

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 Epistles
to the
Churches.

The ¹Apocalypse of IESVS Chrif 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 Chrif, 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 Chrif 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.

^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.

⁹ I Iohn your brother and partaker in tribulation, and the Kingdom, and patience in Chrif IESVS, was ^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 candlesticks 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 fharp 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 hãd, and the feuen candlesticks of Gold. [♠]The

Sap. 18, 24.
podere

Efa. 41, 4.
44, 6.

^a Banished thither for religiō by Nero, or rather by Domitiã, 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 Chrif himself, but an Angel bearing Chriftes perfō; & vſing diuers ſpeeches proper to Chrif.

feuen ftarres, are ^athe Angels of the feuen Churches.
And ^athe feuen candlesticks, are the feuen Churches.

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 meafure 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 obfcurely spoken, to exercife the mind of the Reader: and yet some few things left eident that through them a man may with labour search out the rest. Specially for that the Authour fo 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 wife 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 purpofe, only or cheefely note vnto the ftudious, such places as may be vfed by Catholikes, or abufed by Heretikes, in the controuerfies of this time, and some other also that haue fpecial matter of edification, and that as briefely as may be, for that the volume groweth great.

4 To the 7. Churches.) That certaine numbers may be obserued as fignificatiue and myftical, it is plaine by many places of holy Scripture, and by the ancient Doctours fpecial noting of the same to many purpofes. Whereby we fee the rashnes of our Aduerfaries, in condemning generally al religious respect of certaine numbers in praiers, fafts, 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 fpecially dedicated to the Holy Ghof: and to appertaine to fpiritual mundation, as in the Prophets appointing of Naaman to wash

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

Numbers myftical.

The number of *Seuē* myftical: fpecially in this booke.

^a S. Irenæus alluding to this faith, *The Church euerywhere preacheth the truth, & this is the feuen-fold candlestick, bearing the light of Chrif &c. Li. 5. aduerf. hæc.*

feuen times in Iordan, and the fprinkling of the bloud feuen times againft the tabernacle. *li. 4. quæft. in numer. q. 33.* See *li. 5. c. 5. de Gen. ad lit. & l. 5. quæft. in Deuter. q. 42.* Al thefe vifions ftand vpon Seuens: Seuē Churches, feuen Angels, feuen ftarres, feuen fpirits, feuen candlefticks, feuen lamps, feuen trumpets, feuen vials, feuen hornes of the Lamb, feuen hilles, feuen thunders, feuen heads of the Dragon, fignifying the Diuel: feuen of the beaft, that is Antichrift: feuen of the beaft that the harlot rid vpon: finally the number alfo of the vifions is fpecially marked 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.

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*

God and our Ladie
faue vs, and the
like.

How al Chriftians
be both Kings &
Priests.

the multitude is of holy ones, and the Lord is in them. Why are you extolled ouer the people of the Lord? Num. 16.

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.

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: 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 prefcribed by God himfelf in the fecond commandement, yea and otherwife then he ordained in the firft creation, when he fanctified precifely the Sabbath day, & not the day following. Such great power did Chrifft leaue to his Church, and for fuch caufes gaue he the Holy Ghoft to be refident in it, to guide it into al truths, euen fuch as in the Scriptures are not expreffed. And if the Church had authoritie & infpiration from God, to make Sunday (being a worke-day before) an euerlafting holy-day, and the Saturday, that before was holy-day now a common worke-day: why may not the fame Church prefcribe & appoint the other holy feafts of Eafter, Whitfuntide, Chrifftmas, and the reft? For, the fame warrant she hath for the one, that she hath for the other.

Thirdly, it is to be noted that the caufe of this change was, for that now we Chriftians esteeming more our redemption, then our firft 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 rofe from death to life, which was the day after the Sabbath, being called by the Iewes, *vna* or *prima Sabbathi*, *the firft of or after the Sabbath. Mat. 28. Act 20. 1. Cor. 16.* Fourthly, it is to be marked that this holy-day by the Apoftles tradition alfo, was named *Dominus dies*, *our Lordes day*, or *the Dominike*. Which is alfo an old Ecclefiaftical word in our language. For the name Sunday is a heathenish calling, as al other of the week daies be in our language: fome impofed after the names of planets, as in the Romans time: fome by the name of certaine Idols that the Saxons did worship, and to which they dedicated theyr daies before they were Chriftians. Which names the Church vfeth not, but hath appointed to cal the firft day, *the Dominike*, after the Apoftle here; the other by the name of *Feries*, vntil the laft of the weeke, which she calleth by the old name, *Sabbath*, becaufe that was of God, and not by impofition of the Heathen. See the *marginal Annotation Luc. 24, 1.*

Difference of holy-daies and worke-daies.

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

Other feafts ordained by the Church.

As Saturday was in memorie of the creation fo Sunday of Chrifft's Refurrection.

The Church vfeth not the Heathenish names of daies, but, *Deis Domini-cus, feria, Sabatum.*

Laftly, obferue, that God reuealeth fuch 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 incenfe, & Cornelius (*Act. 10.*) when he was at his praiers the ninth houre, fo here, S. Iohn noteth that he had al the maruelous vifions vpon a Sunday.

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

13 Vefted in a Prieftly garment.) He appeared in a long garment or veftement proper vnto Priefts (for fo the word, *poderes*, doth fignifie, as *Sap. 18, 24.*) and that was moft agreeable for him that represented the Perfon of Chrifft the high Prieft, and appeared 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.*

Prieftly garments.

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 manifft as the light on a candlestick.

Mt. 5, 15.

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 manifft. 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 cariers 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 Protectours.

Bifhops and Priefts are called Angels.

Mal. 2, 7.