

An Untitled Treatise on Revelation – Isaac Newton

A modernized transcription designed for ease of reading without loss of depth. This is intended to be as close to the original work as possible but in a more modern rendition. That means that the quirks of the original text are still present.

Having spent years searching the prophetic scriptures, I now feel bound to share my findings. I keep remembering the judgment that fell on the servant who took his talent and buried it in a napkin. I don't want to be that man. I'm convinced this will be of real benefit to those who aren't satisfied just staying in the basic principles of the faith – things like the doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. These are good and necessary, but there are people who want to leave those first things behind and press on to spiritual maturity. They want to grow until they become of full age, and by constant use they have trained their senses to distinguish between good and evil.

I don't want anyone to get discouraged by how difficult these prophecies have been to decipher and how little success people have had trying to understand them. That difficulty is exactly what we should have expected. Daniel was told that the prophecies about the last days would be closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Only then would the wise understand and knowledge would increase. So the longer these things have stayed hidden, the more reason we have to hope that the time when they are meant to be opened is getting close.

If these prophecies were never meant to be understood, then why did God reveal them at all? He didn't do it for nothing. He revealed them for the good of the church, and if that's true, then it's also certain that the church will eventually come to understand them. I don't mean everyone who calls themselves a Christian, though. I mean a remnant — a few scattered people whom God has chosen. People who aren't led by what benefits them, or by how they were raised, or by what famous men say, but who honestly and earnestly search after the truth for themselves. Daniel said the wise would understand, but he also said none of the wicked would.

So let me tell you this: do not trust any man's opinion on these things, because the odds are you'll be misled. And most certainly do not rely on the judgment of the crowd, because then you'll be deceived for sure. Search the scriptures yourself. Read them often. Meditate on them constantly. Pray earnestly that God will open your understanding if you truly want to find the truth. If you keep at it and finally reach that understanding, you'll value it above all the treasures in the world. It will give your faith a strength and confidence nothing else can, and it will bring a deep, steady satisfaction to your mind. Only someone who has actually experienced it can really know exactly how valuable it is.

If you want to see how important it is to understand these prophecies, and how dangerous it is to ignore them, just look at what happened to the Jews when Christ came. The only way they were supposed to recognize their Messiah was through the prophecies in the Old Testament. Jesus himself pointed them to those prophecies right at the beginning of his ministry. Later he told them straight: "Search the scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me." When they asked him for a sign he called them hypocrites and said, "You can read the sky and tell what the weather will be, but you can't read the signs of the times." Even after he rose from the dead he still had to correct his own disciples for the same thing: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?" Then he went through Moses and all the prophets and explained everything in the scriptures that was about himself.

The apostles and the first Christians did the same thing. They kept pointing people back to those old prophecies and told them to check for themselves whether everything that happened to Jesus matched what the prophets had said. In the end, it was the Jews' ignorance of those prophecies that caused them to reject their own Messiah. Because they missed him they ended up not only conquered by the Romans but facing eternal judgment.

So here's the question: If the prophecies that pointed to the time of the apostles were given so the people living then could recognize the truth and stand firm in it, and if it was their duty to search those

prophecies carefully, then why wouldn't the prophecies that concern our own time — the time we're living in right now — be given for the same reason? Why wouldn't they be meant to help us see clearly in the middle of all the falling away and confusion so we can stay rooted in the truth? If God was so angry with the Jews for not searching the prophecies he gave them to recognize Christ, why would he excuse us for not searching the prophecies he gave us to recognize [the] Antichrist?

It's just as dangerous for a Christian to follow [the] Antichrist as it was for the Jews to reject Christ. So it's just as much our duty to learn how to recognize him so we can stay away from him.

You can see this isn't some idle curiosity or side issue. This is a duty of the greatest importance. In a time like this, when so many are being led astray, you need to be watching very carefully so you don't get pulled in without realizing it. [The] Antichrist is supposed to deceive the whole Christian world, so if you're not ready he can easily deceive you too. And even if he hasn't come yet, there are so many different religions and teachings out there that only one can be true. The odds are so high that you could be following something false without knowing it. So you have to be extremely careful.

Think about how Jesus taught the Jews in parables so that when they heard they would hear and not understand, and when they saw they would see and not perceive. He did that on purpose to test them. In the same way, these mystical scriptures were written to test us. So be careful that you're not found lacking when your turn comes. Because if you are, the difficulty of these prophecies won't excuse you any more than the difficulty of Jesus' parables excused the Jews.

Look also at the instructions Jesus gave us about these latter times through the parable of the fig tree. He said: "Now learn a parable of the fig tree. When its branch is yet tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So likewise you, when you see these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming."

That means it's your duty to learn the signs of the times so you can know how to watch, and so you can recognize what season is coming on the earth by looking at the things that have already happened. If you watch, you can know when it's at the door, the same way a man knows summer is near by the leaves on the fig tree. But if through ignorance of the signs you say in your heart, "My Lord is delaying his coming," and you start beating your fellow servants and eating and drinking with the drunkards, then your Lord will come on a day when you're not looking for him and at an hour you're not expecting. He will cut you in pieces and assign you a place with the hypocrites. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

If you don't watch, how do you expect to escape any more than everyone else? Because it will come like a snare on all who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Consider this too: the same prophets who foretold our Saviour's first coming also foretold his second coming. If it was the main and indispensable duty of the church before Christ's first coming to search into and understand those prophecies ahead of time, why shouldn't it be just as much our duty before his second coming to understand the same prophecies, at least as far as they still remain to be fulfilled?

How do you know that the Christian church, if it keeps neglecting these things, won't be punished in this world just as severely as the Jews ever were? Won't the Jews themselves rise up in judgment against us? Because they at least had some regard for these prophecies. They were in general expectation of the Messiah around the time he actually came. Their only real mistake was not understanding the manner of his two comings — they took the description of the second coming and wrongly applied it to the first.

So think about it: if the description of his second coming was so much clearer and more straightforward than the first that the Jews, who couldn't even recognize the first, could still understand the second, then how will we escape? We understand almost nothing of the second coming and have turned the whole description of it into allegories. And if the Jews were punished so severely for not understanding the more difficult prophecy, what can we possibly say for ourselves who understand nothing of the clearer one? Especially since we have advantages they never had — the first coming, which was hidden from them, has been made plain to us in the New Testament, and the second coming has been explained even further.

Again, think about how the apostles instructed the churches in the first age about these latter times. If it was their duty to understand these things even though they weren't going to live to see them, how can we say the knowledge of them is of no concern to us who actually are living in those times?

And finally, consider the whole purpose of the book of Revelation. Was it not given for the use of the church, to guide and direct her in the right way? Isn't that the whole point of all prophetic scripture? If there was no need for it, or if it cannot be understood, then why did God give it? Is he just trifling with us? But if it really was necessary for the church, then why are you neglecting it? And how can you be sure you're even in the right way if you don't understand it?

And finally, think about the blessing that is promised to those who read, study, and actually keep the things written in this prophecy. It says: "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." That same blessing is repeated again at the very end of the book in chapter 22 to really drive the point home.

God doesn't attach his blessings to things that don't matter. He doesn't waste his words on trifles or things that are just optional. So don't be too wise in your own opinion. If you truly want to receive this blessing, then you need to consider these scriptures and search into them carefully. These are the very things God has given us to be a guide in the times we're living in right now. And don't let yourself get discouraged when the world pushes back against them. There will always be opposition, but that doesn't change the fact that this is what God has set before us.

They'll probably call you a bigot, a fanatic, a heretic, or whatever else they can think of. They'll tell you these interpretations are too uncertain and it's a waste of time to pay any attention to them. They never stop to think that the prophecies about our Saviour's first coming were actually much harder to understand than these, and yet God still rejected the Jews for not paying closer attention to them. Whether they believe it or not, there are far greater judgments hanging over Christians today for their carelessness than the Jews ever experienced.

But the world loves to be deceived. People don't want to understand. They never weigh things fairly. They're led by prejudice, by what benefits them, by the praise of men, and by the authority of whatever church they grew up in. That's obvious because every group sticks tightly to the religion they were raised in, even though every group has both wise and learned people as well as fools and ignorant ones. Very few people actually try to understand the religion they claim to follow. And even those who study it usually do so for worldly reasons or just to defend what they already believe, not because they're honestly examining whether it's true and are willing to choose and follow whatever turns out to be the truest.

And just as their faith is shallow, so is their practice. Where are the people who never give in to anger, who never seek revenge, who never disobey those in authority, who never speak evil of them, who never cheat or lie or swear or use God's name carelessly in everyday talk? Where are the ones who aren't proud, ambitious, covetous, or unchaste, who don't drink too much? Where are the people who actually live like the first Christians — who love God with all their heart, soul, and strength, and love their neighbor as themselves? Where are the ones who, when their religion and the ways of the world disagree, don't think it's rude to follow God instead of following fashion and social rules? I'm afraid there are very few whose righteousness goes beyond that of the scribes and Pharisees.

This is how the world is. So don't trust it, and don't put any value on its censures or contempt. Instead, remember that it is the wisdom of God that his church should look despicable to the world — it's a test for the faithful. That's why he allowed Christ to be hung on a tree under the law, so the scandal of the cross would test the Jews. And for the same reason — to test Christians — he has allowed the great apostasy of the latter times. That's what he meant when he called it "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."

So don't be offended or ashamed when the world mocks you. Look at their reproaches as a mark that you're on the right path.

And when you become convinced of the truth, don't be afraid to profess it openly. If you stay silent, you could become a stumbling block to others and end up sharing the same fate as those rulers of the Jews who believed in Christ but were too afraid to confess him because they didn't want to be put out of the

synagogue. So when you're convinced, don't be ashamed of the truth. Profess it openly and try to convince your brother as well, so that at the resurrection you may receive the promise in Daniel 12:3 — that those who turn many to righteousness will shine like the stars forever and ever. And rejoice if you are counted worthy to suffer in your reputation or in any other way for the sake of the gospel, because then your reward is great.

But I wouldn't want you to rush out and become a teacher too quickly, like those people who grab a few similarities and scripture phrases and, because they don't know much more, use them to criticize their superiors and rail against everything that displeases them. Don't be headstrong like that. First make sure you are thoroughly instructed yourself — and not just in the prophetic scriptures, but especially in the plain doctrines delivered in them. Put them into practice until they become natural and habitual to you. Only after you have taken the beam out of your own eye will you see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother's eye. Otherwise, how can you say to your brother, "Let me pull the mote out of your eye," when there is a beam in your own?

I know some people will be offended that I'm presenting these things so seriously to everyone, as if they're only meant for scholars and learned men. But they should stop and think for a minute. God, who knows exactly what each person is capable of, deliberately hides his mysteries from the wise and prudent of this world and reveals them to babes. It wasn't the scribes and Pharisees who believed in Christ and caught the real meaning of his parables and the prophecies in the Old Testament. It was the ordinary, everyday people.

The wise men of the world are usually too full of their own ideas and too caught up in the business of this life. One man just bought a piece of ground, another has five yoke of oxen, a third has married a wife — so they're busy. That's why it was right that the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and those out in the highways and hedges should be invited too. God, who intended this prophecy mainly for their sake, is perfectly able to open their understanding to it. And understanding these things is not something human wisdom can achieve on its own — it's a gift from God.

It's true that without a guide it would be very difficult — not just for them, but even for the most educated people — to get it right. But if the interpretation is already worked out and laid out clearly for them, then I don't see why, with the help of such a guide, they couldn't understand and judge it just as well as men with more formal education, as long as they read it attentively and often. And I hope this book will serve as exactly that kind of guide, especially if the reader first takes the time to carefully consider the rules that follow. Those rules will help him recognize when an interpretation is genuine and, when there are two possible meanings, which one is the better.

It was the very learned and conscientious Mr. Mede who first opened the way into these interpretations, and for the most part I have followed him. Where I found him to be correct, it would have been wrong for me to depart from him. I'm actually more surprised that he made so few mistakes than that he made any at all. His main errors were in his Clavis, and if that had been perfect the rest would have fallen into place naturally. From that you can guess how uncertain the work of others has been — men who jumped straight into giving interpretations without any proper method or order. They twisted the parts of the prophecy around however they pleased, without paying attention to the internal markers that show how the pieces are supposed to connect. When you do that, it's not very hard, among all the things in the world, to make the prophecy fit more than one way and still have it look plausible. And yet almost everything I've seen from other writers has been so poorly put together and out of proportion that I sometimes wonder if even the authors themselves really believed their own interpretations. I wish they had been more careful, especially when they read the solemn curse that is attached to the end of this prophecy.

I testify to every man who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

To invent false interpretations is to mislead people and keep them from the right understanding of this book. That is just as bad as adding to it or taking away from it, because it robs men of the real use and benefit of the prophecy. Still, I hope those authors did it neither out of vanity, nor to make the church

look more impressive on the outside while ignoring its inner purity (which is worth infinitely more), nor for any other worldly reason, but with an upright heart. And I hope God will not lay it to their charge.

I know some people will say that everything in this prophecy was already fulfilled back in the time of the apostles. I wish those people would stop and think for a minute. According to their own view, these prophecies were supposed to be useful to the church right then, in that very age — yet nobody even thought of the interpretations they now propose. All sacred prophecies are given for the benefit of the church in the specific times God meant them for. That means the church living in those times should be able to understand them.

But these prophecies were never understood by the church in the earlier ages. The Christians back then didn't even pretend to understand them. They never thought the prophecies were about their own time. Instead, with complete agreement, they passed down to later generations the clear tradition that the Antichrist described in these chapters was still to come in the latter days. Since the early church never understood these prophecies as already fulfilled, and since God cannot fail in his purposes, we have to admit that they were written for the benefit of the present and future ages — which means they are not yet completely fulfilled.

So people need to be very careful about trying to push these scriptures aside or stop others from using them, because they might actually be fighting against God.

Because these prophecies are so important, and because it's so easy to go wrong in interpreting them, we need to move forward with great care. This is the method I will follow.

First, I will lay down some general rules for interpreting the prophecies. If you keep these rules in mind, they will help prepare your judgment so you can tell when an interpretation is genuine and, when two different meanings are possible, which one is better.

Second, to help you understand the language the prophets use, I will give a short description of it. The prophets often compare a kingdom either to the whole universe or to a wild beast. By seeing how the parts of the prophecy match the parts of these symbols, you can quickly grasp what the figurative words and expressions mean and keep them from being twisted into whatever someone wants them to mean. This approach makes the language of the prophets much more certain and cuts off the freedom to force private ideas onto them. The main categories I use for these words I call Definitions.

Third, after laying these foundations, I will compare the different parts of the Apocalypse with one another and arrange them into their proper order by using the internal markers that the Holy Spirit has placed in the text for exactly this purpose. I do this by boiling the substance of the prophecy down into clear propositions and then giving the reasons that show why each proposition is true.

And here I have to say it out loud: the wisdom that shines through the structure of this prophecy is truly admirable — more than human. It fits perfectly with all the other prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments.

Section 1. The Rules for interpreting the words and language in Scripture

1. First, carefully observe how the different parts of Scripture agree with each other and how the prophets normally speak. Reject any interpretation that breaks this rule. For example, if someone says a Beast stands for some great moral vice, throw that out immediately as nothing more than their own private imagination. In the style and language of the Apocalypse and all the other prophetic books, a Beast always means a political body — a kingdom or empire — and sometimes the single person who rules that body. There is simply no ground in Scripture for any other meaning.

2. Give each place in Scripture only one meaning, unless there is a clear reason to think otherwise. The only exceptions are when the literal sense is deliberately used as a cover to hide a deeper mystical meaning — like a shell protecting the kernel — so that unworthy people won't taste it, or until God decides the time is right. In those cases there can be a true literal meaning that is still useful to the church in its own way. But once we have the main meaning, if it is mystical we should only hold to a

literal sense as far as history or the circumstances clearly support it. If the main meaning is literal, there may also be a mystical layer, but we can rarely be sure of it without stronger evidence than just a loose analogy. We should be even more cautious about giving any passage a double mystical meaning. It is possible — the heads of the Beast in Revelation 17 are said to be both mountains and kings — but without direct divine authority or at least some argument stronger than mere similarity, we cannot safely say the prophecy points more than one way. Giving ourselves too much freedom here shows a wild, uncontrolled imagination and comes very close to enthusiasm.

3. Stick as closely as possible to the same meaning of words, especially inside the same vision, and prefer interpretations that do this best, unless the context clearly demands a different sense. For instance, if someone interprets the Beast as a kingdom in one sentence and as a vice in another, when nothing in the text shows any change of meaning, that interpretation should be rejected. The same goes for the earth and sea (or earth and waters) when they appear together in the same or related visions. If a person sometimes makes the earth mean the territory of a kingdom (as in the first trumpet where the dragon comes down to the inhabitants of the earth and sea), sometimes church councils (as when the earth helps the woman), and sometimes just a low or humble state (as when the dragon is cast into the earth or the two-horned beast rises out of the earth), that kind of shifting is not reliable. We should look for an interpretation that keeps the same meaning for “earth” in every case. Likewise, in the vision of the whore in chapters 17 and 18, it is not consistent to take “the kings of the earth” in one sense in verse 17:18 and in a completely different sense in 17:2 and 18:3, 9.

4. Choose those interpretations that stay closest to the literal meaning of the words, unless the context and circumstances clearly call for an allegory. So if someone says the wound by a sword means a spiritual wound, or that the battle at the seventh trumpet and vial — described as armies clashing and a hailstorm with other storms — is only a spiritual battle, that should be rejected as pure fantasy because nothing in the text supports it. Note that when the prophets use a common symbolic figure (like describing the fall of nations as a storm of hail, thunder, lightning, and the shaking of the world), the usual prophetic meaning of that figure should be treated as the direct and proper sense of the passage, just as much as if it had been written in plain literal language. This kind of symbolic language was as common to them as any everyday national language is to its people.

5. Accept as the true meaning of any portion of Scripture the one that flows most freely and naturally from the ordinary use and proper sense of the language and from the context in that place and in all other places of Scripture. If that is not the true sense, then the true sense becomes uncertain, and no one can ever reach any real certainty about it. That would make the Scriptures no sure rule of faith and would be a reflection on the Spirit of God who gave them. Anyone who, without better grounds than his own private opinion or the opinion of any human authority, turns Scripture away from its plain meaning into an allegory or any less natural sense is showing that he trusts his own imagination or human authority more than the Scripture itself. Therefore the opinion of such men, however many there may be, is not to be regarded. This is the real reason commentators have twisted the text so badly — not because the Scripture itself is uncertain. This has been the door through which all heresies have entered and driven out the ancient faith.

Section 2. Rules for Methodising and Construing the Apocalypse (Revelation)

Rule 5B. When two interpretations seem equally possible, prefer the one that deals with the most important and significant things. God's whole purpose in these prophecies was to describe and picture the biggest, most consequential events in the world during the time the prophecies cover — not little unimportant details. So if the question comes up whether the three frogs, the head or horn of a beast, the whore of Babylon, the woman Jezebel, the false prophet, the prophet Balaam, the king Balac, the martyr Antipas, the two witnesses, the woman clothed with the sun, the man-child her son, the eagle crying “Woe,” or anything like that, should be understood as single persons or as whole kingdoms, churches, and other great bodies of people, this rule tells me to choose the larger meaning (kingdoms, churches, etc.) unless there is a very strong reason in that particular case to think a single person is more important than the entire group he represents, or some other clear detail points that way. 6. Make

the parts of any vision follow one another in the exact order the text gives them, without breaking the sequence or letting them overlap, unless the text itself clearly shows that a break or overlap is intended. If you could rearrange or interrupt the order whenever you felt like it, the prophecy would have no definite meaning at all. That would turn it into an ambiguous riddle instead of a real prophecy. 7. When two visions run alongside each other (collateral visions), line up their most important parts and time periods with one another. If they are not completely parallel, at least make the beginning or ending of one vision match a notable turning point in the other. The visions are carefully proportioned to the actual events and changes they describe, so they should also be proportioned to each other. 8. Choose the interpretations that, without forcing anything, bring the different visions into the greatest harmony with one another — not just in their timing (as in the previous rule), but in their other qualities too, especially so that they describe the same events. The whole point of having several visions side by side is that they serve as keys to unlock each other. So the best way to understand them is to fit them together as carefully and exactly as possible. That is what it really means to open Scripture by Scripture. You see this when the history of the dragon is compared with the seals and trumpets, and when the trumpets are compared with the vials. 9. Choose the interpretations that, without forcing anything, make everything as simple as possible. The reason is obvious from the last rule. Truth is always found in simplicity, never in complexity and confusion. Just as the world looks incredibly complicated to the naked eye but becomes beautifully simple when you understand its inner structure, the same is true of these visions. The more clearly you understand them, the simpler they become. God's works are perfect in their simplicity. He is the God of order, not of confusion. So just as someone who wants to understand the universe must try to reduce his knowledge to the greatest possible simplicity, the same must be done with these prophecies. Anyone who does the opposite is not only guaranteeing that he will never understand them, but he is also insulting the perfection of the prophecy itself and making people suspect that his real goal is not to understand it but to confuse everyone else. 10. When interpreting the Apocalypse, pay very little or no attention to arguments based on how things turned out in history. There can be almost no certainty in historical interpretations until the meaning of the prophecy has first been settled by the text itself. 11. Accept as the true interpretation the one that flows most naturally and freely from the special markers the Holy Spirit has placed in the text to show how the parts connect, and from carefully following all the rules above. The reason is the same as in #5. So if anyone wants to argue that my interpretation is uncertain simply because it might be possible to come up with other ways of reading it, I'm not impressed unless he can actually show where and how what I have done can be improved. If the alternatives he offers are less natural or rest on weaker reasons, that fact alone is proof enough that they are wrong and that he is not really seeking truth but only defending a party. And if the path I have followed agrees with the nature and character of the prophecy, no other proof is needed. When you see the parts of a well-made machine fitting together perfectly, you know the craftsman put them in the right places even if they could theoretically be forced into some other arrangement. In the same way, when the parts of this prophecy fit together according to the connections the Holy Spirit built into them, a person should accept that construction. It is true that a clever craftsman could design a machine that could be assembled more than one way, and a sentence can be ambiguous, but that kind of objection has no place in the Apocalypse, because God knew exactly how to write it without ambiguity, and he meant it to be a sure rule of faith.

But I don't even need to rely on this general reasoning, because the specific reasons I have given for every single point are so clear and strong that any humble and honest person who reads them carefully and really believes the Scriptures will be convinced. Still, I don't want this to stop other people from continuing the search. I suspect there are still more mysteries to be discovered. Mr. Mede laid the foundation, I have built upon it, and I hope others will carry it further until the work is complete.

Section 3. Rules for Interpreting the Apocalypse (Revelation)

12. Once the overall construction of the Apocalypse has been settled, that construction must become the rule for all interpretations. Any interpretation that doesn't agree with it should be rejected. The prophecy should not be twisted to fit history; instead, we should select those parts of history that best match the prophecy as it stands.

13. Interpret the sacred prophecies as referring to the most important events and actions that took place during the times they cover. If it would be poor writing for a historian to pass over the major events while focusing on trivial ones, then it is even less likely that the Holy Spirit would do that in these

prophecies, which are simply histories of things yet to come.

14. Match the most notable parts of the prophecy to the most notable periods in history, and make the breaks that appear in the continuous flow of the prophecy line up with the major changes that happened in history. Reject any interpretation where the parts and breaks in the prophecy do not keep a proper proportion to the parts and changes in history. Historians naturally divide their accounts into sections, chapters, and books at the points where smaller, larger, and greatest revolutions begin or end. It would be improper to do otherwise. How much more, then, should we expect the Holy Spirit to follow this rule exactly in his prophetic writings, since they are nothing other than histories of things to come. For example, the great break between the sixth and seventh seal (where the vision of the sealed saints is inserted) and the great break between the sixth and seventh trumpet (where the vision of the little book is inserted) divide the whole prophecy into three main parts, with the middle part further divided by the smaller break between the fourth and fifth trumpet (where the angel cries "Woe"). All the other seals and trumpets are like smaller sections. So, according to this rule, we must line up periods of history with these breaks and sections — periods that mark off the great revolutions the prophecy describes. Again, if a historian described things out of proportion — magnifying small events above greater ones, or giving more courage to the weaker of two persons — we would call that bad writing. Since the Holy Spirit's prophecies are histories of things to come, we should not allow such disproportions in them. In Daniel's vision of the four beasts, for instance, it would be absurd to say the fourth beast is Antiochus Epiphanes and his successors, as some recent writers have done. The fourth beast is described as the most terrible, dreadful, strong, and warlike of all four, and the prophet spends far more time describing it than all the others put together, while the kingdom of Antiochus and his successors was both smaller and weaker than any of the three before it.

15. Choose those interpretations which, without forcing anything, show the greatest respect for the church and reveal the greatest wisdom and providence of God in preserving her in the truth. When you try to understand the letters or actions of a very wise statesman so you can see the counsel guiding him and the design he is working toward, you assume his actions are ordered in the way that best serves his main purpose and shows the greatest wisdom. The same applies to these prophecies. They are the counsels of God, so they are the wisest possible and perfectly suited to the end for which they were given. And that end is the benefit of the church — to guide her and keep her in the truth. All the sacred prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments are directed to this same end, as anyone who considers them can easily see. This shows the mistake some interpreters make: if their interpretations were true, the Apocalypse would be of little or no real concern to the church.

Yet I do not mean that these prophecies were intended to convert the whole world to the truth. God is just as well as merciful, and he punishes wickedness by hardening the wicked and visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children. But the design of these prophecies is to test men and convert the best, so that the church may be purer and less mixed with hypocrites and lukewarm people. That is why they are wrapped in obscurity and framed with such wisdom that the careless, the proud, the self-conceited, the presumptuous, the scholars, the skeptics, those whose judgments are ruled by their lusts, their interests, the fashions of the world, their regard for men, outward appearances, or other prejudices — and all those who, no matter how naturally clever they are, cannot discern the wisdom of God in the creation — that these people, whose hearts are hardened, should see and not perceive, hear and not understand. God has declared that this is his intention: that none of the wicked should understand, while the wise should understand.

And from this it is clear how blind a certain sort of men are. They have no better or different grounds for their faith than the scribes and Pharisees had for their traditions, yet they demand that the certainty of faith in the Scriptures be demonstrated so clearly that any natural man, no matter how wicked, who merely reads them can judge them and see their strength with the same plainness and certainty as a demonstration in Euclid. Are these men not like the scribes and Pharisees who would not listen to the law and the prophets but demanded a sign from Christ? If Christ thought it just to refuse a sign to that wicked and adulterous generation — even though they were God's own people and the catholic church — then how much more just is it that this generation should be allowed to die in their sins? They not only neglect the law and the prophets like the scribes, but they trample on them and do everything they can to destroy the faith people have in them and make them seem worthless. I could wish they would consider how completely contrary this is to God's purpose. It was never his intention that the truth of his

religion should be as obvious and plain to everyone as a mathematical demonstration. It is enough that it moves the hearts of those he has chosen. As for the rest who are so unbelieving, it is just that they be permitted to die in their sins.

Here then is the wisdom of God: he has so framed the Scriptures that they distinguish between the good and the bad. They are a demonstration to the one and foolishness to the other.

And from this same consideration we can also see the vanity of those who judge churches by their outward splendor and measure them by their external form and constitution. It is far more in keeping with God's design that his church should appear contemptible and even scandalous to the world, so that men may be tried. For this end he allowed the many revolts of the Jewish church under the law, and for the same end he has allowed the great apostasy under the gospel. If you are relying on the external form of churches, on the learning of scholars, on the wisdom of statesmen or other educated men, then ask yourself whether you would not have sided with the scribes and Pharisees if you had lived in their day. If that is your case, then your situation is no better than theirs, and God may judge you accordingly — unless you happen to be on the right side. But even if you are, it would hardly excuse your folly, though it might lessen it a little.

Section 4: Prophetic Figures

The original source of the figurative language used by the prophets was the comparison of a kingdom to the whole world, and the parts of the one to the corresponding parts of the other. So when they speak in figures:

The Sun stands for the king and kingly power.

The Moon stands for the next in dignity — that is, the priestly power and the person or persons who hold it.

The greater stars stand for the rest of the princes or lesser kings.

Heaven stands for the throne, the court, the honours and dignities in which these earthly lights and stars are placed.

The earth stands for the common people below them.

Waters stand for the same thing — the common people.

The sea stands for a great gathering of many people into one large body or kingdom.

Rivers and fountains of water stand for peoples under several heads — many smaller kingdoms, principalities, or provinces, together with their chief cities.

When the prophets are speaking of two different sorts of people at the same time, they sometimes distinguish them by calling one the earth and the other the sea, waters, or rivers.

A mountain stands for a city, and especially the chief or capital city, such as Jerusalem or Babylon.

Sometimes a mountain stands for a temple.

Islands in the midst of the sea stand for temples scattered throughout a country that is represented as a sea.

Dens and rocks of mountains stand for the buildings of cities, or the ruins of them — especially the great stone buildings like forts, palaces, and temples.

Trees and herbs stand for men.

Swarms of insects (such as locusts) stand for numerous armies.

Wild beasts stand for foreign kingdoms.

Other beasts (such as frogs) stand for other societies or sects of men, according to their character.

A wilderness stands for a country laid waste by these beasts, whether in temporal or spiritual matters.

Flesh stands for riches, the prey on which these beasts feed.

The fowls of the air stand for the things that are in the air — spirits, infectious diseases, and sometimes armies or kingdoms.

Ships stand for buildings.

Merchant ships stand for buildings used for trade and profit — such as shops for tradesmen or temples for priests.

A navy of warships stands for an army.

Rivers stand for the provinces or people of a kingdom.

Overflowing floods stand for invasions.

Drying up of waters stands for the decay of military strength.

Reeds and flags stand for men.

Fountains of water stand for cities and towns.

Fishes stand for armies or people.

So far I have only considered the world as far as its parts are compared to the parts of a kingdom in due proportion. I chose to do it this way because this was the original source of the prophets' figurative language, and therefore it must be the rule for understanding it. But it often happens that, to make the parts of a kingdom fit together better and to express their mutual relations and actions more conveniently — and sometimes to consider two or more kingdoms at once — the prophets extend some part of the world to stand for the whole kingdom. For example, they may use the celestial frame by making the lesser stars signify the common people, or the clouds signify great multitudes of people. Or they may use the terrestrial frame by making the tallest trees stand for kings and princes, and the lesser plants or herbs for the common people. Or they may take any single animal — a lion, a bear, a dragon, an eagle, a lamb, a woman, a man, or even an angel — and use its parts and qualities to signify the parts and qualities of the kingdom. So its heads (if there are more than one) signify the division of the kingdom into that many chief parts, whether side by side or one after another. The horns upon any head signify the number of kingdoms belonging to that head. The eyes signify a politician, and more emphatically a prophet. The mouth signifies a speaker of laws. The teeth signify squadrons of armies under their several commanders. The wings and legs or feet signify armies. The tail also signifies armies if the beast is serpent-like so that it can fight with it; otherwise it only means a train of attendants. And the body signifies the rest of the kingdom which is guarded and governed by these parts.

And thus much concerning the parts of a kingdom. The chief passions and actions are represented as follows:

Ascending up to heaven signifies great exaltation.

Ascending in a cloud signifies exaltation by a multitude of people.

Riding on the clouds signifies victory and dominion over many people.

Covering the sun with a cloud or with smoke signifies the oppression of the king by the armies of an enemy.

The passing away of heaven and earth signifies the passing away of a kingdom.

Darkening, smiting, or setting of the sun, moon, and stars signifies the ceasing or desolation of a kingdom, in proportion to the darkness.

Blackness of the sun and turning the moon into blood signifies the splendor of the kingdom put out and the religious body of it politically slain.

Turning water into blood signifies great slaughter of the people, or at least the political death of a kingdom.

Embittering of waters by wormwood signifies vehement affliction of a people, chiefly by war.

The falling of anything into water signifies the ruin of that thing.

Burning anything with fire signifies its consumption by war.

Being scorched with the sun signifies affliction through war caused by the king.

Appearing like a fiery substance (as the sun, burning brass, flames of fire) or being clothed with a fiery substance (as with the sun) signifies being in great affliction by war or persecution.

Earthquakes signify wars and commotions.

Shaking of heaven and earth signifies commotions so great as to overthrow kingdoms.

Winds signify long and continued series of war.

Whirlwinds signify very violent and destructive wars.

The more sudden and violent tempests of hail and thunder signify battles with loss to the side on which the tempest falls — and the greatness of the loss is increased if the hailstones are described as very great, or mixed with fire (lightning) or with blood.

Rain signifies the blessing of God, unless it comes with a flood.

Living water or water of life signifies the gift of the Spirit.

Besides these there are many other figurative expressions taken for the most part from more obvious similarities or affinities of things. For example: a warrior or potentate is represented by a horseman; victoriousness by a bow; justice by a balance or measure; martyrs by an altar; the church by a temple or a woman; persecution of the church by the pains of a woman in travail; an adulterate church by a whore; idolatry of the church by whoredom or blasphemy; idols by men; the shutting up of idols in their temples or burying them in the ruins of them by hiding men in dens and rocks of mountains; the fall of idol-temples upon their idols by the falling of rocks and mountains upon men; the throwing down of idols by the falling of stars to the earth as figs fall from a fig-tree; the throwing down of idol-temples by the departing of the heavens as a scroll when it is rolled together; the springing up of new heresies or false religions by an ascension out of the bottomless pit; error and affliction by drunkenness or a potion; overthrow in war by a wound; a durable plague of war by a sore; desolation by nakedness; slaughter of the wicked or punishing in hell by treading a winepress; and the end of the world by a harvest or vintage. And some others there are which are either so obvious they need no explaining, or may be more conveniently explained later.

Section 5: Definitions

The original source of the figurative language used by the prophets was the comparison of a kingdom to the whole frame of heaven and earth, and the parts of the one to the corresponding parts of the other. So when they speak in figures:

The Sun signifies the supreme magistrate. The Moon signifies the next in dignity. The greater stars signify the rest of the princes or inferior kings. Heaven signifies the court, the honors, and the dignities in which these earthly lights and stars are placed. The earth and the sea signify the condition of the inferior people. And when two different sorts of people are being considered at the same time, they are sometimes distinguished by calling one the earth and the other the sea.

When the earth is used to represent any people or collection of nations, then a mountain signifies a city, and especially the chief or capital city, such as Jerusalem or Babylon, and sometimes a temple. Dens and rocks of mountains signify the buildings of cities or the ruins of them, and especially the great stone buildings such as palaces and temples. Vegetables (trees and herbs) signify men. Swarms of insects, such as locusts, signify numerous armies. Wild beasts signify foreign kingdoms or armies. Other beasts, such as frogs, signify other societies or sects of men according to their character. A wilderness signifies a country wasted by these beasts, whether in temporal or spiritual matters. Flesh signifies riches and money, the prey on which these beasts feed. The fowls of the air signify the things that are in the air, such as spirits or infectious diseases, and sometimes troops of horsemen or the commanders of an army.

When the sea or waters are used to represent a people or collection of nations, then islands signify cities or temples. Merchant ships signify buildings used for commerce and profit, such as trading towns, shops for tradesmen, or temples for priests. A navy of warships signifies an army. Rivers signify trains of men running to and fro, such as armies or the influx of foreigners. Overflowing floods signify invasions. Drying up of waters signifies the decay of military strength. Reeds and flags signify men. Fountains of water signify cities and towns. And fishes signify armies or people. Sometimes waters signify riches, and then the sea and rivers must be interpreted accordingly.

So far I have considered the universe only so far as its parts are compared to the parts of a kingdom in due proportion to the whole. I chose to do it this way because this was the original source of the prophets' figurative language, and therefore it must be the rule for understanding it. But it often happens that, to make the parts of a kingdom hold a better analogy with one another and for the more convenient expression of their mutual relations and actions — and sometimes when considering two or more kingdoms at once — the prophets extend some part of the universe to stand for the whole kingdom. For example, they may use the celestial frame by making the lesser stars signify the common people and the clouds signify great multitudes of them; or the terrestrial frame by making the tallest trees stand for kings and princes and the lesser plants or herbs for the common people; or any single animal — a lion, a bear, a dragon, and so on — by using its parts and qualities to signify the parts and qualities of the kingdom. So its heads, if there are more than one, signify the division of the kingdom into that many chief parts, whether side by side or one after another. The horns upon any head signify its kings or the subordinate kingdoms belonging to that head. The eyes signify political skill and foresight. The mouth signifies the power of commanding and making laws. The teeth signify captains and other commanders. The feet signify armies. The tail also signifies armies if the beast is of a serpentine form so that it can fight with it; otherwise it only means a train of attendants. And the body signifies the rest of the kingdom which is guarded and governed by these parts.

And thus much concerning the parts of a kingdom. To which may be added the representations of its chief passions and actions as follow:

Ascending up to heaven signifies great exaltation. Ascending in a cloud signifies exaltation by a multitude of people. Riding on the clouds signifies victory and dominion over many people. Covering the sun with a cloud or with smoke signifies the oppression of the king by the armies of an enemy. Darkening, smiting, or setting of the sun, moon, and stars signifies the ceasing or desolation of a kingdom, in proportion to the darkness. Blackness of the sun and turning the moon into blood signifies the splendor of the kingdom put out and its glory turned into bloodshed. Turning water into blood signifies great slaughter of the people. The falling of anything into water signifies the ruin of that thing. Burning anything with fire signifies its consumption by war. Being scorched by the sun signifies affliction through war caused by the supreme magistrate. Earthquakes signify wars and commotions. Shaking of heaven and earth signifies commotions so great as to overthrow kingdoms. Winds signify long and continued series of war. Whirlwinds signify very violent and destructive wars. The more sudden and violent tempests of hail and thunder signify battles with loss to the side on which the tempest falls, the greatness of which is aggravated by describing the greatness of the hailstones and by mixing them with fire (lightning) and sometimes with blood. Rain signifies the blessing of God. Living water or water of life signifies the gift of the Spirit.

Besides these there are many other figurative expressions taken for the most part from more obvious similarities or affinities of things; as to represent a warrior or potentate by a horseman; victoriousness by a bow; justice by a balance or measure; martyrs by an altar; the church by a temple or a woman; an adulterate church by a whore; idolatry of the church by whoredom or blasphemy; idols by men; the shutting up of idols in their temples or burying them in the ruins thereof by hiding men in dens and rocks of mountains; the fall of idol-temples upon their idols by the falling of rocks and mountains upon men; the throwing down of idols by the falling of stars as figs fall from a fig-tree; the throwing down of idol-temples by the departing of the heavens as a scroll when it is rolled together; the springing up of new heresies or false religions by an ascension out of the bottomless pit; error and affliction by drunkenness or a potion; overthrow in war by a wound; a durable plague of war by a sore; desolation by nakedness; slaughter of the wicked or punishing in hell by treading a winepress; and the end of the world by a harvest or vintage. And some others there are which are either so obvious they need no explaining, or may be more conveniently explained later.

Section 6: The Proof

Now although these interpretations may seem plain enough from the way they fit together and match the things they represent, I still want to make them as solid as possible. So I'm going to show how they agree with the scriptures themselves, and also with the interpretations of the Chaldee Paraphrast, and with the ancient teaching of the Eastern interpreters as it was recorded by Achmet, an Arabian, who drew from the old monuments of Egypt, Persia, and India.

These nations bordered on the Hebrews in ancient times and had a lot in common with them in both language and customs. We don't hesitate to learn from them the meaning of words and phrases when we translate the scriptures, so there's no reason to hesitate to learn from them the meaning of the figurative expressions the prophets used. The prophets without doubt spoke in a dialect that was commonly understood by the more thoughtful people of their day, and many of their types and figures that seem unusual and difficult to us were actually very familiar to those Eastern nations, at least among their interpreters. So, after the authority of the scriptures themselves, I choose to rely on the traditions of those ancient sages rather than on the suggestions of my own private imagination.

I proceed on these grounds to prove the interpretations.

The comparison of a kingdom to the world can be seen in Isaiah 51:16, where the new founding of the political world, or the kingdom of the Jews, is described as planting the heavens and laying the foundations of the earth. "I have put my words in thy mouth and have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the heavens and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people." See the Chaldee Paraphrast. The same sense of heaven and earth appears in Isaiah 1:2, Haggai 2:21, and so on. And in the Apocalypse we read, "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea."

The meaning of the sun, moon, and stars is shown by these examples. When Joseph dreamed that the sun, moon, and eleven stars did obeisance to him, Jacob interpreted it of himself, his wife, and his sons, comparing his family to the universe as if it were a little kingdom. Sextus Empiricus says the Egyptians compared the sun to the king and to the right eye, the moon to the queen and to the left eye, the five planets to lictors or staff-bearers, and the fixed stars to the rest of the people. The horn cast down of the host of heaven and of the stars to the ground, and he magnified himself even to the prince of the host (Daniel 8:10). Here the stars are put for the saints, the chief men of the church. So in the Apocalypse the seven stars are the angels of the churches, that is, their bishops. In the same sense the moon may respect the church as the sun respects the kingdom. For in the kingdom of Christ the church is the queen, being the wife of the Lamb (Revelation 19). And therefore the new moons were celebrated by the Jews as a type of the future renovation of the church. The Eastern nations taught that the sun represents the king, the moon the next in power to the king (suppose the Pontifex Maximus with his mystical body of priests), the planet Venus the queen, and the rest of the greater stars the great men of the kingdom (Achmet, Chapter 16, from the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians). Yet Lucifer, which is the same as Venus, sometimes signifies a king, as in Isaiah 14:12 where the king of Babylon is called by this name. And so Christ is called the morning star. Here Christ, being the Prince or Sun of righteousness (as he is called in Malachi 4:2), the stars are put for the saints.

"Thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds." This is spoken of the king of Babylon exalting himself above all kings and earthly dominions (Isaiah 14:13). "Thy greatness, O Nebuchadnezzar, is grown and reacheth unto heaven" (Daniel 4:22). "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven" (Matthew 11:23). "How hath the Lord cast down from heaven to earth the beauty of Israel" (Lamentations 2:1). If a king sees himself, as it were, above the heaven where the stars are, he shall find exaltation and a name above other kings (Achmet, Chapter 162, from the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians). By all which it may appear that heaven signifies any high and exalted estate, and earth a low one.

There is nothing more usual than to put the earth for the nations of the earth, or for the common people of any great kingdom, as in these expressions: "Let all the earth praise the Lord." "He causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first Beast" (Revelation 13:12). "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth" (Isaiah 1:2).

To avoid as much as possible those interpretations which make the scriptures tautologise, it is better to interpret the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea as two sorts of people in Revelation 12:12, or to interpret the victory over the Beast and over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name as four distinct kinds of victories in Revelation 15:2, rather than to treat them as superfluous repetitions.

Thus, when there is nothing in the text that may argue any such change of signification.

Dust. Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? (Numbers 23:10) Dust thou art (Genesis 3:19). He remembereth we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it and it is gone (Psalm 103:14–15). He gave them as the dust to his sword and as the driven stubble to his bow (Isaiah 41:2). I exalted thee out of the dust (1 Kings 16:2, Psalm 113:7).

Woe to the multitude of many people which make a noise like the noise of the seas, and to the rushing of nations that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters. The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters (Isaiah 17:12–13). The waters of Nimrim shall be desolate (Isaiah 15:6, Jeremiah 48:34). The waters where the whore sitteth are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues (Revelation 17:15). I saw a Beast rise out of the sea, that is, out of the aggregate of the waters where the whore sitteth (Revelation 13:1). How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! The sea (that is, the kingdom of the Medes) is come upon Babylon, she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof, her cities are a desolation (Jeremiah 51:42). If any man dream he is lord of the sea, he will be successor in the whole kingdom (Achmet, chapter 178, from the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians). So the Chaldee Paraphrast substitutes people for waters in Jeremiah 47:2 and Ezekiel 26:19 and so on.

Hurt not the earth nor the sea (Revelation 7:3), that is, the two sorts of people signified by the earth and the sea, as is expounded in chapter 12:12: Woe be to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea. For these are two sorts of people, because the earth was hurt in the first trumpet and the sea in the second. Much after the same manner in the Old Testament the Egyptians are distinguished from other nations, they being usually represented by the watery element because of the overflow of the Nile. Thus in Jeremiah 46:8 Egypt's invading foreign territories is compared to a flood covering the earth. The like representation is also made of Syria's invading Judah (Isaiah 8:7) and of a northern nation's invading Philistia (Jeremiah 47:2). So in Jeremiah 51:42 the kingdom of the Medes is compared to a sea and that of Babylon to a land which that sea breaks in upon. And so I conceive the universal dominion of the four empires is represented in Daniel 7 by a great sea to distinguish it from the rest of the earth, which similitude I take to be retained also in the Apocalypse, considering the analogy of these two prophecies.

Of Jerusalem's being called a mountain there are many instances, as in Zechariah 8:3: Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain. So in Daniel 9:16: Let thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem thy holy mountain. The like in Daniel 9:20, Jeremiah 17:3, Isaiah 27:13 and 66:10, and so on.

So of Babylon: I will render unto Babylon all the evil that they have done in Zion. Behold I am against thee O destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth; thou shalt be desolate for ever (Jeremiah 51:24, 25, 26). Who art thou O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain (Zechariah 4:7). The burden of Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amos did see: lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain (Chaldee Paraphrast: upon the city which dwells securely, Isaiah 13:2).

So of cities in general: I will lay the land most desolate and the pomp of her strength shall cease and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate (Ezekiel 33:28). Thou hast said, by the multitude of my chariots am I come up to the height of the mountains (Chaldee Paraphrast: to the strong holds of the cities, Isaiah 37:24).

Sometimes a mountain is extended to signify the whole dominion of a city, as in Daniel 2:35 and Isaiah 11:9, much after the same manner that a king is sometimes put for his kingdom.

And sometimes it signifies only a temple. Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest; but in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains and it shall be exalted above the hills,

that is, above all other temples (Micah 3:12, 4:1). A voice was heard upon the high places: Return, ye backsliding children... in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills and from the multitude of the mountains; truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel (Jeremiah 3:21–22). The reason of this signification of a mountain I suppose is that idol temples were usually placed upon the tops of mountains, as may appear out of Deuteronomy 12:2: Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills; and also because of the greatness and height of the buildings, whence they are frequently called high places in scripture notwithstanding that they are sometimes in valleys, as in Jeremiah 7:31: They have built the high places of Tophet which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom.

And as mountains signify temples in a country represented by the earth, so islands signify temples in a country represented by the sea (Revelation).

That dens and rocks signify buildings is obvious from the resemblance which dens have to their rooms or to the cavities of their ruins, and rocks to their outside. And moreover that this is their meaning in scripture may appear by the following instances. The multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be dens for ever (Isaiah 32:14). I will make Jerusalem heaps and a den of dragons (Jeremiah 9:11). The pride of thine heart, O Edom, hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the cliffs of the rock whose habitation is high, that saith in his heart, who shall bring me down to the ground (Obadiah 3). This is an allusion to the high country of the Edomites, but yet I take it to be meant rather of their sumptuous buildings and palaces than natural rocks, because it is made a character of their pride, and it is no argument of pride merely to dwell in a high and rocky country. In the same sense I understand also the following places. Let the wilderness and the cities thereof lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains (that is, of the cities) (Isaiah 42:11). Behold I am against thee (the house of David) O inhabitant of the valley and rock of the plain, saith the Lord, which say: who shall come down against us or who shall enter into our habitations? (Jeremiah 21:13). Behold I am against thee O destroying mountain (that is, Babylon) saith the Lord; I will roll thee down from the rocks and make thee a burnt mountain (Jeremiah 51:25). They shall destroy the walls of Tyrus and break down her towers, and I will also scrape her dust from her and make her like the top of a rock (Ezekiel 26:4, 14).

To these instances of common buildings may be added those two that follow of temples. Is this house which is called by my name become a den of robbers? that is, an idol temple (Jeremiah 7:11). Are ye not the children of transgression, a seed of falsehood, inflaming yourselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys under the cliffs of the rocks? (Isaiah 57:5) That is, under the idol temples, or high places of Tophet which they built for that purpose in the valley of the son of Hinnom (Jeremiah 7:31, 19:5, 32:35). Other instances of this see in the comment on Figure 64.

The Lord hath anointed me... to give them the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord (Isaiah 61:3). The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant (Isaiah 5:7). They shall march with an army and come against Egypt with axes as hewers of wood, they shall cut down her forest (Jeremiah 46:22). Wickedness burneth as the fire, it shall devour the briars and thorns and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest... the people shall be as the fuel of the fire, which last words explain the rest (Isaiah 9:19). Howl, fir tree, for the cedar is fallen, because all the mighty are spoiled; howl, O ye oaks of Bashan, for the defended forest (Zechariah 11:2). How long shall the land mourn and the herbs of every field wither for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? (Jeremiah 12:4) The good seed (whose blade is a plant) are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one (Matthew 13:38). Every plant which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. I have planted, Apollos watered, etc.

The Chaldee Paraphrast for woods sometimes substitutes armies (Isaiah 10:18, 34) and sometimes cities or people (Jeremiah 21:14 and 9:18). And the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians teach: If one dream that he waters and dresses trees he shall be a very great man and a nourisher of the people. And if a king dream that he plants trees he shall institute new magistrates. And if a plebeian dream that he gathers into his house the leaves of trees, he shall obtain riches from great men proportional to the leaves, etc. (Achmet, chapter 151). And if one dream that hail hurt the stalks of corn there shall be slaughter of men in that place proportional to the breaking of the stalks (chapter 191).

Because herbs and other vegetables signify men, therefore such insects as destroy them signify armies of men which in like manner prey upon countries. That which the palmer worm hath left hath the locust eaten, and that which the canker worm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten... For a nation is come up upon my land, strong and without number... he hath laid my vine waste and barked my fig tree, he hath made it clean bare and cast it away, the branches thereof are made white (Joel 1:4, 6). See also Joel 2:2, 25.

Locusts are generally referred to a multitude of enemies. If any king or potentate see locusts come upon a place, let him expect a powerful multitude of enemies there; and look what hurt the locusts do, the enemy will do mischief proportionally (Achmet, chapter 300, from the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians).

Wild beasts also, by reason of their feeding upon vegetables and preying upon one another, signify kingdoms of the earth with their armies. A particular beast, as in Daniel's prophecies, signifies a particular kingdom, and beasts in general signify kingdoms in general. Come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour (Chaldee Paraphrast: those that slay with the sword shall be assembled from all sides; kings of nations and their armies shall come to spoil, Jeremiah 12:9). The burden of the beasts of the south, that is, the bands of Egypt (Isaiah 30:6). I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon my servant, and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him, and all nations shall serve him (Jeremiah 27:6 and 28:14). I will also send wild beasts among you which shall rob you of your children and destroy your cattle and make you few in number, and your high ways shall be desolate (Leviticus 26:22). In Jeremiah 15:2-3, Ezekiel 5:12, 17, and 14:13, 15, 17, 19, 21 there are described four distinct kinds of plagues to befall the Jews: famine, captivity, sword, and pestilence, whereof their captivity is represented by beasts passing through the land and spoiling it and making it desolate. So that wild beasts strictly signify foreign kingdoms which destroy not by the sword only as in civil wars, but by spoiling a country and carrying away the prey. The famine also is represented in Jeremiah 15:3 by dogs to tear, because of the greediness of this hungry beast who usually leaves nothing behind him for others to feed upon; and perhaps also because his tearing may represent the gnawing of a hungry stomach. And in the same place the pestilence is represented by fowls of the heaven to destroy because the infection of the pestilence is in the air and seizes a man from thence.

Artemidorus, another writer about the interpretation of prophetic dreams, saith that frogs signify impostors and scoffers (book 2, chapter 3). Frogs are unclean animals and live in the mud and croak with no fruit. The ignorant of the law are compared to frogs also by Schemos Rabba. Grotius on Revelation 16:13 says: "Frogs, unclean and talkative animals, signify false prophets, as it is written: And I saw out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet three unclean spirits like frogs" (Arias Montanus, De Arcano Sermone).

The land is as the garden of Eden before them and behind them a desolate wilderness (Joel 2:3). The fruitful place was a wilderness and all the cities thereof were broken down (Jeremiah 4:26), and so on.

The woman (that is, the church) fled into the wilderness (Revelation 12:6). He carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness, and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast full of names of blasphemy (Revelation 17:3). Authors usually interpret the wilderness here of gentilism spreading over the Christian world, in which opinion is Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Hilary, Jerome, Ambrose, and so on, as may be seen in Alcazar.

First the king of Assyria hath devoured Israel, and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones (Jeremiah 50:17). The princes of the house of Israel... eat the flesh of my people and flay their skins from off them, and they break their bones and chop them in pieces, that is, by exaction and oppression (Micah 3:3). So to signify the great wealth which the kings of the Medes and Persians should heap up, it is said to the second beast: Arise, devour much flesh (Daniel 7:5). And the spoiling of the Egyptians by the Israelites is expressed by giving the leviathan to be meat for them in the wilderness (Psalm 74:13). See also Ezekiel 29:5. To the same purpose Achmet saith: If any one seem to find or eat the flesh of dragons he shall receive riches proportionally from some great king (chapter 283, from the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians). And if he eat the flesh of a scorpion he shall receive the wealth of an enemy (chapter 285). The like of the flesh of other beasts in chapters 269, 272, 274, and so on. And if his own flesh seem to grow plump he shall grow rich proportionally (chapter 87, from

the Indians). And in general he says the Indians teach that flesh does universally signify riches and gold.

So the Chaldee Paraphrast for "They shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm" (Isaiah 9:20) translates: They shall prey every man upon the substance of his neighbor. And so for "The fatness of his flesh shall wax lean" (Isaiah 17:4) he translates: The wealth wherein his glory consisted shall pass away.

Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together (Luke 17:37), that is, where the bodies of the saints are at the coming of our Lord, thither will the angels go to carry them up into the air to meet the Lord at his coming (Matthew 24:31 and 1 Thessalonians 4:17). How fowls of the air are sometimes also put for infectious diseases see the comment upon Figure 13. And sometimes for armies, see...

Ships are sea-houses, or if you please sea towns, and merchant-ships trading houses or towns, and consequently must signify temples and their parishes where priests are the merchants. If one dream he builds ships he shall grow rich proportionally to the number of them. This Achmet (chapter 180) relates as the doctrine of the Egyptians and Persians, and in the same chapter adds this for the doctrine of the Indians: If one dream that he builds a merchant ship he shall gather an assembly of men to celebrate religious mysteries.

So war-ships must signify tents, the habitations of an army. If a king dream that he sees his ships sending out fire to burn other ships or countries he shall obtain victories over his enemies proportional to the strength and efficacy of the fire. If he see his own ships burnt it portends ruin to his forces. And if he seem to build a new navy of many ships, according to their number he shall again raise forces more or less powerful against his enemies (Achmet, chapter 181, from the Persians and Egyptians).

21–22. His breath as an overflowing stream shall reach to the midst of the neck to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity... for through the voice of the Lord (which is as the sound of many waters, Ezekiel 43:2, Revelation 1:15, or of a multitude, Daniel 10:6) shall the Assyrian be beaten down... and in battles of shaking will he fight against them (Isaiah 30:28, 31, 32). The hail (that is war) shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place... when the overflowing scourge shall pass through then shall ye be trodden down by it (Isaiah 28:17, 18). Egypt riseth up like a flood and his waters are moved like the rivers, and he saith, I will go up and will cover the earth, I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof (Jeremiah 46:8). Behold the Lord bringeth upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels and go over all his banks, and he shall pass through Judah, he shall overflow and go over, he shall reach even to the neck (Isaiah 8:7). Behold waters (Chaldee Paraphrast: peoples) rise up out of the north and shall be an overflowing flood... and the inhabitants of the land shall howl at the noise of the hoofs of his strong horses, etc. (Jeremiah 47:2). Whence it appears that people within their own country are like rivers within their banks, but when they invade other countries they are overflowing floods.

23–24. And as overflowing signifies excess of power and people, so the drying up of waters must on the contrary signify the decay and weakening of it, of which signification take these instances. They shall draw their swords against Egypt... and I will make the rivers dry and sell the land into the hand of the wicked (Ezekiel 30:12). The Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord... and the waters shall fail from the sea and the river shall be wasted and dried up... and the brooks of defence shall be emptied and dried up, and the reeds and flags shall wither (Isaiah 19:5–6). A sword is upon the treasures of Babylon and they shall be robbed; a drought is upon her waters and they shall be dried up (Jeremiah 50:38). I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry and she shall become heaps, an astonishment without an inhabitant (Jeremiah 51:36–37). Where note that as trees and herbs in Figure 11, so here reeds and flags signify men.

In Ezekiel 32:3 the Chaldee Paraphrast for rivers substitutes provinces; and the records of Achmet compare rivers sometimes to men and sometimes to riches which flow to the king as riches to the sea.

And in whatsoever sense rivers are taken, fountains will most naturally signify cities, the permanent heads of these flowing waters.

26. "Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh, King of Egypt, the great Dragon that lies in the midst of his rivers — I will put my hooks in your jaws and I will cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales — and I will leave you thrown into the wilderness, you and all the fish of your rivers." (Ezekiel 29:4)

27. The great stars in prophetic imagery relate to the nobles of a kingdom, and the rest of the stars to the world at large. (Achmet, ch. 167, from the Indian, Persian, and Egyptian traditions)

28. "You shall ascend and come like a storm; you shall be like a cloud to cover the land, you and all your bands and many people with you." (Ezekiel 38:9) "A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds — a great people and a strong, etc." (Joel 2:2) "A cloud shall cover Egypt and her daughters shall go into captivity" — that is, a cloud of enemies, or as the Chaldean paraphrase puts it, a king with his army like a cloud. (Ezekiel 30:18) In these instances a cloud signifies only numerous armies. But its meaning extends equally to any great multitude, as may appear from Hebrews 12:1: "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, etc." — an expression now grown proverbial, which was without doubt derived from the language of the ancient prophets and wise men, or at least from the same grounds on which they derived it. I take those grounds to be chiefly the resemblance that a numerous swarm of insects — and likewise the dust raised by a great multitude of people — bears to a cloud. Sometimes clouds are used to signify adversity. And some interpreters have also applied them to wisdom, in light of their sublimity.

29. Nebuchadnezzar is represented by a tree (Daniel 4), and the King of Assyria by a cedar (Ezekiel 31). In that same chapter, the kings and princes of Israel and Judah are represented by cedars, fir trees, and chestnut trees, and the Holy Land by the garden of God. So in Isaiah 37:24: "You, Sennacherib King of Assyria, have said, by the multitude of my chariots I have come up — to the sides of Lebanon and I will cut down the tall cedars and the choice fir trees thereof." See also Zechariah 11:2; Isaiah 2:13, 10:19, 10:33–34; Jeremiah 22:7; Ezekiel 20:47; etc. The Chaldean paraphrase substitutes kings, princes, and great men for cedars and firs in Isaiah 14:8 and 37:24 and Ezekiel 31:5,8. For oaks of Bashan it substitutes princes of provinces (Isaiah 2:13, Zechariah 11:2). For fir and myrtle it uses just and good men (Isaiah 55:13), and for briars and thorns it uses wicked men (Isaiah 55:13 and 9:18). Achmet is very particular in sorting various kinds of trees to various sorts of men, in chapters 151, 165, and 200.

30. It is commonly supposed that the moral vices of nations were the reason why in Daniel and Revelation they are represented by beasts. This may sometimes be allowed as a secondary reason — especially in Revelation — but I cannot think it the authentic reason, because a beast may just as well be taken in a good sense as in a bad one. Christ is represented by a lion just as much as Nebuchadnezzar is, and some of the twelve tribes are characterized by beasts in Jacob's blessing just as the four monarchies are in Daniel's visions. I must therefore trace this figure rather to armies, by which kingdoms are usually founded and sustained. Since armies are wild beasts by Figure 13, it is very natural to put a beast for any kingdom that was founded by armies and frequently uses them, like a ravenous beast, to prey upon its neighbors. The prophetic teaching of Jacob may instruct us here: he called Judah a lion, from his getting the prey and being prince of the tribes; Issachar an ass, from his being in slavery; Dan a serpent, from his laying stratagems; and Benjamin a wolf, from ravaging and devouring the prey. So too the descriptions of the beasts in Daniel almost entirely concern their political constitution and their pugnacity, with the exception of what is said of the little horn. And in Revelation, though the two-horned beast is not described as pugnacious, its merchants (chapter 18) supply the place of armies, since they prey upon the kings of the earth through their sophisticated commerce no less than the other beast does by force.

31. Among the beasts that represent kingdoms I count the dragon as one. A dragon signifies the person of a hostile king, and serpents, according to their size, signify the persons of other greater or lesser enemies. "If a dragon appears to a king in a dream, he shall be troubled with the rumor of another king. If anyone happens upon a very great golden dragon adorned on his back with scales like jewels, and makes him his own, he shall obtain a kingdom and dominion over the people." (Achmet, ch. 288, from the Indian, Persian, and Egyptian traditions) According to this doctrine, the Apocalyptic dragon is a very proper emblem of the Roman emperors and empire — which was so great an enemy to the church — as well as of the devil, who is the arch-enemy of mankind. But there seems to be a further mystery in this emblem: namely, to suggest a comparison between the oppression of the church

under the Roman Empire and the Egyptian bondage, as if that were a type of this. For it is notable that although the Jews had many enemies, none but Pharaoh is represented by a dragon in the old prophets. And he is so represented, as may be seen in Ezekiel 29:3, Isaiah 51:9, Psalm 74:13, and Psalm 27:1 — in which last passages Pharaoh is also called Leviathan on account of the flooding Nile, as if he were a water-dragon like that in the Apocalypse, who cast out of his mouth water as a flood. And so in Psalm 74 he is represented with many heads, like that same Apocalyptic dragon. For a fuller analogy between these two dragons, I refer the reader to the commentary on Revelation 11:8.

32. Heads sometimes signify collateral parts of a kingdom, as with the four heads of the leopard in Daniel 7:6. But if a kingdom is divided into both collateral and successive parts, then the successive parts may be represented by heads — as in the Apocalyptic beast, whose seven heads appear to be successive by the statement that five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come (Revelation 17:10).

33. A horn is used to signify strength and power: sometimes that of a single person, as in 1 Samuel 2:10, 2 Samuel 22:3, Psalm 18:2, and Psalm 89:24; sometimes that of a body politic or kingdom, as in Psalm 148:14, Jeremiah 48:25, and Lamentations 2:3,17. From this it is sometimes put for the kingdom itself, as in Zechariah 1:19,21. And so in Daniel and Revelation, the horns of beasts are put to signify the number of dynasties, dominions, or kingdoms of which the universal kingdom represented by the beast is constituted. Some interpreters have applied these horns to signify the persons of individual kings, but without good reason. For although they are called kings in Daniel and Revelation, it is plain that by "king" we are not there to understand a single person, but the whole race of kings in each kingdom — according to the maxim *Rex non moritur* ("The king does not die") — and indeed not only the whole race of kings but the dominion or kingdom itself. For in Daniel 8:20 the ram with two horns is called "the kings of Media and Persia," and yet the ram signifies neither single persons nor were the kingdoms of Media and Persia subject to more than one king when the goat broke his two horns. So in verse 22, the goat's four horns are expressly interpreted as four kingdoms. And in verse 21, where the goat is called "the King of Greece," by the king we are to understand the kingdom. For this king contains at least five other kings: the great horn between his eyes, called the first king, and the other four horns, which as we have seen are kingdoms, besides the little horn which rose up after them. By the first king, it is usually understood to mean only the person of Alexander — but this is through carelessness. For the first horn is called "the first king" not in respect of personal successors (nowhere mentioned in this prophecy), but in respect of the four which in the next words are said to stand up for it. "The great horn," says the angel, "is the first king. Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, etc." The last four kings therefore being kingdoms, the first must be one too, else it could not be the first among them. Moreover, the text says the great horn was broken and four notable ones came up in its place — which makes it clear they were all of a kind. For the four kingdoms did not arise in place of Alexander's person but in place of his kingdom. This great horn, this first kingdom of the Greeks, was broken upon Alexander's death, and four others arose in its place. The breaking of the horn imports the same meaning. For as the breaking of the ram's two horns signifies not the death of Darius but the dissolution of his kingdoms of Media and Persia at his death — so unless we depart from the analogy of the prophecy, by breaking the goat's horn we must understand not Alexander's death but the breaking and dividing of his kingdom upon it. Indeed, the Spirit himself, alluding to this in another place, expresses it plainly: "When he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken and shall be divided towards the four winds." And again, "His kingdom shall be plucked up, even for others beside those." (Daniel 11:3–4)

34. Eyes denote a seer — that is, according to Jewish usage, a prophet. "For beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake: Come and let us go to the seer, for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer." (1 Samuel 9:9) Hence the name "vision" is so frequently used in Scripture for a prophecy. A seer may more broadly be taken to signify any understanding and politically perceptive person, according to that Egyptian hieroglyph of a scepter topped with an eye, signifying the understanding, foresight, and policy required in a king. But I suppose in sacred prophecies we ought chiefly to follow the Jewish manner of speaking. Yet with this distinction: when there is only an incidental mention of eyes as natural to animals — as for instance the goat's eyes in Daniel 8:5,21 — they signify only that counsel and policy naturally found in all kingdoms. But when their description is emphatic and out of the ordinary course of nature, they signify a seer in the extraordinary and

supernatural sense. Thus the lamb's seven eyes are called "the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." (Revelation 5:6) These spirits, at the opening of Revelation, are placed alongside the Father and Son in the greeting, with grace wished from them together, to show that the Holy Ghost or prophetic spirit is denoted by them. Hence some of the ancients called the Holy Spirit the spiritum septemplex — the sevenfold spirit. According to this, the seven eyes signify the sevenfold prophetic spirit of the Lamb, by which, with a prophetic energy and light, he beholds and oversees all the earth — as is again expressed in Zechariah 4:10, where these spirits are called "the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Again, where the four beasts are said to be full of eyes before and behind, and their wings to be full of eyes within, this denotes that they signify prophetic multitudes. As beasts they signify multitudes, and the more so because of their many eyes. Their eyes within the wings — not outside but only inside — denote an inward faculty of seeing, that is, their understanding, illuminated not merely by the light of nature but by the Spirit, because they are not mere men but servants and worshippers of the living God (Revelation 4:8–9). And their eyes before and behind signify not a faculty of seeing only present things round about them (for then why did they not have eyes on both sides and all over, as well as before and behind?) but a faculty of seeing things future and past — and this is the perfect mark of a prophet. Accordingly, in Revelation 5:9–10 we have them, along with the elders, prophesying: "You have slain and redeemed us to God by your blood, etc., and we shall reign on the earth." So too the eyes of the little horn in Daniel 7, I take to signify that horn as being a seer of an extraordinary, supernatural kind — one whose eyes are not spirits of truth like the lamb's eyes but lying spirits: a false prophet. For if those eyes signified only policy and cunning, the other horns would have eyes just as well, though perhaps not such good ones. Beneath these special eyes it must be understood that the beast has other eyes proper to animals, signifying the policy of the kingdoms denoted by all the horns — including the little horn's. The eyes which the little horn possesses beyond those, which no other horn has, must therefore signify a further faculty of seeing such as no other horn possesses. It is not merely a politician, then, but a seer of a higher kind — or, to speak in the Jewish idiom, a prophet, though a false one. In all these instances where eyes are described in an extraordinary manner, they signify a seer of a prophetic kind, and so by their analogy and agreement they confirm this interpretation.

35. Just as eyes signify the highest kind of seeing that the body represented by the animal is capable of, so a mouth — especially where speaking is emphasized and the words spoken are not set down — signifies the highest kind of speaking: the dictating of laws, by civil authority if the thing speaking is a body politic, or by divine authority if it is a body prophetic or theological. Thus, besides the mouth common to the fourth beast in Daniel 7 (shared by the whole kingdom signified by the horns), the little horn has another mouth proper to itself, signifying a legislative power of a kind possessed by none of the other horns. What that power was is plainly described: he had "a mouth speaking very great things" (verse 20) — even great words against the Most High — and thereby wore out the saints of the Most High, and "thought to change times and laws, and they were given into his hand for a time" (verse 25). This he accomplished through the power of his mouth, which must be a legislative power, and that in matters of religion, because times and laws were given into his hand to change in opposition to God and the saints. So where the image of the beast in Revelation 13 is said to speak and to cause that as many as would not worship the image should be killed — it must be by some law that they were killed, and the image is not the officer that killed them but the author of their being killed: that is, the lawmaker. It spoke and caused them to be killed who would not obey its voice. "Spoke" and "caused" are here one expression through two words. So again, where the two-horned beast spoke as the dragon, and where the ten-horned beast had a mouth like the lion — the first of Daniel's four beasts, signifying the kingdom of Babylon — and spoke great things and blasphemies against God: we are to understand that these beasts, each according to his authority, made idolatrous laws and constitutions such as the diabolical dragon and the Babylonian lion had made before them. And so by the prophesying of the two witnesses we are to understand their promulgating and spreading the laws and word of God to the utmost extent of their power — not foretelling future things by immediate revelation, but preaching the word of God to the world according to its right interpretation and propagating it in God's name with all the authority they are able to exercise. On the other side, the false prophet propagates false interpretations and other lies in the name of his god, claiming for his pronouncements the authority of his god just as the true prophets claim that of theirs, so as to make his sentences pass for law and gain for himself a law-making power in matters of religion.

36. Teeth signify great men, because they are in the head — and those of the soldierly class, because they are the chief instruments with which a beast fights. Hence to express the might of the fourth beast it is described with great iron teeth. And so the locusts of Joel 1:6 and Revelation 9:8 are represented with teeth of lions. The author of the fable of Cadmus probably had this signification in mind when he made the dragon's teeth the seed of armed soldiers.

37. The feet most fittingly represent armies. As they are the most active members, the lowest parts of the beast, and serve to support him, to carry him about, and to fight with — so armies are much in motion, are the lowest of the people, are the members by which kingdoms are supported and moved, and are those with which kingdoms fight. This interpretation is also evident from the visions of Daniel. For the ten-horned beast, to signify the use and power of his feet in fighting, is represented with nails of brass and is said to stamp with his feet whatever he did not devour with his teeth — as much as to say that those neighboring nations which were not swallowed up by outright conquest and incorporated into his empire were yet awed and crushed by his armies. So the he-goat stamped upon the ram, and therefore fought with his feet. And Ezekiel 32:2 — "You troubled the waters with your feet" — the Chaldean paraphrase renders as: "You disquieted the peoples with your armies." The nails or claws serve to represent the division of armies into squadrons, each under its own commander.

38. The tail also — at least where the feet are not specifically in view — may properly represent armies, being the train and rearmost part of a kingdom. Achmet says: "If one dreams he rides on a generous steed having a thick and long tail, he shall have a train of attendants answerable to the fullness and length of the tail." (ch. 152) By analogy, the tail of a warlike beast must be a train of soldiers. This is confirmed in that the Euphratean horsemen are said to do harm with their tails — that is, to fight with them — and so, lest that seem improper, their tails are described as being like serpents, to represent them as capable of fighting with them. For the same end, the locusts are described with stings in their tails. See Deuteronomy 28:8, 43–44.

39. The various members of a beast being appropriated to their significations as described above, there remains only the body to signify the people. Beyond these, there may be other ways of representing a kingdom — as when a great fish is put for a king and lesser fishes for his subjects (Ezekiel 29:4), or the sea for a king and rivers for his subjects, etc.

40. That ascending up to heaven in a cloud signifies great exaltation may appear from the notes on Figure 3.

41. And because clouds signify multitudes of people by Figure 28, ascending in a cloud will signify exaltation in or by a multitude, and riding on the clouds will signify subduing and reigning over great numbers of people. "If a king dreams that he sits upon the clouds carried wherever he will, he shall rule over his enemies and obtain victories and unexpected joy." (Persian and Egyptian, in Achmet, ch. 164)

42. And so covering the sun with a cloud or smoke will signify the oppression of a king by adverse enemies. Thus God, threatening the overthrow of Pharaoh by Nebuchadnezzar, says: "And when I shall put you out, I will cover the sun with a cloud and set darkness upon your land" — which the Chaldean paraphrase renders: "A king with his army shall cover you as a cloud which ascends and covers the sun." (Ezekiel 32:7) The same is to be understood of obscuring a kingdom by smoke, as in Isaiah 14:31: "You whole Palestine are dissolved, for there shall come from the north a smoke, etc."

43. "I will cause your sun, O Israel, to go down at noon day, and I will darken the earth in the clear day, and I will turn your feasts into mourning." (Amos 8:9) "She has given up the ghost; her sun is gone down while it was yet day." The Chaldean paraphrase: "Her glory has passed away in her lifetime." (Jeremiah 15:9) "Your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be your everlasting light and the days of your mourning shall be ended." Chaldean paraphrase: "Your kingdom shall no more cease, neither shall your glory be taken away." (Isaiah 60:20) "The day of the Lord comes cruel both with wrath and fierce anger to lay the land — that is, the kingdom of Babylon — desolate, and he shall destroy the sinners out of it: for the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light, and the sun shall be darkened in his going forth and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against him." (Isaiah 13:10) "When I shall extinguish you, O Pharaoh King of Egypt, I will cover the heaven and make the stars thereof dark and will cover the sun with a cloud and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I

make dark over you and set darkness upon your land. For thus says the Lord God: the sword of the King of Babylon shall come upon you." Chaldean paraphrase: "When I shall extinguish the splendor of the glory of your kingdom out of heaven, tribulation shall cover you." (Ezekiel 32:7) "Get into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for you shall no more be called the lady of kingdoms." (Isaiah 47:5) Darkness and sorrow. (Isaiah 5:30) See also Joel 2:10 and Jeremiah 13:16, etc. "If one dreams that he sees the sun in heaven without rays and light, it betokens calamity and dishonor to the king. If he dreams that it is eclipsed, it betokens affliction and war to the king. If in his dream he sees the sun, moon, and stars gathered together without light — if he is one of the nobles, that darkness betokens his own destruction; but if he is the king, he shall be invaded on all sides by war and fall into affliction." (Indian, Persian, and Egyptian, in Achmet, ch. 167) "And if one dreams that the stars are very dim, cast down, scattered, and cloudy, it betokens the calamity of princes, nobles, and rich men." (Persian and Egyptian, in Achmet, ch. 168)

44. Yet the celestial bodies are not to be interpreted so strictly as referring only to the persons of kings and princes but also to the splendor and glory of a kingdom in general — inasmuch as the sun is the glory of the world by day and the moon by night. Thus the Chaldean paraphrase interprets them in Jeremiah 15:9 and Isaiah 60:20. So where the woman is said to be clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet (Revelation 12), the sun and moon signify the glory of the righteousness of Christ, with which the church is to be clothed, and her own righteousness, which she is to put off and yet be supported by it, as it borrows splendor from that sun and shines, as it were, by reflection. And so where the sun is turned into blackness and the moon into blood (Joel 2:31 and Revelation 6:12), I am more inclined to understand it as referring in general to the splendor of the kingdom being extinguished and its glory turned into bloodshed, than to interpret it only as referring to the king and the one next in dignity. For the perishing of those two persons does not entail the overthrow of the kingdom; whereas in Joel, the turning of the sun into darkness and the moon into blood is presented as a description of that universal overthrow of the Gentile kingdoms and mighty slaughter of all their armies which is to occur at the great day of God Almighty, as is described at length in the following chapter. As for the moon being turned into blood — the expression seems borrowed from the dusky reddish color of the moon in a partial eclipse, which is here alluded to rather than the full darkness of a total eclipse, so that the great slaughter of the nations may be expressed by calling the color blood. For that the word was intended as an expression of their bloodshed is plain from the preceding sentence: "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: blood and fire and pillars of smoke" — that is, slaughter and war. To which is added by way of explanation: "The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and terrible day of the Lord."

45. Since waters signify people, the turning of them to blood must signify slaughter of the people. Thus the desolation of Moab is expressed by saying: "The waters of Dimon shall be full of blood." (Isaiah 15:9)

46. To express the ruin of old Babylon, Jeremiah commanded Seraiah: "When you have made an end of reading this book, you shall bind a stone to it and cast it into the midst of Euphrates, and you shall say, Thus shall Babylon sink, etc." (Jeremiah 51:63) So to express the ruin of new Babylon, a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and cast it into the sea, saying: "Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, etc." (Revelation 18:21) And to these two places the casting of the great mountain into the sea in Revelation 8:8 seems to allude — especially since that mountain also signifies a city by Figure 7, not to mention that it is the very same as new Babylon. And so by analogy, the falling of the great star upon the rivers in Revelation 8:10 must signify the ruin of some great prince. On this point the Indian interpreters instruct us: "If one dreams he sees the stars fall into the sea, let him understand thereby a slaughter of men to be caused by the king; and if the king himself has this dream, he shall see a very great slaughter or mortality of his people." (Achmet, ch. 170)

47. Fire is put to signify war, because men are represented by things combustible — trees, ships, beasts — and as these things waste in fire, so men are destroyed in war. There is scarcely any figure more frequently used in scripture than this. "Say to the forest of the south — Behold I will kindle a fire in you and it shall devour every green tree in you and every dry tree: the flaming flame shall not be quenched and all faces from the south to the north shall be burnt therein." (Ezekiel 20:47) "The house of Jacob shall be a fire and the house of Joseph a flame and the house of Esau for stubble, and they shall kindle in them and devour them." (Obadiah 18) "In that day will I make the governors of Judah like

a hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about." (Zechariah 12:6) "The strength of the battle has set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; it burned him yet he laid it not to heart." (Isaiah 42:25) "The Lord called your name a green olive tree — with the noise of a great tumult he has kindled a fire upon it." (Jeremiah 11:16) See also Isaiah 56:15–16, Jeremiah 21:14 and 48:45, and Ezekiel 19:12 and 30:8, etc. The Chaldean paraphrase substitutes "slaying" for "burning" in Isaiah 42:25, and for fire and flame it uses "armies of enemies strong and powerful as fire" in Jeremiah 11:16 and 48:45, etc. "If one dreams that he is burnt by a flame he shall perish in war." (Achmet, ch. 159, from the Indian tradition) "If a king seems to see the pillars of his palace on fire, it signifies the dominion of another and the destruction of the great ones which he has established. And if he sees his hair on fire, he shall lose his people in war." (ch. 160, from the Persian and Egyptian traditions) Sometimes fire signifies trial and purgation by consuming what is evil, as in Malachi 3:2.

48. "If one dreams that the sun has scorched him greatly, he will be punished by the king proportionally to that scorching." (Indian, Persian, and Egyptian, in Achmet, ch. 167) This concerns a single person. From it we may easily gather that if a nation is greatly scorched by the sun, the affliction it portends must be through wars raised by the king — both because burning or scorching denotes war by the preceding figure, and because there is no means by which a king may so readily or so greatly afflict a whole nation as by war.

49. "If a king dreams that there is an earthquake in his city or land, it portends war of nations and conspiracy against him." (Indian, Persian, and Egyptian, in Achmet, ch. 144)

50. But the shaking of heaven and earth imports more than this — namely, the subverting of kingdoms and turning things, as it were, upside down. For of Haggai 2:6 — "Yet once more, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, etc." — Saint Paul gives this interpretation: that "yet once more" signifies the removing of those things that are shaken. (Hebrews 12:27) And Haggai himself a little after makes the same interpretation in verse 22, where repeating the prophecy he says: "I will shake the heavens and the earth and will overthrow the throne of kingdoms and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen, etc." See also Isaiah 13:13, 14:16, and Joel 3:16.

51. "The four winds of heaven strove upon the great sea" — that is, the wars of nations by which the beasts arose. (Daniel 9:1, i.e., 7:2) "The wind shall eat up all your pastures and your lovers shall go into captivity." (Jeremiah 22:22) "I will raise up against Babylon a destroying wind." (Jeremiah 51:1) "Upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven and will scatter them towards all those winds, and there shall be no nation where the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies." (Jeremiah 49:36) "The wind shall carry them away and the whirlwind shall scatter them." (Isaiah 41:16) "I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations." (Zechariah 7:14) "The king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, etc." (Daniel 11:40) "A great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth, and the slain of the Lord, etc." The Chaldean paraphrase renders this as: "Many people shall come openly from the ends of the earth." (Jeremiah 25:32) So in Ezekiel 19:12, for "the east wind dried up her fruit," the Chaldean paraphrase substitutes: "A king strong as a parching wind slew her people." In like manner, in the Apocalypse, the four winds that hurt the earth and sea are the wars of the four first trumpets. "If a king sees the sea much troubled by wind from a known quarter, he will be molested by some nation from that quarter; but if he sees the sea calm, he will peaceably enjoy his kingdom." (Indian, Persian, and Egyptian, in Achmet, ch. 178) "If he seems to be taken up and carried from place to place by a wind, he shall undertake a long expedition with success proportional to the strength and quickness of the wind." (Indian, ch. 165) "If a king in a journey seems to be hindered by a wind, he shall receive a messenger from a remote kingdom by which he shall be troubled." (Persian and Egyptian, ch. 166)

52. "The Lord thundered in the heavens and the Highest gave his voice: hailstones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them, and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them." (Psalm 18:13) "With hailstones of mighty power he made the battle to fall violently upon the nations." (Ecclesiasticus 46) "The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard; he shall show the lighting down of his arm with the indignation of his anger and with the flame of a devouring fire, with lightning and tempest and hailstones. For through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down." (Isaiah 30:30) "I will camp against you round about and will lay siege against you — and the multitude

of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passes away; yea, it shall be suddenly. You shall be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder and with earthquake and with great noise, with storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire." (Isaiah 29:1,6) "The Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great thunder that day upon the Philistines and smote them." (1 Samuel 7:10) See also 1 Samuel 2:10, Isaiah 28:2, and Isaiah 60:15. So Joel, describing the battle of the great day, says: "The Lord shall roar out of Zion" — that is, thunder with a roaring thunder. (ch. 3:16) And in the same sense are thunder, lightning, and hail constantly used in the Apocalypse (chs. 8:6, 11:19, 16:18,21). "If one dreams that hail falls on a place, he may expect a violent incursion of the enemy; and if he dreams that the hail hurts the stalks of corn, there shall be slaughter of men in that place proportional to the breaking of the stalks." (Achmet, ch. 191, from the Indian, Persian, and Egyptian traditions) "If one dreams he sees a dragon struck with lightning, it portends war and ruin to some other king who is an enemy to that country." (ch. 283, from the same traditions) As for the mixing of fire with hail in Revelation 8:6, this figure may seem borrowed from the Egyptian plague of thunder and hail with fire mingled (Exodus 9:23). But I believe it also alludes to the frequent mixture of hail with lightning which occurs in hot countries, even though it is unusual in our northern regions.

53. "My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb and as the showers upon the grass." (Deuteronomy 32:2) "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace so long as the moon endures." (Psalm 72:6) "Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you." (Hosea 10:12) See also Isaiah 55:10, Hosea 6:3, etc. So the Indians teach: "Rain is to be interpreted of God's mercy and the granting of our prayers." (Achmet, ch. 171) The same is to be understood of watering any place to make it fruitful, or of giving water to drink. Hence water is often put for true doctrine and grace, and springs of water for eternal life. (John 4:14, Isaiah 12:3, 44:3, 58:11, etc.)

54. "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O most mighty, with your glory and your majesty, and in your majesty ride on prosperously." (Psalm 45:4) The Hebrew is "prosper and ride," which the Septuagint translates "go on prosperously and reign," and the Chaldean paraphrase as "that you may ride upon the throne of the kingdom." In like manner, riding is put for reigning in Deuteronomy 32:13, Isaiah 58:14, and Psalm 66:12. And so the woman's riding upon her beast is interpreted as her reigning over the kings of the earth. (Revelation 17) Achmet delivers it as the doctrine of the Indians, Persians, and Egyptians that a generous steed denotes eminence and dignity, and that common horses denote lesser nobility and glory — and that if one dreams he rides on a nimble and mettlesome horse, he shall acquire among the people fame and great renown and eminence and honor; and if he seems to ride armed on a generous steed, he shall obtain power and renown according to his armor. (ch. 233)

55. "If one seems to hold a bow and arrows, he shall with joy triumph over his enemies." (Achmet, ch. 249, from the Persian and Egyptian traditions)

56. Some have supposed that the balance in the third seal (Revelation 6) might be an emblem of famine, but without ground — there being no authority either in scripture or other credible writings that I have encountered for such an interpretation. There are other ways of expressing famine, such as the tearing of dogs (Jeremiah 15:3). Wherever the balance is mentioned in scripture, it relates either to judgment (as in Job 31:6, Psalm 62:9, Daniel 5:27) or to justice (as in Hosea 12:7, Micah 6:11, Proverbs 16:11, etc.). The doctrine of the Indian interpreters is to the same purpose: "If in a dream one sees a balance poised in any place, let him understand it of a judge; and if he has a cause and sees the balance equally poised, he shall obtain his right. And if he sees the balance exact and clean, let him know that the judge of that place is just; but if it be broken and out of order, he is unjust." (Achmet, ch. 15) The author further relates how they compare the scales to the ears of the judge and the weights to the matter pleaded on both sides, etc. And he adds that measures have the like interpretation but refer to inferior judges.

57. Martyrdom is a kind of sacrifice. For the sacrifices under the law were but a type of our Saviour's death. And hence Saint Paul, when his martyrdom approached, said: "I am now ready to be offered" — the Greek word means sacrificed — "and the time of my departure is at hand." (2 Timothy 4:6) And to the same effect is that in Philippians: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy."

58. "The Temple of God is holy, which temple you are." (1 Corinthians 3:17) "What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God." (2 Corinthians 6:16) "The man of sin as God sits in the temple of God." (2 Thessalonians 2:4)

59. Nothing is more obvious than the church being represented in scripture as a woman, the spouse of Christ — as in the Song of Songs, Revelation 12, and Revelation 19.

60. To liken sharp affliction to the pains of a woman in labor is also a plain figure. Whence if that woman be the church, her pains in travail must be an emblem of her persecution. Thus our Saviour in Matthew 24:8–9 and Mark 13:9, describing the persecution of the church, calls them birth pangs (τὸ δὲ πῶς). So Isaiah 66:7, speaking of the Jewish church, says: "Before she travailed she brought forth; before her pain came she was delivered of a man child." The Chaldean paraphrase renders this as: "Before tribulation comes upon her she shall be redeemed; before trembling comes upon her like the pangs of a woman in labor, her king shall be revealed." Jeremiah also in chapter 30:6–7 interprets this figure plainly: "Ask you now and see whether a man does travail with child. Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it — it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it."

61. The idolatry of the Jews is almost universally described in scripture as going a-whoring after other gods. See Isaiah 3 and Ezekiel 16 and 25, etc. And though all their neighbors were idolaters to a greater degree, yet none but the Jews are reprov'd for it under the figure of committing whoredom. The reason is plain. For as they were considered as married to the true God (Jeremiah 3:1,8,14; Hosea 2:1,7, etc.), so the other nations had, as it were, contracted wedlock with false gods, insomuch that those false gods are called the gods of those nations just as the true God was the God of the Jews. Yet Nineveh is once called a harlot (Nahum 3:4), but not for bare idolatry.

62. That idolatry is sometimes called blasphemy may be seen from the following. "In this your fathers have blasphemed me, in that they have committed a trespass against me. For when I had brought them into the land — then they saw every high hill and all the thick trees, and they offered their sacrifice." (Ezekiel 20:28) "Your fathers have burnt incense upon the mountains and blasphemed me upon the hills" — that is, by invoking other gods. (Isaiah 65:7) And so in the Apocalypse, although blasphemy need not there be wholly limited to idolatry, yet the names of blasphemy upon the whore's beast are well interpreted by Grotius as the names of idol-gods, by which the true God is blasphemed while men attribute to them what is due only to him.

63. That idols may be called men is in keeping with the common manner of speaking. For they are images of men, and just as we call the image of a beast a beast and the image of a bird a bird, so we call the image of a man a man. And as this is the common way of speaking, so it is the language of the scriptures. "You have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return to me, says the Lord. She defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with stocks." (Jeremiah 3:1,9) "I will destroy her vines and her fig trees whereof she said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me — and I will visit upon her the days of Baalim wherein she went after her lovers and forgot me, says the Lord." (Hosea 2:12) "You poured out your fornications on everyone that passed by — you made yourself images of men and did commit whoredom with them — you committed fornication with the Egyptians great of flesh — your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness discovered through your whoredoms with your lovers, even with all the idols of your abominations." (Ezekiel 16:15,17,26,37) "Aholah doted on her lovers, on the Assyrians her neighbors which were clothed with blue, captains and rulers all of them desirable young men, horsemen riding upon horses. Thus she committed her whoredoms with them, with all them that were chosen men of Assyria, and with all on whom she doted — even with all their idols." (Ezekiel 23:5) And when her sister Aholibah saw this, she doted upon the Assyrians her neighbors — captains and rulers clothed most gorgeously, horsemen riding upon horses, all of them desirable young men — and she increased her whoredoms. For when she saw men portrayed upon the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion, girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads, all of them princes to look upon, after the manner of the Babylonians, she doted upon them and sent messengers to them into Chaldea, and the Babylonians came to her into the bed of love — that is, when she saw their idols she doted upon them and sent for others to be made in their likeness and set up in her own land. (verse 11) By these

instances it may appear that it is according to the practice of the prophets to represent idols as men with whom the church commits adultery — and not only so, but to call them by the names of the men whose gods they are or whose likeness they bear: Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, princes, captains, rulers, horsemen, young men, etc. — not much unlike their being called in the sixth seal "kings and great men and rich men and captains and mighty men and bond and free."

64. In Figures 10 and 63 we have shown that the prophets put men for idols and dens and rocks of mountains for their temples. The nature of the thing requires them to be so interpreted where men are said to hide themselves in dens and rocks of mountains and say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us." For rocks and mountains must here signify buildings, because of their falling; and men must signify idols, because to hide in dens or holes of rocks, or to cover with falling mountains — that is, to shut up in buildings or bury in the ruins of them — is the proper way of destroying idols, but not a proper way of destroying men. But the use of these expressions will best appear from scripture, where they are specifically applied to the demolishing of idolatry. "The high places of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed; the thorn and thistle shall come upon their altars; and they" — the idols — "shall say to the mountains, Cover us, and to the hills, Fall on us" — that is, to the tops of the mountains and hills, or the rocks and coverings of the dens of the idols. (Hosea 10:8) "The Lord alone shall be exalted in that day and the idols shall he utterly abolish; and they shall go into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth for fear of the Lord." (Isaiah 2:19) "In that day a man shall cast his idols — to the moles and to the bats — to go into the clefts of the rock and into the tops of the ragged rocks for fear of the Lord." (verse 21) Here the idols which are to be hid in the rocks are explicitly called idols. But a little before they were addressed as men: "Enter into the rock and hide yourself in the dust." (verse 10) And since the men here addressed are idols, by men hiding themselves in rocks we must understand idols shut up in their temples or buried in the ruins thereof.

65. The falling of the stars and the departure of the heavens, according to the preceding interpretations of stars and heaven, will signify the fall of great men and the departure of the glory of a kingdom. And because idols are sometimes regarded as men by Figure 63, this emblem may be applied either to a kingdom of idols or to a kingdom of men, as the circumstances require. Thus Saint Stephen calls the idol of Remphan a star: "You took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Remphan, figures which you made to worship them." (Acts 7:43) It is admittedly less common to represent idols by stars, but it is more proper because they were images of supposed celestial gods. And the analogy between the universe and a kingdom is more perfect when things relating to heaven are represented by heavenly bodies and the earthly parts of a kingdom by earthly things, than when these are confused together. Besides, the stars formed part of the heathen idols, and it is an ordinary figure to attribute the names of things of one kind to one another. We need not therefore hesitate to interpret stars as idols and heaven as their honor and dignity — or rather as the domed roofs of their temples — whenever that interpretation best fits the circumstances, as it does in this figure. For here the allusions to the falling of figs from a fig tree and to the rolling up of a scroll, by striking the imagination with an idea of local motion, make it a more vivid representation of the ruining of a kingdom of idol-gods than of a kingdom of men. For stars falling to the earth as figs fall from a fig tree most vividly represent falling idols; and heaven departing as a scroll when rolled together most vividly represents the roof of a temple gradually being taken off or splitting apart as the building is thrown down. As for the use of this figure, there are only two places where it occurs: Isaiah 34:4 and Revelation 6:13–14. The first seems to refer to that universal overthrow of the Gentiles so often prophesied in scripture, at which time idolatry is to be universally and forever demolished — as may hereafter appear by comparing Revelation 9:20 and 11:15 with Isaiah 2:17–19 and Zechariah 13:2, etc. The other place is at the sixth seal, when idols were to be universally abolished, but not permanently — of which more hereafter.

66. What is meant by ascending out of the bottomless pit may be seen in Revelation 20, where the putting an end to delusions and false religions is expressed by shutting up the dragon in the bottomless pit so that he should deceive the nations no more until the thousand years should be fulfilled, and the springing up of new delusions at the end of that time by his being let out again to deceive the nations.

67. A potion or drunkenness sometimes signifies great affliction and misery, as in Jeremiah 25:15, Ezekiel 23:33, and Revelation 14:10; and sometimes error, as in Isaiah 29:10: "They are drunken, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink, for the Lord has poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep and has closed your eyes." And accordingly in Revelation 17, by the inhabitants of the earth

being made drunk with the wine of the whore's fornication must be understood their being infatuated and seduced to idolatry by her delusions. For it is said in chapter 18:23 that by her sorcery (the Greek word for "deadly poison") all nations were deceived — that is, by the wine of the poison of her fornication, as it is called in verses 3 and 8. For the Greek word thymos signifies as well poison as wrath, and her cup is to be supposed as a kind of love-potion, such as prostitutes of old were said to administer for exciting love, composing it of poisonous drugs that worked by stupefying and infatuating those to whom they gave it.

68. Where the Jewish nation is represented by a prostitute, her threatened distress and desolation is often expressed by her being made naked, as in Jeremiah 13:22,26, Ezekiel 16:37, Hosea 2:3, and similarly of the virgin daughter of Babylon in Isaiah 47:3.

69. "Wherefore are you red in your apparel and your garments like him that treads the wine vat? I have trodden the winepress alone — for I will tread them in my anger — and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments." (Isaiah 63:2–3) "Proclaim you this among the Gentiles; prepare war, etc. Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come, get you down, for the press is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes, etc." (Joel 3:13) "The Lord shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. He will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword." (Jeremiah 25:30) See also Lamentations 1:15, Ezekiel 15:2, and Deuteronomy 32:32. The reason for this figure is the resemblance between the effusion of blood and the pressing out of the juice of grapes.

70. The signification of a harvest our Saviour has given us in Matthew 13:39.