

Chapter 1

9. *S. Iohn being banished in the Ile Patmos, is commanded to write to the feuen Churches of Afia (fignified by the feuen candlestickes) that which he saw vpon a Sunday, round about the Sonne of man: 13. whose manner of apparition is defcribed.*

The 1. part.
Seuen Epiftles
to the
Churches.

The ¹Apocalypfe of IESVS Chrifft which God gaue him, to make manifeft to his feruants the things which muft be done quickly: and fignified, fending by his Angel to his feruant Iohn, ² who hath giuen teftimonie to the word of God, and the teftimonie of IESVS Chrifft, what things foeuer he hath feen. ³ Bleffed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecie: and ^a)keepeth thofe things which be written in it. For the time is nigh.

⁴ Iohn ¹to the feuen Churches which are in Afia.
Exo. 3, 14. Grace to you and peace from him that is, and that was, and that fhall come, and ¹from the feuen Spirits which are in the fight of his throne, ⁵ and from IESVS Chrifft who is the faithful witnes, the Firft-borne of the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the earth, who hath loued
Col. 1. vs, and washed vs from our finnes in his bloud, ⁶ and
Heb. 9. hath made vs ¹a Kingdom and Priests to God and his
1. Pet. 1. Father, to him be glorie and empire for euer and euer.
2. Pet. 2. Amen. ⁷ Behold he commeth with the clouds, and euery
Zac. 12. eie fhall fee him, and they that pricked him. And al the Tribes of the earth fhall bewaile themfelues vpon him.
Efa. 44. Yea, Amen. ⁸ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning
Apoc. 21. and end, faith our Lord God, which is, and which was,
22, 13. and which fhall come, the Omnipotent.

⁹ I Iohn your brother and partaker in tribulation, and the Kingdom, and patience in Chrifft IESVS, was

^a There be many (fpecially now a-daies) that be great readers, hearers & talkers of Scriptures. But that is not enough to make them good or bleffed before God, except they keep the things prefcribed and taught therein according to our Sauours faying *Luc. 11.* Bleffed are they that heare the word of God, & keep it.

a)in the Iland, which is called Patmos, for the word of God and the teftimonie of IESVS. ¹⁰ I was b)in fpirit ↵on the Dominical day, and heard behind me a great voice as it were of a trompet ¹¹ faying: That which thou feeft, write in a booke: and fend to the feuen Churches which are in Afia, to Ephefus, and Smyrna, and Pergamus, and Thiatira, and Sardis, and Philadelphia, and Laodicia. ¹² c)And I turned, to fee the voice that fpake with me. And being turned I faw feuen candleticks of gold: ¹³ and in the middes of the feuen candelsticks of gold, one d)like to the Sonne of man, ↵vefted in a priestly garment to the foot, & girded about neer to the paps with a girdle of gold. ¹⁴ And his head & haire were white, as white wool, and as fnow, and his eyes as the flame of fire. ¹⁵ And his feet like to latten, as in a burning fornace. And his voice as the voice of many waters: ¹⁶ and he had in his right hand feuen ftarres. And from his mouth proceeded a fharpe two-edged fword: and his face, as the funne fhineth in his vertue. ¹⁷ And when I had feen him, I fel at his feet as dead. And he put his right hand vpon me, faying: Feare not. I am the Firft and the Laft, ¹⁸ and aliue, and was dead, and behold I am liuing for euer and euer, and haue the keies of death and of hel. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things which thou haft feen, and that are, and that muft be done after thefe: ²⁰ The Sacrament of the feuen ftarres, which thou haft feen in my right hād, and the feuen candleticks of Gold. ↵The feuen ftarres, are ↵the Angels of the feuen Churches. And e)the feuen candleticks, are the feuen Churches.

Sap. 18, 24.
podere

Efa. 41, 4.
44, 6.

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- a Banished thither for religiō by Nero, or rather by Domitiā, almoft 60. yeares after Chrifts Afcenfion.
- b I had a vifiō, & not with my corporal eyes, but in fpirit I beheld the fimilitudes of the things following.
- c The 1. General Vifiō of the 7. according to S. Ambrofe.
- d It feemeth not to be Chrifft himfelf, but an Angel bearing Chriftes perfō; & vſing diuers fpeeches proper to Chrifft.
- e S. Irenæus alluding to this faith, *The Church euerywhere preacheth the truth, & this is the feuen-fold candleticke, bearing the light of Chrifft &c. Li. 5. aduerſ. hæer.*

ANNOTATIONS

1 APOCALYPSE.) Of the Apocalypfe thus writeth the Ancient Father Denys, Bishop of Corinth, as Eusebius alleageth him *li. 7. c. 20. hift. Eccl. Of this booke* (faith he) *this is my opinion, that the matter thereof is farre more profound then my wit can reach vnto and I doubt not but almost in euery sentence of it there lieth hidden a certaine sense exceeding myftical and maruelous, which though I vnderftand not, yet I conceiue that vnder the words there is a deep meaning: and I measure not the matter by reason, but attribute al to faith, taking it to be more high and diuine, then I can by cogitation comprife: not reprobuing that which I vnderftand not, but therefore I admire with reuerence, because my wit can not attaine to it.* Againe S. Auguftin faith, *that in the Apocalypfe many things are obscurely spoken, to exercise the mind of the Reader: and yet some few things left euident that through them a man may with labour search out the rest. Specially for that the Authour so repeateth the same things in diuers forts, that seeming to speake of fundry matters, indeed is found to vtter the same things diuers waies. li. 20. de Ciuit. Dei. c. 17.*

Which we fet downe here in the beginning, to warne the good Chriftian Reader, to be humble and wise in the reading both of al other holy Scriptures, & namely of this diuine and deep prophecie: giuing him further to vnderftand, that we wil in our Annotations, according to our former trade and purpose, only or cheefely note vnto the studious, such places as may be vsed by Catholikes, or abused by Heretikes, in the controuerfies of this time, and some other also that haue special matter of edification, and that as breefely as may be, for that the volume groweth great.

4 To the 7. Churches.) That certaine numbers may be obserued as signifiatiue and myftical, it is plaine by many places of holy Scripture, and by the ancient Doctours special noting of the same to many purposes. Whereby we see the rashnes of our Aduerfaries, in condemning generally al religious respect of certaine numbers in praier, facts, or actions. Namely the number of *Seuen*, is myftical, and prophetical, perfect, and which (as S. Auguftin faith) the Church knoweth by the Scriptures, to be specially dedicated to the Holy Ghost: and to appertaine to spiritual mundation, as in the Prophets appointing of Naaman to wash seuen times in Iordan, and the sprinkling of the blood seuen times against the tabernacle. *li. 4. quæst. in numer. q. 33. See li. 5. c. 5. de Gen. ad lit. & l. 5. quæst. in Deuter. q. 42.* Al these visions stand vpon Seuens: Seuen Churches, seuen Angels, seuen starres, seuen spirits, seuen candlesticks, seuen lamps, seuen trumpets, seuen vials, seuen hornes of the Lamb, seuen hilles, seuen thunders, seuen heads of the Dragon, signifying the Diuel: seuen of the beast, that is Antichrist: seuen of the beast that the harlot rid vpon: finally the number also of the visions is specially marked

An admonitiō to the Reader concerning the difficultie of this book.

Numbers myftical.

The number of Seue myftical: specially in this booke.

to be feuen, in this booke. And euery time that this number is vfed in this prophecie, it hath a myfterie & a more large meaning then the nature of that number is precifely and vulgarly taken for. As when he writeth to feuen Churches, it is to be vnderftood of al the Churches in the world, as the feuen Angels for al the Angels or Gouvernours of the whole Catholike Church, and fo-forth in the reft; becaufe the number of *Seuen*, hath the perfection of vniuerfalitie in it, as S. Auguftin faith *li. 5. quæft. in Deuter. q. 42.*

4 From the 7. fpirits.) The Holy Ghoft may be here meant, and fo called for his feuen-fold giufts and graces, as fome Expofitours thinke. But it feemeth more probable that he fpeaketh of the holy Angels, by comparing this to the like in the 5. *Chapter* following: where he feemeth to cal thefe, the feuen Spirits fent into al the world, as S. Paul to the Hebrewes (*c. 1, 14.*) fpeaketh of Angels. And fo the Proteftants take it in their commentaries. Which we note, becaufe thereupon they muft needs confeffe that the Apoftle here giueth or wisheth grace & peace not from God only, but alfo from his Angels: though that benediction commeth one way of God, and another way of his Angels or Saints, being but his creatures. And fo they may learne, that the faithful often ioyning in one fpeech, *God and our Lady, our Lord & any of his Saints*, to helpe vs or bleffe vs, is not fuperftitious, but an Apoftolical fpeech. And fo the Patriarch faid (*Gen. 48. v. 16.*) *The Angel that deliuereth me from al euils, bleffe thefe children.* See the *Annot. Act. 15, 28.*

Grace & peace from God and the holy Angels.

God and our Ladie faue vs, and the like.

6 A Kingdom and Priests.) As al that truely ferue God, and haue the dominion and fuperioritie ouer their concupifcences and whatfoeuer would induce them to finne, be Kings; fo al that employ their workes and themfelues to ferue God, & offer al their actiōs as an acceptable Sacrifice to him, be Priests. Neuertheleffe, as if any man would therevpon affirme that there ought to be no other earthly Powers or Kings to gouerne in worldly affaires ouer Chriftians, he were a feditious Heretike: euen fo are they that vpon this or the like places where al Chriftians be called Priests in a fpiritual fort, would therefore inferre, that euery one is in proper fignification a Priest, or that al be Priests alike, or that there ought to be none but fuch fpiritual Priests. For it is the feditious voice of Core, faying to Moyfes and Aaron, *Let it fuffice you, that al the multitude is of holy ones, and the Lord is in them. Why are you extolled ouer the people of the Lord? Num. 16.*

How al Chriftians be both Kings & Priests.

10 On the Dominical day.) Many notable points may be marked here. Firft, that euen in the Apoftles time there were daies deputed to the feruice of God, and fo made holy and different, though not by nature, yet by vfe and benediction, from other profane or (as we cal them) worke-daies.

Difference of holy-daies and worke-daies.

Secondly, that the Apoftles and faithful abrogated the Sabbath which was the feuenth day, and made holy-day for it the next day following, being the eight day in count from the creation:

Sunday made holy-day by the Apoftles & the Churches authoritie.

and that without al Scriptures, or commandement of Chrifft that we read of, yea (which is more) not only otherwife then was by the Law obserued, but plainly otherwife then was prescribed by God himself in the fecond commandement, yea and otherwife then he ordained in the first creation, when he sanctified precisely the Sabbath day, & not the day following. Such great power did Chrifft leaue to his Church, and for such causes gaue he the Holy Ghost to be resident in it, to guide it into al truths, euen such as in the Scriptures are not expreffed. And if the Church had authoritie & inspiration from God, to make Sunday (being a worke-day before) an euerlasting holy-day, and the Saturday, that before was holy-day now a common worke-day: why may not the same Church prescribe & appoint the other holy feasts of Easter, Whitfuntide, Chrifftmas, and the rest? For, the same warrant she hath for the one, that she hath for the other.

Other feasts ordained by the Church.

Thirdly, it is to be noted that the cause of this change was, for that now we Christians esteeming more our redemption, then our first creation, haue the holy-day which was before for the remembrance of God's accomplishment of the creation of things, now for the memorie of the accomplishment of our redemption. Which therefore is kept vpon that day on which our Lord rose from death to life, which was the day after the Sabbath, being called by the Iewes, *vna* or *prima Sabbathi*, *the first of or after the Sabbath*. *Mat. 28. Act 20. 1. Cor. 16.* Fourthly, it is to be marked that this holy-day by the Apostles tradition also, was named *Dominus dies*, *our Lordes day*, or *the Dominike*. Which is also an old Ecclesiastical word in our language. For the name Sunday is a heathenish calling, as al other of the week daies be in our language: some imposed after the names of planets, as in the Romans time: some by the name of certaine Idols that the Saxons did worship, and to which they dedicated theyr daies before they were Christians. Which names the Church vseth not, but hath appointed to call the first day, *the Dominike*, after the Apostle here; the other by the name of *Feries*, vntil the last of the weeke, which she calleth by the old name, *Sabbath*, because that was of God, and not by imposition of the Heathen. See the *marginal Annotation Luc. 24, 1.*

As Saturday was in memorie of the creation so Sunday of Chrifft's Resurrection.

The Church vseth not the Heathenish names of daies, but, *Deis Dominicus*, *feria*, *Sabbatum*.

Lastly, obserue, that God reuealeth such great things to Prophets, rather vpon holy-daies, & in times of contemplation, Sacrifice, and praier, then on other profane daies. And therefore as S. Peter (*Act. 10.*) had a reuelation at the fixt houre of praier, and Zacharie (*Luc. 1.*) at the houre of incense, & Cornelius (*Act. 10.*) when he was at his praiers the ninth houre, so here, S. Iohn noteth that he had al the maruelous visions vpon a Sunday.

God giueth greater grace at holy times of praier and fasting.

13 Vesteth in a Priestly garment.) He appeared in a long garment or vestement proper vnto Priests (for so the word, *poderes*, doth signifie, as *Sap. 18, 24.*) and that was most agreeable for him that represented the Person of Chrifft the high Priest, and appeared

Priestly garments.

to Iohn being a moft holy Prieft, and who is fpecially noted in the Ecclefiastical hiftorie for his Prieftly garment called, *pecalon* or *lamina*. *Eufeb. li. 3. hift. Eccl. cap. 25. & li. 5. c. 23.*

20 The feuen ftarres.) The Bifhops are the ftarres of the Church, as the Churches themfelues are the golden candlesticks of the world: no doubt to fignifie that Chrifft preferueth the truth only in and by the lawful Bifhops and Catholike Church, and that Chriffts truth is not to be fought for in corners or conuenticles of Heretikes, but at the Bifhops hands, and vpon the candlestick which shineth to al in the houfe.

The true religion
manifest as the
light on a can-
dlestick.

20 The Angels of the Churches.) The whole Church of Chrifft hath S. Michael for her Keeper and Protectour, and therefore keepeth his holy-day only by name, among al Angels. And as earthly Kingdoms haue their fpecial Angels Protectours, as we fee in the *10. chapter of Daniel*, fo much more the particular Churches of Chrifftendom. See S. Hierom *in 34. Ezech.* But of thofe Angels it is not here meant, as is manifest. And therefore Angels here muft needs fignifie the Priefts or Bifhops fpecially of the Churches here, & in them al the Gouvernours of the whole & of euery particular Church of Chrifftendom. They are called Angels, for that they are God's meffengers to vs, interpreters of his wil, our keepers and directours in religion, our interceffours, the carriers and offerers of our praiers to him, and mediatours vnto him vnder Chrifft. And for thefe caufes and for their great dignitie they are here and in other places of Scripture called Angels.

Angels Protec-
tours.

Bifhops and
Priefts are called
Angels.