every spring; that the grand machine might move in an atmosphere in which humanity could not breathe.

“ I N. elect of the church of N. from henceforward will be faithful and obedient to St. Peter the apostle, and to the holy Roman church, and to our lord, the lord N. Pope N. and to his successors canonically coming in. I will neither advise, consent, nor do any thing, that they may lose life or member, or that their persons may be seized, or hands any way laid upon them, or any injuries offered to them under any pretence whatsoever. The counsel which they shall entrust me withal, by themselves, their messengers, or letters, I will not knowingly reveal to any to their prejudice. I will help them to defend and keep the Roman Papacy, and the royalties of St. Peter, saving my order, against all men. The legate of the apostolic See, going and coming, I will honourably treat and help in his necessities. The rights, honours, privileges, and authority, of the holy Roman church of our lord the Pope, and his foresaid successors, I will endeavour to preserve, defend, increase, and advance. I will not be in any council, action, or treaty, in which shall be plotted against our said lord, and the said Roman church, any thing to the hurt or prejudice of their persons, right, honour, state, or power; and, if I shall know any such thing to be treated or agitated by any whatsoever, I will hinder it to my power; and as soon as I can, will signify it to our said lord, or to some other by whom it may come to his knowledge. The rules of the holy fathers, the apostolic decrees, ordinances, or disposals, reservations, provisions, and mandates, I will observe with all my might, and cause to be observed by others. *Heretics, and schismatics, and rebels to our said lord, or his foresaid successors, I will to my power persecute and oppose.*” (d)

The fatal effects of this oath have been felt in Europe in all their horrors. There is scarcely a species of cruelty that can be mentioned, of which it has not been productive; in short, the sentiments which breathe through its sentences, may be considered as the source of those calamities which are at this moment desolating the ear h.

By these and similar methods during the space of 300 years, the Popes turned Germany and Italy into fields of blood, in which one might have seen the son in arms against his father; fathers sheathing their swords in the bowels of

(b) Burnet, as quoted by Whitaker, p. 292. et seq.

(c) Lyttelton's Hen. II. vol. iv. p. 247.

(d) Faber, vol. ii. p. 243, 244

their children; subjects rising up against their princes, and princes obliged to shed the blood of their subjects, and to lay waste their own countries; cities were broken into parties that cut the throats of and massacred each other; yea, families were divided, and one kinsman murdered another in this fury, which was inspired by the Papacy.

The combats, the battles, the sieges of cities, the millions of men who perished in these three ages, cannot be numbered. Henry IV. alone fought above sixty battles, or fights, in those wars which the Popes had kindled. The Papacy, which is a devouring beast, which tears in pieces on the right hand and on the left, while it shed such streams of blood of its own subjects, at the same time poured out great torrents of the blood of the children of God. For, in the very same centuries, the Popes raised those cruel persecutions which raged against those whom they named *Waldenses*, *Albigenses*, *Henricians*, and *Poor Men of Lyons*. All Languedoc was filled with devastations. *Beziers*, *Carcassone*, *Toulouse*, felt the rage of antichristian zeal: the cities were burnt to ashes; the inhabitants were butchered; the women ravished; their goods plundered by the army of cross-bearers, who wore the sign of the cross on their shoulders, and had the rage of hell in their hearts. Those who were taken by them were burnt alive. For fifty or sixty years Languedoc was a very theatre of cruelty: the fury of the inquisitors had neither bridle nor bounds: the innocent and the guilty, the *Albigenses*, and those who were not, were buried under the same ruins. A hundred and fifty of them were burnt at one time at *Grenoble*. In other places the unmerciful soldiers fell upon the common people, and, without distinction, butchered old men, women, and children.

Thus were the *Waldenses* and the *Albigenses* treated for three or four hundred years. In the next century, Germany saw itself filled with armies under the conduct of Charles V. for the rooting out of heresy; that is, for the shedding of rivers of blood. France saw other and worse tragedies: for forty years the rage of the Papacy turned it into a theatre, on which the flower of the French nobility were destroyed: princes of the blood were murdered; two kings, Henry III. and Henry IV. were assassinated; cities were bathed in blood; massacres were made in every province: behold then the spirit of the Papacy!

The same spirit which thus operated on the continent, intended by a powder mine to have blown up the king of England, together with all the nobility of the kingdom. It has gone from one plot to another against all the states and heads which have supported the Reformation. In the year 1641, it caused in Ireland a rebellion, accompanied with one of the most horrid massacres that were ever heard of. We see it persecuting the faithful in *Bohemia*, in *Silesia*, in *Hungary*, in *Moravia*. First, in the year 1620, on the pretext of rebellion and disloyalty, the *Bohemians* were murdered in various ways, driven out and banished. In 1670, the *Hungarians* were persecuted, their temples demolished, their ministers tormented by a cruel persecution, and at last sent to the galleys. In 1655, the *Waldenses*, subjects of the duke of Savoy, were murdered in the vallies, and barbarities were used towards them which are unknown to Indians and Cannibals. In 1685, in pursuance of the repealing of the edict of Nantes, all France was covered with soldiers, who plundered and tormented all the Protestants, to compel them to sign an abjuration, and to go

to mass. These soldiers murdered all who met to pray to God, and exercised all kinds of cruelties on those whose consciences would not permit them to comply with the religion of the court. Lastly, if we were disposed to prove that the Papacy is cruel, bloody, and murderous, and that Papists, who act up to their principles, are such as we have described by virtue of their religion, and the articles of their faith, we might relate the cruel executions which their councils have given orders for; as those of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, burnt by the order, and in the very sight of the council of Constance. (e)

Nor was it in Europe alone that this inhumanity was exercised. The discovery of America and the West Indies opened a new scene for barbarities, and the murderous spirit of the Papacy improved it to the utmost extent. "In Hispaniola (says Mr. Bryan Edwards,) the Spaniards distributed the natives into lots, and compelled them to dig in the mines without rest or intermission; until death, their only refuge, put a period to their sufferings. Such as attempted resistance or escape, their merciless tyrants hunted down with dogs which were fed by their flesh. They disregarded sex and age, and, with impious and frantic bigotry, even called in religion to sanctify their cruelties! Some, more zealous than the rest, forced their miserable captives into the water, and, after administering to them the rite of baptism, cut their throats the next moment to prevent their apostacy! Others made a vow to hang or burn thirteen every morning, in honour of our Saviour and his twelve apostles! Martyr relates, that it was a frequent practice among them to murder the Indians of Hispaniola in sport, or merely, he observes, to keep their hands in use. They had an emulation, which of them could most dexterously strike off the head of a man at a blow; and wagers frequently depended upon this hellish exercise. To fill up the measure of this iniquity, and demonstrate to the world that the nation at large participated in the guilt of individuals, the court of Spain not only neglected to punish these enormities in its subjects; but, when rapacity and avarice had nearly defeated their own purposes, by the utter extirpation of the natives of Hispaniola, the king gave permission to seize on the unsuspecting inhabitants of the neighbouring islands, and transport them to perish in the mines of St. Domingo." (f) It was by inhumanities like these, that, according to Dr. Robertson, in the short interval of fifteen years subsequent to the discovery of the West Indies, the Spaniards had reduced the natives of Hispaniola from "a million to sixty thousand." (g)

Of these barbarities another historian gives the following picture: "They were indiscriminately chained together like beasts. Those who sunk under their burdens were compelled to rise by severe blows: the men perished in the mines, and the women in the fields, which they cultivated with their weak hands. Their constitutions, already exhausted with excessive labour, were still further impaired by an unwholesome and scanty diet. The mothers expired with hunger and fatigue, pressing their

(e) See Whitaker's citation of Jurien on "the Continuation of the Accomplishment of the Prophecies," p. 248, et seq.

(f) Hist. of West Indies, vol. i. p. 105, 106.

(g) Robertson's Hist. of America, vol. i. p. 235.

“ dead or dying infants to their breasts, shrivelled and contracted for want of a proper supply of milk.” (b)

Recalling our views from these distant regions, and confining them to Europe, we shall most probably find it true, “ That there is no nation existing, which, from first to last, has produced such a number of faithful witnesses against papal corruptions and tyrannies, as France. No people have so long a list of martyrs and confessors to show, as the Protestants of that country; and there is no royal family in Europe which has shed, in the support of Popery, half the blood which the Capets have shed. It was their arms which deluged the earth with the blood of the Albigenes and Waldenses, who inhabited the southern parts of France. Above a million of these unhappy sufferers bled beneath their sabres. It was through the instrumentality of these monarchs that the massacre of St. Bartholomew took place;—a massacre which lasted seven days; during which time about fifty thousand Protestants were murdered in Paris alone, and about twenty-five thousand more in the different provinces. In this indiscriminate murder, neither age nor sex could afford protection to the devoted victims; not even women with child were spared, for orders had been given to the executioners of the edict, to slaughter all, even infants at the breast, if they belonged to Protestants.” (i)

“ The countries which have been most cruelly harassed, and deluged with Protestant blood, are Spain, Portugal, Poland, Hungary, Bohemia, Italy, Germany, England, Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, Holland, Savoy, Piedmont, and France. France, indeed, has exceeded all the nations in Europe for acts of persecution, blood, and cruelty. Persecution for conscience-sake began there early, and continued long. Even so late as the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Protestants of France, in proportion to their numbers, endured, perhaps, as much as any people ever did since the beginning of the world. Savoy, Piedmont, and Hungary, have suffered much; but France boasts of more martyrs to the truth than any other kingdom in Europe. We think, and we think justly, that the late massacres in that distracted nation were very dreadful; but what were they, when compared with what the Protestants underwent upon several occasions? At one time, by order of the king, bishops, and priests, thirty thousand (some say sixty thousand) Protestants were murdered in the course of a few days. This shocking business was executed about two hundred years ago. After this, a civil war broke out between the Papists and Protestants, which continued to rage near sixty years in the very heart of the country, in which, Puffendorf assures us, there were destroyed a million of people. One hundred and fifty millions of money were spent. Nine cities, four hundred villages, twenty thousand churches, two thousand monasteries, and ten thousand houses, were burnt or laid level with the ground. This is but a little more than one hundred and fifty years ago.” (k)—“ From the first institution of the Jesuits, to the year 1480, which is but

(b) Abbé Raynal's Hist. of Trade and Settlements in the Indies, book vi. page 266.

(i) See Bicheno, Signs of the Times, p. 29.

(k) Kett, vol. ii. p. 35.

“ little more than thirty years, 900,000 orthodox Christians were slain. In the Netherlands alone, the Duke of Alva boasted, that, within a few years, he had dispatched to the amount of 36,000, and those all by the hand of the common executioner. In the space of scarcely thirty years, the Inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of tortures, 150,000 Christians. Sanders himself confesses, that an innumerable multitude of sacramentarians were burnt throughout Europe; who yet (he says,) were not put to death by the Pope and bishops, but by the civil magistrates.” (l) *

It is well known, that about one hundred years ago Lewis the Fourteenth, a monarch chiefly remarkable for his ambition, licentiousness and bloody conduct, began another persecution against the Protestants. During the calamities which a revocation of the edict of Nantes occasioned, innumerable multitudes were harassed while living, and put to death in the most ignominious manner. Dragoons were quartered upon them, who turned their parlours into stables; and even the peasantry were armed against them, to seize or shoot them, if they attempted to escape those sufferings to which they had been doomed. About five hundred thousand, according to Voltaire, but about eight hundred thousand, according to others, found means to flee the kingdom, though the country was covered with soldiers, and though the guards were doubled on the fords, the highways, and other passes, with orders to seize or shoot all who attempted to escape the gallies and the sword.

“ All these things were transacted in France. The Pope of Rome, as head of the church, was at the bottom of the whole. The archbishops, bishops, and clergy, very generally concurred; and many of them even marched at the head of the king's troops, with small crucifixes in their hands, exhorting the people to turn and embrace their superstitious and idolatrous nonsense, or commanding the soldiers to execute the law upon them. The king, the parliament, the princes, the nobility, the gentry, all concurred in the diabolical measures. And, when the thirty or sixty thousand before mentioned were massacred, we are particularly informed, that the Pope, as soon as he had received the news, appointed public thanksgiving, and *Te Deum* was sung for joy in the church of St. Louis. He moreover published a bull of pardons, and extraordinary indulgences, to such as should pray for the heavenly assistance to the king and kingdom of France for rooting out heretics. The king, archbishops, bishops, clergy, and nobles too went in

(l) Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, as quoted by Faber, vol. ii. p. 250.

* Thus far the account given by Sanders is true in a literal sense, but no further. The holy Inquisition, as its advocates term it, affects to have too much meekness and sanctity to shed blood, and by this act of hypocrisy the inquisitors have retired upon cruelty, and improved the various methods of persecution far beyond any thing which was ever known in Babylon or pagan Rome. Finding all their arts and tortures insufficient to pervert the faith of the unhappy victim, they deliver him over to the secular arm to be consumed with fire. But, to preserve their reputation for humanity in the eyes of the world, they beseech the civil magistrate to shew mercy to those unfortunate victims whom they have given up to be consigned to the flames.

“ public.

“ public procession, singing the praises of God for this “ bloody and diabolical transaction.” (m)

When we take a retrospective view of those topics which we have but lightly touched, we cannot but be struck with horror at these most iniquitous transactions. *Superstition* and *idolatry* have appeared before us, and arrested our attention even by the conspicuousness of their very shadows. The mind sickens with disgust at the degradation of our species relapsing again into Paganism, and grovelling beneath the brute creation. *Apostacy* is but a natural concomitant of these evils. The mind of man, conscious of its ultimate dependance, seeks repose in a superior power, and feels itself misled by the sorceries of sophistry, till it transfers the perfections of the invisible God to sinful mortals, or to idols of gold, of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone, which neither hear, nor see, nor know. But it is not to theory that we exclusively refer. The scenes of villainy which have been exhibited to us in the lives of those men who call themselves *infallible, holy, and gods upon earth*, are too monstrous to come within the reach of language. Such deeds are a comment upon themselves, and develope the innate depravity of the heart.

The *blasphemy* and *cruelty* which have passed in review before us, discover human nature in its darkest colours; our thoughts expand themselves in vain to grasp the atrocities which the actions of mankind, under such circumstances, rather exhibit than express; and we recede with trembling precipitation from an abyss of enormity, which to common depravity must be unknown. Unhappily the gloomy scene does not terminate even here; we have contemplated wickedness in various forms, but we have seen it only in part. *Infidelity*, the natural offspring of popish *superstition, apostacy, blasphemy, and inhumanity*, seems destined to succeed its parent evils, to deluge the world for a season, and to retaliate upon those spiritual oppressors of mankind, those calamities which they have been permitted to inflict upon the saints of God.

How dreadful soever those depredations and murders may be, which the Revolutionary factions in France have alternately committed, though they may chill us with horror at the recital, they are insufficient to extinguish in our bosoms a recollection of evils that are past. Though the oeconomy of heaven defies the scrutiny of mortals, yet we know, from the unerring declarations of God, that it must be just. Impressed, therefore, with this conviction, we cannot but acquiesce in this prophetic declaration, *Thou art righteous, O Lord! they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy.*

SECTION IV.

Infidel Antichrist the offspring of Papal Antichrist; engendered by the corruptions and inhumanities of Popery, and made instrumental in the hands of God, in retaliating upon her priests and supporters the blood which she has shed. Origin and progress of modern Infidelity: occasions the Revolution in France. Effects which have resulted from it:—progress of immorality.

HAVING taken a survey of Papal Antichrist, and viewed it as a system compounded of *superstition and idolatry*,

(m) See Kett, vol. ii. p. 36, and Simpson, to whom he refers.

apostacy, blasphemy and arrogance, and cruelty, let us now turn our attention to that branch which may be considered as *Infidel*, and inquire how far it agrees with that definition which has been already given of *Antichrist*, and which has been still more fully amplified by writers on the prophetic parts of the sacred volume.

In our definition of Antichrist, we have already quoted the Epistles of St. John, in which he has plainly told us, (1 Ep. ch. ii. 22.) that “ *He is Antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.*”—“ Now where (says Mr. Galloway,) is the difficulty of understanding this plain description of Antichrist? The obvious sense of it is, that he should be a power that should ‘ deny both the Father and the Son;’—the Father as the true and only God, the Creator of heaven and earth; and Jesus the Christ as come in the flesh to reveal the divine will, and to atone for the sins of mankind; or, in other words, that he should deny not only the existence and peculiar doctrines of Christ, but even that fundamental principle, ‘ *That there is a God.*’ But in what age, were we to search the annals of the world, shall we find a power so monstrous and consummately wicked? Not among the powers professing Paganism; for they, in the midst of their polytheism, have ever believed in one supreme invisible Spirit, the Creator of all things, and had some notion of a future state of rewards and punishments; nor among the apostate powers, for the Mahomedan powers have ever professed faith in God, as the Creator of the universe, and the dispenser of rewards and punishments in a future life; and the Pope has ever professed in a formal manner to believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,—that ‘ *Jesus is the Christ,*’ the Saviour of the world; so that amidst all his abominations and practical apostacy, he has formally confessed both the Father and the Son:—not in the Christian world, for that, notwithstanding the diversity of opinions which prevails, has invariably acknowledged *both the Father and the Son*. And as these are the only powers of which history gives us any information, from the deluge to the present hour, to which the character can be applied; we must either look for this Antichrist in the present period, or conclude that he is not yet come.” (a)

If we consult the sacred writings, we shall receive an assurance, that, in the last days, perilous times shall come, in which men shall appear *without natural affection, led away with divers lusts; despising government, and beguiling unstable souls; mockers and blasphemers of the name of God.* “ Such principles as these (says Mr. Faber,) existed indeed in the very days of the apostles: even then the spirit of Antichrist was in the world, and his pernicious maxims were concealed in the bosom of the church. Both St. Peter and St. Jude complain, that men, tainted with *atheism*, and the vain pretensions of a spurious liberty, had insinuated themselves into the primitive feasts of charity, and were labouring to lead weak brethren astray. Antichrist, however, was not to be revealed in all his undisguised horrors till the last days; till there had first been a great apostacy, till the reign of superstition was nearly at an end.

“ At the head of this long and black catalogue of the vices and enormities peculiar to the last times, we may

(a) See Galloway, vol. i. p. 467.

“ justly

“ justly place Atheism and Infidelity, or, as St. John expresses it, a denial both of the Father and the Son: for, as a belief that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, is the root of all religion; so Atheism and Infidelity are equally the root of all irreligion, and of every kind of profligacy of manners.” (b)

“ There are many passages (says Mr. Kett,) in the apostle’s description of the perilous times in the last days, which can hardly be applied either to the Papal or the Mahometan Antichrist, and certainly not to civil tyranny unconnected with religion.

“ It is remarkable, that, in his first Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul’s prediction relative to the latter times, applies, in every particular, to the papal Antichrist.” And that, in his second Epistle, when he says, *This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, &c.* he directs our views to a period still farther future than the latter times of which he speaks in his first Epistle. “ In the application of these words to a latter period of time, we are authorized by the opinion of a most profound and sagacious interpreter of Scripture. It has been observed by Mr. Joseph Mede (c), ‘ that the last times simply, and in general, are the times of Christianity: the last times in special, and comparatively, or the latter times of the last times, are the times of the apostacy under Antichrist.’”

“ We have, I think, (continues Mr. Kett,) clearly seen, that ‘ the latter end of the days of vengeance,’ which are ‘ the times of the apostacy under Antichrist,’ are occasionally expressly distinguished in the Scriptures. The second and third chapters of the second Epistle of Peter, and the Epistle of Jude, have certainly but little reference to the papal power of Antichrist.” But it is not difficult for us, in the present day, to discover a power to which the above descriptions will most accurately apply. It would, perhaps, be attended with much difficulty to delineate with greater accuracy the leading features of apostate Infidelity united with democratic tyranny. “ And if, upon examination, we find any corresponding marks of this dreadful power in the second beast of the Revelations, as it is evident we may find in Daniel, the agreement of these distinct prophecies will add so much weight to the separate testimony of each, as, all together, to be nearly demonstrative evidence to the authenticity of the fact, and the justness of the application.”

But though, from the various circumstances which have been already stated on the nature of prophecy, we have no reason to be surprised that most of the learned commentators have failed in their attempts to explain a prediction respecting events which, to them, were veiled in futurity, we have the authority of some, who, either unfettered from those prejudices which lead us to error, or endowed with a superior degree of wisdom, formed conjectures on the second beast, the accuracy of which at once excites our admiration, and confirms the opinion which is now offered to the consideration of the public.

“ The Bishop of Meaux, and the learned Grotius, approached nearer to the truth than has been commonly imagined, when they supposed the second beast to denote

“ philosophy ‘ falsely so called.’ Dr. Hartley, in the conclusion of his Observations on Man, considers Infidelity as the beast. It is also his opinion, that, when the world shall have arrived at a certain degree of depravity, it will then be prepared for the times of desolation. Sir Isaac Newton, and Dr. Clarke, interpreted ‘ the reign of the beast to be the open avowal of Infidelity.’ These men farther conjectured, that ‘ the state of religion in France, together with the manners of the age, combined with the divine oracles, to announce the approaching reign of the beast.’ In addition to this, they considered it, from the complexion of the times, as a circumstance highly probable, that ‘ the ecclesiastical constitution of France would soon be subverted, and that the standard of Infidelity would be first set up there.’ The opinion of Mr. Fleming, whose work was printed about one hundred years prior to the great event, coincides with the above conjectures of Hartley, Grotius, Clarke, and Newton, in a most extraordinary manner. This great man, from considering attentively the nature and apparent application of the fourth vial, concluded that the French monarchy would be destroyed about the year 1794.’ How far facts have corroborated his conjecture the world need not be told. The perfect coincidence which has recently appeared between events and his declaration, seems to demonstrate that he must have been guided in his decision by something more than a mere random supposition, hazarded upon the ocean of accidents, and directed by a combination of fortuitous causes which bade defiance to calculation. On the contrary, the concurrence of opinion, which is to be found in the writings of those men whose names have been mentioned, to which may be added the names of Jurieu, Lowman, and Bishop Newton, (who all directed their views to France, as the great scene of some eventful change which should particularly affect the church of God,) seems to afford us a presumptive evidence, that their judgments were directed by those prophetic intimations, which God, for the guidance of his people, has scattered through his sacred word.” (d)

“ It is considered as an established point, that the beast with seven heads and ten horns, and the woman upon whose forehead was written, *Myselfery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth*, denote the papal Antichrist, whose seat is Rome, and that the duration of this Antichristian power was to be 1260 years. The difficulty has been, to understand the meaning of the beast which came up out of the earth, which had two horns like a lamb,—which spake as a dragon, exercised all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast whose deadly wound was healed (e).” This beast, the author endeavours to prove, is identified in the Antichristian power which has lately avowed itself in France; and it cannot but be acknowledged, that, in support of his theory he has advanced many plausible arguments. Nor is he singular in this interpretation. Mr. Galloway has trodden in nearly the same steps. Both these commentators agree in the general principle, though they vary in adjusting the subordinate particulars.

(b) Faber’s Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. ii. p. 321.

(c) Mede’s Works, p. 804, as quoted by Kett, p. 371.

(d) See Kett, vol. i. 372, et seq.

(e) Kett, vol. i. 375.

The two horns like a lamb, which this beast is said to have, Mr. Kett observes, are the acknowledged symbols of strength and power. For, as the first beast is represented as having ten horns, which are explained by the interpreting angel to be ten kingdoms, which gave their strength to the beast, and by this means increased his *civil* power; so he concludes, that the two horns of the second beast being of a peculiar kind, like those of a *lamb*, (which symbol, throughout the Revelations, represents Christ,) are very significant; and that this circumstance has especially led to the opinion, that the second beast is the ecclesiastical power of Rome, because these horns must denote something which seems to be *like* Christianity, since they are not said to be the horns of a lamb, but *like or resembling* the horns of a lamb. (f)

Mr. Galloway, on the contrary, gives to this passage a very different turn, and expresses himself in nearly the following language: "The reader will here remark, that it is not said, that these horns were to be the horns, or the *real horns* of a lamb, which are inoffensive, and used only when it is injured; but that they should be *like*, that is, in appearance and *pretence* only, the horns of a lamb. They were to be, according to the literal sense of the metaphorical expression, horns, with a false appearance at first in their institution, but not intended to carry that inoffensive appearance into effect. A more accurate figure, to meet the secret design of the appointment, and the after-conduct of the *two Committees of Safety* which were established in France, could not have been devised by human ingenuity. For Robespierre, that demon of anarchy and mischief, persuaded that he could more easily arrive at the summit of despotism in two committees of his own creatures, than in a legislative body consisting of upwards of a thousand members, got that measure effected. The pretence was, that the commonwealth was in danger; and, therefore, those extraordinary guardians were vested with absolute power, legislative as well as executive, to remove that danger. The other supreme powers of the state were thus suspended, and indeed destroyed; and thus, in strict verification of the prophecy, 'the beast,' or the Republic, had 'two horns,' or two committees, by which alone it was governed. And these committees, whether we consider their names, *Committees of Safety*, or the professed but false design of their institution, *the care of the common weal*, were like the horns of a lamb (g)". Thus then, while Mr. Kett and Mr. Galloway concur in making an application of this prophetic figure to the Republic, or the Revolution of France, they considerably differ in their interpretations of the subordinate branches.

But notwithstanding that general agreement which subsists between these two commentators in their subsequent pages, on the application of this beast which rose out of the earth, and which had horns like a lamb, the opinion is by no means universal. Mr. Faber, who has written since either of the above, takes up this figure in a different manner, and not only gives the whole a different interpretation, but controverts the sentiments which both Mr. Kett and Mr. Galloway had advanced. The reasons which he has

given in opposition to these commentators, it must be acknowledged, are not only strong, but, in some instances, conclusive. And, admitting a position which he has laid down in page 215, the consequence which he aims to establish is inevitable, namely, that the theories of Mr. Kett and Mr. Galloway must be wrong. "A commentator upon the prophecies of Daniel and St. John, (says Mr. Faber,) before he ventures to introduce any exposition founded upon present circumstances, ought to make it clearly appear, that it both accords with the chronological order so carefully preserved in these prophecies, that it strictly harmonizes with the language of symbols, and that it demonstrates *every part* of the prediction to tally *exactly* with its supposed accomplishment." (g)

That this rule, which is excellent in general, would remove all scruples, if it could be rendered applicable to all subordinate particulars, will not admit a doubt; but it may well be questioned, whether it can be reduced to practice, when we attempt to "*demonstrate every part, in order to make it tally with the supposed accomplishment of a prophecy.*" There are, without any doubt, allusions in the prophecies to a variety of minutiae which elude our grasp, but which, in many cases, we should behold with critical exactness, could we but perceive them with that perspicuity, with which we behold the more prominent and leading features in the great accomplishment of predictions.

These observations are, perhaps, more or less applicable to all the prophecies; but they acquire an additional force when we view them in connection with events that are now passing before us. The great drama is opened, and many transactions of the last importance have taken place; but many of the scenes are still hidden from our view. To comprehend the whole, it is necessary that we make ourselves acquainted with the whole; but as some parts are evidently lodged in futurity, though, in all probability, at no great distance from us, those parts must of necessity be obscure, and, in some instances, totally unknown.

But, while Mr. Faber rejects the expositions given by Mr. Galloway and Mr. Kett, it is but just that we should hear his own.

"As the *secular beast* (he observes,) is represented with *seven heads and ten horns*, so the *ecclesiastical beast* appears with only *one head and two horns*. Now, since we have already seen, that the secular beast under his last head, is the divided Roman empire under the line of Carolingian emperors, the *ecclesiastical beast* under his single head, who has co-existed and co-operated with the secular beast, must necessarily be the *corrupt church of Rome, under the line of those pretended universal bishops, the Popes*. And here we cannot but observe the wonderful exactness with which the two principal apocalyptic symbols, the first and the second beast, are contrived. The Roman empire, having existed under *seven* different constitutions; is described by a beast with *seven heads*; but the *Catholic church of Rome*, never having existed under more than *one* form of government, namely the *Papal*, is therefore described by a *beast with only one head.*" (b)

On the two horns which resembled those of a lamb, after

(f) Kett, p. 376, vol. i.

(g) Galloway, vol. i. p. 170.

(g) Faber, vol. ii. p. 215.

(b) Faber, vol. ii. p. 234.

having made some previous observations, Mr. Faber delivers his sentiments in the following words: "The regular and secular clergy; then under their respective generals and bishops, are the two horns or ecclesiastical kingdoms of the papal Catholic empire. These horns appeared to the prophet to be of a different form from those of the first or temporal beast: they resembled the horns of a lamb. Now, when we recollect that the second beast is styled a false prophet, we can hardly doubt but that the symbol was so constructed in allusion to his character. Accordingly, the two ecclesiastical horns claimed to be the only servants of the Lamb of God, and affected to be like him in meekness and humility. Solemnly devoting themselves to a life of celibacy, and ever engaged in a round of religious ceremonies, they appeared to the deluded populace to be faints indeed, far removed from all the cares and vanities of this transitory world. And, in order that this impression might not be too soon worn off, new faints were at seasonable intervals added to the calendar; and their names enrolled along with those of the real servants of the Lamb, the holy apostles of the primitive church. Even the Sovereign Pontiff himself, who had a look more stout than his fellows, delighted nevertheless to style himself, with sanctified hypocrisy, the servant of the servants of God." (i)

Such are the opinions of these acute writers on the import and application of the second beast, of which St. John speaks in chap. xiii. 11. It would be foreign to the nature of this Appendix to enter into an investigation of the merits and demerits of their respective opinions. On this point the sentiments of our readers will probably be divided; and, after all that may be said and written upon the subject, a termination of the commotions which are at present agitating the world, seems necessary to dispel those clouds which hover over us. Nevertheless we cannot but conceive, that the opinion given by Mr. Galloway on the two horns of the lamb, namely, that they import the two Committees of Safety established by Robespierre, discovers a refinement which seems hardly congenial with the nature of prophecy. The prophet, directed by the inspiration of God to look through a train of contingencies to some infallible issue, and commanded to record his vision for the instruction of the future generations of the world, can scarcely be supposed to place in the front of his communications, and as one of the most remarkable properties in it, the description of two transient committees, which, in point of duration were born only to expire. Something of a more permanent nature, the whole analogy of prophetic annunciation induces us to believe, must have been the object which the apostle had in view: the movements of a few years may probably direct us, in our researches, to facts and events which are already in existence, but which we have at present no clue to reach.

But whatever difference there may be in the opinions of those writers, whose names have been introduced, on the particular application of a given figure in prophecy, there is one point on which they all harmonize together; and that is, that the prophecies both of Daniel and St. John instruct us to expect some tremendous power in hostility to the truths of the Gospel. This power can neither be

pagan nor papal Rome. Both of these are clearly delineated in the sacred pages; their respective features are noticed with discriminating accuracy; and events in both cases have fully demonstrated, that the prophetic Spirit did not err. Still there is another power, as distinct from Paganism and Popery, as these are from each other, characterized in the sacred language, under certain symbols, which cannot, with any tolerable propriety, be applied either to pagan or apostate Rome. The writings of Daniel have been thought to furnish us with marks of this power. Mr. Galloway (k) and Mr. Kett (l) have both found it typified by Daniel, under the character of the little horn (m); while Mr. Faber, admitting the general principle, but doubting of the particular application made by those writers, directs our attention to the Antichrist of which St. John speaks in his Epistles; and to the harvest of the wrath of God (n), and that subsequent vintage (o) of which he speaks in the Revelations. (p)

Thus much, however, is clear; all admit the prophecy concerning such a power as is here described; all agree in the general outlines of its features; and all agree that the Revolutionary commotions of France exhibit to the world a most striking resemblance of the power which has been predicted. In short, they seem to be unanimous in their judgments, that the factions which have alternately or successively prevailed in that distracted country have uniformly retained, amidst all their changes, the discriminating features of atheistical Antichrist, which St. John foretold should come into the world, and deny both the Father and the Son.

From the passages which have been quoted out of the writings of Daniel, St. Paul, St. Peter, St. Jude, and St. John, we presume it will appear evident, that an allusion is made to a certain power which should come in the last days to afflict the professing Christian world. "The Holy Spirit (says Mr. Kett,) has spoken in explicit terms, not only of those who were to corrupt the faith, as the Papists have done, with their false glosses and innovations, or oppose it with open force, as has been the practice of Mahometans; but of those who were first to undermine it by every insidious art, and, finally, by the union of fraud with violence, were to establish the dominion of Infidelity (q)." — "And their characters, principles, conduct, and success, (continues the same author in his next page,) are so clearly represented, that these inspired writers have in a manner anticipated the history of those false teachers, who have been in the past and in the present age distinguished by the name of Free Thinkers, Sceptics, Philosophists, or Illuminati."

The rise and progress of Jacobinism, a term which, however differently defined, seems to include every species of Infidelity, correspond with the prophetic declarations. This is a system which places itself in a state of hostility to religion and virtue, while it professes to annihilate monarchy, and to give new principles to law. The facts brought forward by the Abbé Barruel, and Professor Reichenow, have clearly shewn, that a conspiracy had been actually formed for the extinction of Christianity, and for the abolition of social order, by a set of men whose de-

(i) Vol. ii. p. 247.

(k) P. 402. (l) Vol. ii. p. 3:2. (m) Chap. vii. 8.
(n) Chap. xiv. 15. (o) Ch. xiv. ver. 18—20.
(p) Vol. ii. p. 408. (q) Vol. ii. p. 109.

mand the execration of mankind. The facts adduced by these writers prove incontrovertibly, that the system which had been established for the execution of this diabolical plan, was introduced into, and diffused through, many countries with unexampled perseverance, secrecy, and art, and threatened universal ruin; that this systematic conspiracy has been the *main spring* of the Revolution in France; and that the power created by this Revolution, became, in return, its chief support and coadjutor. (r)

It was about the year 1720, that Voltaire, who grew hardened in iniquity as he advanced in years, seems to have formed a design to banish Christianity from the world. Why this design should have been formed by him, though we are not expressly told, it is not difficult to conjecture. "Men (says Mr. Locke,) set themselves against the Scriptures, when they find that the Scriptures will not countenance their deeds." Ambition also had its influence upon his resolution, as appears from his own declaration: "I am weary (said he,) of hearing people repeat, that twelve men have been sufficient to establish Christianity; I will prove that *one* may suffice to overthrow it." (s)

Prior to the above period, it is well known, that Infidelity had been wandering through the world. Solitary individuals were to be found, who cherished its principles, because they afforded them an asylum from those remorse of conscience which succeed to vicious actions. These principles were, however, first embodied into a practical system of wickedness by *Voltaire, D'Alembert, Frederic II. of Prussia, Diderot,* and other inferior confederates in iniquity. It was this *royal and literary* junto, that first gained and employed the civil power to aid, and openly to avow an adherence to the cause of Infidelity. (t)

"We have seen, (says Mr. Faber,) that the regular series of events leads us to place the king mentioned by Daniel after the Reformation: and we have likewise seen what sins have been predicted to be most prevalent in *the last days*: we have only, therefore, to study the character of this king, and to compare his deeds with the vices which prophecy declared should prevail, in order to determine whether we are to look for his manifestation, not only after the Reformation, but in that period of the 1260 years, which is peculiarly distinguished by the title of *the last times* (u)."—"This, (says Mr. Kett,) is exactly the period assigned by the prophetic word of God, for the appearance of the second beast and his image; we are therefore authorized to assert, that the present reign of the *Infidel Antichrist* has been expressly foretold." (v)

The period in which this monster disclosed its horrors to the world, was highly favourable to its birth and growth. A combination of circumstances had disgusted the world with impositions, and prepared the human mind for every adventure that could promise it deliverance from its oppressive yoke. The means, however extravagant, or however absurd, were overlooked, in the prospect of obtaining an end that should break the fetters which spiritual oppression had forged, and introduce that liberty to which they had been strangers for ages.

"When the revival of letters enabled men to see the mass of absurdities and impieties which had been taught by the Church of Rome as essential parts of Christianity, scepticism was the natural result of this discovery. Reason, just arisen from her slumbers, or liberated from her long confinement, seized the truths which were presented to her view, with all the eagerness that consistency could inspire, or novelty could excite. Proud of the treasures she had acquired, and yet ignorant how to manage them to advantage; disgusted with surrounding superstition and bigotry, impatient of control, and dazzled with the light, though glimmering, which now broke through the darkness of the middle ages, she too seldom distinguished religion from the gross corruptions with which she had been loaded; and, usurping the seat of judgment, she often decided upon subjects not amenable to her tribunal, and blindly opposed the authority of a power which it was both her duty and her interest to obey." (w)

Dr. Priestley, in his Discourses on the Evidences of Revealed Religion, has asserted, that "the parent of modern Infidels, both among Mahometans and Christians, was Averroes, a Saracen Mahometan of the twelfth century." This statement may be just; but, as Kett observes, though the Arabian impostor may be considered as the father, yet surely modern Infidelity was brought forth by the mother of harlots;—by the superstition and degeneracy of the church of Rome. And, to compromise any difference of opinion which may prevail respecting its origin, we may, perhaps, conclude with safety, that Infidelity is the legitimate offspring of Mahometanism and Popery;—an offspring born to be the chastisement of both, and to exhibit to the world an instance of the divine retribution on this side the grave, in which Popery has produced a monster that has been, or will be made, the principal instrument in destroying its own parent. (x)

On the system of *Voltaire* and his colleagues, it is needless to make any further animadversions; but the methods which were adopted by them to diffuse the poison of their principles through Europe, is really deserving a little consideration. It was from the fullest confidence that their plans were too far advanced in their operations to fail of success, that *Condorcet*, the favourite pupil of *Voltaire*, and of whom he declared that "he should feel a consolation in leaving him upon earth when himself and *D'Alembert* should die," was emboldened in 1785 to publish to the world the secret correspondence of the master movers of their plan. Its effects had long been felt by the public mind, and ingenious men had marked the progress of these effects without once suspecting the real cause which called them into being. Nor did the friends of Christianity, when *Condorcet's* publication avowed the design which had been projected, and the effects which had resulted from the operation of their plan, give credit to the extent of its existence, or form any conceptions of the success which had attended its progress. Depraved as human nature is, they were unwilling to believe it so completely abandoned, and so lost to every principle that can dignify and ennoble man, as the avowals of *Condorcet* would compel them to

(r) See Kett, vol. ii. p. 111.
vol. ii. p. 146.

vol. i. p. 322.
VOL. II.

(s) Cited by Kett,
(t) See p. 113.

(u) Faber,
(v) See Kett, vol. ii. p. 114.

(w) Kett, vol. ii. p. 115.

(x) See Kett, vol. ii. p. 116.

acknowledge. Unhappily, the progress of time and events has proved how much they were deceived by their humane incredulity. The torrent which at once deluged the nation of France, awakened them from their unsuspecting tranquillity, and they were first alarmed with a full conviction that Infidelity was at their doors.

After having unhinged the public mind, Voltaire and his associates proceeded to assume a much bolder tone. The mask had only been worn so long as prudence rendered it necessary to conceal their motives; it was dropped upon the same principles as it was put on;—to serve an occasion, to promote their interest, and to delude mankind. On the leading features of religion, Voltaire, notwithstanding his boasted attachment to morality, delivers himself as follows:

“The *Universal Cause*, that God of the philosophers of the Jews and of the Christians, is but a chimera and a phantom.”—“The phenomena of nature only prove the existence of God to a few prepossessed men: so far from bespeaking a God, they are but the necessary effects of matter prodigiously diversified.”—“It is more reasonable to admit with *Manes* of a twofold god, than of the God of Christianity.”—“We cannot know whether a God really exists, or whether there is the smallest difference between good and evil, or vice and virtue.”—“Nothing can be more absurd than to believe the soul to be a spiritual being.”—“The immortality of the soul, so far from stimulating man to the practice of virtue, is nothing but a barbarous, desperate, and false tenet, and contrary to all legislation.”—“All ideas of justice and injustice, of virtue and vice, of glory and infamy, are purely arbitrary, and dependant upon custom.”—“Conscience and remorse are nothing but the foresight of those physical penalties to which crimes expose us.”—“The man who is above the law can commit, without remorse, the dishonest act that may serve his purpose.”—“The fear of God, so far from being the beginning of wisdom, is the beginning of folly.”—“The command to love one’s parents, is more the work of education than of nature.”—“Modesty is only an invention of refined voluptuousness.”—“The law which condemns married people to live together, becomes barbarous and cruel on the day they cease to love one another (a).” Such were the principles avowed by Voltaire; which, by the deceitfulness of their operations, while under a semblance of truth, that professed to stab the superstition which gave them birth, directed their force against the fundamentals of Christianity, and every principle of religion and morality, and induced about thirty millions of souls (b) to renounce the profession of Christianity, while the majority disowned a God.

When time had so far ripened the plot which these men or monsters agitated, as to insure impunity, if not success, they contrived to institute a club at the house of Baron Holbach in Paris, of which Voltaire was elected honorary and perpetual president; and it must be acknowledged, that he was admirably adapted for that *bad eminence*. This took place about the year 1764. To conceal the real design which they had in view, till the world should be better

prepared by imperceptible degrees for their sublime blasphemy, they denominated themselves Economists.

The primary object of this club was a diffusion of their false philosophy; and the first step they took was to issue from the press an inundation of books and pamphlets, which at once besieged religion, morals, government; and law. These, circulating in almost every direction, soon found their way to the extremities of Europe, and imperceptibly took possession of public opinion. As soon as the sale was sufficient to pay the expences, inferior editions were printed, and either given away or sold at a low price; circulating libraries of them were formed, and reading societies were instituted. While they constantly denied these productions to the world, they contrived to give them celebrity, through their confidential agents and correspondents, who were not always entrusted with the entire secret.

By degrees they got possession of nearly all the reviews and periodical publications, established a general intercourse with the distant provinces, by means of hawkers and pedlars, and instituted an office to supply all schools with teachers. Such were the steps on which they ascended to dominion, and by which they seized the helm of the public mind, which smiled as it marched into captivity, without feeling the least alarm. “The lovers of wit and polite literature were caught by *Voltaire*; the men of science were perverted, and children corrupted in the first rudiments of learning, by *D’Alembert* and *Diderot*; stronger appetites were fed by the secret club of *Baron Holbach*; the imaginations of the higher orders were set dangerously afloat by *Montesquieu*; and the multitude of all ranks were surprised, confounded, and hurried away by *Rousseau*.” (c)

The effects which resulted from the philosophy of these men, prior to the year 1773, may be collected from their own Letters, from which the following extracts have been taken: “In Russia the new philosophy was protected by the empress; and the defenders of Christianity were at their last gasp in Poland, thanks to king *Poniatowski*.” The conduct and principles of *Frederic* speak for *Prussia*; and in the north of *Germany*, the sect of Philosophists daily gained ground, thanks to the *landgraves*, *marquises*, *dukes* and *princes*, *adepts* and *protectors*.” In *Spain* it was undermining the Inquisition, and a great revolution was operating in ideas there, as well as in *Italy*. “Philosophy (says *Frederic*,) is beginning to penetrate into superstitious *Bohemia*, and into *Austria*, the former abode of superstition. In our Protestant countries we go on much brisker.” In *Paris* “many philosophers are to be found behind the counter.” *D’Alembert* writes, “I see every thing in the brightest colours: I foresee the *Jansenists* naturally dying off the next year, after having strangled the *Jesuits* in this,—toleration established, the *Protestants* recalled,—the priests married,—confession abolished,—and *fanaticism* (their cant term for religion) crushed: and all this without its being perceived.” And he expressly attributes this grand triumph to the *Encyclopaedia*. He smiles at the blinded parliaments, “who think they are serving religion, while they are forwarding reason without the least suspicion. They are the public executioners, who take their orders from philosophy,

(a) Cited by Kett, vol. ii. p. 150.

(b) Galloway, vol. ii. p. 117.

(c) Annual Register, as cited by Kett, vol. ii. p. 152.

“without

“without knowing it.” In Calvin’s own town (Geneva), he boasts, “there are but a few beggarly fellows who believe in Christ.” Voltaire writes with excessive joy, “that England and Switzerland were overrun with men who hated and despised Christianity, as Julian hated and despised it,—and that from Geneva to Berne not a Christian was to be found (d).” Such were the effects which these men perceived, or fancied that they perceived, resulting from the principles which they had been so anxious and so diligent to establish. And, though in some places their views were more extensive than their successes, events have awfully proved that their deceptions were of a very partial nature. The methods which were pursued by them to carry their schemes into execution, were adapted to the end which they wished to obtain; the condition, genius, and habits of the different states were carefully studied, that the poison which they were about to administer, might be permitted to operate, without creating any suspicion, or occasioning any alarm.

The great body of the people having imbibed, by imperceptible degrees, those principles which the *Encyclopædia* and other works were written with a design to inculcate, were easily persuaded to despise restraint, and trample upon the most sacred obligations. And, emerging from those idolatrous superstitions to which they had been so long enslaved, but which they could not now acknowledge without a blush, they became prepared for the perpetration of every species of wickedness. Amid such an universal confusion and darkness, the passions became every day more predominant, till nothing was esteemed criminal but that which attempted to check the progress of this systematic madness.

The conspirators, ever attentive to the movements of the public mind, now saw, with pleasure, their plot advancing fast towards maturity, and nearly ripe for the long anticipated explosion; nothing appeared to be wanting to complete their projects, but a concentration of their scattered powers. They saw the necessity of a systematic union, and this they effected in the *Jacobin Club*:—that club from which proceeded 40,000 inferior clubs, all obedient to its

(d) See Kett, vol. ii. p. 155.

* *Barruel*, in his *Memoirs*, describes this *Encyclopædia* to be “a vast emporium of all the sophisms, errors, and calumnies against religion, from the first schools of impiety to the day of their enterprise.” *Diderot*, who was one of its principal compilers, compares it to a “gulf, or rather a rag basket, into which they promiscuously threw every thing half examined, ill digested, good, bad, and indifferent, but always incoherent.”—“This compilation (says Mr. Galloway,) was a vast and laboured collection, and, among other things, of the dark and mystical parts of ancient, and of the errors of modern philosophy and impiety. In short, it was, and yet is, an artful and chaotic mixture of gross contradictions, and impious errors and absurdities, of deism and atheism, of spirituality and materialism, of virtue and vice, of truth and falsehood, of religion and blasphemous impiety; in which the first are but slightly touched, or placed in the back ground, and in the deepest shades; while the last are enforced upon the imagination with all the management of cunning and deception. It was artfully calculated, first, to confound the human intellect, then to seduce it into scepticism; and, afterward, to plunge it, thus bewildered, into the grossest errors and the blackest impiety.”

GALLOWAY, vol. i. p. 70.

nod, and ready to execute its will, however diabolical. (e)

“At an early period of the Revolution, (says Mr. Kett,) this fraternity of illuminated *Free Masons*, took the name of *Jacobins*,—from the name of a convent where they held their meetings. They then counted 300,000 adepts, and were supported by two millions of men scattered through France, armed with torches and pikes, and all the necessary implements of revolution.” (f)

In this great feminary of iniquity they threw off their mask, and openly avowed those principles which had been previously ripening through the various stages of progression. They declared that “all men are equal by nature.”

“That the free will or liberty of man is unrestrained by any law either human or divine.

“That human nature possesses endless perfectibility.

“That insurrection is lawful in civil society.

“That death is only an eternal sleep of the soul.

“That the ancient sabbath (established by God himself at the creation of the world) ought to be abolished, and the times of the year be calculated by decades.

“That tutelary gods, even dead men, may be canonized, consecrated, and worshipped.

“That Jesus Christ was an impostor.

“That human reason is the only true god.” (g)

“An earthquake (says Mr. Faber,) is the symbol of a violent revolution, either religious or political; and a tenth part of the great city, or the Roman empire, is manifestly the same as one of the ten horns of the Roman beast (h).”—In the year 1789 the tenth part of the city fell; and in the earthquake were slain seven thousand men of name, nobles and prelates, exclusive of their more humble victims.” (i)

The year 1789 was styled the first year of Liberty; but Infidel Antichrist had not yet attained his full purpose. He panted to soar with a bolder flight than any of his predecessors in iniquity; and he rested not till he had established the reign of demoniac equality and frantic atheism.

Till the 12th of August 1792, the French Jacobins had only dated the annals of their Revolution by the years of their pretended liberty. On the day when the king was carried prisoner to the Temple, after having been declared to have forfeited his right to the crown, the rebel assembly decreed, that to the date of liberty should be added the date of equality. Antichrist now stood revealed in all his horrors; and the long continued efforts of Popery and Mahometanism were constrained to hide their diminished heads in the presence of a gigantic monster, who alike trampled upon the laws of man, and defied the Majesty of heaven.

On the 12th of August 1792, the Infidel king raised himself above all law; and, on the 26th of the same month, exalted himself above all religion. As the first of these days witnessed the abolition of all distinctions in civil society, so the second beheld the establishment of Atheism by law. It was then that a decree was passed which obliged all the clergy to quit the kingdom within a fortnight after its date; but instead of really allowing them the time spe-

(e) See Gall. vol. i. p. 74.

(g) Gallo vol. i. p. 75.

(i) Ib. p. 87.

(f) Vol. i. p. 190.

(h) Faber, vol. ii. p. 86.

cified in their own decree, their merciless pursuers employed the whole of that period in seizing, imprisoning, and putting them to death.

A great many of the clergy, through death and banishment were now no more; and but few traces of Christianity could be found in the reprobate metropolis of the atheistical Republic. One of the churches was converted into a heathen temple, and the rest were used as places of public festivity and amusement. To these places the abandoned citizens of Paris thronged in multitudes; but not, as formerly, professionally to worship their Maker, but to hear his holy name blasphemed, his existence denied, and his eternal Son derided and ridiculed as an impostor.

On the 27th of the same month, one of these miscreants caused an oath to be taken by all the members of the National Assembly, that every exertion should be used to purge the earth of royalty; and it was decreed, that the Convention should be, what they were pleased to term, *A Committee of Insurrection against all the kings in the universe*. Claiming a diabolical pre-eminence above mere private assassins, they openly and systematically proposed to institute a band of patriots, who, either by sword, pistol, or poison, should attempt to murder the sovereigns of all nations. The proposal, indeed, was not carried into effect, but it was rather postponed than abandoned; it was passed by, on the ground of expediency, but was not reprobated on that of its innate turpitude. It might still be considered as the sentiment of the meeting; for it was ostensibly delayed on no other ground, than till it might be considered whether the measure might not be imprudent, by inducing the objects of their vengeance to make reprisals.

On the 6th of November 1792, a discourse upon Atheism was pronounced by Dupont, and highly applauded by the Convention. During the progress of the Revolution a comedian, dressed as a priest of the Illuminati, publicly appeared, personally attacking Almighty God, in these memorable words: "No! thou dost not exist. If thou hast power over the thunderbolts, grasp them, aim them at the man who dares set thee at defiance in the face of thine altars. But no; I blaspheme thee, and I still live; no, thou dost not exist."

On the 19th of November, a decree of fraternity, and assistance to their brethren in rebellion throughout Europe, was passed; and on the 21st, the President ordered it to be translated into all languages, as the manifesto of all nations against kings. On the 15th of December, another decree was enacted for extending the French system to all countries occupied by their armies; and, on the 19th, Marat asserted in the Jacobin Club, that, in order to cement liberty, two hundred thousand heads ought to be struck off with the national club.

On the 17th of October 1793, all external signs of religion were abolished; and, with a view to take off every restraint from profligacy and licentiousness, it was decreed, that an inscription should be set up in some conspicuous places of the public burying-grounds, purporting that "Death is only an eternal sleep." On the 25th, to obliterate all traces of the Christian sabbath, a new calendar was adopted by the Convention; in which, time was computed not by weeks, but by periods of ten days each. And, instead of the commemoration of those saints which papal superstition had deified, but which these enlightened

Revolutionists had abolished as impositions, festivals, similar to those of pagan Rome, were instituted to the national *Mabuzzim, the Virtues, Genius, Labour, Opinion, and Reward*. This substitute, we presume, was introduced to prevent the people from being superstitious!

On the 7th of November, Gobet, the republican bishop of Paris, with his grand vicars, and others of his clergy, entered the hall of the National Convention, solemnly resigned his functions, and abjured Christianity: several Protestant ecclesiastics abjured at the same time. In the same month, the pupils of the new republican school of the section *des Arais*, appeared at the bar; and one of them set forth, "that all religious worship had been suppressed" in his section, even to the very idea of religion. He added, that *he and his school fellows detested God*, and that, "instead of learning Scripture, they learned the declaration of rights." The President having expressed to the deputation the satisfaction of the Convention, they were admitted to the honour of the sitting, amid the loudest applauses. "We swear," exclaimed another in the hall of the Convention, in the same month, "to acknowledge no other worship than that of Reason; no other duty than Liberty;—no other priests than the magistrates."—"Yes," said numerous voices from every part of the hall, "we take the same oath."

On the 23d, Chaumette praised the people of Paris, who had renounced idolatry, and who only worshipped the Supreme Being. He moved the council of Paris to declare, that, in case any commotion should be stirred up in favour of fanaticism, all the clergy should be imprisoned:—and, considering that the people of Paris had declared, that they acknowledged no other worship than that of Reason and Truth, the council resolved, "that all the churches and temples of different religions and worship which were known to be in Paris, should be instantly shut, and that every person requiring the opening of a church, should be put under arrest as a suspected person." Chaumette recommended, "that the will of such sections should be respected, as had renounced all religious worship, except that of Reason, Liberty, and the Republican Virtues." And, finally, to close the black catalogue of legislative enormities, on the 6th of June 1794, fornication was established by law, as atheism and anarchy had been in the preceding years. It was on this day that the Convention decreed, that "there is nothing criminal in the promiscuous intercourse between the sexes." (k)

Such then was this new Antichristian power, well known through Europe by the common appellation of *Jacobinism*;—a power, which the degrading superstitions of Popery, co-operating with the fallies of ambition, and the impudence of Infidelity, erected upon the ruins of the altar and the throne. These are the causes which gave energy to a power that has spread desolation and terror over the fairest portions of Europe;—a power which became at once conspicuous and tremendous, by being elevated upon those immolated carcases which it had slain, and by being reddened with that gore which it had wrung from its dying victims.

(k) For a further elucidation of the progress of Infidelity, and for evidence on the above facts, see Kett, vol. ii. p. 199—207. Faber, vol. ii. p. 88—93. See also Galloway, vol. i. and ii. in which the progress of iniquity is traced with diligence.

It is this power which, trained in the schools of prostituted philology, put on the alluring dress of *mildness*, *virtue*, and *religion*. Bewitching in its infancy by its deceitful smiles, it captivated with the visor that it assumed, the victims of oppression; but, when grown to maturity, it discovered in rapine and in blood its sanguinary and destructive spirit; and avowing its hostility to every established institution, whether human or divine, it revelled in carnage, and, like Saturn, devoured its own offspring. This is the power, that with philanthropy melting on its lips, nurtured malice and vengeance in its heart; which boasted of honour, and discovered perjury in its practice;—which enthroned liberty, the more effectually to forge in peace those fetters which were destined to enslave mankind;—which fascinated Europe with its harangues on the *Rights of Man*, while its actions demonstrated that the possession of property became criminal in its sight;—which practised an organized system of licensed robbery; perpetrated murder with every species of inhumanity, and then appealed to its thunder to justify the deed.

“ This execrable power, (says Mr. Kett,) which alone can steel the hearts of its votaries against every feeling of nature, has dated to sanction treason, parricide, lust, massacre; and to infuse into the breasts of its subject multitudes a new passion, which has sunk them beneath the level of the brute creation,—a passion for the fight of their fellow-creatures in the agonies of death;—a literal thirst for human blood.

“ This is the power that, first enthroning seven hundred tyrants in the place of one king, ruled twenty-five millions of slaves with the iron sceptre of terror, and for five years made France a slaughter-house; that formed the web of its laws, of the most complex and intricate texture, and changed them at the fancy of the moment, or for the express purpose of ensnaring the innocent;—and, absolute in all things else, disdained to preserve the prerogative of mercy. This is the power, that, calling evil good, and good evil, putting darkness for light and light for darkness, has thought to change *times and laws*, for the express purpose of destroying every vestige of true religion; and that has defied reason, after having degraded it to madness.—That has fettered its vassals in the chains of requisition, a tyranny before unheard.—That has transformed the artizans and peasants into a mass of banditti, deluged the country with torrents of their blood, and marked the frontiers with the vast piles of their bodies.—That, throwing away the sword of justice, made the guillotine keep pace with the slaughter of the field of battle, and crowded the prisons with numbers greater than the captives of war.—That, mingling priests and nobles, women, children, and peasants, with indiscriminating barbarity, made them the wretched victims of its fury, tortured their feelings with the most exquisite and sportive cruelty, and made them drink the cup of misery to the dregs.—That, pillaging alike the church, the palace, and the cottage, banishing thousands of the inhabitants from their country, destroying villages, towns, and cities, seizing every monument of art, and drying up every source of commerce, sets up the standard of desolation in its own dominions. This is the power which, concealing the dagger of terror under the olive-branch of peace, and, pretending to plant the tree of liberty in every country conquered by

“ its arms, or deluded by its professions, invariably profanes their altars, exiles or murders their priests, abolishes their most sacred laws and institutions, and avails itself of their riches and resources to increase the instruments of its own dominion. This is the power, which, not content with hurling defiance at every sovereign upon earth, has raised its voice against the Majesty of heaven, has reviled the Saviour of the world, destroyed his churches, persecuted his ministers, forgiven his worship, and, to complete the measure of guilt, has declared, in terms surpassing the boldness of all former impiety, “ *That there is no God* ” (1)

“ Let it not be imagined, (continues the same author,) that the preceding is an exaggerated picture; every trait will be found in the *decrees*, the *reports*, the *public records* of their enormities.” This, then, is the power which commences an attack upon our faith in the providence of God, and dazzles the nations with that *splendor* which seems to encircle her actions, and gleam from her arms. But let us not be deluded by the glittering meteor. Nations abandoned to every vice, have been made instrumental in the hand of God to inflict his judgments upon apostate professors. Success is no mark of the divine approbation; the most powerful states, having fulfilled the divine pleasure, have afterward been compelled to drink the cup of trembling, and have become the seats of desolation. History furnishes us with numerous instances of this nature; and, in a particular manner, the deplorable state of Babylon bears witness to this awful truth.

The power of which we speak, permitted to triumph for a season, to punish those who, having corrupted the purity of the Gospel, seem to have been given up to strong delusions that they might believe a lie, may fill Europe with consternation, till the blood which Popery has wantonly spilled, shall be fully avenged; but her aggrandizement, agreeably to the prophetic denunciation, being of short continuance, must give place to the reign of righteousness in that happy æra, when the nations of the earth shall learn war no more.

SECTION V.

Acts of Revolutionary Cruelty, sanctioned by the Legislature of France.

IT is not solely through those displays of insolence and impiety, which this unholy power has manifested toward God, that it has rendered itself conspicuous to the world: in the exercise of its dominion, it has been as cruel as it has been daring. The instances of brutality which might be adduced, would even rival, if not over-balance, the past excesses of papal enormity.

The *priests of papal Antichrist* having been the great oppressors of the saints of God through former ages, were made the primary objects of Revolutionary vengeance. The calamities which the church of God had been doomed to suffer by the priestly order, formed indeed no part of the object which these miscreants pursued; they were urged by very different motives; but while they indulged their inhuman passions, and glutted themselves with blood, they were made the tremendous instruments of unconscionable retaliation.

(1) Kett, vol. ii. p. 198, et seq.

"In 1792, the Jacobin Club, having consulted the Ecclesiastical Committee, (of constitutional clergy,) through Mr. Voidel, had been told, in a circular letter, that, "whatever lengths they might go, they should be supported (m)." This was the sanction which they wanted to obtain; they needed no spur to urge them to deeds of bloody activity; their only dread was founded upon an apprehension of consequences: but this declaration exempted them from all the restraints of law. The turbulent characters in their neighbourhood, whose sentiments were in unison with their own, rejoiced in an opportunity of indulging their feelings, by joining a party of men, who, like themselves, delighted in the pangs of their fellow-creatures. These, uniting together, became a formidable body; and, in some places, their numbers were augmented, by seducing the common people to take part in their atrocities; and this was effected by using the name of the king, who had given his sanction to the decree which they had obtained in their favour. In many parts of the country, some of those who declined taking the oath which had been prescribed, were murdered at the doors of the churches, and in Brittany several priests are said to have been hunted through the forests, where, after enduring every extremity of hunger and fatigue, they miserably perished, even when they had escaped the vigilance of their pursuers. In many places their mangled carcases were afterwards found torn by briars, and half devoured by wild beasts. (n)

On the 25th of May 1792, a decree was passed, which condemned the nonjuring clergy to banishment. About the time of the Federation which followed, many of the clergy were put to death with circumstances more or less sanguinary; great numbers were crowded together in gaols and other places of confinement. At Mons there were 200; 300 at Cennes; others at Nantes and different towns; while, at Paris, all the gaols were found insufficient to contain the increased number of prisoners under the new dominion of Liberty. (o)

"By an edict of the Constituent Assembly, there was a general sale of all ecclesiastical property: and every kind of property connected with churches or charities was confiscated. The magnificent church of St. Genevieve at Paris, was changed by the National Assembly into a repository for the remains of their great men, or rather into a pagan temple, and, as such, was aptly distinguished by the name of the Pantheon, with this inscription, 'Aux Grands Hommes la Patrie reconnoissante,' on the front, according to a decree proposed by the impious Condorcet (p)." It was to this temple, or Pantheon, that the remains of Voltaire and of Rousseau were conveyed in a most magnificent procession; a compliment which was afterward paid to the infamous Marat, whom Kett styles, "the Nero of the Revolution." The bones of Voltaire were placed upon the altar, and incense was offered by the infatuated multitude in this reign of Liberty, to prove that they had renounced the worship of images and relics, and to demonstrate to the world that the dominion of superstition was at an end!

It was in that prostituted moment, when these friends of liberty were bowing down before the putrid ashes of

this arch enemy of Christ in silent adoration, that a voice was heard to utter, in a tone of agony and indignation, these memorable words, "O God, thou wilt be revenged." The sound awakened the prostrate throng, and they started from their devotion to bathe their hands in blood. Search was immediately made for the man who thus dared to interrupt these impious rites, and this Abdiel was probably sacrificed to the fury of the multitude.

To the penal laws which had been enacted against the clergy, the king, in conformity to that authority which he derived from the constitution, refused to give his sanction;—this refusal was made a pretence for the immediate abolition of monarchy. The tenth of August was the day that fixed its downfall. The faithful Swiss guards of Lewis and his few loyal adherents were sacrificed by a horde of furies, who disgraced the name of men as well as of citizens, and who were instigated by Petion, Manuel, Danton, the new members of the common council of Paris, and other abettors of anarchy and blood.

"On the 26th of August, it was decreed, that all ecclesiastics, who had not taken the national oath, should be transported. The number of these victims was 138 bishops, and 64,000 priests of the second order." (q)

The month of September was disgraced by more atrocious deeds, and by a far more sanguinary scene than those which had polluted August. In consequence of a plan which had been preconcerted, a band of assassins, composed of Federés and Marseillois, broke into the prisons in Paris, and, treating with contempt both the principles of justice and the forms of law, began a general assassination, which three days and nights were scarcely sufficient to measure. In this private butchery no less than seven thousand five hundred and five persons, who had been imprisoned from motives of private hatred or revenge, were inhumanly murdered; and, as a proof that these miscreants were employed to perform their diabolical work, they publicly demanded the wages of assassination. In short, massacres and butcheries were committed in all the prisons and religious houses. During the short intervals between these bloody scenes, the passions of the populace were fired. The relentless Roland had the care of the general police; the bloody Danton was the Minister of Justice; the insidious Petion was Mayor of Paris; and the treacherous Manuel was procurator of the common-hall. These magistrates must therefore, from the nature of their respective offices, have been either the authors, or the accessaries, of the massacres of September. (r)

On the 21st of January 1793, the King of France, after having suffered every indignity which the ingenious malice of his enemies could devise, was tried, condemned, and murdered upon a scaffold, in a manner that was an outrage to all humanity, justice, and law,—for the imputation of offences and crimes which his accusers had committed, and for the exercise of that prerogative which the constitution had given him. And, in the month of May 1794, the Queen of France, after having been exposed to hardships and indignities which are almost incredible, shared the fate of her unfortunate husband. (s)

The banishment and murder of the priests were almost instantly followed by the plunder of the churches. This

(m) Annual Register, p. 90, 91.

(n) See Kett, vol. ii. p. 212.

(p) Kett, p. 215.

(o) See p. 214.

(q) Kett, p. 115—117.

(r) See Kett, p. 217.

(s) Ibid. p. 219.

new depredation "produced nearly 1,350,000l. sterling; and through the whole extent of France there remained not a sacred vase, not even in the domestic chapels. (s)

The Revolutionary Tribunal was established upon the motion of Danton, March 5th, 1793. It authorized the incessant exercise of the guillotine, and thus confirmed the reign of terror in all its horrors. The Tribunal added daily, for a long time, new victims to the thousands who had fallen on the fatal days of August and September. Here the mockery of justice was complete; for, in the condemnation of the accused, the verdict of the jury, without the examination of witnesses, or even the confession of the prisoner, was declared sufficient to establish guilt. (t)

La Vendée presented to the world a scene of devastation and cruelty, which will be handed down to posterity, to excite the detestation of generations which are yet unborn. The Convention, unable to reduce these brave men by the sword, resolved to employ fire; and, on the fourth of August 1793, they passed a decree to accomplish this purpose;—a decree which cannot be read without filling the mind with horror. It enacted, "that all the corn should be carried into the interior; and that the castles, the villages, and the woods possessed by the royalists, should be burnt."

This decree was awfully carried into execution. Each column carried before it the torch of conflagration: an immense number of persons perished; and a tract of country of more than twenty leagues in circumference, became a prey to the flames. Men, women, and children, fled to the Roman Catholic army, to escape violence or death.

As a proof of the destruction and havoc made by this calamitous war, we may take the report of Carriere. "In the month of August, (says he,) the rebels had 150,000 men in arms; but the victories of Montagne and Chollet were so fatal to them, that the reporter passed over fourteen leagues of country entirely covered with their dead bodies." (u)

On the 5th of August, Le Quinio wrote to the Convention as follows: "I have caused 500 prisoners to be shot and drowned at Fontenai le Peuple. Le Vasseur de la Sarthe caused 700 to be shot and drowned between Samur and Orleans, in parties from fifty or sixty to a hundred." The Commissioner Garnier wrote thus to the Convention, on the tenth of December: "I have caused fifty-eight priests to be drowned." The same man, on another occasion, expressed himself thus: "Ninety priests have just been brought before me; I have drowned them, which has given me great pleasure." (v)

The massacre, in cold blood, of prisoners of war; the condemnation of persons accused without the form of trial, or a proof of guilt, are unhappily not without too many examples in the records of human depravity; but the conflagration of 1820 towns, villages, and hamlets, in one portion of its own territory; the deliberate assassination of women and children by thousands; the horrid pollution of female victims, expiring in the agonies of death; and

the establishment of a tanyard (w), under the auspices of Government, for manufacturing into leather, the skins of its murdered citizens,—are facts and deeds of atrocity, which exclusively disgrace the bloody annals of modern France, and give to the Revolution a dreadful pre-eminence in guilt. (x)

To describe, in regular detail, the varied acts of inhumanity and carnage, would be an almost endless task. Many French writers have transmitted the outlines to posterity, some of whom were spectators of the facts which they have recorded. There is one, who, on the whole, justifies the Revolution, and who, on that account, can hardly be suspected of exaggeration, from whom we will transcribe the following picture.

"In violation of every principle, murder, theft, plunder, massacre, and devastation, were legalized; and that, under the name of Revolutionary government: all the public functions were united in the Committee of Public Safety, where Robespierre had for a long time dominated. Then it was that this Committee became dictatorial, and hurried into the departments that horde of ferocious proconsuls, whom we have seen betraying and slaughtering the people, whose servants they were, and to whom they owed their political existence; sometimes carrying with them, in their murderous circuits, the guillotine; at others, declaring it permanent, which was saying, in other words, that the executioner was not to have a moment's rest. These monsters in mission, these colossuses in crime, these phenomena in cruelty, hunted men, as a German baron hunts wild boars." In another part, he relates what he confesses had never before been seen,—"Myriads of a great and enlightened nation, mutilated, decimated, shot, drowned, and guillotined by their own representatives. Rome, he observes, had a series of tyrants in succession, or, at least, at short intervals; but France had, at one and the same time, a host of Caligulas.—Tacitus (he adds,) would have broken his pencil, from regret at not being able to paint all the crimes which sprang from the monstrous junction of the ferocious Robespierre with the sanguinary Cuthon; the barbarous Billaud with the gloomy Amar; the tiger Collot with the tiger Carriere; the cut-throat Dumas with the cut-throat Cuffinbal; and a thousand subalterns, submissive to their orders: and Mirabeau undoubtedly saw a part only of these horrors, when he said, *Liberty slept only on mattresses of dead carcases.*"

The author, having thus acknowledged the inadequacy of language to convey to the mind of the reader a just idea of the horrors which he wished to express, exclaims as follows: "What a picture! The waves of the ocean swelled by the mangled bodies committed to the Loire; blood flowing in torrents down the streets of every town; the dungeons of a hundred thousand Bastiles groaning under the weight of the victims with which they are encumbered; the crape of death worn by every family; the threshold of every door stained with gore; and, as the height of insult, the word *humanity* en-

(s) Ibid. p. 222.

(t) Ibid. p. 229.

(u) Ibid. p. 224.

(v) Ibid. p. 230.

(w) "This establishment was instituted by the Committee of Public Welfare, of which Citizen Carnot, afterwards one of the five Directors, was, at that time, a leading member." Gifford, cited by Kett, vol. ii. p. 202.

(x) Ibid. p. 202.

"graven.

"graven on every tomb, and associated with death! Such was the lamentable aspect which France presented. On every frontispiece were to be seen the contradictory words *Liberty, Fraternity, or Death!* Alas! the last was the only one that was realized." (a)

"The massacre of St. Bartholomew, an event that filled all Europe with consternation, the infamy and horror of which have been dwelt upon by so many eloquent writers of all religions, and that has held Charles IX. up to the execration of ages, dwindles into child's play, when compared to the present murderous Revolution, which a late writer in France emphatically calls a *St. Bartholomew of five years*. According to Mr. Bossuet, there were about 30,000 persons murdered in all France on that day: there have been more than that number murdered in the single city of Lyons and its neighbourhood; at Nantes there have been 27,000; at Paris 150,000; in La Vendee 300,000. In short, it appears, that there have been two millions of persons murdered in France since it has called itself a Republic; among whom are reckoned 250,000 women, 230,000 children, (besides those murdered in the womb,) and 24,000 Christian priests." (b)

On the recital of the enormities above-mentioned, Mr. Faber observes as follows: "If such has been the effusion of blood in *France alone*, how will the dreadful catalogue of the miseries produced under the third woe be swelled, when all the wars which the Revolution has kindled are likewise taken into the account?" how will it be yet incalculably swelled, ere the terrific blast of this trumpet has ceased, by the *time of trouble* predicted by Daniel at the close of the 1260 years; a time such as never was, since there was a nation even to that same time? We have already beheld the effects of the first and second woes: do we need any further proof to convince us, that the third woe has begun to sound?" (c)

The axe of rapine being once lifted over the heads of the unhappy victims, it was in vain to solicit mercy. Those who attempted to make an application for it, were either repelled with indignity, or suspected to be tainted with those principles for which the sufferer was destined to meet his fate. Such applicants were told, that "the enlightened government of France possessed no power to soften the rigour of the laws," or to revoke a sentence which a company of banditti, at once venal and bloody, had pronounced. That *infallibility*, of which they had recently plundered his *Italian Holiness*, and which they had rejected with indignation as an abominable imposition, they transferred to their own *Uncivil* power, and became thus inconsistently the strenuous supporters of it, by preventing all appeal from the decision of their sanguinary laws. Like the detestable Inquisition which they had taught the people to abhor, they viewed family connections as presumptive evidences of guilt; so that those who had the misfortune to be suspected of being *suspicious*, or even of being connected with any who were thus suspected of being

suspicious persons, were in the high-road to those dungeons which were but so many passages that led to the guillotine. Yet, strange as it may appear, in the midst of these very actions, the directors of this great political machine persuaded the deluded people that they were establishing *Liberty*; and the delusion became more and more imposing, in proportion to the torrents of blood which flowed from their expiring neighbours and friends.

In such a state of society or anarchy, when fortune, life, and honour, depended upon the capricious sallies of sanguinary individuals, already bloated with human blood, we cannot be surprised at hearing that private assassinations were perpetrated with impunity and circumstances of horror; nor, from the torpor and insensibility which those deeds of darkness occasioned, that individual murders should be considered as trivial acts. In many cases suicide became the dreadful refuge of the unfortunate survivors of their families' wrongs; and this prevailed in a more especial manner among those, who, having been robbed of their dearest friends, and of the means of rendering life supportable, had abandoned religion, renounced their belief in the being of a God, and surrendered up all thoughts of an hereafter. These unhappy remnants of human nature, oppressed by calamities with which they were disqualified to grapple, sullenly retired from existence, having nothing further to hope or fear either in time or in eternity.

Thus, many of those who escaped the tribunal of the ruling faction, avoided the scaffold only to perish by their own hands. *Valazé* stabbed himself; *Ecbelle* and *Condorcet* preferred poison; *L'Huillier* killed himself in prison; *Rebecqui* drowned himself: these were agents in the atrocities of *Avignon* and the second of *September*. *Hidon*, and the academician *Champfort*, fell by their own hands. Such also was the end of *Roland*, who was one of the principal actors in the Revolution of the tenth of August. In the short space of two years, almost every individual of the principal actors in that massacre, was brought to a violent end.

Danton, (who, to use the language of Mr. Burke, "offered to this nation the civic kiss with lips just reeking with the blood of his murdered sovereign,") and *Weyermann*, the one who directed, and the other who executed the counsels of the insurgents, perished on the same day, and on the same scaffold. A similar fate befel many of those who decreed the death or imprisonment of the king. Of the 693 Members of the Convention who voted that the King was guilty, seven were assassinated, eight were suicides, thirty-four were proscribed, ninety-two were imprisoned, and sixty-five were guillotined. The addition of those who have since suffered in various ways, will swell this account to a far greater number.

Thus, for a considerable time, in the interior of France, each recent event surpassed in horror that which preceded it; and the metropolis was the centre of malice, atheism, and anarchy. In short, the conduct of the governors and the governed was equally an outrage to decorum, humanity, and consistency of conduct." (d)

(a) Page's Secret Hist. of the Revolution, cited by Galloway, vol. i. p. 249, 250.

(b) Gifford's Preface to the Translation of Gen Danican's *Banditti unmasked*, cited by Kett, vol. ii. p. 232, and by Faber vol. ii. p. 93, 94.

(c) Faber, vol. ii. p. 94.

(d) See Faber, vol. ii. p. 327—329; and also Kett, vol. ii. p. 243—252, to which Mr. Faber refers. In these pages of Mr. Kett the reader may find a finished picture of intolerant liberty.

It is well known, that the Revolution in France commenced in the year 1789; and the following is an abstract of the progress of murder, during the period of the three first legislatures of France; extending from the above date, to the latter end of the year 1795. Without vouching for its correctness in every respect, it may be safely averred, that the author, one of the most zealous promoters of that Revolution of which he details the errors, faults, and crimes, in 6 volumes, octavo, has not been guilty of wilful exaggeration.

“ *Individuals destroyed in consequence of the Revolution :*

“ Constituent Assembly	3,540
“ Legislative Assembly	8,044
“ National Convention	1,026,606
“ In the Field of Battle	800,000
“ In the Colonies	184,000
“ Total	2,022,190

“ Total of Emigrants within the above period 123,789

“ *Laws enacted during the above period :*

“ Constituent Assembly	2,557
“ Legislative Assembly	1,227
“ National Convention	11,210
	14,994”

It must not be forgotten, that the above statement reaches no further than the year 1795: if, therefore, we take into our account the many thousands, and tens of thousands, who have fallen since the above period, by intestine commotions, by foreign wars, by assassinations, by dungeons, and the guillotine, and add these to the numbers above specified, we shall have before us a catalogue, which, like Ezekiel's roll, will be written within and without, with lamentation, mourning, and woe. (e)

To prevent, in the midst of these commotions, every symptom of returning remorse, and to banish reflection from every bosom, the minds of the *Parisians* were kept in a continual fever of the most dissolute gaiety. “ Between the tenth of August 1792 and the first of January 1794, “ (says Robison,) upwards of two hundred new plays were “ acted in the Parisian theatres. Their immorality and “ their barbarism exceeded all conception. All the vo- “ luptuous sensuality of ancient Rome was brought upon “ the stage. No decoration was spared, that could dazzle “ the eye; and the dialogue and representation were cal- “ culated for inflaming the passions, and nourishing the “ hatred of all subordination (f).” This strange chaos of voluptuousness and murder must have been at once an effect and a cause of a depraved state of morals. The most sacred ties of society must have been unhinged by such an unnatural association; and, in fact, the result became an

(e) For the above statement of *destruction, emigrants, and laws*, see Mr. Kett, vol. ii. p. 233; in which he states his authorities for the above calculations.

(f) Robison, p. 252, as cited by Kett, vol. ii. p. 2, 6.

awful comment upon the supposition. In the year 1793, it was calculated that *one hundred and fifty divorces* (g) had taken place in Paris alone every month after the decree relative to marriage became a branch of their established laws. Other portions of the empire, without doubt, followed the example of the metropolis; and the fatal effects of such a measure must have been severely felt in almost every department of domestic life.

After the downfall of Robespierre, the effusion of human blood, within the precincts of the French territories, began to abate. France, however, had been previously converted into a vast *Aceldama*: or, to use the strong language of prophecy, its revolutionary sea became as *the blood of a dead man*, and *every living soul died in the sea*.

When we look back on that ground over which we have travelled, and connect together the different parts of those horrors which we have transiently surveyed, we cannot but feel our minds impressed with the awful and impartial judgments of God. An introduction of the Gospel was soon followed by an apostacy from its sacred principles;—an apostacy which became the more obnoxious to the wrath of heaven, because, under the sanction of the divine direction and approbation, the professed friends of the meek and lowly Saviour of the world perpetrated crimes, which heathen nations would blush to own.

But these crimes have been visited with calamities of a most dreadful nature. The iniquities of this apostate church have been made instrumental in procuring the judgments which have been inflicted on her, becoming, in the same moment, her progeny and scourge, and displaying to all future generations of mankind, that God, by his providence, superintends the affairs of the world, and, consistently with his righteousness, retaliates blood for blood.

“ What may, in some sense, (says Mr. Faber,) be “ called the *abortive offspring of Popery* *, has been made “ instrumental in the hands of God to visit the iniquities “ of its parent. The blood of those who repented not of “ the works of their hands, their idolatry, their murders, “ their forceries, their spiritual fornications, their pious, “ or rather impious frauds, has been prodigally shed: and

(g) Kett, vol. ii. p. 236.

* We may rather, I think, observe, that Infidelity is the *natural consequence* of Popery, than that it is its *abortive offspring*. For, if Popery is founded upon revelation, or, rather, is the same with it, as the Romish Doctors would instruct us to believe, men must abandon every principle which dignifies human nature, before they can suppose that such a revelation came from God. The objects of our faith, without all doubt, transcend our comprehension; but nothing can ever be an object of our belief, which, by involving absurdities and contradictions, becomes repugnant to the first principles of all human knowledge.

The mind of man, perceiving in the legendary tales and pretensions of Popery, not only absurdities and contradictions, but assertions which blasphemously ascribe to human beings the dominion of Omnipotence, and tenets which dethrone the Almighty, by robbing him of his incommunicable prerogatives, revolts with disgust from the daring scene; and, sinking into scepticism, from which it finds no method of escaping, it views religion altogether as a systematic imposition; and, finally, rests in a settled disbelief of every thing with which Popery professes to have any intimate connection. In short, men, under such unhappy circumstances, become Infidels, from being urged to believe contrary to their own convictions.

" it is very remarkable, that the French anarchists have introduced the horrors of war principally into popish countries; as if those nations which profess the purity of the Protestant religion were providentially preserved from danger.

" Not (continues this excellent writer,) that all Protestant countries have escaped. The mere name of *Protestantism* is of little importance when its spirit is no more. They who have apostatized from the religion of their fathers, must expect to partake of the vials of the wrath of God. Though *Antichrist* has reared his head in a popish country, and though he has prevailed most in regions once devoted to the papal superstition, yet the *apostacy* was not to be his only stage of action. His principles have tainted numbers, even under Protestant governments, agreeably to the sure word of prophecy, that the false teachers of *the last days* should allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them that live in error (b)." Of such characters the apostle observes as follows, *It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*

But, since the great apostacy which followed the introduction of the Gospel, has been overtaken by those calamities which Infidelity has inflicted on the friends of superstition, as a just retaliation of the miseries which they have occasioned, may we not presume to inquire, whether Infidelity, having trodden the implements of Papal idolatry in the dust, shall finally triumph in the world? Whether, in the order of Providence, this scourge was not even morally necessary to purge the professing Christian world of its abominations? And whether, after having lived its day, and accomplished the inscrutable purposes of heaven, it shall not finally sustain a total overthrow, and be in its turn an object of the divine vengeance? And, whether there are not to be found in the Apocalyptic visions, predictions that relate to a grand revolution which shall hereafter take place, before the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of God and his Christ?

It is not our design to enter into a distinct investigation of all these varied questions. The limits of an APPENDIX are not adapted for such inquiries; but all these questions will occasionally rise before us in the remaining pages; in which we shall consider, in relation to this great event, the opinions that have been delivered on those prophecies remaining yet to be fulfilled.

SECTION VI.

Infidelity, having lived its day, and been made instrumental in the hands of God in punishing corrupt and apostate professors, destined to perish. Commencement of the 1260 days mentioned by St. John. Popery obtained its enormous power, and Mahometanism began, in 606: Infidelity commenced at a subsequent period: all must expire together. The complexion of the times proves that we are living towards the close of the 1260 days or years. Many predictions yet unaccomplished, namely, the restoration of the Jews:—a grand confederacy of the enemies of Christ:—the battle of Armageddon:—the

Millennium; and Gog and Magog. Remarks on Gog and Magog, and on the grand confederacy. On the pouring out of the fourth vial; the fifth vial; the sixth vial. Observations on the downfall of Turkey, and on the present situation and restoration of the Jews.

IN the prophecies, both of Daniel and of St. John, we find an account of many events, which are not only predicted with circumstantial exactness, but laid out before us in chronological order. And, hence, we are furnished with many important marks to guide us in our inquiries into hidden facts, and to direct us to those future events which time has not yet brought to light. Among other subjects of prophecy, particular and frequent mention is made of a certain period, during which the Almighty, for reasons which are inscrutable to us, should permit his enemies to afflict and persecute his church. Why these things should be so, we must be content to remain ignorant, until we obtain a more intimate acquaintance with the mysterious œconomy of Heaven; and this can hardly, perhaps, be expected, till mortality shall be swallowed up in life.

" This period is indifferently described, as consisting of *three times and an half, forty-two months, or one thousand two hundred and sixty days*: for if we reckon a time to be equal to one year containing 360 days, 42 months, or 1260 days will be found exactly equal to *three such years and an half*. In the language of prophecy it is however a well known fact, that *natural years* are termed *days* (i)." It was thus that the Lord declared himself to Moses and Aaron, when the children of Israel had transgressed his commands. *After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years; and ye shall know my breach of promise.* (Numb. xiv. 34.) And hence it is, agreeably to this mode of computation, that 1260 days must be understood to mean 1260 years; while, following the same calculation, we must conclude that 42 months mean so many months of years; and *three years and a half*, which period was expressed by the word *times*, must, by the same analogy, give to us the same number of years of years. The plain consequence is, that the period of affliction thus variously expressed, during which the enemies of the church were to be permitted to triumph over her, amounts to 1260 natural years.

But, while this long period of troubles and calamities is so clearly predicted, a difficulty occurs as to our comprehension of it, which it became necessary for these prophets to remove. The period, in itself definite and progressive, places the fact itself beyond the reach of all dispute; it nevertheless became necessary that some marks should be given whereby its commencement should be known; for, without these, no accurate calculation could be made on the period of its accomplishment. Accordingly both Daniel and St. John, without giving us the precise year when these 1260 days were to begin, have given us decisive reasons to conclude, that this long period of complicated disasters has no connection with those persecutions which the church of Christ, in its infant state, was destined to suffer from the idolatrous emperors of pagan Rome.

Daniel, in his vision of the *four great beasts*, which he has plainly told us are *four empires or kingdoms*, has clearly

(b) See Faber, vol. i. p. 342.

(i) See Faber's Dissert. vol. i. p. 3.

intimated in his *seventh chapter*, that a certain power, into whose hands the saints should be given during the above afflictive period of 1260 years, should begin to arise in that age of the world, in which the last of those beasts which he saw in his vision (which is generally understood to mean the Roman empire,) should be divided into ten separate horns or kingdoms. And, consequently, we are hence fully instructed not to look for this power, till the Roman empire, through the inroads of the barbarous nations, was thus erected into ten separate and independent states. This event, it is well known, did not take place till after the days of Constantine, in which she made a formal profession of faith in Jesus Christ; and, therefore, it could not be till after the persecutions of the pagan emperors were brought entirely to an end. Hence then it will necessarily follow, that, as the 1260 days were to commence under a power which was to have no existence until the last or Roman beast should be divided into ten kingdoms, which event did not take place till after she became professionally Christian, their commencement must be posterior to the line of the pagan emperors; and, therefore, these afflictions can have no connection with those which the church suffered in her infant state.

In addition to these things, St. John, like Daniel, looked forward from his day to a period comparatively distant, for the commencement of these 1260 years; which he could not have done, if the persecutions under the pagan emperors had been the object that he had in view. These pagan persecutions were already begun; and he, at that moment, suffered as an exile in the island of Patmos. It is a well known fact, that Constantine published his famous edict in the behalf of Christianity so early as the year of our Lord 313; and, consequently, as only 313 years had elapsed from the commencement of the Christian æra to that period, the 1260 years of persecution could not possibly be included within the number. It is thus, that the prophecies of St. John concur with those of Daniel, in furnishing us with decisive marks, that these 1260 days of years are to be sought for in a period of time posterior to the persecuting triumph of pagan Rome.

“But, although (says Mr. Faber,) the pagan Roman empire has no connection with the persecution of the 1260 years, we are evidently to look for the grand promoters of it within the limits of the old Roman empire. The little horn, the ten horns, and the last head of the fourth beast, all arise out of that beast; the Roman empire, therefore, must necessarily comprehend every one of these powers.

“So again; since the Roman empire had embraced Christianity previous to its division into ten kingdoms, since all those ten kingdoms were converted very soon after their foundation, and since the little horn is presented as being contemporary with them, and as springing up among them; the little horn, whatever it may be designed to symbolize, must be some power, at least nominally, Christian. This point is proved by history; for, at the time when the Roman empire was divided, we shall in vain look for the rise of any pagan power within the limits of the empire, that at all answers to the character of the little horn. Yet it is manifest, that the little horns must have been long since in existence, because it is described as first beginning to

“make its appearance at the æra of the division of the Roman empire.

“If then the little horn (a) be a type of some Christian power, it must be one that has greatly fallen away from the purity and simplicity of the primitive church; because it is described as wearing out the saints (b) during the space of three times and a half, or 1260 natural years, and as speaking great words on the side of the Most High, so as to place itself upon an equality with God.

“The nature, both of this power and of its apostacy, we are clearly taught by St. John. In the Apocalypse the same ten horned beast, or Roman empire, as that mentioned by Daniel, is described as standing in the wilderness. Here, however, he appears without his little horn; and, instead of it, is represented as supporting a harlot, who, precisely like the little horn, is said to be a great persecutor of the faithful; for St. John beheld her drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. He moreover tells us, that this harlot is the great city, which, in his time, reigned over the kings of the earth, and whose seat of empire was founded upon seven hills: the harlot, therefore, must be some apostate church, whose influence extends over all the kings of the earth, and whose seat is the seven-hilled city of Rome.

“As for the peculiar nature of the apostacy with which this church is stigmatized, it is very largely described by the apostle in the course of his prophetic vision. The church in question was to be notorious for persecuting the saints of God; for making all nations drunken with the cup of her spiritual fornications or idolatry; for working pretended miracles; for compelling the whole world to worship an image; for laying such as presumed to dissent from her, under the severest interdicts; and for carrying on an iniquitous traffic in all sorts of valuable commodities; and, what remarkably distinguishes her from common traders, in the souls of men (c).” Those who have perused with any attention the preceding pages of this Appendix, which have marked, in a brief manner, the apostacy, idolatry, blasphemy, and cruelty, of the Romish church, require no information how to make an application of the above description.

But how convincing soever the evidence may be, to assure us that the period of persecution to which both Daniel and St. John have alluded, cannot be carried back to the calamities which the church suffered under pagan Rome, yet the time of its commencement is left indefinite within the confines of a circle which seems to be bounded on every side. Daniel, to guide us in our decision, has dated the commencement of this æra from a time, in which, after the division of the great Roman empire into ten kingdoms, the saints should be delivered up into the hand of the little horn; while St. John, with another figure, but with equal accuracy, instructs us to date these important days, from the time when the true church, which he denominates the woman, fled into the wilderness from the threatening serpent; which was precisely the time when the mystic city of God began to be trampled under foot by a new race of Christian idolaters. Hence then it is evident,

(a) Dan. vii. 8.

(b) Ver. 25.

(c) Faber's Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 7, 8.

that, to know with accuracy when these 1260. days began, we must seek after, and find a period subsequent to the dissolution of the great Roman empire, in which some signal event or events took place, corresponding with the above descriptions given by Daniel and St. John.

This eventful period "must evidently be the year" (says Mr. Faber,) in which the bishop of Rome was "constituted supreme head of the church, with the proud title of *Bishop of bishops*. For, by such an act, the whole church, comprehending both good and bad, both the saints of *the most High*, and those who were tainted with the Gentilism of the apostacy, considered individually, were formally given by the chief secular power, the head of the Roman empire, into the hand of the encroaching *little horn*. *This year was the year 606* *, when the reigning emperor Phocas, the representative of the sixth head of the beast, declared Pope Boniface to be universal Bishop: and the Romish church hath ever since shewn itself to be that little horn into whose hands the saints were delivered, by styling itself, with equal absurdity and presumption, *the Catholic, or Universal Church*. The year 606 then is the date of the 1260 years, and the æra of what St. Paul terms *the revelation of the man of sin*. The apostacy, in its individual capacity, was already in existence previous to such revelation; hence he represents it as commencing before it: but, as soon as the man of sin was openly revealed, by having the saints delivered into his hand, then commenced the 1260 years of the apostacy, in its public and dominant capacity." (d)

But it was not merely because the saints of the most High were thus delivered into the hand of the papal power in 606, that this year is rendered memorable. It gave birth also to Mahometanism, agreeably to the prediction of St. John, who, in his prophetic vision, was instructed to describe its rise as issuing from *the bottomless pit*, which is said to be opened by a star which had fallen from heaven; by which we are probably to understand some apostate Christian minister, who had avowedly renounced the cause of Christ. In consequence of this event, there arose a smoke out of the bottomless pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. (e)

It appears, moreover, from a computation which has

* That the above sentiment of Mr. Faber is highly probable, we most readily admit; and, from that conviction have adopted it as fixing us upon the most likely period that history apparently affords; we, nevertheless, dare not vouch for the absolute certainty of the fact, much less can we subscribe to the positive and unqualified manner in which the sentiment is expressed. Other writers, with much strength of argument, and, consequently, with much plausibility on their side, have fixed upon other periods; but the progress of time and of events has shewn the fallacy of their theories, and thereby taught us this lesson, that events are the only infallible interpreters of prophecy, and that secret things belong to God. However, we recommend Mr. Faber's Dissertation, as, perhaps, the best treatise extant at present on the Revelation.

(d) Dissertation on Prophecies, vol. i. p. 14.

(e) Rev. ix.

been made from the numbers of Daniel, by Mr. Faber, that, like Popery, this Mahometan power is to reign precisely 1260 years. Hence then the consequence is inevitable; that, as these powers commenced in the same year, namely, 606, they must run parallel with each other; their periods of continuance must be the same; and, finally, having fulfilled that period in which they were permitted to afflict the church of Christ, they must expire together.

"Of this period, since the year 606, twelve centuries have already elapsed: we are therefore fast approaching to the time of the end, and to the day of God's controversy with the nations (f)." The remaining portion of the prophetic period must be drawing to a close; and, though it may not be placed within the power of mortals to know with precision the times and the seasons, we have reason to conclude, that we are on the eve of the most eventful periods that ever visited the world.

In addition to Popery and Mahometanism, which were predicted both by Daniel and St. John, and which we have seen verifying in fact the prophetic description given of them, the same inspired authors have foretold a third power which should arise towards the termination of the above 1260 days or years. He is described as continuing only a short space of time; as joining the two apostate powers which have been already mentioned; and as perishing firmly leagued with Popery, at the very time of the end, or at the termination of the 1260 years.

St. John brings him upon the grand stage of the world, in his prophetic narration of events, with the piercing blast of the third woe trumpet; and, as a mark by which we may know the arrival and establishment of his power, he expressly foretels, that his open developement should be immediately preceded by the fall of a tenth part of the great Roman city. The miseries with which this third enemy should afflict mankind, the apostle describes under the figurative expressions of the harvest of the wrath of God, which should precede the dreadful vintage of the time of the end; and he sets forth more distinctly the nature of those miseries under the pouring out of a certain number of the seven vials. The same power is described by Daniel, as a king or state rising up after the æra of the Reformation;—as speaking great words against the most High;—as wearing out his saints;—and as thinking to change times and laws (g). St. Peter, St. Paul, and St. Jude, concur in describing, with astonishing accuracy, the principles which should be adopted and carried into practice by this power and its adherents; their sentiments, on this occasion, are in perfect unison with those of Daniel; a lawless contempt for every thing sacred, seems, on every occasion, to be one of its most distinguishing characteristics: for, though the prophetic language varies, the sentiment inculcated by all, is perfectly the same. St. John, indeed, favoured with a particular view of this antichristian power, has not only dwelt upon it in the Apocalypse with peculiar attention, but has also introduced it into his Epistles. And as a specific mark by which this enemy to the church might be distinguished from all others, he has there

(f) Differt. vol. i. p. 17.

(g) Dan. vii. 24, 25.

told

told us, that he should openly deny *the Father and the Son.* (b)

Such, then, are these three great enemies of the Gospel of Christ, *Popery, Mahometanism, and Infidelity.* The two first are represented as starting into being together, immediately on the division of the *great Roman beast into ten distinct kingdoms*, at which time, the period of 1260 years, which was allotted for their continuance, began; while the third is introduced towards the concluding years of the above period. These are all represented as uniting in one solid compact against the church of Christ, though their motives of action are totally distinct; they are represented as running parallel with each other from the time that they respectively sprang into being, and as ending together at the termination of the above period of 1260 years.

“At the time of the end, (says Mr. Faber,) or the termination of the 1260 years, when these three enemies of the Messiah shall be overthrown together, the restoration of the Jews will commence; and, when God’s controversy with the nations is fully decided, then will begin the long expected period of millennial happiness. This period, which is styled the reign of Christ and his saints upon earth, or the reign of the symbolical mountain, will comprize the space either of 1000 years, or of 360,000 years; according as the number predicted be composed of natural or prophetic years. Which of the two be intended by St. John, the event must determine.” (i)

On the issue of these events there can be no mistake, provided we are right in our data. No period, indeed, seems more probable for the commencement of the 1260 years than the year 606, because it was then that *Mahometanism took its rise*; and it was then that *the saints of God were formally delivered into the hands of the papal power.* If, therefore, we suppose these two powers commencing together, and running parallel with each other from the year 606, and add to that date the number 1260, we shall be immediately conducted to the year 1866. Before that tremendous year, the polluted stream of *Infidelity* will have augmented the rushing waters, inasmuch that vice may be expected to reign in triumph throughout the world in general. But when this period shall arrive, if this calculation be right, such wonders will be unfolded to the astonishment of mankind, as cannot fail to amaze the world.

Correspondent with these predictions, and with observations which have proceeded upon this hypothesis, we have seen events unfolded with the progress of time. We have seen a third power arise towards the conclusion of the predicted period, admitting it to have begun in 606; and we have seen, in the havoc which has been made of the human species, a dreadful *harvest of the wrath of God.* Such circumstances afford us strong presumptive evidence in favour of events which are yet future, and furnish us with analogical proofs, that these calculations are highly probable, though we admit them to be attended with much uncertainty, and, from the obscurity which rests upon the primary data, liable to err.

We may, indeed, pronounce, without hesitation, that the great events of which we speak, will most assuredly

(b) See Faber, vol. i. p. 18, 19, and Whitaker, to whom he refers.

(i) Dissertation on the Prophecies, vol. i. p. 19.

be accomplished; and, in many instances, even the manner how, is explicitly revealed, though the precise period when they shall take place, to encourage us to diligence and watchfulness, is wisely hidden from our researches. We, therefore, must not forget that all our conclusions as to time, are but *hypothetically certain.* We feel ourselves indeed inclosed within a circle of events which cannot deceive us as to their general import, though, with respect to subordinate particulars, the information which God has afforded us, compels us to use the language of hesitation. A train of circumstances, as has been already noted, gives to our conclusions an air of probability; but, though we may be deceived as to the specific year in which God will bring his controversy with the nations to a close, we may rest ourselves assured, that we are living towards that close of the prophetic period.

“The folly of interpreters (says Sir Isaac Newton,) has been to foretel times and things by the Apocalypse, as if God designed to make them prophets. By this rashness they have not only exposed themselves, but brought the prophecy also into contempt.” Let us profit by these hints, and not rashly presume to decide upon times and seasons which are necessarily involved in some obscurity, and which we may presume are known with accuracy only to God.

According to the hypothesis which that very excellent writer Mr. Faber has adopted, the sixteenth chapter of the Revelation contains a summary and distinct account of the various miseries which have been brought upon mankind, by the *atheistical Antichrist*, during the period of the *figurative harvest*, which he presumes to include *revolutionary France*, with its *atheistical principles and practical enormities.* This chapter also details those events which will intervene between the figurative harvest, and that *future vintage* which shall consummate the destruction of the *papal, Mahometan, and atheistical Antichrist*; including the earthquake which shall take place during the great vintage, by which the great city will be divided into three parts, at which time *Babylon will come in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God.*

These various events, he supposes, are represented as taking place, in consequence of the successive pouring out of the seven vials, the three former of which he presumes to agree with the harvest of God’s wrath in Revolutionary France. The three following apply to those intermediate events which shall take place between the above harvest and the *successive vintage* which shall happen at the expiration of the 1260 days, which the seventh or last vial more particularly describes.

The three following chapters of the Revelation, namely, the *seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth*, according to his hypothesis, detail, in a particular manner, the horrors of the vintage; which, if the theory be well founded, as to the commencement of the 1260 years in the year 606, will take place about the year 1866.

The events which will peculiarly distinguish this awful vintage, are the division of the *great city into three parts*; the subversion of *mystical Babylon*; and the total overthrow of the confederacy of the *beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the Roman or papal earth, in the tremendous battle of Armageddon.* “The confederacy itself will unconsciously be effected, (he observes,) by the secret diabolical influence

“ of three unclean spirits, but it will physically be facilitated by the military despotism under the fourth vial, by the subversion of the Ottoman empire under the sixth vial, and by the political earthquake at the beginning of the effusion of the seventh vial, which divides the great city, or the Latin empire, into three sovereignties.” (k)

The various events predicted in these chapters relative to the vintage, or the last vial, will happen, it is presumed, at the time of the end, or at the termination of the 1260 years, which, if they began in 606, must be in 1866. It is then that atheistical Antichrist will perish, leagued as at present, though contrary to every expectation that was formed at his original development, with the false Romish prophet: for, according to the sure word of prophecy, one fate awaits them both in the reign between two seas near the glorious holy mountain, in the country which extends 1600 furlongs in the valley of Megiddo. This is a country which extends 1600 Jewish risin or stadia, by measurement, and lies in the land of Palestine, (l) between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. *

In the midst of these commotions, things will be hastening on, in all probability, towards the promised fulness of the Gentiles: then will the wine-press of God's wrath begin to be trodden in the valley of Concision: and then will the great controversy of Jehovah with the nations commence. In the mean while, amidst this dreadful confusion, “the Almighty, as it appears (continues Mr. Faber) from Daniel, from Joel, and from Zechariah, will begin to bring back his ancient people the Jews to their own land; and when that is accomplished, the first resurrection will take place, and the Millennium will commence. Whether the first resurrection, however, and the reign of Christ with his saints upon earth, are to be understood in a literal or a spiritual sense, time alone can determine. Such secret things as unaccomplished prophecies belong unto the Lord our God; and it is a vain waste of time to weary ourselves with conjectures respecting the precise mode of their accomplishment.” (m)

At the termination of the happy Millennium, Satan, who had been bound for a thousand years, will once more be let loose to deceive the nations. It is then that the last confederacy against the church of Christ, which this church shall ever witness, will be formed by certain enemies of the Messiah, whom both St. John and Ezekiel concur in denominating Gog and Magog. Upon this important occasion God will specially interfere in the behalf of his people, and accomplish their deliverance in a most miraculous manner. For while the enemies of the saints are encompassing the camp and the beloved city, fire will come down from heaven and devour them. Then their great instigator, the devil, will be finally cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to which the beast and the false prophet had already been consigned at the commencement of the

thousand years: immediately after these events, the second or general resurrection will take place. (n)

It is evident from the preceding general statement of those future events which have been predicted in the Revelation, and thus laid out before us by Mr. Faber, that two particular seasons of unheard-of calamities are yet in store to afflict mankind, and deluge the earth with human blood. The first of these is the battle of Armageddon; and the last, the effort which shall be made by Gog and Magog at the expiration of the Millennium, when God in a miraculous manner shall sweep his enemies from the earth as with the besom of destruction. Of these distinct events another writer has given in substance the following description.

The Revelation is a prophetic history of the church of Christ, in which three grand enemies and opposers of the word of God are mentioned: these are Pagan idolatry, Apostacy, and Atheism. The first of these powers has been the persecutor of the church of Christ, under various forms, from the commencement of the Christian era down to the present time. The second has triumphed in its abominations more than twelve centuries; while the third, appearing in a later date, has reared its horrid front about eighteen years.

The first of these powers was so reduced by the Providence of God, in converting Pagan Rome to the truths of Christianity, early in the fourth century, that in its original capacity, it has, from that period to the present hour, been destitute of ability either to continue or revive its persecutions. The powers of the second, in like manner, have been so weakened by the events and plagues of those vials which have been poured upon it, that we have no reason to believe, that either this or the first will be able separately to oppose, with any success, the progress of the word of God. Hitherto each of them has made its attempt separately, and at different times; but, as if made sensible of their inability to accomplish their purpose, they enter into a grand confederacy, under the immediate patronage of Satan, who seems to have been permitted to introduce the third power to unite the other two.

Who, or what kings or states they are, or in what parts of the world resident, or to what nations belonging, who are to distinguish themselves in the grand confederacy which shall appear at the great battle of Armageddon, are events of which the prophet gives no intimation; and therefore to obtain any certain knowledge of them, we must wait till the events shall come to pass. We, nevertheless, have reason from the sacred text to believe, that they will be the same enemies to Christianity that have heretofore opposed it, and to which we have repeatedly referred; though the principles of which we speak, may be shifted from nation to nation, through those revolutions which unhinge and agitate the political world.

The conspiracy being formed by these three enemies to God and the gospel of Christ, in what portions soever of the globe they may be scattered, they will in all probability send forth their ambassadors, cunning, crafty, and deceitful; for they are the spirits of devils working miracles; to go to the kings of the earth first; that is, in the literal

(k) Vol. i. p. 50.

(l) See vol. i. p. 51.

* We give these definite expressions as the sentiments of Mr. Faber, without holding ourselves amenable to the tribunal of the public for their actual accomplishment. Probability, indeed, may induce us to believe, that what is thus delivered may be true, but the event alone can give us an assurance.

(m) Dissertation, vol. i. page 52.

(n) See Dissertation, vol. i. p. 53, 54.

sense, to the kings or states professing *atheism*; and having engaged *them* in the conspiracy, these emissaries of Satan are to proceed to the kings of the whole world, evidently meaning, to all the carnal, unregenerate, and ungodly kings and states of the world; for so the unbelievers in the word of God are styled in many parts of the New Testament.

The infernal league concluded, *he* (Satan) shall gather the kings of the earth, and of the whole world together, unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue *Armageddon*. This place is evidently so named, to intimate the immense overthrow of the ungodly which shall take place on that dreadful day: for the word "*Armageddon*," being interpreted, means, "*The mountain of destruction, or the great destruction of the proud and ungodly*." Upon this tremendous occasion, we may suppose, from the tenor of the predictions, that an immense number of hardened and unrepenting sinners, *Liars, fornicators, adulterers, thieves, robbers, traitors, assassins, murderers, idolaters, and blasphemers* of the name of God, a mighty host of *Pagans, Mahometans, Papiſts* and *Atheists*, shall be gathered together to battle against Christ, and the pure remnant of his Church. (o)

The time of this battle, whenever it may be (for it is to come as a thief in the night), is called the great day of God Almighty; that is, the great day of the coming of Jesus Christ with power and great glory: for in many passages of the New Testament, Christ is called God; for as in Rom. ix. v. he is expressly called God, so in Rev. i. 8. he assumes to himself the name of *Almighty*. And hence this important period is emphatically called *His Day*; and it seems to be thus distinguished from others, because Christ shall then come with all his power to subdue his enemies, and to put them under his feet; or, according to St. Paul, to consume them with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his appearing. (p)

In the beginning of the twentieth chapter of the Revelation, St. John tells us, that *he saw an Angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.* And after having described some intermediate events, he proceeds to direct our views to those which shall succeed the above periods in verses 7th and 8th. *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and encompassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.*

"We have here (says Mr. Galloway, in these latter verses) a brief account of the last battle that will ever be fought upon earth: a battle between *truth* and *falsehood*, between the Son of the Most High God, his saints, and just men made perfect, and redeemed from a fallen sinful world," and those idolatrous nations which are at enmity with God. To make us acquainted with the nature and process of this battle, the apostolic Prophet begins by informing us, that Satan, released from his imprisonment,

at the expiration of the thousand years, shall resume his long suspended power;—that, liberated from his confinement, he will then go out to deceive the nations, and that *Gog and Magog* shall become his easy prey. "By these expressions," continues Mr. Galloway, "I humbly conjecture is meant those idolatrous nations, who, having had ocular demonstration of the blessed fruits of the word of God in the kingdom of Christ; shall despise and reject it; for, according to prophetic history, all other nations are to be destroyed before this event, by the judgments and wrath of an offended God, except those that shall have obeyed his divine will, revealed by Christ. This conjecture seems to receive a degree of probability from the text itself; for the nations here referred to, are described by the terms *Gog and Magog*.* And we learn from ancient histories,

* *Magog*, according to Calmet, was the son of Japhet, and, as is generally believed, the father of the *Scythians* or *Tartars*. It is well known, he observes, that the name of *Scythians* was heretofore of considerable extent. It comprehended the *Getae*, the *Goths*, the *Sarmatians*, the *Saca*, the *Massagete*, and several other people. The *Tartars* and *Muscovites* at this day possess the country of the ancient *Scythians*, and there are still found among them several footsteps of the names *Gog and Magog*. They were formerly called *Mogli*: and in *Tartary* are known the several provinces of *Lug*, *Mongug*, *Cangiga*, and *Gigui*, &c. &c. St. Ambrose was of opinion, that by *Gog and Magog* were represented the *Goths*, who, in the fifth and sixth ages, ravaged the Roman empire. We think that *Gog and Magog*, mentioned by *Ezekiel*, chap. xxxviii. xxxix. are put for *Cambyſes* and his army; and that *Gog and Magog* in the Revelation, point out the enemies of the Church in general, and particularly the emissaries of Antichrist. *Gog and Magog* have in a manner passed into a proverb, to express a multitude of powerful, cruel, and barbarous enemies, particularly to God and his worship. Others have been of opinion, that the Persians were descendants of *Magog*. *Suidas* and *Cedrenus* say, that they are still called *Magog* in their own country. We find people there who were called *Magufians*, and philosophers who were called *Magoi*.

Gog, according to *Ezekiel*, was prince of a country denominated *Magog*; for *Magog* signifies the country or people, and *Gog* the king. *Boehart* has placed a country of that name in the neighbourhood of mount *Caucasus*. He derives the name of this celebrated mountain from the Hebrew, *Gog-chafan*, the fortrefs of *Gog*. He shews that *Prometheus*, said to be chained to *Caucasus* by *Jupiter*, is *Gog*, and no other. There is a province in *Iberia*, to the south of *Caucasus*, called the *Gogarene*. According to the Arabians, the ancient people of *Gog and Magog* resided in mountains which were almost inaccessible. To ascend these mountains was a work of inconceivable difficulty. "There was a necessity for spending seventeen days in ascending and descending through countries, extremely un-
"ever, before travellers could come thither. Whatever was carried into these territories, was conveyed either upon the backs
"of men, or upon those of goats, which are very large in this
"part of the world. The people who dwell there, were very un-
"sociable, so that no intelligence could be obtained from them
"relative to their nation or country." This is what we read in Arabian authors concerning the country of *Gog and Magog*. This nation is certainly very famous in antiquity; but we are not acquainted with the place where they anciently resided. We do not at all doubt but that they were some of the *Scythians*, and confounded among the great and little *Tartars*, and perhaps among the *Muscovites* and other northern people. But as these people have no old historians, we are absolutely unacquainted with their history.

See Calmet's Dictionary, articles *Gog* and *Magog*.

(o) See Galloway, vol. i. p. 264—266.

(p) See p. 207.

“ sacred as well as profane, that Magog was the country of
 “ the *Magogians, Gomerians, and Tubalines*, the descendants
 “ of *Magog, Gomer, and Tubal*, the sons of *Japhet*, the son of
 “ *Noah*; a country of the most filthy and detestable idolatry,
 “ in which, in early times, the great idol *Atergatis*, a mer-
 “ maid, was the god of their adoration; and Gog was their
 “ prince, and a great enemy of the Jewish church. It may
 “ therefore be reasonably supposed, that the prophet meant
 “ by those two words, figuratively to describe the refractory
 “ idolatrous nations who are now to be deceived by Satan, in
 “ the four quarters of the earth, and to be gathered together
 “ to battle: a mighty host! for *their number is to be as the*
 “ *sand of the sea*. Nor are the saints to be unprepared to
 “ meet the dreadful event; they are to be ‘*in camp*,’ or, as
 “ it is before figuratively expressed, they are to stand upon
 “ *a sea of glass, mingled with fire*, under the protection of
 “ their Almighty Redeemer, *invincible*.”

Of this perfect security and invincible state of the church of Christ, Satan will be entirely ignorant; and will be under a delusion so strong, that he shall think it will be an easy prey: he shall therefore go upon the *breadth of the earth*, and compass the camp of the saints about, in order to destroy it. But God, whose power and wisdom are infinite, shall pour down fire upon him and his mighty host, and destroy them. This shall be accomplished by such means as shall be consistent with his omnipotent and righteous will; so that in this last and awful overthrow of the enemies of his holy word, he may be sanctified and glorified in their sight, as well as in that of his church.

But although these remnants of the incorrigible heathen world are to be thus utterly destroyed, Satan himself, their invisible leader, is not said to perish with them; from this he must be exempted by his deathless nature. He is to be reserved for a still worse and yet more merited punishment. He is to be taken, and cast into a *Lake of fire and brimstone*, where the *beast* and the *false prophet*, having been sentenced before the coming of Christ, have already met their doom, to be tormented together *day and night for ever and ever*. (g)

Such then are the outlines of the general opinions entertained by modern authors on the grand confederacy at the *battle of Armageddon*, prior to the glorious Millennium; and of the last efforts which shall be made by *Gog* and *Magog*, when Satan, at the close of that period, shall be permitted by the Almighty to go out once more for a little season to deceive the nations.

That such a confederacy at the *battle of Armageddon* will exist, we may plainly perceive is neither the result of fancy, nor the opinion of a solitary individual; but the unerring language of prophecy, (r) and the concurring sentiment of those who have made the investigation of prophecy the study of their lives. This confederacy, we have already observed, will most probably be formed by the advocates and abettors of *Idolatry, Apostacy, and Atheism*. Each has attempted separately to destroy the church of Christ; but these attempts, both fact and prophecy assure us, have been ineffectual. And finally, when they

shall unite their forces in that great and dreadful conflict which St. John has predicted, it shall but tend to complete their ruin, and swell the triumphs of the Son of God.

But whatever may be said on these unaccomplished predictions, it must be admitted by all, that a veil of obscurity hangs upon them, though the facts themselves remain unimpeached. And it is more than probable, though light may increase as we approach nearer towards the period of consummation, that many of these shadows will continue till the events predicted shall elucidate the facts. Every endeavour that is made, with an eye to piety, to gather information from passing admonitions, on those great and awful realities which we now contemplate, but which we shall in all probability only in part behold, is highly laudable, though success may not, in all cases, crown the efforts that are made. The writer, on such subjects, who succeeds but in a few instances, is amply recompensed for his failure in many more; and even the consciousness of his own rectitude would banish remorse, though those events which are now concealed from mortals, should prove, when they appear, that he had been deceived in respect to all.

Among the various authors, who, in the present day, have presumed to venture into these fertile regions of probable conjecture, without doubt Mr. Faber claims the foremost place. He has said all, that, perhaps, can at present be said, to throw light on prophecies which are not fulfilled. In some places his reasonings are strong and conclusive; in others, our attention is arrested with the force of probability; but in many cases, it will be very extraordinary, if events do not show that he has been deceived.

We have already stated, that according to the theory of Mr. Faber, three out of the seven Vials, mentioned by St. John in his xvth chapter, have already been poured out at the commencement of the last woe trumpet; constituting by their union that grand period which St. John styled the *harvest*, and by which Mr. Faber understands the *French Revolution*. In making this application, a general agreement is to be found between his sentiments and those of Mr. Galloway, (s) though they differ much in their selection of subordinate particulars. It is not our province to decide between them; we may respect their observations, without attempting to refute the errors, or to vouch for the authenticity, of what they have written.

As the *harvest* which St. John has introduced in his *fourteenth chapter*, has been applied by these writers to the *Revolution in France*, so the vintage with which that chapter closes, they have presumed to belong to the great battle of Armageddon which shall take place at the close of the 1260 years, and shall usher in the great Millennium. Hitherto, according to Mr. Faber, but three out of the seven vials have been poured out, and consequently four more must yet remain. The last of these, he supposes, is reserved for the termination of the 1265 years, which, according to his calculation, must be finished in the year 1866; while the other three Vials are presumed to occupy the intermediate spaces between the French Revolution and the year 1866. These important events are represented in the following manner. *And the fourth Angel*

(g) See Galloway, vol. i. p. 314—316. Kett, vol. ii. p. 322. Mitchell, vol. ii. p. 226. and Faber, vol. ii. p. 372. and vol. i. p. 50.

(r) Rev. xvi. 14—16.

(s) Galloway, vol. i. p. 223. et seq.

*poured out his vial upon the sun; * and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory.*

The whole prophecy of the Apocalypse, according to Mr. Faber, relates more or less to the Roman empire, when we view it under its various forms of existence; and consequently the sun mentioned under the *fourth vial*, must be the sun of the Roman firmament. If then the three former vials, connected with the symbolical harvest, were actually applicable to the Revolution in France, as Mr. Faber supposes, and which is not altogether improbable, nothing can be more evident than that all the vials must receive their accomplishment *subsequent* to the division of the Roman empire. And consequently if the whole of the Apocalypse applies to the Roman empire, it must also follow, that this *sun* must mean the government of some state within the ancient limits of Rome.

Congenial with the sentiments of Mr. Faber are those of Mr. Galloway, so far as the vial applies to the transactions of revolutionary France, though it must be admitted that they differ widely from each other in the specific objects to which they have respectively applied this visitation of God. The theory which Mr. Galloway endeavours to support on the application of the fourth vial mentioned in the Revelation, xvi. 8, 9. coincides with that of Mr. Fleming, which, it must be acknowledged, appears to have been wonderfully verified. The *sun*, which is there introduced to our notice, he supposes to be the late King of France; and he enumerates several particulars to prove from his greatness the appropriateness of the prophetic emblem. "These circumstances united," he then observes, "being peculiar to the monarchs of France, and no other, seem plainly to indicate, that Louis XVI. was the object intended to be marked out by the hieroglyphic, 'the sun,' and upon which this vial was to be poured out; and it has been poured upon him by the providence of that God who sets up kings, and overturns kingdoms, according to his righteous pleasure."

The sacred text informs us, that *the fourth angel poured out his vial on the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.* This power to scorch men with fire, Mr. Galloway supposes, was not given *unto the sun*, but *to the angel*, whom he presumes the pronoun *him* to represent; and with these views before him he makes the following observations: "Having denounced the judgment of God upon the King, the prophet naturally proceeds to the dreadful events which were to follow. For the angel, commissioned with this vial, had a twofold errand; first, to pour it out upon the sun, and next

* "All luminaries in the symbolic language signify the ruling powers. And seeing that edicts and laws are for the direction of the conduct of the subjects, light becomes the symbol of these laws. Wherever the scene of government is laid, whether in a state or family, the *sun, moon, and stars*, when mentioned together, denote the several degrees of power or governors in the same. Whatever comes from the rising-sun betokens good." (Bicheno, page 226, 227.)

"When the political sun shines with a steady lustre, and yields a salutary warmth, it is a blessing to a people. But when it glares with a fierce and unnatural heat, scorching the productions of human industry, with the intolerable blaze of portentous tyranny, it is the heaviest curse that can befall a nation." *Faber*, vol. ii. p. 335.

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"to scorch men with fire; and we are told that men should be scorched with great heat." (v)

And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains, and their sores, and repented not of their deeds. Rev. xvi. 10, 11.

"The events of this and of the two following vials, says Mr. Galloway, are yet to come. Aware of the impossibility of foreseeing the time when, the manner how, and the means by which they are to be fulfilled, I shall not attempt an explanation of them, farther than by making such general observations as naturally arise out of the texts, and are countenanced by other parts of scripture; and this only to give the reader a general view of the objects upon which they are to be poured out; and to show, that the chain of prophetic events foretold in the first century, and which has been brought down to the present times, is continued by the prophet to the end of time." (w)

These general observations, which Mr. Galloway supposes naturally to arise out of the texts, he conceives to apply to the same monstrous power which he had before described; namely, to revolutionary France. For the prophet, he observes, here gives us another sign, which can be applied with propriety to no other; for he adds, as a reason for pouring out this vial upon the beast, that his kingdom was full of darkness. This darkness he presumes to be the cause of the vial, or the occasion of its being poured out, rather than an effect which resulted from it. And this darkness he further conceives to consist in an aversion to, and contempt of all religion, and to this kingdom's being full of blasphemy and atheism. (x)

"What is precisely meant," says Mr. Faber, "by this judgment, it is impossible at present to determine with any certainty, inasmuch as it is yet future. If, however, we may argue from analogy, since the giving a seat or throne to the beast by the dragon evidently means the investing him with the same secular power of making war with the saints as that exercised by him while in his pagan state, the pouring out of a vial upon that seat so as to fill his kingdom with darkness, seems most naturally to represent some grievous calamity, which should materially affect that secular power of persecution, and fill the whole papal world with consternation and confusion." (y)

"As to the *fifth and sixth vials*, all other circumstances agreeing," Mr. Bicheno observes, "that these are marked by events sufficiently strong; nor is there much difficulty in ascertaining the objects on which they are poured. It will, I think, be allowed by every one, who has attended at all to these subjects, that without either offering violence to the symbols, or calling in the aid of fancy, we may understand by the seat of the beast, *ROME, or the Roman Government*, the throne of the papal monster, as distinguished from his kingdom, which extends over the whole mythical Babylonish empire." (a)

(v) Galloway, vol. i. p. 245, 246.

(w) Galloway, vol. i. p. 252.

(x) Galloway, vol. i. p. 253.

(y) Faber, vol. ii. p. 344.

(a) Signs of the Times, p. 207.

Amidst such a variety of opinions as the different writers hold forth to the public view, it is difficult to determine which to adopt: at the same time it is not improbable but we should add to the number of those conjectures which must be erroneous, should we attempt to hazard an opinion that is new. The very instant that we admit the calamities predicted under this vial to be future, that moment we admit the existence of those shades which our limited capacities are incompetent to pierce. The connexion which seems perceivable between the vials, affords us a strong indication that the fifth is not yet fully revealed; for that the sixth is entirely future, will hardly admit a moment's doubt. If therefore, we adopt the principle laid down by Mr. Faber, namely, that all the vials will have been poured out, and their effects have been felt by the inhabitants of the world, about or before the year 1866, we cannot but check our inquiries when they attempt to soar into the airy regions of speculation, and acknowledge it to be a duty incumbent on us to wait the event, that it may guide us in our decisions. Impressed with this conviction, we conclude in the words of Mr. Faber—"What is precisely meant by this judgment, it is impossible at present to determine with any certainty, inasmuch as it is yet future."

And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 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. Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. And he gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon. Rev. xvi. 12—16.

The language of this vial seems far more explicit than that of the preceding; and therefore, though the object of it be future, it even invites inquiry, and promises to reward the exercise of pious diligence with success. We are not, however, to imagine that every portion of this prophecy is capable of such an elucidation as will not leave room for two opinions. The period when it will be accomplished, the kings of the East who are introduced, the frogs which are said to come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, are in themselves obscure, and have given rise to much conjecture. Nevertheless, the term *Euphrates*, by being definite, directs our view to the territories of the false prophet whose empire shall have an end.

That the Revelation of Jesus Christ by his Apostle John, extends through the whole range of future time, from the period in which it was written, till the final consummation of things, is a fact admitted by all. We cannot therefore but suppose, that many important facts must be only lightly touched; and that events, which are distant in themselves, must be crowded together in his account, though ages should intervene between them. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the distinct observations that the prophet makes on those nations which border on the river Euphrates. In chapter the ninth, verse 14th, under the sixth trumpet, which was founded by

the sixth angel, the four angels are said to be loosed, which were bound in the great river Euphrates, and which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And now, under the sixth vial, the mystical waters of the same Euphrates are said to be dried up. By that prophecy which is recorded under the trumpet, all commentators understand the rise of the Mahometan power; and by the sixth vial its decline and fall.

"The four angels," (mentioned under the trumpet, says Mr. Faber,) "are the four sultanies of the Turks; the capitals of which were Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium. These were long restrained from extending their conquests beyond the territories immediately adjoining to the river Euphrates, by the instrumentality, in the course of God's providence, of the crusades. But when the Christians abandoned Syria and Egypt at the latter end of the thirteenth century, then the four angels on the river Euphrates were loosed. Ortuqul, dying in the year 1288, was succeeded by his son Othman, who, in the year 1229, founded a new empire, composed of the remains of the four Turkish sultanies." (c)

Admitting therefore that application of the sixth trumpet to be just, for which most commentators contend, and which, in the language of Mr. Faber, we have briefly stated, nothing can appear more reasonable than that we should allow in the latter case, under the sixth vial, that the Euphrates introduced by the same prophet should mean the same power. "Rivers typify nations; and, when a particular river is specified, the nation immediately connected with that river, is obviously intended. Such being the case, it follows, that as the issuing forth of the four sultanies, those mystic waters of the Euphrates which deluged the Eastern empire, denotes the rise of the Turkish power, so the drying up of those waters must evidently denote its subversion. Now since the drying up or evaporation of water is a slow process, we may naturally conclude, that the expression 'dried up' points out, not merely the subversion of the Turkish power in general, but the particular mode of that subversion, by the slow consumption of its political strength, and by the gradual wasting away of its people. When the sixth angel, however, poured out his vial upon the figurative Euphrates, we read that its waters were completely dried up, inasmuch that a way was prepared for the kings of the East. Hence it is manifest, when we consider the slow process of evaporating natural water, that we may expect the waters of the Ottoman empire to begin to be dried up many years previous to their final exhaustion under the pouring out of the sixth vial." (d)

These circumstances, probable in themselves from the figurative language which the prophet has used, we learn from actual observation are verified by fact. Tending to annihilation through causes which can hardly be developed, the Turkish empire has been for a considerable period on the decline; those neighbouring nations which had been accustomed to shrink from her sabres, now look upon her with contempt: Turkey can no longer withstand the inroads which it is in the power of these warlike nations to make; and the sultan has reason to tremble for the destiny of his capital and his throne.

(c) Vol. ii. p. 38.

(d) Ibid. p. 346.

The last successes of the Turks were against Charles VI. emperor of Germany, in the year 1739; at which time that prince was compelled to make with them an inglorious peace. At this peace he was obliged to deliver into their hands, as the condition of tranquillity, or the badge of defeat, Belgrade, the capital of Servia. This mortifying circumstance may have shortened his days, for he died in the following year. Since that period the Turks have never gained any advantage over the Christian powers of the West; but, on the contrary, Turkey has been considered as a weakened power, sunk into inglorious sloth, destitute of that enthusiasm which superstition could once inspire, and fast declining both in military skill and ardour.

"The force of arms (says Mr. Eton, in his Survey of the Turkish Empire, p. 28.) first subjugated the countries which form their empire: the force of arms alone could retain them in submission; and it is owing to the decline of the military spirit of the Turks, that the members of so vast a body are at the present day so feeble and disunited.

"These haughty and celebrated legions were long the terror of surrounding nations, and continued to be looked upon as formidable until the seventeenth century. At that time the Turkish power ceased to aggrandize itself. It made a pause in its conquests, a pause prophetic of that downfall towards which it has since so rapidly verged, and which seems now to threaten a speedy approach. The steps which led to this degradation are easily discernible. The discipline of this ferocious soldiery could only be upheld by sovereigns equally ferocious: no sooner did the sultans quit the fatigues of the camp for the baucherics of the *harems*, than the janizaries, disdainful of their command, broke out into sedition, and dethroned the monarch who appeared unworthy of empire." (e)

"To what a degree (says Mr. Whitaker) the streams of this mighty river, which once swept all before it, are now dried up; with how weak a current that which formerly raged as a resistless torrent, now creeps along, is visible to all Europe; while the idea of the Turks themselves, as to their future lot of being driven into Asia by a power to the north-east of them, does most wonderfully accord with the prophecies concerning them." "The lower orders (says Mr. Eton) are at the present day persuaded, that the Russian standard will enter Constantinople through a certain gate, said to be pointed out by an ancient prophecy; and the great men are so far from opposing this weakness by superior energy, that they look to the Asiatic shore as a secure retreat from the fury of the conquerors.

"How awful a testimony is this to the divine origin of the gospel, that a great empire, and all the surrounding states, should be expecting its removal at the very time when the predictions of the Revelations have declared it to be at hand." (f)

"The approaching termination, indeed, of the Ottoman empire is so manifest, that even those whose attention is solely directed to politics, are sufficiently aware that the time of its extinction cannot be far distant. Of late, it hath been preserved rather by the jealousy of the great European powers, than by any physical strength

(e) Eton's Survey of Turkey, as cited by Whitaker, p. 488, 489.
(f) Whitaker, p. 489, 490.

"of its own: and it, doubtless, will be preserved by the hand of Providence till his own appointed season shall arrive for preparing a way for the kings of the East, and for gathering together the kings of the Latin world to the battle of the great day of God Almighty.

"Not only, however, has the political strength of Turkey begun to be dried up; but, as if nothing should be wanting to the exact completion of the prophecy, even its population has likewise begun to diminish. This singular circumstance is noticed by Mr. Eton.* After some inquiry into the causes of it, he adds, "It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that depopulation could not formerly have made so rapid a progress as at present: and that, in a century more, things remaining in their present situation, the Turkish empire will be nearly extinct. It is worthy of remark, that the Kurds in the mountains, and other independent tribes who do not mix with the Turks, are exempt from the mortality occasioned by all the calamities which afflict the countries more immediately subject to the Porte. Many attempts have been made within the last century, principally by French officers, to renew the ancient military spirit of the Turks, and to instruct them in European tactics. Gazi Hassan, the celebrated Pasha, tried with unlimited powers, for nineteen years, to inspire his own spirit into the troops; but he found all his efforts ineffectual." (g)

"If we are right in our own conjectures," (says Mr. Bicheno) "respecting the pouring out of the sixth vial, the proof will be, not only that it will be followed by the general coalition already noticed; but that the Ottoman empire will be overturned, the Jews restored to their own land, and such a time of trouble succeed as never was since there was a nation. Soon, it is likely, the seventh angel will pour out his vial into the air, and a great voice out of the temple in heaven will pronounce, with a sound that will shake all the foundations of the earth, "I^T IS DONE;" and there will be voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

"This speculation is confirmed by other prophecies. In the latter part of the eleventh chapter of Daniel, we have a prophecy which foretells the rise, conquest, and fall of the empire of the Turks. After marking out the conquests of this king of the north, (as this monster is called, the Turks coming originally from this quarter, and their empire lying north of the Saracens,) the prophet goes on to predict his fall. *But tidings out of the east, and out of the north, shall trouble him; therefore he shall go forth with great fury to destroy, yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.*†

"From the beginning of chapter the twelfth, we learn, that there are to be great shakings of nations, and that the Jews, who have long been politically dead, are to

* Faber, vol. ii. p. 347.

(g) Eton's Survey, as cited by Faber, vol. ii. p. 348, 9

† See my commentary on the eleventh chapter of Daniel, verses, 44, 45, in which I have observed "that these two verses, probably, remain yet to be fulfilled—That it is universally known that the Persians are seated to the East, and the Russians to the North of the Ottoman dominions, &c. &c."

" be raised to life. The probability is, unlikely as such an event may appear at present, that the Jews will by some means, and some nation, or providence, be set in motion, and take a conspicuous part in those commotions, which are to shake to pieces the nations which oppose the providence of God. This is intimated in many prophecies, particularly in that recorded in Zech. xii. which has a special relation to their restoration in the latter days." (b)

Who the kings of the East are, for whom a way is to be prepared by the annihilation of the Turkish empire, it is impossible to say with accuracy before the event takes place, and becomes a comment on the prediction. Among the conjectures which offer themselves, the most probable is, that the Jews are alluded to. At present they are dispersed over almost every part of the habitable globe; and it is not improbable that the long lost tribes form a considerable portion of many nations of which we have not the least suspicion. But as some great maritime power is to take the lead in accomplishing their restoration, the ocean will rather facilitate than retard the great event. It seems, nevertheless, highly probable, though myriads of them may have found their way to the west of the Atlantic, that by far the greater proportion of them is scattered throughout the East.

" I have somewhere seen," says Mr. Faber, " a curious account of the ten tribes being discovered in China, by the missionaries sent out into that country. How far it may be depended upon I leave to abler critics than myself to pronounce. The *Afghans* likewise, a tribe at different times subject to, and always connected with the kingdoms of *Persia* and *Hindostan*, are said to be descended from the Jews. But perhaps the most solid reason for thinking that the Jews are intended by these kings of the East, is the exact chronological agreement of the restoration of the former, with this prepared expedition of the latter. The Jews, as we learn from *Daniel*, are to begin to return to their own country at the end of the 1260 years, and during a period of unexampled troubles: the kings of the East are to have a way prepared for them by the subversion of the Turkish empire,—and during the time that the three spirits of devils are gathering together the kings of the earth to the great battle of the Lord: whence we may infer, that, since their way is then prepared, they will set out upon their expedition under the following vial at the close of the 1260 years likewise; and that they will be deeply concerned in the dreadful war between *the beast*, *the false prophet*, and *the kings of the Latin earth*, on one side, and *the Almighty Word of God* on the other. This at least is certain, that, if the restoration of the Jews be not here predicted, the *Apocalypse* is totally silent upon the subject." (i)

Upwards of two thousand five hundred years have elapsed since the ten tribes of Israel were carried away captive into *Assyria*. Some few of them returned with the tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, after the expiration of their captivity in *Babylon*; but *Israel*, as a nation, was never afterwards restored. According to *ii Esdras*, *xiii.*

(b) See *Bicheno*, *Signs of the Times*, p. 211. See also my commentary on *Zech. xii.* and *xiv.*

(i) *Faber*, vol. ii. p. 350.

41—50. they were appointed to a very different destination. We there learn, that they took this counsel among themselves, that they would leave the multitude of the heathen, and go forth into a further country, where never mankind dwelt, that they might there keep their statutes, which they never kept in their own land. And they entered into *Euphrates*, by the narrow passages of the river. For the *Messiah* High then shewed signs for them, and held still the flood till they were passed over. For through that country there was a great way to go; namely, of a year and a half; and the same region is called *Arfureth*. Then dwelt they there until the latter time; and now when they shall begin to come, the *High* shall stay the springs of the stream again, that they may go through: therefore sauest thou the multitude with peace. But those that shall be left behind of thy people, are they that are found within my borders. Now when he destroyeth the multitude of the nations that are gathered together, he shall defend his people that remain. And then shall he shew them great wonders.

From these tribes not having been heard of for so many ages, and the improbability, that, if they any where existed, they should have escaped the observations of all travellers, a general opinion has prevailed, that they are nowhere to be found as a distinct people; but that, exclusively of those who returned from *Babylon* with the tribes of *Judah* and *Benjamin*, they have long since been melted down among the different nations of the earth.

That they should still exist, is certainly a very extraordinary circumstance; and should Providence bring them forth to set a conspicuous part in the great transactions which will at once desolate and astonish the world, we shall find additional reasons to admire the power and wisdom of God. But such an event, instead of being uncongenial with the spirit of prophecy, seems to have been predicted, together with the atonishment with which it will be accompanied. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, who hath begotten me these: seeing I have lost my children, and am a desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? (*Isaiah* *xlix.* 21.)

"Independently of the prophecies," says Mr. *Bicheno*, "there is reason to conclude that this people do still exist distinct from other nations. The grounds for this conclusion may be seen in the *Asiatic Researches*, vol. ii. That the reader may judge for himself, I shall take the liberty of quoting the extract which we find in the *Monthly Review* enlarged, vol. x. p. 502. The account is whimsical enough; but, considering the number of ages since the carrying away of *Israel* captive, their corrupt state at that time, their miserable condition since, their ignorance of printing, &c. &c. it affords as much evidence as can be reasonably expected at the first dawn of their existence. When we are better acquainted with them, with their manuscripts, customs, &c. we may expect more light." (k)

"The *Afghans* call themselves the posterity of *Melchisedech*, or king *Saul*; which, according to their tradition, is thus whimsically traced." (Here follows a train of ridiculous improbabilities, which neither room nor inclination will permit us to transcribe.)

"After *Talut* (they say) had obtained the kingdom, he seized part of the territories of *Talut*, or *Goliath*, who

(k) *Signs of the Times*, p. 103.

" assembled

“ assembled a large army, but was killed by David.
 “ *Talut* afterwards died a martyr in a war against the in-

“ fidels; and God constituted David king of the Jews.
 “ *Melic Talut* had two sons, one called *Berkia*, and the
 “ other *Irmia*, who served David, and were beloved by
 “ him. He sent them to fight against the infidels; and by
 “ God’s assistance they were victorious.

“ The son of *Berkia* was called *Afghan*, and the son of
 “ *Irmia* was named *Ubec*. These youths distinguished
 “ themselves in the reign of David, and were employed
 “ by Solomon. *Afghan* was distinguished by his corporeal
 “ strength, which struck terror into *demons* and *genii*.
 “ *Ubec* was eminent for his learning.

“ *Afghan* used frequently to make excursions to the
 “ mountains; where his progeny, after his death, establish-
 “ ed themselves, lived in a state of independence, built
 “ forts, and exterminated the infidels.”

Such is the substance of the account which the *Afghans*
 give of their origin, descent, and establishment. “ To this
 “ account,” say the Reviewers, “ we shall subjoin a re-
 “ mark of the late *Henry Vansittart*, Esq. This gentle-
 “ man observes, that a very particular account of the
 “ *Afghans* has been written by the late *Hafiz Rahmat*
 “ *Khan*, a chief of the *Robillas*, from which the curious
 “ reader may derive much information. They are Mus-
 “ sulmen, partly of the *Sunni*, and partly of the *Shiah* per-
 “ suasion. They are great boasters of the antiquity of
 “ their origin, and reputation of their tribe; but other
 “ Mussulmen entirely reject their claim, and consider
 “ them as of modern, and even base, extraction. How-
 “ ever, their character may be collected from history.
 “ They have distinguished themselves by their courage,
 “ both singly and unitedly, as principals and auxiliaries.
 “ They have conquered for their own princes and for fo-
 “ reigners, and have always been considered as the main
 “ strength of the army in which they have served. As they
 “ have been applauded for virtues, so they have also been
 “ reproached for vices, having sometimes been guilty of
 “ treachery, and even acted the base part of assassins.”

Subjoined to the above account is a specimen of their lan-
 guage, which is the *Pushto*; after which the following note
 is inserted by the president.

“ This account of the *Afghans* may lead to a very in-
 “ teresting discovery.—We learn from *Esdra*s, that the
 “ ten tribes, after a wandering journey (of a year and
 “ a half), came to a country called *Arfareth*, where we
 “ may suppose they settled. Now the *Afghans* are said
 “ by the best *Persian* historians to be descended from the
 “ Jews; they have traditions among them of such a
 “ descent; and it is even asserted, that their families are
 “ distinguished by the names of Jewish tribes, although,
 “ since their conversion to the *Islam*, they studiously con-
 “ ceal their origin. The *Pushto* language, of which I
 “ have seen a dictionary, has a manifest resemblance to
 “ the Chaldaic; and a considerable district under their
 “ dominion is called *Hazareh* or *Hazaret*, which might
 “ easily have been changed into the word (*Arfareth*) used
 “ by *Esdra*s. I strongly recommend an inquiry into the
 “ literature and history of the *Afghans*.” (1)

If these *Afghans* are what they pretend to be, namely,
 the remains of the ten tribes of *Israel*, it is something

very remarkable, that, after having lived in a state of
 exile and obscurity for upwards of 2500 years, they
 should first start into public notice at a moment when
 so many signs concur to announce their speedy restora-
 tion. The thoughtless and inconsiderate may treat this
 fact as a worthless trifle; but those who have faith in the
 promises of God, and are anxiously waiting for the ac-
 complishment of the sure word of prophecy, will esteem
 this singular circumstance as well worthy of their atten-
 tion. Moving at present as it were in the twilight, the
 indications which surround us direct us to watch. The
 present generation of men may not be wholly swept aside
 before the sun may rise above the horizon, and dispel
 those clouds which now envelope the human understand-
 ing: light may then dart upon us from unexpected
 quarters, and direct us immediately to those events which
 we now pursue with uncertainty, but which we are fully
 assured cannot be remote.

But in what region soever these long lost tribes have
 found a residence, they shall be recalled, for the Spirit of
 God hath spoken it. And then, whether they be the
Afghans, or distinguished by any other appellation, they
 shall make their appearance, to go forth to inhabit the
 promised land. In the mean while, a way will be pre-
 pared for the kings of the East, by the destruction of the
Ottoman empire, and by those various causes which are
 connected with that event. “ At the same time the dia-
 “ bolical influence of the three unclean spirits will be actively
 “ though imperceptibly employed, in gathering together the
 “ kings of the earth, and of the whole world, or of the
 “ *Papal Latin empire*, and the Roman world, to the battle
 “ of the great day of God Almighty. The battle itself is
 “ that which takes place under the next vial, and which
 “ is detailed with wonderful sublimity by the inspired pro-
 “ phet.” (m)

“ All the vials seem to mingle their streams in one
 “ current, and to run on to the pouring out of the seventh;
 “ and then it is, after the general combination of the
 “ dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, under the sixth vial,
 “ that we are to expect that signal wrath, and that ge-
 “ neral crash of which the prophets of God have spo-
 “ ken.” (n) “ Here the dreadful preparations for it com-
 “ mence: There they are completed, and the battle is
 “ fought. From the sources whence the impure spirits
 “ are said to issue, it appears that the beast and the false
 “ prophet, for a season at variance, by reason of the atheis-
 “ tical principles adopted by the former, will then be more
 “ closely leagued together than ever; and that they will
 “ jointly meditate some grand expedition against the wo-
 “ man and her seed, which, however, we shall presently
 “ see under the succeeding vial, will end only in their own
 “ confusion and utter destruction.” (o)

SECTION VII.

*The pouring out of the seventh Vial. Coincidences between the
 predictions of Daniel, Joel, Zechariah, and St. John, on
 events which are yet future. Diversity of opinions on
 subordinate particulars. Conjectures on the accomplishment*

(m) Faber, vol. ii. p. 351.

(n) Bicheno, p. 183.

(o) Faber, vol. ii. p. 322.

(1) Review, as quoted by Mr. Bicheno, p. 104.

of those prophecies which will finally issue in the destruction of Popery, Mahometanism, and Infidelity. This will be at the end of the 1260 years, which, if rightly dated, will terminate in 1866; at which time the restoration of the Jews will probably commence. The prophecies are immutable, and urge us to prepare to meet our God.

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. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. And the great city was divided into three parts; and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail: for the plague thereof was exceeding great. (Rev. xvi. 17—21.)

“The prophet,” says Mr. Galloway, “now concludes his great outlines of this awful subject, by a brief intimation of the issue of the battle between the blessed Son of God, and Satan at the head of all his impious holt. And here he tells us, that on the day thereof there shall be a great earthquake. Whether this word is to be understood in the literal or the metaphorical sense; whether it is to be a violent concussion of the earth, or a great disunion and convulsion among the three parties of the confederacy, this much is certain, it is to be such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. We ought to read the text in the latter sense, and that this great confederacy of Idolaters, Deists, and Atheists, are to quarrel among themselves, and to be the instruments of their own destruction.” (p)

“A storm of thunder, lightning, hail, and overflowing rain,” says Sir Isaac Newton, (q) “is put for a tempest of war, descending from the heavens and clouds political; great earthquakes, and the shaking of heaven and earth, for the shaking of kingdoms so as to overthrow them.” “As the seventh seal and the seventh trumpet,” says Bishop Newton, “contained many more particulars, than any of the former seals and former trumpets; so the seventh vial contains more than any of the former vials.” “It is,” observes Mr. Faber, “the vial of the vintage; the conclusion of the grand drama of 1260 years; the time of the end.” And the reason of this is manifest—the vintage is the last event predicted in the little book, which extends, as itself repeatedly declares, through the whole 1260 years: and as the last vial is poured out at the expiration of that period, the last vial can only contain an enlarged account of that vintage: “for,” as Mr. Mede naturally observes, “there cannot be two different catastrophes of the same drama.” (r)

“When this seventh vial shall be poured out, the great controversy of God with the nations will commence; his ancient people will begin to be restored; and sudden destruction will fall upon the beast and false pro-

phet in the very midst of their temporary success, and while they are vainly flattering themselves with the hope of a complete victory over the church of God. Such being its contents, it is said to be poured out into the air, in allusion to the dreadful storms of political thunder and lightning which it will produce.” (s)

Under this vial, three important events are comprehended; first, the earthquake, by which the great city is to be divided into three parts; secondly, the overthrow of Babylon; and thirdly, the decisive battle of Armageddon, to which the kings of the earth, through the influence of the three unclean spirits which we have already noticed, had begun to gather themselves together under the sixth vial. It is indeed the great period of consummation; a point to which all the preceding vials have tended; and in which their united streams seem to centre, till they lose themselves in the mighty confluence, and disappear in that abyss of horrors which shall then overwhelm the guilty nations of the earth.

As the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth chapters of the Revelations, all belong to the last vial, so they are respectively employed about the great events which it portends; and by entering more minutely into the different branches, they unfold them in detail. “The seventeenth chapter opens with a description of the great whore, arrayed in purple and scarlet, who had long tyrannized over the faithful, and who was now about to be destroyed for ever. It fully sets forth the mystery of her union with her beast, of her name Babylon, and of the three-fold state of her beast, of the rise of the beast’s last head, and of the flourishing condition of the woman while the ten kings gave their power to the beast, and made war upon the Lamb by persecuting his disciples. And it intimates that a great change should nevertheless take place in the sentiments of those kings, so that they should afterwards hate the whore, and make her naked, and eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.—It is, in fact, a sort of climax, extending from the era of the Reformation, down to the final destruction of the whore.

“She was first made naked and desolate by the alienation of the abbey lands in protestant countries, and by the withdrawing of whole nations from her communion. Her very flesh was next eaten by the sale of church lands in Revolutionary France, by the secularization of the German ecclesiastical electorates and monastic principalities, and by the temporary erection of an atheistical republic in her capital. But she will not be burnt with fire till the time of the end, till the fatal day of Armageddon.” (t) The eighteenth chapter contains an account of the overthrow of Babylon; and the nineteenth chapter describes the last battle that shall afflict mankind before the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ.

By means of that tremendous earthquake which we are assured shall take place, St. John tells us, that the great city shall be divided into three parts; but in what manner this division is to be understood, we perhaps have hardly acuteness enough to comprehend. Mr. Galloway seems to imagine, that by the city we are to understand “any

(p) Gall. vol. i. p. 274. (q) P. 17, 18.

(r) See Faber, Galloway, and Bicheno.

(s) See Faber, p. 354.

(t) Faber, vol. ii. p. 3, 5.

“great assemblages of people united by law or contract.” And that “hence we may conclude, that St. John calls “the great confederacy of Pagans, Deists, and Atheists, “the great city.” On the division of this city into *three parts* he observes as follows: “That is, as I humbly interpret the text by the context, it shall be divided into “the *three great parties*, so often described before; and “that they are to make war upon, and destroy one “another, after the late example of the revolutionary “factions in France.” (u) Mr. Kett, however, seems to be of a very different opinion. The great earthquake by which the city was divided into three parts, he conceives to be the *Reformation*, and that the three parts into which it was divided, were the three confessions of faith, namely, *Papish, Lutheran, and Calvinistic*. With this interpretation before him, it is an easy matter for the reader to discover which third part of this figurative city shall fall. (v)

“The apocalyptic city,” says Mr. Bicheno, “is not “Rome, as some understand it, but the Antichristian “States of Europe. This city, by the convulsions and “consequent revolutions which are to take place, is to be “divided into three parts—whether into three great con- “federacies, or what, I shall not venture to guess; for “I do not pretend to be wise above what is written, nor “to have more penetration than my neighbours.” (w)

“By this future earthquake,” observes Mr. Faber, “the “Latin city is to be divided into three parts. It is pos- “sible that a politician might find it no difficult matter “to divine, from the present aspect of continental af- “fairs, in what manner *the great papal city* is likely to be “split into three sovereignties: for, in fact, matters seem “even now to be preparing for such a division of it. But “I feel that I am beginning to step beyond my prescribed “limits, and to advance into the boundless region of con- “jecture: nothing more therefore shall be said upon the “subject. This is *certain*, that Babylon *will* be divided “into three parts: but *how* it will be divided, time must “discover.” (x)

On an event which is at once future, and enveloped with so many shadows as to afford room for such a diversity of opinions, nothing with certainty can be said. The utmost stretch of the human understanding can reach no higher, on such occasions, than probable conjecture; and even on this we are hardly competent to write. Many conjectures which have been already formed, have proved fallacious; their authors, by hazarding their reputation on the issue of their theories, have lived to see themselves disappointed. And it is unhappy to reflect, that in consequence of these failures, which have accompanied presumption, men of corrupt minds have made the prophecies themselves the subjects of their contempt. It is no dishonour to be ignorant of that which God has thought proper to conceal; predictions which are future seem to have been purposely so written, that nothing but the event should be a complete comment on them; by these means we are instructed to wait with patience, and to watch the signs of the times.

(u) Galloway, vol. i. p. 275.

(v) See Kett, as cited by Faber, vol. ii. p. 356.

(w) Signs of the Times, p. 187.

(x) Vol. ii. p. 357.

According to Mr. Faber, *the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation*, which describes at large the fall of *mystical Babylon*, relates to the same event as the destruction of the *little horn* of Daniel's fourth beast: they both allude to a period which is yet future, and predict with equal precision the complete subversion of *the papal power*. This subversion, however, we are not to conceive from the late disasters to which it has been exposed, as an event which has already taken place. It is an event which is yet future, and which will not be accomplished till the consummation of the 1260 years. In that momentous period the witnesses shall discontinue to prophesy in sackcloth, the judgment of this Babylon shall overtake her, and the dominion of the *little horn* shall be taken away for ever.

Nor are these the only events which this important period shall produce; for contemporary with the fall of the adulterous church of Rome, will be the overthrow of her secular accomplice in oppression and abominations, *the ten-horned Roman beast*. Linked to each other by a destiny which we cannot fathom, their mutual support shall but ensure their mutual exposure; both will engage at the end of the 1260 years in a war with the saints of God, and both will be finally destroyed in *the great battle of Armageddon*.

“We learn from the prophecies of Daniel,” says Mr. Faber, “that the last or Roman beast is to be slain, and his “body destroyed and given to *the burning flame*, because “of the voice of the great words which *his little horn* “spake; and that the reign of *this little horn* is to con- “tinue exactly 1260 years. We learn also from St. John, “that the same *ten-horned beast* is to exist in his revived “or idolatrous state, the very same period of 42 months “or 1260 years; and that he is to be destroyed along “with his colleague, the false prophet, or two-horned beast, “in their last great battle against the Word of God. “Now the *two-horned beast* or false prophet is the same “ecclesiastical power as *the harlot* or *spiritual Babylon*: con- “sequently, if the spiritual Babylon were fallen before “this battle, it is evident that the false prophet could “not, along with the temporal beast, have been engaged “in it. Hence it appears, that the fall of the spiritual “Babylon, and the battle of Armageddon, will be pre- “cisely contemporary, both taking place together at the “termination of the 1260 years.

“As for the battle of Armageddon, in which the beast “and the false prophet are to be overthrown, I take it “to be the same event, or rather series of events, as “the *time of trouble* such as never was since there was a “nation, mentioned by Daniel. It is the same likewise as “the dreadful slaughter of the Gentiles in the neighbour- “hood of Jerusalem, predicted in such forcible terms by “Zechariah and Joel.—During *the time of trouble*, fore- “told by Daniel, the infidel king is to come to his end, “none helping him, and the restoration of the Jews is “to commence: at the period of *the great battle of the* “nations, described by Zechariah and Joel, the restora- “tion of the Jews is also to commence: while, in the “battle of Armageddon, predicted by St. John, *the beast*, “*the false prophet*, and *the kings of the Latin earth*, are to “be completely routed with dreadful slaughter by the “Almighty Word of God; and an end is for ever to be “put to their tyrannical and persecuting domination over “the church.

“I have

" I have already briefly spoken on the prophecies of Zechariah relative to these great events, in my commentary on his fourteenth chapter, without attempting to particularize either the time or place which the prophet had in view. In commenting on those words in the second verse—*The residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city*, I have said that it is impossible to reconcile these words with the state of facts at the time when Jerusalem was taken by the Romans; for at that time we are well assured by *Josephus*, who was an eye-witness, that not only all who were in the city were either slain or made captives, but also the city itself was razed to the ground, so as to leave no vestige of a habitation. How then could there be a *residue not cut off from the city*? And if there has been no capture since to which these words can be applied, *we must look forward to futurity for the completion of the prophecy*. From its being said, that a *residue shall not be cut off from the city*, together with what follows, the course of proceeding, it should seem, will be this; upon the city's being taken, the most warlike part of the inhabitants will retire in a body to some strong post near at hand, and stand upon their defence; till, being encouraged by manifest tokens of God's declaring himself in their favour, and perhaps reinforced by their brethren of Judah at large, they shall sally forth, and with the divine assistance completely defeat their enemies, and effect their own deliverance; so that, as it is said, *Jerusalem shall again sit in her own place at Jerusalem*. (Compare chap. xii. 5, 6, 7. See *Blaney*.) *Houbigant* is of the same opinion—that this whole chapter refers not to the destruction of Jerusalem by *Titus*, but to some future and unknown events concerning the great and final restoration of the Jews." (a)

If then the data from which *Mr. Faber* forms his calculations, namely, that the 1260 years commenced in 606, when *Boniface* became universal bishop, be genuine, (which the arrival of the year 1866, or some previous grand incidents, can alone determine,) the next generation may live to be eye-witnesses of those "future and unknown events which relate to the great and final restoration of the Jews." Of the times and seasons, however, we have no minute certainty; nevertheless, the great streams of events with which the world is at present filled, unite to form a current which seems to run strongly that way; and hence, how much soever we may be deceived as to a particular year, we obtain an assurance that the eventful hour is near at hand.

"Daniel predicts," says *Mr. Faber*, "that, at the time of the end, or the close of the 1260 years, the infidel king shall engage in a war of extermination under the pretext of religion; that in the prosecution of this nefarious project, he shall invade *Palestine*, and occupy the glorious holy mountain; but that eventually he shall perish between the two seas, namely, the *Dead Sea* and the *Mediterranean Sea*. The prophet, absorbed as it were in contemplating the vast power of this impious monster, does not notice any confederates with whom he might be leagued; but speaks merely of the king himself, as being the very life and soul of the whole

"expedition, as being peculiarly both its contriver and executor.

"Such is the prediction of *Daniel*. In a similar manner *St. John* declares, that, under the last vial, and consequently at the close of the same 1260 years, there shall be formed against the Lamb a grand confederacy of the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the Latin earth; that this confederacy shall be utterly overthrown at *Megiddo*, which is a town situated between the two seas of *Palestine*; and that the wine-press of the vintage shall be trodden in a region extending 1600 furlongs, which is the exact measure of the Holy Land."

Thus it appears, that, as *Daniel's* infidel king is to be the grand projector and manager of a religious war, and is to perish in *Palestine* between the two seas at the close of the 1260 years: so the Apocalyptic beast, that is to say, the beast under his last head, is likewise, as it appears from his union with the false prophet, to be the main promoter and manager of a religious war, which, precisely like the religious war of the infidel king, is to take place at the close of the 1260 years, and is to be decided in *Palestine*, or the land which extends 1600 furlongs; and at *Megiddo*, a town of that land, which is situated between the seas.

"So exact a correspondence both of time, place, and circumstance, evidently shews, that the war of the infidel king is the same as the war of the beast and the false prophet: and from *Daniel's* prediction, we can scarcely consider the king only as an inferior actor, only as one of the subordinate kings represented by *St. John* as leagued with the beast.

"If I be right in thinking that the gathering together of the kings of the Latin earth to the battle of *Armageddon* is a confederacy of Popish infidels against the Jews, supported by the professors of evangelical Protestantism,* the opinion that the witnesses will not be subjected to the horrors of some future persecution receives a most abundant confirmation. The beast and false prophet indeed shall surely gather their forces together, but not by the Lord; for no weapon hereafter formed against the Gospel shall prosper; and whosoever shall gather together against it shall fall. The 1260 years of opposition will then have elapsed; and the great controversy of *Jehovah* with his enemies will then have commenced. Every project of the beast, the false prophet, and the congregated kings, will be baffled; and sudden destruction will come upon them unawares, as a thief in the night. Through the aid of the great Captain of their salvation, those who have come out of *Babylon*, shall be completely victorious; and the united tyranny of Popery and Atheism shall for ever be destroyed." (b)

* such is the opinion of *Mr. Faber*: but it admits of very considerable doubts. He may be right; but the vast destruction at *Armageddon* may be brought about by a desertion from the infidel king of his own confederates. There may be another severe persecution of the protestants. But of this I am persuaded, that if there be another persecution, it will fall only on the outward court worshippers. Those who really live within the veil, will be preserved from its effects.

(b) *Faber*, vol. ii. p. 262. et seq. For a view of the various prophecies which refer to these momentous events, see *Daniel*, vii. xi. xii. *Joel*, ii. iii. *Zechariah*, xii. xiii. xiv. and *Revelation*, xviii. xix.

(a) Commentary on *Zechariah*, chap. xiv. verse 2.

From considering the prophecies to which we have referred in the preceding note, we cannot but be forcibly struck with various promises which God has made to his ancient people, that they shall one day be recalled from their present fugitive condition, and re-established in his favour, when the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in. And, from a combination of indisputable circumstances, it is evident that this event will both be preceded and accompanied by such commotions as the world never yet beheld. On the association of these circumstances we have hardly room for two distinct opinions. The difficulties which retard our inquiries, arise from our different views of *time* and *place*, and from the combinations and arrangements which we form of the facts themselves. The most prominent and leading features in the great transactions of the moral and civil world, which mark a coincidence between the events which are passing and those predictions which preceded them, must guide our judgments, and we must leave to time to unfold the rest. On the pouring out of the seventh vial, an opinion has been delivered by a late writer, that *the great events* to which that vial refers, have either been fulfilled already, or are now fulfilling, in those commotions which agitate the world. No doubt can be entertained, that these commotions have a close and intimate connection with the vials of prophecy, which denounce in such awful language the wickedness of man and the retributive justice of God; but whether these commotions form the leading features of the *seventh vial*, and are the primary objects to which that vial alludes, may be well worth a second consideration, before we form a decisive opinion, which events still greater may prove to be premature.

“It appears,” says this author, “that the time of the *seventh vial* was that space wherein the events that were to correspond to the seven thunders, were to occur; the seven articles are therefore here enumerated in the following order: the *first*, after the voices, and thunders, and lightnings, or rumours, and tumults, and alarms, which were introductory to these events, is the *great earthquake*, or commotion, which was to shake the whole antichristian political world; the *second*, is the dividing of the great city, or the whole Latin empire, into three shares, or among three potentates; the *third*, is the falling of the cities or states that had partaken of the supreme authority of the empire, or the losing of their power; the *fourth*, is the destruction of mythical Babylon, or Rome, the idolatrous metropolis of the apostate empire; the *fifth*, is the flying away of every island from the apostate confederacy; the *sixth*, is the disappearing of the mountains or kingdoms of the West (this is the same as the withdrawing of the power of the kings from supporting the beast or civil head of the apostacy); and the *seventh*, and last, is the great and destructive hail. By these seven particular events, the seven denunciations of the seven thunders were to be fulfilled; and the third and last, or antichristian state of the Roman empire, was to have its final overthrow.

“The commencement of this *last vial* cannot be dated before the month of August in 1792. The scheme of the general confederacy of the kings and states of the West, to suppress all attempts to alter the accustomed order of things in Europe, was not effectually put in force till that time. The Duke of Brunswick, at the head of

“a confederate and veteran army of 90,000 men, then entered the territories of the French nation. The tumults, rumours, and alarms, that immediately ensued, must be fresh in the remembrance of all who were witnesses to the transactions of that time. How exactly were the political thunders, and voices, and lightnings fulfilled; and how terrified were the several ruling powers in Europe! Papist, and Protestant, and Turk, united against the new principles that were adopted by the French; the suppression of which, and the restoration of the ancient order of things in France, seemed to the confederate powers an achievement equal to the salvation of mankind, and to the preservation of the whole world. For *nine years*, (c) wherein neither blood nor treasure was limited, have the confederate powers of Europe laboured in vain; the ancient system of the apostacy has received its mortal wound; and the French nation is now, upon a new system of principles, become a preponderating power in the affairs of Europe. Thus has the great and mighty commotion, or earthquake, taken place, the like of which has not happened since the first rise of the beast out of the sea, or from the time when the barbarous nations first got possession of the empire.

“It has been observed in the first part of this work, that the *seven* particular events of this vial were to occupy seven lesser times within its period. Before it can be ascertained what the length of one of these *lesser* times is, it will be necessary to find out what may be the length of the vial itself, and then divide that into seven parts. According to the explanation given, the *vials* began to be poured out in the year 1530: from that time to the year 1792, when the *sixth vial* ended, there are 262 years; these divided by *six*, the number of the vials, gives 43 years and 8 months for each vial, the seventh part of 43 years and 8 months is 6 years and 3 months; each lesser time, therefore, of the seventh vial will be 6 years and 3 months. According to this calculation, provided the several lesser times are equal, the second part of the period of this vial must have commenced in the year 1798, in the month of December, when of course the first ended. In this month and year a new war commenced in Italy. In the month of April 1799, the treaty of peace of *Campo Formio* was broken off by the assassination of the French plenipotentiaries at Radstadt. The events of this second war will not be ultimately finished, till a new balance of power, held in the hands of three great potentates, shall have taken place. This will happen in the month of March 1805. The cities will have lost their power by the year 1811, some time in the month of June. Rome, the great Babylon of the West, will have drunk her cup of indignation by the month of September 1817. The islands, which were confederate with the apostacy, will have fled away by the month of December 1823. The mountains, or kingdoms of the West, will not be found supporting the beast in the month of March 1830. By the month of June 1836, *the great hail** will have afflicted the apostate Latins, and

(c) This was published in 1801.

* Of this destructive hail the author speaks thus:—“A great hail, or great invasion of some northern army, as desolating
[h] and

“ and have swept away all power from that refuge of lies, “ the antichristian apostacy of the West.” (d)

How discordant soever the opinions of men may be on such prophecies as are either entirely future, or only partially fulfilled, we cannot but respect in a particular manner the pious exertions of all. Men may fail in their calculations by starting from an improper period, and yet write in such a manner as shall considerably benefit mankind. The failure of others will teach us caution, and discover to us the rocks on which they have split, that we may avoid their disasters by shunning those courses which they have steered. As the progress of events corrects preceding errors, these events necessarily lessen the number of possible cases to which observation can be applied, and finally direct the attentive inquirer after truth into those modes of thinking which will terminate in fact. Whatever errors may have been found in the observations of commentators, there are but few who have not advanced something which tends to throw additional light on the subjects which they have contemplated, and which future writers may improve, till doubt shall give place to certainty, and men shall unfold the prophecies in their proper light. In the mean while, the attempts which have been made to elucidate the predictions, by so many illustrious names as have appeared in every age, render similar endeavours illustrious from that circumstance. Infallibility is not to be expected where the *Newtons* and *Medes* have failed; and it can be no disgrace to err, in laudably attempting to seize those truths which these men were unable to reach.

“ The prophecies of Daniel and St. John,” says Mr. Faber, “ are strictly chronological ones, and are therefore “ in some measure their own interpreters; and as for “ those of Zechariah and Joel, though they be not marked “ by the chronological numbers, and the long continued “ and connected series of events, which form so striking a “ feature of the other predictions, yet they contain within “ them facts which are amply sufficient to shew at what “ era they will be accomplished. *They both foretel the restoration of the Jews*: consequently all the matters of “ which they speak as connected with that restoration, “ must be the same matters as those of which Daniel “ speaks, as being similarly connected with it. Hence “ it will follow, that *the destruction of the nations in the vicinity of Jerusalem*, predicted by Zechariah, as contemporary with the restoration of the Jews, must be the same as the overthrow of *the infidel king in Palestine*, predicted by Daniel, as likewise contemporary with the “ restoration of the Jews. Hence also it will follow, that “ the fierce people, so accurately described by Joel, as “ spreading desolation wherever they come,—as wonderfully succeeding in all their enterprises,—as running to “ and fro in the great city,—as scaling the walls of fenced “ cities with open violence,—as entering insidiously into “ the windows like a thief,—as causing tremendous revo-

“ and destructive as if the hail had been the weight of a talent, “ fell from the heaven, or from the sovereign authority of the “ government that in all then prevail, upon the men of the “ apostate party; and they blasphemed God on account of the “ exceeding greatness of the plague or northern invasion, by “ continuing to call upon their saints and images for relief “ from this great distress, instead of upon God, who is the only “ Saviour.” P. 179.

(d) Dr. J. Mitchell, *New Exposition*, vol. ii. p. 184, *et seq.*

“ lutions in the political heavens; that this fierce people “ can be no other than the people of Daniel's infidel “ king, who are to commence their reign of havoc and “ plunder under the *third woe trumpet*, during the comparatively short time which the devil hath before the termination of *the 1260 years*, before the restoration of the “ Jews. It will likewise follow, that the invasion of Palestine by *the northern army*, or the army of antichrist, “ entering it by *war of the north*, is the same as the expedition of *the infidel king*; and that the destruction of “ this northern army, with its face to the eastern sea, and its “ hinder part toward the utmost sea, is the same event as the “ destruction of the infidel king, after he has planted the “ tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious *holy mountain*; for in both cases the scene is equally laid in “ the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, between the eastern or “ Dead sea, and the western or Mediterranean sea. It will lastly “ follow, that *the great battle of the nations*, in the valley of “ *Jehoshaphat*, is the same as the great battle of the *beast*, “ *the false prophet*, and *the kings*, at *Armageddon*, and as “ the time of *unexampled trouble*, during which Daniel, “ like Joel, predicts that *the restoration of the Jews* will “ commence.” (e)

Impressed with a conviction arising from this coincidence, the same author goes on to observe, that the final war of the beast and the false prophet, when united together against the gospel, will finally be decided in Palestine, between the two seas, and will prove decisive in favour of the cause of God. In the mean while he supposes, that, prior to this great catastrophe, some great commotions will take place in Europe, by means of which the *Latin city* will be divided into three parts, and by which the islands and mountains, or smaller portions of the empire, will be swallowed up in some iniquitous partition. These, he conceives, are alluded to in the prophecies of Joel, and which that servant of God expressed in the language which St. Peter adopted on the day of Pentecost: *And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke.*

In addition to the joint declarations of Daniel, Zechariah, and Joel, relative to the portion of the world which is to be the seat of this decisive war, St. John, he conceives, in the Revelation, affords the fullest confirmation. In the brief account which this prophet gives of that dreadful discomfiture of the enemies of God, which we find from his ninth chapter, under the character of the *vintage*, he informs us, that *the wine press should be trodden without the city*; that blood, instead of wine, should come out of these mystical grapes; and that such should be its dreadful effusion, that it should reach even unto the *knives*, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs. This the *vintage* or *wine press* under which both *papacy* and *infidelity* are for ever to be destroyed; and is nothing more than another description of the great battle of *Armageddon*. Here then we have two marks by which the last scene of action may be known; the first is, that it is to be within the city; and the second is, that it is to be in a country which extends 1600 furlongs. “ Both these descriptive “ marks perfectly correspond with the land of Palestine; “ the land in which, by the unanimous testimony of the

(e) Faber, vol. ii. p. 376, 7.

“prophets, the last great controversy of the Lord will be carried on.”

There are two senses in which the country of Palestine may be viewed; in one of these it lies *within* the precincts of the city, and in the other *without* it. If the *whole Roman empire*, including not only its proper seat in the West, but its extensive conquests in the East, be taken into the account, Palestine lies *within* it. But if the revived or Latin empire, which was exclusively confined to the West, be considered, Palestine lies *without* its boundaries.

It was in reference to the *former* of these considerations that the prophet has told us *our Lord was crucified in the great city*, because at that time the empire existed in the plenitude and greatness of its extent and power. And it is in reference to the *latter*, that the same inspired writer tells us, that this figurative wine-press, from which such an effusion of human blood shall issue, shall be trodden *without the city*; for at the time when this event is to happen, the East, totally detached, will form no part of the *Latin empire*; and consequently this peculiar manner of introducing the two expressions, relative to the crucifixion of our Lord *in the city*, and the treading of the *wine press without it*, discovers to us, that nothing but the Spirit of God could have dictated to the pen of the prophet.

There is another circumstance which has already been briefly noticed; namely, the extent of that country which lies *without the city*, in which this figurative wine-press is to be trodden. St. John describes it as extending 1600 furlongs. Now it is highly worthy of observation, continues Mr. Faber, that the length of that region between the two seas, which is destined to witness the fall of Antichrist and his congregated host, (namely Palestine,) if a line be drawn along the sea shore, from its southern to its northern frontier, amounts exactly to 1600 *Jewish risin, or stadia, or furlongs*.

But it is not merely to the land in an indefinite manner in which this battle is to be fought, that our attention is directed; but Mr. Faber contends, “even to the very place in that land. Zechariah, as we have seen, fixes in general terms the scene of action in Palestine, and in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem: Joel likewise fixes upon Palestine, declaring that the *northern army* shall be destroyed between the seas: Daniel no less explicitly affirms, that the infidel king, after having planted the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas in the glorious holy mountain, shall come to his end, none being able to help him: and St. John asserts, that the wine-press shall be trodden in a land which extends 1600 furlongs.

“In addition to this general statement of the country where these events are to happen, Joel further informs us, that the battle of the nations shall not only be fought *between the seas*, but *in the valley of Jehoshaphat*; and St. John predicts very definitely, that this same battle shall not only be fought in a land which extends 1600 furlongs, but in a certain place of that valley called *Armageddon*. The *valley of Jehoshaphat*, therefore, and *Armageddon*, are one and the same region. Now the word *Jehoshaphat* signifies the *judgment of the Lord*: and the *valley of the battle* is indifferently styled by Joel the *valley of Jehoshaphat, or the judgment of the Lord, and the valley of Consecration or Destruction*. It is plain, therefore, that this is not the *proper*, but only a *descriptive* name of the

place; that is, of some place or other between the two seas. Here then St. John steps forward, and furnishes us with the literal proper name of the region which is thus to be made the last scene of the just judgment of the Lord. *Armageddon* signifies the *destruction of Megiddo*; and *Megiddo* is a town situate between the two seas, in the half-tribe of Manasseh, at a small distance from the shores of the Mediterranean. In the valley of this place, Josiah lost his life in his fatal encounter with Pharaoh king of Egypt: and it appears, that this valley of the destruction of *Megiddo*, or as it is termed by Joel, this valley of the judgment of the Lord, is hereafter to be the scene of a yet more dreadful conflict.” (f)

“That in the gathering together of the Jews,” says Mr. Whitaker, “the divine interposition will be visible, we are fully assured by many passages of holy writ. On this point the prophet Isaiah speaks plainly in the eighth and following verses of his fifty-second chapter. To this does Hosea bear witness, in the latter part of his first and eleventh chapters. To the same does Micah testify in his last chapter; and indeed scarcely any prophet is there but has spoken, either directly or by allusion, to this particular. That as the ancestors of the Jews were the instruments of the living God in exterminating the polluted nations of Canaan, so they shall be the same in taking out of the kingdom of the Messiah whatsoever offendeth, is strongly indicated, as in other scriptures, so in the last verses of the eleventh and sixteenth chapters of this book (the Revelation); and that the land of Judea shall be the theatre of the divine vengeance, is in various places most clearly pointed out. Lastly, too, that the pope shall, for a time, triumph at Jerusalem, is in the *seventh and eighth verses* of the *eleventh* chapter expressly declared. As, therefore, the preservation of the Jewish people in a state of separation from all others, in all the revolutions of human affairs, through so many centuries to the present day, forms such a call on men to acknowledge their God as the Lord of all, as is not to be rejected without the necessary conviction of those who are guilty of it; so the very extraordinary circumstances which have lately occurred, visibly clearing the way for the accomplishment of this prediction concerning the papal power, cannot be overlooked without the most daring inattention to those signs for which Christians have been commanded to watch, without the most impious unconcern to his judgments, who has warned us of the approach of a period in which he will take unto himself his great power, and reign.” (g)

(f) Faber, vol. ii. 380, 31.—“*Armageddon*,” says Calmet, “spoken of in the Revelation, signifies the mountain of *Megiddon* or *Megiddo*. Megiddo is a city situate in the great plain at the foot of mount Carmel. There it was that good king Josiah received his mortal wound, in the battle against Necho king of Egypt. At *Armageddon* the evil angel, coming out of the dragon’s mouth, shall gather together the kings of all the earth, to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, as it is laid in the Revelation.”—See Calmet’s Dictionary, article *Armageddon*.

(g) Whitaker, p. 441, 2.

Though the gathering of the kings together to the battle of the great day of God Almighty, endeavouring by their combined exertions to support that antichristian system which God has determined to demolish, may be the same as the gathering of the grapes of the vine, that they might be cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God; yet we must suppose, that the battle of these kings cannot be *intentionally* against God. Other motives will, doubtless, be assigned as the occasion of the great confederacy, and perhaps in some views the delusions of policy may seem to justify the measure. The spirits of devils, which, by working wonders, shall entice the kings of the earth to combine their forces, may fascinate them with such miraculous deceptions, as may re-animate them with vigour and courage in proportion to the defeats which they shall successively sustain. The same deceptions which can induce them to unite, will easily be able to induce them to persevere; a succession of calamities may become the parent of patience, while the illusions of a deceitful hope may urge them to their fate. Like the Jews in the crucifixion of our Lord, their opposition to God may partake more of implication than of formal and avowed hostility; political justice may be their pretence, ambition their aim, and their own destruction their end. (b)

“ The gathering together of the kings of the earth, previous to the battle of Armageddon, may possibly mean” (says Mr. Faber) “ a confederacy of the infidel popish powers against the Jews, supported by the arms of Protestantism. This conjecture is strengthened by a certain peculiarity of expression, which the Holy Spirit taught both Joel and Daniel to adopt in their respective predictions, concerning the great troubles about to come to pass at the end of the 1260 years. Joel describes the proclamation, by which the nations are to be gathered together, as inviting them to *sanctify war*: and Daniel describes the infidel tyrant as going forth in great wrath to devote, under the pretext of religion, many to utter destruction. From these expressions I am much inclined to think, that the gathering together of the *beast*, the *false prophet*, and the *kings of the Latin earth*, will be for the purpose of undertaking what a Papist would denominate a *holy war*; that is to say, a war somewhat similar to the *ancient holy crusade* against the Waldenses of Provence; a war, entered into under the cognizance of the *cross* for the pious purpose of exterminating all those whom the church of Rome thinks proper to denominate *Heretics*. This infamous prostitution of the sacred name of religion will, however, be amply repaid upon their own heads. The *Arma*, or destroying anathema, which the false prophet shall fulminate against his enemies, and which his zealous coadjutor the *atheistical-papal tyrant* will go forth in great fury to put in execution against those whom he hath religiously devoted to destruction, shall prove an *Arma* only to themselves. Accordingly we find, what is somewhat remarkable, that the same word *Arma*, the radical verb of which Daniel uses to express the manner in which the infidel king should go forth in his wrath, is united by St. John in composition with the proper name *Megiddo*; as if he wished to intimate, that they, who had pronounced an *Arma* against all their opponents, should themselves feel the baleful

(b) See Mitchell, vol. ii. p. 173.

“ effects of the Lord's *Arma* at *Arma-Megiddon*. The very league of the *false prophet*, indeed, with the *beast* and the kings of the earth, might alone lead us to conclude, that this war should be a religious war; for if it were a war undertaken only upon common principles, it is not easy to assign a reason why the false prophet should be evidently so much interested in its success.” (i)

The *balance of power*, as it is politically termed, a notion which has sprung up among the statesmen of the great civilized nations of Europe, and through which their jarring interests intersect each other, has given rise to confederacies which have been of the most destructive tendencies and consequences, both to the financial concerns of the interested empires, and to the happiness of millions of the human race. The return of the Jews into Palestine, when the mystical *waters of the Euphrates* shall be dried up, may cause that political principle to operate in all its force, so that the safety of Europe may be thought to be implicated in the great question in agitation. The expulsion of the returning tribes may be deemed necessary, from motives of expediency, to prevent their growing power, which may reach in time to a preponderation; and those unhappy confederates, with an eye fixed upon their imaginary palladium of empire, will only become more and more exasperated, in proportion to the valour which the Jews shall manifest, and to that success, which, in all their enterprises, shall attend their arms.

How, or in what manner, those nations which profess the Protestant religion can be supposed to engage in this unholy crusade, it is impossible to say. Perhaps, forgetting the inestimable blessings they have received from God, they may barter the securities of peace for the hazard and calamities of war, and learn, when their destinies become irretrievable, that the deceitful glare of political wisdom dispensed its beams only to light them to their doom. Be this, however, as it may, it is highly probable that all will not thus oppose the designs of God. The purposes of the Almighty are, to recall his ancient people, and once more to re-establish them in his favour. To accomplish this, he will, without doubt, make use of means, and adapt them to those ends which he has in view; and if the former part of the eighteenth chapter of Isaiah* have any reference to these last days, we cannot but conclude that some maritime nation will be made subservient to his designs. The rest, possibly, joining the unrighteous combination, will act under the direction of the papal and atheistical powers, whose aim will be to exterminate such of the Jews as shall have been brought back to their own country, and to prevent those of their brethren who may be yet at a distance, from joining them in Palestine.

From the prophecies both of Daniel and Zechariah it seems even more than probable, that the confederated hosts will prove, in the first place at least, partially successful in their attempts. “ The former of these prophets teaches

(i) Faber, vol. ii. p. 382. et seq.

* Ho! Land spreading wide the shadow of (thy) wings, which art beyond the river of Cusb.

Accustomed to send messengers by sea, even in bulrush vessels upon the surface of the waters! Go, swift messengers, unto a nation dragged away and plucked, unto a people wonderful from their beginning hitherto, a nation expecting, expecting, and trampled under foot, whose land rivers have spoiled!

Isaiah xviii. 1, 2. Bishop Horsley's translation.

“ us, that before the infidel king shall come to his end, he shall have succeeded in planting the tabernacles of his palaces in the glorious holy mountain between the two seas : and the latter more openly informs us, that, immediately before the Lord shall go forth and fight against the assembled nations, those nations shall have sacked Jerusalem with circumstances of the greatest cruelty.” (k)

In the mean while, the plans of Heaven are carrying onward, through the instrumentality of those who act with an eye to different objects, and are impelled to their deeds by very different motives. Perfectly unconscious of any thing beyond the dominion and wealth which they exert themselves to acquire, their blindness is but a link in that chain which encompasses the destiny of the world ; and, in conjunction with other causes, will ultimately lead to the accomplishment of prophecy, and issue in the final consummation of things. To this consummation the signs of the times assure us that we are fast approaching. Every succeeding year brings with it some important event which becomes evidence in favour of this truth ; and it is highly probable, that events will continue to exhibit themselves before us in rapid succession, till all contention for empire shall cease ; till Christ shall establish his reign in righteousness, and till the nations of the earth shall learn war no more.

The events to be accomplished before we can expect the world to be blessed with that desirable tranquillity which Christ shall one day establish upon earth, are great and many ; and that of the restoration of the Jews is one which in all probability requires much time. However, according to the concurring opinion of all the writers on the prophecies, the period that shall close the drama of the world, cannot be remote. Writers, indeed, vary considerably in their calculations ; but with respect to the result they almost all meet within half a century. And though in modes of reckoning all commentators may have erred, it is highly improbable that in the great outlines all have been deceived. The great concluding scenes of the world are evidently drawing to a close, and some of the events are even already begun.

If the passage, which, in a preceding page, we have quoted from the eighteenth chapter of Isaiah, applies to the restoration of the Jews, it is evident that some great maritime state, at once courageous and powerful, is destined to begin the work ; and we may reasonably conclude that it will be some years in accomplishing. We learn from Zechariah, that they will be brought to their original habitations in two distinct bodies, and consequently they are not all to return to Palestine together. “ The Lord,” says the prophet, “ shall save the tents of Judah first ; that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, do not magnify themselves against Judah.” (Zech. xii. 7.)

In my commentary on this chapter I have observed, that it is not difficult to perceive, that the prophecies of this and the two following chapters relate to future times, and most probably to those predicted of by Ezekiel in his 38th and 39th chapters ; where it is said, that Israel, after their restoration and return to their own country, would be assailed by a combination of many nations. That it is at least likely, when the time shall

“ come for the re-establishment of the Jews, and they shall begin to collect themselves and attempt a settlement in their ancient possessions, that such a measure would create jealousy and uneasiness, in those powers more especially, who are interested in the dominion over these countries, we have already hinted. But, without attempting to determine precisely concerning the invaders, the substance of this prophecy is this ;— that Jerusalem will be besieged by a multitude of hostile nations, to the great terror of the people in the vicinity, as well as of Judah itself ; but that the attempts of those nations will be frustrated through the special interposition of God, and will terminate in their total discomfiture and ruin, and in the permanent peace of the victorious Jews. After which the Jews will be brought at length to see and lament the sin of their forefathers in putting their Messiah to death ; will be admitted as members of the Gospel dispensation ;—and through the great atonement of the Messiah, and the grace of his Spirit, shall be cleansed from past guilt, will renounce all their former offensive practices, and carefully abstain from a future repetition of them.” (p)

“ If then,” says Mr. Faber, “ Judah is to be saved first, and if the isles and the ships of Tarshish are to bring his sons from far first, it is evident that the division, which Zechariah terms Judah, will be restored by the maritime power before the other division, which he terms the house of David and Jerusalem : but how the one division is to be distinguished from the other, nothing but the event can shew. It is possible, that the circumstance of this two-fold division may throw some light upon a very obscure chronological passage in the last prophecy of Daniel, which relates to the restoration of the Jews. After having predicted in the words of the Angel, that his people should be delivered during a time of unexampled trouble, he next proceeds to inform us, that, when God shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all the things contained in the period of 1260 years shall be finished : consequently, since the scattering of the holy people will not be fully accomplished till the end of the 1260 years, it will of course be accomplished at the end of them ; and therefore, exactly at that era, their scattering then being accomplished, they will begin to be restored.” Having thus stated the commencement of their restoration, he then adds—“ From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up (in the year of our Lord 606, at the beginning of the 1260 years), there shall be 1290 days : blessed is he that writeth, and cometh to the 1335 days. (Dan. xii. 11, 12.)” Here then we learn, that, from the beginning of the restoration of the Jews at the end of the 1260 years, to the beginning of the period of great blessedness, which I think can only mean the Millennium, there shall be a space of 75 years. And these 75 years Daniel divides into two portions : the one consisting of 30 years, and therefore terminating at the end of 1290 years from the commencement of the 1260 years ; and the other comprehending 45 years, and therefore terminating at the end of 1335 years from the commencement of the same 1260 years. This division of the 75 years, however, he

(k) Faber, vol. ii. p. 389.

(p) See this commentary on Zech. xii. vol. iv. p. 658.

makes without giving us the least hint of what is to take place at the era of the division: without specifying *any thing whatsoever*; he simply divides them, for some purpose or another, into 30 years and 45 years. Now since the period of millennium-blessedness is not to commence till the end of the 75 years, will it be deemed an unreasonable conjecture, that these 75 years will be taken up in gathering together the Jews from the various nations among which they are dispersed; that the thirty years will be devoted to the restoration of Judah, which is to take place *first* by the instrumentality of the great protestant maritime power; and that the remaining forty-five years will be occupied in bringing back the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem? This conjecture I wish to be considered as a mere conjecture: it may, or it may not, be well founded. But whatever be intended by the division of the 75 years, it is evident to common sense, that the restoration of the Jews, that *magna molis opus*, will assuredly not be the work of one day. The first return of that people from the Babylonian captivity, was a light matter, when compared with their manifold restoration at the yet future period, when the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the Islands of the sea: when he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and shall gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. For so vast an undertaking as this, perhaps the shortest space that can reasonably be allowed will fully amount to 75 years. These 75 years are the peculiar period of God's controversy with the nations. They are styled by Daniel the time of the end.

"From what has been said concerning the restoration of the Jews, the following positions may indisputably be collected: (1.) The Jews most certainly will be restored. (2.) They will as certainly be converted to Christianity. (3.) They will begin to be restored as soon as the 1260 years shall have expired. (4.) They will successively be restored in two great divisions. (5.) The main agent in restoring the first of these divisions will be the prevailing protestant maritime power of the day. (6.) A great opposition will be made to this attempt of the maritime power, by a confederacy consisting of the heath, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, or Latin empire. (7.) The confederacy, one member of which will be certainly the Antichristian papal king, having sanctified their war by proclamation, will invade Palestine, in order to prevent the return of the Jews; and will succeed in taking Jerusalem, and in planting the tabernacles of their palaces between the two seas in the glorious holy mountain. (8.) Their triumph will be but short. Assembling themselves together at Megiddo, they will be struck with a preternatural confusion, and draw every man his sword against his fellow: so that the bulk of this mighty northern army shall miserably perish between the two seas; and the infidel tyrant himself come to his end, none being able to help him.*

* From a passage in Zechariah xiv. this acute and ingenious author has attempted to infer the manner of the overthrow of this mighty host; and it cannot be denied, that the prophetic language of the prophet gives a sanction to the conclusions which he has made. The prophet tells us, that it shall come to

"(9.) The confederate hosts will consist of three parts. (10.) The Latin city will be divided into three parts, immediately previous to these events; the earthquake and the events being equally comprehended under the seventh vial. (11.) Two out of three parts of the confederacy will be destroyed at Megiddo. (12.) The third will be spared, and will be converted. (13.) The power of the heath and the false prophet will be forever broken by their last decisive overthrow in the valley of the Lord's judgment. (14.) At the end of the 75 years, after the termination of the 1260 years, the season of Millennial rest will commence.

"All these matters are clearly predicted by the prophets. The manner, in which they will be accomplished, affords a vast field for conjecture; but their accomplishment itself is no vain speculation: in God's own good time that must take place: how it will take place we know not beyond what is revealed." (9)

That these events will most assuredly take place, is not a subject of doubtful speculation, because plainly predicted by the Spirit of God; but the exact period when war and iniquity shall forsake the earth, and Christ shall reign in righteousness, is not to be known with such precision. The former is a subject of the most indubitable certainty, but the latter is concealed in shade. Persevering inquiry has nevertheless done much toward the elucidation of these obscurities which hang upon unaccomplished prophecies, yet nothing but time and events can completely remove the veil. Our observations on those predictions and events which are already past, afford us much instruction and help in respect to our calculations on the future. We learn from thence to separate those which are yet lodged in futurity, from the passing objects of the present day, and to trace by analogy the methods which we ought to pursue.

On those prophecies which are of a chronological nature, their respective numbers cannot fail to guide us with

precision in that day, that a great tumult from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. From this passage Mr. Faber supposes, that on the great day of decision, while they are contriving the destruction of those whom God has determined to make triumphant, a supernatural panic will be sent among them, by which means they will maily turn their swords against one another, so that they will become their own executioners: that, nevertheless, in the midst of this signal vengeance, God will remember mercy, and manifest his salvation to those who shall escape the general carnage. Many, it may reasonably be presumed, will have joined this coalition through the influences of persecution operating upon a pernicious education; and many more, contrary to their better judgments, will be compelled to take up arms by the more formidable powers. All therefore cannot be presumed to be in an equal state of guilt; and hence those who acted from invincible ignorance, or the impulsion of necessity, may be of that number who shall find mercy at the hand of God. For it shall come to pass (says the prophet) that in all the land, saith the Lord, 1200 parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third shall be left therein. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God. (Zech. xiii. 8, 9.)

See p. 399-391.

(7) Faber, vol. ii. p. 396 et seq.

precision

precision to a definite issue, provided we can be assured that our data are right. But while these are enveloped in obscurity, uncertainty must necessarily rest upon the conclusions which are drawn from them.

The ingenious author whose works we have had occasion frequently to quote in the latter part of this appendix, has dated the commencement of the 1260 years during which *Popery*, *Mahometanism*, and *Antichrist*, are to continue to afflict the true church and to delude mankind, in the year of our Lord 606; and it must be acknowledged, that scarcely any period in history appears more probable when all circumstances are taken into the account.

The publication of the Justinian code of arbitrary rules of faith in the year 529, or 532, was doubtless a memorable period, and most deservedly worthy of much notice; but the calculations founded on it, will bring us to the awful moment of consummation much sooner than the appearances of the world seem to justify; for in this case we cannot look into futurity beyond the year 1819. But when we turn our eyes to those events which remain to be accomplished, namely, *the drying up of the mystical Euphratean rivers*, or the downfall of Mahometanism, *the total abolition of Popery*, *the end of the Infidel king*, or *of the reign of Antichrist*, and *the restoration of the Jews*, reason seems to require a longer period. It must nevertheless be acknowledged, that the period yet remaining in this calculation, is fully sufficient, if God shall be so pleased as to make it subservient to his purposes. This, the short space of *twelve years* will determine.

There is another important circumstance which must also be taken into the account, namely, *the rise of Mahometanism*, which cannot with much propriety be brought to agree with the date of the Justinian code. For though the Arabian impostor did not flee from Mecca to Medina till the year 622, which was the twelfth year of his ministry, and the 54th of his age; and though his followers compute their time from this era; yet he first retired to the *cave of Hera* in the year 606; which, as it coincides with the prophecies that relate to the continuance of his doctrines, is certainly a proper period from which to date his daring imposture. But whether we date the rise of Mahometanism from 622, or from 606, it can in neither case be made to agree with the daring impositions of Justinian and the Pope. And consequently, as Popery and Mahometanism are destined to fall together at the end of the 1260 years, the despotic measures of Justinian in the year 529 or 532 cannot afford us a proper date. Hence then, as these two daring impositions must run parallel with each other, and must perish together, we must look for their origin or particular establishment in the same year; and it is remarkable, that the year 606 was the identical period in which the Arabian impostor retired to the *cave of Hera*, and in which the Italian impostor obtained from the emperor Phocas that power with which he has since ruled his vassals as with a rod of iron. These are circumstances which have induced several of those authors to whom we have referred, to fix upon the year 606 as the period from whence to date the 1260 years, during which their dominion was to continue.

It must be obvious to all, that, if the year 606 be admitted as the period in which the 1260 years began, they must end in the year 1866; and, consequently, that must be the period of consummation to which the transac-

tions of the world are now verging. Daniel had predicted, that the little horn, by which Mr. Faber and others understand Popery, should arise at a time when the great Roman empire was bursting with its own weight, and giving birth to *ten independent kingdoms*. Thus far fact and prophecy go hand in hand. For some considerable time after the establishment of Popery, it was nothing more than an ecclesiastical kingdom; but it continued to increase in magnitude and power till the year 606, at which time the Pope was declared *Bishop of bishops*, and *supreme Head of the Catholic church*.

“At this era, (says Mr. Faber,) which is the proper date of the 1260 years, and the epoch when the old *pagan Roman beast*, which had been mortally wounded by the sword of the Spirit under *his sixth head*, revived under *the same sixth head* by setting up a spiritual tyrant in the church, and by relapsing into idolatry, St. John first introduces upon the stage the power which Daniel symbolizes by the little horn of the fourth beast. That power, however, was now become *an universal empire*, instead of being what it had hitherto been, a *limited ecclesiastical kingdom*. Hence the apostle, instead of representing the ten-horned beast as having likewise a little horn, describes him as attended by a *second beast* whose character precisely answers to that of the *little horn*. By the instigation of this corrupt spiritual power, the ten-horned beast, or the secular Roman empire, wages war with the saints, during the period of the 1260 years, through the instrumentality either of his last head, or his ten horns. The *Mohammedan horn* arose in the same year, that the papal horn became an universal spiritual empire.” (r)

“The Mohammedan little horn itself, or the religion of Mohammed, is to continue to the end of 2200 years from the invasion of Asia by Alexander the Great; which is found to bring us down exactly to the year 1866, and thus to allow precisely 1260 years for the duration of *Mohammedism*, reckoning from its commencement in the year 606.” (s)

These are circumstances which wear a convincing aspect, and are entitled to our most serious attention. So many remarkable coincidences in past events, united with the declarations of prophecy, and remarkably countenanced by the present appearances of the world, corroborate one another in a manner that astonishes, and which must be allowed to be inexplicable, at least at present, upon any other supposition than that which has been made.

Agreeably to the hypothesis of the author last quoted, the cotemporary rise and progress of Popery and Mahometanism were predicted by St. John, under the blasts of the *first* and *second* *rose trumpets*; while, under the *third*, was announced the appearance of Infidel Antichrist, who, in the last days of Atheism and insubordination, and subsequently to the Reformation, should deny both the Father and the Son, and continue prosperous in iniquity till God's controversy with the nations should cease. The full development of this monster, however, he supposes to be preceded by an awful circumstance, namely, a dreadful earthquake, by which a *tenth part* of the great Latin city, or what is denominated one of the *ten horns* of the Roman beast, should be overthrown. And, finally, that this woe,

(r) Faber, vol. ii. p. 404.

(s) Ibid. 406.

which

which extends to the very termination of the 1260 years, is that which introduces, what St. John has denominated *the harvest of God's wrath*, and will only conclude with the last *dreadful vintage*.

Notwithstanding that the occurrences which have happened of late years, are very extraordinary; yet they may be considered only as precursors which are sent to admonish the world, and to bid mankind prepare for the calamities which await them at the time of the end. Still no visible measures have been taken to facilitate the restoration of the Jews. It must indeed be acknowledged, that the *waters of the Euphrates* have long since been drying up; and the rapid decline of the Ottoman empire, which is understood by this figurative expression, may be considered as a circumstance more immediately connected with the return of the exiled tribes. For, if the figurative waters of the figurative Euphrates must be completely dried up to prepare a way for the kings of the East, it is not to be expected that any considerable movement should be made among the descendants of Judah, till that empire has undergone some important, perhaps, sudden change.

A train of circumstances may nevertheless be secretly operating towards the restoration of these exiled tribes, though we may be incompetent to trace the connection; and even the individuals themselves may, at this moment, be taking measures that will lead to issues of which they are unconscious. The separated parts, when viewed detached from one another, may have tendencies distinct from those which will result from them when combined, and, by these means, baffle all our attempts to calculate upon the distant issues which the actions of mankind will produce. Through the over-ruling providence of God, even those nations which shall hereafter exert themselves to defeat the establishment of the Israelites in the Holy Land, may, at this very moment, be the unconscious instruments of preparing the way for them to enter upon their promised possession, and may be laying for themselves those snares, from which, in *the valley of decision*, they shall not be able to escape.

Be these things, however, as they may, whatever opposition may be made by the confederacy at the great battle of Armageddon, the Jews shall finally be triumphant. Their Almighty Protector will cause even the wrath of man to praise him; enmity shall only tend to exalt his power and glory; and those who shall gather themselves together to counteract his designs, will learn, when it is too late, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Stimulated to their deeds by a design to preserve *the balance of power*, to *dismember and partition some defenceless state*, or to obtain what, in the fashionable phraseology of the day, may be termed *an indemnity for recent losses*, and *a security against future wrongs*, the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers may take counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed; and, by deluding themselves, persuade the people to imagine a vain thing, till destruction shall come upon them suddenly and irretrievably.

The calamities of *the harvest* which has been considered as already past, "are but the harbingers (says Mr. Faber,) of those which shall take place under the last vial during the period of the vintage. Men have not yet ceased to blaspheme the name of the Lord: soon, therefore, shall

"the spirit of devils go forth from the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, to delude them to destruction. Few perhaps, indeed of the present generation, will behold *the division of the Latin city into three parts, the formation of the antichristian confederacy, their invasion of Palestine, their opposition to the maritime power which shall begin the restoration of the Jews, their temporary capture of Jerusalem, their ultimate destruction at Armageddon:* but, if I be not greatly mistaken in the date which I have assigned to the 1260 years, many of our children will be eye-witnesses of these events." (†)

The date, we have already observed, which this intelligent author has assigned for the commencement of the 1260 years, is the year 606; and, if these two numbers be added together, we shall be immediately conducted to the year 1866,—the precise period in which he supposes the dreadful overthrow of the enemies of God to take place in *Palestine, in the valley of Megiddo,—the region between the two seas,—the region whose limits extend 1600 furlongs.* To sentiments so definite, we have already observed, we dare not assent, however probable the evidence may be in favour of the fact. The most judicious calculations that have hitherto been made, have, in many respects, been found to be erroneous; and, on this very account, we are forbidden to presume. It is true, that former errors can form no real argument against calculations which may hereafter be made; but they teach us a lesson of caution, and direct us to wait with patience, indecision, humility, and expectation, till time and fact shall dissipate every doubt.

Our confidence in the sure word of prophecy arises from two sources,—the positive declarations of God, and the actual accomplishment of many predicted events. These lay hold on both our understanding, and our faith, and afford us all the evidence that we can either expect or hope, while they become a sure foundation on which we rest, to wait the arrival of events that are yet future.

When the captive Jews were compelled to sit down and weep by the river of Babylon, God directed Isaiah to call Cyrus, by name, more than two centuries before he was born, and to point him out as the deliverer of his exiled people; and so fully did he *break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron*, that the name of the Chaldee empire was lost in that of Persia, and Babylon became a habitation of dragons.

From the Old Testament we may collect the history of the Messiah, together with the minute circumstances of his birth, life, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension into glory. The prophets who described these things, set forth the time of his sufferings, the treatment which his followers were to expect, the success of his Gospel and its ultimate triumph. In descending to particulars, they described the periods within which many facts that were equally important and improbable should come to pass, and history has demonstrated the truth of their declarations.

The destruction of Jerusalem, together with the calamities which the inhabitants suffered during the siege, was foretold by Christ, and its fate has been a mournful comment on the prediction. Contrary to the common practice of the Romans on similar occasions, both the capital and the temple were destroyed, though every exertion was made by Titus to preserve the latter. A superior destiny

(†) Vol. ii. p. 412.

awaited it, and neither Jews nor Romans could preserve it from impending ruin.

These singular events, though calamitous in themselves, tended to establish the truth of Christianity, and proved the divine authority of its Founder, both to Jews and Gentiles. Though happening in conformity to the sacred predictions, the pride, the disobedience, the profligate wickedness of the people, and, above all, their rejection of the Messiah, were made the instruments of their accomplishment. And, in opposition to prejudice and philosophy, the Gospel has continued to triumph over power and art.

“ In the prophecies respecting latter events, (says Mr. Kett,) we have seen the Antichrist, the great and formidable enemy of the true church of Christ, revealed with the most striking accuracy; though in such mystic language, that nothing but corresponding events could have decyphered it. We have seen the antichristian power arise at the same period of time in the corruptions of the church of Rome in the West, and in the false doctrine of Mahomet in the East (v).” And, without doubt, our successors will behold the devastations which yet remain to be made in papal and Mahometan countries, and which will convulse the world before it shall meet its irreversible doom.

“ Prophecy is indeed the voice of God, appealing to the records and the observations of man for its eternal truth; it speaks to unbelieving Jews, to careless Christians, and to Infidels of all denominations; and it adapts its awful declarations to the spiritual wants of mankind in every age. The truth of prophecy admits not only the clear illustration of history, but the evidence of daily experience and common observation. The present hour bears witness to its divine origin, as well as the generations that are passed.

“ *Jerusalem is now trodden down by the Gentiles,—its walls are beaten down, its ditches are filled up, and it is surrounded with ruins of buildings,—it is the residence of the despotic Turks, and superstitious Christians, divided into various communities of Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Abyssinians, and Franks.*

“ The Jewish people are now dispersed among all the nations of the earth, yet distinct and separate from all; — ‘ afflicted but not forsaken, reviled as a proverb and a by-word,’ yet numerous, and in general opulent: enriched with the spoils of their enemies, they abide without a king, and without a priest, and without a sacrifice, a conspicuous monument of the truth of prophecy to every people among whom they dwell. Where are the Assyrians and the Romans? They are swept off from the face of the earth. *The name and the remnant has been cut off. I will make a full end of all the nations, but I will not make a full end of thee.* The conquerors are destroyed, and the captives remain.

“ *The sons of Ismael still wander over the deserts, and have their habitations in the tents of Kedar, and are wild men; their hands are still against every man, and every man's hand against them.* Every act of plunder committed by the unbridled and roving tribes of the wild Arabs upon the caravans that traverse the deserts, bears witness to

“ the truth of the memorable prediction pronounced 4000 years ago.

“ *Egypt remains ‘ a base kingdom,’ according to the prophetic word; It shall not exalt itself any more above the nations.* The Babylonians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Romans, the Saracens, the Mamelukes, and the Turks, have held it in constant subjection for near 2000 years since this prophecy was uttered.

“ The *Mahometan Antichrist* still rears its proud crescent in the East, though its avenging sword, having done its appointed office, has been long put up into the scabbard.

“ The corruptions and superstition of *Antichristian Rome* continue, though the time of her tyranny is past. *The decree is gone forth; who shall disannul it?* The exact time of its full accomplishment is not yet given us to know; the *one day in which her plagues shall come upon her, when she shall be thrown down with violence, and found no more at all,* cannot be yet discovered with certainty; but the time is declared with sufficient accuracy to explain the wonderful events now passing in the world. Some of the kings or nations that gave her their strength and power, have begun to take away her dominion; and others stand afar off, and bewail and lament for her, saying *Alas! Alas! that great city Babylon; that mighty city!*

“ The confutation of her false doctrines,—the detection of her impostures,—the abolition of her spiritual tyranny,—the destruction of her monastic institutions,—the panic of her adherents, and, above all, the progress of a power which seems peculiarly fitted to execute the wrath of God, point to her fate with more than common clearness.

“ *Scepticism, Infidelity, and Atheism,* throwing off the mask of dissimulation which they wore in former times, now boldly avow their principles, and shew themselves to the world in all their horrors, *for the day of their power is come.* They call upon the world to worship the image that they have set up; and, while heresies divide the church, they attack its foundations with infernal art and fury.

“ Thus we appeal to the present state of the world for the confirmation of prophetic truth. We point to a wide display of permanent and conspicuous miracles; not confined to a few witnesses who lived in distant times, but open to the view of the men of our own generation, even to so many as have eyes to see what is immediately passing before them, and curiosity to inquire into what is at this instant transacting in the more distant parts of the globe.

“ By the comprehensive study of the prophecies, we are enabled to find a standard of reference to the different parts of the vast designs which are now passing before us in too rapid succession to be otherwise understood; and the aggregate testimony of facts thus linked together, will afford fresh evidence to the truth and order of the mighty scheme.

“ We see that many great and extraordinary plans of Providence remain still to be executed; but the certainty of their accomplishment rests upon the foundation of eternal truth. *Hath he said, and will he not do it?* The ages, as they roll, are charged to execute the high commission; and the past afford a certain pledge

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“ for

“ for the accomplishment of those future events, which are
 “ as clearly predicted as those already fulfilled.

“ The Christian, from his enlarged views of Scripture
 “ and of mankind, sees in their full and proper light, the
 “ sublimity, the extent, and the importance, of prophecy :
 “ and it may be with truth asserted, that the study of
 “ religion is absolutely necessary to the understanding of
 “ universal history. The pretensions of the *modern philoso-*
 “ *pher* to enlarged and impartial views of things, mult then
 “ be considered as false and absurd. Rejecting the surest
 “ guides of human reason, he wanders through the laby-
 “ rinth of history as chance directs, resting only in those
 “ places which appear to favour his system; and, like the
 “ fly upon the beautiful Corinthian pillar, sees nothing
 “ but disorder and confusion. The Christian, on the
 “ contrary, steadily following the clue which religion
 “ offers, observes the connection of the parts, and their
 “ relation to the vast, the wonderful plan which reaches
 “ from the creation of the world to its final destruction,—
 “ from earth to heaven. Raised to the lofty station to
 “ which revelation only can conduct him, he surveys, as a
 “ widely extended prospect, the past and present history
 “ of the world. His eyes are opened, and his concep-
 “ tions are elevated and enlarged by gratitude, admiration,
 “ and hope, while he beholds the nations of the earth that
 “ have carried on, and are now fulfilling, the great de-
 “ signs of God with respect to his chosen people and the
 “ religion of Christ. He surveys the transitory glory of
 “ ancient and modern states, the boasted monuments of
 “ art, the attainments of learning, the powers of genius,
 “ the light of science, and the various employments of
 “ human life; not as subjects of useless speculation, but
 “ with a reference to that particular end, which, whether
 “ they are collectively or separately considered, gives an
 “ unspeakable importance to them all.

“ Let all, then, who bear the name of Christians, con-
 “ sider the real dignity of the character, and *walk as chil-*
 “ *dren of the light, amidst a crooked and perverse generation,*
 “ *looking for the glorious appearing of their Lord.* And let
 “ those who remain unconvinced of the truth of revelation
 “ by the evidence derived from *prophecy*, remember that
 “ many other unanswerable proofs may be drawn from
 “ other sources. Let them examine the various arguments
 “ presented by the internal evidence of Scripture. Let
 “ them pursue the opening path of oriental literature, and
 “ consider, with particular attention, the Chaldean sphere,
 “ recording, as it were, the earliest annals of the world
 “ first written in the heavens. Then let them search the
 “ earth for testimony, for the earth itself bears constant
 “ witness to the truth of the Mosaic history. What shall
 “ I say more? If they will not *then* hear Moses and the
 “ prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose
 “ from the dead.” (w)

Thus have we, in the course of this Appendix, taken a
 survey of some of the most striking coincidences, between
 the predictions of the prophets, and the great events which
 have either recently occurred in these latter periods, or are
 now actually taking place in the moral and civil world.
 That the resemblances are striking no one can deny; but
 that they imply certainty no one will presume. Almost
 every writer on the prophecies has been more or less be-

trayed into error through the illusions of the phenomena
 which appeared in his time; many of them have lived to
 discover their mistakes; and many more have departed
 this life with a degree of confidence in their theories, to
 which we are now fully assured they were not entitled.
 These circumstances are of use to check our presumption,
 whenever we feel disposed to speak with an unbecoming
 assurance;—they teach us a lesson of humiliation; they in-
 struct us to moderate our expressions, and direct us, even
 on the most conspicuous occasions, to rejoice with trembling.

We must not, however, forget, on the opposite side of
 the question, that the predictions of the prophets, and the
 transactions of the moral and civil world, have such an in-
 timate connection with each other, that the latter constantly
 form the only infallible comment on the former, with which
 God has hitherto favoured mankind. Were it not for
 these, all prophecy would, even to the present moment,
 have been wrapped in shade, and our belief in the authen-
 ticity of the sacred writings would have been more or less
 supplanted by those doubts which invariably result from a
 deficiency of evidence. But for the incarnation, the life,
 the transactions, the death, the resurrection, and ascension
 of Jesus Christ, the most sublime predictions of Isaiah,
 Jeremiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, would have appeared to
 us in no better light than the rhapsodies of the Sybils, for
 which extravagance and folly would have been too soft a
 name. The coming of our adorable Saviour has, however,
 given a more pleasing turn to the countenance of pro-
 phesy; so much so, that what our ancestors, under former
 dispensations, saw, as through a glass darkly, we now be-
 hold in the most resplendent light, since life and immortality
 have been brought to light by the Gospel. On such pro-
 phesies as are yet unaccomplished, future generations, when
 alluding to our writings, will most probably, on many oc-
 casions, make similar remarks.

Analogy is, perhaps, in point of reason, the surest guide
 which we can follow; and this most imperiously directs us
 to watch the signs of the times. The concurrence of past
 incidents with those ancient predictions which respected
 them, yields an unquestionable proof that this mode of in-
 quiry has been attended with success. And we furthermore
 learn from hence, that, by adopting the same method, of
 watching the information which circumstances afford us,
 we may know, with no small degree of certainty, in what
 age of the world we now live. Thus a retrospection on
 the past will enable us to appreciate the present, while
 both will afford us some ground to form calculations
 on the future. Absolute certainty may not indeed attend
 our researches, but we may obtain a sufficiency of know-
 ledge to prepare for those momentous events which are fast
 approaching, and which, when they arrive, will close the
 drama of the present life. This knowledge is of all kinds
 by far the most important. If this be obtained, the great
 business of life is finished,—the end of prophetic warnings
 will be fully answered,—and a day of retribution will un-
 ravel those mysteries of providence and grace which are
 now concealed.

On comparing the history of the world, with the *manners*
of the times which the Spirit of God that was in the ancient
prophets did signify, we cannot but be convinced, that,
 though many predictions have received their accomplish-
 ment, many more are still unfulfilled. These also in due
 time will be found so to coincide with suitable incidents,
 that

(w) Kett, vol. ii. p. 368—378.

that it shall appear evident, even to an inconsiderate world, that not one jot or tittle has been permitted to pass, either from the law or the prophets, till all was fulfilled. But this universal coincidence must take place at different periods; and, consequently, as the events of the world are all progressive, the light which they will shed on the page of prophecy, must move gradually onward till it shines more and more to the perfect day.

That we live in no common times is a point which it is almost needless to prove; though, should evidence be required, a complication of the most surprising circumstances that have ever astonished the human race, is at hand to give conviction to the most sceptical. Should an impartial spectator, who had examined with some attention the prophetic records, be asked,—“What are the sources from whence we may expect to learn the presages of the latter days?” it is highly probable, that he would direct us to the following: “The condition of idolatry,—the prevalence of infidelity,—the tottering state of Mahometanism,—the progress of Christianity in the earth,—and the morals of mankind. These are sources of evidence to be explored in the moral and religious department. To these we may add, the rise and fall of kingdoms,—the slaughter of millions of the human race,—the daring sallies of ambition,—the most astonishing revolutions in the empires of the world,—and the diffusion of new principles, which shall start forth from obscurity, to enlighten, to improve, and unhappily to corrupt mankind. These are the phenomena which we may expect to find in the civil world.”

Any one of these topics taken separately would, without doubt, afford a strong indication, when it accorded with prophetic description, that God was about to bring to pass what his prophets had declared; but should these unite their varied streams,—should all point in one direction, and mingle together with perfect harmony, we should have every reason to expect, that some important crisis was nigh at hand to alarm a guilty world. But if to this general concurrence of circumstances we could add the testimony of chronology, the evidence would become too formidable for resistance: the mind of man would sink beneath the weight of its influence, and acknowledge its convictions in spite of its firmest resolutions.

It is under this weight of evidence that we live. The commotions which for the last eighteen years have depopulated some of the fairest countries in Europe, deluged their fertile plains with blood, and covered them with ashes;—the periods resulting from chronological calculations, and the general appearance of the world, all conspire to tell us, that the events of the latter days are even come upon us, and that the time of God’s controversy with the earth is near at hand.

The resemblances between the predictions of the prophets and the ancient historical events of the world, which have been traced by men of piety, talents, and erudition, who have devoted their time to the investigation of them, we have endeavoured to note in the suitable parts of this Commentary; while, in this Appendix, we have attempted so to survey the events which are passing before us, as by them to illustrate the providence of God. The whole work is now happily brought to a conclusion, but God alone can render what has been written instructive to the souls of men. So far as light has been afforded, no point of importance has been left uninvestigated; but

we have not presumed to pronounce with certainty on those occurrences which are but just emerging from the shade.

The coincidence of many events, which are completely past, with ancient predictions, has left no room for a diversity of opinions; those which are passing, glimmer through a mental twilight; but those that are yet future, leave us no other evidence than what probable conjecture and analogy can supply. To these, in this last instance, we have had recourse; but the flight of time, and the occurrence of incidents, are alike necessary, both to convince ourselves, and to persuade posterity, that we are right in all that we have advanced.

Error is of such an insinuating nature, that it is imperceptibly interwoven with the works of man. None have hitherto been wholly exempted from its influence; and the writer would only make an addition to the general stock, were he to presume that this Commentary enjoys the solitary immunity. Posterity may be able to detect the rocks on which he has split, when new light shall emerge from the recesses of futurity; and this will be the case, when hoary Time shall tremble on the margins of eternity.

It is, nevertheless, a matter of no small consolation to the author, to learn, that most, if not all of those writers on these important subjects, who have preceded him, have been enabled, through the divine blessing, to throw some additional light on those facts which have occasionally come forth to correspond with the predictions of the prophets. And he shall esteem himself highly favoured, if the sentiments which he has selected from others, and variously combined, and occasionally interwoven with observations of his own, may either be entitled to the same recommendation, or may stimulate others to exertions which shall prove more beneficial to the Church of Christ. But, above all, he shall esteem himself happy, if what he has written should prove so far instructive to those who may peruse his pages, that they may be induced to inquire the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, and be urged to prepare to meet their God.

When we take a retrospective survey of God’s dealings with mankind, and look back through the antediluvian, the patriarchal, and prophetic ages, we cannot but be smitten with admiration at the chain of providences which we discover in the history of the world. The dispensation of the Gospel holds out convictions still more striking. It cannot, therefore, be an act of presumption in us to believe, that God, who, in these last days has spoken to us by his Son, has favoured us with such lights as our distant ancestors never knew. This, without all doubt, is actually the case. The period, therefore, cannot be remote, when the happy confluence of aggregate information shall supersede the necessity of conjectural hypothesis, and all uncertainty shall disappear.

As the predictions of Daniel, of Zechariah, and of St. John, though many of them have been accomplished, still cast a look into futurity, even to the present hour; and as the age in which we live, contains most of those prominent marks which were to precede the final issues to which they respectively refer, we feel ourselves warranted in concluding, that they are even now preparing to burst upon us,—that they are even at our doors. The precise moment when these awful events shall happen, it would be arrogant in us to attempt to ascertain. All that we can say with safety has been already said; a few years will
most

most probably unravel a considerable portion, if not all the rest.

In the mean while, the hand which now traces these lines may stiffen in the repositories of the dead, or its constituent parts may be dissolved to mingle with their primitive dust, and most of the present generation of men may be swept aside; but, if the conjectures of Mr. Faber, and others, which we have inserted as such, in this Appendix, be well founded, there are many who have already entered life, who will live to behold such calamities, as never were witnessed by any human being since there was a nation upon earth.

These appearances, however, though they seem commanding, are no criterion of certainty. Many have already proved illusive, though they promised fair. And even the present phenomena of the moral and civil world may be set aside by such unexpected occurrences as will bring with them a weight of evidence that shall leave no room for doubt. Nevertheless, when we take analogy for our guide, and refer for examples to those incidents which have ushered in the predictions of ancient times, we feel an increasing confidence in what we discover around us,—that they are the visible prefaces of the latter days. And, though every circumstance may not at present unite in one concurrence, yet the leading features are too striking to be wholly mistaken.

But whether these probable conjectures are well or ill founded, these specific facts are only of remote and secondary consideration to mankind. It is of infinitely higher importance, that we take warning by what is inevitably impending, and prepare for the consummation of all things. Happy for us that the Almighty has placed the means within our reach, and urged us by motives the most powerful and the most endearing. The overtures of mercy, which God has displayed through Jesus Christ, are held forth as incitements to repentance; while the assurances of the divine favour with which the Scriptures abound, are sufficient to convince us, that in due time we shall reap if we faint not. The strong intimations which he has afforded, through the appearances of the world, of those calamities which are impending, and of the prospects of brighter days which shall then succeed, all aim at the same common object, and conspire to tell mankind, that the day in which God will judge the world in righteousness is already on the wing. If these things are insufficient to alarm the guilty, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.

But though the predicted events which are to take place in the latter days, may not be so near at hand as we have supposed, their ultimate certainty cannot be thereby affected. This, like the pillars of heaven, depends upon the immutability of God. The day of visitation will most probably come upon mankind as a thief in the night, in a moment when they are not aware; so that nothing but constant watchfulness can guard us against surprise. To this we are most ardently exhorted by our Lord and Saviour;

while we are directed, under all the conditions of life, how to make our calling and election sure.

Whatever may be the revolutions which the empires of the world are destined to undergo, before they shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ, they can be of little avail to the millions who must shortly depart the present life. Their conditions will then be inevitably fixed, till the trumpet shall sound, and the earth and sea shall give up their dead. The present mode of existence is that alone in which we can be the subjects of mutation; no changes can therefore affect our condition beyond the grave. Thrice happy they who are prepared by grace in time, for glory in eternity!

It is sufficient for us to know, that the great King of Heaven will accomplish his designs, whether we can trace their various evolutions or not. We may probably remain in ignorance of these in time; but when the mysteries of his kingdom shall be unravelled,—when we shall see him eye to eye and face to face, and shall know even as we are known, we shall, without doubt, be able to discern how all things have been made subservient to the welfare of his church and faithful people, and, by his over-ruling providence, have conspired to raise them to that state of felicity which shall never end.

It is not knowledge, but goodness, that is held out before us in the present life as the primary object of our pursuit; and they who attain it, are made wise unto salvation, however ignorant they may remain of speculative facts and theories. The great Disposer of all events has so circumscribed the human intellect, as to adapt its attainments to its present state. Another life may open sources of intelligence, of which we have hitherto been able to form no conception. We have sufficient intimations, that more knowledge, more enjoyments, and more love, are reserved in another life for those who fear God in this; but a full comprehension of these realities we must die to attain. Under these views, death becomes a necessary link in the great chain of human existence: at present we walk by faith and not by sight, and therefore cannot expect to be delivered from every intervening cloud: we nevertheless rest in the positive conviction, that the light of eternity will dissipate every shadow, and unfold to us many important truths which are at present totally unknown.

With such prospects before us, we cannot but exclaim with the Apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Our views in the present life are sufficient to draw from us this exultation; but the occasion for it must be abundantly increased beyond the grave, in that happy region where all tears shall be for ever wiped away, and God shall be all in all! Here then we pause, and conclude with an ascription of praise to the Almighty Triune God, in language adapted to the inhabitants of both worlds, for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

F I N I S.

I N D E X.

THE Sacred Writings, including both the Old Testament and the New, embrace a period of 4,100 years, beginning with Genesis, and ending, either with the Revelations, or the Gospel of St. John. Of these years 4,004 were before the birth of Christ, and 96 after it.

The whole of this period has generally been divided into seven distinct portions, or ages, each of which terminates at some particular epoch, either in the history of the world at large, or in that of the church of Christ. The *first* of these ages begins with the creation, and ends with the deluge, embracing a period of 1656 years. The *second* commences with the preservation of Noah, and continues till the days of Abraham; who, after the decease of his father, received a command from God to enter upon the land of Canaan: this happened in the 75th year of his age. This period includes about 428 years. The *third* begins where the second ended, and extends to the time when the Israelites, under the guidance of Moses, were delivered from their servitude in Egypt. In this period are included about 430 years. The *fourth* age reaches to the time of Solomon, and to that period of his reign in which he laid the foundation of the temple. This age encompasses about 479 years. The *fifth* age begins with the temple, and ends with the commencement of the Babylonish captivity, including a period of about 424 years. The *sixth* age commences with the captivity, and, including the apocryphal history, extends to the birth of John the Baptist. This period includes about 587 years. The *seventh* age commences with the incarnation of Christ;—records the transactions of his life;—the establishment of the Christian churches;—the epistles written to them on sundry occasions;—and terminates with the Revelation, or with the gospel of St. John, and closes the sacred canon.

The First Age of the World.

This age, though by far the longest, furnishes us with the fewest incidents; but those which are recorded in it are of the utmost importance. From the records of this age we learn,

“ _____ in the beginning
“ How the heavens and earth rose out of chaos;”

we also obtain from hence some knowledge of the origin of human nature;—of the introduction of moral evil;—of the melancholy effects which resulted from it;—of the extreme wickedness of the human race;—and of the awful deluge which inundated the earth, and drowned its numerous inhabitants.

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The Second Age of the World.

From the records of this age we learn how the earth was re-peopled by the descendants of Noah, and how the foundations of the various empires of the world were laid.

About the year 2229 before Christ, Nimrod, according to Calmet, laid the foundation of the great Assyrian empire. According to Prideaux, it continued to give laws to Asia above thirteen hundred years, till the days of Sardanapalus; when it was dissolved by Arbaces and Belesis, two of his generals, who headed a conspiracy which they had set on foot. These successful conspirators no sooner found themselves in possession of the empire, than they divided the spoil. Arbaces claimed Nineveh for his capital, as Sardanapalus had done before him, and thus laid the foundation of the Median empire; while Belesis, erecting his standard in Babylon, laid the foundation of the Babylonish empire. These empires were again re-united under Cyrus: the whole was afterward swallowed up by the Macedonians: these were in their turn subdued by the Romans; and these finally by the barbarous nations in the fourth century of the Christian era. Such are the revolutions of empires!

The cities of Nineveh and Babylon were nearly coeval with the Assyrian empire; and it was about the same period that men undertook the building of the tower of Babel; at which time God confounded their language, and forced them to disperse in distinct parties into the different parts of the world. It was about this time that Ham the son of Noah, and father of Mizraim, carried a colony into Egypt, and laid the foundation of the Egyptian empire. This empire continued 1663 years, till it was conquered by Cambyses the son of Cyrus, and rendered tributary to his dominions.

About 1994 years before Christ, Noah died, and about two years afterwards Abraham was born. 1925 years before Christ, Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, made war upon the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Bela, and held them tributary twelve years.

The Third Age of the World.

The most prominent incidents recorded in the *third age of the world*, are those which follow: Abraham, 1921 years before Christ, received a command from God to enter upon the land of Canaan, which he had promised to give to his posterity. The year following, a severe famine compelled both Abraham and his family to take refuge in

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the land of Egypt. From this time, to the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, are reckoned 430 years. The same year both he and Lot returned again to the Land of Canaan; but the desolation which the famine had occasioned, rendered the country insufficient for them, their families, and their flocks; in consequence of which they separated; Lot removed to Sodom, and Abram removed to Hebron, and there erected an altar to God.

In 1913 before Christ, Bera, the king of Sodom, with four other tributary kings, rebelled against Chedorlaomer, and attempted to shake off the yoke; but they were defeated by him in the valley of Siddim, and Lot among the rest was taken prisoner. Abram, with his people, pursued the conquerors, and overtook them at Dan, near the springs of Jordan, where he defeated them, retook the spoil, and rescued his nephew Lot, and brought them back to Sodom. In this conflict Chedorlaomer and his associates were slain. Abram, in his return, was blessed by Melchizedec, king of Salem, to whom he gave tithes. The remaining part of the spoils, after his partners had received their portion, he restored to the king of Sodom.

In 1897 before Christ, God made a covenant with Abram, and changed his name into Abraham, and instituted circumcision as a seal of that covenant which he had made. In this year Abraham entertained three angels; and received a revelation from God that the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah was impending. It was then that he interceded with God in behalf of them; but the extreme wickedness of these cities prevented his success.

Lot, to escape the impending calamity, was commanded to flee to the mountain, but by much intercession obtained leave to conduct his family to Zoar. Immediately after his departure, God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and all the cities in the valley of Siddim, and destroyed all the inhabitants. The Dead Sea remains a monument of this singular judgment to the present day. (*See Maundrell's Travels.*)

The following year (1896 before Christ), Isaac was born, in the hundredth year of Abraham's age. Lot also, about the same time, begat Moab and Ammon. 1871 before Christ, God, to try the faith of Abraham, commanded him to offer up his only son in sacrifice; he prepared to obey; but having given sufficient proof of his obedience, God stayed the execution. 1859 before Christ, Sarah died at Hebron in the 127th year of her age. Three years afterwards Isaac married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, in the fortieth year of his age. Ten years after this, Shem, the son of Noah, died.

In 1837 before Christ, Jacob and Esau were born, in the 60th year of Isaac's age. 1821 before Christ, Abraham died, aged 175. Four years after, died Heber, the fifth from Noah, from whom both Abraham and his descendants were denominated Hebrews. In 1760 before Christ, being seven years after the death of Ishmael, Jacob, through the intrigues of his mother, obtained from Isaac that blessing which he had designed for Esau. But upon the discovery of the fraud, he was compelled to flee into Mesopotamia, to escape his brother's resentment. Arriving at the house of his uncle Laban, he engaged to serve him seven years for his daughter Rachael; but Jacob was deceived in his turn, and was obliged to take Leah. To overcome this disappointment, he was obliged to make a new agreement with his uncle, and was compelled to serve him seven years more to obtain the object of his wishes.

Of Leah, during Jacob's servitude, were born Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, from whom the Israelites received the appellation of Jews.

In 1745 before Christ, Rachael bore Joseph; and about this time, as his servitude was completed, Jacob intimated his wishes to depart into his own country; but Laban prevailed upon him to continue six years longer in his service for some part of his numerous flocks and herds.

1739 (before Christ), Jacob, contrary to the wishes of Laban, determined to visit his parents in Canaan, and accordingly set forward from Mesopotamia, after he had sojourned in it twenty years. Laban pursued him as an enemy, but parted from him as a friend. Shortly after, Esau, from whose wrath he had fled about twenty years before, heard of his approaches, and came out to meet him, and a cordial reconciliation took place between them. About this time Rachael was delivered of Benjamin, on the way between Bethel and Ephrath, and died in childbed.

1724 (before Christ), Joseph, falling under the displeasure of his brethren, was sold by them to the Ishmaelites, and carried into Egypt, and, through the providence of God, was raised to a state of unexampled grandeur. 1716 (before Christ), Isaac died, being 180 years of age. In the following year, the seven years of plenty began in the land of Egypt, about which time Joseph's two sons were born. 1708 (before Christ), began the seven years of famine, and the next year Jacob sent his sons into Egypt to buy corn. Two years afterward, Jacob, persuaded in his mind that Joseph was alive, having offered sacrifice unto God, went with all his family into Egypt, in the 130th year of his age, and was seated in the land of Goshen. Seventeen years after he had taken up his residence in Egypt, Jacob, finding his dissolution approach, called to him Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, and blessed them with his own sons. He then foretold the manifestation of the Messiah from Judah; and, having requested his sons to carry him to Canaan, and inter him in the sepulchre of his father, died aged 147 years.

The year 1635 (before Christ) was marked with the death of Joseph. On his death-bed he prophesied to his brethren that they should return into their own land. But, being unwilling to be left behind, even in a region that had covered him with glory, he exacted from his brethren an oath, that whenever they should remove to Canaan, they should carry his bones with them; and having engaged them to fulfil his request, he died, being 110 years of age.

"About this time (1573 before Christ), says Calmet, "lived Job, famous for his wisdom and virtue, as well as for his exemplary piety. He was descended from Isaac by Esau." About the same time began the cruelties inflicted by the Egyptians on the Israelites, as there arose another king who knew not Joseph. This year was also marked by the birth of Aaron, and by that inhuman edict, which commanded the midwives to destroy every male child born among the Hebrews, to prevent their increase. Three years afterward (1570 before Christ), Moses was born, and, after having been exposed in an ark of rushes upon the Nile, was accidentally found by a daughter of Pharaoh, who, compassionating his misfortune, determined to preserve his life.

Moses, having attained his fortieth year, went (1530 before Christ) to visit his brethren, at that time groaning under oppression; and, beholding an Egyptian insult one

of them, slew him. But learning soon afterward that Pharaoh had been made acquainted with his conduct, he, to avoid consequences, retired into Midian, and married the daughter of Jethro, and lived with him in the character of a shepherd forty years.

In 1491 before Christ, while Moses kept his father-in-law's sheep at Mount Horeb, God appeared to him in a burning bush, and sent him to deliver the Israelites from that oppression under which they suffered. Aaron, engaged in the same errand, came to meet him at Horeb, from which place both brothers repaired to Egypt, and presented themselves before Pharaoh, declaring to him the command of the Lord. Pharaoh, hearing their declaration, charges them with being the ringleaders of a mutiny among his vassals. They were, however, permitted to depart, with a severe reprimand; but the burdens imposed upon their brethren were considerably increased, so that their condition became intolerable. The same year, Moses, through the power of God, inflicted ten plagues upon Egypt; and at length, Pharaoh, finding himself unable to master the power with which he had to contend, consented to let the Hebrews go.

The Fourth Age of the World.

Upon the 14th day of the first month, which answers to May the 4th, 1491 before Christ, the passover was instituted. The ensuing night the first-born of the Egyptians were slain; and on the next, the Israelites were ordered to depart, after having been held in bondage 430 years, from the time of Abraham's quitting Charran. Their numbers amounted to 600,000 men fit for war, besides old men, women, and children. (See my Comment on Exod. xii. 37.) They first came to Rameses, and from thence moved, by several encampments, till they approached the borders of the Red Sea, God conducting them by a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. The bones of Joseph were carried with them. The same year they were pursued by Pharaoh, and the Red Sea was divided before them to afford them a passage. From thence, entering into the wilderness of Etham, after three days' march through the desert, they came to Marah, the bitter waters of which were sweetened by Moses. Soon afterward God sent them quails to satisfy their hunger; and on the next day rained down manna from heaven, upon which food they lived forty years. Their want of water produced another miracle, Moses striking the barren rock Horeb, from which God caused a stream to gush. Near this place they were assailed by the Amalekites, who fell upon the rear of their army, and cut off those who, through weakness, were unable to keep pace with the rest.

On the third day of the third month after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites reached the foot of Mount Sinai, where they encamped above a year. Here God published his Law, containing the Ten Commandments. After this, Moses erected twelve altars at the foot of the mountain, and, with the blood of the victims which were offered in sacrifice, sprinkled the book that contained the conditions of the covenant which he then entered into with the people.

While these things were transacting, the people fell into idolatry, making unto themselves a golden calf; in consequence of which Moses brake the two tables of stone on

which the divine Law was written, and, having burnt or demolished the idol, put 3000 of the idolaters to death. After this God renewed his covenant with the people. Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priesthood. Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire, were struck dead in the place by fire from heaven.

The year following, twelve men, among whom were Caleb and Joshua, were sent out to discover and inspect the land of Canaan and its inhabitants. On their return they brought with them a branch of a vine, with a cluster of grapes on it; but ten out of the twelve brought up an evil report upon the good land. The country they represented as barren, the inhabitants they represented as giants, and their cities as too strong to be taken from them.

The people, terrified with this report, determined to return to Egypt; and when Caleb and Joshua endeavoured to dissuade them from their purpose, they intended to stone them. This rebellion awakened the anger of God; but the prayers of Moses in their behalf prevailed, and averted the impending destruction. Nevertheless, the Almighty declared, that those who were at that time twenty years old and upwards, should never enter into the promised land, Caleb and Joshua only excepted. As to the men who raised the false report, they were destroyed by a sudden death; and while some attempted to annul the decree of heaven, by entering into Canaan, they were smitten by the Amalekites, and slain by the edge of the sword.

How long the Israelites continued in this place of rebellion, is not ascertained; but either in this or some other neighbouring encampments they must have continued a considerable time. For while we learn from their history, that in the space of 37 years they pitched their tents only 17 times, we must conclude, either that many places are omitted, or that their conduct was marked with but few memorable incidents. The principal circumstances recorded of them at this time are, the mutiny and punishment of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and 250 of their associates;—the murmuring of the people at the calamity which had befallen their brethren, which murmuring the Lord punished by the destruction of 14,700;—and Aaron's rod budding and bringing forth almonds.

In 1452 (before Christ,) Moses speaking unadvisedly, and striking the rock with his rod, when God had commanded him only to speak that it might yield its water, was, with Aaron, forbidden to enter into the promised land. On the fifth month of this year, Aaron died on the top of Mount Hor, aged 123 years. The same year, the people, for their repeated rebellions, were afflicted with fiery serpents; upon which Moses, by the divine command, made a serpent of brass, as an antidote against the malady.

The year following (1451 before Christ,) Sihon, king of the Amorites, refusing them a passage through his territories, was slain, and his country taken. Og, king of Basan, making war upon the Israelites, met a similar fate; both he and his associates were slain; and the conquerors took possession of his country. Balak, king of Moab, apprehensive of his fate, hired Balaam to curse the strangers; but the event turned out contrary to his wishes, and Israel was blessed. But the women of Moab, by seducing the Israelites to idolatry, brought upon them the displeasure of God; in consequence of which, the more audacious were commanded to be hanged; and a plague fell upon the others, so that 24,000 fell in one day: but on the death of

Zimri the plague was stayed. After this plague the people were numbered near Jordan, over against Jericho; and, including only those males who were twenty years old and upward, they were found to amount to 601,730. In this number the Levites were not included. These alone, reckoning from one month old and upward, were 23,000. Among all these Moses received a command to divide the land; and then received an intimation that he should die, upon which he appointed Joshua to be his successor.

In the twelfth month of the year 1451 (before Christ,) Moses went up to Mount Nebo, and from thence surveyed the promised Land; and on Mount Nebo he died, being 120 years old. His body was removed by God from the place where he died, to a valley in the land of Moab, where it was buried; but the particular spot remains a secret to the present day. With the Death of this great Legislator terminates the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses, which contain a history of 2,552 years and a half. The book of Joshua commences with the forty-first year after the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt.

Joshua, confirmed by the Almighty in his government, the same year in which Moses died, conducted the Israelites onward; renewing the use of circumcision, which had been neglected for forty years; and celebrating the passover in the Land of Canaan, for the first time, after they had passed over Jordan. Soon after this the walls of Jericho fell; Ai was taken; an altar was erected; and the ten commandments were engraven on stone, and read in the ears of the people. Various wars succeeded between the Israelites and the Canaanitish nations, which, though marked with many vicissitudes, proved ultimately successful to Israel. 1443 Years before Christ, Joshua died, aged 110 years. After his days, and the days of the elders who outlived him, a generation of men succeeded, who forgot God, and, by intermarrying with the women of Canaan, sunk into foul idolatry. To punish them for this offence, God gave them into the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, by whom they were harassed for eight years. After this, they were discomfited by the Ammonites and Amalekites, and Jericho was retaken from them. These disasters lasted eighteen years.

The year 1155 before Christ was remarkable for the birth of Sampson, and the year 1116 for his death: the incidents of his life are well known. The next year was still more remarkable for misfortunes. The Israelites, having lost in one battle 4000 men, determined to make new exertions to retrieve their disasters. With this view they sent to Shiloh for the ark of the covenant, and had it brought into their camp. The Philistines, perceiving the formidable preparations making against them, determined to make a most vigorous stand. Success attended their exertions. In the day of battle, they slew of the Israelites 30,000 men, among whom were Hophni and Phineas; the ark of God was taken, and the whole Israelitish army routed. Old Eli, at the tidings, fell from his chair, and was taken up dead, in the 98th year of his age.

The victors carried the ark to Ashdod, and set it in the house of Dagon their God; but the idol fell before it, and was broken to pieces. The inhabitants also were sorely plagued, in consequence of which they removed the ark to Gath; but here the plague followed them. From whence they carried it to Ekron, but the plague accompanied it. After seven months, by the advice of their priests,

they returned it with many presents. It was then carried into the Land of Bethshemesh, where 50,070 men were smitten for presuming to look into it. It was finally committed to the care of Eleazer.

In 1096 before Christ, Samuel recommended to them solemn repentance; they took his advice, and the Philistines were subdued. The same year Saul was anointed king; and eleven years afterward David was born. Some years after this (1063 years before Christ,) God rejected Saul, and sent Samuel to anoint David king; this raised in the bosom of Saul an enmity against David, which never forsook him during his life. In 1055 before Christ, Saul, finding his power departing, applied to the witch of Endor to raise up Samuel; and an awful apparition stood before him, and denounced his doom. The same year the armies of Israel were defeated, and Saul fell upon his sword.

About 1047 before Christ, David marched to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, and, after obtaining a decisive victory, made this city the seat of his kingdom; and from this circumstance it obtained the appellation of *the City of David*. To this place he removed the ark of the covenant. This procession was attended by 30,000 chosen men, who followed it, singing the 68th psalm.

In 1035 (before Christ,) happened the affair between David, Bath-sheba, and Uriah. The year following Nathan charged David with his crimes: his repentance is recorded in the 51st psalm. The year after this Solomon was born. 1024 Years before Christ, Absalom raised a rebellion against his father, and seven years afterward was stabbed by Joab. The same year a dreadful pestilence swept away 70,000 men in one day; but on the repentance of David the plague was stayed. Two years after this, David, having caused Solomon to be anointed king, and given him instructions, was gathered to his fathers in the 70th year of his age.

The Fifth Age of the World.

In the year 1012 before Christ, Solomon laid the foundation of the temple, in the 480th year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. It was seven years and a half in building, and was finished in the eleventh year of his reign. In 1004 it was solemnly dedicated to the service of God, at which time they received a visible token of the divine approbation. 975 Years before Christ, Solomon died, having reigned in peace 40 years.

He was succeeded by his son Rehoboam in the same year, through whose tyranny ten tribes revolted under the auspices of Jeroboam. These tribes not only revolted from the house of David, but from the worship of the Living God. From this period two separate kingdoms were set up,—that of Judah, and that of Israel. The amity which had subsisted between the tribes, began from this moment to be turned into fierce enmity; wars and foreign alliances ensued; they fought each other's destruction; and in one battle alone, Abijam, who succeeded Rehoboam in the kingdom of Judah, slew 500,000 men belonging to Jeroboam.

In 736 before Christ, *Arbaces*, who with *Belshis* had overturned the ancient Assyrian monarchy, resided in Nineveh. This Arbaces, who is called in scripture Tiglath-Pileser, after having overcome Rezin king of Damascus, and put

him

him to death, entered into the Land of Israel, and overthrew many cities. At this time he took a great number of captives, and carried them with him into his own land; but the captivity fell chiefly upon the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. This was the first captivity of Israel. In 721 before Christ, Shalmaneser, who succeeded Tiglath-Pileser, besieged Samaria, the capital of Israel, and finally subdued it, after a siege of three years. On his return from this conquest, he carried with him beyond the Euphrates those tribes which had escaped the ravages of his predecessor. This happened 717 years before Christ, in the 6th year of Hezekiah king of Judah, and in the 9th year of Hoshea king of Israel. With this captivity the kingdom of Israel ended, after it had stood 254 years; and the miserable exiles who escaped the edge of the sword were either melted down among the nations of the world at large, or conducted to some obscure recesses from whence God shall recall them before the final consummation of things.*

In the kingdom of Judah, among other remarkable incidents, may be noticed the appearance of the prophets. In the reign of Uzziah (779 years before Christ,) arose Isaiah and Amos. In 754 appeared Hosea; and Micah arose some little time afterward. Isaiah and Joel prophesied in Judah; but several other prophets laboured in Israel.

In 713 before Christ, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, reduced many of the fenced cities of Judah, and compelled the inhabitants to pay him tribute: upon this condition he departed from their territories. About the same time, Hezekiah fell sick, and was told by Isaiah, in a conditional sense, that he should die. But Hezekiah addressed himself to God, who, hearkening to his petitions, added to his life fifteen years, and, as a sign of certainty, caused the sun to go backward ten degrees.

Three years after this, (710 before Christ,) Sennacherib, not satisfied with the tribute he had exacted, broke through the articles of peace, and laid siege to Jerusalem. Hezekiah, receiving from him a blasphemous letter, spread it before God, and implored the divine assistance. Through the prophet Isaiah he obtained an assurance that God would defend the city; and on that very night 185,000 men were slain in the Assyrian army.

About one hundred years afterward, (607 before Christ,) in the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar sent an army against Jerusalem, and took it. Jehoiakim was put in chains to be carried to Babylon. This, in the estimation of some, was the commencement of the seventy years' captivity. It was during this captivity that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, rendered themselves conspicuous in Babylon. Jehoiakim, though a captive, was, upon his promise of obedience, permitted to dwell in his own house; but after three years he revolted from Nebuchadnezzar. In the year 600 (before Christ,) Nebuchadnezzar sent forth another army to lay waste the country of Judea, from which he carried away 3023 prisoners. Jehoiakim was also taken, but was put to death; and his body, as Jeremiah had foretold, was drawn without the walls of the city, and left unburied. The year following, Nebuchadnezzar carried away 18,000 inhabitants, among whom were Mordecai and

Ezekiel. At the same time he brake in pieces all the vessels of gold, and destroyed all the valuable furniture which Solomon had made for the temple.

Nebuchadnezzar, prior to his departure from Jerusalem, made Zedekiah king over this tributary province. But he, watching an opportunity, attempted to shake off the yoke. This exasperated Nebuchadnezzar to such a degree, that he determined to take exemplary vengeance. In the year 588 before Christ, he sent his armies against Jerusalem, and compelled it to surrender after a long and severe siege. Zedekiah, to escape the judgment which awaited him, retired by night; but being pursued and overtaken, he was brought prisoner to Riblah, the head-quarters of the conqueror. His children were then slain before his face: his own eyes were afterward put out, agreeably to the prediction of the prophet; and, being loaded with chains, he was carried to Babylon, and thrown into prison. About a month after the taking of the city, the captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard was sent to demolish the buildings. On making his entry into it, he set fire to the temple, to the palace, and to some of the noblemen's houses, and reduced this magnificent metropolis to ashes. He then demolished the walls; and taking with him what people were left, and what treasure he could find, carried the spoils to Babylon.

Thus ended the kingdom of Judah, about 468 years after David began his reign; 388 years after the falling off of the ten tribes under Jeroboam; 134 years after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel; and 588 years before Christ.

The Sixth Age of the World.

The sixth age of the world begins with the distraction of Nebuchadnezzar, in consequence of which he was driven from among men, as a reward of his haughtiness and cruelty. After seven years he was restored to his senses, but his reign was short; he died in the year 569 before Christ, and Belshazzar succeeded to the throne. This impious wretch, in defiance of the God of heaven, made a sumptuous feast, in which he profaned the sacred vessels which his father had taken from the temple at Jerusalem. While pouring his libations, the mysterious hand appeared, writing against the wall: Daniel decyphered the meaning of the writing, which told him that his kingdom had departed from him. The same night the troops of Cyrus entered the city through the channel of the river; approached the palace; engaged in a conflict with the impious drunkards; and Belshazzar was slain. This event, which terminated the Babylonish empire, happened, according to Prideaux, 539 years before Christ, and in the 50th year of the Jewish captivity, estimating from the time that Jerusalem was destroyed in the days of Zedekiah.

The time of the Jewish deliverance being near at hand, Daniel continued to offer fervent prayers to God; and, as soon as the government was settled, most probably applied to Cyrus for the liberation of his countrymen, and no doubt shewed him that remarkable prophecy of Isaiah (Chap. 45.) in which he is even called by name. But the time not being fully accomplished, Cyrus, though he highly respected Daniel, attended to the affairs of his empire. An expedition into Syria obliged him to leave the affairs of Babylon to the direction of Cyaxeres, whom the scriptures call Darius. It was during this time that the enemies of Daniel

obtained

* See the Appendix to this Commentary, on the probable situation of Israel, and the ways by which God will finally restore them to himself.

obtained a decree on purpose to ensnare him; in consequence of which, because he would not omit to pray to his God, he was cast into the den of lions. His miraculous preservation served to exalt his fame, and to ruin those who sought his destruction; it prepared a way for him to petition Cyrus, on his return, for the restoration of his captive brethren, and perhaps contributed to his success.

Cyrus, in the first year of his reign, 536 before Christ, issued out his famous decree (which is recorded by Ezra i.ii.) for the Jews to depart to their own land. They were accordingly gathered together from all parts of the kingdom of Babylon, and their numbers amounted to 42,360 persons, besides servants, who were 7337 more. At the same time that Cyrus liberated the Jews, he contributed towards the building of their temple, and restored to them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken.

In the year 535 before Christ, Levites were appointed to superintend the building; but the year following, the Samaritans, through the influence of some courtiers, who had gained the ear of Cyrus, prevailed upon him to retard the building of the temple. In the reign of Artaxerxes (or Cambyfes) they framed an accusation against the Jews, in consequence of which they were prohibited from going on with their work. This happened 529 years before Christ.

Nine years after this, the building was again forwarded, in the second year of the reign of Darius Hytaspes, at which time Haggai prophesied that the glory of this second temple should exceed that of the first; not indeed in the magnificence of its structure, but in the dignity of the Messiah, who should honour it with his presence, and proclaim salvation to the world. In the year before Christ 518, Darius, or *Abafuerus*, put away Vashti his wife, and in the year following married Esther, the niece of Mordecai the Jew. In 515 before Christ, the temple was finished, and dedicated to God with great solemnity. In 510 before Christ, Haman, of the race of the Amalekites, a favourite of Darius, displeased at the prosperity of the Jews, and more particularly with Mordecai, because he refused to do him homage, determined on a mode of revenge, which would have terminated in the destruction of the Jewish nation, had not his designs been frustrated. The interference of Esther, however, under the gracious providence of God, defeated his purposes; and in the following year Haman suffered on that very gallows which he had prepared for Mordecai.

In 481 (before Christ), Darius died, and was succeeded by Xerxes. In 469 Xerxes died also, and was succeeded by Artaxerxes, who, in 467, gave a commission to Ezra to settle the Jewish common-wealth. In the seventh year of Artaxerxes, Ezra, with a great multitude of Jews, departed from Babylon; at which time he obliged those who had married strange women to send them back. In 455 before Christ, Nehemiah, one of the king's cupbearers, was made governor of Judea; at which time he obtained leave to build the walls of Jerusalem, and to complete the work. At this period, according to some, the seventy weeks of Daniel relative to the Messiah commenced. In 442, Nehemiah returned into Persia, after having governed Judea twelve years.

Thus far the canonical writings conduct us. But the various events which took place afterward among the Jews, we only know from the books of the Maccabees and the history of Josephus. These have delivered to us a general account of Jewish transactions from the above period to the times of the Romans.

Malachi, the last of the prophets, it is more than probable, was contemporary with Nehemiah, especially in the latter days of Nehemiah. Malachi nowhere exhorts the people to assist in building the temple, as Haggai and Zechariah did. On the contrary, he speaks of the temple as being already built; and of those corruptions, which, so early as his day, about 400 years before Christ, had crept in among them; these were,—abuses in the worship of God,—the marriage of the Jews with strange wives,—their frequent divorces,—and their refusal to pay tithes.

As a succession of prophets from his time was to discontinue, Malachi, instead of referring the Jews to his successors, directed their views to the law of Moses, to which he exhorted them to adhere till the Dayspring from on high should visit them. The forerunner of Christ he clearly predicted in his last chapter, who should “come in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient unto the will of the just.” These prophetic declarations were clearly verified in the person of John the Baptist, as the harbinger of the Sun of Righteousness, and fully ratified by the immediate appearance of the Son of God.

The Seventh Age of the World.

In the sixth year of the Roman empire, under the Cæsars, commencing with the overthrow of Pompey at the battle of Pharsalia, the angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the temple, and informed him of the approaching birth of John the Baptist. Six months afterward, the same messenger announced the conception of the blessed virgin.

The birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ happened, according to Calmet, on the 25th of December, four years before the vulgar era, in the year of the world 4000. In the year of Jesus Christ 12, he entered into the temple, and continued there three days, disputing with the doctors. John the Baptist began to preach in the year 32, and Christ was baptized the year following. Immediately after this, our Lord, being filled with the Holy Ghost, was led into the wilderness, in which he fasted, was tempted, and overcame the powers of darkness. In this year he called several of his apostles, wrought many miracles, and held his conference with Nicodemus.

In the year 34, John the Baptist was put into prison, and the year following was beheaded, at the instigation of Herodias, in the 17th year of Tiberius. In the year 36, Christ raised Lazarus from the dead, and repaired to Jerusalem to celebrate the last passover, and to offer himself as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. His death, his resurrection, his ascension into glory, and the gift of the Holy Ghost at the day of Pentecost, took place in the same year.

In the year 37, Stephen was put to death, and Saul of Tarsus was miraculously converted. A great persecution of the church at Jerusalem followed the death of Stephen; Philip carried the gospel into Samaria, and, directed by an angel, instructed in the things of God, and baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, the eunuch of Ethiopia.

In the year 47 St. James was beheaded; and St. Peter was put into prison, but he was delivered by an angel. The next year there was a great famine in Judea. In 54, the great council at Jerusalem was held, in which it was determined that the Gentile converts should not be subject to the ceremonies of the law. In the year 60, St. Paul was obliged to leave Ephesus on account of the uproar raised

raised against him by Demetrius, the silver-smith. Two years after this he was seized in the temple at Jerusalem; and the year following, being constrained to appeal unto Cæsar, was put on board a ship, and sent to Rome. During the voyage he was shipwrecked on the island of Malta, after which he arrived at Rome, and continued there a prisoner two years.

In the year 66, Jesus the son of Ananus began to cry in the streets of Jerusalem, "*Woe, woe to the city;*" which he continued to do till the commencement of the siege by the Romans. In 69, after Florus had put several Jews to death, their brethren rose up in arms against him, and slew the Roman garrison that was at Jerusalem. In consequence of these disturbances, the faithful, who saw that these were but the beginning of sorrows, retired to Pella. The same year Vespasian was appointed by Nero to carry on the Jewish war. In the year 71, Nero died, and was succeeded by Galba. The next year, while Vespasian ravaged the country of Judea, and made himself master of many important posts, Galba died, and Otho succeeded to the purple. On his death in 72, though Vitellius assumed the title, Vespasian was declared emperor by the army, and was acknowledged as such all over the East. In 73, Titus, at the head of a powerful army, marched to begin the regular siege of Jerusalem. On the 17th of July the perpetual sacrifice ceased in the temple; and the Romans, making themselves masters of the court, set fire to the galleries; and soon after, though Titus had given command to the contrary, a Roman soldier set the temple on fire, and consumed it to ashes.

Thus was Jerusalem, according to the predictions of Christ, besieged, taken, and destroyed by Titus. In this catastrophe, 1,100,000 of the inhabitants perished, and 97,000 were taken prisoners. Besides these, an innumerable company in other parts of Judea either fell by their own hands, or perished through famine and a complication of miseries.

In the year 96, St. John was banished into the island of Patmos by Domitian, in which place he received from Jesus Christ, and wrote, the Revelation. Domitian was killed in 96, and was succeeded by Nerva, who recalled those whom his predecessor had exiled. St. John, in consequence of this change, was recalled to the church in Ephesus, where, in the year 97, when he was about 90 years of age, he wrote his gospel, according to Calmet, at the request of the Church, to refute certain heresies which had crept into it, and to assert the supreme Divinity of the Son of God.

Such are, in a brief manner, the historical outlines of the sacred writings; and such are some of the most prominent events which we find recorded in the sacred pages. Those among them which pertain to the *Seventh Age of the World*, and are comprised in the *NEW TESTAMENT*, with many others, we have attempted to display before the reader in the two volumes of this Commentary. What remains, is to refer him in this Index to the particular volume and page in which the most important articles may be found, that he may have recourse immediately to any particular subject, by turning his eye to the volume and page which are placed against the words in this alphabetical arrangement.

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