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OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
SEVENTH FORM
OF
ROMAN GOVERNMENT;
IN A
LETTER

TO THE
REVEREND HENRY KETT, B. D.

AUTHOR OF
HISTORY THE INTERPRETER OF PROPHECY.

BY A LAYMAN.

EGO SIC EXISTIMO: SI SINT EA GENERA DIVINANDI VERA,
DE QUIBUS ACCEPIMUS, QUÆQUE COLIMUS, ESSE DEOS:
VICISSIMQUE SI DII SINT ESSE QUI DIVINENT.

CICERO, De Divin. Lib. i. Cap. 5.

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TO THE REVEREND

HENRY KETT, B. D.

REVEREND SIR,

IT is scarcely to be supposed that you should have employed the labour and attention requisite to the accomplishment of your excellent work upon the Prophecies, without feeling deeply interested in the great subject of which it treats, and without being anxious to collect every ray of light which can be thrown upon that subject, however diminutive the luminary from which it may flow. Under this impression, I shall venture, without further preface, to offer to your consideration some observations relative to the seventh head of the beast, mentioned in the 17th chapter of the Revelations, and alluded to in the second volume of your work. If, however, in the following pages, some topics should be introduced, not immediately connected with that particular point, I trust that such irregularity will not be found to exceed the bounds of freedom allowed to the epistolary style. My object is not to establish a system, but to contribute an humble effort to the elucidation of the truth,

From the variety of meanings which have been assigned to the symbol of the seventh head, it appears that the interpretation of it has been attended with considerable difficulty, nor do I know of any one exposition to which plausible objections may not be raised: but as I am inclined to think that the explanation which you have adopted is among those to which the objections are not merely plausible, but sound, and that there is another to which the objections, though plausible, are, in truth, invalid, I shall endeavour to state my reasons for both these opinions in their order.

The interpreting angel thus explains to St. John the seven-headed beast, which had been presented to him in the vision: "And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh, he must continue a short space: and the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition (*a*)."
 Upon which interpretation you make this comment: "These seven kings denote the seven forms of Roman government—First, Kings; second, Consuls; third, Dictators; fourth, Decemvirs; fifth, Military Tribunes; sixth, Emperors; seventh, Gothic Kings and Exarchs of Ravenna; eighth, Popes (*b*)."

The sure word of prophecy, as it says nothing in vain; so does it leave nothing unsaid which is essentially necessary to make it applicable to historical fact. The minuteness of the circumstances to which the prophecies are often made to relate, gives rise to the principal difficulty in the interpretation of them: but as it is this very accuracy of application which affords the most valuable evidence of

(*a*) Rev. xvii. 10, 11.

(*b*) Kett, vol. ii. p. 147. note P. ed. i. Vol. i. p. 409. note Y. ed. ii.

their authenticity; it becomes the business of those who would expound the mysteries of holy writ, not to rest content with imperfect and ambiguous resemblances, but to search the histories of nations with the same assiduity that they search the scriptures; assured, that if the type relate to the times which they suppose, the anti-type will there be found. The mode which you have employed of selecting passages from profane historians, needs not my applause. Your citation (*c*) of the opinion of Prince Cantemir (*d*), respecting the decline of the Othman Empire, from the critical period fore-ordained by revelation; and the manner in which you have judged Gibbon, out of his own mouth, will be remembered with gratitude by the Christian world. For my own part, I am almost disposed to think that the latter has done more for the cause of revelation than any single commentator upon the prophecies of any age or nation. Let the Christian scholar, while he reads Gibbon in the one hand, but hold fast his Bible with the other, and the mystery which veils a great part of the writings of the New Testament will gradually unfold itself, and, in proportion as his knowledge is extended, his faith will be confirmed. If it were necessary to adduce instances of the precision of prophecy, the histories of Persia, and of the successors of Alexander, would furnish ample materials: but it will be more applicable to the point before us, to observe, that the five first heads of the beast relate to the only five forms of government under which Rome had exercised dominion previous to the establishment of the empire. However

(*c*) Kett; vol. ii. p. 284, 285. ed. i. Vol. ii. p. 90. ed. ii.

(*d*) Hist. Othman, Emp. Part i. Book iii. Chap. xii. Sec. 19.

short or fluctuating the duration of each form, it was shadowed out in the prophetic vision by a distinct head. Besides the monarchy, the consulate, the dictatorship, the decemvirate, and the tribuneship, no legal form of government existed in Rome from its foundation to the accession of Augustus. The office of interrex, before the establishment of the consulate, was altogether a part of the elective monarchy: and after that time was nothing more than that of returning officer at the election of a new magistrate, in the place of one who was deceased (*e*); and was therefore to be considered in a very different light from that of the dictator, whose authority superseded the power both of the consuls and the tribunes. Nor was the triumvirate of Octavianus, Anthony, and Lepidus, (the only triumvirate which had any pretensions to constitutional authority) to be put upon a footing with the decemvirate: the latter having been created by the deliberate and united voice of the senate and the people, in a period of foreign and domestic tranquillity (*f*), while the usurpation of the former was ratified *flagrante bello civili*, with a victorious army in the heart of the city, but a few days after one massacre, and upon the very eve of another (*g*). By the agitation of contending parties, the republican government was dissolved; but no other government was established, or generally submitted to, until Octavianus extinguished the flames of war, and united, in his own person, the dominion of the Roman world, by the naval victory at Actium: soon after which, the se-

(*e*) Adam's Roman Antiq. p. 101, 107. ed. ii.

(*f*) Liv. Lib. iii. cap. xxxii, xxxiii.

(*g*) Anc. Uni. Hist. Chap. 1. Vol. 12. p. 50—53. 8vo. ed.

nate refused his proffered resignation, and invested him with the titles of Emperor and Augustus.

Thus, it appears, that the only five forms of Roman government which had fallen when St. John wrote, were separately described to him. With respect to these, there was no confusion, no blending together of things which the histories of the times shew to have been different. Upon what ground, then, is it to be contended (unless upon the impious supposition that the future is less clearly seen by the divine Author of revelation than the past), that the seventh head was intended to include not only the governments of two distinct, and even hostile powers, but two *forms* of government, at least as different in their natures from each other, as any two which had preceded in the history of Rome?

If the kings of Italy, and the exarchs of Ravenna, are to be considered as one form of government, because they agreed in one characteristic, namely, their subordination to the Emperor, then must be included under the same form every delegated government which existed in Rome after the removal of the royal palace to Nicomedia; as well the authority of the Augusti (*b*) established by Dioclesian, as that of the Municipal Prefects, who, upon the cessation of the Augusti in the reign of Constantine, were responsible to the Emperor alone (*i*). But this construction will hardly be contended for by any expositor, as it would necessarily suppose the extinction of the empire, or sixth head, as early as the reign of Dioclesian.

If, on the other hand, it be allowed, that the authority of the Emperors so far ceased in the western provinces,

(*b*) Gibbon, chap. xiii. vol. ii. p. 168. 8vo. ed. 1797.

(*i*) Ibid. chap. xvii. vol. iii. p. 43—45.

upon the resignation of Augustulus, as to make the kingdom of Italy of sufficient consequence to be deemed a new form of Roman government, yet this consideration is in no respect applicable to the exarchs, who were the mere representatives or delegates of the Emperor. And even if we should go one step further, and concede (what history does not warrant) that the immediate interference of the Emperor during the exarchate, was not openly displayed or felt in Italy, yet as the Ostrogothic kingdom, and the exarchate of Ravenna were fundamentally different in their constitutions, they ought to be considered as separate and distinct forms of government, and should of course have been shadowed out by different heads. To shew that they differed fundamentally, it may be sufficient to observe, that the Ostrogothic kingdom was an hereditary monarchy, though possibly subject to the Emperor, as feudal sovereign, or liege lord (*j*); while the exarchs were invested with their office or superseded, at the pleasure of the Byzantine court. Theodoric, “ though he

(*j*) Though the feudal law was first reduced to a system by the Lombards (Craig. jus feud. lib. i. tit. vi. sec. 1—5.) there is reason to believe that fiefs were known in some parts of Europe before the irruption of that tribe into Italy. (Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec. 2. vol. xvii. p. 441. note.) It is not therefore impossible that Theodoric may have received his kingdom of Zeno to be held as an imperial fief. This indeed is not very probable, since a feudal sovereign would scarcely have omitted to leave some monuments of subinfeudation; and we have no account of fiefs in Italy before the time of Autharis, king of the Lombards (Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec. 1. vol. xvii. p. 374.) who (A. D. 585.) being raised to the throne after a ten years interregnum,

declined the name, the purple and the diadem of the Emperors, assumed, under the hereditary title of King, the whole substance and plenitude of imperial prerogative (*k*).”
 “ Having completed the conquest of Italy after three years siege, he was proclaimed king of that country, without waiting for the return of ambassadors, whom he had sent to Constantinople for the ensigns of royalty. However, he dispatched two persons of rank to solicit the Emperor’s approbation, and excuse the liberty he had taken. Anastasius received his excuses, promised not to molest him in the possession of the country he had conquered, and sent him the ensigns of the royal dignity (*l*).”

permitted the dukes of the different cities within his kingdom to continue in their governments, but took an oath of them, that in time of war they would cheerfully assist him to the utmost of their power (Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec 2. vol. xvii. p. 441). Gibbon (chap. xxxix. vol. vii. p. 11.) after comparing Jornandes, Procopius, the Valesian fragment, and Theophanes, concludes that it was left doubtful by the commission of Zeno, whether Theodoric should reign as the lieutenant, the vassal, or the ally of the emperor of the East. It seems however to be clear, from the conduct both of Theodoric and his immediate successor, that they acknowledged no right of control in the Byzantine court (Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec. 1. vol. xvii. p. 376, 377, 383, 384.). Nor does any such right appear to have been claimed until the time of Justinian (ib. p. 389, 392.). The Goths then insisted on their right of conquest (ib. p. 393.) and a bloody contest ensued, which, after a struggle of near twenty years, terminated in the extinction of the Ostrogothic kingdom (ib. p. 393 to 435).

(*k*) Gibbon, chap. xxxix. vol vii. p. 27.

(*l*) Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxiv. vol. xiv. p. 446.

“Both Zeno, and his successor Anastasius, acknowledged Theodoric king of Italy, not only allowing him to wear the royal ensigns, but transferring to him all their claims and rights (*m*).” On the other hand, Longinus, the first exarch, was recalled by the Emperor Tiberius to make room for Zamaragdus, whose military talents were thought more competent to the task of expelling the Lombards from Italy (*n*): Zamaragdus was afterwards displaced in favour of Romanus (*o*); and again restored after the death of Callinicus, who had succeeded Romanus (*p*). Thus, *quâcunq; viâ datâ*, if the argument of resemblance be founded on the subordination of both governments to the Emperor, it proves too much; if we consider both governments as independent, the resemblance is not made out.

Nor is the prophecy applicable to either of these powers taken separately. It is admitted (in words at least) by the note in your work, and indeed it appears from the context of 17th chapter of the Revelations, that the seven heads or kings denote seven forms of *Roman* government. It is expressly said in the last verse, that the woman who sat upon the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, “is that great *city* which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” If then each of the seven heads be intended to denote some form of *Roman* government, that is, some form in which the *city of Rome* exercised dominion, how can it be said with plausibility, that the reign of a foreigner, a barbarian, who was not only averse to the arts, and ignorant of the language of the Romans, but whose policy it was to perpetuate the separation of the Italians and

(*m*) Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec. 1. vol. xvii. p. 371.

(*n*) Ibid. sec. 2. p. 439, 440.

(*o*) Ibid. 446.

(*p*) Ibid. 447.

the Goths (*q*), may be considered as a form of Roman government? As well may the dynasties of the Visigoths and the Heruli be so considered: the former of which retained possession of Italy for a period of four years, from the invasion of Alaric to the voluntary retreat of Adolphus (*r*), and the latter for fourteen, from the resignation of Augustulus to the capitulation of Odoacer (*s*). Add to this, that Rome was not the capital, or even the city of second consequence in the Ostrogothic kingdom. The royal palace of Theodoric, and of his successors, was at Ravenna; and the second place, in the scale of importance, on account of its military strength and convenience, was occupied by Verona (*t*). If, in answer to the last objection, it be urged, that the sixth head continued to subsist while the seat of the imperial government was at Nicomedia, or Constantinople, or Milan, or Ravenna, it may be replied, that so long as Rome continued to enjoy privileges, and derive importance from the government to which she had given birth, her dominion remained. But Rome was now subject to a foreign yoke. And if any circumstances could render the government of a foreigner the government of Rome, they must be nothing less than his making Rome the metropolis of his kingdom, and adopting the character of a Roman.

After what has been said, little more can be necessary to shew that the exarchate of Ravenna was no form of government under which Rome exercised dominion, than to cite the following passages.

“ Three *subordinate provinces* of Rome, of Venice, and of Naples, acknowledged both in peace and war the su-

(*q*) Gibbon, chap. xxxix. vol. vii. p. 19.

(*r*) Ibid. chap. xxxi. vol. v. p. 327.

(*s*) Ibid. chap. xxxvi. vol. vi. p. 237.

(*t*) Ibid. chap. xxxix. vol. vii. p. 33.

premacv of the exarch (*u*).” “The city of Rome was not more honoured than any other; for Longinus having abolished the very name of senate and consuls, appointed a magistrate over that metropolis, with the title of Duke, common to the governors of other cities (*v*).” “Rome was oppressed by the iron sceptre of the exarchs, and a Greek, perhaps an eunuch, insulted with impunity the ruins of the capitol (*w*).”

Let it be remembered also, that upon the heads of the beast were written the names of blasphemy (*x*); and no exception is made in favour of the seventh. Perhaps the true paraphrase of the words “heads of the beast,” is this: forms of government under which Rome, in a state of idolatry, exercised dominion. If this paraphrase be just, we are furnished with another reason why neither the kingdom of Italy, or the exarchate of Ravenna, can be considered individually or collectively as the seventh head. For both the Ostrogothic kings, and the exarchs were Christians. And though the former, indeed, were Arians, yet this circumstance seems scarcely sufficient to characterize them with the strong epithet of “blasphemous;” especially when it is considered, that the impiety which justifies its application to the first six heads, consists rather in giving to the creature the worship which is due to the Creator only, than in withholding from the Creator any part of the honour to which he is justly entitled. Moreover, the heresy of the Ostrogoths was confined to their own breasts. The Catholic was not persecuted, and the Arian was not restrained from

(*u*) Gibbon, chap. xlv. vol. viii. p. 146.

(*v*) Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec. 1. vol. xvii. p. 437.

(*w*) Gibbon, chap. xlv. vol. viii. p. 147.

(*x*) Rev. xiii. 1.

abjuring his errors (*y*). Perhaps, upon the whole, the religion of the Roman people was never less debased by superstitious rites than during the period of the Ostrogothic kingdom; idolatry having been abolished by Theodosius, a century (*z*) before the commencement of that dynasty in the person of Theodoric (*a*), and not having been again authorized by the Romish Church until more than half a century (*b*) after its extinction by the victory of Narfes, and the death of Teias (*c*).

In order to fix with precision the rise of the seventh head, it becomes material to consider with attention the description in the 13th chapter of the Revelations, of the deadly wound which was inflicted on the beast. "And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed, and all the world wondered after the beast (*d*)."
From the application of the possessive pronoun "his," to the deadly wound that was healed, it may be inferred, that the head which received the wound was not to be healed, but that the healing was to be effected by the rise of another. For, had it been intended that the wounded head should recover, the expression would have been "*its* deadly wound was healed." But what the English translation enables us faintly to perceive, the correct idiom of the Greek puts almost beyond a doubt. Καὶ εἶδον μίαν τῶν κεφαλῶν αὐτοῦ ὡς ἐσφαγμένην εἰς θάνατον· καὶ ἡ πληγὴ τῆς θανάτου αὐτοῦ ἐθεραπεύθη, καὶ ἐθαυμάσθη ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ γῆ ὀπίσω τῆς θηρίας. Now the substantive κεφαλή being feminine, the expression ἡ πληγὴ τῆς θανάτου αὐτοῦ, can have no re-

(*y*) Gibbon, chap. xxxix. vol. vii. p. 36, 37. Anc. Uni. Hist. chap. lxxxvi. sec. 1. vol. xvii. p. 374.

(*z*) A. D. 390. Gibbon, chap. xxviii. vol. v. p. 117.

(*a*) A. D. 493. Gibbon, chap. xxxix. vol. vii. p. 16.

(*b*) A. D. 607. See postea. p. 19. et seq.

(*c*) A. D. 553. Gibbon, chap. xliii. vol. vii. p. 389, 392.

(*d*) Ver. 3.

ference to it: the demonstrative pronoun *αυτε* clearly agreeing with *θηριον*, which is neuter. Had the wounded head been intended to recover, the obvious expression would have been, *η παληγη τε θανατοι αυτης*. I take it therefore to be clear, that the wound was to occasion the fall of one head, and the healing of the wound was to give rise to another. But as seven heads only are mentioned, and the sixth was in existence when St. John saw the vision, it follows, that the wound was to be inflicted on the sixth head, and to be healed at the rising of the seventh. From the words, "*his* deadly wound," or, "the wound of his death," which is the literal translation, we further learn that the wound was not only to cause the extinction of the sixth head, but, for a time, to deprive the beast itself of the energies of life. And this idea is confirmed by the account of the effects which the healing of the wound produced. "And all the world wondered after the beast." Such was the magnitude of the wound, and so lifeless did the beast appear, that his revival filled all the world with wonder; and the nations, fascinated by his unexpected appearance, flocked after him in stupid admiration. The strong figures, employed in the preceding chapter to express the defeat of the dragon, very well agree with the short but emphatic expression of the "deadly wound," and are clearly to be taken in aid of it. The power of Satan, in the Roman state, is there represented by a dragon with seven heads. "And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent which is called the Devil and Satan, which de-

ceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him (e).³ So complete was the discomfiture of the idolatrous powers, that not a vestige of their force remained upon the field of battle. It is necessary, however, again to notice a slight ambiguity in the English translation. To say that "the place of the dragon was not found *any more* in heaven," not only imports, that after his defeat his power and dominion were extinguished, but asserts that he was never afterwards in a situation to renew the contest with the celestial champion of the true church; whereas the Greek *ἔτι τόπος εὐρέθη αὐτῶν ἐτι ἐν τῷ ἔρανω*, only asserts the former, and should have been rendered, "neither was their place *any longer* found in heaven." By the context of the 12th and 13th chapters then, the reader is led to suppose, that the extinction of the sixth head would be followed by some signal alteration in the state of Rome. That her population, her opulence, her splendour, would be so far diminished, the salubrity of the air, and of the waters, so far impaired, the spirit of her people so far broken, and their character so far debased, as to induce a general belief, that even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbour cities, the ancient capital of the world would be swept with the besom of destruction, and that as its fall would be dreadful, so would it be irreparable, like the falls of Nineveh and Babylon.

It is the general opinion, and I am not disposed to controvert it, that the deadly wound was inflicted by Odoacer, A. D. 476. Now, if the seventh head commenced with the accession of Theodoric, it follows, from what has been already said, that the deadly wound was then healed; and consequently we are to look for all its

(e) Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9.

dreadful effects in the usurpation of Odoacer. But do we find this revolution accompanied with any circumstances peculiarly distressing either to the people or the city of Rome? Augustulus resigned the empire without resistance: the dominion of Italy passed from his hands to those of Odoacer, with less injury either to public or private happiness than had attended many changes of the diadem from one Emperor to another (*f*): and the reign of the king of the Heruli exhibits a picture of justice, of moderation and of attention to the welfare of his subjects, which is scarcely surpassed by those of a Titus, a Trajan, or an Antonine (*g*). But was there no period at which the consequences of the wound were felt? The barbarian monarchs indeed swayed the usurped sceptre of Italy with a politic and lenient hand: yet, by their invasion, were sown the seeds of all those calamities which fully justify the strong language of the prophecy. The numerous and ferocious contests of the different tribes among each other, and the almost constant warfare which they maintained with the imperial forces, desolated the once favoured plains of Italy, depressed her cities, and diminished her population. Besides the neglect and consequent abasement which Rome sustained during her subjection to the Ostrogoths, she endured severities of a more immediate kind. Five times was Rome taken and retaken during the reign of Justinian alone (*h*). The attendant horrors are more easily conceived than expressed. “The barbarian allies of Narses too frequently confounded the privileges of peace and war: the despair of the flying Goths found some consolation in sanguinary revenge: and three hundred youths of the noblest families, who had been sent as

(*f*) Gibbon, chap. xxxvi. vol. vi. p. 221—230.

(*g*) Ibid. p. 232, 233.

(*h*) Ibid. chap. xliii. vol. vii. p. 388.

hostages beyond the Po, were inhumanly slain by the successor of Totila. The fall of the senate suggests an awful lesson of the vicissitude of human affairs. Of the senators whom Totila had banished from their country, some were rescued by an officer of Belisarius, and transported from Campania to Sicily, while others were too guilty to confide in the clemency of Justinian, or too poor to provide horses for their escape to the sea shore. Their brethren languished five years in a state of indigence and exile: the victory of Narfes revived their hopes; but their premature return to the metropolis was prevented by the furious Goths; and all the fortresses of Campania were stained with Patrician blood (*i*).” But Rome did not reach the lowest period of her depression till the time of the exarchate. In the following melancholy picture it will be easy to trace all, and more than all, the circumstances which might be expected from the language of the Apostle. “ Amidst the arms of the Lombards, and under the despotism of the Greeks, we again inquire into the fate of Rome, which had reached about the close of the sixth century, the lowest period of her depression. By the removal of the seat of empire, and the successive loss of the provinces, the sources of public and private opulence were exhausted; the lofty tree, under whose shade the nations of the earth had reposed, was deprived of its leaves and branches, and the sapless trunk was left to wither on the ground. The ministers of command, and the messengers of victory no longer met on the Appian, or Flaminian Way; and the hostile approach of the Lombards was often felt, and continually feared. The inhabitants of a potent and peaceful capital, who visit without an anxious thought the garden of the

(*i*) Ibid. et seq.

adjacent country, will faintly picture in their fancy the distress of the Romans: they shut or opened their gates with a trembling hand, beheld from their walls the flames of their houses, and heard the lamentations of their brethren, who were coupled together like dogs, and dragged away into distant slavery beyond the sea and mountains. Such incessant alarms must annihilate the pleasures, and interrupt the labours of a rural life, and the Campagna of Rome was speedily reduced to the state of a dreary wilderness, where the land is barren, the waters are impure, and the air is infectious. Curiosity and ambition no longer attracted the nations to the capital of the world: but if chance or necessity directed the steps of a wandering stranger, he contemplated with horror the vacancy and solitude of the city, and might be tempted to ask, where is the senate, and where are the people? In a season of excessive rains, the Tyber swelled above its banks, and rushed with irresistible violence into the valleys of the seven hills. A pestilential disease arose from the stagnation of the deluge, and so rapid was the contagion, that fourscore persons expired in an hour in the midst of a solemn procession which implored the mercy of heaven. A society in which marriage is encouraged, and industry prevails, soon repairs the accidental losses of pestilence and war: but as the far greater part of the Romans was condemned to hopeless indigence and celibacy, the depopulation was constant and visible, and the gloomy enthusiasts might expect the approaching failure of the human race. Yet the number of citizens still exceeded the measure of subsistence: their precarious food was supplied from the harvests of Sicily or Egypt: and the frequent repetition of famine betrays the inattention of the Emperor to a *distant province*. The edifices of Rome were exposed to the same ruin and decay: the mouldering fabrics were easily overthrown by inundations, tempests,

and earthquakes, and the monks, who had occupied the most advantageous stations, exulted in their base triumph over the ruins of antiquity (*k*).” Surely this was a state of degradation which might call for the strongest figures which prophetic eloquence could supply. At this period the place of Rome was no longer found among the principalities of the earth: and the wound which she had received was such as might induce the nations to believe that it was even unto death. “ Like Thebes, or Babylon, or Carthage, the name of Rome might have been erased from the earth, if the *city* had not been animated by a vital principle which again restored her to honour and dominion (*l*).” This was the principle of idolatry: and, by the mighty influence of that principle, according to the sure word of prophecy, the deadly wound was healed.

The introduction of pictures and images into churches, by *way of ornament*, though much opposed by the orthodox bishops in the fifth century, obtained universally in the sixth (*m*). The *worship* of images, however, was still forbidden (*n*); but the *use* of them, by way of helps to the memory, and instruction to the ignorant, was recommended (*o*). In the beginning of the seventh century, A. D. 601, Gregory the Great, then Pope, or Bishop of Rome, wrote two letters to Severus, Bishop of Marseilles, who had caused all the images in his diocese to be broken, because the people had begun to worship them. “ We commend your zeal,” says he in the first, “ in not allowing images, or any thing that was made with hands, to be worshipped; but we cannot approve your zeal in breaking them, since images were set up in churches,

(*k*) Gibbon, chap. xlv. vol. viii. p. 158, 159, 160.

(*l*) Ibid. p. 161.

(*m*) Bower's Hist. of Popes, vol. iii. p. 230.

(*n*) Ibid.

(*o*) Ibid. p. 232.

that the ignorant may see on the walls what they are not capable of reading in books : you should therefore have preserved them for that purpose, and been satisfied with restraining the people from worshipping them. Thus the illiterate would have been instructed in history, and would not have sinned in giving them worship (*p*).” In the second letter, he says, “ It is one thing to adore an image, and another to learn from an image what is to be adored (*q*).” From the pontificate of Gregory I. we hear no more of the censure either of images, or image worship by the Church of Rome. The zealous and indefatigable Bower (*r*), who seems to have spared neither

(*p*) Bower's Hist. of Popes, vol. iii. p. 234.

(*q*) Ibid.

(*r*) It may not be known to every one, that Archibald Bower was once Counsellor of the Inquisition, and a zealous champion of the Roman See ; that he engaged in writing his history with the express view of establishing the supremacy of the Pope ; but that the materials which he collected for that purpose having convinced him of his error, he became a proselyte to the opinion which he proposed to confute, and sincerely abjured that which he had ignorantly undertaken to defend. Impressed by a sense of duty, he afterwards revised, completed, and published his laborious work, under the pious hope that the body of evidence which had overcome the prejudices both of education and interest in himself, would operate with equal force upon the deluded understandings of others. (See the Preface.) A rare instance in the history of man of candour, and zeal united !—Let me not be deemed presumptuous for paying this unavailing tribute to one whose character is above mortal praise, and whose reward is of another world. By dwelling on the actions of virtuous men, we strengthen our own attachment to virtue : and in the hope that I may profit by contemplating the example

ingenuity or research upon this subject, offers the following conjecture respecting the introduction of that worship into the church. "As about the middle of the seventh century we begin to read of wondrous things performed by images, of victories obtained by their means, of distempers cured by applying them to the part affected, &c. we may well conclude, that if they were not then commonly worshipped, they were at least looked upon as something more than helps to the memory, and books for the ignorant. Some are of opinion, and their opinion is not ill grounded, that it was during the famous dispute concerning the will and operations of Christ, which was moved 626, and carried on with great warmth till the end of that century, that the worship of images began to obtain; the bishops being too much taken up in determining so important a point, to restrain or correct the abuses which, during that time, crept into their churches. However that be, certain it is, that though in the beginning of the seventh century images were by no means allowed to be worshipped as we have seen, they were nevertheless commonly and publicly worshipped in the beginning of the eighth; nay, and that some of the chief bishops of the church, instead of destroying them, as Serenus had done, when they found they were worshipped, or teaching their people agreeably to the doctrine of Gregory, that images were set up only for instruction, began to teach the quite contrary doctrine, and even to pretend, so utterly were they unacquainted with the practice and doctrine of all preceding ages, that the worship of images was enjoined by the apostles, and of Bower, I will pause a moment to give honour to his memory.

*His saltem accumulæ donis, et fungar inani
Munere!*

had, ever since the apostolic age, been constantly practised by the Catholic Church (s).” The very learned digression in which the above conjecture is contained, was expressly introduced by Bower, with a view to controvert the opinion entertained and propagated by some of the chief bishops in the beginning of the eighth century, “that the practice of setting up and worshipping images had ever been approved by the church (t).” It is therefore fairly to be inferred, that the bias of the author’s mind would naturally lead him to place the origin of that practice at as late a period in the history of the church as the evidence would authorize him to do. He allows that it may have commenced soon after the year 626: but he adduces no very satisfactory reason why it may not have taken place before that year; and circumstances seem to justify our fixing its commencement at a period about twenty years earlier. That the worship of images and pictures was censured by Gregory the Great, we have already seen: but that he strongly recommended the use of them, has equally been shewn. It may easily be conceived what an effect the constant presence of images and pictures in the house of prayer must have produced upon an ignorant and superstitious people; a people scarcely emerged from the grossness of Pagan idolatry, and inhabiting a city where the vestiges of Pagan rites presented themselves at every step. The pageantry (u) also which Gregory introduced into the service of the church, the sacerdotal vestments, the magnificent processions, and the canon of the mass, all tended to bring back the mind to the contemplation of

(s) Bower, vol. iii. p. 236.

(t) Ibid. p. 202.

(u) Mosheim, Cent. vi. part ii. chap iv. sec. 3. Gibbon, chap. xlv. vol. viii. p. 165.

corporeal objects. Nor must we forget, that in the sixth century the practice had commenced of raising temples in every village, and instituting festivals upon a Pagan model; as the means of purchasing the favour and protection of the saints (*v*). The mind of Gregory might be able to distinguish between bowing *before* the image, and bowing *to* it; his memory might be refreshed, or his devotion warmed by contemplating an emblem of the real object of his worship: but those whose minds were scarcely competent to embrace the sublime idea of spiritual being, would not fail to pay their adoration to the material substance, as soon as it should be presented to them by their priests. The lamentable description which Mosheim (*w*) gives both of the superior and inferior clergy, affords little ground for thinking that they resisted the progress of the delusion, or even were exempt from it themselves. And as we find nothing in the characters of the immediate successors of Gregory which shews them to have been more watchful, or more enlightened than the body from which they were taken, we are certainly not excluded from supposing that the worship of images may have formed a part of the ritual of the Romish Church as early as the pontificate of Boniface III. which commenced in the month of February, A. D. 607. Making every allowance for ignorance and bigotry, it will hardly be thought too great a concession, that a practice, which was generally asserted in the beginning of the eighth century to have been in use ever since the apostolic age, was actually adopted by the church in the beginning of the seventh. Accordingly we find one fact, which nearly establishes the point. “ Boniface III. died on the 20th November 607, and in

(*v*) Mosheim; Cent. vi. part ii. chap. iv. sec. 4.

(*w*) Cent. vi. part. ii. chap. ii. sec. 3. Cent. vii. part ii. chap. i. sec. 2. and chap. ii. sec. 3.

his room was chosen and ordained, on the 25th August 608, Boniface the fourth of that name. The new Pope availing himself of the partiality of Phocas (the Emperor) to his see, begged of him the famous Pantheon; and, having obtained it, he changed it into a church, substituting the Mother of God to the Mother of the Gods, and the Christian martyrs to the other Pagan deities adored there before, so that only the names of the idols were altered (x)."

The historian of the Decline and Fall of the Empire places the æra of Rome's second rise to power and dominion at the commencement of the seventh century (y). And it is not a little remarkable that he considers the vital principle by which this extraordinary revolution was effected to have been a superstitious veneration for inanimate objects. "A vague tradition was embraced that two Jewish teachers, a tent-maker, and a fisherman" (the apostles St. Paul and St. Peter), "had formerly been executed in the Circus of Nero, and at the end of five hundred years their genuine or fictitious relics were adored as the palladium of Christian Rome. The pilgrims of the East and West resorted to the holy threshold (z)." The priests did not fail to extol the merits of visiting the sacred shrines, or to adduce instances of their miraculous effects. Those who performed the pious task exaggerated the object of their journey,

(x) Bower, vol. iv. p. 1. According to Gibbon (chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 116.) "The use, and even the worship of images was firmly established before the end of the sixth century." Nothing, therefore, seems to have been wanting but the sanction of the Roman pontif, and this probably was no longer withheld after the death of Gregory the Great.

(y) Gibbon, chap. xlv. vol. viii. p. 161.

(z) Ibid.

and the circumstances which prevented others from following their example, only tended to increase their credulity. Curiosity and superstition combined in rendering Rome a place of general resort: and while the concourse of strangers increased the opulence of her citizens, the influence of public opinion again raised her to pre-eminence in the scale of cities.

At this period of general fascination, therefore, we ought to look for the rise of the seventh form of Roman government; and history does not disappoint our expectations. The dominion exercised by Boniface III, and his immediate successors in the see of Rome, under the title of Universal Bishops, whether considered with respect to its extent of jurisdiction or degree of power, is fully entitled to the denomination of a Roman government.

Though the Bishop of Rome had always enjoyed the precedence of rank among the patriarchs of the empire, and far exceeded his brethren in wealth and magnificence (*a*), yet the residence of the Bishop of Constantinople at the metropolis afforded opportunities of courting the Imperial favour, which he had not failed to improve to his advantage. The Emperor Constantine first raised him to the rank of patriarch (*b*); and Theodosius, A. D. 381, gave him rank immediately after the Bishop of Rome, to the prejudice of the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch (*c*). In the following century, the aspiring favourite reduced under his jurisdiction the two latter patriarchs, as prelates of the second order; even invaded the diocese of the Roman Pontif, and spoiled him of several provinces (*d*): and in the sixth century, he

(*a*) Mosheim, Cent. iv. part ii. chap. ii. sec. 5.

(*b*) Ibid. sec. 7. (*c*) Ibid.

(*d*) Mosheim, Cent. v. part ii. chap. ii. sec. 5.

not only claimed an unrivalled sovereignty over the eastern churches, but maintained that his church, in point of dignity, was no way inferior to that of Rome (*e*). The rising importance of the Byzantine see had long excited the jealousy of the Roman Pontifs; and its ambitious projects were always vigorously, and often successfully opposed (*f*). But the indignation, perhaps the Christian zeal, of the bishops of Rome, broke forth without restraint, when the Bishop of Constantinople, A. D. 588, by the authority of a great council held at the capital for the trial of the patriarch of Antioch, assumed the title of Œcumenical, or Universal Bishop (*g*). Pelagius II (*h*), and Gregory the Great (*i*), remonstrated in the severest terms against a title which they styled "heretical, blasphemous, and antichristian." Eulogius, of Alexandria, with a view to appease the resentment of Gregory, addressed him with the same title which his rival had assumed. But Gregory disclaimed it with a degree of horror, and treated the assumption of it, by any member of the church, as amounting to a claim of unlimited spiritual dominion. "If you call me Universal Pope," says he, "you acknowledge yourself to be no Pope (*j*)." The patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, he considered as his equals (*k*); and took upon himself the style of the "Servant of the servants of God (*l*)," while he boldly pronounced to the Patriarch of Constantinople, that "whoever calls himself Universal Bishop, or desires to be so called in the

(*e*) Mosheim, Cent. vi. part ii. chap. ii. sec. 1.

(*f*) Ibid. Cent. v. part ii. chap. ii. sec. 6. Cent. vi. part. ii. chap. ii. sec. 2.

(*g*) Bower, vol. ii. p. 458, 459.

(*h*) Ibid.

(*i*) Ibid. p. 507.

(*j*) Ibid. p. 517.

(*k*) Ibid. p. 516.

(*l*) Ibid. p. 518.

pride of his heart, is the forerunner of Antichrist (*m*).” Received opinions, though often erroneous in respect of facts; afford valuable evidence of the general character of times and seasons. Perhaps we shall not find many observations in history more true than this, that Gregory was the last bishop of Rome (*n*). Boniface III. having ascended the chair of St. Peter, A. D. 607, disregarded the real or affected humility of his predecessors; and taking advantage of the antipathy of the tyrant Phocas to Cyriacus, then patriarch of Constantinople, he not only obtained a reversal of the decree of 588, but procured another, vesting in himself and his successors, the title of “Universal Bishop,” and declaring the Bishop of Rome “Head of the whole Catholic Church.” It is generally believed that the Bishop of Constantinople derived no accession of power from the title which he had assumed. But Boniface had scarce obtained it, when he took upon himself to exercise a jurisdiction and power to that time unheard of in the Catholic Church. No sooner was the imperial edict investing him with the title of Universal Bishop, and declaring him head of the church, brought to Rome, than, assembling a council in the Basilic of St. Peter, he acted there as if he had not been invested with the title alone (though Phocas probably meant to grant him no more) but with all the authority of a supreme head, or rather absolute monarch of the church. For, by a decree which he issued in that council, it was pronounced, declared, and defined, that no election of a bishop should thenceforth be deemed lawful and good, unless confirmed by the Pope interposing his authority in the following terms:

(*m*) Bower, vol. ii. p. 515.

(*n*) Ibid. p. 540.

We, will and command, *volumus et jubemus* (o). From this period the Universal Bishop omitted no opportunity of augmenting, by threats or persuasion, by fraud or by force, his spiritual jurisdiction. Encouraged by submission, and not deterred by opposition, he persisted to extend his usurpations, and the sacred right of the god Terminus was again adopted as the fundamental principle of Roman policy.

Many circumstances contributed to facilitate the elevation of the see of Rome. Britain, Gaul, Germany, Spain, and a great part of Italy, had either asserted their independence, or submitted to a barbarian yoke. As these provinces had never been subject to the Patriarch of Constantinople, whatever power or importance was to be derived from their conversion, not only resulted to the Bishop of Rome, but was secure from the pretensions of his rival. The progress of Christianity in the west had been very considerable during the sixth century, and much of its success is to be attributed to the Roman missionaries (p). These persons laboured with unremitting zeal to bring the doctrine and practice of the western churches into strict conformity to the Roman model: and we find very early instances of the success with which their exertions were attended. Oswi, king of Northumberland, summoned a council at Whitby, in Yorkshire, A. D. 664, to determine the controversy relative to the celebration of Easter. "The Scotch orators maintained that their manner of celebrating Easter was prescribed by St. John, the beloved disciple; and the Romanists affirmed, with equal confidence, that theirs

(o) Bower, vol. ii. p. 546, 547, 548.

(p) Mosheim, Cent. vi. part i. chap. i. sec. 2. also Henry Hist. Great Brit. Book ii. chap. ii. sec. 2. vol. iii. p. 190. et seq. 8vo. ed. 1788.

was instituted by St. Peter, the prince of the Apostles and the door-keeper of Heaven. Oswi was struck with this last circumstance, and both parties acknowledging that Peter kept the keys of Heaven, the king declared that he was determined not to offend the celestial porter upon any account, but to observe all his institutions to the utmost of his power, for fear he should turn his back upon him when he came to the gate of Heaven" (*q*). In the council of Harford, A. D. 673, Theodore (*r*), Archbishop of Canterbury, "produced a copy of the canons which he had brought with him from Rome, and pointed out ten of them which were peculiarly necessary to be observed in order to establish a perfect uniformity among all the English churches, to which he demanded and obtained the consent of all the members" (*s*). Not long after this "the Pope sent John, precentor of St. Peter's, into England, to examine the sentiments of the English churches concerning the heresy of the Monothelites, which made a mighty noise. Theodore, to satisfy the Pope in this particular, summoned a synod to meet at Hatfield, September 15, A. D. 680, in which a confession of the faith of the church of England (which was perfectly orthodox) was drawn up and transmitted to Rome" (*t*). The ambitious claims of the Roman Pontiffs

(*q*) Henry, *ibid.* p. 204, 205.

(*r*) Wigart, Archbishop of Canterbury elect, having been sent to Rome for consecration by the kings of Kent and Northumberland, died there of the plague. Upon which Pope Vitalian (A. D. 668.) by his own authority, made choice of Theodore, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and having consecrated him instead of Wighart, sent him to England. Henry, *ibid.* p. 206.

(*s*) *Ibid.* p. 207.

(*t*) *Ibid.* p. 210, 211.

had not yet excited the jealousy of their new profelytes. The metropolitans of the west received the pallium from the mother church (*z*). Scruples of conscience and doctrinal points were referred for explanation to the same high source (*v*). Already had the practice commenced of appealing from the provinces to Rome; and though the decisions of the Roman Pontif were not always acquiesced in, each precedent was carefully preserved to be the foundation of some future claim: meanwhile the dignity of the Roman see was enhanced in the opinions of all those who witnessed nothing but the solemnity of its proceedings, and the authoritative tone of its decrees (*w*). The Pope corresponded also not only with the churches, but with the sovereigns of the west (*x*): and the desire of receiving baptism or consecration from his hands, induced persons of the highest rank, both in the church and state, to visit the seat of his authority (*y*). These tokens of deference and respect,

(*z*) Henry, Book ii. chap. ii. sec. 2. vol. iii. p. 223. Bower, vol. iii. p. 6, 18.

(*v*) Henry, *ubi. sup.* p. 193, 197. Bower, vol. iii. p. 2—24.

(*w*) See the story of Wilfred, Bishop of York (Henry, *ubi. sup.* p. 209, 210, and sec. 3. p. 218—221.) also that of John Bishop of Lappa, in Crete; which last, Bower, vol. iii. p. 85, 86. thus introduces: "Vitalian had, in the year 668, a favourable opportunity of exerting the power which his predecessors had assumed, of receiving appeals from all parts of the world, of reversing the judgments of other bishops or synods, and absolving those whom they had condemned, or condemning those whom they had absolved."

(*x*) Bower, vol. ii. p. 522, 538. vol. iii. p. 18.

(*y*) Among the former may be reckoned Wighart, Archbishop of Canterbury elect. See ante note (*r*) and among the latter, Ceadwalla, king of the West Saxons, who was baptized at Rome by Pope Sergius, A. D. 688. Bower, vol. iii. p. 149.

while they impressed upon the minds of the vulgar a superstitious reverence for the holy see, were easily interpreted, by the policy of Rome, into blind and unqualified submission.

Another powerful auxiliary to the ambition of the Popes, was the increase of monastic establishments. The contagion of monachism was propagated with such success in the sixth century by the numerous disciples of Congall, a British abbot, and by the still more numerous disciples of Benedict, that Europe was covered with convents (z). By an affectation of extraordinary sanctity, the monks had obtained a great ascendant over the minds of the people; and the Popes, who readily perceived what advantage was to be derived from this circumstance, did not fail to give every degree of countenance and encouragement to their institutions. In the seventh century, dissentions having arisen between the secular and regular clergy, the latter had recourse to the protection of the Roman Pontif, who by degrees exempted them from the jurisdiction of the former. The monks, in return for this important service, devoted themselves wholly to advance the interest and maintain the dignity of the Bishop of Rome; making his cause their own, and representing him as a sort of god to the ignorant multitude (a).

To this it may be added, that the countries of Gaul and Britain, the two first whose monarchs received the sacrament of baptism, were not unaccustomed to an ecclesiastical yoke. The authority of the Druids was not inferior to that of the Romish clergy in the zenith of its power. They decided private controver-

(z) Mosheim, Cent. vi. part ii. chap. ii. sec. 5, 6, 7.

(a) Mosheim, Cent. vii. part ii. chap. ii. sec. 3.

sies, interposed in political questions, and thundered a sentence of excommunication indifferently against the subject or the magistrate, which at once excluded him from the comforts of society, the protection of the laws, and the dignity of office. *His autem omnibus Druidibus præest unus qui summam inter eos habet auctoritatem* (b).

Still indeed Rome was subject to the Emperor, both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. But the question is not how far Rome was subject to others, but how far she herself exercised authority.

The conclusion from what has been said may be summed up in a few words.—In the beginning of the seventh century, the woman again took her seat upon the beast, which then raised up a seventh head—that is, the city of Rome again became an idolatrous power, and exercised dominion under a seventh form.

One question more, Sir, remains to be considered; namely, whether the Universal Bishopric be not included under the symbol of the eighth king? I readily admit, that by the eighth king is designated that impious and gigantic power which you, with great propriety, have styled the Papal Antichrist. Its application to that power has been too fully and satisfactorily illustrated by yourself and your fellow-labourers in the fruitful vineyard of prophecy, to leave room for reasonable doubt. My observations, therefore, upon the nature of that extraordinary moral and political phenomenon will be wholly directed to point out the distinction between the Papal Antichrist and the Universal Bishopric.

It may not be unimportant to remark, that Gregory the Great, though anxious to load the patriarch of Constantinople with every epithet of reproach, never applies

(b) Cæsar de Bell. Gall. Lib. vi. cap. xiii.

to him the name of Antichrist. Yet Gregory was by no means ignorant that the appearance of that impious personage was not far distant. "All things that have been predicted are now accomplished," says he. "The king of pride is at hand; and what I dread to say, an army of priests is ready to receive him (c)." From this conduct we may infer, that it was not his opinion, or the opinion of the times in which he lived, that the usurpation of universal spiritual dominion was alone sufficient to fix on the usurper the character of Antichrist. But it is not less clear, that Gregory, though he did not consider Antichrist and the Universal Bishop as the same, was nevertheless firmly convinced of their intimate relation to each other; and upon the strength of this conviction, he pronounces, in the most unequivocal terms, that he who assumes the title of Universal Bishop, *Anti-Christum præcurrit* (d). According to this opinion, the seventh king was to prepare and make ready the way for the rising of the eighth; the one was to be the harbinger of the other. By the artifice and perseverance of the Universal Bishop, that mighty power was to be raised, which the bolder arm of Antichrist was afterwards to wield in defiance both of God and man.

Let us now consider how far this opinion corresponds with the words of the apostle. The Roman state was presented to St. John in three several visions (e). In the first, under the form of a dragon; in the two last, under that of a beast. But neither the dragon of the first vision, or the beast of the two last, had more than seven heads. It is further to be observed, that the angel prefaces his interpretation of the seven heads by these

(c) Bower, vol. ii. p. 508.

(d) Ibid. vol. ii. p. 515.

(e) Rev. xii, xiii, and xvii.

words, "And there are seven kings." Yet when he descends to particulars, he makes mention of an eighth. "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space; and the beast that was and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven (*f*)." From the two first visions also we learn, that power was to be given to Rome after her recovery from the deadly wound (which was to be inflicted on the sixth head) to persecute the church for 1260 years (*g*); a circumstance which seems very ill to accord with the expression of the angel, that the seventh king should continue a short space: and in those two visions we find the same hostility to Christ and his saints attributed to the seven-headed dragon (*b*), and seven-headed beast (*i*), which in the third vision is described by the angel as belonging to the eighth king (*j*). Are these things contradictions? "God forbid! Let God be true, and every man a liar" (*k*). Seven forms of government only have existed in Rome from its foundation to the present hour. But the seventh, after continuing a short space, assumed such a tone of authority, and acquired such an accession of dominion, that its character and effects were altogether altered: it was no longer in substance the same. When the pride, the ambition, and the persecuting spirit, together with a great part of the territorial possessions of the Pagan Empire (the beast that was and is not) were transferred to the Universal Bishopric, the relative state of Rome was so far changed, that she might almost be said to have acquired a new government. This new political situation, which had grown out of the Universal Bishopric, was not suffi-

(*f*) Rev. xvii. 10, 11.

(*b*) Rev. xii. 13—17.

(*j*) Rev. xvii. 14.

(*g*) Rev. xii. 14. xiii. 5.

(*i*) Rev. xiii. 78.

(*k*) Romans iii. 4.

ciently distinct from it to be shadowed out by an eighth head, consistently with the accuracy of prophecy; yet the peculiarity of its character, and the magnitude of its effects, could not fail to draw forth a comment from the interpreting angel. Accordingly, seven heads only were shewn to St. John; which heads were explained by the angel to mean seven kings, or forms of government; and though he afterwards makes mention of an eighth king, in order to mark more strongly the change which the seventh was to undergo, he sufficiently cautions us against looking for an eighth distinct form of government, by adding that it is “of the seven.”

In further confirmation of this opinion, we might, if necessary, refer to the Greek text, which characterizes, with its usual accuracy, the nature of the eighth power. For the words *ἐκ τῶν ἐπτά*, which in the English bible are rendered “of the seven,” properly signify “proceeding, or springing from the seven.” In this sense Homer uses the preposition *ἔκ*. *Ἦναρ ἐκ Διὸς ἔστιν* (1).—*Τιμὴ δ' ἐκ Διὸς ἔστι* (m), *Ἐκ γὰρ ἐμεῦ γένος ἔσσι* (n).

This part of the prophecy you apply to the conquest of the Exarchate. But upon what ground it can be said that the Papal Antichrist was either of, or proceeding from, the Exarchate of Ravenna, I am utterly at a loss to conjecture. Had the Exarchs usurped the universal dominion of the church, and exercised that antichristian power which the Popes assumed, this interpretation would have been consistent with the truth. But when it appears that the Popes, assisted by the arms of France, invaded the Exarchate, abolished both its name and substance, and united its territories to the see of Rome without adopting its constitution—shall it be contended that the same

(1) Iliad, i. line 63. (m) Iliad ii. line 197.

(n) Iliad, v. line 896.

interpretation must be admitted as if the very reverse had taken place? Many of the prophecies of holy writ apply to more periods of history than one, but it is the characteristic of Pagan oracles only to be applicable to contradictory events.

I proceed to shew that the Universal Bishopric, after continuing (o) for near a century and a half (a short space compared with the duration of those powers which immediately preceded and followed it) underwent that extraordinary and important change which entitled it to be considered as the eighth king or Papal Antichrist.

About the middle of the eighth century, the Popes, for the first time, usurped the name and authority of God, for purposes of temporal ambition. The three letters of Stephen II.* to the French court, written in the years 754 and 755, with a view to induce Pepin to wrest the imperial dominions in Italy from Aistulphus, king of the Lombards, who had seized upon them, and to confer them on the see of St. Peter, as they are the earliest instances of this blasphemous usurpation, so are they among the most outrageous which darken the page of Papal history. In the first letter, he says to Pepin, "God might have defended his church, or raised up others to ascertain and defend the just right of his apostle St. Peter. But it has pleased him to chuse you, my most excellent son, out of the whole human race, for that holy purpose. *For it was in compliance with his*

(o) I leave to better Grecians to determine whether the words relative to the seventh king *ὕταν ἔλθῃ, ὀλίγον αὐτὸν δεῖ μῆναι*, might not be rendered, "when he cometh he must continue *the same* for a short space." If they were intended to signify nothing more than "he must continue for a short space," that sense would have been better expressed by a different disposition of the words; thus, *δεῖ αὐτὸν ὀλίγον μῆναι*.

* By the Romanists called Stephen III. See Bower, vol. iii. p. 342.

divine inspiration and command that I applied to you to espouse the cause of his beloved apostle, and your great protector St. Peter (*p*).” In the second, he takes upon himself to promise everlasting rewards, and to threaten the wrath of heaven and everlasting damnation in the world to come, according as the French king and nation should afford or refuse him assistance: and concludes with entreating them, as they expected to hear it said to them at the last day, *Come, ye blessed of my Father*; not only to come, but to come without delay” (*q*). The third letter is written in the name of St. Peter. The form of the address is taken from the second general epistle of that apostle. “Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to the three most excellent kings Pepin, Charles, and Carloman; to all holy bishops, abbots, presbyters, and monks; to all the dukes, counts, commanders of the French army, and to the whole people of France: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.” The letter begins thus: “I am the apostle Peter, to whom it was said, Thou art Peter, and upon this rock, &c. As all this was said to me in particular, all who hearken to me and obey my exhortations, may persuade, and firmly believe, that their sins are forgiven them; and that they will be admitted, cleansed from all guilt, into life everlasting. Hearken therefore to me, to me the apostle and servant of Jesus Christ; and since I have preferred you to all the nations of the earth, hasten, I beseech and conjure you, if you care to be cleansed from your sins, and to receive an eternal reward; hasten to the relief of my city, of my church, and of the people committed to my care, ready to fall into the hands of the wicked Lombards,” &c (*r*). Judge whether at this time “a mouth was given unto the beast speaking great things

(*p*) Bower, vol. iii. p. 369. (*q*) Ibid. p. 372.

(*r*) Ibid. p. 373.

and blasphemies (s) !” A divine commission is pretended ; eternal punishments are denounced ; and the bliss of heaven is profanely offered in the language of our blessed Saviour. Daring and impious as this conduct is, it is not palliated by the urgency of self-defence. For not only did the holy father, after the expulsion of Aistulphus, accept the Exarchate and Pentapolis, which indisputably belonged to the Emperor, his lawful sovereign, as a donation to St. Peter ; but the language of Pepin to the ambassadors of Constantine, affords incontrovertible evidence of a pre-concerted plan to erect the popedom into a temporal principality. These ambassadors were charged to thank the king of France in the name of their master, for his friendship and generosity in defending the imperial dominions against the Lombards, while the Emperor was employed in the East in repelling the Saracens, the common enemies of Christianity. The answer of Pepin was, “ That it was for St. Peter, and not for the Emperor, that he had *engaged* in the present war ; that he took not from the Emperor the disputed dominions, but from the Lombards, who had taken them from the Emperor ; that he had *promised*, not prompted thereto by any worldly motive, but merely for the good of his soul, and the remission of his sins, and *promised upon oath*, to yield to St. Peter and his successors, whatever he should recover, with the assistance of that apostle, from his enemies the Lombards, and that nothing should ever divert him from *performing that promise* (t).

It has been said, upon the authority of a passage in Sigonius, that the temporal power of the see of Rome commenced in the Pontificate of Gregory II. A. D. 727 ; at which time, according to that author, *Roma*

(s) Rev. xiii. 5.

(t) Bower, vol. iii. p. 375—378.

Romanusque Ducatus à Græcis ad Romanum Pontificem pervenit (u). But whatever personal authority and independence Gregory may have acquired by his successful resistance to the edict of Leo Isaurius, and from the isolated situation of Rome, it is highly to be doubted whether he was ever acknowledged as a temporal prince. The Popes, after confirming the worship of images, exhorted the Italians not to separate from the body of the Roman monarchy (v). In the pontificates of Gregory III. and Zachary, his immediate successor, we find a person of the name of Stephen exercising authority in Rome under the title of Patrician and Duke (w); and Zachary requested and received from the Emperor Constantine the grant of certain crown lands called Nymphas and Nornias, to be for ever held and possessed by the said most holy Pope, and the holy Roman see (x); a grant which probably would neither have been asked or made, had Zachary then possessed the whole Roman dukedom in right of his see (y). It is not improbable that the rebellion of Gregory II. by discovering the impotence of the Byzantine court, may have awakened the temporal ambition of the Roman Pontiffs, and suggested those schemes of aggrandizement which they soon after concerted with the kings of France. But their temporal power must be dated from that period when Pepin, in pursuance of his promise, after having defeated Aistulphus, A. D. 755. compelled him to deliver, not to the Emperor

(u) De regno Italiæ. Lib. iii. in Luitprand, A. D. 727.

(v) Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 141.

(w) Anastasius in Zachar. cap. ccvii. ccxiii.

(x) Ibid. cap. ccxx.

(y) If it could be ascertained that these lands were situated within the limits of the Roman dukedom, it would be decisive; the limits of the dukedom may be seen in Gibbon, chap. lxix. vol. ix. p. 142.

(as Aistulphus expected) but to the Pope, the Exarchate Pentapolis, and all the places which he had taken in the Roman dukedom, to be for ever held and possessed by St. Peter, and his lawful successors in the see of Rome. The Abbot Fulrad, as commissioner from the Pope, attended by commissioners of the king of the Lombards, repaired to every city mentioned in the instrument of donation; and having taken possession of them all in the names of St. Peter and the Pope, and every where received a sufficient number of hostages, he went with all his hostages strait to Rome, and there laying the instrument of donation and the keys of each city on the tomb of St. Peter, put the Pope thereby in possession of his long wished for principality (z). “The splendid donation was granted in supreme and absolute dominion, and the world beheld, for the first time, a Christian Bishop invested with the prerogatives of a temporal prince, the choice of magistrates, the exercise of justice, the imposition of taxes, and the wealth of the palace of Ravenna” (a).

To the Pontificate of Zachary, who ascended the chair of St. Peter, A. D. 741, and to those of his immediate successors, we must look for the primary assumption of that right which can belong to the King of kings alone—the right of exalting and deposing at pleasure the temporal sovereigns of the earth. It has been said by some Greek writers, that Gregory II. so early as the year 730, excommunicated the Emperor Leo Isaurius, and absolved the people of Italy from their oath of allegiance; but as this assertion stands unsupported by any of the early Latin historians, some of whom had access to the archives of the Vatican, its authenticity may

(z) Bower, vol. iii. p. 379, 380.

(a) Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 158.

reasonably be doubted (*b*). It appears indeed, from the united testimony of all writers, that Gregory II. encouraged the Italians to revolt (*c*). Leo had given orders to the Exarch to abolish by force the favourite worship of the Romish church; Gregory resisted the commands of his sovereign, and in this was guilty of treason: but there is a wide difference between disobedience to a master, and deposing an independent prince. The rebellion of Gregory II. even supposing him to have proceeded so far as to excommunicate the Emperor, and to absolve the Italians from their allegiance, can scarcely have afforded a pretext to Zachary for sanctioning the groundless pretensions of Pepin to the throne of Childeric, the hereditary monarch of the Franks (*d*); or furnished a precedent to Leo III. for conferring upon Charlemagne the empire of the West (*e*). It is not necessary for us to decide between the partizans of the Romish church, who maintain that it was by the authority of Zachary, as Pontif, that the crown was taken from the head of Childeric and placed upon that of Pepin, and the Gallican writers who assert that it was only in consequence of his opinion as a casuist and a divine; or to shew that Leo III. even pretended by divine right to transport the Western empire from the Greeks

(*b*) Bower, vol. iii. p. 288, 289. Mosheim, Cent. viii. Part ii. chap. iii. sec. 11. note [*s*]. Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 131—133.

(*c*) Bower, vol. iii. p. 290—292. Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 137—141. and the passage from the Liber Pontificalis there cited.

(*d*) See Mosheim, Cent. viii. Part ii. chap. ii. sec. 7. and note [*q*] Bower, vol. iii. p. 331—335.

(*e*) See Mosheim, Cent. viii. Part. ii. chap. ii. sec. 10. and note [*y*] Bower, vol. iv. p. 153—157.

to the Franks. It is most certain that these ambitious Pontifs took advantage of their spiritual character to affect the rights of independent princes ; to exalt Pepin, from whom they had much to hope, at the expence of Childeric, from whom they had nothing to fear ; to extinguish the odious power of the Byzantine court, and to assure to their favourites, the Franks, the empire of the West. Of the deposition of Childeric, Gibbon speaks thus : “ The Franks were absolved from their ancient oath ; but a dire anathema was thundered against them and their posterity, if they should dare to renew the same freedom of choice, or to elect a king, except in the holy and meritorious race of the Carlovingian princes. Without apprehending future danger, these princes gloried in their present security : the secretary of Charlemagne affirms, that the French sceptre was transported by the authority of the Popes ; and in their boldest enterprizes they insist with confidence on this signal and successful act of temporal jurisdiction (*f*).”

Hitherto the bishops of Rome were subject to the authority of general councils. In the ninth century, says Mosheim, “ The power of the bishops was greatly diminished, and even the authority both of provincial and general councils began to decline. The Roman Pontifs, elated with their overgrown prosperity, and become arrogant beyond measure by the daily accessions that were made to their authority, were eagerly bent upon persuading all, and had indeed the good fortune to persuade many, that the Bishop of Rome was constituted and appointed by Jesus Christ supreme legislator, and judge of the church universal ; and that therefore the bishops derived all their authority from the Roman Pontif ; nor could the councils determine any thing with-

(*f*) Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 153.

out his permission and consent (*g*).” The most powerful engine, according to the same learned author, which the Popes employed in this attack upon the spiritual liberties of Christendom, was the forgery of the Decretal Epistles. But as many of these Epistles appeared in the eighth century (*b*), it is manifest that the plan was not only laid, but acted upon before the beginning of the ninth. In these celebrated Epistles, each innovation was represented as the ancient practice of the church; each ambitious project was sanctioned by the authority of the early fathers; and these venerable persons were made to speak a language, which, however inconsistent with their characters or situations, was highly conducive to the interest of their successors.

The sentence of excommunication was now to be made subservient to the ambition of the Popes; and this spiritual censure, which was instituted for the salutary purpose of maintaining the purity of the faith, was now to become an instrument of persecution in the hands of idolaters. To this end the thunders of the church were impressed with new and extraordinary energy. “Excommunication acquired in the eighth century new accessions of terror; so that, from that period, the excommunication practised in Europe, differed entirely from that which was in use in other parts of Christendom. Excommunicated persons were indeed considered in all places as objects of aversion both to God and man: but they were not on this account robbed of the privileges of citizens, nor of the rights of humanity; much less were those kings and princes whom an insolent bishop had thought proper to exclude from the communion of

(*g*) Cent. ix. Part. ii. chap. ii. sec. 7.

(*b*) Ibid. sec. 8. Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 159. See also Bower, vol. i. p. 13. note [A].

the church, supposed to forfeit on that account their crowns or their territories. But from this century it was quite otherwise in Europe; excommunication received that infernal power which dissolved all connexions; so that those whom the bishops, or their chief, excluded from church communion, were degraded to a level with the beasts. Under this horrid sentence the king, the ruler, the husband, the father, nay even the man, forfeited all their rights, all their advantages, the claims of nature, and the privileges of society" (i). It is far from being improbable, that the example of the ancient Druids, both suggested to the Roman Pontiffs the desire of extending their own spiritual censures, and facilitated the execution of their project (j). But the arts of forgery were not neglected on this occasion; and Liberius, who ascended the chair of St. Peter, A. D. 351. is made to denounce confiscation of property, degradation from office, corporal punishment, and perpetual exile against the enemies of the church, with a tone of authority which was not exceeded in the Pontificate of Gregory VII. *Qui contra ecclesiæ pacem sunt, si dignitatem aut cingulum militiæ habeant, nudentur eis. Si autem privati, siquidem nobiles existunt suarum substantiarum proscriptionem patiantur: si autem ignobiles non solum in corpore verberentur, sed exilio perpetuo castigentur* (k).

Another forgery, not less daring in its nature, or important in its effects, than the decretals of Isidorus, was

(i) Mosheim, Cent. viii. Part ii. chap. ii. sec. 6. note [p.]

(j) See *ibid.*

(k) Decret. Grat. Secund. Pars. caus. xxiv. quæ. 1. cap. xxxii. All the Decretal Epistles before the time of Syricius, A. D. 385, are now given up by the most sanguine advocates for the Papal supremacy. Bower, vol i. p. 13. note [A].

imposed upon the same ignorant and credulous generation. The fictitious donation of Charlemagne was introduced to the world by an epistle of Adrian the first, who exhorts Charlemagne to imitate the liberality, and revive the name of the great Constantine. "According to the legend, the first of the Christian emperors was healed of the leprosy, and purified in the waters of baptism by St. Silvester, the Roman Bishop; and never was physician more gloriously recompensed. His royal proselyte withdrew from the seat and patrimony of St. Peter, declared his resolution of founding a new capital in the East, and resigned to the Popes the free and perpetual sovereignty of Rome, of Italy, and the Provinces of the West. This fiction was productive of the most beneficial effects. The Greek princes were convicted of the guilt of usurpation; and the revolt of Gregory was the claim of his lawful inheritance. The Popes were delivered from their debt of gratitude; and the nominal gifts of the Carolingians were no more than the just and irrevocable restitution of a scanty portion of the ecclesiastical state. The sovereignty of Rome no longer depended on the choice of a fickle people: and the successors of St. Peter and Constantine were invested with the purple and prerogatives of the Cæsars" (1).

All the vices of the Roman clergy now appeared upon a larger scale; those who pretended to be the luminaries of the church, abandoned themselves to their passions without restraint, and were distinguished by their luxury, their gluttony, and their lust (m): and the idolatry of the Roman church, about the middle of the eighth century, is not surpassed in grossness by the rites of the most degenerate heathens. Till the latter end of the seventh

(1) Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 160.

(m) Mosheim, Cent. viii. Part ii. chap. ii. sec. 1.

century, Christ was only represented in the church under the type or figure of a Lamb: all images representing him in human shape being thought not only imperfect, but false and unworthy of him, since they could only represent him as a man, whereas he was both God and man. (*n*). But these distinctions were no longer known. In a solemn procession, appointed by Stephen II. A. D. 753, to implore the assistance of Heaven against the arms of the Lombards, "the whole Roman clergy, and the Pope himself, walked bare-foot, with ashes on their heads: the Pope carried on his shoulders an image of our Saviour that was not made with men's hands, but had, like the image of Pallas in old Troy, or that of the great Diana of the Ephesians, fallen down from Heaven." (*o*)

Nor was this all. After bowing at unhallowed shrines, the haughty Pontiffs of the eighth century first exacted from their fellow-creatures the tokens of exterior adoration. "The most lofty titles, and the most humble postures which devotion has applied to the Supreme Being, have been prostituted, by flattery and fear, to creatures of the same nature with ourselves. The mode of adoration, of falling prostrate on the ground, and kissing the feet of the Emperor, was borrowed by Dioclesian from Persian servitude; but it was continued and aggravated till the last age of the Greek monarchy." (*p*) At what period this ceremony was introduced into the church is not positively certain, but it can scarcely be doubted that it was borrowed from the Byzantine court; and it is highly probable that it accompanied the temporal

(*n*) Bower, vol. iii. p. 231. note [F].

(*o*) Ibid. p. 347.

(*p*) Gibbon, chap. liii. vol. x. p. 124.

power (*q*). The same worldly passions which induced the fathers of the church to violate obligations human and divine in the attainment of temporal dominion, banished all remembrance of Christian humility, the precepts of the gospel, and the example of the apostles. While they grasped at the imperial territories, they sighed for the honours of the imperial court; but scarcely had they attained their object, than, attributing the homage which they received to veneration for their ecclesiastical character, they claimed it indifferently of the subject and the sovereign, and even forbid all others to receive what belonged exclusively to the vicegerent of God. "All princes," says Gregory VII, "are to kiss the Pope's foot, and to pay that mark of distinction to him alone." (*r*) An opinion has prevailed (*s*), upon the sole authority of a passage in Anastasius, that the custom of kissing the Pope's foot was in existence at the election of Conon, A. D. 686. But the passage itself affords no ground for this opinion. The words of the historian are these: *Omnes iudices unà cum primatibus exercitus ad ejus salutationem venientes in ejus laude omnes simul acclamaverunt* (*t*). It will be difficult to find an argument for rendering *salutationem* by the word "kissing;" neither authority or etymology sanction such an interpretation, nor does the context in any degree re-

(*q*) Bower, vol. iii. p. 145. says, that it is quite uncertain at what time it was introduced. But Dr. Maclaine, in the Chronological Table which he has subjoined to his translation of Mosheim, places its introduction in the eighth century immediately after the grants of Pepin and Charlemagne.

(*r*) Bower, vol. v. p. 293.

(*s*) See Bower, vol. iii. p. 145.

(*t*) Anastasius in Conon. cap. clvi

quire it. Even admitting that *salutationem* were capable of being understood in that sense, it would remain for the ingenuity of the advocates for the Roman see to discover the word "*pedum*" in the sentence, without which it would afford but little evidence of the antiquity of the custom: and Anastasius was not ignorant of the expressions *pedibus osculatis*, and *osculati sunt pedes*, as we shall presently have occasion to see. "Coming to pay their respects to him," is the obvious meaning of *ad ejus salutationem venientes*; nor could the sentence ever have been otherwise understood, but by those who wished to conceal the origin of this instance of Papal usurpation. The first election, at which the ceremony is expressly recorded to have taken place, is that of Valentine, A. D. 827. *Cujus orante ab omni Romanorum senatu pedibus osculatis et omnibus quæ explenda erant ritè ac veneranter peractis, &c.* (u).—The second is that of Leo IV. A. D. 847. *Morem conservantes antiquum omnes osculati sunt pedes* (v). The latter instance occurred in the life-time of the historian: from the words *morem conservantes antiquum*, therefore, it may fairly be inferred, that the ceremony had been some time in existence when Anastasius wrote; though after what has been observed respecting the claims of the bishops in the beginning of the eighth century, to the antiquity of image worship, we shall not be inclined to give very great latitude to his expressions. Stephen II. being chosen Pope (A. D. 752.) in the church of St. Mary ad Præsepe, was carried from thence upon men's shoulders to the Lateran: and Polydore Virgil observes, that this is the first instance which

(u) Anastasius in Valentin, cap. cdlviii.

(v) Idem in Leon IV. cap. cdxvii.

occurs of this ceremony in the history of the Popes (*w*). Whether adoration made a part of this ceremony at the election of Stephen II. does not indeed appear: but when we consider the character of that aspiring prelate, that his whole pontificate was spent in annexing the Imperial territories to the Roman See, and that the homage which the Pontifs soon after received, was precisely the same as that which was paid to the Emperor, we may conclude, that if it was not actually given to Stephen II, it was not deferred beyond the time of his immediate successors. As yet, however, the ceremony was not claimed as exclusively belonging to the head of the church, nor does it appear to have been considered as expressive of religious veneration: for Leo III, after placing the Imperial crown upon the head of Charlemagne (A. D. 800.) made no scruple to prostrate himself before the throne, and offer that adoration which he conceived to be due to the Emperor of the West (*x*). But Charlemagne was the last Emperor who received the adoration of the Roman Pontifs; and so successful were the latter in blending their temporal and ecclesiastical characters, that Lewis the Debonnaire did not hesitate to pay to Stephen IV. that very homage which his predecessor Charlemagne had received from Leo III. Stephen IV. having signified to Lewis his earnest desire of conferring with him in person, the Emperor appointed the city of Rheims for their place of meeting, and repaired there himself as soon as he heard of the Pope's arrival in France. When the Pope was yet at some distance from the city, the Emperor went, attended by a great number

(*w*) Bower, vol. iii. p. 343.

(*x*) Gibbon, chap. xlix. vol. ix. p. 173. And it appears from Bower (vol. iv. p. 154.) that the Pope's adoration of Charlemagne is recorded by contemporary writers.

of ecclesiastics and great lords of the court, to receive him. "He waited his arrival on horseback, at the monastery of St. Remigius, a little way out of the city; and dismounting as his holiness approached, he fell three times prostrate on the ground, welcoming him with the words of scripture, *blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.*" (y)

When therefore we consider the character of the Papacy about the middle of the eighth century, the An-

(y) Bower, vol. iv. p. 185.—A story is related in Anastasius (in Constantin. cap. clxxi, clxxii, clxxiii.) to the following effect: Pope Constantine, A. D. 710. in obedience to the *commands* of the Emperor Justinian II. (*jussis imperialibus obtemperans*) went up to the royal city of Constantinople. In his passage through the Imperial territories, he was received with all the honours which belonged to the Emperor himself; and in the course of the journey, a *miraculous* cure was performed upon a person who saluted him with great reverence. On the day appointed for the interview, the Emperor, having the royal diadem on his head, *prostrated* himself before the Pope and *kissed his feet*, to the great joy of all who beheld the humility of this excellent prince.—That the Pope undertook this journey was probably true, and the commands of the Emperor were probably authenticated by the archives of the Roman See. (See Bower, vol. iii. p. 290.) But as the historian relates neither the object or the event of the journey, he does not appear to have possessed very accurate information on the subject: and the story could have been introduced for no other purpose than to magnify the Pope. When therefore we consider that the Emperors claimed a superiority over the Popes in spiritual as well as temporal affairs, and that according to the practice of the Byzantine court, ecclesiastics were not exempted from paying adoration to the Emperor (See Gibbon, chap. liii. vol. x. p. 125.) and when we observe the general tendency of the story to the *marvellous*, we shall not be inclined to think it intitled to the highest credit.—It is

tichristian vices by which the Popes of that remarkable period were distinguished, the hostility to pure and spiritual worship which they maintained, and the enormous accession of power which they received, we shall not hesitate to allow that the Universal Bishop then grew into the Papal Antichrist. And if it were necessary to assign a precise period for the commencement of the reign of the latter, we should not perhaps incur much danger of error in fixing upon the year of our Lord 755, when Pepin, either influenced by the hope of obtaining the promised remission of his sins, or by gratitude for the

also recorded in the same book (Anastas. in Stephen III. cap. ccxliii.) that Pepin, A. D. 753. *prostrated* himself before Stephen II. If this story be true, we must suppose that the conduct of Pepin proceeded from religious veneration, since no other motive could have induced an independent prince to prostrate himself before his fellow-creature. But had the *custom* of paying religious adoration to the Pope been established at this period, or had the Pope *claimed* it as due to his ecclesiastical character, it is scarcely to be supposed that Leo III. would voluntarily have offered it to Charlemagne. In the time of Anastasius, who flourished in the ninth century, the custom was firmly established; and if the passages which contain the above stories were written by him, we may suppose that he adopted, without any dishonest intention, the legends which had been fabricated in the preceding century, with a view to sanction the claims of the Popes to the adoration of princes. If indeed those passages were written by the apostolical librarians of the eighth century (See Gibbon, chap. xlix. notes 31, 32. vol. ix. p. 133.) though we may less readily believe that the authors were imposed upon, we shall not be precluded from supposing that they intended to impose upon others. The donation of Constantine, and the decretals of Isidorus, bear ample testimony to the inventive powers of the Romanists in the latter period.

services of his spiritual coadjutor in dethroning his lawful sovereign, first placed the Universal Bishop on the throne of temporal dominion, and thereby crowned his unrighteous projects with success. But this is not necessary to the explanation of the prophecy. Possibly, indeed, it may be objected, that, unless the rise of the eighth king be correctly ascertained, no certain æra will be afforded from which we may date the commencement of the 1260 years, during which power was to be given to the beast to persecute the church (z). But it may be observed, that as the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Revelations (in which chapters only the 1260 years are mentioned) contain no allusion to the eighth king, the commencement of those years is not necessarily confined to the rising of that power: probably the period from which it is to be calculated will not be known with certainty before the whole number of years shall have elapsed. When Daniel predicted the arrival of the Messiah in sixty-nine weeks, he dated the commencement of those weeks from the going forth of the decree for restoring Jerusalem (a). Now four decrees relative to that subject were actually issued by the kings of Persia within a short period of time; and the learned Rabbis could not have failed to labour under the greatest difficulties in endeavouring to ascertain to which of the decrees the prophecy was to be applied. To them, the expression "a decree for restoring Jerusalem" might seem equally applicable to all those decrees which issued for rebuilding the temple, the wall, and the city of Jeru-

(z) These are prefigured by 3 time, times, and half a time, in Rev. xii. 14. and by forty-two months, in chap. xiii. 5. each containing 1260 days. The Jewish month consisted of thirty days only, and the year of 360.

(a) Daniel ix. 25.

falem : but notwithstanding the apparent generality of the expression, it contained a latent particularity which nothing but the fulfilment of the prophecy could develop. The event having fixed its application to the decree of the seventh of Artaxerxes, it was easily discovered by the learned Prideaux (*b*), that, according to the analogy of scripture language, the restoration of Jerusalem could with propriety import nothing but the restoration of its true characteristics, the political and ecclesiastical establishments of the Jewish nation. So when the final overthrow of the Papal Antichrist shall have ascertained the end of the 1260 years, the coincidence of the beginning with the concession of Phocas, with the rebellion of Gregory II, with the donation of Pepin, or with any other period of equal notoriety in Papal history, will probably suggest to posterity the reasons for its application to such particular period. The prediction being explained by the event, the end of prophecy will be fully answered by establishing the inspiration of the apostle. For the object of prophecy is not, as Bishop Hurd has well observed (*c*), to sooth the impatient mind under its anxiety about future events, but to bear testimony to its Divine Author (*d*). As the fulfilment of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament was designed to set before the Jewish nation a perpetual and living miracle, when the Urim and Thummim had ceased, and the brightness of the heavenly Shechinah was withdrawn from the temple, so were the revelations of

(*b*) See Prideaux. Connect. Part. i. chap. v. p. 264, 265. ed. 1716.

(*c*) Introduct. to the Study of the Prophecies, Sermon. i. Head 2.

(*d*) The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Rev. xix. 10. This is the text of Bishop Hurd's second sermon, where the subject is admirably explained.

the New, adapted to confirm the faith of those unborn generations who were no longer to behold the Holy Spirit working signs and wonders by the hands of the apostles, and to afford an unequivocal denial to the assertion upon which the unbeliever founds his proudest argument, that the existence of miracles, and the testimony of experience, stand in direct contraction to each other (*e*). Be it our business then to contemplate with pious admiration that part of the prediction to which history has already affixed the seal of truth, rather than to reject its application to the most apposite facts, because our short-sighted faculties are unable to perceive how the accomplishment of the rest will be made equally evident to posterity.

Thus have I endeavoured, "according to my mediocrity," to reconcile history and the word of God. The attempt, however feeble, is at least the effort of an unprejudiced mind: the objections which I have stated to the interpretation adopted in your work, having occurred to me before I had formed any opinion of my own, and that which I have offered to your consideration having been suggested by an attentive perusal of the twelfth, thirteenth, and seventeenth chapters of the Revelations, unaccompanied by any comment. The subject is new to my mind, and foreign to my usual studies; I neither have the books requisite to a complete investigation of it, or leisure to consult them in the public repositories. If, however, I have not always traced up authority to its source (*f*), I have advanced nothing upon the testimony of less respectable or laborious compilers than Gibbon,

(*e*) See Hume's Essay on Miracles.

(*f*) It may be observed, however, that no marginal reference is made to any work, where the work itself has not been seen.

Bower, Henry, Mosheim (*g*), and the authors of the Ancient Universal History.

The contents of these pages could derive no importance from the publication of the author's name; and professional considerations have induced me to suppress it, since those who forget the example of the venerable Hale (*b*) might possibly be inclined to deem theological inquiry inconsistent with the study of the law. I am not conscious that any thing has escaped me which can afford just cause of offence to the learned and respectable gentleman to whom I address myself, or which can in the slightest degree derogate from the tenets of the church of England, whose creed I unequivocally profess, and whose precepts I humbly endeavour to fulfil. Should any apology, either public or private, be demanded, my name shall not be withheld: but if, through ignorance of my subject, I have only advanced an untenable or exploded proposition, I trust that the offence will not be deemed inexcusable in

A LAYMAN.

(*g*) Mosheim is quoted throughout from Dr. Maclaine's translation.

(*b*) "He seemed particularly attached to the study of divinity; and those who read his religious disquisitions, may be induced to think that the science of theology engaged the principal part of his attention."—Life of Sir Matthew Hale, Knt. prefixed to his History of the Common Law, by Runnington, p. 5.

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