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by E. Boudnot to the
Col. Gen. P. P. P.
for Mrs. Boudnot



A
K E Y

TO THE MYSTERY OF THE
REVELATION:

WHEREBY ALL ITS DARK MEANINGS,
BEING REDUCED TO ONE REGULAR SYSTEM,
ARE EASILY ACCOUNTED FOR,

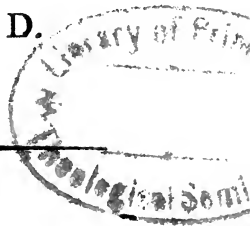
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E X P L A I N E D.

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T H E

INTRODUCTION.

THE author is very sensible of the great difficulty of proposing in a suitable manner to the world a system of opinions, entirely new, and contrary in every respect to those which are generally received, particularly in regard to the mystery of the Revelation: but as he has found from many years experience the great efficacy of the Key, or manner of explanation, now offered to the public, in opening these intricate wards, he thinks it inconsistent with that duty every good man owes to his country to withhold from it what he apprehends is of the utmost importance to it's welfare, and places it in the highest rank of glory and dignity. Nothing but these considerations would tempt

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him to hazard any publication, and he flatters himself that such motives will prevail with the learned and great to allow his labours that favour and indulgence, which their novelty indeed greatly requires, especially as he has endeavoured to establish them upon every principle of unity and consistency.

THESE sacred pages may be considered as a dark ænigma, held out and propounded by the great author, but at the same time wrapped up in every mystic covering and disguise. Every one who attempts to unfold it without being previously possessed of its secret key, or meaning, must of consequence wander through an inextricable labyrinth; every step he takes must necessarily lead him to further difficulties, and he must be lost in endless mazes and incertainties. The author however flatters himself that he is possessed of the happy clue, which many years ago was accidentally discovered to a friend. It is no more than
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the simple hint of considering these mysteries as a regular series of ecclesiastical events from the beginning to the end of time, but yet variously expressed, agreeable to the seven parts into which they seem naturally to be divided. Every interpreter therefore who considers them in a different view must of consequence be greatly confounded and embarrassed; but when they are contemplated agreeable to the plan here proposed, they are so far from disturbing and perplexing the mind of the reader, that on the contrary it must be greatly refreshed, and enlightened. Every different part contributes new matter and information, and affords such a pleasing variety that the serious peruser is never weary of repeatedly revolving the several fortunes of the church, while at the same time he will perceive himself more and more interested in them, till at length they must totally engage his notice and attention: and indeed it is astonishing to see such a heap of seemingly wild and jarring

matters so easily yielding themselves to order and arrangement by so simple a means.

THE novelty of opinions, here introduced, should be so far from offending the cautious reader, that it should rather awaken his curiosity, and engage his attention to what may probably at length give solution to things which have afforded matters of dispute and controversy even for ages. To walk in the paths of those who have confessedly failed in their attempts to decipher these secrets is the manifest wasting of time, and imposing upon the credulity of the world. We must consider this mystery as a desperate case in medicine. Since every effort to restore it has hitherto proved ineffectual, something daring and uncommon must be attempted, the efficacy of which may most likely subdue the malignity of the distemper. What is now offered to the world is contrary to every former attempt, but by its easy pervasion of every secret and abstracted part in its most dark
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and latent recesses, the author flatters himself that he has discovered what has lain concealed for so great a length of time, and what must consequently be greatly acceptable to the enquiring world, especially as it will be found to be of the utmost importance and concern.

THE truth of an exposition of any of the of the sacred oracles must be known by the greatness and importance of it, for a vague and desultory one must be rejected, as altogether incompatible with the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. This exposition may readily offer itself to such a trial; for nothing can be greater than it's end, which is the only true justification of the ways of God to man, in a full exemplification of his providence and interposition in human affairs, from the beginning to the dissolution of the world, and the final settling and adjusting of them in the conformity of every kingdom and nation of the earth to the glorious institutions of the gospel of Christ.

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THIS must certainly be a great and most important event, in comparison of which every former change and alteration of states and kingdoms must appear trivial, and of small account. They were only changed to give way to further revolutions; for many of them, being grown unweildy, perished through the extent of their dominion and greatness, no human wisdom being able to keep in subjection such a multitude of kingdoms, continually differing from each other in their political views and interests. The glorious universal kingdom of Christ, here pointed out and displayed, will be a kingdom, as the prophets sing, never to be shaken or disturbed to the end of time. It is therefore called a new heaven, and a new earth, as being altogether different, in respect to it's stability and multitude of peace, from all other monarchies preceding it. Nothing therefore can be more reasonable than to give a regular detail of it's several stages and fortunes, from it's first beginning and formation till it
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breaks out to that universal dominion and glory, which will be found worthy of the great author of nature. The natural curiosity of mankind will require this historical series, and the vindication of God's ways to the world must demand it.

ANOTHER argument of the truth of this explanation is the conformity of the other prophetic scriptures to the rules and principles here observed and enforced. Their principal burthen is the celebrating of Christ's kingdom, and the prophets have continually held it out in prospect to their countrymen, that they might with such splendid attractions allure them to a return to their duty, and a rejection of those idolatrous infatuations, which have always been a disgrace to humanity. In all their earnest solicitations after the welfare of this people, and that parental care which they have every where shewn in their addresses to them, nay even in the midst of their severest threatenings, they have constantly
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broke out into the most rapturous predictions of the future glory of the church; thereby exposing the stupidity of the Jews in deserting what was the only means to insure to their posterity a permanent inheritance of this multitude of peace. This is the constant end of the prophets on every occasion of exerting their prophetic spirit, this is the manifest burthen of this Revelation, in all the various lights and forms in which these mysteries are represented: their exact agreement therefore in this great and important purpose must certainly give weight to this exposition, which every where supports and establishes it.

As these prophecies had evidently relation to distant times, they were purposely obscured in ænigmatical terms, that their genuine meaning might be reserved entire, to be manifested more fully when these times should be fulfilled. Neither would it have been proper that they should have been known before upon many accounts.

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It would have been very afflicting and discouraging to the old Roman church, composed of pure primitive christians, to have found that in length of time their posterity should grow so wicked and corrupt as to perfect the image of Antichrist. The nature of the world may likewise resemble that of the human body, and necessarily require a certain space of time before it be sufficiently perfect, and able clearly to comprehend the mysteries of religion; and submissively and readily conform itself to her laws. The kingdom of Christ is therefore called the harvest, as it is said in St. Mark, ch. iv., ver. 26, &c. ‘ So is the kingdom God, as if a man should cast seed in the ground, and should sleep and rise up night and day; and the seed should spring and grow up, he not knowing how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ears, after that the full corn in the ears. And as soon as the fruit sheweth itself, he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.’ We may therefore

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fore see the reason why christianity seemed to be so meanly and obscurely founded, for the seed of this harvest was only then sown.

It may be observed that all the prophets foretel not the restoration of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin only, but the complete re-establishment of all the tribes, as may be seen in the quotations of such parts of the prophetic scriptures as regard that great event, and which are subjoined at the end of the description of the new Jerusalem. It is very evident that only the relicts of the Babylonian captivity returned to their country; for the ten tribes were so far from returning, that all memory of them was in a manner lost, and they seem to have been banished not only out of their own country, but in a manner out of the world. We must therefore conclude, that until the whole body of the Jews be completely settled, without the least apprehension of any further removal, the burthens of the sacred prophets, and this Revelation, must be
considered

considered as yet to be accomplished. When therefore the following observations, by a plain and regular rule, shew that this Revelation, and all the prophets, point out not only the general restoration of the Jews, but the conversion of the whole world to the christian faith, not from mere conjecture, but a variety of systems, centering in one end and purpose, the prophets as it were officiously offering their tribute of testimony to each other, it must be difficult to resist so many concurring arguments, and refuse our assent to a system, every where uniformly supported and established.

FROM the following work it appears that the only profession of the true christian faith is according to the doctrine of the church of England, and that her liturgy and service must consequently be a model for all other nations to conform to. As God is not the author of confusion, it is reasonable to suppose that one particular christian church should be selected for this

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purpose;

purpose; none therefore can have greater pretensions to this honour than that of England. But as the principal business of the following work is to settle and establish her claims to this great pre-eminency, the reader must be referred to it for his greater satisfaction. We may however observe, that as the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, it may be natural to imagine that he should chuse the most eminent of the protestant kingdoms, or states, (for such only can be competitors for this honour, as reforming in the six thousandth year) to be the seat of his empire, and for the residence of his divine presence. This distinction may be easily yielded to our celebrated country, which in glory, and renown, may bear the palm from all the other nations of Europe.

By the above system also it manifestly appears that a great and dreadful persecution is now about suddenly to break upon us. Our victory and triumph must be preceded

ceded by a dreadful conflict, for such great honours and distinctions will not be rashly given, but only conferred on those who shall be sufficiently tried in the furnace of affliction. Happy will the author think himself if by the reception, and serious contemplation, of these his labours, his countrymen may be induced to flee the shadow of this world, and having before their eyes the great and fiery trial, which is now literally at hand, and clearly pointed out and discovered in the following work, may make that suitable preparation for it that may insure to them the secret preservation and protection of providence. We ought (as the prophet Esdras warns us) to make ourselves ready for the battle, and in the troubles be even as strangers upon the earth. For as an arrow which is shot of a mighty archer returneth not backwards, so the plagues that shall be sent upon the earth shall not turn again. What will ye do, or how will ye hide your sins before God and his angels? Woe unto them who are bound
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with their fins, and covered with their iniquities, as a field is hedged in with bushes, and the path thereof covered with thorns, whereby no man may travel! It is shut up, and is appointed to be devoured with fire. See II. Esdras, ch. 16.

THE ruin of all great kingdoms and states has for the most part been preceded by the luxury and wickedness of the people, which have hastened and drawn upon them, as it were with violence, that destruction which might otherwise perhaps have been removed or deferred. How much the inhabitants of these kingdoms are immersed in every species of luxury, dissipation, and corruption, is sufficiently known, and lamented: how must we therefore expect to escape the fortune of other empires and states, which have preceded us? We too must suffer, but not like them perish; and the evils, which are ready to happen to us, will only be for our correction and amendment, and not for our destruction. This
furnace

furnace of affliction will purge away from us all dross and corruption, and we shall come out of it like gold, pure and without loss of weight, and more refined and glittering.

It may not be improper to take notice of the beauties and excellencies of this divine Revelation in respect to it's stile and composition; for on mature contemplation these allegorical descriptions will be found to equal the most sublime flights of the holy prophets of the Old Testament, and greatly excel them in the steady and uniform concurrence of their several parts in one great and solid system, constantly tending to inculcate to the world the purposes and designs of the great author of these mysteries.

THE seemingly wild and jarring matters, which every where occur to the reader who is unacquainted with the clue which can only lead him through these labyrinths and difficulties, must no doubt greatly pre-
judice

judice him against these mysteries, and readily incline him to listen to any objections which may have been raised against them. But the author does not doubt that the light they are now proposed to be considered in will sufficiently maintain their authenticity, and the gradual openings, and evident promulgations, of the great and most important secrets intended to be revealed, will so effectually interest the attentive peruser, as to cause him gladly to give up any trifling errors, while he is contemplating matters of universal importance, which angels have desired to look into.

IF any literal and grammatical inaccuracies should appear to the minute and critical observer, they will be found to be infinitely overborne by those strong descriptive expressions which every where penetrate the soul of the attentive reader, and fix in it such lasting impressions as continually vibrate in the fancy. These errors may perhaps be imputed to the transcribers
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of these sacred pages: or, when we consider the manner of delivering those mysteries, these little defects may be otherwise accounted for. The several matters, treated of by the Evangelist, appear to be a continued series of visionary scenes, successively passing in review before him, which with the several speeches, declarations, and other verbal explanations, and illustrations, necessarily connecting them, were no doubt infinitely perfect, and totally void of every blemish; but the digesting and recollecting of them might be left to the liberty of St. John, who might very likely be guilty of some little inaccuracies in respect to stile, which are nevertheless too trifling (as I observed before) to supersede the general beauties and perfections of these mysteries. We may therefore readily allow this volume of the Revelation to be the work of the holy spirit of God, and consequently contemplate it with attention, and reverence. Considering it with such a state of mind, and

according to the plan mark'd out in the following explanation, we may very likely comprehend it's heighth and depth, and observe every proportion of this great and spiritual building.

PART THE FIRST.

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A KEY



KEY to the MYSTERY, &c.

PART THE FIRST.

REVELATION, Chap. I. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants those things which should shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John;
2. Who bare witness to the word of God, and

and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and likewise to the things which he saw. 3. Blessed is he who readeth, and those who hear, the words of this prophecy, and observe the things written therein; for the time is at hand.

THIS great mystery, and magnificent system, when rightly explained and understood, will be a revelation indeed; for hereby God discovers to the world his very inmost counsels, and purposes. They are no less than the accomplishment of that universality of opinions in matters of religion, which the world has been hitherto deprived of; and the want of which has occasioned such innumerable wars and dissensions among mankind, that many of them, from the seeming improbability of a general consent in religious principles, have wholly abandoned all thoughts of religion, and degenerated into infidelity, and an indulgence of every vicious thought, and inclination. Why God should suffer
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the world to continue so long a time in this confusion of sentiments cannot easily be imagined; but one reason of this procrastination of his final decisions in this great concern may perhaps be imputed to his observing a general analogy in the nature of things. As we see no earthly production perfected at once, but arriving gradually and imperceptibly to perfection, in the same manner God seems to have cultivated the spiritual plant of religion. The discovery of it's several gradations and improvements will be the business of this great mystery, which will be manifestly seen in the explanation here offered to the public, if indulged with that attention, which ought to be given to what so much belongs to our peace.

THE reader must not be discouraged when he sees that this mystery relates to things which must shortly come to pass, and that the time is at hand. These are phrases peculiar to the eastern manner of expression

sion, and imply that the things here related shall surely come to pass, and are fully determined by God to be accomplished in due time. This may be confirmed by the following passages. 'Vengeance and recompence are mine, their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their destruction is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste,' &c. Deut. xxxii., v. 35, &c. When the prophet Ahijah denounces the destruction of the house of Jeroboam, among other expressions he has the following. 'Moreover the Lord shall raise him a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day. What? even now!' And thus Esdras. 'And therefore I say unto you, O ye heathen, that hear and understand, wait for your shepherd who shall give you everlasting rest, for he is near at hand that shall come in the end of the world. Chap. ii., ver. 34. The burthen of this great mystery was otherwise so far from being at hand at the time it was given to St. John, that it related

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lated to events equal to the duration of time.

Chap. I. Ver. 4, &c.

Ver. 4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace unto you, and peace, from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before the throne of God: 5. And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the chief of the kings of the earth. To him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, 6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father, to Him be glory and power from generation to generation! Amen. 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and those also who pierced him; and all the families of the

C earth

earth shall lament because of him. Even so, Amen. 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning, and the end, saith the Lord, who am, and who was, the Almighty.

THIS dedication, being an opening or proposition of the whole subject of these mysteries, shews that the end of them is to establish Christ's kingdom in the world, and to separate from it every thing that offends: for behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, (or acknowledge him) even the stubborn Jews who pierced him. It is addressed to the seven churches of Asia in a figurative sense; for it is evident that no records of them can furnish a series of facts correspondent to the several particulars hereafter mentioned concerning them. They are manifestly here made use of as a disguise to wrap up these things, and hide them from the knowledge of the world till God should think proper to discover them; and they are the more
concealed

concealed as the literal churches were contemporary, whereas the real churches here meant are successive, comprehending the several periods of the church from the beginning to the end of time: for the present tense may be equally significant as the past, and serve in even a more expressive manner to illustrate the history of past ages.

WE may observe that the prophets, in their several denunciations to the Jews, have generally begun them from the deliverance of that people out of Egypt, making use of their past story as an introduction to their present mission. St. Stephen likewise, and St. Paul, began their discourses in the same manner, (Acts, vii., ver. 2, &c. and xiii., ver. 17, &c.) and the propriety of that method seems sufficiently evident. How much more necessary must it therefore be, in this great exemplification of the glorious universal church of Christ, to deduce it from it's first creation, and shew it's several stages and gradations, supported

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and preserved by the extraordinary power and providence of God.

To confirm what I have advanced, we find that these things are revealed by Him who is, and who was, and who is to come. He likewise stiles himself Alpha, and Omega, the beginning, and the end. This sufficiently implies that these things are of no temporary meaning, but comprehend the important facts of ages, and what we may call the true ecclesiastical history from the beginning to the end of time. The epithets, here mentioned, naturally imply the strong controlling power of God, which is not restrained to any one particular period, but bears up the system of religion, proposed by him, from it's first establishment to the end, though planted in so tempestuous an element as the unruly mind of sinful man.

VERSE fifth, we may observe the manifestation of Christ's divinity, where it is said, To Him who loved us, and washed us from
our

our sins in his blood, &c. to Him be glory and power from generation to generation. Behold, he cometh with clouds, &c. These acknowledgments can be only made to the Deity, and to him alone can glory and power be ascribed for ever and ever. But Christ's divinity will further appear in the course of these observations.

Chap. I. Ver. 9, &c.

Ver. 9. I John, who am also your brother, and companion in affliction, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the island called Patmos for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice like a trumpet, 11. Saying, I am Alpha, and Omega, the first and the last, and, What thou seest write in a book,
and

and send to the seven churches in Asia, to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea. 12. And I turned to see the voice which spake to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden candlesticks: 13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man, cloathed in a long robe, and girded about the breasts with a golden girdle. 14. His head and his hair were white as wool, like snow, and his eyes were like a flame of fire: 15. And his feet were like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice was as the voice of many waters: 16. And having in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth proceeding a two-edged sword; and his appearance was as the sun shining in it's strength. 17. And when I saw him, I fell before his feet as dead; and he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not: I am the first and the last, 18. And who live, and was

was dead, and behold, I live for ever and ever, Amen, and have the keys of hell and death. 19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter. 20. In regard to the mystery of the seven stars, which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks; the seven stars are the seven angels of the churches, and the seven candlesticks, which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

IT may be here necessary previously to consider the manner of discovering this important Revelation to St. John. The prophets in the Old Testament generally revealed their prophecies in a plain and open promulgation, directly from God, and used every power of divine eloquence to illustrate the future glory of the church. The manner here made use of is different; for the great matters, intended to be discovered, are represented in a variety of visionary scenes, successively passing in review before

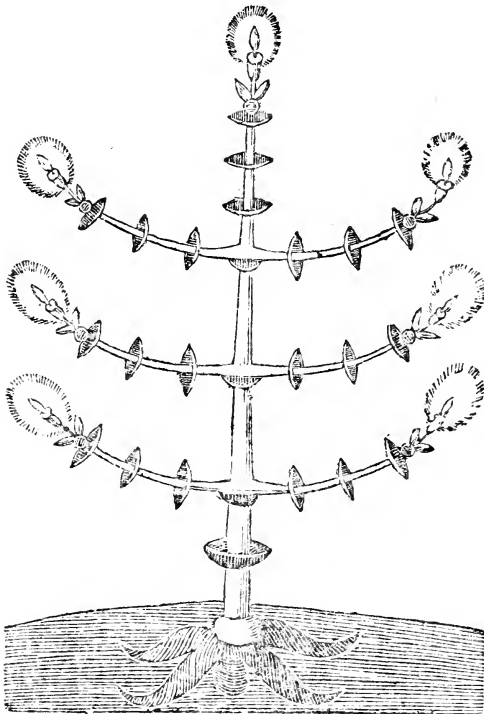
before the eye of the Evangelist, till they are finally concluded, and brought to the intended perfection. It may be necessary to consider them in this light through the course of these observations, in order to avoid any confusion of ideas; for otherwise what is only a strong visionary representation of things, may be sometimes taken for a literal detail of them, by which means their genuine meaning may be mistaken and confounded.

THE first thing to be considered in the above vision must be the representation of the seven golden candlesticks: In the midst of these was seen walking a glorious appearance of Christ, cloathed in all the pomp of majesty, as the great eternal high-priest of his people, both able and willing to avenge them of their enemies, and establish them in perfect peace and glory. These candlesticks are the seven periods or divisions of the church, and are made use of as a proper representation of religion, which

which is a strong burning light, illuminating the dark gloomy minds of erring mortals, and directing them in the way of endless peace and felicity.

IN order the better to illustrate the meaning of these candlesticks we must compare them with that made by Moses, according to the express command of God. Though these are represented as standing separate, and that of Moses as being only one; yet upon a proper comparison it will be found to have the same typical meaning and tendency, and to be explanatory of many particular terms used in these mysteries: The candlestick of Moses was to be made, with it's several appurtenances, of a talent of pure gold, in the following manner. The middle part of it was the main shaft, or stem; from which proceeded six branches, three branches from one side, and three branches from the other side. The two lowermost, extending opposite to each other, were in a manner united by a knop, formed in that part of the shank of the candlestick from whence

they proceeded, directly under their connexion. Two more branches proceeded in the same manner above them, and two more still above these. Every one of these several branches had lamps fixed to their extremities, and on the top of the middle stem was likewise fixed a lamp.



THE two lowermost branches, connected together with a knop, may signify the two several periods of the church before the law, here called the churches of Ephesus and Smyrna. The two other branches above them may represent the two churches under the law, called Pergamos, and Thyatira, and the two uppermost branches express the two christian churches, called Sardis and Philadelphia. The middle stem, being as it were the parent of these branches, is the third christian church, called here the church of Laodicea, and in other places of scripture the great church, as being that into which all the nations in the world will bring their glory and honour, as the prophets have every where loudly sung. We may now see the propriety of Christ's walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks, he giving life and existence to them all, and like the shaft of Moses's candlestick bearing and supporting all the rest. Thus we see likewise the unity of our most holy religion, which with it's several branches

forms

forms one glorious system, that will blaze and flourish to the end of time.

HERE it may be necessary to observe the several divisions of the church. We see it in the first place divided into seven periods; again it is contracted into three divisions, one before the law, one under the law, and one under the gospel. The christian church, being great and extensive, admits of two divisions, one comprehending the churches of Sardis, and Philadelphia, and the other that of Laodicea: the whole church therefore from the beginning may also consist of four several parts.

It may not be improper to observe that the number seven appears every where remarkable in the Old Testament, particularly in the Jewish ceremonies. All sprinklings and purifications were seven times repeated, and their religious year was in some measure regulated by that number, the feast of pentecost being appointed by a multiplication

cation of seven days by seven after the pas-
 sover. The Jubilee likewise was formed by
 a multiplication of seven years by seven :
 and this sacred number has been otherwise
 so often mentioned in the scriptures that it
 must be obvious to any person the least con-
 versant in them. We must therefore con-
 clude that it must be of great importance,
 and may well be imagined to imply the se-
 ven periods of God's church, from the be-
 ginning to the end of time.

WE may in the text particularly observe
 the divinity of Christ, exemplified in the
 great and pompous description of his majes-
 ty; which was so exceeding great that the
 Evangelist fell at his feet as dead. But he
 mercifully raised him up, saying, Fear not:
 I am the first, and the last. I am he that
 liveth, and was dead, and behold, I am
 alive for evermore, Amen, and have the
 keys of hell and death. He here gives
 himself the attributes peculiar to the
 Deity, which cannot possibly be given to
 any inferior power.

HE goes on to direct St. John to write the things which he had seen, the things which were, and the things which should be hereafter, &c. The intent of the whole mystery is here particularly manifest, and appears to be a regular history of God's church, and a discovery of his dispensations to mankind from the beginning to the end of time. It is likewise reasonable to imagine when God shews his church, adorned in all her ornaments like a bride, and ready to receive the homage of the yielding world, that he should give a regular detail of her several stages and fortunes from the beginning. She is his immediate creation, every part of which must be recorded with reverence. The prophet Isaiah, expostulating with his idolatrous countrymen, says, Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else, I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things which are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. Ch. xlvi., v. 9, 10.

THE seven stars are said to be the angels of the seven churches, which we may suppose to be the chief governing powers of each millinary.

Chap. II. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. To the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. 2. I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and that thou art not able to endure those that are wicked; and hast tried those that say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3. And hast borne, and had patience; and for my name hast laboured, and not been weary. 4. But I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love. 5. Remember

member therefore from whence thou hast fallen, and repent, and do the first works; if not, I shall come against thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of it's place, unless thou repent. 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicholaitans, which I also hate. 7. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches, To him who overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

IN our review of these churches we must observe the signification of their names, and the stile, or epithets, assumed by Christ in his message to each church; for the expressions here used will throw a great light on those dark meanings: the conclusion likewise of each message will greatly conduce to the same end. But the middle parts (especially of the messages to the three first churches) seem to have been purposely disguised, that the whole mystery might be
locked

locked up in obscurity till God should send a proper key, or manner of opening of it; without which not only this mystery, but the prophecies likewise of the Old Testament, are altogether unintelligible.

THE word Ephesus signifies any thing desirable, and may well be applied to this church, as being the first spiritual creation of God, and like all his works great and desirable. It might also perhaps be understood as any thing permitted, or left to it's fortune. This meaning likewise may agree very well with the first state or period of the church, which was planted in the beginning of the world, and left to make it's way through all the temptations and evils which might disturb it, being the beginning of God's spiritual creation, and the first essay of his power.

THE epithets here assumed are, He who holds the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden
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candlesticks:

candlesticks: that is, He who is the Lord and Creator of all things, and rules and directs his church from the beginning to the end. These expressions may be very well made use of in this review of the first church, where God's providence first begins to exert itself, and from which he goes forth conquering, and to conquer.

THE service and duty of those first professors of religion are commended, and they are remarked for having zealously maintained their integrity amidst that great corruption of manners, which generally overwhelmed the first race of men. They had the examples of the first patriarchs to form and direct them in the service and duty which God might then require of them, and which were not at that time circumscribed with particular laws and ceremonies. The patriarch Enoch is said to have walked with God, or to have been remarkably favoured with his notice; and must no doubt by his preaching and example have stirred up the
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zeal and devotion of God's votaries, and taught them to discover all false apostles, or corrupt teachers of religion. They nevertheless are said not to have continued to the end of their period in this fervency of devotion, but to have grown lukewarm and indifferent in their duty, and left their first love, called their first works, or that zealous exertion of their duty, shewn by them at the beginning. For this neglect of their duty they are justly censured, and threatened with the removal of their candlestick out of it's place, or forfeiture of all title to God's favour and providence.

THEY are however commended for their hatred of the doctrine of the Nicholaitans. These were heretics of the primitive christian church, who had their wives in common. But this doctrine of the Nicholaitans (here only mentioned as a disguise) I take to have a further meaning, and closely to imply spiritual fornication, or idolatry; for the Jews in the third church are particu-

larly charged with holding this doctrine, and were most remarkably addicted to idolatry. As it may signify in itself adultery, or fornication, which is wandering from lawful pleasures to those which are unlawful; so idolatry is wandering from the service of God, to which we are married, to the service of idols: for the Jews are frequently said to go whoring after other Gods. From this passage we may gather that this infatuation was unknown to the first age of the world, but afterwards crept in by time and degrees. See Wisd. ch. xiii.

In the conclusion, those who overcome, or preserve their integrity, are promised to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Here we see a manifest allusion to the original paradise, in which our first parents were placed, and which they forfeited by the transgression of God's law. Such of their posterity however as should keep themselves unspotted in the world were to be rewarded with endless blifs

bliss and immortality, of which the tree of life in the earthly paradise was only a type.

Chap. II. Ver. 8, &c.

Ver. 8. And to the angel of the church of Smyrna, write, These things saith the first, and the last, who was dead and is alive. 9. I know thy works, and thy affliction, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and are not, but of the Synagogue of Satan. 10. Fear not what thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil purposeth to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tempted, and you shall have tribulation ten days: be faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. 11. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the

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the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

THE two first churches, being freed from all the restraints and fetters of the law, resemble very much the christian churches in that freedom of which St. Paul every where glories in his epistles: We see therefore that very near the same attributes are assumed by Christ in his mission to those two first churches as to the last. We may likewise in the same manner account for the meaning of the name given to this church, which signifies myrrh, and may express those pure unbloody offerings, or sweet odours, which are afterwards in this mystery termed the prayers of saints. It may not be improper to observe that the favour and indulgence of God to the first race of men are conspicuously evident. They were tried with all the liberty enjoyed by the professors of the gospel, and God withheld no encouragement which might enable them to bear fruit worthy of his culture; but their

their total degeneracy and corruption of manners brought upon them of necessity the severer discipline and fetters of the law.

THIS second church was chiefly under the direction of Noah. The affliction and poverty of it are therefore very evident: for at that time the wickedness of mankind was so general and great, that Noah and his family appear to have been the only and poor remains of God's worshippers. But they were sufficiently rich in being blessed with his providence and protection: for after the flood God made a great and especial covenant with Noah and his family, and gave them a most remarkable sign of performing his engagements. The hypocritical pretenders to the truth are here called Jews, and in the first church they were termed apostles: we must therefore consider those appellations as indifferently applied to God's true worshippers, and to be here made use of chiefly as a disguise.

THE tribulation, here mentioned, of ten days may not unlikely seem to be the temporary imprisonment of Noah and his family in the ark, during the flood. For though God favoured them with so remarkable an instance of his protection, yet the terrors of a ruin'd world, and the dreadful destruction of it's inhabitants, and their fellow-creatures, must have embittered their minds with painful reflections, and rendered their confinement irksome and afflicting.

THIS interpretation may receive confirmation from St. Chryostom, who, in his homily on Noah's confinement in the ark, dwells largely, in his agreeable and most instructive manner on the irksomeness of it, constantly calling the ark a prison, in which Noah was shut up, overwhelmed with uneasy sensations in regard to the destruction of nature, and continually lamenting the unhappy fate of his fellow-creatures. For as this great and most rational interpreter of the scriptures observes, the prophets are sufficiently

sufficiently known not only to bemoan the afflictions of the people of God, but likewise the ruin and destruction of their enemies. We may take notice that if the flood had not been so darkly hinted, the circumstances of it were so extremely remarkable, that it must otherwise have appeared very evident, and consequently ruined the intent of these mysteries.

IN the conclusion, those who overcome are assured of not being hurt by the second death, or involved in the dreadful and final condemnation of the followers of Antichrist: (see ch. xx., ver. 14.) for all who are open and presumptuous sinners must expect the same eternal punishment denounced against Antichrist and his followers.

Chap. II. Ver. 12, &c.

Ver. 12. And to the angel of the church of Pergamos, write, These things saith he
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who hath the sharp sword with two edges.

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is; and holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days in which Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain amongst you where Satan dwelleth.

14. But I have a few things against thee, that thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, and to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15. Likewise hast thou those who hold the doctrine of the Nicholaitans; which thing I hate. 16. Repent, or otherwise I shall come against thee quickly, and shall fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17. He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him who overcometh will I give to eat of the manna which is hid; and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written,

written, which no man knoweth, saving he who receiveth it.

WE must here chiefly consider the epithet assumed by Christ; for the sharp sword with two edges implies the statutes and judgments of the law, which take vengeance on the transgressors of it.

WE may date the commencement of this church from the time of Abraham, and carry it's duration to that of David. In the course of this period various occurrences happened, some of which are here taken notice of. The misty veil, thrown on the transactions of the former churches, seems here in a great measure removed; and we may easily compare what is here mentioned with the real history of the third thousand year.

THEIR dwelling where Satan's seat is, may seem evidently to mean their abode in Egypt, under the tyranny and oppression

pression of a heathen prince: for the Egyptian kingdom must be considered as a part of the great complicated body of Antichrist, being the first political power stirred up by Satan against the church of God. (See the observations on ch. xvii.) They are here said to continue in their faith and duty, and not to swerve from their religious principles under every affliction and discouragement, even when Antipas, God's faithful martyr, was slain amongst them where Satan dwelled. This circumstance may very likely imply the massacre of the male children belonging to the Jews by the appointment of Pharoah, the first engine of Antichrist fabricated by the devil against the church: for had not the providence of God frustrated the intentions of this wicked prince, the race of the Jews would in time have been wholly extinguished.

THEY are however afterwards blamed for holding the doctrine of Balaam. This wickedness they were actually guilty of in their

their approach to the holy land. For after Balaam was restrained from his intention of cursing them by the strong power of God, and was obliged to turn his curse into a blessing; he in some measure afterwards had his revenge by the counsel he gave to Balak to send his young virgins among the Israelites, who quickly seduced them to idolatry, and fornication. Numb. xxxi., v. 16.

THEY are likewise charged with holding the doctrine of the Nicholaitans. This doctrine, as was observed in the church of Ephesus, must mean idolatry; for in this thousand year the Jews were remarkably infected with that madness, and most ridiculous infatuation; from which they were never thoroughly reclaimed till after their return from the Babylonian captivity.

THOSE who overcome these temptations are promised to be fed with the manna which is hid. The Jews who did eat of the literal manna in the wilderness died in
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their sins: but the hidden manna, here mentioned, is that bread which came down from heaven, of which whosoever eateth shall live for ever. This heavenly food is promised to the faithful posterity of this people, of which the manna they eat in the wilderness was but a type. See John vi., ver. 48, &c. In a word, they should be fed with all the graces and consolations of the christian religion, at the end of the second of the three larger divisions of the church.

THEY are likewise promised to have a white stone, and upon it a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he who receiveth it. The ancients used to decide their judgments by casting into an urn a white or black stone, the white acquitting, and the black condemning, the criminal. From this custom is this expression taken, which here signifies the promised freedom of the gospel of Christ to such of the posterity of the Jews as should be willing to receive it: for the law was only a schoolmaster to
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bring the Jews to Christ. Christianity is likewise represented by the prophets as a new creation and institution, which will further appear in the course of these observations.

Chap. II. Ver. 18, &c.

Ver. 18. And to the angel of the church of Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and whose feet are like unto fine brasa. 19. I know thy works and thy charity, and thy service, and thy faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20. But I have a few things against thee, that thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and deceive my servants, to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.

21. And

21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. 22. Behold, I cast her into a bed, and those who commit fornication with her into great affliction, unless they repent of their works. 23. And I will slay her children with death, and all the churches shall know that it is I who search the reins, and hearts; and I will give unto you every one according to your works. 24. But to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, who have not this doctrine, and who have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will not cast upon you any other burthen. 25. But what you have hold fast until I come. 26. And he who overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end unto him will I give power over the nations. 27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessel of a potter shall he break them in pieces, as I have received from my Father. 28. And I will give him the morning-star. 29. He who hath an ear let

let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

THE word Thyatira may be interpreted a sweet favour of labour, and may very properly be applied to this fourth church, as expressing their wholesome labour and perseverance in the law, and the rewards which might justly be expected for keeping it from Him, whose eyes are like a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass:

THIS period comprehends the time from David to Christ. In this message the Thyatirians are generally commended for their good works, and diligent observation of the law. But it is observed to them that these duties were more scrupulously exerted by them in the latter state of this millenary than at the beginning. This appears evident from the history of this people: for we find that after their return from the Babylonian captivity they never once relapsed into their former idolatrous infatuations,

but religiously persevered in the strictest observation of the law of Moses.

THE divided state of the Jews in this millenary is here evidently taken notice of, and the revolted ten tribes under Jeroboam, Ahab, &c. come first under the just censure of God. They are blamed for suffering and submitting to that woman Jezebel, who actually resided amongst them, and might no doubt greatly contribute to corrupt their naturally vicious inclinations with every foreign superstitious refinement in their idolatrous rites. It may be observed that not one of the kings of those ten tribes adhered to the law of God, but during their whole continuance in the land of Canaan both prince and people united their utmost efforts to provoke and affront the majesty of God. After he had allowed them a sufficient space for repentance, his justice could no longer be restrained, but he was obliged to sacrifice them to his vengeance, and banish them from that land which they had so long polluted

luted with their impieties. In fine, they were delivered up a prey to the Affyrians, who carried them away captives into their own country; from whence however they escaped into some unknown region, and have been no more heard of, even unto this day. Their return notwithstanding into their own country is clearly predicted by the prophets, and will be particularly taken notice of in a proper place. Thus God made them a just example of his vengeance in the face of the world, that all the nations of it might know that it is he who searcheth the reins and hearts, and rendereth unto every one according to his works.

HAVING satisfied his anger upon this rebellious people he next addresseth himself to the kingdom of Judah, called the rest of Thyatira, or the remains of this fourth church, who had not been so generally impious as their brethren of Samaria; but having had several religious and worthy princes among them, the spirit of religion

was for the most part kept up, and their idolatrous inclinations considerably restrained. From those he requires no other duty and service but what were enjoined them by the law of Moses; in which he exhorts them to persevere till he himself should come to them in the flesh, in whom all types and ceremonies center and are fulfilled.

To such of them therefore as shall receive his doctrine will he give power over the nations, and impart all the glory and honour reserved for the last state of his church, to which all nations will bow. The prophet David, in the second psalm, speaking of the glory of Christ's kingdom, makes use of the words here mentioned in the text. 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Desire of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt bruise them with a rod of iron, and break them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'

Pf. ii., ver. 7, &c. He calls himself likewise the morning-star, which at the end of this period arose for the salvation, not only of such of the Jews as should believe in him, but generally of all the world.

THE truth of this new method of explanation may seem already sufficiently clear; but it will appear much more so in the further examination of this great and most important mystery.

Chap. III. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And to the angel of the church of Sardis, write, These things saith he who hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars, I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, but art dead.
 2. Be watchful, and strengthen that which remaineth, which is ready to die; for I have
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have not found thy works perfect before God. 3. Remember therefore how thou hast received, and heard, and observe, and repent. If therefore thou wilt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I shall come upon thee. 4. Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. 5. He who overcometh shall be cloathed in white raiment, and I will not blot his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before my father, and before his angels. 6. He who hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

THE epithet, here made use of, we may observe is general, agreeable to those assumed by Christ in his addresses to the two first churches, which in their freedom (as has been observed) much resemble those of Christ. These things saith he

he who hath the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars: that is, he who ruleth and directeth his people from the beginning to the end.

THE duration of this fifth church may be reckoned from the time of Christ to that of the reformation of the errors of the church of Rome, which comprehends the greatest length of time that any one of the churches has arrived at.

THIS message is particularly addressed to the papal church, which assumed to herself the dominion of much the greatest part of the christian world. This universal power was a principal cause of her ruin: for being intoxicated with it, and choaked with the thorny cares of the world, she yielded herself a willing prey to those flattering temptations offered her by the devil, and deserted that beautiful simplicity and purity so diligently and zealously cultivated by the first christians, for the pompous outside,
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and flimsy tinsel, of religion. Thirsting only after the worldly gain of godliness, (for, as St. Paul observes, godliness is in itself the greatest of gains) she opened a passage for innumerable errors; which continued increasing with such a variety of flagrant and open impostures that they naturally compelled the more sensible and considerate members of this church to a reformation of them. Platina, in the life of Sixtus the First, acknowledges that at first the celebrating of divine service was very plain and simple. He says that many additional parts and ceremonies were afterwards added to it by different Popes; and that Pelagius the First was the first who invented the prayers for the dead, so late as about the year of Christ 580. See the homilies of the church of England against idolatry; in which the learned author has irrefragably proved that the papists are guilty of the grossest idolatry. This most heavy accusation is confirmed by the holy Spirit of God: for in the sixth trumpet,

pet, where the utter ruin of the Romish church is represented, it is said, that such of those unhappy people as should escape this fatal destruction, would not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. Also they repented not of their murders, nor of their forceries, neither of their fornications, nor of their theft. See likewise the works of that great pillar of our church, Bishop Jewell, which ought, for the benefit of the christian world, to be reprinted, as they cannot possibly be made too public.

FOR these reasons God tells them that they have a name that they live, but are dead: that is, that they have only the outward appearance of religion, but are strangers to the substance and reality of it. They are advised therefore to be watchful, and to endeavour to nourish what little expiring

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spark of religion may be yet remaining amongst them; for God assures them that their works are not perfect before him. They are ordered to remember what they had received and heard, diligently to consider the first institution and rudiments of the gospel, as laid down and established by the holy apostles of Christ, and yet sufficiently seen in such of their writings as we have still remaining with us. This appears to have been the commendable practice of the ancient fathers of the church. St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, in his discourse addressed to his new converts, is remarkable in this necessary precaution. ‘In respect to the divine and holy mysteries of the faith (he observes) nothing rashly should be obtruded without the concurrence of the sacred scriptures; nor what is supported merely by the plausible arrangements of eloquence and arguments. Nor would I have you give implicit credit, says the Bishop, to what I tell you, unless I support my assertions directly by the authority of the sacred writings: for the founda-
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tion of our faith does not depend upon the studied modes of oratory and persuasion, but on the simple demonstration of holy writ.' They have however to this day neglected this good and wholesome advice, and are consequently blinded and infatuated with their errors.

WE may see that the Greek church, and what other old christian churches may yet remain, are equally disfigured with the rust and corruption of time, which is naturally productive of superstitious errors, where a diligent attendance, and constant watching, are not observed over the great and important doctrines of christianity, which are not to be the sport of vanity and caprice. This shews the necessity of preserving them by articles maturely established, which are a wall and strong fortress of religion, and effectually banish from it all corruption, and false doctrine.

To return to the text. It is said, ver. 4. Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments, &c. These are those bold and virtuous members of that church, who wisely took the advice before given them, of strengthening the things that remained, and cherishing and reviving the little expiring flame of religion left among them. This they effectually and happily accomplished in a glorious reformation of their innumerable corruptions, as we shall see in the succeeding church.

HE that overcomes shall be cloathed in white raiment, or rewarded with victory, glory, and triumph, which will be given to those who persevere in the doctrine and truth of the gospel; for fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

Chap. III. Ver. 7, &c.

Ver. 7. And to the angel of the church of Philadelphia, write, These things saith he who is holy and true, who hath the key of David; who 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; because thou hast had 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, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and know that I have loved thee. 10. Because thou hast kept the words of my patience, I also will keep thee in the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them who dwell upon the earth. 11. Behold, I come
come

come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12. Him who overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which descendeth from Heaven from my God, even my own name. 13. He who hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

THE meaning of Philadelphia is brotherly love. This name may with the greatest propriety be given to this sixth church; for as she is adorned with every habiliment and ornament proper to decorate the Spouse of Christ, and hath need of no additional perfection, but will remain according to her present establishment to the end of time, she is justly therefore distinguished by that great characteristic of christianity, love, which comprehends in itself every requisite of religion.

THE epithets, here used, do likewise remarkably point out this last great work of God's spiritual creation. These things saith he who is holy and true, who hath the key of David; who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth. That is, He, who having from the beginning proposed to reserve for his holy presence an established church, continually visible and resident in the world, and by degrees to give it that perfection he requires, is now ready to fulfil his purpose, and finish and attire her as a bride adorned for her husband. This is accomplished by divesting her of the ridiculous vanities of superstition, and cloathing her with the pure shining robes of truth; by setting before her an open door of reformation, which no human power can shut, but which will continue open for all the nations in the world to bring their glory and honour into it to the end of time.

As this sixth church must necessarily be a reformed one, we need not hesitate to pronounce it to be the venerable and renowned church of England. Though her title to this pre-eminency may be disputed, yet it will nevertheless appear evident by many arguments.

THIS church may boast of a more public foundation than any other of the reformed churches, having been established by the deliberate united wisdom of a number of wise, learned, and eminent men, publicly appointed for that purpose, and authorised and confirmed by the king and parliament.

IT was likewise reformed the latest of any of them; and must consequently (only considering it as a human establishment) under the direction of such a number of learned men, have availed itself of every improvement, and avoided every error which a rash and intemperate heat might have occasioned.

THE true church is likewise known by her being chastened and scourged; for as the nature of man is continually prone to evil, God's presence is never more known than in his fatherly corrections of his people, and bringing them by the wholesome severity of his judgments to a just sense of their impieties. These chastisements the church of England has twice already particularly experienced; first, under the tyranny of Queen Mary, presently after her reformation, and secondly, by a new enemy, sprung out of her own bowels, to wit, the presbyterians and sectaries, called in the gospel tares, and in the Revelation the court without the temple. Another dreadful judgment is ready to fall upon us, which will be clearly demonstrated in the course of this great mystery.

YET the greatest evidence of the truth of our pretensions to this great distinction will afterwards appear, when all the protestant nations of Europe will be shewn to

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join with the papists in our ruin and destruction; which they will for a while effect and accomplish, though, like Judas, they **will** afterwards miserably repent of **their wickedness** and folly. It may now be **time to return to the text.**

VERSE 8, it is said, I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it, &c. This expression is used by St. Paul, For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, &c. 1 Cor. xvi., ver. 9. It signifies the extraordinary exertion and interposition of God's providence in encouraging the people of this land to reform the errors of the church of Rome, and giving this chosen people spirit and resolution to contend earnestly for that faith which was once delivered to the saints. This great work, through the assistance of God's Spirit, they effectually accomplished: and though presently after it was interrupted by a dreadful and fiery persecution, yet our gallant and steady ancestors were favoured

voured with a little strength, and kept God's word, and did not deny his name. They bravely struggled through all difficulties and discouragements, and in a little time emerged into glory and victory.

IN reward of this zealous perseverance in the truth, God promises, in the next verse, to make all opposers of her doctrine and service (the tares that were scattered among us, as well as all foreign protestant churches) of the synagogue of Satan, who falsely pretend to the truth of the gospel, and compel them to worship before our feet, and submit to the doctrines, and liturgy of our church. This happy union will be accomplished immediately after the dreadful persecution in a little time to be expected, and will afterwards appear.

WE are further encouraged, ver. 10, with the promise of God's protection at the time in which he pours out his vengeance on all the European nations, when we shall be

sealed and marked out as a precious treasure, reserved for glory and victory. See ch. vii., ver. 4, &c. We must therefore strive to preserve our integrity, that no man take our crown, or rob us of our promised triumph and pre-eminency.

VERSE 12, it is said, Him who overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, &c. That is, those who escape out of the evils and afflictions, now near at hand in a literal sense, will for ever afterwards be firmly established in peace, and be members of the New Jerusalem, afterwards particularly described in this Revelation. We shall then, as St. Paul says, be no longer strangers and sojourners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. In whom the building, being completely fitted, increases into a holy temple in the Lord. In whom we also shall be builded together for a habitation

tation of God through the Spirit. Ephes.
chap. ii., ver. 19, &c.

Chap. III. Ver. 14, &c.

Ver. 14. And to the angel of the church of Laodicea, write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. 15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert either cold or hot. 16. Because therefore thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spew thee out of my mouth. 17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. 18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,

fire, that thou mayest be made rich, and whiteraiment, that thou mayest be cloathed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not appear, and to anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

19. Those whom I love I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any one hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.

21. He who overcometh, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and have sat down with my father in his throne. 22. He who hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

LAODICEA may signify a just people, and be very applicable to this seventh church, as having stood the test of trials and afflictions, and come out of this fiery furnace

nace like gold, pure and without loss of weight, being honourably justified and acquitted before God. These are they who come out of great tribulation (ch. vii., ver. 14.) the triumphant Philadelphians, to whose order and liturgy all the nations of the world will gladly conform themselves. They will then constitute what in the scriptures is called the Great Church, which will remain uninterrupted with any further chastisements and afflictions to the end of time. This great peace and tranquility will occasion that lukewarmness and indifferency here complained of, and will consequently bring on the ruin, and catastrophe, of the world.

THE epithets, here used, are likewise remarkable. Christ calls himself the Amen, to intimate that having now finished the spiritual creation of his church, he makes it apparent that he has acquitted himself to his creatures with faithfulness and truth. The word Amen is likewise used to signify
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an assent to any matter before expressed, and as the final conclusion of it. We may therefore consider it as implying the last state of the church, in which humanity has it's furthest indulgence; and being found imperfect it will perish in the dissolution of nature. He is likewise the faithful and true witness, and the beginning of the creation of God; that he may, as St. Paul says, in all things have the pre-eminency.

THIS message is addressed to the last state of this church, for at that time the merits of any period can best be considered. It's first beginnings will no doubt be fruitful in piety and good works, and mankind being received into the bosom of God's providence, will stand in awful reverence of his great and visible presence, which will then be evidently revealed amongst them.

THIS fervour will, however, too soon give place to lukewarmness, of which God here complains, and upon which account
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he will spew them out of his mouth, or withdraw his presence from them, and devote them to final destruction.

It here appears, that they will not, like the papists, corrupt or innovate their religion, with superstitious inventions; but imagining themselves sufficiently rich and happy in the external profession of it; and satiated with the perfect knowledge of the prophets and scriptures, and having nothing further to occupy their thoughts, they will grow indifferent to every thing, and be enervated with indolence. They will imagine that they shall have need of nothing, but consider not that they, in reality, are poor, and blind, and naked.

THE true criterion of religion is love, or charity: without this divine quality all other knowledge is vain. They will forget the advice of God in his scriptures, and neglect to lay in the divine treasures recommended by him, to wit, gold tried in

the fire, or the pure and effectual doctrines of christianity; and white raiment, or purity and holiness, without which no man can appear before God, for it is written, ‘ Be ye holy, for I the Lord who sanctify you am holy.’ They will also neglect to prepare for themselves eye-salve, or a clear and perfect knowledge of the duties to God and man.

GOD however still condescends to offer his mercy to them, and even invites himself to feast with such of his votaries as shall open their doors to his holy presence (v.20); being desirous to neglect nothing that may contribute to the salvation of his people.

VERSE 21. Those who are zealous and repent, or are not deceived with the shadow of sublunary things, but persevering stedfastly in their duty, go on from strength to strength, and bring forth every fruit of true religion and holiness; those happy and distinguished persons will be admitted to sit
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with Christ in his throne, or rewarded with a happy and glorious immortality: for there will be no further earthly expectations.

THOUGH the consideration of these churches in the light I have presumed to offer them to the public, may be sufficiently clear to the moderate and impartial reader; yet it may not be unnecessary to observe that a little reflection will give us sufficient reason to be convinced that they can have no regard to the literal churches in any respect whatsoever.

THEY were all of them not only contemporary but contiguous; comprehending in their extent but a corner of Asia Minor. It must therefore be hard to conceive why the many other extensive countries, which equally admitted colonies of christians among them, should be wholly overlooked and neglected, and only the affairs and fortunes of these few churches should en-

gage the notice and attention of the divine providence.

FOR a further confirmation of this opinion, it may be worth while to recapitulate some particular facts in the text, which could have no possible connection with them in regard to any point of time whatsoever.

How the literal church of Pergamos could be charged with holding the doctrines of Balaam, and eating things sacrificed to idols, cannot readily be comprehended: but the figurative Pergamos, or the Jewish church in the third millenary, actually received those doctrines, and severely suffered for their impieties.

IN like manner, it can be no easy matter to shew how the church of Thyatira should suffer that woman Jezebel amongst them, and commit idolatry; and that a great part of them should be extirpated, but the remainder

mairider of them ſhould wait for the Morning-ſtar, which, figuring Chriſt, had already ſhined upon them, and in whoſe beams they then rejoiced and were glad: but the figurative Thyatira, or the Jewish church in the fourth thouſand year, was actually guilty of this charge, and ſuffered for it in the manner before explained.

IN like manner we may conſider the remaining churches; which I flatter myſelf will give ſufficient weight and authority to the explanation of them which I have attempted to enforce,

PART THE SECOND.

A KEY.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1954

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KEY to the MYSTERY, &c.

PART THE SECOND.

REV. Chap. IV.

Ver. 1. After these things I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet, talking with me, saying, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

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2. And immediately I was in the spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3. And he who sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and a rainbow was round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald. 4. And round about the throne were four-and-twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four-and-twenty elders sitting, cloathed in white raiment, and they had upon their heads crowns of gold. 5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices; and seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

6. And before the throne was a sea of glass, like unto chrystal: 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 unto a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had the face of a man,

a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8. And the four beasts had each six wings about them, and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and who art, and who art to come! 9. And when the beasts give glory and honour, and thanks to him who sitteth on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10. The four-and-twenty elders fall down before him who sitteth on the throne, and worship him who 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!

Chap. V.

Ver. 1. And I saw in the right-hand of him who sat on the throne a book, written

- within, and on the back side thereof, sealed with seven seals. 2. And I saw a strong angel, proclaiming with a great voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and loose the seals thereof? 3. And no man was able in heaven, nor on the earth, nor under the earth, to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and read the book, nor to look thereon, 5. And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not: behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and loose the seven seals thereof.
6. And I saw, and behold, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb stood 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 who sat on the throne.

throne. 8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and the four-and-twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one harps, and golden vials, full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. 9. And they sung a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and loose the seals thereof! for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every tribe, 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 heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, even thousands of thousands, 12. Saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing! 13. And every creature that was in the heaven, and in the

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the earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, To him who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing, and honour, and glory, and strength, for ever and ever! 14. And the four beasts said, Amen! And the four-and-twenty elders fell down, and worshipped Him who liveth for ever and ever.

THE Evangelist is now about to be favoured with a second view of those great and interesting events, in a different light. These various representations of the same things have not only served to hide the meaning of them from the world till the proper time for revealing of them, but from a continued variety of expression, make them shine with a double lustre, and give them that importance and majesty which they naturally claim. Besides, this manner of variously expressing the same things seems agreeable to the method God has formerly made use of; an instance of which

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we have in Pharoah's dreams. He had them twice repeated, to shew (as Joseph informed him, the certainty of them, and that God hastened to accomplish them. The prophets likewise observe the same method, thereby using every means to allure their countrymen to listen to those things which so much belonged to their peace. The inspired writers make use of no logical arguments: their productions are all great and evident conclusions. It may suit the weakness of human nature to support it's assertions by a variety of arguments, but the word of God is every where stable and permanent, and wants only a serious examination, and attention, to impress for ever on our minds a full conviction of it's truth. For as the author to the Hebrews observes, The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb. iv., ver. 12. The
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many different expressions therefore of the same things seem the only natural means of enforcing their truth, and are perfectly consistent with the method and language of the holy Spirit of God.

IT is now time to consider the text. We see the scene changed to a representation of the great church, or the Laodicean church in her glory. At this time only God's spiritual building is complete, and can be properly shewn from the beginning, and foundation: and as the full knowledge of those mysteries will be only then generally understood, every different view of the several periods of the church seems properly introduced with a vision of the times, in which only they will be open and conspicuous to the world.

CHAPTER iv., ver. 1. it is said, After these things, &c. This seems sufficiently to imply a shifting of the scene to another prospect,

prospect, and the commencement of another part of this great mystery.

A DOOR was opened in heaven, or a further light was given to the Evangelist of those things which he was told were to happen hereafter, agreeable to the events which were before shewn him in the former chapters.

THE throne, ver 2. represents the full power and dominion, which God in the last state of the church will take to himself, when he will reign over his people in undisturbed authority to the end of time. A sign of this peace and protection is here given by a rainbow, which gloriously encircled this throne of power. The propriety of this interpretation may be confirmed by considering the rainbow which God set in the clouds, as a sign to Noah after the the flood, that he would never more destroy the world with water; but that he should be ever mindful of his promise when he saw

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this emblem, and mercifully preserve and protect his people from any danger of the like nature. The Laodicean church being firmly established, this beautiful emblem properly expresses the stability of it's peace.

VERSE 4, &c. The four-and-twenty elders here mentioned, are the twelve patriarchs of the Jewish church, and the twelve apostles of Christ; or the natural and spiritual fathers of the church. In regard to the twelve apostles, Christ here seems to verify his promise to them, Mat. xix., v. 28, where he said to them, Verily I say unto you, that you, who have followed me in regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. These holy apostles therefore, with the twelve patriarchs, represent together what St. Paul calls the Israel of God, or the great universal church. As it is now complete, seven lamps of fire,
which

which are the seven Spirits of God, are seen burning round about the throne.

VERSE 6, &c. Also before this throne is a sea of glass, resembling Solomon's brazen sea, made for the service of the temple, and figuring the laver of baptism, which washes away all our filth, and sin.

AND in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, are four beasts, full of eyes. These beasts may be compared with the Cherubims seen by Ezekiel, and the Seraphims by Isaiah. They represent the four generations, or larger divisions of the church.

THE first, being like unto a lion, figures the two first churches; which in their freedom (as was observed before) resemble those of Christ. The second, which was like unto a calf, implies the two churches under the law; which ordained sacrifices, and other rites, typical of the great and ul-

timate sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ. These sacrifices consisted of bullocks as well as sheep and goats. The calf therefore is here put for bullocks, and other beasts proper for sacrifice. The third beast had the face of a man, and expresses the perfect reasonable service of christianity, as adopted by the two first christian churches. And the fourth was like a flying eagle, signifying the spreading empire and glory of the Laodicean, or great universal, church, so often mentioned.

THESE four-and-twenty elders, and four beasts, form one grand chorus, virtually comprehending the elect from the beginning to the end. For as the church is one body, so the members of every particular part equally partake of the full graces and benefits of religion.

THUS we see, ver. 8, &c. the pure and holy adoration, which these typical representatives of the faithful perform before the
 throne

of God, glowing with eternal ardour day and night. They yield all glory, honour, and power, to the only author of them, and teach us to join in one pure and harmonious worship, as we find it happily and divinely established in the sacred liturgy of our church.

CHAPTER V., ver. 1, &c. This book, sealed with seven seals, agreeable to our proposed plan, we will call the volume of the times. It gradually unfolds itself, and discovers the several millenaries, with their particular marks of description, necessary and introductory to the principal design, which is the placing in a further light the great and interesting events, which are now shortly about to happen. The honour of opening this book, and pointing out to the world the several remarkable æras, and circumstances, necessary to trace out the pilgrimage of the church, is particularly reserved for the holy Lamb of God. He only is worthy to take the book, and loose the seals

seals theteof, for he was slain, and hath redeemed us unto God, &c. ‘and (as St. Paul observes, A^ctis, chap. xvii., ver. 26.) hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.’ As he is the Word of God, we therefore by him receive all revelation, and spiritual knowledge: through him we know the Father, and by him are taught to do those things which are acceptable unto God, and which will secure to us after this life the fruition of his glorious presence.

ALL the powers visible and invisible, angels and mortals, do therefore justly join in one grand chorus, pouring forth their gratitude to the holy and merciful Lamb of God, for the unspeakable favours vouchsafed to his creatures. Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!

Chap. VI. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard one of the four beasts, saying, as with the voice of thunder, Come, and see. 2. And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he who sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

THESE seals for the most part import particular judgments brought upon each millenary. Though no judgment is mentioned in this first period, yet God shews himself ready armed, and arrayed in pomp and majesty. Having planted his church in the world, he lets mankind see that he is both able and willing to defend it. The holy flame of religion must never be extinguished: though it may be often smothered in it's embers, yet it will still be preserved

preserved, and at last break out in a full blaze of glory. God ever conquers and triumphs over his enemies, but will particularly subdue them when he overcomes the power of Antichrist, as will be seen in the 19th chapter, There he appears, as here represented, sitting on a white horse, and warring against his opposers.

Chap. VI. Ver. 3, &c.

Ver. 3. And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see. 4. And there came forth another horse, which was red; and to him who sat on him was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

and see. And I saw, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6. And I heard a voice from the midst of the four beasts, saying, 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.

THIS visionary appearance may express the famine in Egypt, and the adjacent countries, in the time of the patriarch Jacob. In this extremity the small seed-plot of the faithful must have perished, had not God in mercy raised up Joseph; who persuaded Pharaoh to lay up timely magazines of corn, sufficient to supply the ensuing dearth.

THE rider on the black horse is therefore seen with a pair of balances in his hand, as scrupulously weighing and distributing the precious stores, on which so many lives depended,

depended, particularly those of Jacob and his family.

Chap. VI. Ver. 7, &c.

Ver. 7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the fourth beast say, Come, and see. 8. And I saw, and behold, a pale horse; and his name who sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

THIS emblem expresses the ruin and destruction of the state and nation of the stony-hearted Jews, by the Romans; because these stubborn Israelites had not

depth of soil to receive the sacred seed of God's word, were repugnant to his will, and contrary to all men.

THEY are called the fourth part of the earth, as belonging to one of the four generations, or larger divisions of the church; that they may be properly distinguished from the rest of the world, overwhelmed in paganism and infidelity.

THE word, interpreted hell, signifies properly in the Greek the state of the dead, and in this place emphatically represents the ruin'd state of this stubborn people, in which they have remained for many ages, as it were buried and overwhelmed in the grave of destruction.

Chap. VI. Ver. 9, &c.

Ver. 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who 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, wilt thou not judge and avenge our blood of those who dwell on the earth! 11. And there were given unto each of them white robes: and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet a little time until the days of their fellow-servants, and brethren, who should be slain as they were, should be fulfilled.

IN this seal we see the many persecutions which the primitive christians endured under the Pagan and Arian emperors. They wandered about in sheepskins and goat-skins, of whom the world was not worthy.

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They suffered every torment and torture, which the malicious wit of man could devise; but they still preserved their integrity, being comforted with the secret consolations of God, whose strength is ever made perfect in weakness.

THESE faithful martyrs are cloathed with white raiment, and their sufferings honoured with the acceptance of God: but the time of their vengeance, or final triumph over their enemies, is deferred till their brethren, or successors in the truth, should suffer as they had done. This last persecution will be shewn in the following seal.

WHEN this seal is accomplished, then He, who goeth forth conquering and to conquer, will fully take vengeance of the enemies of his people; for to him only vengeance does properly belong. And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear

bear long with them? Luke, xviii., ver. 7. Thus, likewise, Esdras, chap. xv., ver. 8, &c. ‘Behold the innocent and just blood cries unto me, and the souls of the just cry continually. I will avenge them with fury, saith the Lord, and require from among them all the innocent blood.’

Chap. VI. Ver. 12, &c.

Ver. 12. And I saw when he opened the sixth seal, and behold there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sack-cloth of hair, and the moon as blood. 13. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14. And the heaven departed as a book when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were removed out of their places.

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Ver. 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and every servant, and every freeman, hid themselves in dens, and in the rocks of the mountains. 16. And said to the mountains, and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?

THE opening of this sixth seal, figures the last and greatest persecution of the christian church. This chastisement is reserved for the church of Philadelphia, or England, and will be that day of fiery trial, which will effectually purge out of her all things that offend. The fellow-servants and brethren of the first christians (as mentioned in the last seal) will now in their sufferings, fulfil the measure of afflictions appointed by God, and afterwards obtain that triumph and glory, of which all the prophets have sung.

THE enemies of God's church will likewise in this last effort fill up the measure of their iniquities, that they may be rendered fitter objects of the righteous judgments of God. These enemies will be afterwards discovered in the fifth trumpet, and particularly pointed out in the description of the beasts. What is mentioned therefore in this visionary scene (so gloomy and dreadful to our church and nation) regards chiefly the greatness of our sufferings, and the terrors of this ruinous calamity.

THE day and hour knoweth no man: but as it is now considerably above an hundred years since the last subversion of our church and government, (and the church has been constantly chastened and scourged) there is the greatest reason to believe that this great and dreadful calamity is very near at hand in a literal sense, and hasteth greatly. This seal may be compared with Matthew, chap. xxiv., and xxv.

THESE things (as I observed before) must be considered as visionary scenes, expressive of the different events mentioned in those mysteries.

THE great earthquake, here described, does intimate therefore the violent concussions, and revolutions, which these nations will in a little time be shaken with. The eclipses of the heavenly bodies, here portrayed, emblematically display the extinction of our state and polity, and the ruin and removal of all it's officers and governors. To shew the exceeding greatness of this evil, it is compared to a fig-tree, shaken with a mighty wind, so strong and violent as to cast to the ground even it's unripe fruit. For all traces of polity and government, both in church and state, will vanish like the volume of a book, rolled up, and forgotten; and in the greatness of our affliction, and despair, we shall call upon the mountains and rocks to cover us from the
 wrath

wrath of him who sitteth on the throne, and of the Lamb.

THESE evils will, however, be but of short duration, as we shall afterwards find: for Christ told his disciples, that these days should be shortened, otherwise no flesh could be saved.

Chap. VII.

Ver. 1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow upon the earth, nor upon the sea, nor on any tree. 2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom

it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3. Saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, until we seal the servants of our God in their foreheads.

Ver. 4. And I heard the number of those who were sealed, and there were sealed an hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5. 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 Asher were sealed twelve thousand, of the tribe of Naphtalim were sealed twelve thousand, of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand: 7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve 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
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were sealed twelve thousand, of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

Ver. 9. After these things I saw, and behold a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation, and tribe, and people, and tongue, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, cloathed in white robes, and palms in their hands, 10. And crying with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to Him who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb! 11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and the elders, and the four beasts, and fell down before the throne, upon their faces, and worshipped God, 12. Saying, Amen! Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength, unto our God, for ever, and ever, Amen!

Ver. 13. And one of the elders answered, and said unto me, Who are those who are cloathed in white robes, and whence
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come they? 14. And I said unto him, Lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they who come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15. For this cause they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he who sitteth upon the throne will dwell with them. 16. They shall not hunger any more, nor thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne will feed them, and will lead them to living fountains of water; and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

AFTER the church of Philadelphia, or England, has struggled through her last trial and temptation, and having a little strength has kept God's word, and has not denied his name; he also in return will perform his engagement, and preserve her in
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the hour of temptation, which will come upon all the world, to try those who dwell upon the earth.

THIS divine protection is emblematically expressed, ver. 1, &c., by four angels holding, or restraining, the four winds of the earth from giving loose to their fury till the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. These four winds of the earth are the Eastern powers, the Turks, and other Mahometan nations, whose terrible array will be particularly described in the sixth trumpet, and who are reserved by God as the instruments of his vengeance on the whole papal empire. In this dreadful scene of ruin and destruction we shall, as the Psalmist expresses it, abide under the shadow of the Almighty. We shall not be afraid for the terrors by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, A thousand shall fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right-hand, but the evil shall not come nigh us.

us. Only with our eyes we shall behold and see the reward of the wicked. See Pf. xci.

VERSE 4, &c. Here we have an accurate representation of the merciful selection of God's people from every tribe of the children of Israel; or the true church of Christ, to wit, the happy and distinguished Philadelphians. After this glorious deliverance, and exemption, from the general wreck of Europe, a fine description ensues, ver. 9, &c., of their most solemn and grateful acknowledgments of the divine favour, expressive of the highest and most seraphic adoration of the divine Being.

WE see, ver. 13, &c., that this select multitude are shewn to have come out of great tribulation, and must consequently be the Philadelphians, whose sufferings have been particularly mentioned in the sixth seal. Their happy situation after all their troubles is here elegantly and poetically described.

THE prophet Ifaiah, in like manner, describes the deliverance of God's people, when he begins to establish his kingdom in the world. In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou mayest say to the prisoners, go forth to them who are in darkness, shew yourselves! they shall feed in the ways and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger, nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them, for he who hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by springs of water shall he guide them. Ifai. 49. v. 8. &c. See Pf. 23.

THE prophet Esdras, making mention of those times, uses the very words of the text in some parts of the following quotation.

HIS words are as follows. 2. Esd. ch. 2. ver. 25., &c. My people, wait and rest, for your rest shall come, O good nurse, nourish thy children, strengthen their feet. None of the servants which I have given thee shall perish, for I will seek them from among thy number. Be not afraid; for when the day of affliction and anguish shall come, others shall weep and be sorrowful, but thou shalt rejoice and have abundance. The Gentiles shall envy thee, and shall be able to do nothing against thee, saith the Lord. My hands shall cover thee, so that thy children shall not see Hell, &c.

AGAIN, ver. 34., &c. And therefore I say unto you, O nations, who hear and understand, wait for your Shepherd, who will give you everlasting rest; for he is near at hand who shall come at the end of the world. Be ready for the reward of the kingdom, for the light eternal shall shine upon you for evermore. Flee the shadow
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of this world; receive the joy of your glory: I testify my Saviour openly, &c.

ARISE, and stand upright, and see the number of those who are marked (or sealed,) for the banquet of the Lord: who have withdrawn themselves from the shadow of the world, and have received the shining robes of the Lord. (O) Sion, receive thy number, and preserve thy cloathed in white, who have accomplished the law of the Lord. The number of thy children which thou didst desire is accomplished, &c.

I Esdras saw in mount Sion a great multitude which I could not number, who all together praised the Lord with songs. And in the midst of them was a young man, taller than the rest, who put crowns upon the heads of each of them, &c. Then I asked the angel, and said, Lord, who are those? he answered me, saying, these are

they who have put off the mortal robe, and received the immortal, and have confessed the name of God : now are they crowned, and receive palms. Again I said to the angel, who is that young man, who puts crowns upon them, and gives them palms in their hands ? and he answered me, saying, he is the son of God, whom they have confessed in this world.

Chap. VIII. Ver. 1.

Ver. 1. And when he opened the seventh seal there was silence in Heaven for the space of half an hour.

AFTER the opening of the seventh seal all the enemies of the church will be finally subdued. She will then enjoy
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joy the multitude of peace, and enter into her rest; for, as the author to the Hebrews observes, there remains a rest for the people of God. Heb. 4. ver. 9. This rest will at the end of this mystery be particularly mentioned in the description of the new Jerusalem:

1870
The following is a list of the
names of the persons who
were present at the
meeting of the
Board of Directors
of the
Company held on
the 1st day of
January 1870.

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Chap. VIII. Ver. 2, &c.

Ver. 2 And I saw seven angels, who stood before God, and there were given unto them seven trumpets. *3.* And another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censor: and there was given unto him much incense, that he should

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should offer it, with the prayers of all saints, before the throne. 4. And the smoke of the incense ascended, with the prayers of the saints, out of the angel's hand before the throne of God.

Ver. 5. And the angel took the censor, and filled it with the fire of the altar, and cast it on the earth: and there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and an earthquake. 6. And the seven angels, who had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

WE have, as above, another fine and solemn scene, introductory to a further historical detail of the several fortunes and events of the church of God from the beginning to the end of time.

THESE several different accounts, not only in their variety of descriptions throw necessary lights on the many transactions, displayed in these mystick pages, but likewise

wise serve in comparison to shew the truth, and great importance, of the key, or manner of opening these mysteries. Though they are all different in their manner, yet they are the same in their tendency, and unite together in a full justification of the ways of God to man.

IN this introductory scene we see an heavenly high priest, in full sacerdotal pomp, offering up directly before the throne of God the forcible penetrating prayers of his saints, who cry day and night to him in the several ages of the world. These holy prayers ascend like incense before him, and bring down on the world those judgments and punishments, which their presumptuous crimes and provocations justly merit, and which will be the burthen of the several trumpets hereafter mentioned.

TRUMPETS, being martial instruments, are here properly made use of, where God

assembles the several armies of his wrath, and numbers himself the hosts of the battle.

Ver. VII.

Ver. 7. And the first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire, mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

IT must be observed that these judgments have respect to the last fortunes of each church. These judgments, through God's indulgence to his creatures, are often prolonged, he being desirous that all men should come to repentance.

THE first trumpet therefore may shew the utter ruin and destruction of the first race of men by the flood; which blotted and expunged out of the world every green thing, or living substance, except Noah, and his family.

Ver. VIII., &c.

Ver. 8. And the second angel sounded, 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 the third part of the creatures, which were in the sea and had life, died, and the third part of the ships was destroyed.

AS the sea by the prophets is generally used to signify the wicked and infidels, and the earth the true church; so by this mountain being cast into the sea may be shewn the general apostacy of mankind in the second thousand year from the truth to idolatry. Of this we have a remarkable testimony in Joshua, ch. 24. v. 2. where God is mentioned to have called Abraham from his father's house, where they served other Gods. If this family, from which Abraham derived his birth, was tainted with this wicked and ridiculous infatuation, it may easily be imagined that all mankind were then wholly immersed in it. The world therefore may very justly be said at this time to be plunged, flaming with their sins, into the sea of idolatry, and infidelity.

As the church may be divided into three general distinctions, one before the law, one under the law, and one under the gospel; the third part of men is here made use of to signify the whole race of them,

as having once had some title to be ranked among God's people, though in this millenary they were deservedly abandoned to their own inventions.

Ver. X., &c.

Ver. 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell from Heaven a great star, burning as a lamp; and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and fountains of water. 11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many men died of the waters because they were made bitter.

IN the fore-going trumpet, we saw the world generally sunk and overwhelmed in idolatry, in this we find even the progeny of the faithful Abraham tainted with this most pernicious error.

THIS falling star may be compared with that other mentioned in the fifth trumpet, called the angel of the bottomless pit, and may signify how much the Jews at this time were poisoned and embittered with idolatrous infatuations. This fatal corruption continued more or less destroying every religious principle till the Babylonian captivity, but wholly ceased after the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus, and their return into their own country.

Chap. VIII. Ver. 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 that the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for the third part of it, and the night likewise.

HERE we see the utter destruction of the Jewish government both in church and state. In the sixth seal the heavenly bodies suffered and were destroyed, intimating the subversion of the Philadelphian polity; so in this fourth trumpet we see them darkened and eclipsed, emblematic-

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ally figuring the ruin of the Jewish nation. The princes and governours of a state may justly bear this comparifon, giving light and glory to the community by a regular diftribution of juftice, and a wholefome exertion of their power and authority.

Chap. VIII. Ver. 13.

AND I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midft of Heaven, faying with a loud voice, woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, who are yet to found!

THE enfuing woes are here denounced in a particular manner, to intimate that the paff were only mentioned to
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give order and regularity to this series of ecclesiastical events; but that the following are yet to happen, to demonstrate which these mystick pages were principally designed.

Chap. IX. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from Heaven to the earth, and there was given unto him the key of the bottomless pit. 2. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there came up smoke out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. 3. And out of the smoke came forth locusts upon the earth, and power was given unto them as the scor-

pions of the earth have power. 4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 5. And to them it was given that they should not slay them, but they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion when it striketh a man. 6. And in those days men shall seek after death, and shall not find it, and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

Ver. 7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle, and on their heads were as it were crowns of gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. 8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. 9. And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings

wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails : and their power was to hurt men five months. 11. And they had a king over them, who is the angel of the bottomless pit ; whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Ver. 12. One woe is past, and behold there come two woes more hereafter.

IN this fifth trumpet, as also in the fourth vial, may be seen some variation from the thread, and regular succession of things, before observed. But it must be considered that as these trumpets and vials for the most part shew God's judgment's on the world, and as judgment must begin at the house of God ; so in this fifth trumpet must necessarily be shewn the great persecution and affliction of the church of Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, or England. We must suffer first, and drink of the cup of God's wrath; but our enemies must immediately afterwards drink deep of the dregs of it, and reel and totter with madness and astonishment, tumbling headlong into utter ruin and destruction.

THE fallen star, mentioned ver. 1. is the Pope of Rome, or antichrist; who perverting and corrupting the truth and simplicity of our most holy religion, and darkening it with innumerable errors, may justly be said to have fallen from Heaven, and to be banished and excommunicated from the church of the faithful.

BEING unworthy to feed the sheep of God's pasture, the care of loathsome odious creatures is committed to him, which come thronging and issuing to him from the dark mansion of the bottomless pit. Being freed by him, the keeper of the key of this infernal prison, they darken the
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air with their sooty pineons, and are eager to gorge themselves with ruin and destruction. They are here called locusts, and designed as the instruments of God's wrath against this nation.

THIS beautiful country, fair as the garden of Eden, they will devour and spoil, and leave it behind them like a desolate wilderness. This day of trouble and affliction is literally at hand, and hasteth greatly. At this time all the terrors mentioned in the sixth seal will be accomplished upon us, who by our sins and wickedness are justly the objects of God's wrath. These days will however be shortned. Other particulars, regarding this calamity, will be carefully noted as we proceed in these observations.

WE find, ver. 4. that the power of these locusts is restrained, and there fury is directed to rage on those among us who have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

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This will be more particularly explained in the eleventh chapter. It will in reality be impossible for any particular set of men to escape in this general and promiscuous ruin; though no doubt all good men, even of every denomination, will greatly merit the protection of providence. But this passage must be taken in a kind of dramatick view, and imply God's merciful election and preservation of the established church of this nation, and the rejection and reprobation of all schismaticks and sectaries amongst us.

THIS is what in many parts of scripture is called the harvest; when the pure wheat, or the true professors of religion, will be carefully gathered, and laid up in God's barn, but the tares, or all false pretenders to it, will be gathered up in bundles to be burnt. For God will purge from his kingdom every thing that offends, and every plant, which he has not planted, must be rooted out.

Ver. 5. Shews the duration of this evil, which is here mentioned to be five months, and is called in other places three days and an half. By this we must understand three years and an half: but as we are told that these days shall be shortened, we may hope that it will only partake of three years and an half, and not endure the full extent of that time.

Ver. 6., &c. We see the great desperation and extremity men will be reduced to. The wickedness of our enemies will rather please itself with protracted tortures than speedily put an end to the wretched lives exposed to their cruelty. Such even as may escape to hiding places, through want and misery, and the most dreadful despondency, will, as in the sixth seal, call to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him who sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

BUT when we reflect on the behaviour of the Papists to our countrymen in Queen Mary's persecution, we may be inclined to give this passage another interpretation. By death in scripture may be understood a spiritual death, or apostacy from the truth. In this light we may consider the above passage as follows. By our desiring to die, and death shall flee from us, may be understood, that many men will be glad to conform to the superstition of our enemies for the sake of their lives, which nevertheless they will not be able to preserve. An instance of this may be seen in the usage of Archbishop Cranmer whom they burnt, notwithstanding his most unfortunate recantation.

THE remaining verses are chiefly employed in describing the strength and puissance of these formidable enemies, who will be more particularly mentioned afterwards. The name of their chief is Abaddon, or a destroyer.

Ver. 12. shews that this is the first of the three woes before denounced to the world: this being past, the other two woes will quickly follow.

Chap. IX. Ver. 13, &c.

Ver. 13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar before God, 14. saying to the sixth angel, who had the trumpet, loose the four angels bound on the great river Euphrates. 15. And the four angels were loosed, who were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, that they might slay the third part of men.

Ver. 16. And the number of the armies of the horsemen was twice ten thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. 17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and those who sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and jacinet, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths came forth fire, and smoke, and brimstone. 18. By these three were killed the third part of men, the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone, which came out of their mouths. 19. Their power was in their mouth: their tails were like unto serpents, having heads, and with them they do hurt.

Ver. 20. And the rest of the men, who were not slain with these plagues, 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 wood, which neither see, nor hear, nor walk. 21. And they repented
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ed not of their murthers, nor their force-
ries, nor their fornication, nor their
thefts.

GOD, having long delayed the venge-
ance of his saints, does now in this
sixth trumpet arm himself with all his ter-
rors, and pours them with horrible ruin and
combustion on the guilty head of anti-
christian Rome.

THE several nations of Europe, devot-
ed to her superstitious worship, will at this
time be totally overwhelmed with destruc-
tion, like Sodom and Gomorrha, and ne-
ver more have any established polity and
government, as will afterwards in these
mysterics be manifestly seen.

THE church of Rome has always de-
ceived herself with the flattering opinion
of being the only true Christian church:
and finding that God in the scriptures has
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every where promised universal dominion to the church, she has greedily snatch'd at the tempting bait, making herself sure of the justice of her pretensions to this pre-eminence. But having in reality no title to this empire, and using her own unlawful means to arrive at it, she justly perishes in her ambitious enterprizes, and renders herself an object of God's anger and resentment.

THE instruments of God's vengeance on this devoted people are the Turks, and eastern nations. They are in the text said to be bound on the river Euphrates, as that is the most remarkable river in their empire, rolling itself as it were in the center of it.

THESE people are the four winds of the earth, mentioned, ch. 7. v. 1. to be held back and restrained from mischief till the servants of God should be sealed in their foreheads. But in this sixth trumpet they are
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are loosed from their bands, and indulged with the full liberty of glutting themselves with ruin and destruction.

WE may here admire the wisdom, and foreknowledge of God, who has purposely reserved this great and formidable people to check and controul the papal nations, and their confederates, in their wicked designs against us, and placed those instruments of revenge, ready at hand to be made use of the moment their irruption is necessary.

THEY are said, ver. 15. to be prepared for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men: that is, a certain limited time is appointed for them to execute the commission intrusted to them, and to wreak their fury on the third part of men or those who may be comprised in the third division of the church, in the manner before observed.

Ver. 15., &c. Shew the terrible array of this formidable people, and how perfectly they are qualified for the business of destruction. They will at this time be inspired with irresistible fury, and courage, and the strongest cities and fortresses will not resist them a moment. All human devices, and machinations, will fail before a people armed with the fury and indignation of God. The consequences must therefore be dreadful and decisive.

WE see, *ver.* 20. that notwithstanding the severity of this judgment, the papists will still be blinded and infatuated with their errors. Their case will be miserable and deplorable; and those, who deny entrance into Heaven to all religions and sects besides their own, will be the only people excluded from the grace and mercy of God. For after the accomplishment of their destruction, not only all other christian nations and sects will willingly yield obedience to the Philadelphian, or English,

lish church, but all other nations in the world will gladly conform themselves to her doctrine and service.

WHEN therefore the papists see the English church (which they have always persecuted and hated,) covered with all those glories, their anguish and miseries will be greatly increased, and they will (as it is elsewhere mentioned in these mysteries,) gnaw their tongues for pain. The weakness of human nature will then be most evidently seen, when not only the most palpable errors, which are utterly void of any foundation in scripture, nay even directly contrary to it, will be still embraced and continued; but their utter ruin and destruction, and the prosperity of all the world besides, will not bring them to repentance, nor incline them to give glory to the God of Heaven. His judgments upon them will therefore appear just; but mortal man must pity his fellow creatures

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perishing

perishing in obstinacy, and exposed to the vengeance of an indignant God.

Chap. X. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And I saw another mighty angel descend from Heaven, cloathed 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 a little book open; and set his right foot upon the sea, and his left upon the earth: 3. And he cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth, and when he cried seven thunders uttered their voices. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices I was about to write: and I heard a voice out of Heaven, saying unto me, seal those things

things which the seven thunders have uttered, and write them not.

Ver. 5. And the angel, whom I saw standing upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to Heaven, 6. and swore by Him who liveth for ever and ever, who hath created the Heaven, and all things therein, and the earth, and all that is therein, and the sea, and all things in it, that there should be time no longer. 7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, even the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

Ver. 8. And I heard a voice from Heaven again speaking with me, saying, go, and take the little book, that is open in the hand of the angel, who standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth. 9. And I went to the angel, and said unto him,

give me the book. And he said unto me, take, and eat it : and it will make thy belly bitter, but shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10. And I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and eat it : and it was in my mouth sweet as honey, and when I had eaten it my belly was made bitter. 11. And he said unto me, thou must prophecy again before many peoples; and nations, and tongues, and kings.

THE reader will in this, and the following chapter, be diverted from the regular series of events by digressive representations of particular circumstances, necessary to illustrate the principal purpose of those mysteries. These chapters (with some others descriptive in like manner of several matters tending to the same end,) afford an agreeable variety to the subject; and being all of them easily explained as
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so many different parts of this great building, the truth of this explanation will thereby become sufficiently evident. Whether therefore we regard the harmony and connexion of the several parts with each other, or the general tendency of the whole, which will be found to be of the utmost importance to mankind, we must equally acknowledge the efficacy of the key, here made use of to open these hidden stores. The simplicity of it is likewise an argument of its truth. The wards of this mystick lock easily yield to its power, which have resisted the infinite efforts and attempts of ages. But we must now consider the text.

THIS mighty angel, so glorious in his appearance, holds in his hand a little book open. This little book may signify the mysteries now before us, which are held out open to the evangelist, and ready for him to read, or transcribe. By setting his right foot on the sea, and his left on the earth, may

may be implied the tendency of this volume ; which is to unite the Pagan with the Christian world, and join them together in one uniform system of religion. For in the scriptures by the sea are generally understood the heathen nations, and by the earth the true church.

It is said, ver. 3., &c. When he cried seven thunders uttered their voices ; at hearing of which St. John was about to write. This however he was forbid to do. From this passage we may gather that the voices of those thunders imported the discovery of these secrets, which was by no means to be then communicated to the world, but on the contrary locked up and sealed till Gods appointed time.

Ver. 5., &c. The angel is described solemnly protesting that there should be time no longer ; but when the seventh angel should sound the mystery of God should be finished. By this may be understood

stood that at the founding of the seventh trumpet the spiritual labours of God in his church should be finished, and no more time should be employed in her formation; but being now made perfect she should enter into rest and glory, as all the holy prophets in their several times have declared.

Ver. 8., &c. afford a representation of the formal delivery of Gods prophetick commission to the holy evangelist, whereby he was empowered to promulgate Gods mysteries to the world. By eating of the book is implied a thorough digestion of its contents, and a clear and accurate arrangement of its several parts.

EZEKIEL likewise was commanded to eat the prophetick volume, which had the same effect with the book here mentioned, making his belly bitter. Ezek. 2. and 3. This bitterness may imply the many judgments contained in this volume, and denounced
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against the wicked in their several ages, which must have given pain and concern to St. John in the reflection of them.

Ver. 11. The evangelist is told that he must prophecy again before many nations, and tongues, and kings. This he will effectually do when these mysteries are fully explained, and all the kings and potentates of the earth are ready to bring their glory and honour into Gods church. Their greatness and importance will then be duly honoured and revered.

Chap. XI, Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And there was given unto me a reed like unto a rod, saying, arise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar

altar, and those who worship therein.

2. But the court that is without the temple leave out, and measure it not, because it is given to the gentiles : and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty two months.

Ver. 3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, cloathed in sackcloth. 4. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks, standing before the God of the earth. 5. And if any would hurt them, fire proceedeth from their mouth, and devoureth their enemies ; and if any would hurt them in this manner must they be killed. 6. These have power to shut up Heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy : and they have power upon the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with every plague as often as they will.

Ver. 7. And when they shall finish their testimony, the beast, which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war with them, and overcome them, and kill them. 8. And their carcases shall lie in the street of the great city, which is spiritually called Sodom, and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified. 9. And the peoples, and tribes, and tongues, and nations, shall see their carcases three days and an half, and shall not suffer their carcases to be put into graves. 10. And those who dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and shall make merry, and send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented those who dwell upon the earth.

Ver. 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 those who saw them. 12. And they heard a loud voice

voice out of Heaven, saying unto them, come up hither. And they ascended into Heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them. 13. And in the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and there were slain of men in the earthquake seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of Heaven.

THIS chapter contains many things great and interesting, which merit particular regard. The principal tendency of this mystery is to discover the true christian church, to which all other christian churches (except the Roman,) must conform, and to which all other nations in the world must yield obedience. This will be in a great measure effected by the confederacy of the protestant with the papal powers against us in their invasion, mentioned in the fifth trumpet.

BUT that the true church may be still more accurately discovered, a particular part of the Revelation is here set apart, which represents in a clear and lively manner her happy selection at that time from the many and various professors of christianity amongst us. It is not enough that she should be distinguished from foreign, she must also be distinguished from all domestick rivals. Her title to pre-eminency will then be fixed and determined, and she will be sufficiently conspicuous to engage the homage and subjection of the world.

To illustrate what is mentioned above we find the evangelist commanded, ver. 1., &c. to measure the temple of God, and the altar, (or the established church of England,) and mark out this holy inclosure for protection, and deliverance, in the time of ruin and desolation mentioned in the fifth trumpet: but the court without the temple (or the many different dissenters from our church,) must be left out, and given up a prey to the fury of the
Gentiles,

Gentiles, or the protestant and papal invaders of those kingdoms, called in the fifth trumpet locusts. This measurement must however be here only used as an emblematick distinction of the wheat from the tares in this time of harvest; for otherwise, as I observed before, in reality all persons of every denomination will be equally exposed to the fury of those times.

IT may not be amiss to refer to this last persecution of the church the fiery trial mentioned by St. Paul; for then only the truth of religion will be fully known and established.

OTHER foundation (says he, 1 Cor. 3. v. 11, &c.) can no man lay besides that which is already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any one will build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble: every mans work shall be manifest, for the day shall declare it, for it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall

shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any mans work shall remain, which he hath built, he shall have a reward. If any mans work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. 'In this manner will all errors and corrupt doctrines be totally destroyed and effaced, and the Philadelphian, or English. church will come of this furnace of affliction like gold, pure and without loss of weight, and more refined and glittering.

THE court without the temple, above-mentioned, is to be given up to the Gentiles for the space of forty two months; which time comprehends exactly three years and an half. This will be the utmost duration of this great affliction; but for the sake of the Elect we may hope that these days will be shortened.'

Ver. 3., &c. It is said, and I will give power unto my two witnesses, &c. which
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are called also two olive-trees, and two candlesticks.

IN order the better to comprehend the meaning of these appellations we must take notice of the golden candlestick shewn to the prophet Zachariah, Ch. 4. This candlestick is for the most part the same with that made by Moses, and expressive of the seven divisions of the church; but beside it were seen two olive-trees, one on each side.

THESE two olive trees represent the two larger divisions of the christian church, to wit, the two first christian churches, and the great universal church. As therefore every branch of the sacred candlestick equally comprehends the whole, and the seven branches are all one solid mass of pure gold, for true religion is one and the same in all ages, and only differs in its several stages of perfection; we must apply the meaning of the two witnesses, &c.

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above-mentioned, to the pure sincere christians, who amidst the deluge of superstitious errors, which overflowed and darkened the papal church, did not defile their garments, as is mentioned in the church of Sardis, with these impurities, but secretly lamented them, cloathed as it were in sackcloth. And though they openly protested against them at the reformation, yet they may still be said to prophecy in sackcloth till this great decisive fiery trial, so often mentioned; for then only will their merits be finally acknowledged and determined, and then only will be laid the foundation of their future glory.

THE time of this humiliation is said in the text to be a thousand, two hundred, and threescore days. These days we may call so many years, and date the commencement of them from the first general admission of errors and corruption in the church of Sardis, or Rome.

THESE holy witnesses, or true professors of the faith in the several christian churches, are here shewn to have always been armed with the secret protection of providence. The rage of their enemies cannot transcend the bounds appointed by God ; but at every effort to exceed them they are constantly driven back with shame, and confusion. The prayers of those holy professors of true religion are here said to be strong and efficacious ; in the strength of which they safely pass through the vale of tears, and afflictions.

THOUGH the first appearance of those witnesses must take date in the sixth century, when the christian church was sufficiently darkened and overwhelmed with corruption and superstition to banish from it the glory of the divine presence ; yet it may not be amiss to observe the notice which protestants have taken of them in the eleventh century, when the christian world was totally buried in ignorance and

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stupidity,

stupidity, and afforded a plentiful harvest for the cunning and insidious spiritual directors of those gloomy times.

THE learned Mosheim, in his ecclesiastical history, takes notice, ' that from the time of Gregory the 7th in several countries of Europe, particularly in Italy and France, there very evidently appeared the vestiges of those people who are commonly called by Protestants the witnesses of the truth, that is, good and pious men, who bewailed the vices and diseases of publick religion, and the whole ecclesiastical body, opposed the immoderate tyranny, as well of the Roman pontiffs as of the ordinary bishops, and endeavoured both privately and openly to effect some reformation of the church. However rude upon the whole and ignorant of true divinity this age might have been, yet what few fragments of christian doctrine were thought proper to be divulged to the multitude were sufficient to inform, even the illiterate

illiterate and rustick that it was not pure and genuine, and that Christ required any thing from his disciples rather than what the priests of those times professed either by their words, lives, or manners; that pontiffs and bishops egregiously abused the power they were intrusted with, in fine that the divine favour and salvation were not to be obtained by ceremonies, liberality to churches and priests, or building and endowing of monasteries, but only in the purity and holiness of the mind and disposition.'

To return to the text. ver. 7th, &c, it is said, and when they shall finish their testimony, the beast, which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war with them and overcome them, &c. that is, when the term of one thousand two hundred and threescore days, or years, is expired, then will commence the last affliction, and fiery trial, allotted for the faithful. At this time will they be given up

an easy conquest to the devouring locusts, mentioned in the fifth trumpet, and their carcases will be given to be trodden under foot in the streets of the great city, spiritually called Babylon, and Sodom. Here we find that the scriptures give disguised names and titles to the several nations which are the objects of their notice, that they may be the better concealed from the knowledge of the world till the time when it may be proper that they should be fully known and discovered. Thus we see the papal church is here called Babylon, as she is likewise in other parts of this Revelation, as well as in other places of the prophetick scriptures.

OUR enemies will now imagine that they have laid a lasting foundation to their long desired spiritual empire, and will congratulate one another upon so happy an event. Their joy will be so much the greater as these witnesses gave them trouble and uneasiness, and checked and interrupted

rupted their progress in spiritual tyranny. This England has been allowed to have done, having always been accounted the great bulwark of the protestant faith.

BUT we find, ver. 11, &c. that after three days and an half, or three years and an half, the time allotted for our sufferings, these dead carcases were re-animated, and ascended, in the sight of their enemies, with glory and triumph into Heaven. The meaning of which is, we shall then be happily and miraculously delivered from the power and tyranny of our enemies, in the manner which will be hereafter taken notice of as we proceed in these mysteries.

Ver. 13., it is said, and in the same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, &c. This earthquake, is the trouble and affliction of our church and nation, so often mentioned; in which the tenth part of the city (or the
court.

court without the temple, mentioned in the beginning of this chapter,) will fall, or be devoted to destruction. A certain number of them (said in the text to be seven thousand,) will be slain in this calamity; but the remnant will hapily repent of their errors and obstinacy, return to the bosom of our most holy and venerable church, and give glory to the God of Heaven.

SUCH are the remarkable particulars of the great revolution, which, according to those mysteries, will shortly happen in those kingdoms. It will be the greatest evil the church has ever endured, but it will also be the last: and though we shall sow in tears, yet we shall shortly afterwards reap with joy, and bear our sheaves with us.

Chap. XI. Ver. 14, &c.

Ver. 14. The second woe is past, and behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

AFTER the above necessary circumstances, relating to our church and nation, are particularly related, as above, the second woe, (or Gods judgments and dreadful vengeance on the papal nations, described in the sixth trumpet,) is pronounced to be past. This will speedily be succeeded by a third woe, comprised in the following trumpet.

Chap. XI. Ver. 15., &c.

Ver. 15. And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in Heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever

Ver. 16. And the four and twenty elders, who were sitting before God upon their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 17. Let us give thanks unto thee, Lord God Almighty ! who art, who wast, and who art to come ! because thou hast taken thy great power, and hast reigned. 18. And the nations
were

were angry, and thy wrath was come, and the time of the dead that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward to thy servants the prophets, and to thy saints, and to those who fear thy name, both small and great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth!

Ver.-19. And the temple of God was opened in Heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and a great hail.

THE seventh trumpet is employed in subduing all the kingdoms of infidelity to that of Christ: and he will now reign for ever and ever.

THE strong rugged powers of the Mahometan empire shall stretch forth their
 Y hands

hands unto him, and desire to be softened and civilised by his gentle laws and institutions. All the mighty Pagan nations, with their numerous dependents, and every wild and savage state, will feel the pervading spirit of God, which will instil into their minds a strong and irresistible desire of submitting to his laws. For at that time (as the Psalmist expresses it,) his dominion shall be from the one sea to the other, and from the flood unto the world's end. They who dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before him: his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tharsis, and of the Isles, shall give presents; the kings of Arabia, and Saba, shall bring gifts. All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall do him service. Ps. 72. v. 8., &c.

Ver. 16., &c. What is here mentioned may be compared with the other preceding descriptions of Christ's kingdom; for here the four and twenty elders are likewise
said

said to prostrate themselves before the throne of God, and do him homage, as before.

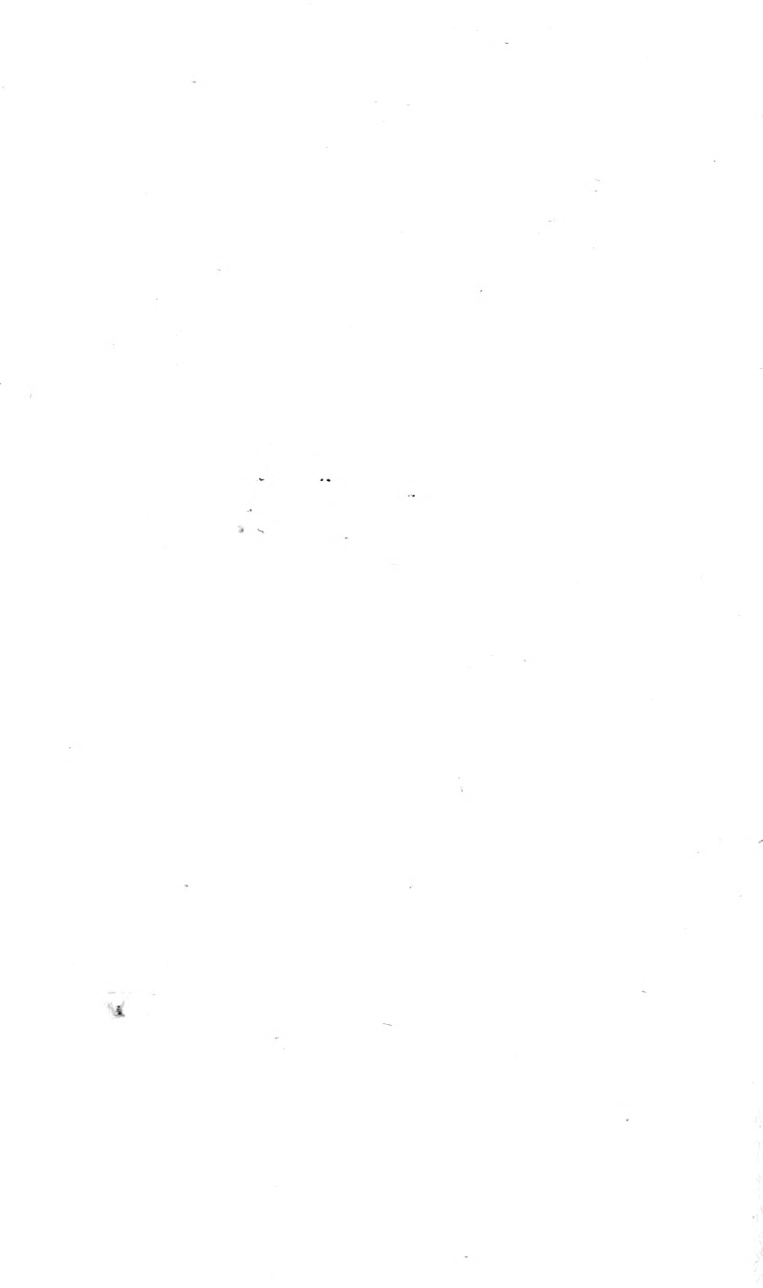
THEY observe in his presence that the nations were angry ; but that at the same time his anger was kindled against them, nor did it cease but in their destruction. It is impossible for the combined powers of nature to resist his will ; for the world and nature are his, and even the resistance and stubbornness of his enemies serve the more to accomplish his purposes. He will now fully reward his servants the prophets, and his saints, having destroyed those who destroyed the earth, and broke the burning arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the war. The Heathen made much ado, and the kingdoms were moved ; but God shewed his voice, and the earth melted away, Pl. 46. v. 6.

Ver. 19. We see that the temple of God now opened in Heaven, and the ark of the testament is seen in his temple. His religion, and dominion, are now fully established, and guarded and defended with the terrors of his Majesty: for there were lightnings, and thunders, and voices, and an earthquake, and a great hail.

PART

PART THE FOURTH.

A KEY



KEY to the MYSTERY, &c.

PART THE FOURTH.

Chap. XII. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And there appeared a great sign in Heaven, a woman cloathed with the sun; and the moon was under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2. And she, being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

Ver.

Ver. 3. And there appeared another sign in Heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and upon his heads seven crowns. 4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman, who was ready to be delivered, that he might devour her child as soon as it should be born. 5. And she brought forth a man child, who should rule all nations with a rod of iron; and the child was taken up to God, and to his throne. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared for her of God, that they should nourish her there a thousand two hundred and three score days.

Ver. 7. And there was war in heaven: Michael, and his angels, fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and his angels. 8. And they prevailed not, neither was place found for them any
more

more in Heaven. 9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, who deceiveth all the world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast forth with him.

Ver. 10. And I heard a loud voice saying in Heaven, now is come salvation, and power, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before God day and night!
 11. And they have overcome him through the blood of the Lamb, and through the word of their testimony: and they loved not their life unto death.
 12. Wherefore rejoice, O Heavens, and you who dwell therein! woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath a short time.

Ver. 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast out to the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child. 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she should flee into the wilderness, where they should nourish her for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15. And the serpent cast forth after the woman out of his mouth water as a river, that he might cause her to be carried away with the flood. 16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood, which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, such as keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

IN this fourth part of the mystery of the Revelation, the reader will find a change and relaxation from the continual repetition of ecclesiastical events in their progressive series, and will find them contrasted with a strong and formidable picture of antichrist.

THE description in the text is deduced from that part of him called the iron kingdom, or the old Roman empire, the most potent of any preceding it, and carried on in the next chapter to his last stage of existence, when he will receive his deadly wound, and no more trouble and interrupt the peace of the world.

THIS chapter is remarkably dark, and its secret meanings seem hard to be extracted from its clouded materials; but it may however be necessary to attempt an explanation of it, as the following chapter evidently appears to be, a continuation of the antichristian history, and may easily be ex-

plained into many particular circumstances regarding the last fortunes and strugglings of the church: and though the exposition will not be so particular as might be desired, it may however be sufficient to carry on the thread of the narration.

THE woman, cloathed with the sun, &c. may represent the church, and the great red dragon, the iron kingdom, or pagan Rome. This terrible monster stood ready to devour christianity as soon as it should be born; but the providence of God sheltered it from his malice, and preserved it from destruction.

THIS dragon is said to have seven heads, and ten horns; for though he composes but a part of the image of antichrist, yet he nevertheless equally partakes of the whole. In the same manner we have seen the church represented as one solid body, composed of seven different members, or periods.

Ver. 6. The woman is said to flee into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared for her, in which she is to be nourished a thousand two hundred and threescore days. This passage may be compared with that in the eleventh chapter, where it is said the witnesses should prophecy in sackcloth the same number of days.

THIS number of days we must consider as so many years, and (as was there observed,) date the commencement of them from the first general corruption of the church. From that time the true faith seemed as it were hid and secreted from the eye of the world, and was only professed and preserved by a more enlightened and conscientious few, who might reverence in secret what they were not allowed openly to practice; as we find recorded concerning the revolted tribes of Israel, that God had reserved for himself seven thousand persons who had not bowed their knees to Baal. And though (as was observed)

served) the church of England has for a long time afforded reception and protection to the persecuted faith; yet as it cannot still be reckoned free from the danger of its enemies, and has not yet received its crown and reward, it may therefore till its period of final deliverance be looked upon as under a state of pilgrimage.

Ver. 7, &c. The fate of antichrist seems to be determined by God, and the scale of his power to be overpoised by the glory, and good fortune, of the church. This is a general emblematick picture of the final decision of his fate.

THE knowledge of his doom exasperates him the more to persecute and vex those whom he is not permitted to destroy. Accordingly, *ver. 13., &c.* may represent the many persecutions the church has suffered from the envy and malice of the Devil, who has stirred up every member of antichrist to afflict and distress her in the
time

time of her pilgrimage, a thousand two hundred and threescore years. We may likewise see that God preserved her from every attempt of her enemies, and was always a present help in the time of her troubles.

Ver. 17. The dragon is represented as enraged at his many disappointments, and the confusion of all his enterprizes against the woman, or the church: he is therefore determined to collect all his strength, and to make one more furious effort against the remnant of her seed.

THIS will be the business of the next chapter, which is a circumstantial description of the several enemies who will shortly invade these kingdoms, with some notable particulars which will mark that fatal time.

Ver. 18, and Chap. 13.

Ver. 18. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, chap. 13. ver. 1. And I saw coming up out of the sea a beast, having seven heads, and ten horns; and upon his horns seven crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2. And the beast which I saw 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 Dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority.

Ver. 3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death: and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered

wondered after the beast. 4. And they 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. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty two months. 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and those who dwell in Heaven. 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given unto him over every tribe, and tongue, and nation. 8. And all who dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world. 9. If any one hath an ear let him hear. 10. He who leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity, if any killeth with the sword, he shall be killed

with the sword: here is the patience, and the faith of the faints.

Ver. 11. And I saw another beast ascend out of the earth; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12. And he exercised the power of the first beast in his presence, and caused the earth, and those who dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13. And he doth great wonders, so that he maketh fire to come down from Heaven to the earth before men. 14. And he deceiveth those who dwell upon the earth, through the wonders which were given him to make in the presence of the beast, commanding those who dwell upon the earth to make an image to the beast, which had a wound with a sword, and did live. 15. And power was given unto him to give life to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause, that those
who

who should not worship the image of the beast should be slain. 16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right-hand, or on their foreheads. 17. And that no man should buy, or sell, but those who had the mark, or the name, of the beast, or the number of his name. 18. Here is wisdom. Let him who 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.

AT the end of the preceding chapter we found the dragon wroth with the woman, or the church, and preparing to make war with the remnant of her seed. In this chapter he puts in execution his threatnings, but makes use of a deputy to give them their full accomplishment.

THIS deputy is the beast, which St. John sees, ver. 1. coming up out of the

sea. He has likewise seven heads, and ten horns, to shew he is a member of the great body of antichrist. These heads and horns will be particularly described afterwards in the 17th chapter.

THIS formidable beast is the papal church, and is called in the fifth trumpet the angel of the bottomless pit, and Apollyon, or a destroyer. This name is emphatically given to that fatal church, which hath already, not only here, but in every part of the world where its power has extended, sufficiently manifested its persecuting and destroying principles. These pernicious qualities, so contrary to the gentle doctrines of the gospel of Christ, have justly broken this devoted church from the olive-tree of the faith, and caused her to be ingrafted into the body of antichrist.

THIS beast, ver. 2. is said to be like unto a leopard, or to the Grecian monarchy, preceding the Roman; his feet to be like those

those of a bear, or the Persian monarchy, and his mouth like a lion, or the Babylonian empire. These successive empires, with some others preceding them, which will be taken notice of in the 17th chapter, and that of the Roman church, and her ten confederate kingdoms, make up the perfect image of antichrist. To this beast the dragon delegates his full power and authority, which he will effectually make use of in causing the temporary ruin and destruction of these kingdoms.

ST. JOHN saw, ver. 3., &c. one of his heads as it were wounded to death. We must understand every thing mentioned in the scriptures as particularly relating to the church of God. In this light the deadly wound, here said to be given to the beast, will appear to have been inflicted by our reformation, and the secession of these kingdoms from the empire of the church of Rome.

At this time, in respect to these kingdoms, it received a deadly wound: but this wound will seem to be fully healed, and the power of the Roman church re-established in a greater extent than ever, when the beast ascends out of the bottomless pit, with his army of locusts, when the carcases of the saints shall be trodden under foot, and exposed in the streets of the great city, spiritually called Sodom, that is Rome, or under the power of the papal tyranny; in a word, when England is fully conquered and subdued by the power of antichrist.

ALL the world will then wonder after the beast, as his empire will appear fully settled and established; and in the eyes of his votaries no power whatsoever will be accounted able to make war with him. This triumph and exaltation, however, we find will be limited to forty two months, making exactly three years and a half,
and

and called ch. 11. v. 9. three days and an half.

BUT ver. 10. we are comforted with this observation, that he who leads into captivity shall go into captivity, and he who killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword. This is agreeable to the righteous judgments of God, who will not suffer wickedness to prosper with impunity, but in his own due time will avenge his church, and cause her in her turn to triumph over her enemies.

Ver. 11, &c. The evangelist sees another beast come up out of the earth, having two horns like a lamb, and speaking like a dragon. This is the person who will be the particular instrument of bringing to perfection the purposes, and counsels, of the church of Rome. By his means the ten horns, or foreign protestant powers, will be confederated against us with those of Rome, and jointly with them, effect the
entire

entire conquest of this nation, this beast giving full force and power to the confederacy.

HE will exercise the power of the preceding beast, and cause all men to worship him: that is, he will propagate and establish the doctrines and service of the church of Rome, and utterly subdue those kingdoms to her tyranny. It is even said that he will cause fire to come down from Heaven, and have the power of doing miracles; that the faithful in those days may be tried to the utmost, and that their virtue and integrity may the better appear to merit that exceeding glory and triumph, which will afterwards be given them over all their enemies.

THOSE feats he is said to do in the presence of the beast, that is, under the inspection and authority of the court of Rome. To this beast he will make an image, or promulgate laws and statutes, which

which will effectually establish the papal authority amongst us. By those ordinances it will be made capital to refuse a full and blind obedience to the doctrines, and superstitions, of the church of Rome; and by those means will the abomination of desolation, mentioned by Daniel, be fully set up.

It may not be improper to subjoin to the above St. Paul's description of anti-christ. 2. Theff. ch. 2. v. 3, &c. ' Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, &c. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who letteth will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked man be revealed, whom the

Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, &c. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lye,' &c.

AGAIN, 1. Tim. ch. 4. v. 1, &c. Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils: speaking lyes in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving,' &c.

AND whereas the members of the true church are said, ch. 7. to be sealed in their foreheads, and the number of the sealed

sealed is solemnly mentioned, with a fine description of their glory and triumph: that the church of Rome may in every respect assume to herself the badges of the Elect, she likewise, when arrived at this pinnacle of glory, will cause all in subjection to her to receive a mark in their foreheads, or right-hand. But as she has hitherto been unfortunate in all her religious innovations, so in this last sanction of her authority, when she imagines she has strengthened it with the finishing mark of religious perfection, to her utter confusion and astonishment it will be found not to be the seal of the living God, but the wicked mark of the antichristian beast.

WITHOUT this mark in those fatal times, ver. 17. no man will be able to buy or sell, or enjoy any rights or privileges, but be utterly excluded from every species of liberty, thrust into confinement, exposed to every trouble and difficulty, and trodden under foot like mire in the streets.

IN respect to the number of the beast, which is said, ver. 18., to be 666, it is remarkable that the letters of the word *latinos*, (which may imply the latin church,) considered as numerals, and those of the word *Romijth*, (which may express the city of Rome,) as also the word *papeifkos*, (which may in some measure agree with *papa*, or what we call in english *pope*, implying the head of the *Romish* church,) exactly compose the above number. Whether this is really what is meant in this place, or not, must be left to the discovery of time.

Resh - 200	L - 30	P - 80
Vau - 6	a - 1	a - 1
Mem - 40	t - 300	p - 80
Jod - 10	e - 5	e - 5
Jod - 10	i - 10	i - 10
Tau - 400	n - 50	s - 200
—	o - 70	k - 20
	s - 200	o - 70
		s - 200
666	<u>666</u>	<u>666</u>

IN order the better to illustrate the foregoing interpretation of those beasts, it may be necessary to compare them with those mentioned by Daniel ; which will likewise be found to constitute the body of anti-christ, and in their latter state to correspond with those mentioned above. By those means the scriptures will be found to have only one great and important end, which is the evident discovery of the true church ; that all nations without hesitation may readily flow unto her. That we may the better judge of what is mentioned by Daniel, it may be proper to give the text, and interpretation, in the manner made use of in expounding this mystery of the Revelation.

DANIEL, Chap. 7. Ver. 1., &c.

Ver. 1. In the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and the visions of his head upon his bed: then he wrote the dream, and told the sum of the matter.

Ver. 2. Daniel spake, and said. I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the Heavens strove upon the great sea. 3. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. 4. The first was like a lion, and had eagles wings: and I beheld till the wings thereof were pluckt, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made

to

to stand upon its feet like a man, and a man's heart was given unto it. 5. And behold, another beast, a second, like unto a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth; and they said thus unto it, arise, devour much flesh. 6. After this I beheld, and lo, another like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads, and dominion was given unto it.

Ver. 7. After this I saw in the night vision, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly, and it had great iron teeth; it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts which were before it, and it had ten horns.

Ver. 8. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them a little horn,
horn,

horn, before whom there were three of the first horns pluckt up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things.

Ver. 9. I beheld till the thrones were set up, and the ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. 10. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

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

to the burning flame. 12. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season, and time.

Ver. 13. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of Heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, 14. And there were given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

THE four beasts, above-mentioned in the text, are the four great successive monarchies, commencing from that of Babylon.

THE first beast, being like a lion, represents the Babylonian monarchy, described

in the image shewn to Nebuchadnezzar, as the head of gold. By having his eagles wings pluckt off, and being set upon his feet as a man, may be intimated the particular fortunes of that prince ; who for his arrogance and presumption was driven for a while from his kingdom, till he was humbled to a due submission to the king of kings.

THE second beast, being like a bear, figures the Persian monarchy. By his standing on one side, with three ribs in his mouth, is signified the collective strength of that empire, which comprehended the dominions of the Medes, Persians, and Babylonians.

THE third beast, being like unto a leopard, is the Grecian empire. This beast is said to have four wings of an eagle, and four heads ; because after the death of Alexander, his kingdom became divided among his principal officers. To those three kingdoms

doms the beast, mentioned above in the Revelation, as coming out of the sea, and succeeding the dragon, is compared, as partaking of their political body, and giving himself perfection to it.

THE fourth beast, so strong and terrible, is the old heathen Roman empire, called above in the Revelation the dragon, and the apostate power of christian Rome; to which, as we have seen, he delegates his power and authority.

THE description of the ten horns, to avoid repetition, it may be proper to refer to the 17th chapter of the Revelation, and mention only the little horn, which makes so remarkable a figure in this vision.

THIS little horn is the third beast, mentioned above in the Revelation, ch. 13. v. 13, &c. and is there explained to be the instrument of accomplishing the papal counsels and contrivances against this na-

tion. The three horns, pluckt up by the roots, are the three flourishing kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland; which, being subdued by him, will constitute three of the ten horns, being then wholly under his power, and subjection. He will then speak as a dragon, or, as is mentioned in the text, have a mouth speaking great things. He will then give vigour to the papal authority, and fix it, in the opinion of his votaries, upon a lasting foundation.

THIS little horn is mentioned again, Dan. 8. v. 9., &c. as springing from the remains of the above-mentioned monarchies.

HE is there said to be great, and to prosper against the stars of Heaven, and to cast them to the ground; or finally to subdue and conquer our church and nation. He is likewise said to take away the daily sacrifice, or utterly to abolish the service and exercise of religion amongst us. An appointed time is there said to be given him,

him, which is called above in the Revelation forty two months, or three years and an half. In the conclusion of this further account of the little horn, were it possible to settle a certain state of chronology, the time of this great affliction might be accurately determined. It is there said that one faint spake to another faint, and enquired how long should continue the vision of the daily sacrifice, and of the abomination that maketh desolate. That is, how long should it be till the last struggles, trials, and afflictions, of the church should be ended? And it was answered, from the evening to the morning, two thousand three hundred (days, or years,) then should the sanctuary be cleansed. Now if we could compute this number of years from the exact time that Daniel saw this vision to our deliverance from the power of antichrist, and deduct from it three years and an half, the duration of our affliction, and the beasts reign, the time of the commencement of this great persecution would be perfectly

perfectly ascertained. But we are told that the day and hour of it are concealed even from the angels in Heaven, and must consequently be beyond the reach of all human sagacity to determine.

IN this eighth chapter of Daniel, in the interpretation of the vision, the power of antichrist, or the Pope of Rome, is remarkably described.

IT is there said, ver. 23, &c. And at the end of their kingdom, when the transgressors shall be sealed, or determined; that is, when the mystery of iniquity shall be finished, or the reign and power of antichrist shall be completed: there shall arise a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences.

THIS subtle potentate is the Pope of Rome, whose power is great, by his spiritual authority reigning over the consciences of his dependents. He is said to understand

derstand dark sentences, as being an ecclesiastick, pretending to be versed in the mysteries of religion.

AND in the text it is said, and he shall be mighty in his strength, yet not in his strength: that is, he shall rule rather by a spiritual than a temporal authority, without any political or legal power reigning at will over the consciences of his dependents, or as the poet expresses it,

Rome, qui sans soldats porte en tous lieux la guerre.

HENRIADE.

IT is further said, by his understanding he shall cause deceit to prosper. This is agreeable to what is above-mentioned in the Revelation, where the last mentioned beast is said to do wonders, and to deceive all those who dwell upon the earth; for what he does is in the presence, or under the authority of the first beast, or the Pope of Rome,

IN the conclusion, he is said to be destroyed without any effort; that is by the immediate power and vengeance of God.

It may be now time to return to ch. 7. where, ver. 9., &c. Daniel saw the thrones set up, and the ancient of days sitting, and deciding the fate of the world. This may be compared with Rev. ch. 20. v. 11, &c. It signifies the final doom of antichrist, and a just determination of the fate of every opposer of the truth. The true church will at that time be distinguished with the divine approbation, and received into her rest, and glory. For, ver. 13, &c. Daniel saw the son of man, or Christ, coming with the clouds of Heaven, and receiving from the ancient of days dominion, glory, and a kingdom: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Chap. XIV. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And I saw, and behold, a lamb standing upon mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty four thousand, having the name of his father written on their foreheads.

Ver. 2. And I heard a voice from Heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. 3. And they sung a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man was able to learn the song, except the hundred and forty four thousand, who were redeemed from the earth. 4. These are
D d they

they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins : these are they who follow the lamb wheresoever he goeth ; these were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God, and the lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without fault before the throne of God.

AFTER the above description of the reign and tyranny of antichrist, agreeable to the method constantly made use of in this mystery, we have another fine and interesting view of the faithful, triumphing over all their enemies, and receiving the full and complete reward of all their sufferings and afflictions. Hitherto they have possessed their souls in patience, and in all their trials and distresses have indeed had a hope full of immortality, but no expectation of temporal honours, and glory : but at this time their patience and integrity will be honoured with every recompence that the world is able to furnish.

THESE

THESE distinguished people are the same who are mentioned in ch. 7. being an hundred and forty four thousand, and having the name of their father written in their foreheads, or sealed with the seal of the living God.

THEY here, as in ch. 7. prostrate themselves before the throne of God, and express their gratitude in continual adorations, serving him day and night in his temple. They sing new songs of praise, known only to themselves, and agreeable to those of David, which chiefly celebrate the victory of Christ in his church. They are said not to be defiled with women; that is, to possess their souls pure, and unpoluted with the sinful corruptions of the world, and thereby able to follow the lamb wheresoever he goeth, or remain continually in the doctrines and practice of our most holy religion. They will imitate the zeal and fervency of the primitive christians, but will not like them be afflicted and

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discouraged;

discouraged ; on the contrary they will be rewarded with the acquisition of all worldly glory and honour. They will then sing with the prophet, we have a strong city : salvation hath God appointed for walls, and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in. Ifai. 26. v. 1., &c.

Ver. 6, &c.

Ver. 6. And I saw another angel flying in the midst of Heaven. having the everlasting gospel, to preach to those who dwell upon the earth, and to every tribe, and nation, 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
who

who made Heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.

THIS is a scene expressive of the general publication of those mysteries to the world; whereby the ways of God will be fully justified, and mankind be admitted to the knowledge of the springs and motives of his judgments.

THIS vision may likewise indicate the preaching of the gospel of Christ to every kingdom and nation in the world; for the publication of it at that time will be rapid, and universal, and the minds of men will be secretly impelled by the pervading spirit of God to a ready and sincere reception of it.

Ver. 8, &c.

AND another angel followed, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city; for she hath made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

THIS fall of Babylon, or antichristian Rome, will be remembered at large in the 18th chapter, and there recorded in elegiack strains, that her presumptuous wickedness may remain a warning and terror to mankind to the end of time: for she hath made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Ver. 9., &c.

Ver. 9. And a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, if any man worships the beast, and his image, and receives his mark upon his forehead, or on his hand, 10. Even he shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his wrath ; and he shall be tormented with fire, and brimstone, before the holy angels, and before the lamb. 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever ; and they have no rest day or night who worship the beast and his image, and if any man receiveth the mark of his name. 12. Here is the patience

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tience of the faints, here are those who keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

WE here see the dreadful danger of shewing the least compliance to the commands of the antichristian beast : for this is the last trial of the church, and God will require of us at this time the utmost exertion of our faith, and fortitude.

WE shall then greatly need the fervent zeal of the apostle, who cries out in his epistle to the Romans, ch. 8. ver. 35, &c. ' What shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, &c. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.'

THIS exceeding zeal and fortitude will, I trust, in that fatal hour be given to our prayers, and safely guide us through that vale of tears, and persecution. Here will be clearly seen the patience of the saints, and their merits will be tried to the utmost. But he is strong who will protect them, and his strength will be made perfect in their weakness.

Ver. 13.

AND I heard a voice out of Heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord from this time: even so, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.

THIS verse is with great propriety made use of in the burial service of our church. They are equally happy who die at any time in the true profession of the faith; but from this time they will be more remarkably so, as it will be more fully manifested, and ascertained. The strong foundations of the church will then be eminently seen, and she will rest firm and unshaken upon them for ever.

Ver. 14, &c.

Ver. 14. And I saw, and behold, a white cloud: and upon the cloud one sat, like unto the son of man, having upon his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15. And another angel came

came forth out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him who sat on the cloud, thrust in thy sickle, and reap, for the hour of reaping is come, for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16. And he who sat upon the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

THIS visionary scene is an emblem of the time of trial, and affliction of the church, so often mentioned, when God will purge out of his kingdom all things that offend.

THIS is what in other parts of scripture is called the harvest: for the tares, or heretical pretenders to christianity, being gathered in bundles to be burnt, the pure wheat, or God's elect people, will be carefully treasured in his barn. Then will the just shine like the sun in the kingdom of their father. See Mat. 13.

Ver. 17., &c.

Ver. 17. And another angel came out of the temple of God in Heaven, having likewise himself a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came from the altar, having power over fire, and he cried with a loud voice to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel thrusted his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God. 20. And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came from the wine-press, even to the horses

horses bridles, for the space of a thousand and two hundred furlongs.

AS in the preceding scene we have seen the pure wheat carefully separated from the tares, and treasured up in God's barn; so in this we see the gathering of the vine of the earth, or the selection of the subjects of the antichristian beast, (that unhappy unrepentant race, mentioned in the sixth trumpet,) not for use and preservation, but for ruin and destruction.

THIS figure is used in other parts of scripture, where God shews his judgments on the wicked. In the last verse of the 76th Psalm it is said, according to a literal translation of the text, ' He shall gather as grapes the spirits of princes, and is wonderful among the kings of the earth.'

THE prophet Isaiah, speaking of Edom, or the papal church, uses the very similitude mentioned above in the text.

' WHO is this who cometh from Edom,
 with dyed garments from Bozrah; who is
 glorious in his apparel, travelling in the
 greatness of his strength? I who speak in
 righteousness, and am mighty to save.
 Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and
 thy garments like him who treadeth in the
 wine-press? I have trodden the wine-press
 alone, and of the people there was none
 with me: for I will tread them in my an-
 ger, and trample them in my fury; and
 their blood shall be sprinkled upon my
 garments, and I will stain all my raiment.
 For the day of vengeance is in my heart,
 and the year of my redeemed is come.
 And I looked, and there was none to help,
 and I wondered that there was none to
 uphold: therefore my own arm brought
 salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld
 me. And I will tread down the people in
 my anger, and make them drunk in my
 fury, and I will bring down their strength
 to the earth.' ch. 63. v. 1., &c.

PART THE FIFTH.

A KEY



A

KEY to the MYSTERY, &c.

P A R T T H E F I F T H.

Chap. XV. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1 And I saw another sign in Heaven, great and wonderful, seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire, and those who had overcome

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the beast, and his image, and his mark, and the number of his name, standing upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Ver. 3. And they sung the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the lamb, saying, great and wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, O king of saints!

4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name, for thou only art holy? for all nations shall come, and worship before thee, for thy judgments have been made manifest.

Ver. 5. And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in Heaven was opened. 6.

And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, cloathed in linen pure and shining, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7. And one of the four beasts

gave

gave to the seven angels seven golden vials, full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever. 8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power: and no man was able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

Chap. XVI. Ver. 1.

AND I heard a loud voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, go, and power out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

AFTER the historical series of events, respecting the church of God, has been interrupted with a particular detail of the complicated power of antichrist, and a relation of many interesting anecdotes, which in their completion will greatly affect the faithful in

those times ; we return again for the last time to a regular narration of the several fortunes of the church, and see the several judgments of God diversified in another different representation of them.

THOUGH it cannot but appear, from the manner of this explanation, that the whole mystery of the Revelation has only regard to one great and particular purpose ; yet we find so great a variety in the many different lights in which this grand scheme of God's providence is viewed, that we may contemplate it with pleasure in its various descriptions, and continually admire the greatness and justness of the divine dispensations.

AGREEABLE to the introduction to the fore-going relations, we see the pouring out of the vials ushered in with a view of the triumphant church, celebrating the great author of her deliverance, and enjoying the multitude of peace : for at this
time

time only, as has been observed, the ways of God to man can be regularly examined, and justified. At this enlightened period the prophetick scriptures will be clearly understood, and what has hitherto shined as it were in a dark place will then with its spreading beams sufficiently illuminate the world: the propriety therefore of those introductory scenes must be sufficiently evident.

THE sea of glass has been mentioned before in the fourth chapter, and is here made use of in the same manner as a proper emblem to express the purity and holiness of the church, which after her triumph over the beast, and his image, will be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. She will then pour forth her gratitude in songs of praise to her great deliverer, agreeable to that of Moses when the Israelites were so wonderfully delivered from the tyranny of the Egyptians. Our deliverance out of spiritual Egypt, or the power
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of antichrist will be equally great, and the song of Moses will at that time be equally applicable in expressing the joy of our hearts.

WE see, ver. 5., &c. a fine representation of the seven great ministers of God's judgments. Their cloathing is grand and splendid, and expressive of that purity, which is requisite in those who dispense the vengeance of God to a sinful world. To those holy angels are given the seven fatal vials by one of the four beasts; and the temple of God is filled with the brightness of his glory, expressive of the greatness and terror of his judgments. From this temple the seven angels receive their commission, the execution of which will be seen in the following verses.

Ver. II.

AND the first angel went, and poured out his vial upon the earth, and there was a noisome and evil fore upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and those who worshipped his image.

THIS passage is greatly disguised, and may seem hard to be reconciled with the system here proposed: but a little reflection, and attention to the nature and design of those mysteries, will render it easy to conceive according to the plan made use of for their explanation.

SIN may generally be defined a transgression of the law of God: and this law may be understood either as that which is written in the scriptures, or that which is naturally written in the hearts of men, who (as St. Paul observes,) have within themselves a secret instinctive knowledge of the will of God. Whoever therefore presumptuously sins against God may be said to worship the beast and his image, or be cut off from the body of the church, and ingrafted into that of antichrist. We may likewise observe that in whatever age or country the true church is situated, whatever immediately disturbs and opposes it must be considered as the power of antichrist, which, from the natural wickedness of mankind, follows the church as a shadow does the substance.

THIS vial therefore, being poured out upon the earth, and affecting with grievous plagues those who worshipped the
beast,

beast, and his image, may be interpreted in the following manner.

As all men, who shall receive the mark of the antichristian beast, will be wiped and expunged out of God's book, so was the first race of men condemned by God, and totally blotted and expunged out of the world, except Noah, and his family: The noisome and grievous plague, here mentioned, may be compared with that of the fifth vial, where the subjects of the beast are said to gnaw their tongues for pain, representing their total condemnation, and destruction.

It must likewise be observed that these vials, being called the last plagues, must be considered as the great and final punishments of mankind in each period.

Ver. III.

AND the second angel poured out his vial into the sea, and it became blood, as of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.

THIS second vial may be compared with the second trumptet, where a great mountain is said to be cast into the sea, and that the third part of the sea became blood. It was there interpreted to mean the general apostacy of mankind in the second thousand year from true religion to idolatry: Heathen and idolatrous nations being generally in the scriptures called seas.

Ver. IV., &c.

Ver. 4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of water, and they became blood. *5.* And I heard the angel of the waters say, righteous, O Lord, art thou, who art, and who wast, and shall 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 another out of the altar, saying, even so, O Lord God Almighty, true and just are thy judgments!

THIS third vial, being poured out upon the rivers and fountains of water, implies the final ruin and destruction of the Jewish nation by the Romans.

IN the third trumpet they are called the rivers and fountains of water, and being there said to be impregnated with wormwood, they continued poisoned with this wicked bitterness till they justly merited a total ruin of their polity, and a general dispersion among all the nations of the world, in which they continue to this day.

GOD's righteous judgments on them are here applauded, because they continually resisted his providence, shed the blood of saints and prophets, not sparing even the prince of life, and were contrary to all men.

Ver. VIII., &c.

Ver. 8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun, and it was given him to scorch men with fire. 9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, who had power over these plagues, and repented not to give him glory.

THIS plague must be the portion of the church of England, which will suffer as is mentioned in the sixth seal. But after the time appointed for her affliction is accomplished she will stand up on her feet, to the astonishment of her enemies, and burn up and consume them through

through him who hath power over these plagues.

Ver. X., &c.

Ver. 10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the throne of the beast, and his kingdom was darkened, and and they gnawed their tongues for pain.
11. And they blasphemed the God of Heaven by reason of their pains, and of their sores, and repented not of their works.

THE fifth vial may be compared with the sixth trumpet, as it shews the utter ruin and subversion of the power of antichrist,

antichrist, or the whole papal empire. God is fully justified in his judgments towards them, as their infatuation will still remain with them, and they will not repent of their works, or those heretical doctrines and superstitions, which cut them off from the olive-tree of the faith.

THIS judgment on the enemies of the church is agreeable to what is mentioned by the prophet Zachariah, ch. 14: v. 12. 'And this shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the nations which war against Jerusalem; to consume their flesh while they are standing on their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall rot away in their mouths.'

Ver. XII.

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.

THIS great river Euphrates signifies the Mahometan empire, which must not escape with impunity, but in its turn drink of the cup of God's wrath.

AFTER they have satiated their fury on the papal kingdoms, they must yield themselves up to the judgments and chastisements of God, and submit themselves, and
their

their empire to his laws. The impious superstitions of Mahometanism must vanish before the brightness of the gospel as darkness and obscurity before the splendour of the sun. ' For in that day the Lord with his sore, and great, and mighty sword, will punish Leviathan, the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent, and he shall slay the Dragon that is in the sea. *Isai. 27. v. 1.*

WHEN this formidable power is subdued then will the way of the kings of the east be prepared; for all obstructions to the conversion to christianity of all the eastern or other nations will then be fully removed, and they will be ready to bring their glory and honour into Gods church.

Ver. XIII., &c.

Ver. 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, doing miracles, going forth to the kings of the earth, and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

Ver. 15. Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he who watcheth and keepeth his garments, that he do not walk naked, and they see his shame.

Ver.

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

THESE unclean spirits like frogs are the shattered remains of Rome, who after a certain period, called, ch. 20. ver. 7. a thousand years, will be loosed from their confinement, and permitted to make one more feeble and impotent attempt upon the church. A further account of their preparations will be seen in the above-mentioned chapter.

THE faithful however are warned at that time to keep themselves pure and holy, and worthy of the protection of God: for we see in the account of the Laodicean church that too many of them will grow lukewarm, and through their negligence and indifference occasion the dissolution of the world.

THESE wicked and unclean leaders, with their deceived multitude, called in the 20th chapter Gog, and Magog, will be gathered to a place, called Armageddon. This word may be interpreted the mountain of the gospel, or the church. Here they will stand ready prepared to make their last and fugitive effort against the faithful; but it will be in effect only to receive their just doom and punishment, which will be mentioned in the next and last vial.

Ver. XVII., &c.

Ver. 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came forth a loud voice from the temple of Heaven,

Heaven, and the throne, saying, it is done. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings : and there was a great earthquake, such as never happened since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

Ver. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell : and Babylon the great came into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21. And there descended out of Heaven upon men a great hail, every stone of the weight of a talent : and men blasphemed God by reason of the plague of hail, for the plague was exceeding great.

WHEN

WHEN the seventh vial is poured out God will accomplish all wordly vengeance, and finish it on the unhappy and obstinate remains of antichrist.

THEY will be hardened in their stubbornness and presumption to the utmost limits of their continuance : for in the text it is said, it is done ; that is, all temporal punishments are ended, for no longer space will be given to mankind to provoke God with their wickedness, and impiety.

IN all probability in this last effort of the remains of antichrist they will assemble an innumerable multitude, and encourage themselves with the hopes of once more triumphing over the people of God. But God himself will fight against them, and arm all the powers of nature for their destruction, which will be great and terrible, and beyond all former examples.

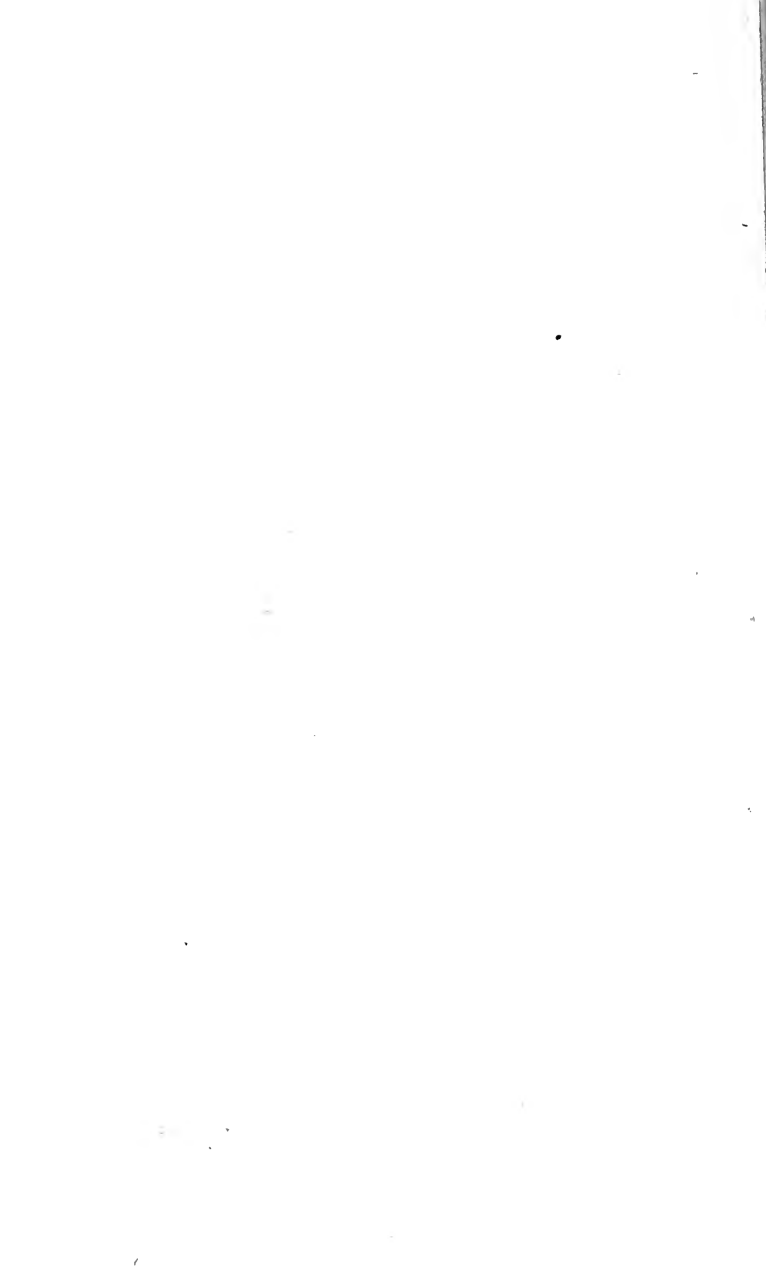
IN the 20th chapter, where mention is again made of those people we see them miserably consigned to eternal punishment. It is said, and the Devil, who deceived them, was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast, and the false prophet, are, and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

PART

PART THE SIXTH.

I i

A KEY



A

KEY to the MYSTERY, &c.

PART THE SIXTH.

Chap. XVII. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And one of the seven angels, who had the seven vials, came, and talked with me, saying unto me, come, and I will shew thee the judgment of the great whore, who 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.

Ver. 3. And he carried me into the wilderness in the spirit, and I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns. 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations, and filthiness of her fornication. 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY: BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH! 6. And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Ver. 7. And the angel said unto me, wherefore dost thou wonder? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her. 8. The beast which thou sawest was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and those who dwell upon the earth shall wonder (whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they shall see the beast, which was, and is not, and yet is.

Ver. 9. Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, whereon the woman sitteth. 10. They are also seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he shall continue a short space. 11. And the beast, which was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Ver. 12. And the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings, who have not received any kingdom as yet, but shall have power as kings one hour with the beast. 13. These have one mind, and they shall give their power and authority to the beast. 14. They shall make war with the lamb; and the lamb shall overcome them, for he is Lord of Lords, and king of kings, and those who are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. 15. And he saith unto me, the waters, that thou sawest, on which the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

Ver. 16. And the ten horns, which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to have one mind, and to give their kingdom to the
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the beast, until the words of God should be finished.

Ver. 18. And the woman, whom thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kingdoms of the earth.

HAVING had many different views of antichrist, we are presented in this sixth part with the last scene of this formidable power.

IN this description the papal church is so forcibly and accurately painted that it is impossible to mistake for whom this picture is designed : and it is touched indeed in so powerful a manner by the great author of nature, that every figure of it (and especially the principal one,) seems to pass in review before the mind's eye as visibly as it was actually seen in vision by the evangelist.

It is however a melancholy consideration to think that so many great nations should so obstinately persist in errors, manifestly contrary to the scriptures, and even to common sense; for it is obvious that they can find nothing to justify those absurdities but custom, length of time, and the infallibility of the church: But these pretended arguments are so far from supporting those infatuations that they manifestly condemn them, as such pretences are the natural parents of all corruption, and error.

THIS description is called the judgment of the great whore, for in it all her wickednesses and abominations are enumerated; which have so greatly incensed the eternal judge of nature, as to provoke him to destroy her with his final condemnation.

THIS great whore is the church of Rome. She is described as sitting upon many waters, or ruling spiritually over the
many

lamb, and to speak like a dragon, and is called in Daniel the little horn.

THE gorgeous array of this harlot represents the pomp and splendour of the papal church, with which she dazzles her votaries, and lulls them in her embraces. She holds in her hand a golden cup, full of abominations; or intoxicates her subjects with her deluding doctrines, deceiving, and being deceived. This cup is equally fatal with that of Circe: whoever drinks of it fancies himself an angel, though he is in reality deprived of all title to humanity, and may be ranked with the beasts which perish.

UPON her forehead is a name written, MYSTERY: BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. In this name is summed up the account of her impieties, with which she provokes the majesty of God.

God. She is called mystery in respect to her religious profession, and the cultivation of those mystick ceremonies and superstitions, with which her devotees are amused and infatuated. Scaliger, in a note on this place, observes that M. de Montmorency, being at Rome when people spoke very freely of the holy father, and the holy see, was told by a person of credit, that the word *mysterium* had actually been wrought on the frontal of the pontifical tiara; but that Pope Julius had lately taken care to have it removed, and his own name wrought with diamonds, placed in its stead. He likewise judiciously observes, that only the word *mysterium* must be supposed to be written on the whores forehead, Babylon the great, &c. being rather to be understood as St. John's interpretation of it.

I met with the above note of (I suppose) Joseph Scaliger, along with a few others

on different parts of the New Testament, preserved by the editors of a Greek Testament, with the apocrypha in Greek annex'd, printed and published, 'Coloniæ Allobrogum,' which Ortelius places about five leagues to the westward of Geneva.

SHE is described, ver 6. as drunk with the blood of the saints, &c. by this description are signified the many cruel persecutions she has carried on against all who have opposed her, and those seas of blood she has shed in defence of her errors. In short her whole appearance was so terrible and shocking to the calm and placid mind of the evangelist, that he beheld her with the utmost astonishment and confusion.

ST. JOHN has, ver. 7, &c. a particular interpretation of the vision before him, especially of the beast which beareth the great whore, as he is the means of introducing her authority amongst us.

THIS beast was, and is not : that is, he formerly had authority, but that authority having been superseded, it will continue suspended till the time of our invasion. He will however receive it again when he ascends out of the bottomless pit at the head of his army of locusts, as in the fifth trumpet ; and then all the world will wonder when they see the beast which was, and is not, and yet is,

WE see, ver. 9., &c. the several successive monarchies of antichrist. They are here mentioned as being seven in number ; five of which were fallen at the time St. John lived, one was at that time in power, but the other was not then established,

THE order of them must therefore be reckoned as follows. We may call the first the Egyptian kingdom ; for under this power the Jewish church was oppressed in her infancy : and, as we observed before, antichrist must be supposed to have a con-
temporary

temporary subsistence with the true church, following it as the shadow follows the substance.

THE second monarchy must be the Assyrian. It seems sufficiently evident that it preceded the Babylonian from the prophet Isaiah, who mentions a congratulatory embassy sent to Hezekiah from the king of Babylon a little while after the retreat of Sennacherib out of the Jewish dominions. It appears likewise from Herodotus that not long after that time the Medes shook off the Assyrian yoke, when that empire had continued about 520 years, and became powerful enough afterwards to subdue it, except the territories of Babylon. The kingdom of Babylon, as is well known, presently became great and flourishing, and continued increasing in glory and dominion till it was finally subdued by Cyrus.

THE third monarchy is the Babylonian, the fourth the Persian, and the fifth the Grecian.

THESE at the time St. John saw this vision were all extinguished, but the sixth, being the Roman empire, was flourishing and subsisting in his days.

THE seventh, being the papal empire, was not then established, but should succeed in its time; and for a short space, or during the beasts reign, as mentioned in the 13th chapter, should more eminently tyrannize and flourish than any of the preceding powers.

BUT the beast that was, and is not, (before explained,) may in some measure be accounted the eighth; though being only as a delegated power of the papal monarchy, and the instrument of introducing its authority amongst us, he can only be properly

perly considered as one of the seven, or a member, and substitute, of the seventh.

THE ten horns, mentioned ver. 12, &c. come next under consideration. They are said to be ten kings, who have received no power as yet, but shall receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

THESE ten kings are the protestant nations in Europe, which, through the means and interest of the beast before mentioned, will be confederated with those of the papal church, and jointly with them invade those flourishing kingdoms in the manner before mentioned in those mysteries. They will yield themselves implicitly to the pleasure of the beast, and heartily at first espouse and promote his cause. They will be hardened to make war with the lamb: but the lamb will overcome them for he is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

THESE ten horns are the clayey part of the feet and toes of the image of antichrist, shewn in a dream to Nebuchadnezzar. As it is impossible for iron to be mixed or incorporated with clay, so will it be equally impossible for those protestant nations, in respect to religious principles, to be thoroughly united with those of the papal church. When therefore those protestant auxiliaries shall perceive that the end of their invasion will only be to establish the papal authority in those kingdoms, they will then change their opinions, and hate the whore. Being greater in numbers and strength, they will suddenly fall upon her, and make her desolate and naked, devour her flesh, and burn her with fire.

FOR, ver. 17. it is said, God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to have one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast; until the words of God should be finished. The meaning is, God Almighty, in this last effort of our enemies,

will incline those protestant kingdoms to join their power with the beast; that when his reign shall be determined they may be ready at hand to destroy him, and thereby release us out of perhaps the greatest dangers and difficulties the church has ever before experienced.

WE may therefore cry out with St. Paul, ‘ 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! Rom. 11. ver. 33. They likewise may say who live to see those fatal times, if the Lord himself had not been on our side when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick when they were so wrathfully displeas'd at us, &c. The deep waters of the proud had gone even over our soul, &c. Our soul is escap'd even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken, and we are deliver'd! Ps. 124.

THIS great deliverance will be like what Jehosaphat experienced when his invaders flew one another; and like that in the time of Gideon, when God struck the Midianites with his terrors, and utterly dispersed and destroyed them.

It may not be improper to subjoin some extracts from the 83d Psalm, which will be found to relate to those times.

HOLD not thy tongue, O God, keep not still silence, &c. For lo, thine enemies make a murmuring, and they who hate thee have lifted up their heads. They have imagined craftily against thy people, and have taken counsel against thy secret ones. They have said, come, and let us root them out, that they may be no more a people, and that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance, For they have cast their heads together with one consent, and are confederate against thee. The tabernacles of the Edomites, and the
L 1 2 Ishmaelites;

Ishmaelites; of Moab, and the Hagarenes. Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre. Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the children of Lot. (These several states thus enumerated imply the ten horns, or protestant powers, confederated with the beast, as before mentioned.)

‘ BUT do thou unto them as unto the Midianites, &c. Make them and their princes, like Oreb, and Zeb; yea make all their princes like Zeba, and Salmana, &c. And they shall know that thou, whose name is Jehovah, art only the most high over all the earth!’

Chap. XVIII. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And after these things I saw an angel descend out of Heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory.

Ver. 2. And he cried in strength, with a loud voice, saying, 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. Because she hath made all nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication; and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the
the

the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Ver. 4. And I heard another voice out of Heaven, saying, come out of her, my people, that ye partake not 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. Reward her even as she hath rewarded you, and give unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double. 7. 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. Therefore in one day her plagues shall come upon her, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord who judgeth her.

Ver. 9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning: 10. standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, alafs, alafs, that great city Babylon! that mighty city! for in one hour is her judgment come!

Ver. 11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and lament for her, because no man buyeth of their merchandise any more. 12. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all odorous wood, and all manner of vessels of ivory, and every vessel of precious wood, and brass, and iron, and marble: 13. and cinnamon, and odours, and ointment, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and cattle, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and
souls

fouls of men. 14. 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 not find them at all any more.

15. The merchants of these things, who were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, through fear of her torment, weeping and lamenting, 16. and saying, alas, alas, that great city, which was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, for in one hour so great riches are come to nought !

Ver. 17. 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 saw the smoke of her burning, saying, what is like to this great city ! 19. And they cast dust upon their heads, and cried, weeping and lamenting, and saying, alas, alas, that great city, by which all who had
ships

ships in the sea were made rich, by reason of her costliness, for in one hour is she made desolate!

Ver. 20. Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy apostles, and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her!

Ver. 21. And a strong angel took up a great mill-stone, and cast it into the sea, saying, thus with violence shall Babylon, that great city, be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all! 22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and 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 sound of a mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee. 23. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bride-groom, and of the bride, shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the

great men of the earth, for by thy force-
ries were all nations deceived. 24. And in
her was found the blood of prophets,
and of saints, and of all who were slain
upon the earth.

THIS chapter records the great and fi-
nal destruction of antichrist in a fine
and solemn elegy, called in the prophetick
scriptures a lamentation. It is added to
give a fulness and consistency to this grand
system of the Revelation; which is form-
ed of a number of parts, all of them tend-
ing to build up and perfect its greatness
and magnificence.

THE meaning of those figurative allusi-
ons may be easily obvious to the reader,
and they will therefore need no other com-
ment than a comparison of them with those
other parts of scriptures, which record
in like manner the ruin of Babylon, or
antichrist.

WE see in the 11th chapter of this Revelation that he is disguised under different fictitious names and is spiritually called Sodom, and Egypt: he may likewise be traced under that of Edom, under which name we shall make free to detect him, as well as his more common one of Babylon.

ISAIAH in the thirteenth chapter particularly mentions the destruction of this power, and concludes it with the most lively description of the permanency of his ruin and desolation.

‘ AND Babel, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty and pride of the Chaldeans, shall be as the destruction of God in Sodom, and Gomorrha. It shall not be inhabited for ever, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tents there, neither shall the shepherds make their folds there. But Zim shall lodge there, and

their houses shall be full of Ohim: ost-riches shall dwell there, and the Satyrs shall dance there. And Ijim shall cry in their palaces, and dragons in their pleasant palaces: and the time thereof is ready to come, and the days thereof shall not be prolonged.'

.EXTRACTS from ch. 14. How hath the oppressor ceased, and the gold-thirsty Babel rested, &c. The whole world is at rest, and is quiet: they sing for joy, &c. Hell beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming, &c. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the found of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! and cut down to the ground who didst cast lots upon the nations, &c. For I will rise up against them, saith the Lord, and will cut off from Babel the name, and the remnant, &c. And will
will

will make it a possession to the hedge-hog, and pools of water, &c.

FROM *Isaiah*, chap. 34. For my sword shall be drunken in the Heavens, behold, it shall come down upon Edom, even upon the people of my curse, to judgment, &c. For it is the day of the Lords vengeance, and the year of recompence, for the judgment of Zion. And the rivers thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall be burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night, nor day: the smoke thereof shall go up evermore, it shall be desolate from generation to generation, none shall pass through it for ever. But the pelican, and the hedge-hog, shall possess it, and the great owl, and the raven, shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of vanity, and the stones of emptiness. The nobles thereof shall call to the kingdom, and there shall be none; and all the princes thereof shall be as nothing.

thing. And it shall bring forth thorns in the palaces thereof, &c. There shall meet also Zim, and Ijim, and the satyre shall cry to his fellow, &c.

FROM *Isaiah*, chap. 47. Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter Babel! sit on the ground, there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans! for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate, &c. Sit still, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans! for thou shalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted my inheritance, and given them into thy hand: thou didst shew them no mercy, &c. Therefore now hear, thou who art given to pleasures, and dwellest careless. She saith in her heart, I am, and none else: I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall know the loss of children. But these two things shall come upon thee, the loss of children and widowhood, &c. Therefore shall evil come upon thee, and thou

thou shalt not know the morning thereof; destruction shall fall upon thee, which thou shalt not be able to put away; destruction shall come upon thee suddenly before thou art aware. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels: let now the astrologers, the star-gazers, and prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from those things which shall come upon thee, &c.

FROM Jeremiah, chap. 50. Babel is taken, Bel is confounded, &c. In those days, and at that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they, and the children of Judah, together, &c. Put yourselves in array against Babel round about, &c. her foundations are fallen, and her walls are destroyed: for it is the vengeance of the Lord: take vengeance upon her. As she has done do unto her, &c. I have laid a snare for thee, and thou also art taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware, &c. Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye who bend the bow, camp
against

againſt it round about, let none thereof eſcape: recompence her according to her work, according to all that ſhe hath done do unto her, &c. Therefore the wild beaſts of the deſert, with the wild beaſts of the iſlands, ſhall dwell there, and the owls ſhall dwell therein: and it ſhall be no more inhabited for ever, neither ſhall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom, and Gomorrha, and the neighbouring cities thereof, ſaith the Lord, ſo ſhall no man abide there, neither ſhall any ſon of man dwell therein, &c.

FROM chap, 51. Flee out of the miſt of Babylon, and deliver every man his ſoul: be not cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the Lords vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lords hand, that hath made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunk of her wine, therefore the nations are mad, &c. We would have healed Babylon, but ſhe is not healed:

healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country; for her judgment reacheth unto Heaven, and is lifted up even unto the skies, &c. O thou, who dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thy end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness, &c. Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth, and I will stretch out my hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain, &c. My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of the Lord, &c.

So Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon, and all those words that are written against Babylon. And Jeremiah said unto Seraiah, when thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see and shalt read all these words, then thou shalt say, O Lord, thou hast spoken against this place, to cut it off, that none

shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but that it shall be desolate for ever. And it shall be when thou hast made an end of reading this book, that thou shalt bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Euphrates, and thou shalt say, thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise, from the evil that I will bring upon her: and they shall be weary.

THOUGH it must be allowed that this last mentioned prophecy was in some measure fulfilled on literal Babylon, yet it must be considered also as typically to signify spiritual Babylon, which ultimately claims to itself the principal burthen of it.

As the prophets did not continue for ever, their prophecies seem to have a kind of perpetual meaning chiefly centering in the last state and fortune of the church. After the destruction of Babylon the Jews are constantly mentioned as being lastingly established in their country, and all nations

tions are represented as flowing to the church: but the establishment of the Jews after their deliverance from literal Babylon was only temporary, and was followed not long after with their total ruin and dispersion.

BESIDES Babylon itself suffered little more when it was taken by the Persians than a change of its polity and government, and might yet flourish, though perhaps in a lesser degree, under its new lords. But as the deliverance of the Jews at that time greatly resembled the deliverance which will happen to the church from the tyranny of spiritual Babylon, the prophets have constantly directed the principal scope of their prophecies to this great event, as is evident from a thorough review of them, and particularly from that part of them which I propose to subjoin to the description of the new Jerusalem.

IT is likewise natural to imagine that the holy prophets, in whom the spirit of God resided, would not be content to confine their predictions to only a particular temporary event, but would rather indulge themselves with the rapturous contemplation of the universal glory and dominion of the church, which might be easily couched under those typical representations.

Chap. XIX. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And after these things I heard the voice of a great multitude in Heaven, saying, Hallelujah! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, to the Lord our God! 2. For true and righteous are his

his judgments : for he hath judged the great whore, who hath destroyed the earth through her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3. And again they said Hallelujah ! and the smoke of her burning ascendeth up for ever and ever. 4. And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God, who sitteth upon the throne, saying, amen ! Hallelujah !

Ver. 5. And there came a voice from the throne, saying, praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye who fear him, both small and great ! 6. And I heard the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelujah ! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth ! 7. Let us rejoice and be glad, and give glory unto him ; for the marriage of the lamb is come, and his bride hath made herself ready,

Ver.

Ver. 8. And to her it was given that she should be clothed in fine linen and shining, for fine linen is the righteousness of saints. 9. And he said unto me, write, blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the lamb. And he said unto me, these are the true sayings of God.

Ver. 10. And I fell at his feet to worship him, and he said unto me, see thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren who have the testimony of Jesus; worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

HERE again, according to the usual manner of this mystery, the gloomy scenes of antichrist are contrasted with the splendid visions of the triumphant church, which is represented as continually pouring out her praises and thanksgivings to God.

WE cannot do better than illustrate this passage with a song of thanksgiving, which Isaiah has composed for the use of the faithful, when they shall triumph over their enemies, and be established in the multitude of peace.

‘ AND in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me thy anger is turned away, and thou dost comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength, and my song, he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, praise the Lord, call upon his name: declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the holy one in the midst of thee.

Ver.

Ver. XI., &c.

Ver. 11. And I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and he who sat upon him was called Faithful, and True, and in righteousness doth he judge, and make war. 12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and upon his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, which no man knew but he himself. 13. And he was cloathed in a vesture dipt in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.

Ver. 14. And the armies in Heaven followed him upon white horses, cloathed in white linen and pure. 15. And out of his

his

his mouth proceeded a sharp sword, that with it he might smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16. And he had upon his vesture, and his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

Ver. 17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun: and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of Heaven, come, and gather yourselves together to 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 who sit on them, and the flesh of all men, free and bond, and small and great.

Ver. 19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him

who sat on the horse, and against his army. 20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet, who wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them who had received the mark of the beast, and them who worshipped his image: both these were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone. 21. And the rest were slain with the sword of him who sat upon the horse, which proceeded out of his mouth, and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

AS the divinity of Christ does here shine in full majesty and splendour, it may be very proper to attend to every particular part of this description.

WE have in this place another view of the triumph of the son of God over the power of antichrist. He presents himself before him in all the terrors of his greatness,

ness, and easily consigns his trembling enemy to eternal punishment.

THE evangelist sees Heaven open before him, and our powerful Redeemer appears now ready to avenge the blood of his servants. He sits upon a white horse, as in the first seal, and goes forth conquering, and to conquer. There is no necessity that Heaven and earth should arm themselves in the defence of their creator, the justice of his cause is alone sufficient to inflict a mortal wound on his enemies; for in righteousness does he judge, and make war, and he is always called Faithful and True.

THE evangelist goes on to describe his glorious appearance.

HIS eyes were as a flame of fire, as he seemed when he was first seen walking among the seven golden candlesticks; and upon his head were many crowns, figuring

the greatness of his power, for he alone is
**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF
 LORDS.**

HE had likewise a name written, which no man knew but himself; intimating that no mortal, or even immortal, nature can be able to comprehend the exceeding greatness of his majesty and dominion in their full extent, for it is impossible for us to find out the Almighty to perfection.

HE is clothed, ver. 13. in a vesture dipt in blood, to signify his redemption of his people, when he offered himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and suffered death, even the death of the cross. He then revealed to the world the glory of the Father, and became the Word of God, manifesting particularly the will of God to mankind, and accomplishing every end and purpose of religion. St. John calls Christ in his gospel the Word of God, saying, in
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the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, &c. And the Word became flesh, and dwelled amongst us: and we beheld his glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, and truth. John, 1. ver. 1., &c.

HE is followed, ver. 14. by the armies of Heaven upon white horses, and out of his mouth proceeded a sharp sword. Armed in this most formidable manner he treads the wine-press of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God, agreeable to the reaping of the vine of the earth, ch. 14. ver. 17, &c.

AFTER all the fowls of Heaven are invited to the supper of the great God, we see the armies of antichrist hardened to oppose themselves to his majesty: but the lamb of God overcomes them, for he is **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.** The beast is taken, and with him

him the false prophet, and are cast alive into a lake, burning with fire, and brimstone.

DAVID in the 45th Psalm, expresses the greatness and power of Christ, agreeable to the above description of them.

‘ GIRD thee with thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty! according to thy worship, and renown. Good luck have thou with thy honour! ride on! because of the word of truth, of meakness, and righteousness; and thy right-hand shall teach thee terrible things, &c. Thy throne, O God, endureth for ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.

AGAIN, Psalm 24th. The earth is the Lords, and all that is therein: the compass of the world, and they who dwell therein, &c. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is the
the

the king of glory? even the Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory.

CHRIST'S divinity and majesty are likewise remarkably described by Ifaiah, ch. 9. ver. 6, &c.

‘ FOR unto us a child is born, and unto us a child is given : and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and he shall call his name, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace! the increase of his government and peace shall have no end : he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever !

To these great testimonies we may add others equally remarkable.

ST. PAUL, mentioning with pity and concern, his brethren the Jews, says, of whom

whom are the fathers, and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all God, blessed for ever. Amen. Rom. 9. ver. 5.

AGAIN, taking leave of the Ephesian elders, he warns them as follows. ‘ Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the holy spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Acts, 20. ver. 28. Here St. Paul, full of the holy spirit, directly, and without the least ambiguity, acknowledges Christ as God, for Christ only was our sacrifice, and propitiation. See 1. Tim. 3. ver. 16.

MAT. 12. ver. 1, &c. When the Pharisees reprimanded Christ’s disciples for plucking on the Sabbath day some ears of corn, Christ justified them by the example of David, who through necessity eat even of the shew bread ; and observed
likewise

likewise that the priests in some instances profaned the Sabbath in the temple. After which he says, I say unto you, here is one greater than the temple: and a little after, the son of man is Lord of the Sabbath. If the temple was built and dedicated for the service and worship of God, it is impossible that any inferior creature should be able to proclaim himself greater than this sacred inclosure. He only must be greater who is adored and honoured in it. And in respect to the Sabbath, seeing that the observation of it was instituted in remembrance of God's rest from the labours of his creation, what other being, or angel, or inferior power, can stile himself Lord of the Sabbath? he only can be Lord of it who rested on it after the works of his creation, and who appointed the solemn observation of it.

MAT. 18. ver. 19, &c. Christ says,
 " Again I say unto you, that if two of
 you agree together upon earth in any thing

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which

which they shall request, it shall be granted to them by my Father who is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them." We see first that any two persons devoutly preferring their petitions to God, will be heard and relieved by him: and Christ afterwards adds, ' for where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am in the midst of them.' As these two verses comprehend one particular matter, and the latter is an explanation and illustration of the former, it is very evident that Christ here shews that he and the Father are one. He is in the midst of them, that is, he is ready to hear and grant their petitions, which in the former verse are said would be granted by his Father who is in Heaven. None can forgive sins but God: He only can be present to our prayers, He only can be in the midst of us.

THIS great and holy mystery is still rendered clearer by the following remarkable passages.

passages. John, 25. ver. 7, &c. ‘ If you had known me you had known my Father also; and from henceforth you have known him, and have seen him. Philip said unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it will be sufficient for us. Jesus saith unto him, so long time have I been with you, and have not you known me, Philip? he who seeth me hath seen the Father; and wherefore dost thou say, shew unto us the Father. Dost thou not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?’

THESE expressions are so forcible and irresistible that the passage towards the end of this chapter, where it is said, ‘ my Father is greater than I,’ may from them be readily and easily concluded to signify that this superiority of the Father can only be understood in respect to his Godhead, and the manhood of the son. This is agreeable to the definition of this faith by the Athanasian creed, where it is said, that Christ is equal to the Father as touching his god-

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head,

head, and inferiour to the Father as touching his manhood. This distinction is further explained by St. Paul, (Philip. 2. v. 6, &c.) who, speaking of Christ says, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. For as he observes to Timothy, ‘ without controversy great is the mystery of religion, God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed in the world, received to glory. 1 Tim. 3. ver. 16.

It would require a volume to consider the many discourses of Christ to his apostles, concerning faith in him, recorded by St. John. His divinity is therein sufficiently illustrated to the plain and unprejudiced

diced reader. If he is not God, to what purpose is our faith in him? If he is not God he must be a creature, and as a creature must be infinitely inferior to God. Faith therefore in a creature can be of no effect : for a creature is so far from affording salvation that itself must of necessity stand in need of it. Faith therefore in Christ must always be understood as faith in God, for he only is able to afford salvation to his creatures.

THE holy scriptures, being the immediate revelation of Gods will to his creatures, can only be depended upon as a foundation for doctrines of this great and most sublime nature. It is infinitely beyond the utmost reach of human faculties to comprehend them in their full extent. We may amuse ourselves as we please with volumes of logical positions and premises : as we have no real certainty of their truth, the superstructure built upon them must be altogether tottering, and imperfect.

Religion

Religion must therefore suffer by vague and unsupported arguments ; and after all our length of reasonings we must be glad to return to an implicit faith in the doctrines recommended to us in the holy scriptures.

WE may however indulge so much of argument in respect to the great doctrine of Christs divinity as to consider it in the following manner. Christ must of necessity be either God, or a creature ; for it is impossible in the nature of things that there should be any other intermediate being. He may no doubt be greatly superior to man, but if we consider him as a creature he must be infinitely inferior to God. We may therefore gather that if he is a creature he must be altogether unequal to the great business of redemption ; for nothing can be supposed to reconcile us to God but his own immediate pardon, and forgiveness of our offences, which must be
virtually

virtually implied, and as it were resident, in the sacrifice, or propitiation, for our sins.

Chap. XX. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And I saw an angel descending out of Heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold of the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. 3. And he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him in, and set a seal upon him, that he should no longer deceive the nations, until the thousand years should be finished; and after

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ter that he must be loosed for a short space.

Ver. 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them, and the souls of those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, and for the word of God, and who worshipped not the beast, nor his image, and received not the mark upon their foreheads, nor upon their hand: and they lived, and reigned with Christ, a thousand years. 5. And the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection: upon such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

THIS

THIS space of a thousand years must represent what is called in the scriptures the rest of the church, or the kingdom of Christ, or the Laodicean church in her first glory, so often before mentioned; for the commencement of which in the Lord's prayer we daily pray.

THE description of this glorious kingdom will take up the remaining of the seven parts, into which this great mystery seems naturally divided. It is there called a new Heaven, and a new earth, such a visionary representation (as is every scene in this Revelation,) figuring a solid and permanent state of things, altogether new, and different from that precarious and fluctuating one in which of necessity they must remain till this most happy and lasting establishment.

IT must also be observed, that nothing is mentioned in the writings of the prophets

phets but what regards us, or our posterity; for it is not in the power of our mental faculties to comprehend the glories of the immortal world, as it is written, ‘ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things which God hath laid up for those who serve him.’ It seems likewise to be his pleasure to make us in this life continually dependent on him; that when he shall think proper to receive us to himself, we may rush at once into glories, which nothing but the happy change of our nature can enable us to comprehend.

DURING this rest of the church, the power of the Devil will be altogether restrained, that no evil may interrupt this peace, but that mankind may have a full and uncontrolled enjoyment of it.

THIS is called the first resurrection, or reception into favour and dominion, of the just and faithful of those times; the second
death

death being the great and final condemnation of the wicked.

Ver. VII., &c.

Ver. 7. And when the thousand years shall be finished, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison: 8. and shall go forth to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Ver. 9. And they came up upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed about the camp of the saints, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them.

10. And the Devil, who deceived them, was cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast, and the false prophet are; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

THIS army of Gog, and Magog, is the same with that collected by the three unclean spirits like frogs, which came out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. They are the shattered remains of Rome, who towards the conclusion of the world will gather together all who shall be wicked and abandoned like themselves, that they make one more desperate effort against the people of God: but it will prove feeble and impotent, for fire will come down from Heaven, and destroy them, as in the seventh vial.

As the Gog, and Magog, here mentioned, seem to be the same with the Gog,
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and Magog, of the prophet Ezekiel, it may not be improper to produce some extracts from this prophet concerning them.

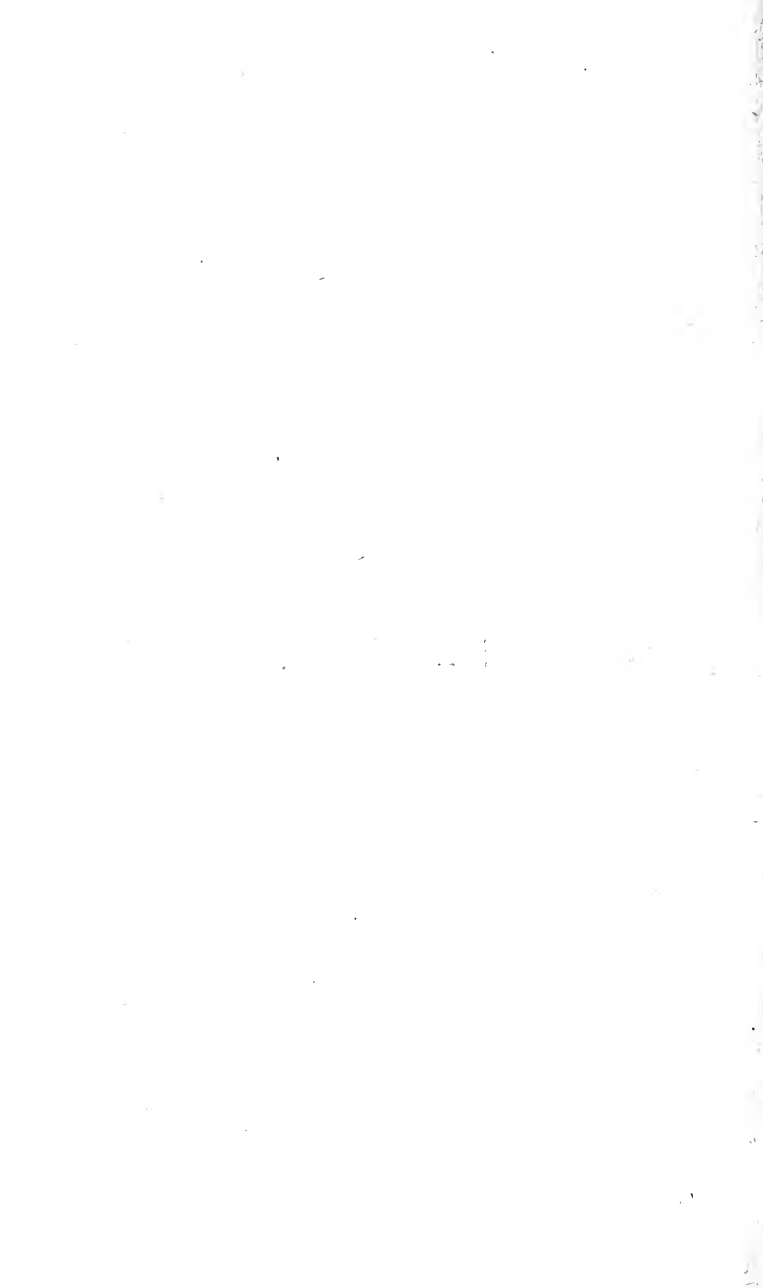
FROM chap. 38. Son of man, set thy face against Gog, and against the land of Magog, &c. Behold, I come against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Mesheck, and Tubal. And I will destroy thee, and put hooks in thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thy host, cloathed in all sorts of armour, &c. Thou shalt ascend, and come up like a tempest, and shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, &c. In that day, when my people dwelleth safe, shalt thou not know it? and come from thy place out of the north, &c. in the latter days. And I will bring thee upon my land, that the Heathen may know me when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. For I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against

gainst his fellow. And I will plead against him with pestilence, and with blood, and I will cause to rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the great people who are with him, a fore rain, and hailstones, and fire, and brimstone, &c.

PART

PART THE SEVENTH.

A KEY



KEY to the MYSTERY, &c.

PART THE SEVENTH.

Chap. XX. Ver. 11, &c.

Ver. 11. And I saw a great white throne, and him who sat upon it, before whose face the earth and the Heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

12. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and the books were

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opened:

opened: and another book was opened which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of what was written in the books, according to their works. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hell gave up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works. 14. And death and Hell were cast into a lake of fire: this is the second death. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into a lake of fire.

FOR the reasons given in the observations on the first part of this chapter we must consider the above as a further representation of what is called the harvest, or the grand revolution of things, when antichrist will be condemned, and bound in the bottomless pit, and Gods true church rewarded according to her works, and promoted to rest, glory, and empire.

THIS judgment and distinction of things are naturally previous to that great and particular description of the church, called the New Jerusalem, immediately following; which will be found agreeable to all the prophets, in a view of the several extracts from them, intended to be subjoined in their proper place. The reader must likewise observe that all these things are shewn in visionary scenes, and must be largely and figuratively understood.

Chap. XXI. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And I saw a new Heaven, and a new earth, for the first Heaven, and the first earth, were past away, and there was no more sea.

Ver. 2. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerufalem, coming down from Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Ver. 3. And I heard a loud voice out of Heaven, faying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he fhall dwell with them ; and they fhall be his people, and God himfelf fhall be with them, and be their God. 4. And God fhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there fhall be no more death, neither forrow, nor crying, neither fhall there be any more pain : for the former things are paff away,

Ver. 5. And he who fat upon the throne faid, behold, I make all things new : and he faid unto me, write, for thefe words are faithful and true. 6. And he faid unto me, it is done : I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning, and the end : I will give unto him who is athirft of the
fountain

fountain of the water of life freely. 7. He who overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all lyars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire, and brimstone, which is the second death.

Ver. 9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels, who had the seven vials, full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, come hither, and I will shew thee the bride, the lamb's wife.

Ver. 10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven from God: 11. having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear

as chryſtal. 12. And had a wall great and high, and twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and 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 twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apoſtles of the lamb.

Ver. 15. And he who talked with me had a golden reed to meaſure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16. And the city lieth fourſquare, 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.

Ver.

Ver. 18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glafs. 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 chalcedony, the fourth an emerald: 20. the fifth a sardonix, the sixth a sardius, the seventh a chrysolite, the eighth a beryl, the ninth a topaz, the tenth a chrysoprasus, the eleventh a jacinth, the twelfth an amethyst. 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls, every severall gate was one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glafs.

Ver. 22. And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty, and the lamb, are the temple of it. 23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither, of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of the
the

the Lord did lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof. 24. And the nations of them who are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lye, but they who are written in the lamb's book of life.

Chap. XXII. Ver. 1, &c.

Ver. 1. And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the lamb. 2. In the midst of the street of it, and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded its fruit every month: and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations. 3. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God, and of the lamb, shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him. 4. And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. 5. And there shall be no
S f night

night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Ver. 6. And he said unto me, these sayings are faithful and true, and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he who keepeth the sayings of this book.

Ver. 8. And I John saw these things, and heard them: and when I had heard and seen I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed me these things. 9. Then said he unto me, see thou do it not; for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

Ver. 10. And he said unto me, seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand. 11. He who is unjust let him be unjust still, and he who is filthy let him be filthy still; and he who is righteous let him be righteous still, and he who is holy let him be holy still.

Ver. 12. And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be. 13. I am Alpha, and Omega, the beginning, and the end, the first, and the last. 14. Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. 15. For without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever lieth and maketh a lye.

Ver. 16. I Jesus have sent my angel, to testify unto you these things in the church-

cs: I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. 17. And the spirit, and the bride, say, come; and let him who heareth say, come: and let him who is athirst come, and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely. 18. For I testify unto every man who heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. 19. 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.

Ver. 20. He who testifieth these things saith, surely I come quickly. Amen, even so: come, Lord Jesus.

Ver. 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

AS heretofore in this great and most important mystery our minds have had for the most part the disagreeable, though necessary, compulsion of investigating the gloomy power of antichrist, tracing him from his remotest origin, and detecting him under every borrowed and assumed appearance, (for Satan has often been known to transform himself to an angel of light;) so henceforward all this labour and toil will be rewarded with the refreshing and delightful views of the glorious and immaculate spouse of Christ, his only true church, shewn to us in every dazzling appearance, particular as a holy city and state, built and established, not with earthly and corruptible materials and polity, but fixed on immortal and permanent foundations, and adorned with every spiritual excellency, and ornament. She will appear, as St. Paul says, built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner

corner stone. In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the spirit. Ephes. 2. ver. 20., &c.

It may now be proper to examine the principal parts of this most enchanting view of the glories of Christ's kingdom; for it will generally be sufficiently plain and obvious to the reader.

ST. JOHN saw, ch. 21. ver. 1., &c. a new Heaven, and a new earth, &c. that is, a fixed and permanent state of things, not like those of common human polity, subject to every change and accident of fortune, and born along with the fluctuating tides of human affairs, but established in a firm and lasting foundation, never to be shaken, and disturbed. Isaiah uses the same expression, where he evidently speaks of the glories of Christ's kingdom. ' For behold,

hold, I create new Heavens, and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying. ch. 65. ver. 17, &c. For St. John heard, ver. 3., &c. a loud voice out of Heaven, saying, behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God, &c.

VER. 9., &c. We see a new and particular view of the church, and the glories of Christ's great and universal kingdom, which must shortly be established in the world. St. John sees it in the appearance of a glorious city, descending out of Heaven, having the glory of God, and whose
light

light was like unto a stone most precious. This beautiful vision he does not see in the wilderness, but from a high and lofty mountain.

VER. 12, &c. We see this city fortified, and surrounded with a great and high wall, having twelve gates, named after the twelve tribes of Israel. The wall of this city is likewise said to have twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the lamb. Here we see the natural and spiritual fathers of the church, called in other parts of this mystery the four and twenty elders, who, together with the four beasts, are represented as continually resident before the throne of God, and adoring day and night his greatness and majesty.

WE see, ver. 16., &c. the measurement of this sacred city. It lieth foursquare, every side of which is extended twelve thousand furlongs; the circumference of which
must

must necessarily be forty eight thousand. Now if we divide this circumference of forty eight thousand furlongs by eight, it will be reduced to six thousand English miles; which figuring so many years, may represent the complete duration of time, or the world. This may very likely be the meaning of this measurement.

THE wall of it was measured an hundred and forty four cubits. This is agreeable to the number of those who were sealed, chap. 7., (adding so many thousands,) the select supporters of the church: by which we may find that the purpose of this mystery is only one and the same, every part agreeing perfectly with each other, and forming one beautiful whole.

THE remaining part of this chapter is employed in shewing the further embellishment of this most holy city, which may be easily comprehended, and needs no further comment.

CHAP. 22. ver. 1, &c. St. John was shewn a pure river of water of life, adorned on each side with the trees of life, yielding twelve manner of fruits every month, whose leaves too are given for the healing of the nations. Here we see renewed that paradise, from which our first parents by their transgression were driven. It is however now open to such of their posterity as persevere in the truth of the gospel. In those happy and truly golden days there shall be no more curse; but Gods servants shall continually behold his face, and his name shall be written in their foreheads.

VER. 6. We are told that these words are faithful and true, and shall surely be accomplished in their day. We must therefore look upon them as no vain thing, but consider them as our life. We must weigh them with the most scrupulous attention, and receive them as the oracles of God. The truth and importance of them I flatter myself are fully manifest from the preceding

preceding explanation; which could never have been perfected without the key, or manner of expounding those mysteries from the beginning. In this light they appear easy, and intelligible, and the knowledge of them must only be attributed to the favour and goodness of God.

VER. 8., &c. We see the worshipping of saints, and angels, expressly forbidden: and it is astonishing to imagine that the church of Rome should dare to establish such idolatrous worship in open contradiction to so manifest a condemnation of it.

VER. 10. St. John is forbid to seal the words of the prophecies of this book, for the time is at hand; that is, they shall surely be accomplished in their day, agreeable to the like phrases made use of in scripture, as in the beginning of this work I have endeavoured to explain.

IT follows, ver. 11. He who is unjust let him be unjust still, &c. and he who is righteous let him be righteous still, &c. The meaning of which is that this Revelation is the only means of discovering to mankind the true church of Christ, and explaining to us his will; whereby we may live holily and happily in this life, and be assured of endless peace, and a glorious immortality, in that to come. Christ now has shewn himself the Alpha, and Omega, the beginning, and the end, in presiding over his people, and governing them, from the beginning to the end of time, and making even the end of time the commencement of a happy eternity. Blessed are those therefore who live after his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, or participate of all the benefits and graces of religion, and enter in through the gates into the city, or be made members of the New Jerusalem: for without are dogs, and forcerers, &c.

VER. 16., Christ ſays, I Jeſus have ſent my angel to teſtify thoſe things to the churches : I am the root, and the offspring, of David, the bright and morning ſtar. This bright and morning ſtar was promiſed to the faithful of the fourth church, or period, that of Thyatira. In the beginning of the following period of the church he was born in the world, and took our nature upon him : and having offered himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of mankind, he remains an eternal high prieſt, making continual interceſſion for us.

VER. 17. We find an earneſt invitation to partake of the water of life, or reſreſh our thirſty ſouls with all the comforts and conſolations of religion.

WE ſee, ver. 18, &c. an expreſs denunciation of Gods eternal anger againſt thoſe who ſhall alter and pervert the text of this Revelation, thereby making it ſubſervient to any particular purpoſe, contrary to its
true

true intent and meaning. It has hitherto I believe remained pure and free from any wilful corruptions, and though locked up in the most dark and inexplicable disguises, has been nevertheless carefully treasured and preserved in the church: but it may very likely happen that when the church of Rome finds herself openly condemned by this volume, she may produce a spurious copy of it, purposely corrupted and altered, thereby soothing herself in some measure in her errors, and agreeable to her constant practice, deceiving, and being deceived: for we see in the sixth trumpet that she will never repent of her superstitions.

THE holy evangelist earnestly wishes for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and concludes this great Revelation with a suitable blessing. 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

I SHALL

I SHALL now take the liberty to subjoin such of the prophecies of scripture as manifestly relate to the future glory of the church, and the universal kingdom of Christ. Their harmony and connection with the above description of the New Jerusalem will be evidently seen, and the truth of the above explanation will thereby clearly appear.

EXTRACTS from *Isaiah*. chap. 2. ver. 2, &c. It shall be in the last days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it, &c. And he shall judge among the nations, and rebuke many people: they shall break their swords also into mattocks, and their spears into scythes, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn to fight any more.

FROM chap. 11. There shall come a rod forth of the stock of Jesse, and a graft shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, &c. With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and with equity shall he reprove for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked, &c. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, &c. And the sucking child shall play at the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand upon the cockatrice den. Then shall none hurt nor destroy in all the mountain of my holiness: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day the root of Jesse shall stand up for a sign unto the people: the nations shall seek unto it, and his rest shall be glorious, &c. And he shall set up a sign to the nations, and assemble the dispersed of Israel, and gather the scattered

tered of Judah from the four corners of the world. The hatred also of Ephraim (that is, Israël, or the ten tribes,) shall depart, &c. Ephraim shall not envy Judah, neither shall Judah vex Ephraim, &c.

FROM chap. 35. The desert, and the wilderness, shall rejoice, and the waste ground shall be glad, and flourish as the rose, &c. Then shall the eyes of the blind be lightened, and the ears of the deaf be opened, &c. And there shall be a path, and a way, and the way shall be called holy, the polluted shall not pass by it: for he shall be with them, and the way faring men, though fools, shall not err therein, &c. Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with praise: everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

FROM chap. 52. Arise, arise, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on the garments

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of

of thy beauty, O Jerufalem, the holy city, for henceforth there fhall no more come into thee the uncircumcised, and the unclean, &c. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who declareth and publisheth peace, who declareth glad tidings, and publisheth falvation, faying unto Zion, thy God reigneth ! The voice of thy watchmen fhall be heard, they fhall lift up their voice, and fhout together : for they fhall fee eye to eye when the Lord fhall bring again Zion, &c. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the fight of all the Gentiles, and all the ends of the earth fhall fee the falvation of our God, &c.

FROM chap. 54. Rejoice, O barren that didft not bear, break forth into joy, and rejoice, thou that didft not travail with child : for the defolate hath more children than the married, faith the Lord, &c. For he who made thee is thy husband, whose name is the Lord of hofts, and thy redeemer,

er, the holy one of Israel, shall be called the God of the whole world, &c. For this is unto me as the waters of Noah: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be angry with thee, nor rebuke thee, &c. O thou afflicted, tossed with tempests, and not comforted! behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, &c.

FROM chap. 60. Arise, O Jerusalem, be bright, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, &c. And the gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about, and behold, all these are gathered, and come unto thee, &c. Then thou shalt see, and shine, thy
heart

heart shall be astonished and enlarged; because the multitude of the sea shall be converted unto thee, and the riches of the gentiles shall come unto thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, &c. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually, neither day nor night shall they be shut; that men may bring unto thee the riches of the gentiles, and that their kings may be brought, &c. Thou shalt suck the milk of the gentiles, &c. Violence shall no more be heard of in thy land, neither desolation nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call salvation thy walls, and praise thy gates. Thou shalt have no more sun to shine by day, neither shall the brightness of the moon shine unto thee: for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, &c.

FROM chap. 62. And the gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name,
 &c.

&c. It shall no more be said unto thee, Forsaken, neither shall it be said any more to thy land, Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall have an husband, &c.

FROM chap. 65. For behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But rejoice and be glad for ever in the things which I create: for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, &c. They shall not build and another inherit, &c. for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, &c.

FROM chap. 66. A voice of tumult is heard from the city, &c. the voice of the Lord executing vengeance on his enemies, &c. Who hath heard such a thing, &c. Shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Sion travailed she brought forth her children, &c. For thus saith the Lord, Behold
I will

I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the gentiles like a flowing stream: then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees, &c. It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those who escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel, saith the Lord, bring an offering in a clean vessel, into the house of the Lord. And I will take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens, and the new

new earth, which I make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcases of the men who have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

FROM Jeremiah, chap. iii., ver. 17, &c. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the Throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, even to the name of the Lord in Jerusalem, &c. In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north, into the land that I have given for an inheritance to your fathers.

FROM

FROM chap. 30, &c. For lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and Judah, &c. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin Israel, &c. For the days shall come that the watchmen upon the mount of Ephraim shall cry, Arise, and let us go up unto Zion to the Lord our God, &c. Therefore they shall come and rejoice in the height of Zion, &c. I have heard Ephraim lamenting, Thou hast corrected me, and I was chastised as an untamed calf, &c. Is Ephraim my dear son, or pleasant child? Yet since I spake unto him, I still remembered him: therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have compassion upon him, saith the Lord, &c. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah, &c. This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward

inward parts, and write it in their hearts, &c. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananeel, &c. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely, &c. And the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, If you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day nor night in their season, then may my covenant be broken with David, my servant, &c.

FROM chap. 23. And I will gather the remnant of my sheep out of all countries whither I have scattered them, and I will restore them to their pasture, and they shall be fruitful, and multiply, &c. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, and a king

shall reign and prosper, &c. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell in safety: and this is the name with which he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, &c.

SEE Ezek. xxxvi. and xxxvii. and chap. xl., &c. Hof. ii., ver. 2, &c. and iii., ver. 4, &c. Mic. iv., ver. 1, &c. Zeph. iii., ver. ix., &c. Zach. vi., ver. 12, &c. and viii. and ix. ver. 10. Mal. iv. Pf. xxii., ver. 28, &c.

As St. Paul saw from the prophetic scriptures the return of his brethren the Jews to their own land, and the softening of their stony heart into one of flesh, it may be very proper to give in part his sentiments on so important an event, as the return of the Jews will be contemporary with the universal kingdom of Christ.

FROM Romans, chap. 11. I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.

bid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, &c. Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the gentiles, &c. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, &c. how much more their fulness, &c. For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, (lest ye should be wise in your own conceits) that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the gentiles come. And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Sion a deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, &c.

It may likewise be proper to take notice of the Lord's prayer, which manifestly has regard to this great and most important event.

It consists of three parts. In the first part we pray for the coming of Christ's king-

dom, that his will may be done in earth as it is in heaven, or that all the world may unanimously serve him according to the glorious institutions of the gospel.

THE second part relates to the common cravings and necessities of our nature; which will not pass unregarded by him who feeds the ravens, and supports every species of his creatures, especially when we call upon him in faith, and trust to his providence and mercy. It also regards our general preservation and protection from evil.

AND the third part consists of a solemn doxology, or acknowledgment of his power and omnipotence, agreeable to the worship and homage which we have seen so often paid to him in the Revelation.

THOUGH I have referred the reader to the 37th chapter of Ezekiel, the first part of which is a fine representation of the return of the Jews to their own land: yet as the latter part is still a stronger and more positive declaration of the return of all the twelve tribes to their ancient country, their permanent

ment establishment in it, and reception of the gospel of Christ, I think it may be very necessary to illustrate what has been advanced with some extracts from it.

CHAP. XXXvii., ver. 16, &c. Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, for Judah, and for the children of Israel, his companions. Then take another stick, and write upon it, for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel, his companions. And join them one to another into one stick, and they shall become one in thy hand, &c. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in my hand, &c. Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the
the

the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all : and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all, &c. And David, my servant, shall be king over them, and they shall all have one shepherd, &c. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob, my servant, wherein their fathers have dwelt, and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children, for ever: and my servant David shall be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant with them ; and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them, yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

E R R A T A.

- Page 105 line 8, for shinning read shining.
- 124 - 9, for Room read Rome; and line 12, for innumberable read innumerable.
 - 126 - 1, for particulary read particularly; and line 10, for established read established.
 - 130 - 6, for jocinet read Hyacinth.
 - 134 - last, for obodience read obedience.
 - 153 - 9, for cremonies read ceremonies.
 - 161 - 11, for stubbornefs read stubbornnefs.
 - 177 - 20, for accomplishment read accomplifment.
 - 184 - 7, for parish read parish.
 - 200 - 3, for wherefover read wherefoever.
 - 204, - after verfe 8, blot out &c.
 - 206 - last but 1, for feperate read separate.
 - 224 - 6, for trumptet read trumpet.
 - 236 - 6, for stubbornefs read stubbornnefs.
 - 254 - 18, for harndened read hardened.
 - 259 - 13, for furnication read fornication; the fame in the next line.
 - 262 - 5, for shall read fhalt.
 - 264 - last but 2, for fcriptures read fcripture.
 - 268 - 3, for fatyre read fatyr; and line 9, for shall read fhalt.
 - 284 - 17, for Lords read Lord's.
 - 299 - 13, for shall read fhalt.
 - 309 - 12, for Jacinct read Hyacinth.
 - 316 - 18, for in read on.
 - 325 - 13, for in read on. 10

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