

Thomas Brightman on the Two Witnesses

The Reuelation of S. Iohn illustrated with an analysis & scholions Wherein the sence is opened by the Scripture, & the euent of things fore-told, shewed by histories. The third edition corrected & amended, with supply of many things formerly left out. By Thomas Brightman. Imprinted at Leyden: By J. Claesson van Dorpe, 1616.

Spelling and text modified for improved readability.

Now as touching the words.¹ The *reed* that was given, is a power that was granted to know the truth, whereby the Saints might measure the length and breadth of the true and lawful worship, lest that in so great a confusion, they should stray from a just proportion; in that it was like unto a *rod*, it teaches us, that the truth was to be greatly helped, & under propped with the authority of princes. For a rod is oftentimes put for an ensign of honour, namely that scepter which kings carry in their hands, by which name also that bundle of rods is called, which was wont to be carried before the Magistrates. It signifieth also an instrument wherewith power is executed, as in the poet; *Circe the witch* worketh all her enchantments with a *rod*; *Mercury* with a *little white wand proper to ambassadors*. This showeth then that the temple was to be measured by the help of some prince or great man, as we heard in the seventh Chapter, where *Constantine the great* was the instrument whom God used in sealing his servants. For while he took care for the peace of the Church, and defended the truth with all his endeavour,

he provided a safe refuge for the Saints to preserve them in from the contagion of the times.

And the Angel stood by. These words are wanting in *Aretas*, whereupon it is that he makes the reed to command him to arise and *mete*². But the help of *Angels* joined elsewhere with the *ministers*, where the like business is in hand, doth seem also to require, that nothing should be done but in the presence of the Angel; see Ezek. 40.3. And afterwards, Apoc. 21.16. Wherefore *Th. Beza* has done well to make this place perfect outof the Complutense Edition.

Mete the temple. The *true Christian Church* is shadowed out by the type of *the old temple*: each part whereof was most accurately decyphered and measured out of old by the commandment of God himself; And that to this end, that men might know that this house is *framed by God*, and is not made by mans' might or cunning, and that therefore they should not take upon them any power to change matters at their pleasure, as if

¹p. 446

²measure

the heavenly wisdom had not provided sufficiently to ordain everything in the fittest manner that could be. The things to be measured are the *temple*, the *altar*, and the *worship* that the *minister* uses. The temple was³ distinguished into the *Holy of Holies*, the *Holy Place*, which had the *Altar* for the whole burnt offering, placed before the doors thereof. He commands to mete these things alone of the whole building, which are but little parts of the whole, and the innermost and most secret rooms of it only. For the *tabernacle* which was of old *thirty cubits long* and *twelve broad*, was sixteen times and more lesser than the court. After that the temple which was enlarged by *Solomon*, and by the *Angel in Ezekiel*, had far more ample, and spacious courts. The temple then that is only measured, doth declare that the *Church* was to be brought into great straits, to be limited with small bounds, and be altogether removed from the eyes of men. For the *Holy place* did not lie open to the people, but the priests alone did minister there, such as all true Christians are reckoned to be in this place, as above, Chapt. 1.6.

When *Constantine* therefore came to the kingdom, the Church began to hide itself in secret, by departing aside from the view of the world into a certain secret sanctuary. To which purpose *that sealing* Chapt. 7. served. By which some few were severed and set apart from a great many, by some privy mark. And it must not be marvelled at, that this setting and going apart was to be seen in the middle of such glorious peace and in the time of great a desire to advance the *Christian profession* as then was. For when as some kindled contentions, others gaped after honours, & many were with child, and delivered of monstrous heresies, and all men gave themselves up to heap up superstitions, was it an easy matter, to preserve any thing entire sincere and

³p. 448.

sound, while matters were at this pass? But the obscureness of the *true Saints* grew every day more and more, the more those four plagues grew. And this doth Rome itself at unawares confess. For dost thou enquire, where our *Church* was before *Luther's time*? Thou therefore art ignorant of it. But to answer thy question, know that where thou O *Romish Church* was not, there was ours, namely in the hidden sanctuary of our God, whether it fled together with all the Saints from the contagion. But seeing thou boasteth, that thou art the *city set upon an hill, which was never hid*, but always flourished with a perpetual & glorious succession, apparent to the world, acknowledge with all that thou art not the true Church, seeing thou foundeth no place in that secret covert.

And them that worship therein. The word *to Mete*, is common and belonging to the continued quantity, but here it signifieth by a synechdoche to number, as if he should say, reckon those few in the number of my servants, who do worship me truly in secret. So in the *sealing* of the Elect the number was certain, Chapt. 7. Which is the same thing that is declared here in other words, when he bids him *measure those that worship*. Now all the faithful are said to worship *in the Altar*, because they place all their hope, and affiance in Christ's death alone; which kind of sacrifices belong not only to the *tribe of Levi*, but as well to *every truly gody one*. And this is that only, which distinguisheth a true Christian from one that is false and counterfeit. But it may be thought worthily, that the most in these times, did not so worship God upon the *Altar*, when as it is clearly evident by their writings, that many who ought to give light unto others, with all manner of good knowledge, did attribute too much to the works of their own choosing and deceiving, and to their own holiness.

But the court which is without the temple. So read *Aretas* and *Complutensis*, but certain copies read: *That which is within the temple*, namely the court of the priests, wherein was the *Altar* of the whole burnt offerings, of which he spake right now, which is wont to be contained often times under the name *the temple*. And this reading is not to be lightly rejected. For John is not bidden to *mete this court*, but only the *Altar* of this court. And perhaps it agreeth better with that that followeth, if that inward court be cast⁴ out of doors, that if that should be cast out, which was already without before. But both tend to one, that it is to be had in no reckoning at all, whatsoever is more than those three things above said, the *temple*, the *Altar*, and the *worshippers*.

For the court is given to the Gentiles. That is, to the *Christians* that are so but in name, and not this only, but the *Holy City* also, the which they should tread under foot, not by spoiling and sacking it in a hostile manner, but by frequenting it continually under a pretence to worship God, as it is in *Isaiah 1:12*. And that by the space of *two & forty months*. These things do teach plainly, what should be the state of the false Church in the time of those Ages wherein the truth should lie hid. First it should exceed no less in number and multitude, than the people that dwelt in *Jerusalem* of old & that were wont to converse in the outmost court did exceed the number of those, that bare office in the *temple*. And it can hardly be expressed how great difference was between them. The company of inhabitants of those that did flock daily to the temple was huge, but how few were the priests, that were within (in the meanwhile) to that innumerable multitude that was without? The same proportion should there be of fained Christians, to the true and

⁴p. 450.

natural citizens. Secondly, it should have the *counterfeit worshippers*, dwelling as near as could be unto the *temple*. For they should possess *Jerusalem* and the whole court should be theirs, now how near was the court joined to the temple? How doth it compass it around about, *Ezech. 40.5*. How near society is this? Who durst have condemned the *court* as being profane, unless the *Angel* himself had bidden a man to do so? And indeed that event did answer to this prophecy altogether.

For in those first times, when the *four trumpets* did blow, what was one *Athanasius* to so great assemblies of Bishops as then were? And afterwards, what was *Basil the great*, or *Gregory Nazianzen*, to the whole *East* almost? If a man would look to number, who would not have contemned one or two, in comparison of so great a rabble? But if a man would respect *holiness*, were they not all Bishops? Did they not all desire to be thought valiant champions for the truth? How easy a thing was it then to be deceived, either with their *number*, or their *nearness to the true Church*? The same bragging of the *Holy City* and the *outmost court* may we also see in these last ages, to be used against the temple. For thus they babble, and foolishly prate. What is not the *Church of Rome* scattered far and wide throughout the whole world. Have the heresies of the Lutherans ever passed over sea. Have they ever seen either *Asia*, or *Africa*, or *Egypt*, or *Greece*. Who can doubt whether the *Church of Rome* be the Holy Catholic Church, which can number her Bishops, by a most certain succession from Peter himself. But let *Rome* boast now of her multitude, the more it doth now flourish as it has for a long time done with a great number of professors, the more near a kin is it to the crowds of people, that tread *Jerusalem* under foot, and the more un-

like it is to this poor handful, that lieth hid within the temple; we see the patern of a whorish Church in this place, that is furnished as much as can be with multitude, and nearness to the true Church. If these things be enough to get the victory with-all, thou hast got the day (*O Rome*) with thy troupes of citizens, & thine adjoynd nearness to the temple.

But let them look to it, who are carried away, with the name of the *Catholic Church*, how easily they may be cozened⁵ by this whore, which takes possession of the *Holy City*, and of the *outmost court*, that is so near the *temple*; let them in the name of God weigh the matter in good earnest and diligently, and let them not suffer themselves to be gulled with her vain brags. Let them think, that all those seem indeed to be in the *temple*, who are with them in very outmost compass of the walls, at least while they look⁶ upon them afar off, but let them once come nearer, and they shall see most clearly, that they whom they supposed to converse in the innermost, and most secret places of the *temple*, are kept out of the *holy place*, with walls of brass. And yet the matter is not now so hard to be judged of, as it was long ago, while the Church wanted all public liberty of God's worship.

Only do but read the writings of our men, and thy eyes shall be enlightened through God's grace, to see the truth clearly, mayest thou not worthily suspect the fraudulent dealings of the Popish Doctors & rulers, who do forbid thee all meddling with our books, and all society with men of our religion. But do thou strive, the more to know the truth, which thou shalt see to be thus hated of thy leaders and teachers, as who are privy to the filthiness of their religion?

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⁶p. 452

Two and forty months. This is the time in which the true Spouse should lie hid, and the false should sway & rule all. But how great is the obscurity and difficulty of this point? And no marvel, seeing there is so great blindness in the mind of man. Thou therefore who hast received these things to declare them to thy servants, be present with me, that I may through thy conduct set my feet in sure places.

For the driving away of this mist, we must first of all observe, that three common years and a half as they commonly fall, are not to be determined in these *two & forty months*. I hope that the agreeing of matters hath made it good and credible, that the *four Angels of Euphrates in the 9. Chapt. are the Turkes*, who seeing they had power given for them *one hour, and a month and a year*, and now three hundred years are gone and past, is there any man so perverse, that he will yet strive for this, that these *two and forty months* are to be crowded into the straits of their native signification. To this may be added, that seeing these months are belonging to the *Beast*, Chapter 13.5. And that was not yet born into the world, at the time when this Revelation was first given, for John saw it afterwards at the first arising thereof, Chapt. 13.1.

Which is no where spoken, either can by any means be spoken the Roman Empire, this space then of the months there is out of doubt that time, wherein Antichrist shall be born, grow, be wounded, and be restored to health again, wherein Antichrist shall be born, grow, be wounded, and be restored to health again, wherein he shall exercise power over every tribe, tongue and nation, and shall make the place where he shall dwell & play the tyrant in to be the *Queen of the whole world*. Wherein lastly

both he himself and all the factors to procure and fulfil his beastly pleasures, shall be altogether given to exceeding riot, as is plain out of the 13.17- and 18. Chapters of this book.

Now can all these things be performed in three ordinary years and a half? Perhaps that *Braggadochio* in *Plautus* shall be revived, whom he calls *Therapontigonus Platagidorus*, who conquered half of all the nations in the world by himself alone and that within twenty days. *Alexander of Macedonia* is likened unto a Libard, who had four wings on his back, which were notable foretellers of that swiftness of his whereby he should attain the whole Empire of *Asia* in twelve years, and that while himself spent all his time in his tents, and gave himself nothing but ease and wontonness, Dan. 7.6. But *Antichrist* might be thought and that worthily to ride upon the sun itself, if he should subdue all the world at once in *three years and a half*, and should in the mean time give himself in his lazy vein to all delights, and a most wretched intemperancy. But more expressly yet afterwards, Chapter 20.4. Where the enemies of the *beast* refusing to be governed by him, and that reign with *Christ a thousand years*, namely all that time, wherein the Devil was bound and fettered, and the subjects of *Antichrist* lie dead before the first resurrection, I necessarily evince that *Antichrist the Beast* had his being throughout all the time, otherwise how could they resist⁷ him, who not only commanded them not to do an thing, but was not alive at all? The same thing shall be manifest also out of the *person of Antichrist*, which we will shew in the proper place, not to belong to *any singular man*, but to a certain *kingdom & succession* chapt.17.

Secondly, seeing this computation can not be of common months, we must

⁷p. 454

need number these months according to the custom of the other scriptures. For all things are expressed in this book of the Revelation after the manner of the old types. Now what is this manner? Shall *each month* note out *seven years* as the weeks in Daniel do? It is quite destitute of all example and reason to equal the *months* to the *weeks*. Neither will the words bear it by any means. For the *Angel* teaches us, that every one of the days are to be numbered one by one, whereupon he doth note out this space indifferently, sometimes by the *forty two months*, otherwise by a *thousand six hundred days*, as in the next verse, & Chapt 12.6. But that manner of accounting, by which the *months* are reduced to *weeks*, and the number of *two hundred ninety four years* is made up, does not number the fourth part of the days, we therefore judge that the years are to be reckoned up one by one and that so many are to be set down, as there are days in these months, which agrees perfectly with the custom of *Daniel's weeks*.

Thirdly, we must observe, that these are no *Julian years* for these *two and forty months* only do make a *thousand, two hundred and threescore days*. But so many *Julian months* do make a *thousand seventy eight days and more*, so that they come short 18 days and a little more of the *Julian years*, and so many years are wanting in a thousand, two hundred threescore days, if you take each of the years for to make up a thousand two hundred threescore Julian years. What kind of months then does the *Angel* use in this place? Not such as are reckoned *by the Moons*, nor *Julian years*, but only *Egyptian*, each of which consists of *thirty days*. And he thought best to have the years numbered after the order that is used in this nation only, as the which should kill the prophets of God, in the streets of which great City they should lie

trodden under foot and unburied to their reproach, of which we shall read after in verse 8. After the account of these months we have *before assigned* thirty days to every one of those five months, cha. 2.

Fourthly, we must not begin this computation, either from the *passion of our Lord*, or from any other time, that went before the writing of this book. For this is forbidden in this book, as we have diverse times advertised so much out of those words. *I will show thee what things must be done hereafter*, chapt. 4.1. Neither must we begin it presently from the time that this book of the Revelation was made. For next unto that, do *the dwelling in heaven, the clothing with the Sun, the crown of twelve stars, and the trampling upon the Moon follow*, chapt. 12.1. For that first most holy Church did glitter with all this glory, or else truly we shall nowhere find to what times to ascribe it. Now this space of 42 months is of another fashion, namely, such as is most agreeable to a most desert wilderness, sackcloth, a filthy, unpleasant & woeful deformity. As touching the wilderness, the words are expressed, *this sign was seen in heaven, where afterwards the Dragon waged war when he was thrust down headlong from thence*, ch. 12. 7 &c. Now what should the Dragon do in heaven, but lie in wait to destroy the woman's children, when she was about to be delivered? Whence also was it that the woman fled, if she were in the wilderness before her delivery? What did she fly from one wilderness into another? But all the error ariseth hence because the wilderness is not described by the proper notes of it. For this desolate state of the Church is not a want so much of any human & outward aid & protection, but of the gifts of the holy Ghost wherewith the first Church abounding most plentifully, perceived no manner of desolations, al-

⁸p. 456.

though it was quite destitute, of all help of men, it was indeed in⁸ every great affliction by reason of the cruelty of the Emperors, but the *Dragon* when he cast down the *third part of the stars upon the earth*, took not heaven away from her, neither did he bereave her of her *clothing with the Sun*, though he bereaved almost infinite Saints, of their bodies. For the excellency & majesty thereof is not to be measured by our outward pomp, & pompous shew, but by the true faith, and the integrity of the whole worship of God, in both which the Church did then chiefly flourish more than in all other ages. Having now thus found out to what both time & place these months belong namely to the *Church's fight, wilderness, hidden estate*, and that not at her first beginning, but after a long and most grievous encountering with the *Dragon*, Chapt. 12.6.

We must needs know hereby, that seeing these same months are given to the *Beast*, Chapter 13.5. This same Beast is a creature that liveth and haunteth in some wilderness and indeed what other place is more fit for wild beasts, than dens and caves such as be in the wilderness? Whereupon this *beast* is afterwards more clearly beheld in the wilderness, Chapt. 17.3. And withall we must needs hereby know that this enemy who should thus drive the woman into the wilderness, and should there labour with all his might to annoy and disturb her refuge and safe repose is not the first enemy she had, that is, the *Roman Empire*, but of a second sort, namely *Antichrist*. Out of which it is evident how contrary it is unto the truth, to end these months in the death of *Licinius*, to wit, straightways after they began. The which may be made the more plain, if we shall consider, that if this term be set unto months, the whole sixth trumpet, must be also shut up in a manner within the same bounds. For there is but a very little

of that remaining, when they are ended. How cometh it to pass then, that *the mystery is not finished*, as was fortold, Chapt. 10.7. Specially seeing the *seventh trumpet* hath now continued blowing for so many ages by that account, to wit these thousand three hundred years within a little more or less? Not but that we know that *a thousand years are all one to God with one day*, 2 Pet. 3.8. But because it seemeth strange, that when as the *seven seals*, and *six trumpets*, are by this account of theirs finished *in three hundred years only*, there should be one of the same trumpets that should find no issue and that after four times three hundred years, and more. But there is no such unequal variety of the *holy prophecies*, all this monstrous disproportion whatsoever it is, cometh of man's ignorance and silliness, that can not divide the times aright. Neither is that a sound assertion of these men, that there is no certain space of time set down anywhere in the scriptures wherein the calamities upon the Church of God are limited. For the contrary is taught, Num. 14.33, 34; 2 Sam. 24.13,14; 2. Kings 8.1. And others of like sort, that might be added. Therefore to shut up this whole point, seeing the seals bring us unto *Constantine*, & these *months* are of a longer continuance, then *all the trumpets* together that are past, we hold & that upon good ground, that they take their beginning in the *sixth seal*, when as *the heaven departed away*, chap. 6.14. For why should not the woman bethink her of providing new places of abode, when as the old were gone & vanished away, & when as after that *Dioclesian Maximian* had put themselves out from their Empire of their own accord, the *Dragon was thrust down from heaven* namely in the year of our Lord 304. When also the Church began to have a wished peace given her, the whole Empire was devolved to *Constantine*, & a few of the elect began to be

sealed & severed by him out of an infinite company of *Christians* that were so in name only, Chapter 7, Which things being thus laid down and confirmed out of their necessary principles, I hope there is now a large open way made to find out the truth of those things that follow.

3. *And I will give unto my two witnesses. Th. Beza, but I will give it unto my two witnesses*, as if the *Holy City* should⁹ be given them, which yet should belong to the *Gentiles*, not to the *witnesses*, who should have place with the rest of the Saints in the *Temple*. We must therefore read as it is in the Greek, *but I will give to my two witnesses, &c.* In which words he doth now turn himself to speak of the principal members of the *Holy Church*, seeing he had now summarily declared those things, that concern the whole body of the Church, both true & also false. Now the words, *I will give & they shall prophecy*, as all one in sense, with the words *I will permit*, take order of command that they shall prophecy, as also the word giving signifieth elsewhere as; *Joshua gave them that same day to be hewers of wood*, that is, he did from that day appoint them to hew wood; see chap 1.1. But we must not stay the sentence in the office of prophecy as if they should prophecy for the space of these days alone, which yet is their perpetual function, but that they should do this throughout this time *clothed in sackcloth*. The ancient Fathers that lived farther remote from the event of things, did think that these two witnesses were *Enoch* and *Elias*, & that they should come & fight with *Antichrist* in the end of the world. But we that have seen the matter long since accomplished may determine for a certainty, that the *holy Ghost* had another manner of meaning than this. The Popish teachers catch greedily at this opinion of the fathers & make great account of it, thrusting it upon the world,

⁹p. 458.

as if it were of some oracle, and no marvel, seeing it doth withdraw men from the consideration of those things which are to be seen with their eyes at this present day, & this is that only thing that they long & labour greatly, to effect in all their expositions. But the explaining of these things as the words do particularly lay them before us, will be enough to confute the peevishness of these men. To dispath all therefore in a word; we do gather & judge that these *two prophets are the Holy Scriptures, & the assemblies of the faithful*; we will yield a reason of this judgment of ours afterwards in the description of these witnesses. And yet there is no man that may not at the first sight behold, how fit both of these are for this office of being witnesses. *The Scriptures do bear witness of the truth*, Joh. 5.39. And the *Saints do celebrate the power of God, & speak of his goodness, as it is every where in the Psalms*. The *Scriptures* have a person given them after that manner of speaking, after which adjuncts are signified by their subjects, as *Moses for the Law, &c.* Than which kind of speaking nothing is more usual. The *Sun* was the *Type* of the *Scriptures* formerly in this book, but seeing here should be mention made of their *fighting, dying, & rising again* it was needful to give them a *person*, that might be capable of these things; whence cometh this new manner of expressing an old matter. The time during which they should prophecy, is determined in *a thousand two hundred, and threescore days*, which is the self same space altogether with the 43 months afore spoken of, wherefore then doth he thus divide it into small pieces by days, & doth not declare by it rather months in gross as before? Namely for this reason, because this *office of prophesying* is such, that a man must bend himself to it continually without any intermission, not quarterly four times throughout the year, or else a

little more diligently than that, once every month, but wherein a man must dwell always like a watchman in his watch-tower, lest the enemy that doth lie in wait to destroy souls incessantly, should come upon them, while they are either absent, or fast asleep. Besides the computation is changed for this end, that we might see and acknowledge the singular providence of God over his saints, which is evermore at hand both to deliver them from evil, and to multiply good things upon them. After the same manner, *he held the Angels in his hand*, cha. 1.20. And the Psalmist singeth sweetly, that *he that keepeth Israel doth not sleep*. Psal 121.4.

To conclude, he doth hereby teach us, that the months are not to be numbered after a general manner, but so as¹⁰ every day in them is to be reckoned apart as we have shewed before. The *clothing wherein they should prophecy is sackcloth*, because all the time that they should discharge their function, they should be in a deformed and mournful state stripped of all their glorious and glittering shew clothed in like manner for all the world, as those be that go in black, and mourn at funerals usually.

But whence cometh it, that they should be thus dolefully arrayed, in that triumphing time, that the *Church* lived under *Constantine* the great? Certainly however the glory of peace, honours, dignities, and wealth was great, wherewith he did enrich and adorn the Churches, in most magnificent manner, yet as touching true piety, all began to wax worse & worse. *The heaven departed away under Dioclesian*, by means of a horrible tempest of persecution, but it was now more corrupted through outward ease & happiness, than it was when the cruel enemies' sword was hacking upon the necks and backs of Christians. For now the sim-

¹⁰p. 460.

ple and sincere purity of the Scriptures, began to be more and more defiled, the meaning of them began not to be understood, yea to be wrested with allegories, and absurd expositions, and any thing almost to be fathered on them, whatsoever men listed. Did not *the Arian faction*, (which as we have heard, did infect the third part of the floods, and fountains, with their wormwood, Chapt. 8.10, 11) strive to draw the Scriptures by force to speak on their side, & to broach their wicked opinions to the world with the authority thereof? So do all hereticks commonly for the most part, but there was never before any Magistrates to help forward their ungodly endeavour, with their authority in that manner, as was then and after that to be seen. *Worthily indeed did the Scriptures put on sackcloth at that time*, when they were so compelled to defend, and stablsh errors, against their meaning, which they chiefly hated above all other things. Yet were they not thus covered over with this foul and ill favoured hue forthwith and at the first, but they began to change their garment in that joyful time, which they wore openly, not long after. Indeed that age and these that followed after were graced and blessed with some *men*, that were notably *learned* and *holy*, but both these were few, and no man can be ignorant, how much even these *few worthy ones* were blemished, with the contagion of those corrupt times. They did indeed search and set out the truth, with great sharpness of wit and depth of learning, when they had to encounter with the heretics, but in their other labours and commentaries when they were free from this fear, they erred greatly from the mark, missing the drift of the scriptures. And yet even then was *their gown* they wore without spot, in respect of that filth, wherewith the truth of God was afterwards stained: the assemblies of the faithful likewise were besmeared (as it were) with *honouring and*

adoring of relics, and so were clothed in *sackcloth*; then also was *religion placed in holy places*, and *times*, & *other frivolous and trifling matters of that kind*. For then are the Churches beautiful and goodly to see to, when they glitter with the simplicity of God's ordinances. But the ages following did defile them rather, with ashes, and dust, & dirt, so that being at length covered over wholly therewith, they could be known of none but God alone, but were utterly grown, out of the knowledge of other men, as touching their natural visage. *It is a matter, indeed to be admired with astonishment, that the Church should be so glorious in her sunlike robes under the persecuting Emperors, & yet should be thus mournfully clad in this calm & sun shine weather that her Nursing Father brought unto her.*

Vers. 4. *These be those two olive trees*. Now we come to the double property of these prophets, the one *of bounty towards their friends* as I may call it, the other *of terrible power over their enemies*, both to destroy them vers. 5. As also to bring other plagues upon them, vers. 6. As for their *bounty*; they are *two olive trees*, & *two candlesticks*; which *type* is taken out¹¹ of Zach. 4:2, 12. And it is very fit for the matters in hand. For even as God did then preserve his Church, and did beautify it with the gifts of his Spirit, and that not so much by the ministry of man, as by his own grace, which he gave it from above beyond all expectation, and that in a bountiful manner, which the oil signified, that was not gotten by the industry of man, but did flow voluntarily, out of the olive berrys, into the cups of the candlesticks. So should he now maintain his Church, that was in danger of an utter overthrow, and should reserve unto himself, some flaming candlesticks, which however they wanted the oil, that was beaten and trodden out of the press, yet he himself would set

¹¹p. 462.

olive trees by their sides, which dropping and distilling down of their own accord and continually, out of the berrys into the lamps, should furnish them with perpetual matter, to nourish their flame withall. Seeing then that in this type the inward gifts of the Spirit, are shadowed forth by the flame of the candlesticks, the outward by the olive trees, among which the holy word of God is the principal, these *olive trees* may not unfitly betoken *the Scriptures*, as out of whose berries (as it were) oil is poured to nourish the flame of the lamps; it being their office to minister doctrine to the prophets sufficiently, so as they may be able to nourish the flame of piety in themselves, and in their hearers. Neither is the reason hereof much unlike to that, for which bothe the instruments which God useth to convey and to contunue spiritual things. (that is, both the Scriptures, and the ministers of the word) were compared before to the *sun*, the one for the light it has of its own, the other for kindling a flame with convenient nourishment in others.

Now they are two, to answer to the two Testaments old and New, *God spake of old by the prophets, now by his son*, Heb. 1.1. They are two also in Zechariah, before ever the Gospel was written and yet nothing doth hinder but that this reason may be applied to them also, seeing the Gospel was always in force before it was written. For these are the two main heads of the whole most holy Scriptures, the law and the Gospel, which are these wholesome olive trees, and so have been always in all times. The candlesticks do carry the candles that be set within them, whereby Christ has taught us before expressly that the Churches are noted out, Chap. 1.20. And that because they do resemble candlesticks, as in the tops of which prophets be set, and not in the high topgallant of worldly dignity and promotion to vive saving light

¹²p. 464

unto the Saints. The prophets themselves are candles, and not candlestickks as Christ distinguisheth them, saying, *neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it shineth out to all that be in the house*, Mat. 5.15. And he said abore that the ministers are stars, when he compared the Churches to the candlesticks, Chap. 1.20. But why are they but two now? most fitly no doubt, to express the present state of the Church, that had by this time lost the other lamentably. In the first Chapter they were *seven*, namely so many as there be boughs of one and the same tree; after the similitude of the *lamp in the temple*, which bearing an image of the Church, *had but one shank, yet seven bowls and branches coming out of the sides thereof*, Exod. 25.31. &c. For the Catholic Church is one, as *the shaft is one*, but the particular congregations are many, which coming out of that one, and sticking in their one, as the sundry branches of one shaft, do rest upon it as their foundation. Wherefore those *first seven candlesticks*, which did answer to the type in the whole number, did shew that the Church was then most flourishing, as long as the Apostles and their next successors did burn like lights in it.

But now at this time, wherein the prophets should go in black; there are but *two candlesticks*, which want five of their full number; because the dignity of the Church should now be much diminished, and it should be brought almost into extreme misery. And yet there¹² should be some fatness as it were of *olive trees*, supplied unto the Elect, wherewith to feed the heavenly flame in their hearts, and there should not be some one or other candlestick lacking, from whence the ministers should send out their light, howsoever the assemblies of the faithful should be very scarce, and small. And

yet perhaps all this will not as yet fully satisfy us, especially seeing we have taught, Chapt. 2.3. That there had shined *six of these seven candlesticks in this space of a thousand two hundred and three-score days*, which we have shewed to be so many years, and to begin about the year 304. Therefore I do thus suppose, that *the three last candlesticks of Sardis, Philadelphus, Laodicea were not lighted but after 1220 years almost*, and that therefore they come scarce into any account, and not without cause, as which have so small a share in the number of these days, as for the three other, *the candlestick of Smyrna* was a type of the Church when it was falling. *That of Thyratira* was a type of the Church, when it was rising again, but *that of Pergamos* was a type of the Church, when it lay in the deepest dungeon of all corruption, whereupon there is made no reckoning of this neither, but it is passed by of set purpose. Not that there should be none at all under that condition of the Church, but that there should be none apparent at that time.

5. *And if any man will hurt them.* Now followeth the power they had to destroy their enemies. But why are they clothed with sackcloth unless it be for the wrong that was done them? For they then destroy the world with fire for the daily wrongs that it offers them? The injury offered unto them is twofold, one more grievous, as which is advisedly, & with open either force or fraud offered. The other upon error & unadvisedly & therefore lighter; They seem then to have put on sackcloth, because of this second kind, & yet in the mean time they did continually, take revenge of their more deadly enemies with this devouring fire. It is said to go out of their mouth, because this or such like judgment is executed by their denouncing, & upon their prayers. For even as of old time at the

threatening of *Moses, fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty men, that made an insurrection against him with Korah*, Numb. 16. Or, *as fire came down from heaven at the prayers of Elias, and took away the captains, & his fifty, which Ahaziah sent to kill him*, 2 Kings 1. After the same manner doth God defend these prophets, as he did those old ones, yea he doth so much the more notably provide for these, by how much more account he maketh of his truth, and of the whole assemblies of the Saints, than of particular persons. The Scriptures therefore while they do denounce most certain punishments against all impiety and transgression, do as it were blow fire out of their mouth, wherewith they do utterly consume the impenitent. *For it cannot be, that one tittle of the word of God should fall to the ground*, Math. 24.35. But they do specially *vomit out fire against those that will hurt them*, that is, who dare corrupt their most pure truth with the patched inventions of men, threatening thus, that, *If any man will add unto this prophecy, God will cast upon him the plagues written in this book*, Chapt. 22. 18, 19. Not that they do esteem, the authority of this book of Revelation alone, to be more holy and great, than of the other books, the contempt whereof they will have punished so grievously, but they will have the like regard to be had of the whole truth, that is inspired from God, as, *ye shall not add unto this word, which I speak unto you, neither shall ye take ought from it*, Deut. 4.1. *Do not add ought to his words, lest thou be reprov'd, & found a liar*, Proverb. 30. Hence came that horrible destruction, that was made of *Baal's priests* of old, 1 Kings 18. 40; 2 Kings 10. 25. Hence was it that so many most grievous calamities did rush upon the world, during all the time of these 42 months, & that because nothing in a manner was taught, or done, according to the true meaning

¹³p. 466.

of the *Scriptures*, but the world would be wholly wise, & introduced only out¹³ of & by traditions, as for the truth of God they did either altogether despise it, or else did wrest it to strengthen their toys, and foolerys.

These prophets therefore being so ill entreated, *burnt up the third part of the trees and all the green grass with fire that was mingled with hail, killed the third part of the creatures, that live in the Sea, with a burning mountain, that was cast into the Sea, turned the floods and fountains into wormwood, by means of a Star that fell, and flamed out like a firebrand, Yea gave power to send the locusts and the Angels of Euphrates unto the world*, as we have before expounded the former trumpets, out of each of which either *fire* or at least *a hellish smoke* issued forth. All which evils were nothing else but a flame, that broke out of the mouths of the prophets, that did punish the wicked despisers of the truth in a terrible manner. The same account doth God make of the *Candlesticks*, that is of the assembly of his Saints, for he will not suffer his Church to be oppressed for nought, but he being moved with their prayers, punisheth their oppressors according as they deserve. *Dioclesian* giving over his Empire decreed to lead the rest of his life quietly. But he escaped not so, for after that his house was wholly consumed with lightning, as a flame of fire that fell from heaven, he hiding himself for fear of the lightning, died within a little after. So saith *Constantine* the great in that book of his, that is commonly called the fifth book of *Euseb.* of the life of Constantine Pag. 168.a. Although *Eusebius*, *Necephorus*, and others do tell of a far more horrible death that befell him. *Maximian Herculus* his contemporary perished by breaking his neck with a halter. *Maximius* his son was drowned in the *Tiber*. *Galerius* was destroyed with horrible and painful disease. *Maximius Lucinius* was taken away after the same manner, be-

ing often overcome, and chased away, and at last slain. What should I speak of others. *Valens* fighting unhappily against the *Goths*, and flying into a certain base cottage, was burnt up together with the house itself by a fire. Now these were but particular persons, but as for the whole multitude, they were punished very often and grievously with famine, pestilence and war, as might be fully declared, but that is too long, and not much needful to relate it. Let these things serve to demonstrate enough and more, that these prophets, howsoever they seemed to be miserable, ragged, and overgrown with filth, yet they were armed with no contemptable power, which selfsame condition may be looked for of all the prophets.

Vers. 6. *These have power to shut heaven.* He passeth over to another power of these, which is mighty and admirable, wherewith they do likewise equal the greatest of all the prophets. *Elias* is famous, *at whose prayers God did so shut up heaven, that the earth was not made wet with any shower in three years and six months*, 1 Kings 18.1.; Luke 4.25. But we read of no such things acted by these prophets. It is true indeed if we take the word properly, but of we transfer them to spiritual matters, according as the rest have been, that we have spoken of, how great agreement shall we find? That drought came three years and six months at the prayers of *Elias*. So the time of the power given to these prophets, should be for so many great years and months. For *42 months, or a thousand two hundred & sixty days*, do make this space of years and of months. But they be *great ones* as I have said, and have now sufficiently proved, not *such common ones*, as those of *Elias* were, each of them being *three hundred & threescore ordinary years*, and the half year being a hundred and fourscore.

How great a drought and penury of

spiritual dew, was there all this time, for want whereof piety withered away everywhere in the world? But they that bring all strictly to the letter, and will have for these three years and a half understood of common years, do they likewise dream of such a restraint of rain as indeed they must¹⁴ needs do? Certainly they make Antichrist's kingdom ill savoured, hunder starved, and every ways miserable and wretched, altogether contrary to that excess & riot, wherewith the holy Ghost saith he shall run over. Neither should *Antichrist* be at liesure to carry weapons about, to sudue nations withall, but he should rather lead his droves of oxen and cattle, to water them where he can, as we read that *Ahab* did of old. But it is no marvel, that they fall into many such absurdities as these, who had rather follow their own opinions that they have once conceived than the truth itself.

And they have power over the waters. As Moses that turned the waters of Egypt into blood. And as these Prophets did indeed effect such a matter, when the third part of the Sea was made blood, Chapter 8.8. For all this power was put forth in those plagues of which we have heard, Chapt. 8.9. It is just with God that all they who will not believe the truth should believe a lie, 2 Thess 1.11. Which is indeed nothing else, but to have their pure ... crystal waters, changed into blood.

The next words that follow (*and of striking the earth with every plague, as oft as they will*) do comprehend the rest of the plagues in a short sum, which are not mentioned in this place, as namely that of the shining *of the sun, sending of the locusts, and of loosing of the four Angels*. Out of which power that is manifest, which we taught in the beginning of this Chapter, that this whole prophecy of *measuring the temple, of casting out the court, and of the two prophets, belongs to the same time that the six former trumpets do*. Which do relate the plagues severally in the same order as they fell out. But this prophecy mentioneth the causes, namely, the *violating of the purity of the Scriptures, and the defiling of the worship of God with many superstitions in the assemblies of the faithful*. These were the things that did pull down scourges and plagues upon the world, they come not thither by chance or fortune. The prophets are said to have power, to punish the earth with what plague they will, because God doth govern and order the world according to his will revealed in the Scriptures, and that for the good of his Church, and in favour unto it. In the beginning he gave up the earth to *Adam* while he stood in his enntire estate, and he will have all things now again to serve for the use of his Children, that are restored to their integrity by Christ. ...

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¹⁴p. 468.