

# CHAPTER 12

## INTRODUCTION TO REVELATION 12

This chapter contains a vision of two wonders or signs seen in heaven, a woman and a dragon, and an account of what followed thereon, war both in heaven and earth. The vision of the woman is in ([Revelation 12:1,2](#)), who is described by her being clothed with the sun; by her having the moon under her feet; by a crown of twelve stars on her head; and by her pregnancy, travail, pains, and cry. The vision of the dragon is in ([Revelation 12:3,4](#)), who is described by his size, a great one; by his colour, red; by the number of his heads and horns, and the crowns on the former; by the force and strength of his tail, drawing and casting: down to the earth the third part of the stars of heaven; and by his position, standing before the woman, in order to devour her child when born. Next follows an account of the birth of her child, and what became of that and her: the child is said to be a man child, is described as a monarch, and as advanced to great honour and dignity; but she flies into the wilderness, where a place is prepared for her of God, and where she is hid for the space of 1260 days, ([Revelation 12:5,6](#)); upon this ensues a war in heaven; the combatants on one side were Michael and his angels, and on the other the dragon and his; the issue of which was, that the latter were conquered, and cast out into the earth, ([Revelation 12:7-9](#)), on account of which victory a triumphant song is sung by the inhabitants of heaven, because of salvation and strength that were come to them; and because of the kingdom and power of Christ, which now took place; and because of the ejection of Satan, the accuser of their brethren; in which song also notice is taken of the manner in which Satan was overcome by those he accused, by the blood of the Lamb, by the word of their testimony, and by their death; and it is concluded with an apostrophe to those that dwell in heaven, calling on them to rejoice, and to the inhabitants of the earth denouncing woe to them, because the devil was among them, whose wrath was great, his time being short, ([Revelation 12:10-12](#)). Next follow the dragon's persecution of the woman, and her flight into the wilderness, and the care took of her there, as before described, ([Revelation 12:13,14](#)); then the method the serpent took to annoy her, the help she received from the earth,

and the wrath of the dragon upon that; which put him upon making war with the remnant of her seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus, (<sup>(6617)</sup>Revelation 12:15-17).

**Ver. 1.** *And there appeared a great wonder in heaven*, etc.] This vision begins a new account of things, and represents the church in the apostles' times, and purer ages of Christianity, and under the Heathen and Arian persecutions; after which an account is given of the beast, mentioned in (<sup>(6617)</sup>Revelation 11:7), of his rise, power, and reign, and then of the victories of the saints over him and of the vials of God's wrath upon him, and of his utter ruin and destruction; when comes on the marriage of the Lamb, and after that the first resurrection, and the thousand years' reign; and the whole is closed with a most beautiful description of the new Jerusalem state, which is the grand point and utmost period this prophetic book leads unto. This vision was seen "in heavens", whither John was called up to, (<sup>(6618)</sup>Revelation 4:1); and where the various scenes, in a visionary way, were acted, both before, and after this; and which was an emblem of the state of the church on earth: what was seen is called "a wonder" or "sign", it being very amazing to behold, and very significative of persons and things; and a "great" one, because it respects great affairs, and wonderful events relating to the state of the church in future times, as well as present: and the first thing seen and observed was

*a woman*: by whom is meant, not the virgin Mary, as highly favoured of God, and big with her firstborn son Jesus; though there may be an allusion to her, and in some things there is a likeness, as is by some observed; as Mary brought forth Christ corporeally, and God in the fulness of time sent forth his Son, made of a woman, so this woman brings forth Christ spiritually, or the manly birth of his kingdom in the world, or one that should be the instrument of enlarging his kingdom; and as Herod sought to destroy Christ in his infancy, and as soon as born, so the dragon here stands watching to destroy the manly birth as soon as brought forth; and as Joseph, with Mary, and her son, by a divine direction, fled into Egypt, where they continued during the reign of Herod, so to this woman are given two wings of an eagle, to flee into the wilderness, where she abides, and is nourished, during the reign of antichrist; and as Herod, after the flight of Mary, killed all the infants of Bethlehem, of two years of age, and under, that he might destroy her son, so the dragon casts out a flood of water after the woman, to carry her away, and makes war with the remnant of her seed; and as the son of Mary, after he had done his work, was taken

up to heaven, and made Lord and Christ, so the man child, this woman brings forth, is caught up to God, and his throne, to rule all nations with a rod of iron. But Mary, and the birth of Christ, can never be intended in this vision, that affair being past and over, and would never be represented to John in this manner, who was well acquainted with it: nor is the church of God, among the Jews of the former dispensation, designed; who were highly honoured of God, on whom he shone forth at the giving of the law to them; who had his word and ordinances, to be a light unto them, and had the priests and prophets of the Lord among them; and whose crown and glory it was to descend from the twelve patriarchs; and who were in great expectation of, and most earnestly desired, and longed for, and were, as it were, in pain for the coming of the Messiah; but to what purpose could such a representation of them be made to John now? much less is the church of the Jews, or the Jewish synagogue, as it was at the coming and birth of here designed, which was an evil, wicked, and adulterous generation, and so bad as not to be declared by the tongue and pen of man, and therefore far from answering the description here; but the pure apostolic church is meant, or the church of Christ, as it was in the times of the apostles, and the first ages of Christianity: the description answers to the first of the seven churches, the church at Ephesus, and to the opening of the first seal; and the church apostolical is here called “a woman”, because the church was not now in its infancy, in nonage, as under the former dispensation, but grown up, mature, and at full age; and because espoused and married to Christ her husband, to whom she now brought forth many children, in a spiritual sense, as she hereafter will bring forth many more; and, because of her beauty in the eyes of her Lord and husband, which is greatly desired, and highly commended by him; as also because of her weakness in herself her ministers and members, not being able to do anything without her husband, Christ, through whom she can do all things. And who is further described by her habit and attire,

*clothed with the sun*; which does not point at her future state in glory; (see ~~<0137>~~ Matthew 13:47); but to her then present state on earth; and is expressive of that clear light of Gospel doctrine, which shone out upon her, like the sun in its meridian glory, and of the heat of love to God, Christ, and his people, and zeal for his truths, ordinances, worship, and discipline, which appeared in her; and of that inward holiness of heart which made her all glorious within; and of the outward purity of life and conversation, which greatly adorned her; but, above all, of the righteousness of Christ,

who is the sun of righteousness, and the Lord her righteousness; which righteousness, as it was doctrinally held forth by her in the clearest manner, was also as a garment on her, to cover, preserve, and beautify her; and is comparable to the sun for its glory and excellency, outshining that of angels and men; and for its spotless purity, being without any blemish or deficiency; and for its perpetuity, being an everlasting one, and even exceeding the sun in duration.

*And the moon under her feet*; the church is sometimes compared to the moon herself, because, as the moon receives its light from the sun, so she receives her light from Christ; and as the moon often changes, and has its various “phases” and appearances, so the church sometimes is in the exercise of grace, and sometimes not; sometimes under trials and persecutions, and at other times in rest and peace; one while retaining the doctrines and ordinances of the Gospel in their power and purity, and anon almost overrun with errors and superstition; but this cannot be the sense here. The common interpretation is, that it signifies the church's contempt of, and trampling upon all worldly things, which are changeable, perishing, and passing away; and which very well suits with the primitive saints, who did set their affections on things in earth, but on things in heaven, who sold their worldly possessions, and laid them at the apostles' feet. Brightman thinks, that, as the moon is a luminary, it may denote the light derived from the word of God, which was a lamp to her feet, and a lantern to her paths, by which her discipline and public worship were directed, and all the private actions of life were squared; which is no contemptible sense of the words: but I rather think the ceremonial law is intended, which is very fitly represented by the moon; it consisted much in the observation of new moons, and its solemn festivals were governed and regulated by them; (see <sup><482></sup>2 Chronicles 8:12,13 <sup><2013></sup>Isaiah 1:13 <sup><3085></sup>Amos 8:5). There was some light in it, and it gave light to the saints in the night of Jewish darkness; it pointed out Christ to them, and was their schoolmaster to teach and lead them to him; yet, like the moon, it was the lesser light, the light it gave was interior to that which the Gospel now gives; and as the moon has its spots had that its imperfections; had it been faultless, there had been no need of another, and a new dispensation, but that could make nothing perfect; and, as the moon, it was variable and changeable; it was but for a time, and is now done away; it is not only waxen old like the moon in the wane, but is entirely vanished away: and yet, though it was abolished by the death of Christ, it was kept up and maintained by many of the Jews, even of them

that, believed: persons are naturally fond of ceremonies; and many had rather part with a doctrine of the Gospel than with an old custom, or an useless ceremony; and this was, in a great measure, the case of the Jews; (see <sup><4211></sup>Acts 21:20); so that it was one of the greatest difficulties the Christian church had to grapple with, to get the ceremonial law under foot; for though it was under the feet of Christ, it was a long time ere it was under the feet of the church; and a wonder it was when it was accomplished. Mr. Daubuz has given a new interpretation of this clause; and by “the moon” he understands the Holy Ghost, the Governor of the church, next to Christ, his successor and Vicar, and the minister of him, the sun of righteousness; who is said to be “under [the] feet” of the church, to assist her in her labour, and in the bringing forth of her man child; and to support and sustain her followers and members; and to be a luminary to them, to guide them in their ways.

*And upon her head a crown of twelve stars*; by “stars” are meant the ministers of the Gospel, which Christ holds in his right hand, and the church here bears on her head, (<sup><4111></sup>Revelation 1:20). And these “twelve” have respect to the twelve apostles of Christ; and the “crown”, which was composed of these stars, designs the doctrine which they preached; and this being on her “head”, shows that it was in the beginning of this church state that the pure apostolic doctrine was embraced, professed, and held forth; for in the latter part of it there was a great decline, and falling off from it; in the times of the Apostle Paul, the mystery of iniquity began to work; and in John's time many antichrists were come into the world: and also this signifies, that the church openly owned the doctrine of the apostles, and was not ashamed of it before men, and publicly preached, and held it forth in her ministers, to all the world; and that this was her crown and glory, so long as she held it in its power, purity, and was both what she gloried in, and was a glory, an ornament to her: and this was also an emblem of her victory over her enemies, and of her future happiness, and pointed at the means of both; that it was by a faithful and steadfast adherence to the doctrine of the apostles that she overcame Satan, and all her spiritual enemies, and came to the possession of the crown of life and glory.

**Ver. 2.** *And she being big with child*, etc.] Which may be expressive of the fruitfulness of the church in bearing and bringing forth many souls to Christ, and which were very numerous in this period of time, when it was said of Zion that this and that man was born in her; and particularly of her

pregnancy with the kingdom of Christ, to be brought forth, and set up in the Roman empire, under the influence of a Roman emperor: and this being her case, she

*cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered*; which are metaphors taken from a woman in travail; and may either denote the earnest cries and fervent prayers of the members of the church, and the laborious and painful ministrations of the preachers of the Gospel for the conversion of souls, and especially for the setting up of the kingdom of Christ in the empire of Rome; or else the sore and grievous persecutions which attended the apostles of Christ, and succeeding ministers of the word, throughout the times of the ten Roman emperors, and especially under Dioclesian; when the church was big, and laboured in great pain, and the time was drawing on apace that a Christian emperor should be brought forth, who should be a means of spreading the Gospel, and the kingdom of Christ, all over the empire; (see <sup>4316</sup>Jeremiah 30:6,7 <sup>4248</sup>Matthew 24:8); so the Targumist frequently explains the pains of a woman in travail in the prophets by **aq[**, “tribulation”; see the Targum on (<sup>2338</sup>Isaiah 13:8 26:18 66:7).

**Ver. 3.** *And there appeared another wonder in heaven*, etc.] Or “sign”; which represents the woman, or the church's adversary, Satan; not that he was in heaven, in the third heaven, the place of glory and happiness, for out of that he had been cast long ago; but in his great power and authority here on, earth, particularly in the Roman empire, where the church was labouring to bring forth her man child:

*and behold a great red dragon*; the devil, as it is explained in (<sup>6129</sup>Revelation 12:9); though not he in person, but the Heathen Roman empire, or the Heathen Roman emperors, acted, influenced, directed, and presided over by him; so Pharaoh king of Egypt, and other cruel and persecuting monarchs and states, are called dragons in Scripture, (<sup>2370</sup>Isaiah 27:1 51:9 <sup>4328</sup>Ezekiel 29:3); all which places the Targum interprets of **akl m**, “a king”, and particularly of Pharaoh king of Egypt; who is like to a great and mighty dragon: and the Roman Pagan empire, as under the influence of Satan, the god of this world, is fitly compared to a “dragon”, for its policy and cunning in circumventing and ensnaring the professors of Christianity; and for its cruelty and inhumanity in persecuting of them; and for its poison of idolatry, will worship, and superstition: and it may be called a “great” one, for its strength and power, which lay in its immense treasure and riches, in numbers of men, in powerful armies, in strong cities,

castles, etc. and for its large extent and jurisdiction; and a “red” one, because of the blood of the saints shed in it, by which it became of this colour; suitable to the character and bloody practices of the old serpent the devil, by whom it was influenced, who was a murderer from the beginning; and agreeably to one of the names by which the Jews <sup>f311</sup> frequently call the Roman empire Edom, the name Esau had from the red pottage he sold his birthright for, and who himself was born red, (<sup>(-0259)</sup>Genesis 25:29,30); it seems there were red dragons; Homer <sup>f312</sup> says of the dragon, that it is red upon its back:

*having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads*; the “seven heads” of the Roman empire either design the seven mountains, or hills, on which Rome, the metropolis of the empire, was built, as the seven heads of the beast on which the woman drunk with the blood of the saints sat, are explained in (<sup>(-617)</sup>Revelation 17:9); or rather the seven forms of government which successively should obtain in the empire, as kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, tribunes, emperors, and popes; hence these heads are said to have “seven crowns” upon them, as expressive of the imperial power and dignity which were in them, and exercised by them: Mr. Daubuz thinks seven capital cities in the Roman empire are meant, as Rome, Carthage, Aege, Antiochia, Augustodunum, Alexandria, and Constantinople; and nothing is more common than to call chief cities the heads of the countries they belong unto, as Damascus the head of Syria, and Samaria the head of Ephraim, (<sup>(-2378)</sup>Isaiah 7:8,9). Pliny <sup>f313</sup> calls Babylon the head of Chaldea; and Cornelius Nepos says <sup>f314</sup> of Thebes, that it was the head of all Greece; and Syracuse is by Florus <sup>f315</sup> called the head of Sicily, as Rome is in Livy <sup>f316</sup>, and other writers, the head of the world: and by the “ten horns” are meant either the ten kingdoms which should hereafter arise out of the Roman empire, and whose kings should give their kingdoms to the beast; or the ten Roman emperors, the persecutors of the Christians; or rather the ten provinces, or jurisdictions, which the empire was divided into while Pagan: Brightman out of Strabo has shown, that in the times of Augustus Caesar the Roman empire was distributed into two parts, the one was more immediately under the care of the emperor, and the other was governed by deputies; and each were divided into ten provinces; that which the emperor held consisted of Africa, France, Britain, Germany, Dacia with Mysia and Thracia, Cappadocia, Armenia, Syria, Palestine with Judea and Egypt, in all ten; and that part which was governed by deputies were the outermost Spain, and the isles by it, the

innermost Spain, etc. Sardinia with Corsica, Sicily, Illyricum with Epirus, Macedonia, Achaia, Crete with Cyreniaca, Cyprus, Bithynia with Propontis; so that the Roman Pagan empire, as under the dominion of Satan, is manifestly designed by the dragon thus described. The Jews <sup>f317</sup> speak of ten horns which the Israelites had, which when they sinned were taken from them, as it is written, (<sup><200B></sup>Lamentations 2:3), and were given to the nations of the world, according to (<sup><200D></sup>Daniel 7:20); “and of the ten horns that were in his head”, etc.

**Ver. 4.** *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth,* etc.] So Solinus <sup>f318</sup> speaks of dragons that have power not only in their teeth, but in their tails, and do more hurt by striking than by biting; and the great serpent, which Attilius Regulus and his army fought with, not only destroyed many of his soldiers with its vast mouth, but dashed many to pieces with its tail <sup>f319</sup>; which serpent, Pliny <sup>f320</sup> says, was a hundred and twenty foot long: this is said in allusion to Antiochus Epiphanes, in (<sup><208D></sup>Daniel 8:10); and designs either the subduing of the third part of the principalities, states, and kingdoms of the known world, to the Roman empire, through its great power and strength; which lay in its tail, in its train of armies which attended it, whereby such a number of nations were drawn into subjection to it, insomuch that the empire was called all the world, (<sup><400D></sup>Luke 2:1); or else the influence the dragon should have upon the ministers of the word, who are compared to stars, (<sup><600D></sup>Revelation 1:20); by causing them to relinquish their ministry, and drop their heavenly employment, and fall from that high and honourable state in which they were, into a carnal, earthly, and worldly religion; and that either through policy, cunning, and flattery, or through sorcery, magic art, lying oracles, and prophecy; (see <sup><200E></sup>Isaiah 9:15); or through the violence of persecution they had not power to withstand; of which falling stars there are many instances, as the ecclesiastical histories of those times show:

*and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born;* just as the dragon Pharaoh lay in the midst of his rivers, in the river Nile, (<sup><200B></sup>Ezekiel 29:3); to slay the male children of Israel as soon as born; and as the dragon Herod sought to take away the life of Jesus quickly after his birth; and as Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, so the Pagan empire, or the Pagan emperors, took every opportunity to stifle the kingdom of Christ in embryo, and to prevent the bringing forth of any illustrious person; and sought to destroy him as soon as he appeared, who might be thought, or



suspected to be an instrument of encouraging and establishing the kingdom of Christ in the empire: the instances Brightman produces are appropriate, and to the purpose; as of Maximinus destroying Alexander the son of Mammea, who he saw was inclined to the Christians; and of Decius taking off the two Philips, father and son, who were favourable to their cause; but especially the watchfulness of the dragon to destroy the man child was very manifest in the Roman emperors towards Constantine; Dioclesian and Galerius, observing his virtuous disposition in his youth, left nothing unattempted to cut him off privately; he was sent against the Sarmatians, a cruel and savage people, in hopes he would have been destroyed by them; and was set to fight with a lion in the theatre, under a pretence of exercising and showing his valour; and many other methods were used to take away his life, but none succeeded.

**Ver. 5.** *And she brought forth a man child*, etc.] Not Christ, literally and personally considered, or Christ in his human nature, as made of a woman, and born of a virgin, which was a fact that had been years ago; but Christ mystically, or Christ in his members, who are called by his name, because he is formed in them, and they are the seed of the woman, the church; and many of these were brought forth to Christ by the church in the primitive times, who were a manly birth, hale, strong, and robust Christians; or rather this manly birth may design a more glorious appearing and breaking forth of the kingdom of Christ in the Roman empire; for though Christ came as a King, yet his kingdom was not with observation in the days of his flesh; and though, upon his ascension to heaven, he was made and declared Lord and Christ, and had a kingdom and interest in the world, and even in the Roman empire, during the first three centuries, yet this was attended with the cross and persecution; but now, towards the close of that period, Constantine, a Christian emperor, was born, under whose influence and encouragement the Gospel was spread, and the kingdom of Christ set up and established in the empire; and this seems to be the thing intended here, he being of a generous, heroic, and manly disposition:

*who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron*; this has a manifest reference to (~~the~~ Psalm 2:9); which psalm, and the passage referred to in it, evidently belong to Christ; and as this is represented as something future, what should be hereafter, and not what would immediately take place, it may regard the kingdom of Christ in the last times, of which the present breaking forth of it in Constantine's time was an emblem and pledge; and may denote the universality of it, it reaching to all the kingdoms of the

world, and the manner which Christ will rule, especially over his enemies, antichrist and his followers, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and break in pieces with his rod of iron, and order all that would not have him to reign over them slain before him; and as this may be applied to Christ mystical, the seed of the church, and members of Christ, as it is in (<sup>f125</sup>Revelation 2:26,27); it may relate to their reign with Christ on earth, when they shall sit on thrones, and judge the world, when the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to there; but since this is expressly said of the man child in the text, it may be expressive even of the temporal government of Constantine, who was an heroic and victorious prince, and extended his dominions to the several parts of the world; as far as Britain to the west, and all Scythia to the north, Ethiopia to the south, and the remote parts of India to the east, even to the ultimate parts of the whole world, as Eusebius <sup>f321</sup> affirms, making his kingdom to be three times larger than that of Alexander the great: and more especially it may describe the kingdom of Christ in his times; which was spread throughout all the nations of the empire; when Paganism was demolished, both in the continent and in the isles of the sea, and the strong holds Satan were pulled down, not by carnal, but spiritual weapons; when multitudes of souls were converted by the word, the rod of Christ's strength, and when the saints were guided, directed, fed, and comforted by it; for the allusion seems to be to the shepherd's rod, with which he leads and feeds his sheep; the same word signifies both to rule and feed:

*and her child caught up unto God, and [to] his throne;* which is to be understood not of Christ's ascent to heaven in human nature, when he was set down on the same throne with his Father; nor of Christ mystical, or of the saints being caught up into the air, to meet the Lord and be for ever with him, and sit down with him on the same throne; but rather of some glorious advance of the church and kingdom of Christ on earth; for as "to fall from heaven" is expressive of debasement and meanness, and of a low estate that a person is brought into, (<sup>2342</sup>Isaiah 14:12); so an ascending up to heaven, as the two witnesses in the preceding chapter are said to do, denotes exaltation, or a rise to some more glorious state and condition, which was the case of the church in Constantine's time: and this may also take in the accession of Constantine himself to the imperial throne, which was the throne of God; for king's have their sceptres, thrones, and kingdoms from him, they his viceregents, and in some measure represent

and are therefore called gods, and the children of the most high; yea, since Constantine, as advanced to the empire, was such an instrument in Christ's hand for the setting up and establishing his kingdom in it, Christ himself may be here represented as reigning over the Roman empire, as a presage and prelude of his reigning over all the earth another day.

**Ver. 6.** *And the woman fled into the wilderness*, etc.] Not as soon as she was delivered of her child, which is not reasonable to suppose, and would have been improper if not impracticable; nor indeed was this flight until after the war was over, mentioned in (<sup><69213></sup>Revelation 12:13-17); nor until the dragon and his angels were conquered and cast out; nor until a fresh persecution was raised by the dragon against the woman, as appears from (<sup><69214></sup>Revelation 12:14); where this account stands in its proper place, and is here only introduced by way of prolepsis, or anticipation, and that with this view, to show what care was taken of the woman, as well as of her son: and this does not design the flight of the Christians from Jerusalem to Pella, a little before the destruction of the former; nor the expulsion of the Jews or Christians from Rome, either by Claudius or by Nero; but the disappearance of the true church, and its obscure state and condition quickly after the above advance of it; for through the riches and honours which Constantine bestowed upon the Christians, they became vain, proud, ambitious, and careless; false doctrine and superstition obtained; the antichristian apostasy came on apace, and prevailed and increased, and so obscured the true church, that in process of time it became invisible, was in the cleft of the rock, and in the secret places of the stairs, or like persons in a wood or wilderness, not to be seen, as well as desolate and uncomfortable:

*where she hath a place prepared of God*; God has had, and will have a church in the worst of times; as he reserved a number in Elijah's time, so he did in the times of the antichristian apostasy, who bowed not the knee to idolatry; this woman, the church, and her case, are the same with the 144,000 sealed ones in (<sup><69011></sup>Revelation 7:1-8): whom God distinguished, hid, and preserved; for the wilderness is a place of retirement and safety, (<sup><69215></sup>Ezekiel 34:25), as well as of obscurity; and if any particular place is pointed at, I should think the valleys of Piedmont, which lie between France and Italy, are intended, where God has preserved, and continued a set of witnesses to the truth, in a succession, from the beginning of the apostasy to the present time, living in obscurity, and in safety, so far as not to be utterly destroyed:

*that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred [and] threescore days:* in allusion to the children of Israel in the wilderness, where they were fed with manna forty years; so the overcomers, or true Christians in the Pergamos church state, have hidden manna given them to eat, the food of the wilderness, with which church state the church in the wilderness must be considered as contemporary, as also with the Thyatirian and Sardinian church states; for though, at the Reformation, which the Sardinian church state introduces, the church appeared again, and has been ever since coming up out of the wilderness, yet she is stall in it; where she is fed and nourished with the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, by the faithful ministers of the word, the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth; the time of whose prophesying: is exactly of the same date with the woman's bring in the wilderness, and with the reign of antichrist, namely, forty two months, or 1260 days, that is so many years, (~~Gen~~ Revelation 11:2,3,13).

**Ver. 7.** *And there was war in heaven,* etc.] Not in the third heaven, the habitation of God, the seat of the angels and glorified saints, there is no discord, jars, and contentions there, nothing but peace, love, and joy; but in the church below, which is militant, and has in it as it were a company of two armies; or rather in the Roman empire, which was the heaven of Satan, the god of this world, and of his angels; and this war refers not to the dispute between Michael the archangel and the devil about the body of Moses, (~~Gen~~ Jude 1:9); nor to the of the angels when they rebelled against God, left their first estate, and were cast down to hell, (~~Gen~~ Jude 1:6); nor to that ancient and stated enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, (~~Gen~~ Genesis 3:15), which has appeared in all ages of time, more or less, since the fall of Adam; nor to the combats which Christ personally had with Satan and his powers when here on earth, as in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism, and in the garden, a little before his death, and on the cross, when he spoiled principalities and powers, and destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil; but rather to the conflict which Christ and his people had with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the Roman powers, and with false teachers during the three first centuries; though it seems best to understand it of the war commenced by Constantine against Paganism, and which was finished by Theodosius, by whom Heathenism received its death wound, and was never restored since the phrase of war in heaven is not unknown to the Jews; they say <sup>f322</sup> when Pharaoh pursued after Israel, there was war above and below, and there was a very fierce war **μυμϸβ**, “in heaven”:

*Michael and his angels fought against the dragon*: by whom is meant not a created angel, with whom his name does not agree, it signifying “who is as God”; nor does it appear that there is anyone created angel that presides over the rest, and has them at his command; though the Jews seem to imagine as if the angels were ranged under several heads and governors, of whom they make Michael to be one; for they say <sup>f323</sup>,

“when the holy blessed God descended on Mount Sinai, several companies of angels descended with him, *wtrwbj w l akym*,  
 “Michael and his company”, and Gabriel and his company:”

“so kings armies”, in (<sup>4982</sup>Psalm 68:12); are by them interpreted of “kings of angels”; and it is asked who are these? and the answer is, Michael and Gabriel <sup>f324</sup>. Lord Napier thinks that the Holy Ghost is designed, who is equally truly God as the Father and the Son, and who in the hearts of the saints opposes Satan and his temptations; but it seems best to interpret it of Jesus Christ, who is equal with God, is his fellow, is one with the Father, and in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: he is the Archangel, the first of the chief princes, the head of all principality and power, who is on the side of the Lord's people, pleads their cause, defends their persons, and saves them; (see <sup>6009</sup>Jude 1:9 <sup>2703</sup>Daniel 10:13 12:1); and by “his angels” may be meant either the good angels, literally understood, who are his creatures, his ministers, and whom he employs under him, in protecting his people, and in destroying his enemies; or else the ministers of the Gospel, who are called angels in this book, and who, under Christ, fight the good fight of faith, contend earnestly for it, being valiant for the truth upon earth; or rather the Christian emperors, particularly Constantine and Theodosius, and the Christians with them, who opposed Paganism in the empire, and at last subdued, and cast it out:

*and the dragon fought, and his angels*; there is such an order among the evil angels, as to have one of their own at the head of them, they having cast off their allegiance to God and Christ, who is styled the prince of devils, and his name is Beelzebub: hence we read of the devil and his angels; (see <sup>4124</sup>Matthew 12:24 25:41); and these may be intended here, unless false teachers, who transform themselves into angels of light, as their leader sometimes does, should be thought to be meant, who resist the truth and oppose themselves to the ministers of it; though rather, Satan as presiding over, and influencing the Roman Pagan empire, and the Roman emperors, who acted under him, are here designed; with whom

Constantine and Theodosius, under Christ, combated, such as Maximinus, Maxentius, Licinius, Arbogastes, and Eugenius, and those that were with them. The Arabic version renders it, “the serpent with his soldiers”.

**Ver. 8.** *And prevailed not*, etc.] That is, the dragon, or the devil, and his angels, prevailed not against Michael and his angels; but, on the other hand, were conquered by them, as the above tyrants were by Constantine and Theodosius: some copies read in the singular number, “and he prevailed not”, as the Alexandrian copy, the Complutensian edition the Arabic and Ethiopic versions; and other copies in the plural number, “they prevailed not”: and as the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions:

*neither was their place found any more in heaven*; in the Roman empire; or “his place”, as some copies and versions: this was the time of the judgment of the world, or of the empire as Pagan; Satan the prince of the world, who had long governed in it, was now cast out of all power and authority in it, and all the idol gods in whom he was worshipped, with all the idolatrous priests; nor were there any more any Heathen emperors, for after Constantine's time there was only Julian the apostate, and who reigned but a little while; and after Theodosius, who cleared the empire of Paganism, there never was any, and there is reason to believe there never will be.

**Ver. 9.** *And the great dragon was cast out*, etc.] From heaven, or from power and authority in the Roman empire, namely, the devil, where he had long presided; it is observable that Constantine himself speaks of “the dragon” being removed from the government of the commonwealth by the providence of God, and by the ministry, or means of him<sup>f325</sup>; and he had his own effigies on a table placed before the porch of his palace, with the cross over his head, and a dragon under his feet thrust through with darts, and falling headlong<sup>f326</sup>;

*the old serpent*; who is so called, because, of old, from the beginning, almost as soon as the world was, he appeared in the form of a serpent, or rather made use of it as an instrument and means, by which he seduced Eve, and so brought on the ruin of mankind, it is very usual with the Jews to call the devil *ynwmdqh cj n*, “the old serpent”<sup>f327</sup>; wherefore John uses this phrase as a known one, to explain who was meant by the great dragon:

*called the devil and Satan*; the first of these names signifies an accuser, and a forger of calumnies, and such is the old serpent; he accuses God to men,

as if he was envious of their happiness, as in the case of our first parents, and of men to God, of which there is an instance in the case of Job; and hence he is in (<sup><620></sup>Revelation 12:10) called the accuser of the brethren; and the latter of them signifies an enemy, one that is filled with hatred and enmity to God and Christ, and to his church and people, whose adversary he is said to be, and at whose right hand he stands to resist, as he did Joshua the high priest:

*which deceiveth the whole world*; which he did by deceiving our first parents, from whom all mankind spring, and in whose loins they were when they were deceived; so the Jews say <sup>f328</sup> of the old serpent, that  $\mu\lambda\ \omega[\ h\ l\ k\ l\ h[j\ m$ , “he deceives the whole world”; and so he deceived and corrupted the old world before the flood; and so he seduces every age and generation of men in the world; but here the Roman empire, sometimes called all the world, as in (<sup><400></sup>Luke 2:1), is meant, whom Satan deceived by drawing it into idolatry and superstition;

*he was cast out into the earth*; he was cast out of the Roman empire, from the rule of it, and worship in it, the Heathen gods and Heathen emperors being no more; when he possessed and instigated, and influenced the Huns, Goths, and Vandals, a meaner and baser sort of people, hereafter in this chapter called the earth, which is said to help the woman, contrary to the intention of Satan; the phrase denotes the greatness of the fall of Satan, his loss of power, and the meanness and low estate of the persons he afterwards had the power of, both the savage people before mentioned, and the antichristian party:

*and his angels were cast out with him*; the Heathen emperors, magistrates, priests, and other votaries of his, which he made use of as instruments to do his will.

**Ver. 10.** *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven*, etc.] Which was a song of praise on account of the victory obtained by Michael and his angels over the dragon and his, or for the overthrow and downfall of Paganism in the Roman empire; for by “heaven” is meant the empire, now become Christian, or the Christian church state in it; and the “loud voice” heard in it by John shows that there was a great number in it, who rejoiced on this occasion, and that they were full of affection and fervency, and therefore expressed themselves in such manner, and in form following:

*now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ*; “salvation” was come when Christ obtained it by his sufferings and death, and comes to particular persons in the effectual calling, and it will only be fully come when it is perfectly enjoyed in heaven: but here it designs a deliverance from Satan, as the god of this world, who was now dethroned, and cast down from his power, authority, and influence in the empire; and from Pagan idolatry and superstition, and from the ten days of tribulation, the cruel and bloody persecutions under the Heathen emperors; and denotes that safety and security, comfort, peace, and happiness, the churches enjoyed under the government of a Christian emperor: and now was come “strength”; not the strength of Christ personal, displayed in the redemption of his people; but rather of Christ mystical, of his church and interest, which had been very weak and low, and under oppression and persecution, but was now exalted, and in a flourishing condition, and was become strong and mighty; or it may design the strength and power of Christ, shown in destroying his enemies, in casting the dragon out of heaven down to the earth, and in bringing to confusion and destruction the Heathen emperors, princes, and others, who fled to the rocks and mountains for fear of him, and because of his great wrath: also now came “the kingdom of our God”, the Gospel of the kingdom was preached everywhere and Gospel churches were set up in all parts of the empire, both which are sometimes signified by the kingdom of God; here was now an illustrious appearance of the kingdom of God in the world, such as had never been before; and which was a pledge and presage of the greatness of the kingdom, or of that everlasting kingdom which will be set up hereafter, when all other kingdoms will be at an end: to which is added “the power of his Christ”; or his authority as Lord and Christ, which took place at his resurrection, ascension, and session at the right hand of God, and which will more fully appear at the last day, when he shall come in glory, and exercise his authority in judging the quick and dead, of which there was some resemblance at this time, in dethroning Satan, destroying Paganism, and putting an end to the power of the Heathen emperors and empire; and which is expressed in such language as the day of judgment is, (~~and~~ Revelation 6:12-17); for to the opening of the sixth seal does this passage belong: a further account is given of the matter of this song, and the reason of it:

*for the accuser of our brethren is cast down*; hence it appears that this is not a song of the angels in heaven, since the saints are never called their



brethren, nor the angels theirs, but their fellow servants; rather it may be thought to be the song of the saints in heaven, acknowledging those on earth to be their brethren, as they are, for there is but one family in heaven and in earth, and the saints on earth are called the of the souls under the altar, (~~<66B>~~ Revelation 6:9,11); but as this refers to the state of the church in Constantine's time, it must be the song of the saints in that state, who call the martyrs, that had been slain under the former persecutions, their brethren; for that they are the persons meant is clear from the following verse, whom Satan is an accuser of, for he is designed here; the word rendered “devil” signifies an accuser, and a false one, and is so translated (~~<66B>~~ Titus 2:3); this is a name frequently given to Satan by the Jews, and have adopted into their language the very Greek word <sup>f329</sup> that is here used; and often say of him that he accuses Israel, and particularly that he accuses Israel above, that is, in heaven; and that he stands and **dymt grj qm** <sup>f330</sup>, “continually accuses them”, the very phrase used in the next clause: when Israel came out of Egypt, they say <sup>f331</sup> the angel Samael (the devil) stood and accused them; the first day of the month Tisri, according to them <sup>f332</sup>, is appointed a day for blowing of trumpets, to confound Satan, who comes to accuse at that time; so they say <sup>f333</sup> that Satan stood and accused Abraham, and others; and indeed he was an accuser from the beginning, both of God to men, and of men to God; we have instances in Job and Joshua the high priest, (~~<80B>~~ Job 1:8-11) (~~<81B>~~ Zechariah 3:1); but here it refers to the accusations brought against the Christians in the primitive times, during the ten persecutions, which were very horrid ones indeed; as that they had their private suppers, at which they ate their own infants, and their nightly meetings, for the gratifying of their lusts, in which they committed adultery, incest, and all manner of uncleanness; if ever a fire happened in a city, they were charged with it; and whenever there were any famine, or pestilence, or wars, or any public calamity, they were accused as the cause and occasion of it; as appears from the apologies for them written by Justin, Tertullian, Cyprian, Minutius Felix, etc. so that Satan at this time was remarkably the accuser of the brethren; but now this father of lies was cast down, he was cast out of heaven, and deprived of that power and authority he had in the empire, and lost his influence over men, and could not spread his lies, and get his false charges and accusations credited and received as before; he was not indeed wholly destroyed, nor even shut up in the bottomless pit, but he was cast down to the earth; he was in a low condition, his power was greatly diminished, and he was conquered by Christ, and cast down and bruised under the feet of the saints,

*which accused them before our God day and night*; so the evil spirit in Ahab's time, and Satan in Job's time, are said to stand before the Lord: and this shows the malice, and also the insolence of the devil, that he should stand and accuse the saints before God, who he knew was their God, and was on their side, and therefore his accusations could be of no avail; and though Christ appears in the presence of God for them, and is their advocate with the Father, yet he is constant and indefatigable in going about, and picking up charges against them, and carrying them to God.

**Ver. 11.** *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*, etc.] The Lord Jesus Christ, by whose blood they were redeemed and ransomed out of the hands of Satan, that was stronger than they; and by which they were justified from all sin, and so all charges and condemnation were of no avail against them, whether of Satan or the world; and by which they were cleansed from all pollution, both internal and external; and by which even their conversation garments were washed and made white; by this they also, drew nigh to God with boldness, as to their own God, notwithstanding the accusations of Satan; and this they could, and did make use of as a shield to defend them against all his charges; and this being sprinkled upon them, as it gave them an inward conscience peace amidst all, so it was their security from the destroying angel; and under this purple covering they went triumphantly to glory, having through it obtained an entire conquest over Satan: as also

*and by the word of their testimony*; either by Christ, the essential Word, they bore record of, who is sharper than any twoedged sword, and through whom they were made more than conquerors; or rather by the use they made of the Scriptures of truth, the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, to which they bore a faithful testimony, and to which they adhered, and by so doing gained the victory over Satan and his instruments, whether false teachers or persecutors; and particularly by the Gospel, which they embraced, professed, and preached with constancy and courage, and by their last testimony they bore to it at their death, on the account of it, as it follows:

*and they loved not their lives unto the death*; they did not value them; they made no account of them; they were not anxiously careful to preserve them; they chose to lose them; they ran to the stake, and willingly and cheerfully laid them down; they did not count them dear unto them, as said the Apostle Paul, that they might finish their course with joy, and testify

the Gospel of the grace of God, or bear a testimony to it, (<sup><402></sup>Acts 20:24); yea, as Christ has directed, (<sup><403></sup>Luke 14:26); they hated their lives in comparison of him, and when in competition with him and his Gospel; and by dying thus they conquered Satan; had they loved their lives, and saved them by denying Christ and his truths, Satan would have conquered them; but dying in the cause of Christ, and for it, they got the victory over him.

**Ver. 12.** *Therefore rejoice, [ye] heavens, and ye that dwell in them,* etc.] So in the prophetic language, at times, and upon occasions of rejoicing, the heavens are called upon to join, and bear a part therein, (<sup><1960></sup>Psalm 96:10,11 <sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 44:23); and by these may be meant here the angels of heaven, who rejoice at every advance of Christ's kingdom and interest; they rejoiced at his incarnation, and so they do at the conversion of every single sinner; and much more may they be thought to do so at such a time as this, when there were such multitudes of conversions, and the churches and interest of Christ in so flourishing a condition, and Satan's kingdom so much weakened; and to these may be joined the souls of the saints departed, who might be made acquainted with this wonderful change of things in the empire; and it may also be understood of the saints, the members of the several churches, even all heavenly minded persons, who were born from above, and were partakers of the heavenly calling, and whose conversations were in heaven; these are called upon to take their part in this song of praise and thanksgiving:

*woe to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea:* such as are of the earth, earthy, sensual, and earthly minded persons; and who are like the troubled waters, and raging waves of the sea, cannot rest, but cast up mire and dirt, and foam out their own shame; the barbarous nations of the Goths and Vandals, carnal professors of religion, and the antichristian party, which quickly upon this sprung up, may be intended, on whom this woe is denounced; the reason of which follows:

*for the devil is come down unto you;* and a greater woe cannot be upon men on earth, than to have the devil among them, who always brings mischief with him, and breathes nothing but ruin and destruction to men; he having lost his power in the Roman empire, possessed the above persons, and took up his residence among them; he came down, but not willingly, he was forced to it, he was cast down:

*having great wrath;* because he was conquered, and cast out of heaven, and was deprived of the worship that had been long given him, as the god

of the world, and of that authority and influence which he had over men: and this his great wrath was seen in stirring up the Arians to persecute the Christians; and in the times of Julian, when he endeavoured to regain his lost power; and in bringing in the Goths, Huns, and Vandals, into the empire, to waste and destroy it; and in moving the antichristian party, which soon prevailed, to make war against the saints:

*because he knoweth he hath but a short time*; ere he should be shut up in the bottomless pit, or be confined in the place of torment, and ere his full punishment should be inflicted on him; which time of his to tempt, deceive, disturb, and distress men, is to be no longer than during the forty two months of antichrist's reign, and the 1260 days, or years, of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of the church's being in the wilderness, and no longer than till the thousand years' reign of Christ with his saints begins, which, in comparison of his long reign in the Gentile world, is but a short time; and though, after the thousand years are ended, he will be let loose, yet it will be but for a season, a very small time, when he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tormented night and day, for ever and ever.

**Ver. 13.** *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth*, etc.] When the devil perceived he had not the power in the Roman empire he formerly had; and that his influence was only over the common and meaner sort of people, or over the earthly part of the church, and the barbarous nations in the world:

*he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man [child]*: he was enraged at the church, and pursued her with great wrath, who had brought forth a Christian emperor, by whom the kingdom of Christ was encouraged and supported in the empire; and because he could not come at this child to destroy it, that being caught up to God and to his throne, he attacks the woman, the church, in a new way, by stirring up earthly minded professors of Christianity, the Arians, against her, and by bringing in an inundation of the barbarous nations into the empire, now become Christian; for this persecution cannot be understood of the persecution raised by the Jews, under the instigation of Satan, against the Christian church, quickly after the ascension of Christ to heaven, for then the dragon had his place and power in the Roman empire, whereas this persecution was not till after the downfall of Paganism in it; and for the same reason it cannot design the persecution against the Christians begun by Nero, and carried on under

succeeding emperors, which were the ten days of tribulation under the Smyrnaean church state, and were now over; these were the pains and birth throes of the woman, the church, antecedent to, and which brought on, the birth of the man child; and the persons that endured them were those that overcame Satan by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and their death, which were all previous to these times: nor does it respect so much the persecution under Julian, which was carried on not by open force and violence, but by subtlety; he abstained from corporeal punishments and shedding of blood, observing that these methods in former times had given the Christians an opportunity of showing their faith, patience: and fortitude, which had been the means of increasing their number; wherefore he betook himself to more private and artful methods, as to content himself with taking away the revenues of the ministers of the word, not suffering any Christians to be in military employments, denying their children the use of schools, encouraging the Jews, their sworn enemies, and tolerating all sorts of heresies among themselves, that so they might destroy one another; to which may be added, that his reign was but one year and seven or eight months, and therefore can scarcely be thought to be pointed at here; but inasmuch as the Arian persecution was the first after the fall of Paganism, and the principal one before the rise of antichrist, this may most reasonably be concluded to be meant here; and this began even in Constantine's time, for by means of an Arian presbyter that belonged to his sister Constantia, he was prevailed upon, towards the close of his days, to believe that Arius was not the man he was said to be, and that he had had hard measure; insomuch that he was recalled, and received into communion, and Athanasius was driven from his church, and banished to Triers in France: and the historian says <sup>f334</sup>, that Constantine exercised “vim persecutionis”, the force of persecution, or a violent one; bishops were exiled, the clergy were severely handled, and laymen taken notice of, who separated themselves from the communion of the Arians. Under Constantius, his son, the persecution raged much, Athanasius being gone from Alexandria, and one Gregory put in his room; and the people being uneasy at it, some were banished, others cast into prison, and others had their goods confiscated; women were dragged by the hair of their heads to the tribunals, and used very ignominiously; three thousand soldiers entered a church on an Easter day, and killed many women and children; virgins were stripped naked, and the bodies of those who died of their wounds were denied a burial, and cast to the dogs; and the persecution did not stop here, but went through Egypt, where the bishops, some of them, were

beaten with rods, others were laid in bonds, and others were banished: in Egypt and Lybia ninety bishops were forced away, sixteen were banished, whose churches were delivered to the Arians. Lucius of Adrianople was bound in chains, cast into prison, and there perished; Paul of Constantinople was first expelled, after that murdered, and Macedonius, an Arian, put in his room; and such who refused to commune with him suffered stripes, bonds, imprisonment, and other tortures, of which they died, and others were banished, where they perished; women that refused had their breasts cut off, or burnt, either with red hot irons, or with eggs roasted at the fire to a very great heat<sup>f335</sup>; with other instances too many to recite. Under Valens the emperor things were still worse, who became an Arian at the persuasion of his wife, and was baptized by Eudoxius, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, who, at his baptism, obliged him to swear that he would defend Arianism, and persecute those of a contrary opinion; and accordingly he moved an irreconcilable war against them; at one time he expelled Melesius from Antioch, Eusebius from Samosata, Pelagius from Laodicea, and Barsis from Edessa; and all the rest that would not communicate with Euzoius, an Arian, he punished, either with pecuniary fines or with stripes; and he is said to drown many in the river Orontes. This persecution went through the churches of Thrace, Dacia, and Pannonia; but what is most shocking of all is, that some chosen ecclesiastical men, to the number of four score and one, were sent to him from Constantinople to Nicomedia, with a supplication to redress some injuries and grievances; at which he being angry, ordered Modestus, the governor, to take them and put them to death; but the governor fearing to do it openly, lest there should be an insurrections, ordered a ship to be got ready, pretending to carry them into exile, but directed the mariners to go in a fisher's boat behind, and set fire to the ship, which they accordingly did when at sea, where all the above worthy men perished at once<sup>f336</sup>. It would be endless to rehearse all the instances of cruelty under this persecution; it need only be observed, that this was at the instigation of the devil, as all persecution is; and that Satan herein acted like himself, as the great dragon, as he was when Rome Pagan was in power: these were Christian emperors in name, but they exercised all the cruelties of the Heathen ones, if they did not exceed them; and a greater regard was shown to Paganism than to the orthodox religion. Valens tolerated all religions but that, especially Heathenism; all his reign the fire burned upon the altars, images were honoured with libations and sacrifices, the public festivals of the Heathens were kept, and the rites of Bacchus were performed in the streets<sup>f337</sup>; and

this persecution was followed by the inundation of the barbarous nations, of which hereafter.

**Ver. 14.** *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle*, etc.] By which are meant, not the two testaments, by which she was supported under afflictions, trials, and persecutions, and against Satan and all his efforts; nor the two graces of faith and hope, by which she rose, and dwelt on high, in the view of invisible things, and with contempt of the world, its frowns or flatteries; nor, as others think, prayer and good works, by the former of which she flew to God for supplies of grace and protection, and by the latter was useful and profitable to men, and gave glory to God, and escaped the just censures of the world; nor are two powerful kingdoms, within the dominions of the dragon, intended, as others have thought, who take them to be France and Spain, to which Britain was an appendix; when they were in the possession of Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine the great, where the Christians had refuge in the persecution under Dioclesian; but this was before the war in heaven, and the downfall of Paganism in the empire, and before the above persecution; rather these two wings of the eagle design the eastern and western divisions of the Roman empire: it is not unusual in Scripture for a monarchy, or monarch, as the Assyrian king and kingdom, to be signified by an eagle, and the wings of eagles, (<sup><267B></sup>Ezekiel 17:3,12 <sup><270B></sup>Daniel 7:4); and it is well known that the eagle is the ensign of the Roman empire, to which the allusion is in (<sup><42B></sup>Matthew 24:28); and at the death of Theodosius the empire was divided, as has been observed before, into two parts; the eastern empire was given to one of his sons and the western to another; and this was between the Arian persecution, and the irruption of the Goths and Vandals, when the church was fleeing and gradually disappearing; and these two empires both went under the Christian name, and supported the outward visible church, though much corrupted, and still more and more corrupting; by which means the pure members of the church, though few and very obscure were preserved. In a word, these wings may denote the swiftness in which the church proceeded to disappear, having lost her former simplicity and glory for which eagles' wings are famous, (<sup><21B></sup>Proverbs 23:5); and more especially that divine strength and support by which she was bore up, and carried through, and delivered out of sore afflictions and persecutions; (see <sup><24B></sup>Isaiah 40:31). The allusion is to God's deliverance of the people of Israel out of Egypt when he bore them as on eagles wings,

and carried them though the wilderness, (<sup>(12904)</sup>Exodus 19:4 <sup>(6520)</sup>Deuteronomy 32:10-12), so here it follows,

*that she might fly into the wilderness*; a place desolate, and full of serpents and scorpions, uncomfortable, and destitute of provisions, and yet a place of safety as well as of solitariness and retirement; and chiefly designs the obscure and invisible state of the pure church in the times of the antichristian apostasy; (see Gill on "<sup>(66216)</sup>Revelation 12:6").

*Into her place*; which was prepared of God for her, as in (<sup>(66216)</sup>Revelation 12:6);

*where she is nourished* by the ministers of the word the two witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth who feed the church with knowledge and understanding; with the words of faith and good doctrine, with the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are sweet, comfortable and nutritive; and with the ordinances of the Gospel, the entertainment of Wisdom's house, the feast of fat things, and the breasts of consolation; and with Christ the hidden manna, the food of the wilderness: and that

*for a time, and times, and half a time*; that is, all the times of antichrist, the forty two months of his reign; during which time the holy city is trodden under foot, and in a desolate and afflicted condition outwardly, as may be learnt by comparing together (<sup>(21025)</sup>Daniel 7:25) (<sup>(66216)</sup>Revelation 13:5 11:2); and until the end of wonders, or when time shall be no longer or till the seventh angel has sounded his trumpet as appears from (<sup>(21025)</sup>Daniel 12:7 <sup>(66216)</sup>Revelation 10:6,7). This date is the same with 1260 days in (<sup>(66216)</sup>Revelation 12:6), for "time" signifies a prophetic year, or 360 years; and "times" two years, or 720 years; and half a time, half a year, or 180 years, in all 1230 years; and which are to be reckoned, not from the beginning of the church's flight in Constantine's time, or from the Arian persecution, but from her entering into her wilderness state, or entire disappearance upon the prevalence of the antichristian apostasy; which might be when the bishop of Rome took upon him the title of universal bishop: and here and during this time she is hid

*from the face of the serpent*; that is, from his wrath so as that he cannot utterly destroy her. God having reserved a sealed number for himself; (see <sup>(66216)</sup>Revelation 6:16), or from the sight of the serpent as the Arabic version renders it, so as that he could not discern with all his quick sight where the church was.



**Ver. 15.** *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood,* etc.]

Which cannot design any persecution before the fall of Paganism, either of the Jews, or of the Romans; nor indeed the Arian persecution, since the casting out of this flood is distinguished from the above persecution, and was after the church began to flee upon that persecution; though it is not unusual for wicked persecutors, and violent persecutions, to be expressed by waters, and they are called proud waters, (<sup><BCE></sup>Psalm 124:1-4); and these may be said to be cast out of the mouth of the serpent, the devil, who was a persecutor and a murderer from the beginning, and by whom all persecutors and persecutions are instigated, moved, and carried on; but rather, as the words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, (<sup><BCE></sup>Proverbs 18:4); and doctrines, good or bad, may be so called; that flood of errors and heresies, which were poured in between the times of Constantine and the rise of antichrist may be here intended; such as the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ; the Nestorian heresy, which divided his person; and the Eutychian heresy, which confounded the two natures in him; and the Macedonian heresy, which took away the deity of the Holy Ghost; and the Pelagian heresy, which destroyed the grace of God, and set up the power of man's free will: and this flood of errors and heresies may be truly said to be cast out of the serpent's mouth; since the old serpent, the devil, is the father of all lies, and errors: and the above heresies are the doctrines of devils, and damnable ones; and were designed by Satan to destroy the souls of men, and ruin the church: though since this flood followed upon the Arian persecution, and was after the church began to flee, being supported and secured by the two divisions of the empire, eastern and western, the wings of the Roman eagle, it seems best by this flood to understand the irruption of the barbarous nations, which quickly followed that division; the Goths, Huns, Vandals, Heruli, Alans, and Lombards, who were poured into the western empire, and overran, and at last destroyed it; so that this flood is contemporary with the first four trumpets; after which followed the swarms of locusts, the Saracens, which infested, teased, and tormented the "eastern" empire; and after them the Turks, the four angels bound at the great river Euphrates, were let loose, and like a mighty torrent overflowed, and utterly destroyed it; and all this was done at the instigation of Satan, he being filled with wrath, because the empire was become Christian, and his view was to destroy the church in it: for this flood was cast

*after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood;* along with the empire, and be no more; but his designs were frustrated, and he disappointed; so people, nations, and tongues, are compared to waters in (<sup>6175</sup>Revelation 17:15); (see <sup>2387</sup>Isaiah 8:7 28:2), which the Targum interprets of the armies of much people.

**Ver. 16.** *And the earth helped the woman*, etc.] By opening itself, and taking in what the serpent cast out, so that it could not reach the woman, and annoy her, as follows:

*and the earth opened her mouth;* as it did when it swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, (<sup>0460</sup>Numbers 16:30); to which history this may have some respect:

*and swallowed up the flood which the dragon east out of his mouth;* if the flood refers to the Arian persecution, then the earth helping the woman, the church, and swallowing up this flood, may respect the Goths, who broke into the Roman provinces, under their king, Athanaricus, and fell upon the Arians, with great rage and cruelty, and infested the Roman provinces, which were nearer; they seized upon Thrace, which was the occasion of tranquillity to the orthodox; for Valens being moved by these things, desisted from persecuting them, and, leaving Antioch, he went to Constantinople to form measures for the carrying on of the war against the Goths <sup>f338</sup>; and thus the earth helped the woman. But if, by the flood, the errors and heresies of those times are meant, then the councils may be intended by the earth; which, though they consisted of men that were earthly, and greatly apostatized in other things, yet opposed, refuted, and condemned these heresies and errors, and so were the means of preserving the church from them, as some think; though others are of opinion that the barbarous nations are in this also designed, who embracing Arianism, and the corrupt religion, where they came, by which they were, in, some measure, mollified and reconciled to the Christians, did not seek to root them out, and destroy them, as Satan hoped they would; but since they themselves, with the Mahometans, are meant by the flood, the earth must be interpreted of the corrupt and antichristian church, the idolaters which sustained the force of this inundation, and for some time repelled it, and so secured the true church; and when the western empire was overrun by it, as by the Goths, etc. idolaters, earthly minded men, and carnal professors, were the sufferers, and bore the shock of it; and when the eastern empire was overrun by the Saracens, the tormenting locusts, the green things,

grass and trees, were not hurt by them; none of the sealed ones, only those who were not sealed, (~~Rev~~ Revelation 9:4); and the Turkish inundation was a scourge upon the antichristian party: so that it was the earth, or earthly part of professors, the idolaters, that bore the fury and force of this flood, and broke it off from the church. And so sometimes wicked men are helpful to the saints, as the Philistines were serviceable to David, to screen him from the fury of Saul; and Lysias, the chief captain, and Felix and Festus, Roman governors, were instruments of preserving the Apostle Paul from falling into the hands of the Jews, his enemies; and the Christians that were scattered by the persecution at Jerusalem found refuge and safety among the Gentiles.

**Ver. 17.** *And the dragon was wroth with the woman*, etc.] The devil was very angry with the church, because he could not destroy her by the Arian persecution he had raised; and because he could not carry her away with the flood, either of errors and heresies, or of the barbarous nations; and because he could not, by any means, come at her, and indeed did not well know where she was, a place being prepared for her of God in the wilderness, where she was taken care of: wherefore he took another method as follows,

*and went to make war with the remnant of her seed*; which refers to the war the beast, to whom he gave his power, seat, and authority, is said to make with the saints; and which was entered into and carried on by his instigation, of which there is an account in the following chapter: the persons with whom he went to make war are described as “her seed”; the seed of the church, her spiritual offspring, the sons and daughters she brought forth to Christ; between which seed, and Satan and his seed, there always was an enmity: and these are “the remnant” of her seed, a few persons scattered up and down, a remnant according to the election of grace; who were not in bodies, or in church states, regularly formed, as heretofore, but in private families, and some here, and some there; and who were called out to bear a testimony for Christ in corrupt times: and these are further described as such

*who keep the commandments of God*: and not the traditions of men: nor are the commands of the moral law of God so much designed, though it is true that these were kept by the seed of the church; but rather the ordinances of the Gospel, the commands of God our Saviour, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; which were kept by these faithful ones, as

they had been delivered, when they began now to be sadly corrupted by the antichristian party:

*and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*; the Gospel, which is a testimony concerning him; (see Gill on “~~the~~ Revelation 1:2”). This they had in their hearts, a spiritual knowledge and saving experience of it; and this they had in their hands, they made a profession of it, they held it forth, and held it fast; all which was the reason of Satan's enmity against them, and war with them.