

tance. Of whom one is departed a true faythfull seruaunt of the Lord, the other two be yet alive, and witness hereof. To whom the number of their foresayd 42. monethes, being propounded and examined by Sabbathos of yeares, the whole summe was found to surmount to 294. yeres, concerning the full and iust tyme of these foresayd persecutions neither more nor lesse.

Now this one clasp being opened, the other numbers that follow, are plaine and manifest to the intelligent reader to be understood. For where mention is made of three yeares and a half: of one tyme, two times, & halfe a tyme, also of 1260. dayes, all these come to one reckoning, & signify 42. monethes, by which monethes, as is sayd, is signified the whole tyme of these primitiue persecutions, as here in order may appeare.

The mysticall numbers in the Apocalyp opened.

First, where mention is made, Apocal. chap. 11. that the two Prophetes shall prophesie 1260. dayes. And also that the woman fleeing into the desert shall there be fed .1260. dayes: who knoweth not, that .1260. dayes make three yeares & a halfe: that is, monethes 42. Secondly, where we read, chap. 11. the bodies of the two foresaid Prophetes shall lye in the streetes of the great cite vnburned, the space of iij. days & a half, and after the said iij. dayes & a half they shall reuiue againe, &c. let the houres of these iij. dayes and a half (which be 42.) bee reckoned euery day for a Sabbathos of yeares, or els euery day for a moneth, and they come to moneths 42. Thirdly, where as in the same booke is expressed that the woman had ij. wings geuen her to flye vnto the desert for a tyme, tymes, and halfe a tyme, geue for one tyme, one yere, or one day: for ij. times ij. yeares, or ij. dayes: for halfe a tyme, halfe a yere, or halfe a day. And so it is manifest, that those three yeares & a halfe, mounteth to moneths 42. Fourthly, account these 42. monethes foresaid (which the beaſt had power to make. Apoc. 11.) by Sabbathos of yeares, that is, vij. yeares for a moneth: or euery moneth for seuen yeares, & it amounteth to the summe of yeares 294.

1. MCCLX. Reuelation. 11.12.

2. Three dayes and a halfe, Reuela. cap. 11.

3. A tyme, tymes and halfe a tyme. Reuela. cap. 12.

4. Xlii. monethes or 3. yeares and a halfe. Reuel. cap. 12.

Ezech. cap. 47.

And so haue ye the iust yeares, dayes, times, & months of these foresaid persecutions vnder the beaſt, neither shorter nor longer, reckoning from the death of John Baptist vnder Herode the Romain king to the ende of Maxentius, and of Licinius, i. last great persecutors, the one in the west the other in the East, who were both vanquished by godly Constantinus. And so peace was geuen to the Church, albeit not in such ample wise, but that diuers tumultes and troubles afterward ensued, but they lasted not long: & the chief hunt, to speake of these Romain persecutions, which the holy ghost especially considered about all other, in this his Reuelation thus ended, in the time of this Constantinus. Then was the great Dragon the deuill, to witte, the sicrage & power of his malicious persecuting, tied short for a thousand yeres after this, so that he could not preuaile in any such sort, but that the power and glory of the gospel by little and little encreasing and spreading with great ioy and libertie, so preuailed that at length it got the vpperhand, & replenished the whole earth, rightly verifying therein, the water of Ezechiel, which issuing out of the right side of the aulter, the farther it ran, the deeper it grew, till at length it replenished the whole Ocean Sea, & healed all the fishes therein. No other wise the course of the Gospell proceeding of small & hard beginnings kept still his streame, the more it was stopped, the swifter it ranne: by blood it seeded, by death it quickned: by cutting it multiplied, through violence it sprung, till at last out of thraldome and oppression it brast forth into perfect libertie, & flourished in all prosperitie, had it to bene, that the christians wisely & moderately could haue vled this rest & libertie, & not abused the same, forgetting their former estate to their own pride, pomp & worldly ease, as it came afterward to passe, whereof more is to be seene & said (the Lord willing) in place & tyme convenient.

And thus much touching the propheticall numbers in the Apocalyp, wherein is to be noted and magnified the eternall wildome, and his prouidence of almighty God, so disposing and governing his church, that no aduersitie or perturbation hapneth at any tyme vnto it, which his prouident wildome doth not foresee before & provide, neither doth he provide or determine any thing, which he doth not most truly perform, both foreseeing the beginning

of such persecutions, and limiting the end thereof how long to continue and when to cease. In much like sort we read in the bookes of Genesis, how the stocke of Isaac, was, 400. yeares in the lande of Egypt. During the space of which 400. yeares, after the death of Joseph, (who beareth a playne figure of Christ) they were hardly intracted and cruelly afflicted of the Egyptians, about the space of 300. yeares, reckning from after the death of Joseph, to their deliuerance out of the bondage of Egypt, seemingly as these Christians, after Christes tyme suffered the like bondage vnder the Romain tyrantes.

Thus much by the way I thought to insinuate, least any should misse, or take any offence in himself, to see or read of the Church, so long & so many yeares to be vnder so miserable & extreme afflictions, wherein neither chance nor fortune, nor disposition of man, hath had any place: but only the forecounsel & determination of the Lord so gouerned and disposed the same. Who not only did suffer the to fall, and foresee those persecutions before they fell: but also appointed the times and yeares how long they should last & when to haue an ende. As by the foresaid, 42. monethes in the 13. and 11. chap. of S. Johns Apocalyp haue bene declared, which monethes conteyning, 294. yeares, if they be rightly gathered, make the full tyme betwene the first yeare of the persecution of Christ vnder the Jewes & Herode, till the last yeare of persecution vnder Licinius, which was from the natiuite of Christ, an. 324. from the first persecution of Christ, an. 294. as is aforesaid. After the which yeare, according to the preordained counsell of God, when his seueritie had bene sufficiently declared vpon his own house, it pleased him to shew mercy againe, & to bind vp Sarban the old serpent, according to the xx. chap. of the Reuelation for the space of a thousand yeares, that is, fro this tyme of Licinius, to the tyme of Iohn Wicklesse, and Iohn Husse. During all which time, albeit certaine conflicts and tumults haue bene among Christian by thops themselves in the church, yet no vniuersal murdering persecutio was stirring, before the preaching of Iohn Wicklesse, of Husse, and such other, as in the further processe of this history (Christ willing and aiding vs) shall more appeare hereafter.

Thus hauing at large discouered these horrible persecutions past, and heauy afflictions of Christian Martyrs, now by the grace of God, coming out of their redde sea of bloody persecution, leauing Pharao and his host behynde: let vs sing gloriously to the worthy name of our god, who through the blood of the lambe, after long & tedious afflictions at length, hath visited his people with comfort, hath tide vp Sarban thore, hath sent his mecke Moses (gentle Constantine I meane) by whom it hath so pleased the Lord to worke deliuerance to his captiue people, to let his seruants at libertie, to turne their mourning into ioy, to magnifie the church of his sonne, to destroy the Idoles of the world, to graunt life and libertie: and would God also not so much riches vnto them which before were the abiectes of all the world: and all by the means of godly Constantinus, the mecke and most christian Emperour of whole diuine victories against so many tyrantes and Emperours persecutors of Christes people, and lastly against Licinius, an. 324. of whose other noble actes & prowesses of whole blessed vertues and his happy birth and progeny, part we haue comprehended before, part now remaineth (Christ willing) to be declared.

This Constantine was the soune of Constantius the Emperour, a good and vertuous childe, of a good and vertuous father, borne in Britaine, as saith Eutropius whose Mother was named Helena, daughter, in dede of King Coillus, although Ambrosius in his funerall Oracion of the death of Theodosius, sayth was an Inboulders daughter. He was a most bountifull and gracious Prince, hauyng a desire to nourish learning and good artes, and did oftentimes vse to read, write, and study himselfe. He had marvellous good successe & prosperous achievement of all things he took in hand, which then was (and truly) supposed to proceede of his, for that he was so great a sauourer of the Christian sayth, which sayth when he had once embraced, he did euer after most deuoutly and religiously reuerence: and commaunded by speciall commission and proclamations, that euery man should profess the same religion throughout all Romaine Monarchie. The worshipping of Idoles, toherinto he was addit, by the allurements of Fausta his wife: in so much that he did sacrifice vnto them: after the discomfite of Maxentius in battail, he vterly abjured. But Baptisme he deferred euen vnto his olde age, because hee had determined a iourneye into Persia, and thought in Jordan to haue bene baptised, Eusebius, lib. 4. de vita Constantini.

As touching his naturall disposition and wit, he was J. iii. very

The persecuted Israelites bearing a figure of the persecuted Church of Christ.

From the first persecution of the primitiue Church to the last persecution 294. yeares. Vniuersal persecution ceaseth for a 1000. yeares in the Church. Apoc. 10. From the tyme of Licinius, to Wicklesse 1000. yeares, Sathan bound vp for a thousand yeares. The tyme of Sathans binding opened.

Doxologia.

The good qualities of Constantinus.

The cause of his prosperitie successe.

Constantine sometime by means of his wife vsus an Idolater.

Euseb. lib. 4. de vita Constant.