

Chapter 17

Horrible darkenes falling in Ægypt, 19. the reft of the world had ordinarie light.

Exo. 1. & 10.

For thy iudgements ô Lord are great, & thy wordes inexplicable, for this caufe the foules lacking difcipline haue erred. ² For whiles the wicked are perfwaded that they can rule ouer the holie nation: fettered with the bands of darknes, and ^a)long night, shut vp vnder roofes, they haue lyen fugitiues from the euerlafting prouidence. ³ And whiles they thincke that they lie hid in obfcure finnes, they were difperfed by the darke couert of obliuion, being horribly afrayd and difturbed with exceding admiration. ⁴ For neither did the denne that conteyned them, keepe them without feare: becaufe the found coming downe trubled them, and forowful vifions appearing to them, put them in feare. ⁵ And no force certes of the fyre could geue them light, neither could the clere flames of the ftarres lighten that horrible night. ⁶ But there appeared to them foden fyre, ful of feare: and being ftroken with the feare of that face, which was not fene, they eftemed the thinges that were fene to be worfe: ⁷ and there were added derifions of the magical art, and contumelious rebuke of the glorie of their wifdom. ⁸ For they which promifed that they would expel feares and pertubations from the languifhing foule, thefe with derifion languifhed ful of feare. ⁹ For although none of the monfters difturbed them: being moued with the paffing by of beafts, and hiffing of ferpents, they perished trembling: and denying that they faw the ayre, which by no meanes any man could auoyde. ¹⁰ For wheras wickednes is fearful, it geueth teftimonie of condemnation: for ^b)a trubled confcience doth alwayes prefume cruel thinges. ¹¹ For

^a Literally the Ægyptians had darknes three dayes together, *Exo. 10. v. 22.* Morally they & other gentiles vv ere in darknes vvithout faith in God, til Chrifts Refurrection the third day.

^b A trubled confcience is a great torment.

feare is nothing els but a bewraying of the aydes of cogitation. ¹² And whiles inwardly there is leffe expectation, the greater doth he count the ignorance of that caufe which maketh the torment. ¹³ But they that during the night in deede impotent, and coming vpon them from the loweft and higheft hel, flept the fame fleepe, ¹⁴ were fometime molested with the feare of monfters, fometime fayled by paffing away of the foule: for foden feare and vnlooked for came vpon them. ¹⁵ Moreouer if any of them had fallen downe, he was kept shut vp in prifon without yron. ¹⁶ For if one were a husbandman, or if a shepheard, or worker of the labours in the filde were fodenly taken, he fufteyned neceffitie ineuitable. ¹⁷ For with one chayne of darkenes they were al tyed together. Whether it were the hiffing winde, or among the thicke boughes of trees the fweete found of birdes, or the force of water running downward exceedingly, ¹⁸ or the mightie found of rockes tumbled headlong, or the running of playing beafts, that were not fene, or the mightie noyfe of roaring beaftes, or an Echo refounding from the higheft mountaynes: they made them fwoone for feare. ¹⁹ For ^aal the world was illuminated with a cleare light, & none was hindered in their workes. ²⁰ But ouer them onlie was layd an heauie night, the image of darkenes, which was to come vpon them. They therfore were vnto themfelues more heauie then the darknes.

^a This fignified the conuerfion of al nations to Chrift.