

THE
EVENTS & APPEARANCES
OF THE
PRESENT TIMES,

VIZ

A VIEW OF THE GREAT CITY

DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS, and the CITIES of the
NATIONS falling, the ISLANDS fleeing away, and
the MOUNTAINS vanishing;

A GLANCE OF THE ANGEL

With the great Chain in his Hand, binding the DRAGON,
that old Serpent, the DEVIL and Satan.

THOUGHTS,

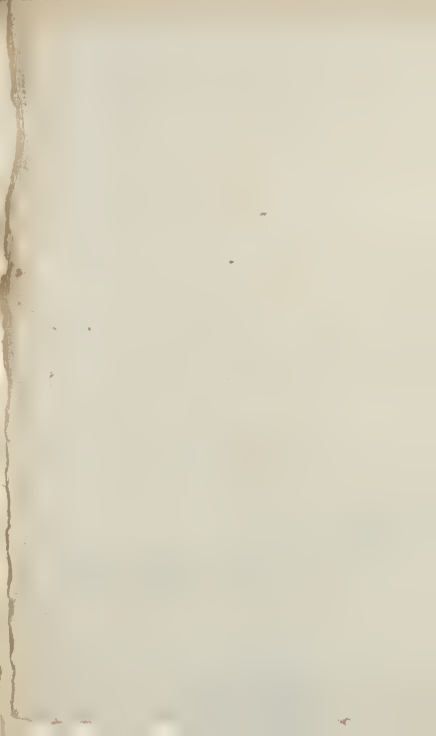
*ON THE ORIGIN OF THRONES AND THOSE
THAT SIT ON THEM,*

With the Appearance of a sudden Resurrection of the Spiritual
Livelihoods of the Martyrs in the Christian Church.

*In a LETTER from a Countryman, to his youngest Brother,
a Student in the University of Edinburgh.*

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YOU have, I hear, desired I should send you the pamphlet, entitled *The Signs of the Times*; It is not at hand with me at present, but you will soon find it in Edinburgh.

THOUGH I think I have never wrote you before, your enquiry about the observers of the times, gives me to hope, that your mind is not altogether enchanted with the charms of Grecian and Roman poets, sages, and orators, which, however much their sublime thoughts and flowery stile enlarge the genius, exalt the speech, and accomplish you to speak in public, still consider, that the true study of the heart should be, acquaint-

ance with God, his works of creation and providence, comparing them with his holy oracles, by which the mind will come to see, that the events of the times, are only fulfilling what he hath already foretold, and all the signs or signals that are hanging out to attract the enquiry of mankind in public appearances, have their true motto in sacred write.

WHATEVER Deists, or the unthinking part of mankind, may alledge otherwise, by a just acquaintance, and continued examination of God's word and works, the Christian will acquire a pleasure and composure of heart, amidst the reeling confusion of events which perplex and torment the unthinking world, and even distract the grovelling sensualist.

THE author of "The Signs of the Times," has given many wonderful and instructive proofs of his having compared present events, accomplished and accomplishing, with the word of God, and the connection he shews appear very striking. In reading his views, my attention was awakened to consider, what events at present appeared fulfilling particular parts of the Revelation of the New Tes-

tament, and have been led to mark the following observations, which, I could wish you, and all who read or hear the word of God, to consider. As I have never seen any of them in print, I shall begin with

R E V E L A T I O N, xvi. 17.

Where you will observe it written, that the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air, when a great voice came out of the temple in heaven, saying, "It is done," which I take to be, the reign of Antichrist is at an end, the oppression of the true church is at an end.

THIS is followed in the 18th verse, with voices, and thunders, and lightnings, which, I take, to relate to the cries and pleadings against popery and absolute power throughout Europe, and especially in France, before the late Revolution; and the thunders and lightnings to be the struggles and battles with fire-arms, bringing about and accomplishing that great earthquake or revolution, which in many circumstances, excels all other shakings or commotions that have been since mankind were upon earth.

IF an intelligent mind consider what principles of civil and religious power are overturned by it, I mean despotism and superstition; how long these had endured, how strong they were supported, and how dangerous it was to oppose them, they will be clearly convinced, as it is said, that the like never happened before in any country.

IN the 19th verse, the great city is said to be divided into three parts. The great city here spoken of, appears to me to be no other than the whole established Roman church, as the true church is often compared to a city, and the metaphor is very expressive, as the learned have observed, and a false church in this has the same metaphor of the true, as the church of Rome in this book it is often called, a city appearing in all its established extent, as supported and confirmed by law.

BEFORE the French revolution, popery appears in the connection of the countries where it was first established by law, as an united body or city. View in the map of Europe, the connection of the popish countries, from the borders of Russia and Tur-

key to Cape St. Vincent, and one may see them all joined less or more; but, even in the map, if France and French conquests, are cut out, the countries where popery is at present established will fall into three pieces, viz. Spain and Portugal on the west, Rome, Naples, and the States of Italy on the south, Germany, Hungary, and Poland on the north and east; this fulfils very evidently the first sentence of the 19th verse.

IN the next sentence, it is said, " and the cities of the nations fell;" these cities of the nations, I take also to be churches, or what is called the established churches, one of these the most apparently agreeable to scripture of any other established church. In Europe it is already fallen, I mean in the presbyterian church in Holland; as I have always thought presbytery nearest to christian simplicity. In America, religious establishments are also abolished.

AN established church, in many circumstances and considerations, appears rather to be a city of the nations than the true

church of Christ; because, the holy communion of the established churches, are more conformed to the spirit and principles of the nation, than the spirit of grace and the simple principles of christianity. Teachers and pastors are admitted into the churches established by law, by the leading powers of the nations, and according to the rules of national policy, and not called by the flock of Christ, as the only judges who know his voice and will not follow strangers. The ministers in established churches are supported by the nations and not by the milk of the christian flock; though the labourers have a legal right to their hire, yet I see no other reason for any gospel minister having an established tiend, or salary, but a greed of filthy lucre.

To speak of tiends is Jewish, where a whole tribe, or twelve, were employed; in the christian dispensation all is plain and simple; one person in proper conveniency may teach and administer all the gospel ordinances to one thousand, at least; three or five hundred can come to one minister, how unjust, that he should live to the tenth income

of all these. Besides, Christ Jesus whose kingdom is not of this world, hath strongly enjoined, that his ambassadors excel only in spiritual accomplishments, and not in carnal show. I have seen in my small acquaintance with the world, that as riches and grandeur increased, self sensuality and pride came into dominion, both in hearts and families, while self-denial, humility, and christian charity, were scarce respected, and duty became the servant of taste. How unlike the great Author of christianity are his ambassadors! What difference can we behold in a gentleman of the church and those of the nation? In these and many other respects, if room and time would permit to show, established churches appear to be the cities of the nations here alluded to by the apostle; I may add, all circumstances considered, there are evidences that the established churches in Britain and Ireland cannot stand long. The common people, who like small stones in a building, support and connect the great, are falling into dissenting parties, where they find the doctrine and exercises of christianity more lively, and the government more scriptural. The established clergy are still be-

coming more proud, ignorant, lifeless, and sensual, which being contrary to christianity, cannot miss to bring down any fabric raised to support it. Besides, many of the great and leading men in the nation look upon religion as nothing, only as far as subservient to civil interest; and are beginning to think the burden of supporting these cities of the nations far greater than all the benefit they produce to society. So they, viz. the established churches, I mean so far as relates to temporals, are more supported by the views of rulers than the rules of Christ. Whenever they see their insignificancy and forsake them, then they must fall, while the true church of Christ shall stand firm on himself, as its infallible rock; this is the holy city, the new Jerusalem, which shall more clearly appear, when the cities of the nations are fallen, as they did before they were built; and, though I believe many citizens of the new Jerusalem hath dwelt in established churches, those cities of the nations, and been employed and privileged by them, yet they found many embarrassments to please the King of Zion, and the kings of the nations; they saw how.

impossible it was to please God and Mammon.

THE last sentence of this 19th verse, after shewing the great city divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations falling, brings in great Babylon thus divided, to receive the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God. We are sacredly informed, that division tends to desolation ; all the supporters of mystical Babylon must surely be tormented, to see their city divided, their wealth plundered, and themselves abhorred.

AGAIN, the 20th verse seems remarkably to point at the isles of Britain and Ireland. The first sentence says, " And every island fled away." All agree that the prophecies of this book of the Revelation relates particularly to Christendom and Europe ; more especially as Britain and Ireland are the most exalted, large, and conspicuous islands in Europe, and the most powerful and wealthy islands in Christendom. As to their fleeing away, I am incapable to describe grammatical criticisms, but I take it to

denote their rulers or inhabitants being overcome, in a cause to which they had engaged their whole power, wisdom and wealth, and as a discomfited army flying back. How far this observation corresponds with present events and appearances, let the intelligent observer consider.

AGAIN, the apostle in the last sentence of the same 20th verse, informs us, by his hieroglyphic figures, that when every island fled away the mountains were not found. By mountains I think may naturally be meant, men either of high and rising principles, or powers, or both, whether in church or state, but very cold and barren, as to public benefit to society; these shall either lose their haughty spirit or power, and so be rendered unnoticeable. Leaving these general hints and observations on the xviii chapter, to your improvement, and such as may read them, I shall next write you my thoughts on

CHAPTER XX. VERSE I.

WHERE the apostle appears, as observing in vision, an angel coming down from hea-

ven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. This angel I view, as some spiritual light, coming into the hearts or minds of mankind, shewing them the bottomless pit of deep deceit, by which they have been kept in civil and religious bondage and darkness. This great chain, appears to me to intimate some great union among the lower classes, particularly in France; as chains for binding, not for ornament, are made of common and coarser metals, so the lower callings and occupations, uniting by the same angelic light, become like a chain to bind what really doth or may seem to hurt or destroy them.

IN the 2d verse, the use of this chain is evidenced; where it is said, that he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, the devil and satan, and bound him a thousand years. This, I think, is to limit evil powers, principles, and practices that have been pernicious to mankind, hurting and destroying them and their privileges, by fury and cruelty. Like the dragon, deceiving them by subtlety; like the serpent, in poisoning their minds and senses. The spiritual evils, represented

by these names of dragon, old serpent, devil and satan, being discovered, bound, and imprisoned by the agreeable connection and prudence of all orders of mankind, shall not have the liberty to act the part they have formerly done, according to the rules of the powers of darkness; but all degrees of men forsaking proud and selfish principles, shall strive who shall become most extensively useful, and best serve each other, seeking the good of the whole, shall find most good to themselves. By such wisdom and power as this, the powers of darkness appear to be bound and sealed up in their own dungeon, for an appointed season, which appears beginning in the present and henceforth æra; I am persuaded that the real principles of moral evil will become so clear, that laws not formed to bind it up, both in civil and religious concerns, will become unpopular and so be repalled. Rulers that rule not for the universal good, but to serve their pride and carnal pleasure, will be despised and removed, and such as appear to be most serviceable will be most esteemed, as our blessed Saviour told his disciples, "Whoever would be greatest among you, let him shew

“ himself most serviceable.” In this observance of his maxims, will the glory of the latter days, or the reign of our Saviour, most appear.

IN the 5th verse, the apostle in the same vision, informs us, that he saw thrones, and they that sat upon them; and judgment was given unto them. It hath struck me, that much of the events in France, are fulfilling what is foretold in the book of the Revelation, by the apostle John. Whether these words in the vision, may refer to the Directory established in France by their new constitution or not, I shall not ascertain; only they are here said to be thrones in the plural number, so are the Directory's seats. And a plurality are said to sit on them, they are not said to make laws, but as it were to execute the laws that are in being: judgment is here said to be given then.

WHAT I have already considered, I take to be fulfilled, in events that relate to the carnal and civil concerns of mankind. But now the apostle appears, in the second sentence of this 2d verse, to behold spiritual glo-

ries springing up, related in the figure, a resurrection of the souls of the martyrs ; which can only imply the true life and knowledge of christianity, according to the holy scriptures, and a conversation of holy sincerity and simplicity, quite free from and opposite to popery. Neither worshipping the beast, in professing popery by a mark on the forehead, nor his image in whatever form it may appear among protestants, such as the political unscriptural worship and government of various parties.

ON their restrained communion and readiness to excommunicate ; their superstitious regard to ceremonies and authority of former persons, or church counsel ; or even in personal self-conceit, censoriousness, and cruel persecuting desires ; nor receiving the mark of popery in their right hand, by giving either power or property to assist and support the beast, or his image. Those that are directed by such a spirit, are equal in heart to martyrs ; are joined to the Lord, and will be more respected by the true church than those that excel them in every other accomplishment of more natural wisdom. Carnal

clergymen and careless professors, as well as infidels, have had no right feeling of this receiving spirit; they are void of those exalting principles that lead to reign with Christ.

THE events that seem to be coming forward, incline me to conclude, that ruling principles, even respecting this world, will change sides. From what hath been felt in former ages both by Jews, heathens, and christians, whoever sought most the welfare of mankind, have been most wickedly persecuted and destroyed by them. Whoever appeared to excel in virtue or holiness, became the butt of malice; as the history of every age will verify. But it appears, in this last age or millenium, persons will become popular as the experience of their usefulness shall recommend them, and will lose their influence when they lose their virtue, and those will be set by themselves whose narrow mind seek only self.

I THINK it therefore needful, to advise the young, and especially young students who are pursuing their learning at an university, to strive, not for these excellencies which

please the carnal fancy, but how they shall obtain and be enabled to recommend the most pure and durable knowledge. Every devote mind may raise his gratitude, and bless God, that the mist of popery no more darkens the country; that we see the holy oracles fulfilled in the rising and falling of the great Antichrist; all the dazzling glare of that adorned whore, in the moral world, is now sinking in the sea of divine judgments, and shall arise no more! And young students, instead of looking forward to all the indulging pleasures of some emolument among established churches, or becoming noticed by the rulers of the nation, should set their eye to spread the true knowledge of religion, among Jews, papists, Mahometans, and pagans; should search the scriptures for the true knowledge of the glorious excellencies of redeeming love, and to feel the power of the glad tidings of peace on earth and good-will towards men; rejoicing that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and not imputing their trespasses unto them.

THE blessed tenderness of conscience, according to God's word, I soon hope will be

no more burdened by tests of party ; whereby men on pretence of covenanting with God, I am afraid, are only striving to confirm and collect profelytes to names and distinctions. The church of Christ will appear most beautiful when stript of all that is esteemed among men, which is an abomination in the sight of God.

THE course of a few years hath produced great things, and great events seem near their birth. When the christian sees the carnal world in perplexity, he needs not be troubled amidst these alarms. In their patience, let those who trust in God through the Saviour, possess their souls and lift up heads, for their redemption draweth nigh. But, let the carnal clergymen tremble, who have in a lordly manner, oppressed the heritage of the Lord, broken in pieces his people, and offended his little ones, because they had the civil power on their side. How will you appear, when your cities fall, and the nations shake you off with abhorrence, and Christ Jesus the true head of the church himself, whose commission you have despised, in not assisting to the utmost, to have the

gospel preached to every creature, so that Jews and heathens might hear the joyful sound? Remember, if grace be not given to you who will not help to make it known among pagan tribes, greater and more endless misery is coming upon you the professed christian leaders, than the most wretched infidel among Jews, pagans, or Mahometans. Let every sincere believer look and watch with prayer, for his great Lord coming, who hath all power in heaven and in earth, who will purge his sanctuary with the spirit of judgment, and with the spirit of burning, and take out of his church and from among his people every thing that offends, when all the vessels of the church shall be holy; yea, holiness shall be engraven on the very bells of the houses in the new Jerusalem, and there shall be nothing to hurt, far less to destroy, in all God's holy mountain.

• THE established clergy appear at present, apprehensive their cities are in great danger; looking with jealousy upon those falling abroad, they more vehemently than any other description of men, cry out against the crimes of France and the danger of French principles.

Strange, that such as condemned the errors of popery, should now make it the most heinous evil to overturn it, the reason is obvious; the axe is levelling at the root of ecclesiastical establishments, and all the nests that are built upon the branches are trembling, which cannot miss to raise a great noise and hurry among the well-feathered inhabitants, who have dwelt with ease upon it. Rejoice over her ye followers of Christ, and especially his ministers, when God's judgments are made known upon Babylon, come out from her and reform from her sins, lest her plagues overtake you, which I fear will reach some of God's people, who have not the prudence to force the evil and avoid it, but pass on in simplicity and so be punished.

THOUGH I rejoice in the overthrow of popery and the increase of liberty, let none take me as an advocate for the crimes of France. The infidelity, sabbath-breaking, violations of property, and other cruel outrages, are heinous evils in the sight of God and every serious discerning mind; but all circumstances considered, France can be more excused than we. Are not infidels readier to receive the

true faith than self-conceited Arminians? Is it to be thought criminally strange, that a nation long over-burdened with superstitious holidays should in ignorant hurry and anger, shake off the appointed times of Divine worship with those of human device. But, I fear if the French were to turn the reproach against many of us who are most forward to criminate them, what a formal shame would many of our church-services appear; and our sabbaths only a day of unmeaning idleness and carnal entertainment if not immoral exercise. Let us be thankful to God, small appearance of national cruelty hath for a long time appeared at home; but casting our eyes abroad and viewing, what a cruel time of slave-trade we have authorised! what wars we have kindled and continued to serve pride, and policy! Are we not cruel and unfeeling as men, not to say as christians? When God hath been executing his judgments in France, we look with horror on the scene, not on the guilt of provoking to it. In such dreadful earthquakes as hath shaken the whole nation of France, it cannot surprise us, to see the just bounds of property shaken into discord. That we may in time be prepared against such convul-

sions as appear to shake and overturn the present condition and order of states and kingdoms, with all the connected interests dependant on them, let us instead of being the friends of party, civil or religious, study judicious friendship, which is the true image of the universal God, and our great duty to the universe. Let us be ready to know, as well when we offend others as when others offend us, and strive to see our own faults as large as we see those even of our greatest enemy's, and be as forward with sincere repentance and humility, to seek forgiveness of those we have wickedly offended, as we could wish them who have offended us, with true penitence to ask our forgiveness; thus such gracious spirits as are enabled to overcome anger and conquer passion, rooting out all principles of revenge, slaying enmity with love, obtain the most acceptable and enduring victory, and may only be esteemed to triumph in reality.

Thus have I sent you some of my select observations on the fulfilling of scripture, the state and appearances of the present times, with some considerations of duty concerning

them. If you aim only at the glory of God and your duty connected therewith, for the universal love of mankind, I have no fear of your being brought to much loss by the fall of established churches, or what I take to be, as formerly mentioned, the cities of the nations.

Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus Christ, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will ; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

I remain, Dear Brother,

Yours &c, J. P.

THE END.