

DANIEL AND THE REVELATION - VOLUME 2

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Introduction

The Revelation, usually termed “The Apocalypse,” from its Greek name, meaning “a disclosure, a revelation,” has been described to be “a panorama of the glory of Christ.” In the Evangelists we have the record of his humiliation, his condescension, his toil and sufferings, his patience, his mockings and scourgings by those who should have done him reverence, and finally his death upon the shameful cross,—a death esteemed in that age to be the most ignominious that men could inflict. In the Revelation we have the gospel of his enthronement in glory, his association with the Father upon the throne of universal dominion, his overruling providence among the nations of the earth, and his coming again, not a homeless stranger, but in power and great glory, to punish his enemies and reward his followers. “A voice has cried in the wilderness, ‘Behold the Lamb of God;’ a voice will soon proclaim from heaven, ‘Behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah!’”

Scenes of glory surpassing fable are unveiled before us in this book. Appeals of unwonted power bear down upon the impenitent from its sacred pages in threatenings of judgment that have no parallel in any other portion of the book of God. Consolation which no language can describe is here given to the humble followers of Christ in this lower world, in glorious views of Him upon whom help for them has been laid,--Him who has the key of David, who holds his ministers in his own right hand, who, though he was once dead, is now alive forevermore, and assures us that he is the triumphant possessor of the keys of death and of the grave, and who has given to every overcomer the multiplied promise of walking with him in white, having a crown of life, partaking of the fruit of the tree of life which grows in the midst of the paradise of God, and being raised up to sit with him upon his own glorious throne. No other book takes us at once, and so irresistibly, into another sphere. Long vistas are here opened before us, which are bounded by no terrestrial objects, but carry us forward into other worlds. And if ever themes of thrilling and impressive interest, and

grand and lofty imagery, and sublime and magnificent description, can invite the attention of mankind, then the Revelation invites us to a careful study of its pages, which urge upon our notice the realities of a momentous future and an unseen world.

Chapter 1

The Opening Vision

The book of the Revelation opens with the announcement of its title, and with a benediction on those who shall give diligent heed to its solemn prophetic utterances, as follows:--

Verse 1. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: 2. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

The Title.--The translators of our common version of the Bible have given this book the title of "The Revelation of St. John the Divine." In this they contradict the very first words of the book

itself, which declare it to be “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Jesus Christ is the Revelator, not John. John is but the penman employed by Christ to write out this Revelation for the benefit of his church. There is no doubt that the John here mentioned is the person of that name who was the beloved and highly favored one among the twelve apostles. He was evangelist and apostle, and the writer of the Gospel and epistles which bear his name. (See Clarke, Barnes, Kitto, Fond, and others.) To his previous titles he now adds that of prophet; for the Revelation is a prophecy. But the matter of this book is traced back to a still higher source. It is not only the Revelation of Jesus Christ, but it is the Revelation which God gave unto him. It comes, then, first, from the great fountain of all wisdom and truth, God the Father; by him it was communicated to Jesus Christ, the Son; and Christ sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John.

The Character of the Book.--This is expressed in one word, “Revelation.” A revelation is something revealed, something clearly made

known, not something hidden and concealed. Moses, in Deuteronomy 29:29, tells us that “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever.” The very title of the book, then, is a sufficient refutation of the popular opinion of to-day, that this book is among the hidden mysteries of God, and cannot be understood. Were this the case, it should bear some such title as “The Mystery,” or “The Hidden Book;” certainly not that of “The Revelation.”

Its Object.--“To show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.” His servants — who are they? Is there any limit? For whose benefit was the Revelation given? Was it given for any specified persons? for any particular churches? for any special period of time?-- No; it is for all the church in all time, so long as any of the events therein predicted remain to be accomplished. It is for all those who can claim the appellation of “his servants,” wherever or whenever they may live.

But this language brings up again the common

view that the Revelation is not to be understood. God says that it was given to show something to his servants; and yet many of the expounders of his word tell us that it does not show anything, because no man can understand it! as though God would undertake to make known to mankind some important truths, and yet fall into the worse than earthly folly of clothing them in language or in figures which human minds could not comprehend! as though he would command a person to behold some distant object, and then erect an impenetrable barrier between him and the object specified! or as though he would give his servants a light to guide them through the gloom of night, and yet throw over that light a pall so thick and heavy that not a ray of its brightness could penetrate the obscuring folds! How do they dishonor God who thus trifle with his word! No; the Revelation will accomplish the object for which it was given, and “his servants” will learn therefrom “the things which must shortly come to pass,” and which concern their eternal salvation.

His Angel.--Christ sent and made known the

Revelation to John by “his angel.” A particular angel seems here to be brought to view. What angel could appropriately be called Christ’s angel? May we not find an answer to this question in a significant passage in the prophecy of Daniel? In Daniel 10:21, an angel, which was doubtless Gabriel (see Daniel, chapters 9, 10, and 11:1), in making known some important truths to Daniel, said, “There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.” Who Michael is we easily learn. Jude (verse 9) calls him the “archangel.” And Paul tells us that when the Lord descends from heaven, and the dead in Christ are raised, the voice of the archangel shall be heard. 1 Thessalonians 4:16. And whose voice will be heard at that amazing hour when the dead are called to life? The Lord himself replies, “Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice” (John 5:28); and the previous verse shows that the one here referred to, whose voice will then be heard, is the Son of man, or Christ. It is the voice of Christ, then, that calls the dead from their graves. That voice, Paul declares, is the voice of the archangel; and Jude

says that the archangel is called Michael, the very personage mentioned in Daniel, and all referring to Christ. The statement in Daniel, then, is, that the truths to be revealed to Daniel were committed to Christ, and confined exclusively to him, and to an angel whose name was Gabriel. Similar to the work of communicating important truth to the “beloved prophet” is the work of Christ in the Revelation of communicating important truth to the “beloved disciple;” and who, in this work, can be his angel but he who was engaged with him in the former work, that is, the angel Gabriel? This fact will throw light on some points in this book, while it would also seem most appropriate that the same being who was employed to carry messages to the “beloved” prophet of the former dispensation, should perform the same office for him who corresponds to that prophet in the gospel age. (See on chapter 19:10)

The Benediction.--“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy.” Is there so direct and formal a blessing pronounced upon the reading and observance of any other

portion of the word of God? What encouragement, then, have we for its study! And shall we say that it cannot be understood? Is a blessing offered for the study of a book which it can do us no good to study? Men may assert, with more pertness than piety, that “every age of declension is marked by an increase of commentaries on the Apocalypse,” or that “the study of the Revelation either finds or leaves a man mad;” but God has pronounced his blessing upon it, he has set the seal of his approbation to an earnest study of its marvelous pages; and with such encouragement from such a source, the child of God will be unmoved by a thousand feeble counterblasts from men.

Every fulfillment of prophecy brings its duties; hence there are things in the Revelation to be kept, or performed; practical duties to be entered upon as the result of the accomplishment of the prophecy. A notable instance of this kind may be seen in chapter 14:12, where it is said, “Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

But says John, "The time is at hand,"--another motive offered for the study of this book. It becomes more and more important, as we draw near the great consummation. On this point we offer the impressive thoughts of another: "The importance of studying the Apocalypse increases with the lapse of time. Here are 'things which must shortly come to pass.' Even when John bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw, the long period within which those successive scenes were to be realized was at hand. If proximity then constituted a motive for heeding those contents, how much more does it now! Every revolving century, every closing year, adds to the urgency with which attention is challenged to the concluding portion of Holy Writ. And does not that intensity of devotion to the present, which characterizes our times and our country, enhance the reasonableness of this claim? Never, surely, was there a period when some mighty counteracting power was more needed. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, duly studied, supplies an appropriate corrective influence. Would that all

Christians might, in fullest measure, receive the blessing of ‘them that hear the words of this prophecy, and that keep the things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.’”[1]

The Dedication.--Following the benediction, we have the dedication, in these words:--

Verse 4. John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne; 5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. 6. And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The Churches in Asia.--There were more churches in Asia than seven. We may confine ourselves to that western fraction of Asia known as

Asia Minor, or we may include still less territory than that; for in even that small portion of Asia Minor where were situated the seven churches which are mentioned, and right in their very midst, there were other important churches. Colosse, to the Christians of which place Paul addressed his epistle to the Colossians, was but a slight distance from Laodicea. Miletus was nearer than any of the seven to Patmos, where John had his vision; and it was an important station for the church, as we may judge from the fact that Paul, during one of his stays there, sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus to meet him at that place. Acts 20:17-38. At the same place he also left, in good Christian hands no doubt, Trophimus, his disciple, sick. 2 Timothy 4:20. And Troas, where Paul spent a season with the disciples, and whence, having waited till the Sabbath was past, he started off upon his journey, was not far removed from Pergamos, named among the seven. It becomes, therefore, an interesting question to determine why seven of the churches of Asia Minor were selected as the ones to which the Revelation should be dedicated. Does what is said of the seven churches in chapter 1, and

to them in chapters 2 and 3, have reference solely to the seven literal churches named, describing things only as they then and there existed, and portraying what was before them alone? We cannot so conclude, for the following reasons:--

1. The entire book of Revelation (see chapter 1:3, 11, 19; 22:18, 19) was dedicated to the seven churches. Verse 11. But the book was no more applicable to them than to other Christians in Asia Minor,--those, for instance, who dwelt in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia, addressed in 1 Peter 1:1; or the Christians of Colosse, Troas, and Miletus, in the very midst of the churches named.

2. Only a small portion of the book could have personally concerned the seven churches, or any of the Christians of John's day; for the events it brings to view were mostly so far in the future as to lie beyond the lifetime of the generation then living, or even the time during which those churches would continue; and consequently they could have no personal connection with them.

3. The seven stars which the Son of man held in his right hand (verse 20), are declared to be the angels of the seven churches. The angels of the churches, doubtless all will agree, are the ministers of the churches. Their being held in the right hand of the Son of man denotes the upholding power, guidance, and protection vouchsafed to them. But there were only seven of them in his right hand. And are there only seven thus cared for by the great Master of assemblies? May not, rather, all the true ministers of the whole gospel age derive from this representation the consolation of knowing that they are upheld and guided by the right hand of the great Head of the church? Such would seem to be the only consistent conclusion.

4. Again, John, looking into the Christian dispensation, saw only seven candlesticks, representing seven churches, in the midst of which stood the Son of man. The position of the Son of man in their midst must denote his presence with them, his watchcare over them, and his searching scrutiny of all their works. But does he thus take cognizance of only seven individual churches in

this dispensation? May we not rather conclude that this scene represents his position in reference to all his churches during the gospel age? Then why were only seven mentioned? Seven, as used in the Scriptures, is a number denoting fulness and completeness, being, doubtless, a kind of memorial of the great facts of the first seven days of time, which gave the world the still used weekly cycle. Like the seven stars, the seven candlesticks must denote the whole of the things which they represent. The whole gospel church in seven divisions, or periods, must be symbolized by them; and hence the seven churches must be applied in the same manner.

5. Why, then, were the seven particular churches chosen that are mentioned? For the reason, doubtless, that in the names of these churches, according to the definitions of the words, are brought out the religious features of those periods of the gospel age which they respectively were to represent.

For these reasons, “the seven churches” are

doubtless to be understood to mean not merely the seven literal churches of Asia which went by the names mentioned, but seven periods of the Christian church, from the days of the apostles to the close of probation. (See on chapter 2, verse 1)

The Source of Blessing.--“From him which is, and which was, and which is to come,” or is to be,- -an expression which signifies complete eternity, past and future, and can be applicable to God the Father only. This language, we believe, is never applied to Christ. He is spoken of as another person, in distinction from the being thus described.

The Seven Spirits.--This expression probably has no reference to angels, but to the Spirit of God. It is one of the sources from which grace and peace are invoked for the church. On the interesting subject of the seven spirits, Thompson remarks: “That is, from the Holy Spirit, denominated ‘the seven spirits,’ because seven is a sacred and perfect number; not thus named as denoting interior plurality, but the fulness and perfection of his gifts

and operations.” Barnes says, “The number seven, therefore, may have been given by the Holy Spirit with reference to the diversity or the fulness of his operations on the souls of men, and to his manifold agency in the affairs of the world, as further developed in this book.” Bloomfield gives this as the general interpretation.

His Throne.--The throne of God the Father; for Christ has not yet taken his own throne. The seven spirits being before the throne “may be intended to designate the fact that the Divine Spirit is ever ready to be sent forth, in accordance with a common representation in the Scriptures, to accomplish important purposes in human affairs.”

And from Jesus Christ.--Then Christ is not the person who, in the verse before, is designated as “him which is, and which was, and which is to come.” Some of the chief characteristics which pertain to Christ are here mentioned. He is,--

The Faithful Witness.--Whatever he bears witness to is true. Whatever he promises, he will

surely fulfil.

The First Begotten of the Dead.--This expression is parallel to 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; Hebrews 1:6; Romans 8:29; and Colossians 1:15, 18, where we find such expressions applied to Christ as “the first-fruits of them that slept,” “the first-born among many brethren,” “the firstborn of every creature,” and “the first-born from the dead.” But these expressions do not necessarily denote that he was the first in point of time to be raised from the dead; for others were raised before him. That would be a very unimportant point; but he was the chief and central figure of all who have come up from the grave; for it was by virtue of Christ’s coming, work, and resurrection, that any were raised before his time. In the purpose of God, he was the first in point of time as well as in importance; for it was not till after the purpose of Christ’s triumph over the grave was formed in the mind of God, who calleth those things that be not as though they were (Romans 4:17), that any were released from the power of death, by virtue of that great fact which was in due time to be

accomplished. Christ is therefore called the “first-begotten of the dead” (chapter 1:5), the “first-fruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20), the “first-born among many brethren” (Romans 8:29), and “the first-born from the dead.” Colossians 1:18. In Acts 26:23 he is spoken of as “the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people,” or the first who by rising from the dead should show light unto the people.[2]

The Prince of the Kings of the Earth.--Christ is Prince of earthly kings in a certain sense now. Paul informs us, in Ephesians 1:20, 21, that he has been set at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” The highest names named in this world, are the princes, kings, emperors, and potentates of earth. But Christ is placed far above them. He is seated with his Father upon the throne of universal dominion (chapter 3:21), and ranks equally with him in the overruling and controlling of the affairs of all the nations of the earth.

In a more particular sense, Christ is to be Prince of the kings of the earth when he takes his own throne, and the kingdoms of this world become the “kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,” when they are given by the Father into his hands, and he comes forth bearing upon his vesture the title of “King of kings and Lord of lords,” to dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel. (Chapter 19:16; 2:27; Psalms 2:8, 9)

Unto Him that Loved Us.--We have thought that earthly friends loved us,--a father, a mother, brothers and sisters, or bosom friends,--but we see that no love is worthy of the name compared with the love of Christ for us. And the following sentence adds intensity of meaning to the previous words: “And washed us from our sins in his own blood.” What love is this! “Greater love,” says the apostle, “hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” But Christ has commended his love to us, in that he died for us “while we were yet sinners.” But more than this--“Hath made us kings and priests unto God and his

Father.” From being leprous with sin, we are made clean in his sight; from being enemies, we are not only made friends, but raised to positions of honor and dignity. This cleansing, and this kingly and priestly exaltation--to what state do they pertain? to the present or the future?--Chiefly to the future; for it is then only that we shall enjoy these blessings in the highest degree. Then, after the atonement has been accomplished, we are absolutely free from our sins; before that time they are pardoned only on condition, and blotted out only by anticipation. But when the saints are permitted to sit with Christ on his throne, according to the promise to the victorious Laodiceans, when they take the kingdom under the whole heaven and reign forever and ever, they will be kings in a sense that they never can be in this present state. Yet enough is true of our present condition to make this cheering language appropriate in the Christian’s present song of joy; for here we are permitted to say that we have redemption through his blood, though that redemption is not yet given, and that we have eternal life, though that life is still in the hands of the Son, to be brought unto us at his appearing; and

it is still true, as it was in the days of John and Peter, that God designs his people in this world to be unto him a chosen generation, a royal (kingly) priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people. (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 3:21; Daniel 7:18, 27) No wonder the loving and beloved disciple ascribed to this Being who has done so much for us, glory and dominion, forever and ever. And let all the church join in this most fitting ascription to their greatest benefactor and dearest friend.

Verse 7. Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

He Cometh with Clouds.--Here John carries us forward to the second advent of Christ in glory, the climax and crowning event of his intervention in behalf of this fallen world. Once he came in weakness, now he comes in power; Once in humility, now in glory. He comes in clouds, in like manner as he ascended. (Acts 1:9, 11)

His Coming Visible.--“Every eye shall see him;” that is, all who are alive at the time of his coming. We know of no personal coming of Christ that shall be as the stillness of midnight, or take place only in the desert or the secret chamber. He comes not as a thief in the sense of stealing in stealthily and quietly upon the world, and purloining goods to which he has no right. But he comes to take to himself his dearest treasure, his sleeping and living saints, whom he has purchased with his own precious blood; whom he has wrested from the power of death in fair and open conflict; and for whom his coming will be no less open and triumphant too. It will be with the brilliancy and splendor of the lightning as it shines from the east to the west. Matthew 24:27. It will be with a sound of a trumpet that shall pierce to earth’s lowest depths, and with a mighty voice that shall wake the sainted sleepers from their dusty beds. Matthew 24:31, margin; 1 Thessalonians 4:16. He will come upon the wicked as a thief, only because they persistently shut their eyes to the tokens of his approach, and will not believe the declarations of his word that he is at the door. To represent two

comings, a private and a public one, in connection with the second advent, as some do, is wholly unwarranted in the Scriptures.

And They also which Pierced Him.--They also (in addition to the “every eye,” before mentioned) who were chiefly concerned in the tragedy of his death; they shall behold him returning to earth in triumph and glory. But how is this? They are not now living, and how, then, shall they behold him when he comes? Answer: By a resurrection from the dead; for this is the only possible avenue to life to those who have once been laid in the grave. But how is it that these wicked persons come up at this time? for the general resurrection of the wicked does not take place till a thousand years after the second advent. Chapter 20:1-6. On this point Daniel informs us. He says (chapter 12:1, 2):--

“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be

delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

Here a partial resurrection is brought to view, or a resurrection of a certain class of each, righteous and wicked, before the general resurrection of either class. Many, not all, that sleep shall awake. Some of the righteous, not all of them, to everlasting life, and some of the wicked, not all of them, to shame and everlasting contempt. And this resurrection transpires in connection with the great time of trouble such as never was, which just precedes the coming of the Lord. May not “they also which pierced him,” be among those who then come up to shame and everlasting contempt? What could be more appropriate, so far as human minds can judge, than that those who took part in the scene of our Lord’s greatest humiliation, and other special leaders in crime against him, should be raised to behold his terrible majesty, as he comes forth triumphantly, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God,

and obey not his gospel? (See Daniel 12:2)

The Churches Response.--“Even so, Amen.” Though this coming of Christ is to the wicked a scene of terror and destruction, it is to the righteous a scene of joy and triumph. “When the world’s distress comes, then the saints’ rest comes.” That coming which is with flaming fire, and for the purpose of taking vengeance on the wicked, is to recompense rest to all them that believe. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10) Every friend and lover of Christ will hail every declaration and every token of his return as glad tidings of great joy.

Verse 8. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Here another speaker is introduced. Previous to this, John has been the speaker. But this verse has no connection with what precedes nor with what follows. Who it is who here speaks must be determined, therefore, by the terms used. Here we

again have the expression, “Which is, and which was, and which is to come,” which has already been noticed as referring exclusively to God. But it may be asked, Does not the word Lord denote that it was Christ? On this point Barnes has the following note: “Many MSS. instead of ‘Lord,’ read ‘God,’ and this reading is adopted by Griesbach, Tittman, and Hahn, and is now regarded as the correct reading.” Bloomfield supplies the word God, and marks the words “the beginning and the ending” as an interpolation. Thus appropriately closes the first principal division of this chapter, with a revelation of himself by the great God as a being of an eternity of existence, past and future, and of almighty power, and hence able to perform all his threatenings and his promises, which he has given us in this book.

Verse 9. I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle, that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The subject here changes, John introducing the place and the circumstances under which the Revelation was given. He first sets himself forth as a brother of the universal church, and their companion in the tribulations incident to the Christian profession in this life.

And in the Kingdom.--These words have been the occasion of no little controversy. Does John really mean to say that Christians in the present state are in the kingdom of Christ, or in other words, that in his day Christ's kingdom had already been set up? If this language has any reference to the present state, it must be in a very limited and accommodated sense. Those who take the ground that it has its application here, usually refer to 1 Peter 2:9 to prove the existence of a kingdom in the present state, and to show its nature. But, as was remarked on verse 6, the literal reign of the saints is yet future. It is through much tribulation that we are to enter into the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22. But when the kingdom is entered, the tribulation is done. The tribulation and the kingdom do not exist contemporaneously. Murdock's translation of the

Syriac of this verse omits the word kingdom, and reads as follows: “I John, your brother, and partaker with you in the affliction and suffering that are in Jesus the Messiah.” Wakefield translates: “I John, your brother, and sharer with you in enduring the affliction of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.” Bloomfield says that by the words tribulation and patience “are denoted afflictions and troubles to be endured for the sake, and in the cause of Christ; and βασιλεία [kingdom] intimates that he is to be partaker with them in the kingdom prepared for them.” He says that “the best comment on this passage is 2 Timothy 2:12,” which reads: “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” From all which we may safely conclude that though there is a kingdom of grace in the present state, the kingdom to which John alluded is the future kingdom of glory, and the suffering and patience are preparatory to its enjoyment.

The Place.--The isle that is called Patmos,--a small, barren island off the west coast of Asia Minor, between the island of Icaria and the promontory of Miletus, where in John’s day was

located the nearest Christian church. It is about eight miles in length, one in breadth, and eighteen in circumference. Its present name is Patino or Patmosa. The coast is high, and consists of a succession of capes, which form many ports. The only one now in use is a deep bay sheltered by high mountains on every side but one, where it is protected by a projecting cape. The town attached to this port is situated upon a high, rocky mountain rising immediately from the sea, and is the only inhabited site of the island. About half way up the mountain on which this town is built, there is shown a natural grotto in the rock, where tradition will have it that John had his vision and wrote the Revelation. On account of the stern and desolate character of this island, it was used, under the Roman empire, as a place of banishment, which accounts for the exile of John thither. The banishment of the apostle took place about the year A. D. 94, as is generally supposed, under the emperor Domitian; and from this fact the date assigned to the writing of the Revelation is A. D. 95 or 96.

The Cause of Banishment.--“For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” This was John’s high crime and misdemeanor. The tyrant Domitian, who was then invested with the imperial purple of Rome, more eminent for his vices than even for his civil position, quailed before this aged but dauntless apostle. He dared not permit the promulgation of his pure gospel within the bounds of his kingdom. He exiled him to lonely Patmos, where, if anywhere this side of death, he might be said to be out of the world. Having confined him to that barren spot, and to the cruel labor of the mines, the emperor doubtless thought that this preacher of righteousness was finally disposed of, and that the world would hear no more of him. So, doubtless, thought the persecutors of John Bunyan when they had shut him up in Bedford jail. But when man thinks he has buried the truth in eternal oblivion, the Lord gives it a resurrection in tenfold glory and power. From Bunyan’s dark and narrow cell there blazed forth a spiritual light, which, next to the Bible itself, has built up the interests of the gospel; and from the barren Isle of Patmos, where Domitian thought he

had forever extinguished at least one torch of truth, there arose the most magnificent revelation of all the sacred canon, to shed its divine luster over the whole Christian world till the end of time. And how many will revere the name of the beloved disciple, and hang with delight upon his enrapturing visions of heavenly glory, who will never learn the name of the monster who caused his banishment. Verily, those words of the Scriptures are sometimes applicable, even to the present life, which declare that “the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance,” but “the name of the wicked shall rot.”

Verse 10. I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

In the Spirit.--Exiled though John was from all of like faith, and almost from the world, he was not exiled from God, nor from Christ, nor from the Holy Spirit, nor from angels. He still had communion with his divine Lord. And the expression “in the Spirit” seems to denote the

highest state of spiritual elevation into which a person can be brought by the Spirit of God. It marked the commencement of his vision.

On the Lord's Day.--What day is intended by this designation? On this question four different positions are taken by different classes. 1. One class hold that the expression "the Lord's day" covers the whole gospel dispensation, and does not mean any particular twenty-four-hour day. 2. Another class hold that the Lord's day is the day of Judgment, the future "day of the Lord," so often brought to view in the Scriptures. 3. The third view, and the one perhaps the most prevalent, is that the expression refers to the first day of the week. 4. Still another class hold that it means the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord.

1. To the first of these positions it is sufficient to reply that the book of Revelation is dated by the writer, John, in the Isle of Patmos, and upon the Lord's day. The writer, the place where it was written, and the day upon which it was dated, have each a real existence, and not merely a symbolical

or mystical one. But if we say that the day means the gospel dispensation, we give it a symbolical or mystical meaning, which is not admissible. Besides, this position involves the absurdity of making John say, sixty-five years after the death of Christ, that the vision which he records was seen by him in the gospel dispensation, as though any Christian could possibly be ignorant of that fact!

2. The second position, that it is the day of Judgment, cannot be correct; for while John might have had a vision concerning the day of Judgment, he could not have had one on that day when it is yet future. The word translated on is (en), and is defined by Robinson when relating to time, as follows: "Time when; a definite point or period, in, during, on, at, which anything takes place." It never means about or concerning. Hence they who refer it to the Judgment day either contradict the language used, making it mean concerning instead of on, or they make John state a strange falsehood, by saying that he had a vision upon the Isle of Patmos, nearly eighteen hundred years ago, on the day of Judgment which is yet future!

3. The third view is that by “Lord’s day” is meant the first day of the week, a view by far the most generally entertained. On this we inquire for the proof. What evidence have we for this assertion? The text itself does not define the term Lord’s day; hence if it means the first day of the week we must look elsewhere in the Bible for the proof that that day of the week is ever so designated. The only other inspired writers who speak of the first day at all, are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul; and they speak of it simply as “the first day of the week.” They never speak of it in a manner to distinguish it above any other of the six working days. And this is the more remarkable, viewed from the popular standpoint, as three of them speak of it at the very time when it is said to have become the Lord’s day by the resurrection of the Lord upon it, and two of them mention it some thirty years after that event.

If it is said that the term “Lord’s day” was the usual term for the first day of the week in John’s day, we ask, Where is the proof of this? It cannot

be found. But we have proof of just the contrary. (See History of the Sabbath, by J. N. Andrews, published at the Review Office, Battle Creek, Mich.) If this was the universal designation of the first day at the time the Revelation was written, the same writer would most assuredly call it so in all his subsequent writings. But John wrote the Gospel after he wrote the Revelation, and yet in that Gospel he calls the first day of the week, not Lord's day, but simply "first day of the week." For proof that the Gospel was written at a period subsequent to the Revelation, the reader is referred to such standard authorities as the Religious Encyclopedia, Barnes's Notes (Gospels), Bible Dictionaries, Cottage Bible, Domestic Bible, Mine Explored, Union Bible Dictionary, Comprehensive Bible, Paragraph Bible, Bloomfield, Dr. Hales, Horne, Nevins, and Olshausen.

And what still further disproves the claim here set up in behalf of the first day, is the fact that neither the Father nor the Son has ever claimed the first day as his own in any higher sense than he has each or any of the other laboring days. Neither of

them has ever placed any blessing upon it, or attached any sanctity to it. If it was to be called the Lord's day from the fact of Christ's resurrection upon it, Inspiration would doubtless have somewhere so informed us. But there are other events equally essential to the plan of salvation, as, for instance, the crucifixion and the ascension; and in the absence of all instruction upon the point, why not call the day upon which either of these occurred, the Lord's day, as well as the day upon which he rose from the dead?

4. The three positions already examined having been disproved, the fourth--that by Lord's day is meant the Sabbath of the Lord--now demands attention. And this of itself is susceptible of the clearest proof. 1. When God gave to man in the beginning six days of the week for labor, he expressly reserved the seventh day to himself, placed his blessing upon it, and claimed it as his holy day. 2. Moses told Israel in the wilderness of Sin on the sixth day of the week, "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." We come to Sinai, where the great Lawgiver

proclaimed his moral precepts in awful grandeur; and in that supreme code he thus lays claim to his hallowed day: “The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: ... for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.” By the prophet Isaiah, about eight hundred years later, God spoke as follows: “If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, ... then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,” etc. We come down to New-Testament times, and He who is one with the Father declares expressly, “The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath.” Can any man deny that that day is the Lord’s day, of which he has emphatically declared that he is the Lord? Thus we see that whether it be the Father or the Son whose title is involved, no other day can be called the Lord’s day but the Sabbath of the great Creator.

One more thought, and we leave this point. There is in this dispensation one day distinguished above the other days of the week as the Lord’s day.

How completely does this great fact disprove the claim put forth by some that there is no Sabbath in this dispensation, but that all days are alike. And by calling it the Lord's day, the apostle has given us, near the close of the first century, apostolic sanction for the observance of the only day which can be called the Lord's day, which is the seventh day of the week.[3]

Verse 11. Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

On this verse Dr. A. Clarke remarks, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and] — this whole clause is wanting in ABC; thirty-one others; some editions; the Syriac, Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Arethas, Andreas, and Primasius. Griesbach has left it out of the text." He also states that the phrase "in Asia" is

wanting in the principal MSS. and versions, and that Griesbach omits this too from the text. Bloomfield also marks the clause, “I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and”--as without doubt an interpolation, and also the words “in Asia.” It would then read, “Saying, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches; unto Ephesus,” etc.[4]

Verse 12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; 13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. 14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; 15. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. 16. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. 17. And when I saw him, I fell at his

feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

I turned to see the voice; that is, the person from whom the voice came.

Seven Golden Candlesticks.--These cannot be the antitype of the golden candlestick of the ancient typical temple service; for that was but one candlestick with seven branches. That is ever spoken of in the singular number. But here are seven; and these are more properly "lamp-stands" than simply candlesticks, stands upon which lamps are set to give light in the room. And they bear no resemblance to the ancient candlestick; on the contrary, the stands are so distinct, and so far separated from one another, that the Son of man is seen walking about in the midst of them.

The Son of Man.--The central and all-attractive figure of the scene now opened before John's

vision is the majestic form of one like the Son of man, representing Christ. The description here given of him, with his flowing robe, his hair white, not with age, but with the brightness of heavenly glory, his flaming eyes, his feet glowing like molten brass, and his voice as the sound of many waters, cannot be excelled for grandeur and sublimity. Overcome by the presence of this august Being, and perhaps under a keen sense of all human unworthiness, John fell at his feet as dead; but a comforting hand is laid upon him, and a voice of sweet assurance tells him to fear not. It is equally the privilege of Christians to-day to feel the same hand laid upon them to strengthen and comfort them in hours of trial and affliction, and to hear the same voice saying unto them, "Fear not."

But the most cheering assurance in all these words of consolation is the declaration of this exalted one who is alive forevermore, that he is the arbiter of death and the grave. "I have," he says, "the keys of hell (the grave) and death." Death is a conquered tyrant. He may ply his gloomy labors age after age, gathering to the grave the precious of

the earth, and gloat for a season over his apparent triumph: but he is performing a fruitless task; for the key to his dark prison-house has been wrenched from his grasp, and is now held in the hands of a mightier than he. He is compelled to deposit his trophies in a region over which another has absolute control; and this one is the unchanging Friend and the pledged Redeemer of his people. Then grieve not for the righteous dead; they are in safe keeping. An enemy for a while takes them away; but a friend holds the key to the place of their temporary confinement.

Verse 19. Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

A more definite command is given in this verse to John to write the entire Revelation, which would relate chiefly to things which were then in the future. In some few instances, events then in the past or then transpiring were referred to; but these references were simply for the purpose of introducing events to be fulfilled after that time,

and so that no link in the chain might be lacking.

Verse 20. The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

To represent the Son of man as holding in his hand only the ministers of seven literal churches in Asia Minor, and walking in the midst of only those seven churches, would be to reduce the sublime representations and declarations of this and following chapters to comparative insignificance. The providential care and presence of the Lord are with, not a specified number of churches only, but all his people; not in the days of John merely, but through all time. “Lo! I am with you always,” said he to his disciples, “even unto the end of the world.” (See remarks on verse 4.)

Notes:

1. Thompson's Patmos, pp. 28, 29.
2. See the Greek of this passage, and Bloomfield's note thereon; also Here and Hereafter, chapter 17.
3. An additional thought may be added to what is said about the claim that the first day of the week is meant by the term "Lord's day" in verse 10. If, when Christ said, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day" (Matthew 12:8), he had said instead, "The Son of man is Lord of the first day of the week," would not that now be set forth as conclusive proof that Sunday is the Lord's day?-- Certainly, and with good reason. Then it ought to be allowed to have the same weight for the seventh day, in reference to which it was spoken.
4. See translations of Whiting, Wesley, American Bible Union, and others. Compare remarks on verse 4.)

Chapter 2

The Seven Churches

Having, in the first chapter, mapped out the subject by a general reference to the seven churches, represented by the seven candlesticks, and to the ministry of the churches, represented by the seven stars, John now takes up each church particularly, and writes the message designed for it, addressing the epistle in every case to the angel, or pastors, of the church.

Verse 1. Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; 2. I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: 3. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. 4. Nevertheless I

have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. 5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate. 7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The Church of Ephesus.--Some reasons why the seven churches, or more properly the messages to them, should be regarded as prophetic, having their application to seven distinct periods covering the Christian age, have been given in the remarks on chapter 1:4. It may here be added that this view is neither new nor local. Benson quotes Bishop Newton as saying, "Many contend, and among them such learned men as More and Vitringa, that the seven epistles are prophetic of so many successive periods, or states, of the church, from

the beginning to the conclusion of all.”

Scott says: “Many expositors have imagined that these epistles to the seven churches were mystical prophecies of seven distinct periods, into which the whole term, from the apostles’ days to the end of the world, would be divided.”

Although Newton and Scott do not themselves hold this view, their testimony is good as showing that such has been the view of many expositors. Matthew Henry says:--

“An opinion has been held by some commentators of note, which may be given in the words of Vitringa: ‘That under this emblematical representation of the seven churches of Asia, the Holy Spirit has delineated seven different states of the Christian church, which would appear in succession, extending to the coming of our Lord and the consummation of all things; that this is given in descriptions taken from the names, states, and conditions of these churches, so that they might behold themselves, and learn both their good

qualities and their defects, and what admonitions and exhortations were suitable for them.’ Vitringa has given a summary of the arguments which may be alleged in favor of this interpretation. Some of them are ingenious, but they are not now considered sufficient to support such a theory. Gill is one of the principal of the English commentators who adopt this view, that ‘they are prophetic of the churches of Christ in the several periods of time until he appears again.’”

It appears from the authors above cited, that what has led commentators of more modern times to discard the view of the prophetic nature of the messages to the seven churches, is the comparatively recent and unscriptural doctrine of the temporal millennium. The last state of the church, as described in chapter 3:15-17, was deemed to be incompatible with the glorious state of things which would exist here on this earth for a thousand years, with all the world converted to God. Hence in this case, as in many others, the more Scriptural view is made to yield to the more pleasing. The hearts of men, as in ancient times,

still love smooth things, and their ears are ever favorably open to those who will prophesy peace.

The first church named is Ephesus. According to the application here made, this would cover the first, or apostolic age of the church. The definition of the word Ephesus, is desirable, which may well be taken as a good descriptive term of the character and condition of the church in its first state. Those early Christians had received the doctrine of Christ in its purity. They enjoyed the benefits and blessings of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They were noted for works, labor, and patience. In faithfulness to the pure principles taught by Christ, they could not bear those that were evil, and they tried false apostles, searched out their true characters, and found them liars. That this work was specially done by the literal and particular church at Ephesus more than by other churches of that time, we have no evidence; there is nothing said about it by Paul in the epistle he wrote to that church; but it was done by the Christian church as a whole, in that age, and was a most appropriate work at that time. (See Acts 15; 2 Corinthians 11:13.)

The Angel of the Church.--The angel of a church must denote a messenger, or minister, of that church; and as these churches each cover a period of time, the angel of each church must denote the ministry, or all the true ministers of Christ during the period covered by that church. The different messages, though addressed to the ministers, cannot be understood to be applicable to them alone; but they are appropriately addressed to the church through them.

The Cause of Complaint.--“I have somewhat against thee,” says Christ, “because thou hast left thy first love.” “Not less worthy of warning than departure from fundamental doctrine or from Scriptural morality, is the leaving of first love. The charge here is not that of falling from grace, nor that love is extinguished, but diminished. No zeal, no suffering can atone for the want of first love.”--Thompson. The time never should come in a Christian’s experience, when, if he were asked to mention the period of his greatest love to Christ, he would not say, The present moment. But if such a

time does come, then should he remember from whence he is fallen, meditate upon it, take time for it, carefully call up the state of his former acceptance with God, and then hasten to repent, and retrace his steps to that desirable position. Love, like faith, is manifested by works; and first love, when it is attained, will always bring first works.

The Threatening.--“I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.” The coming here mentioned must be a figurative coming, signifying a visitation of judgment, inasmuch as it is conditional. The removing of the candlestick would denote the taking away from them of the light and privileges of the gospel, and committing them to other hands, unless they should better fulfill the responsibilities of the trust committed to them. But it may be asked on the view that these messages are prophetic, if the candlestick would not be removed anyway, whether they repented or not, as that church was succeeded by the next, to occupy the next period, and if this is not an objection

against regarding these churches as prophetic. Answer: The expiration of the period covered by any church is not the removal of the candlestick of that church. The removal of their candlestick would be taking away from them privileges which they might and should longer enjoy. It would be the rejection of them on the part of Christ as his representatives, to bear the light of his truth and gospel before the world. And this threatening would be just as applicable to individuals as to the church as a body. How many who professed Christianity during that period thus came short and were rejected, we know not; doubtless many. And thus things would go on, some remaining steadfast, some backsliding and becoming no longer light-bearers in the world, new converts meanwhile filling up the vacancies made by death and apostasy, until the church reaches a new era in her experience, marked off as another period in her history, and covered by another message.

The Nicolaitanes.--How ready is Christ to commend his people for whatever good qualities they may possess! If there is anything of which he

approves, he mentions that first. And in this message to the church of Ephesus, having first mentioned their commendable traits and then their failures, as if unwilling to pass by any of their good qualities he mentions this, that they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which he also hated. In verse 15 the doctrines of the same characters are condemned. It appears that they were a class of persons whose deeds and doctrines were alike abominable in the sight of Heaven. Their origin is involved in some doubt. Some say that they sprang from Nicolas of Antioch, one of the seven deacons (Acts 6:5); some, that they only attribute their origin to him to gain the prestige of his name; and others, that the sect took its name from one Nicolas of a later date, which is probably the nearest correct. Concerning their doctrines and practices, there seems to be a general agreement that they held to a community of wives, regarded adultery and fornication as things indifferent, and permitted the eating of things offered to idols.[1]

The Summons to Attention.--“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the

churches.” A solemn manner of calling universal attention to that which is of general and most momentous importance. The same language is used to each of the seven churches. Christ, when upon earth made use of the same form of speech in calling the attention of the people to the most important of his teachings. He used it in reference to the mission of John (Matthew 11:15), the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:9), and the parable of the tares, setting forth the end of the world. Verse 43. It is also used in relation to an important prophetic fulfillment in Revelation 13:9.

The Promise to the Victor.--To the overcomer it is promised that he shall eat of the tree of life that grows in the midst of the paradise, or garden, of God. Where is this paradise? Answer: In the third heaven. Paul writes, in 2 Corinthians 12:2, that he knew a man (referring to himself) caught up to the third heaven. In verse 4 he calls the same place “paradise,” leaving only one conclusion to be drawn, which is, that paradise is in the third heaven. In this paradise, it seems, is the tree of life. There is but one tree of life brought to view in the

Bible. It is mentioned six times, three times in Genesis, and three times in the Revelation; but it is used every time with the definite article the. It is the tree of life in the first book of the Bible, the tree of life in the last; the tree of life in the “paradise” (Septuagint) in Eden at the beginning, and the tree of life in the paradise of which John now speaks, in heaven above. But if there is but one tree, and that was at first upon earth, it may be asked how it has now come to be in heaven. And the answer would be that it must have been taken up, or translated, to the paradise above. There is no possible way that the same identical body which is situated in one place can be located in another, but by being transported bodily thither. And that the tree of life and paradise have been removed from earth to heaven, besides the necessary inference from this argument, there is very good reason to believe.

In 2 Esdras 7:26 occurs this language: “Behold, the time shall come, that these tokens which I have told thee shall come to pass, and the bride shall appear, and she coming forth shall be seen that now is withdrawn from the earth.” There is an

evident allusion here to the “bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9), which is the “holy city, New Jerusalem” (verse 10; Galatians 4:26), in which is the tree of life (Revelation 22:2), which is now “withdrawn from the earth,” but which will in due time appear, and be located among men. (Revelation 21:2, 3)

The following paragraph on this point we quote from Kurtz’s Sacred History, p. 50:--

“The act of God in appointing the cherubim ‘to keep the way of the tree of life’ (Genesis 3:24), in the garden of Eden, likewise appears not only in an aspect indicating judicial severity, but also in one which conveys a promise full of consolation. The blessed abode from which man is expelled, is neither annihilated nor even abandoned to desolation and ruin, but withdrawn from the earth and from man, and consigned to the care of the most perfect creatures of God, in order that it may be ultimately restored to man when he is redeemed. Revelation 22:2. The garden, as it existed before God ‘planted,’ or adorned it, came under the curse,

like the remainder of the earth, but the celestial and paradisaical addition was exempted, and entrusted to the cherubim. The true paradise is now translated to the invisible world. At least a symbolical copy of it, established in the holy of holies in the tabernacle, was granted to the people of Israel after the pattern which Moses saw in the mount (Exodus 25:9, 40); and the original itself, as the renewed habitation of redeemed man, will hereafter descend to the earth. (Revelation 21:10)

To the overcomer, then, is promised a restoration to more than Adam lost; not to the overcomers of that state of the church merely, but to all overcomers of every age; for in the great rewards of Heaven there are no restrictions. Reader, strive to be an overcomer; for he who gains access to the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, shall die no more.

The time covered by this first church, may be considered the period from the resurrection of Christ, to the close of the first century, or to the death of the last of the apostles.

Verse 8. And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive; 9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. 10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. 11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

It will be noticed that the Lord introduces himself to each church by mentioning some of his characteristics which show him to be peculiarly fitted to bear to them the testimony which he utters. To the Smyrnian church, about to pass through the fiery ordeal of persecution, he reveals himself as one who was dead, but is now alive. If they should

be called to seal their testimony with their blood, they were to remember that the eyes of One were upon them who had shared the same fate, but had triumphed over death, and was able to bring them up again from a martyr's grave.

Poverty and Riches.--“I know thy poverty,” says Christ to them, “but thou art rich.” Strange paradox this may seem at first. But who are the truly rich in this world?--Those who are “rich in faith” and “heirs of the kingdom.” The wealth of this world, for which men so eagerly strive, and so often barter away present happiness and future endless life, is “coin not current in heaven.” A certain writer has forcibly remarked, “There is many a rich poor man, and many a poor rich man.”

Say They Are Jews, and Are Not.--That the term Jew is not here used in a literal sense, is very evident. It denotes some character which was approved by the gospel standard. Paul's language will make this point plain. He says (Romans 2:28, 29): “For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the

flesh; but he is a Jew [in the true Christian sense] which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Again he says (chapter 9:6, 7): “For they are not all Israel which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.” In Galatians 3:28, 29, Paul further tells us that in Christ there are no such outward distinctions as Jew or Greek; but if we are Christ’s, then are we Abraham’s seed (in the true sense), and heirs according to the promise. To say, as some do, that the term Jew is never applied to Christians, is to contradict all these inspired declarations of Paul’s, and the testimony of the faithful and true Witness to the Smyrnian church. Some were hypocritically pretending to be Jews in this Christian sense, when they possessed nothing of the requisite character. Such were of the synagogue of Satan.

Tribulation Ten Days.--As this message is prophetic, the time mentioned in it must also be regarded as prophetic, and would denote ten years. And it is a noticeable fact that the last and most

bloody of the ten persecutions continued just ten years, under Diocletian, from A. D. 302 to A. D. 312.[2] It would be difficult to make an application of this language on the ground that these messages are not prophetic; for in that case only ten literal days could be meant; and it would not seem probable that a persecution of only ten days, on only a single church, would be made a matter of prophecy; and no mention of any such case of limited persecution can be found. Again, apply this persecution to any of the notable persecutions of that period, and how could it be spoken of as the fate of one church alone? All the churches suffered in them; and where, then, would be the propriety of singling out one, to the exclusion of the rest, as alone involved in such a calamity?

Faithful unto Death.--Some have endeavored to base a criticism on the use of the word unto, instead of until, as though the idea of time was not involved. But the original word, rendered unto, signifies, primarily, until. No argument, however, can be drawn from this for consciousness in death. The vital point for such an argument is still

lacking; for it is not affirmed that the crown of life is bestowed immediately at death. We must consequently look to other scriptures to learn when the crown of life is given; and other scriptures very fully inform us. Paul declares that this crown is to be given at the day of Christ's appearing (2 Timothy 4:8); at the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:51-54); when the Lord shall himself descend from heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17); when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, says Peter (1 Pet. 5:4); at the resurrection of the just, says Christ (Luke 14:14); and when he shall return to take his people to the mansions prepared for them, that they may ever be with him. John 14:3. "Be thou faithful until death;" and having been thus faithful, when the time comes that the saints of God are rewarded, you shall receive a crown of life.

The Overcomer's Reward.--"He shall not be hurt of the second death." Is not the language Christ here uses a good comment upon what he taught his disciples, when he said, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to

destroy both soul and body in hell”? Matthew 10:28. The Smyrnians might be put to death here; but the future life, which was to be given them, man could not take away, and God would not; hence they were to fear not those who could kill the body,--to “fear none of the things which they should suffer;” for their eternal existence was sure.

Smyrna signifies myrrh, fit appellation for the church of God while passing through the fiery furnace of persecution, and proving herself a “sweet-smelling savor” unto him. But we soon reach the days of Constantine, when the church presents a new phase, rendering a far different name and another message applicable to her history.

According to the foregoing application, the date of the Smyrnian church would be A. D. 100-323.

Verse 12. And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; 13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where

Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. 15. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. 16. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. 17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Against the church of Smyrna, which has just been considered, there was no word of condemnation uttered. Persecution is ever calculated to keep the church pure, and incite its

members to piety and godliness. But we now reach a period when influences began to work through which errors and evils were likely to creep into the church.

The word Pergamos signifies high, elevation. The period covered by this church may be located from the days of Constantine, or perhaps, rather, from his professed conversion to Christianity, A. D. 323, to the establishment of the papacy, A. D. 538. It was a period in which the true servants of God had to struggle against a spirit of worldly policy, pride, and popularity among the professed followers of Christ, and against the virulent workings of the mystery of iniquity, which finally resulted in the full development of the papal man of sin.

Where Satan's Seat Is.--Christ takes cognizance of the unfavorable situation of his people during this period. The language is not probably designed to denote locality. As to place, Satan works wherever Christians dwell. But surely there are times and seasons when he works with

special power; and the period covered by the church of Pergamos was one of these. During this period, the doctrine of Christ was being corrupted, the mystery of iniquity was working, and Satan was laying the very foundation of that most stupendous system of wickedness, the papacy. Here was the falling away foretold by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2:3.

Antipas.--That a class of persons is referred to by this name, and not an individual, there is good reason to believe; for no authentic information respecting such an individual is now to be found. On this point, William Miller says:--

“It is supposed that Antipas was not an individual, but a class of men who opposed the power of the bishops, or popes, in that day, being a combination of two words, anti, opposed, and papas, father, or pope; and at that time many of them suffered martyrdom in Constantinople and Rome, where the bishops and popes began to exercise the power which soon after brought into subjection the kings of the earth, and trampled on

the rights of the church of Christ. And for myself, I see no reason to reject this explanation of this word Antipas in this text, as the history of those times is perfectly silent respecting such an individual as is here named.”[3]

Watson says, “Ancient ecclesiastical history furnishes no account of this Antipas.” Dr. Clarke mentions a work as extant called the “Acts of Antipas,” but gives us to understand that it is entitled to no credit.

The Cause of Censure.--Disadvantages in situation are no excuse for wrongs in the church. Although this church lived at a time when Satan was especially at work, it was their duty to keep themselves pure from the leaven of his evil doctrines. Hence they were censured for harboring among them those who held the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. (See remarks on the Nicolaitanes, verse 6.) What the doctrine of Balaam was, is here partially revealed. He taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel. (See a full account of his work and its

results in Numbers, chapters 22-25 and 31:13-16.) It appears that Balaam desired to curse Israel for the sake of the rich reward which Balak offered him for so doing. But not being permitted by the Lord to curse them, he resolved to accomplish essentially the same thing, though in a different way. He therefore counseled Balak to seduce them, by means of the females of Moab, to participate in the celebration of the rights of idolatry, and all its licentious accompaniments. The plan succeeded. The abominations of idolatry spread through the camp of Israel, the curse of God was called down upon them by their sins, and there fell by the plague twenty-four thousand persons.

The doctrines complained of in the church of Pergamos were of course similar in their tendency, leading to spiritual idolatry, and an unlawful connection between the church and the world. Out of this spirit was finally produced the union of the civil and ecclesiastical powers, which culminated in the formation of the papacy.

Repent.--By disciplining or expelling those

who hold these pernicious doctrines. Christ declared that if they did not do this, he would take the matter into his own hands, and come unto them (in judgment), and fight against them (those who held these evil doctrines); and the whole church would be held responsible for the wrongs of those heretical ones whom they harbored in their midst.

The Promise.--To the overcomer it is promised that he shall eat of the hidden manna, and receive from his approving Lord a white stone, with a new and precious name engraved thereon. Concerning manna that is "hidden," and a new name that no one is to know but he that receives it, not much in the way of exposition should be required. But there has been much conjecture upon these points, and an allusion to them may be expected. Most commentators apply the manna, white stone, and new name, to spiritual blessings to be enjoyed in this life; but, like all the other promises to the overcomer, this one doubtless refers wholly to the future, and is to be given when the time comes that the saints are to be rewarded. Perhaps the following from the late H. Blunt is as satisfactory as anything

that has ever been written upon these several particulars:--

“It is generally thought by commentators that this refers to an ancient judicial custom of dropping a black stone into an urn when it is intended to condemn, and a white stone when the prisoner is to be acquitted; but this is an act so distinct from that described, ‘I will give thee a white stone,’ that we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers rather to a custom of a very different kind, and not unknown to the classical reader, according with beautiful propriety to the case before us. In primitive times, when traveling was rendered difficult from want of places of public entertainment, hospitality was exercised by private individuals to a very great extent, of which, indeed, we find frequent traces in all history, and in none more than the Old Testament. Persons who partook of this hospitality, and those who practiced it, frequently contracted habits of friendship and regard for each other, and it became a well-established custom among the Greeks and Romans to provide their guests with some particular mark,

which was handed down from father to son, and insured hospitality and kind treatment whenever it was presented. This mark was usually a small stone or pebble, cut in half, upon the halves of which the host and the guest mutually inscribed their names, and then interchanged with each other. The production of this tessera was quite sufficient to insure friendship for themselves or descendants whenever they traveled again in the same direction, while it is evident that these stones required to be privately kept, and the names written upon them carefully concealed, lest others should obtain the privileges instead of the persons for whom they were intended.

“How natural, then, the allusion to this custom in the words of the text, ‘I will give him to eat of the hidden manna!’ and having done this, having made him partake of my hospitality, having recognized him as my guest and friend, I will present him with the white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, save he who receiveth it. I will give him a pledge of my friendship, sacred and inviolable, known only to

himself.”

On the new name, Wesley very appropriately says:--

“Jacob, after his victory, gained the new name of Israel. Wouldst thou know what thy new name will be? The way to this is plain--overcome. Till then, all thy inquiries are vain. Thou wilt then read it on the white stone.”

Verse 18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; 19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. 20. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. 21. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. 23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. 24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. 25. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. 26. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: 27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. 28. And I will give him the morning star. 29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

If the period covered by the Pergamos church has been correctly located, terminating with the

setting up of the papacy, A. D. 538, the most natural division to be assigned to the church of Thyatira would be the time of the continuance of this blasphemous power, through the 1260 years of its supremacy, or from A. D. 538 to A. D. 1798.

Thyatira signifies “sweet savor of labor,” or “sacrifice of contrition.” This would well describe the state of the church of Jesus Christ during the long period of papal triumph and persecution. This age of such dreadful tribulation upon the church as never was (Matthew 24:21), improved the religious condition of believers. Hence they receive for their works, charity, service, faith, and patience, the commendation of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. And works are then again mentioned, as though worthy of a double commendation. And the last were more than the first. There had been an improvement in their condition, a growth in grace, an increase in all these elements of Christianity. This church is the only one that is commended for an improvement in spiritual things. But as in the church of Pergamos unfavorable circumstances were no apology for false doctrines in the church,

so in this church, no amount of labor, charity, service, faith, or patience could compensate for a like sin. A rebuke is therefore given them for suffering in their midst--

That Woman Jezebel.--As in the preceding church Antipas denoted, not an individual, but a class of persons, so, doubtless, Jezebel is here to be understood in the same sense. Watson's Bible Dictionary says, "The name of Jezebel is used proverbially. Revelation 2:20."

"Jezebel is a figurative name, alluding to Ahab's wife, who slew the prophets of the Lord, led her husband into idolatry, and fed the prophets of Baal at her own table. A more striking figure could not have been used to denote the papal abominations. (See 1 Kings, chapters 18, 19, and 21.) It is very evident from history, as well as from this verse, that the church of Christ did suffer some of the papal monks to preach and teach among them. (See the 'History of the Waldenses.')

[4]

The Comprehensive Commentary has the

following remark upon verse 23: “Children are spoken of, which confirms the idea that a sect and its proselytes are meant.” The judgments here threatened against this woman are in harmony with the threatenings in other parts of this book against the Romish Church under the symbol of a corrupt woman, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. (See chapters 17-19) The death which is threatened is doubtless the second death, at the end of the one thousand years of Revelation 20, when the righteous retribution from the Searcher of “the reins and hearts” of all men will be given. And further, the declaration, “I will give unto every one of you according to your works,” is proof that the address to this church looks forward prophetically to the final reward or punishment of all accountable beings.

And All the Churches Shall Know, etc.--It has been argued from this expression that these churches could not denote seven successive periods of the gospel age, but must exist contemporaneously, as otherwise all the churches could not know that Christ was the searcher of the

reins and hearts from seeing his judgments upon Jezebel and her children. But when is it that all the churches are to know this?--It is when these children are punished with death. And if this is at the time when the second death is inflicted upon all the wicked, then, indeed, will "all the churches," as they behold the infliction of the judgment, know that no secret thing, no evil thought or purpose of the heart, has escaped the knowledge of Him, who, with eyes like flames of fire, searches the hearts and reins of men.

I Will Lay upon You None Other Burden.--A respite promised the church, if we rightly apprehend, from the burden so long her portion,--the weight of papal oppression. It cannot be applied to the reception of new truths; for truth is not a burden to any accountable being. But the days of tribulation that came upon that church, were to be shortened for the elect's sake. Matthew 24:22. "They shall be holpen," says the prophet, "with a little help." Daniel 11:34. "And the earth helped the woman," says John. (Revelation 12:16)

Hold Fast till I Come.--These are the words of the “Son of God,” and bring to our view an unconditional coming. To the churches of Ephesus and Pergamos, certain comings were threatened on conditions: “Repent, or else I will come unto thee,” etc., implying visitations of judgment. But here a coming of a different nature altogether is brought to view. It is not a threatening of punishment. It is suspended upon no conditions. It is set before the believer as a matter of hope, and can refer to no other event but the future second advent of the Lord in glory, when the Christian’s trials will cease, and his efforts in the race for life, and his warfare for a crown of righteousness, will be rewarded with everlasting success.

This church brings us down to the time when the more immediate signs of the soon-coming advent began to be fulfilled. In 1780, eighteen years before the close of this period, the predicted signs in the sun and moon were fulfilled. (See chapter 6:12.) And in reference to these signs the Saviour said: “And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads;

for your redemption draweth nigh.” In the history of this church we reach a point when the end is drawing so near that the attention of the people could properly be called more particularly to that event. All along Christ has said to his followers, “Occupy till I come.” Luke 19:13. Now he says, “Hold fast till I come.”

Till the End.--The end of the Christian age. “He that shall endure to the end,” says Christ, “the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13) Is not here a like promise to those who keep Christ’s works, do the things he has enjoined, keep the faith of Jesus? (Chapter 14:12)

Power over the Nations.--In this world the wicked bear rule, and the servants of Christ are of no esteem. But the time is coming when righteousness will be in the ascendancy; when all ungodliness will be seen in its true light, and be at a heavy discount; and when the scepter of power will be in the hands of the people of God. This promise will be explained by the following facts and scriptures: (1) The nations are to be given by

the Father into the hands of Christ, to be ruled with a rod of iron, and dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalms 2:8, 9); (2) Associated with Christ when he thus enters upon his own work of power and judgment, are to be his saints (Revelation 3:21); (3) They are to reign with him in this capacity for one thousand years (chapter 20:4); (4) During this period, the degree of judgment upon wicked men and evil angels is determined (1 Corinthians 6:2, 3); (5) At the end of the one thousand years, they have the honor of sharing with Christ in the execution of the sentence written. (Psalms 149:9)

The Morning Star.--Christ says, in chapter 22:16, that he is himself the morning star. The morning star is the immediate forerunner of the day. What is here called the morning star, is called the day star in 2 Peter 1:19, where it is associated with the dawn of the day. "Until the day dawn, and the day star arise." During the saints' weary night of watching, they have the word of God to shed its needful light upon their path. But when the day star shall arise in their hearts, or the morning star be

given to the overcomers, they will be taken into so close a relationship to Christ that their hearts will be fully illuminated with his Spirit, and they will walk in his light. Then they will no longer need the sure word of prophecy, which now shines as a light in a dark place. Hasten on, O glorious hour, when the light of heaven's bright day shall rise upon the pathway of the little flock, and beams of glory from the eternal world shall gild their banners!

Notes:

1. See Religious Encyclopedia, Clarke, Kitto, and other authorities.
2. See Buck's Theological Dictionary, pp. 332, 333.
3. Miller's Lectures, pp. 138, 139.
4. William Miller, Lectures, p. 142.

Chapter 3

The Seven Churches (continued)

Verse 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee, 4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name

before my Father, and before his angels. 6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

If the dates of the preceding churches have been correctly fixed, the period covered by the church of Sardis must commence about the year 1798.

Sardis signifies “prince or song of joy,” or “that which remains.” We then have before us, as constituting this church, the reformed churches, from the date above named to the great movement which marked another era in the history of the people of God.

The great fault found with this church is that it has a name to live, but is dead. And what a high position, in a worldly point of view, has the nominal church occupied during this period! Look at her high-sounding titles, and her favor with the world. But how have pride and popularity grown apace, until spirituality is destroyed, the line of distinction between the church and the world is

obliterated, and these different popular bodies are churches of Christ only in name!

This church was to hear the proclamation of the doctrine of the second advent, as we learn from verse 3: “If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief.” This implies that the doctrine of the advent would be proclaimed, and the duty of watching be enjoined upon the church. The coming spoken of is unconditional; the manner only in which it would come upon them is conditional. Their not watching would not prevent the coming of the Lord; but by watching they could avoid being overtaken as by a thief. It is only to those who are in this condition that the day of the Lord comes unawares. “Ye, brethren,” says Paul, “are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.” (1 Thessalonians 5:4)

A Few Names even in Sardis.--This language would seem to imply a period of unparalleled worldliness in the church. But even in this state of things, there are some whose garments are not defiled,--some who have kept themselves free from

this contaminating influence. James says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27)

Shall Walk with Me in White.--The Lord does not overlook his people in any place, however few their numbers. Lonely Christian, with none of like precious faith with whom to commune, do you ever feel as though the hosts of the unbelievers would swallow you up? You are not unnoticed or forgotten by your Lord. The multitude of the wicked around you cannot be so great as to hide you from his view; and if you keep yourself unspotted from surrounding evil, the promise is sure to you. You shall be clothed in white,--the white raiment of the overcomer,--and walk with your Lord in glory. See chapter 7:17: “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

White Raiment.--Being clothed with white raiment is explained in other scriptures to be a symbol of exchanging iniquity for righteousness. (See Zechariah 3:4, 5.) "Take away the filthy garments from him," is explained by the language that follows, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee." "The fine linen," or the white raiment, "is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 19:8)

The Book of Life.--Object of thrilling interest! Vast and ponderous volume, in which are enrolled the names of all the candidates for everlasting life! And is there danger, after our names have once been entered in that heavenly journal, that they may be blotted out?--Yes; or this warning would never have been penned. Paul, even, feared that he himself might become a castaway. (1 Corinthians 9:27) It is only by being overcomers at last that our names can be retained in that book. But all will not overcome. Their names, of course, will be blotted out. And reference is made to some definite point of time in the future for this work. "I will not," says Christ (in the future), blot out the names of the

overcomers, which is also saying, by implication, that at the same time he will blot out the names of those who do not overcome. Is not this the same time mentioned by Peter in Acts 3:19? “Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” To say to the overcomer that his name shall not be blotted out of the book of life, is to say also that his sins shall be blotted out of the book wherein they are recorded, to be remembered against him no more forever. (Hebrews 8:12) And this is to be when the times of refreshing come from the presence of the Lord; may we not also add, in that other language of Peter, When the day star shall arise in our hearts, or the morning star be given to the church, just previous to the advent of the Lord to usher in the glorious day? (2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 2:28) And when that hour of decision shall come, which cannot now be a great way in the future, how, reader, will it be with you? Will your sins be blotted out, and your name be retained in the book of life? or will your name be blotted out of the book of life, and your sins be left to bear their

fearful record against you?

The Presentation in Glory.--“I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” Christ taught here upon earth, that as men confessed or denied, despised or honored him here, they would be confessed or denied by him before his Father in heaven and the holy angels. (Matthew 10:32, 33; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:8, 9) And who can fathom the honor of being approved before the heavenly hosts! Who can conceive the bliss of that moment when we shall be owned by the Lord of life before his Father as those who have done his will, fought the good fight, run the race, honored him before men, overcome, and whose names are worthy, through his merits, of standing upon the imperishable record of the book of life forever and ever!

Verse 7. And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; 8. I know thy

works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. 9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. 13. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

The word Philadelphia signifies brotherly love,

and expresses the position and spirit of those who received the Advent message up to the autumn of 1844. As they came out of the sectarian churches, they left party names and party feelings behind; and every heart beat in union, as they gave the alarm to the churches and to the world, and pointed to the coming of the Son of man as the believer's true hope. Selfishness and covetousness were laid aside, and a spirit of consecration and sacrifice was cherished. The Spirit of God was with every true believer, and his praise upon every tongue. Those who were not in that movement knew nothing of the deep searching of heart, consecration of all to God, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit, and pure, fervent love for one another, which true believers then enjoyed. Those who were in that movement are aware that language would fail to describe that holy, happy state.

The Key of David.--A key is a symbol of power. The Son of God is the rightful heir to David's throne; and he is about to take to himself his great power, and to reign; hence he is represented as having the key of David. The throne

of David, or of Christ, on which he is to reign, is included in the capital of his kingdom, the New Jerusalem, now above, but which is to be located on this earth, where he is to reign forever and ever. (Revelation 21:1-5; Luke 1:32, 33)

He that Openeth, and no Man Shutteth, etc.--To understand this language, it is necessary to look at Christ's position and work as connected with his ministry in the sanctuary, or true tabernacle above. Hebrews 8:2. A figure, or pattern, of this heavenly sanctuary once existed here upon earth in the sanctuary built by Moses. (Exodus 25:8, 9; Acts 7:44; Hebrews 9:1, 21, 23, 24) The earthly building had two apartments,--the holy place and the most holy place. (Exodus 26:33, 34) In the first apartment were the candlestick, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense. In the second were the ark, which contained the tables of the covenant, or ten commandments, and the cherubim. (Hebrews 9:1-5) In like manner the sanctuary in which Christ ministers in heaven has two apartments. (Hebrews 9:24; see also verses 8 and 12 and chapter 10:19, in each of which texts the

words rendered holiest and holy place are plural in the original, and should be rendered holy places.) And as all things were made after their pattern, the heavenly sanctuary has also furniture similar to that of the worldly. For the antitype of the golden candlestick and altar of incense, in the first apartment, see Revelation 4:5; 8:3; and for the antitype of the ark of the covenant, with its ten commandments, see Revelation 11:19. In the worldly sanctuary the priests ministered. (Exodus 28:41, 43; Hebrews 9:6, 7; 13:11; etc.) The ministry of these priests was a shadow of the ministry of Christ in the sanctuary in heaven. (Hebrews 8:4, 5) A complete round of service was performed in the earthly tabernacle once every year. (Hebrews 9:7) But in the tabernacle above the service is performed once for all. (Hebrews 7:27; 9:12) At the close of the yearly typical service, the high priest entered the second apartment, the most holy place of the sanctuary, to make an atonement; and this work is called the cleansing of the sanctuary. (Leviticus 16:20, 30, 33; Ezekiel 45:18) When the ministry in the most holy place commenced, that in the holy place ceased; and no

service was performed there so long as the priest was engaged in the most holy place. Leviticus 16:17. A similar opening and shutting, or change of ministration, must be accomplished by Christ when the time comes for the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. And the time did come for this service to commence at the close of the 2300 days, in 1844. To this event the opening and shutting mentioned in the text under consideration can appropriately apply, the opening being the opening of his ministration in the most holy place, and the shutting, its cessation in the first apartment, or holy place.[1]

Verse 9 probably applies to those who do not keep pace with the advancing light of truth, and who oppose those that do. Such shall yet be made to feel and confess that God loves those, who, not rejecting the past fulfilments of his word, nor stereotyping themselves in a creed, continue to advance in the knowledge of his truth.

The Word of My Patience.--Says John, in Revelation 14:12, "Here is the patience of the

saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” Those who now live in patient, faithful obedience to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will be kept in the hour of temptation and peril just before us. (See chapter 13:13-17)

Behold, I Come Quickly.--The second coming of Christ is here again brought to view, and with more startling emphasis than in any of the preceding messages. The nearness of that event is here urged upon the attention of believers. The message applies to a period when that great event is impending; and in this we have most indubitable evidence of the prophetic nature of these messages. What is said of the first three churches contains no allusion to the second coming of Christ, from the fact that they do not cover a period during which that event could be Scripturally expected. But we come down to the Thyatiran church, beyond which only three comparatively brief stages of the church appear before the end, and, as though then the time had come when this great hope was just beginning to dawn upon the church, the mind is carried

forward to it by a single allusion: “Hold fast till I come.” We come down to the next state of the church, the Sardis, the church which occupies a position still nearer that event, and the great proclamation is brought to view which was to herald it, and the duty of watching enjoined upon the church: “If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief.” We reach the Philadelphian church, still further down in the stream of time, and the nearness of the same great event then leads Him who “is holy and true” to utter the stirring declaration, “Behold, I come quickly.” How evident is it from all this that these churches occupy positions successively nearer the great day of the Lord, as in each succeeding one, and in a continually increasing ratio, this great event is made more and more prominent, and is more definitely and impressively urged upon the attention of the church. Here they see indeed the day approaching. (Hebrews 10:25)

Faithfulness Enjoined.--“Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” Not that by our faithfulness we are depriving any one else of a

crown; but the verb rendered to take has a number of definitions, one of which is “to take away, snatch from, deprive of.” Hold fast that thou hast, that no man deprive thee of the crown of life. Let no one, and no thing, induce you to yield up the truth, or pervert you from the right ways of the Lord; for by so doing they will cause you to lose the reward.

A Pillar in the Temple.--The overcomer in this address has the promise of being made a pillar in the temple of God, and going no more out. The temple here must denote the church; and the promise of being made a pillar therein is the strongest promise that could be given of a place of honor, permanence, and safety in the church, under the figure of a heavenly building. And when the time comes that this part of the promise is fulfilled, probation with the overcomer is past; he is fully established in the truth, and sealed. “He shall go no more out;” that is, there is no more danger of his falling away; he is the Lord’s forever; his salvation is sure.

But they are to have more than this. From the moment they overcome, and are sealed for heaven, they are labeled, if we may so express it, as belonging to God and Christ, and addressed to their destination, the New Jerusalem. They are to have written upon them the name of God, whose property they are, the name of the New Jerusalem, to which place they are going, not old Jerusalem, where some are vainly looking; and they have upon them the new name of Christ, by whose authority they are to receive everlasting life, and enter into the kingdom. Thus sealed and labeled, the saints of God are safe. No enemy will be able to prevent their reaching their destination, their glorious haven of rest, Jerusalem above.

Verse 14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15. I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17. Because

thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. 19. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Laodicea signifies the judging of the people, or, according to Cruden, a just people. The message to this church brings to view the closing scenes of probation. It reveals a period of judgment. It is the

last stage of the church. It consequently applies to believers under the third message, the last message of mercy before the coming of Christ (see chapter 14:9-14), while the great day of atonement is transpiring, and the investigative Judgment is going forward upon the house of God,--a period during which the just and holy law of God is taken by the waiting church as their rule of life.

These Things Saith the Amen.--This is, then, the final message to the churches ere the close of probation. And though the description of their condition which he gives to the indifferent Laodiceans is fearful and startling, nevertheless it cannot be denied; for the Witness is "faithful and true." Moreover, he is "the beginning of the creation of God." Some understand by this language that Christ was the first created being, dating his existence anterior to that of any other created being or thing, next to the self-existent and eternal God. But the language does not necessarily imply that he was created; for the words, "the beginning of the creation," may simply signify that the work of creation, strictly speaking, was begun

by him. “Without him was not anything made.” Others, however, and more properly we think, take the word to mean the “agent” or “efficient cause,” which is one of the definitions of the word, understanding that Christ is the agent through whom God has created all things, but that he himself came into existence in a different manner, as he is called “the only begotten” of the Father. It would seem utterly inappropriate to apply this expression to any being created in the ordinary sense of that term. For “beginning,” read “beginner.”

The charge he brings against the Laodiceans is that they are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. They lack that religious fervency, zeal, and devotion, which their position in the world’s closing history, with the light of prophecy beaming upon their pathway, demands that they should manifest; and this lukewarmness is shown by a lack of good works; for it is from a knowledge of their works that the faithful and true Witness brings this fearful charge against them.

I Would Thou Wert Cold or Hot.--Three states are brought to view in this message,--the cold, the lukewarm, and the hot. It is important to determine what condition they each denote, in order to guard against wrong conclusions. Three conditions of spiritual life which pertain to the church, not to the world, are to be considered. What the term hot means it is not difficult to conceive. The mind at once calls up a state of intense fervency and zeal, when all the affections, raised to the highest pitch, are drawn out for God and his cause, and manifest themselves in corresponding works. To be lukewarm is to lack this zeal, to be in a state in which heart and earnestness are wanting; in which there is no self-denial that costs anything, no cross-bearing that is felt, no determined witnessing for Christ, and no valiant aggression that keeps sinews strained and armor bright; and, worst of all, it implies entire satisfaction with that condition. But to be cold — what is that? Does it denote a state of corruption, wickedness, and sin, such as characterizes the world of unbelievers? We cannot so regard it, for the following reasons:--

1. It would seem harsh and repulsive to represent Christ as wishing, under any circumstances, that persons should be in such a condition; but he says, “I would thou wert cold or hot.”

2. No state can be more offensive to Christ than that of the sinner in open rebellion, and his heart filled with every evil. It would therefore be incorrect to represent him as preferring that state to any position which his people can occupy while they are still retained as his.

3. The threat of rejection in verse 16 is because they are neither cold nor hot. As much as to say that if they were either cold or hot, they would not be rejected. But if by cold is meant a state of open worldly wickedness, they would be rejected therefor very speedily. Hence such cannot be its meaning.

We are consequently forced to the conclusion that by this language our Lord has no reference whatever to those outside of his church, but that he

refers to three degrees of spiritual affections, two of which are more acceptable to him than the third. Heat and cold are preferable to lukewarmness. But what kind of a spiritual state is denoted by the term cold? We may remark first that it is a state of feeling. In this respect it is superior to lukewarmness, which is a state of comparative insensibility, indifference, and supreme self-satisfaction. To be hot is also to be in a state of feeling. And as hot denotes joyous fervency, and a lively exercise of all the affections, with a heart buoyant with the sensible presence and love of God, so by cold would seem to be denoted a spiritual condition characterized by a destitution of these traits, yet one in which the individual feels such destitution, and longs to recover his lost treasures. This state is well expressed by the language of Job, "O that I knew where I might find him!" (Job 23:3) In this state there is not indifference, nor is there content; but there is a sense of coldness, unfitness, and discomfort, and a groping and seeking after something better. There is hope of a person in this condition. What a man feels that he lacks and wants, he will earnestly

strive to obtain. The most discouraging feature of the lukewarm is that they are conscious of no lack, and feel that they have need of nothing. Hence it is easy to see why our Lord should prefer to behold his church in a state of comfortless coldness, rather than in a state of comfortable, easy, indifferent lukewarmness. Cold, a person will not long remain. His efforts will soon lead him to the fervid state. But lukewarm, there is danger of his remaining till the faithful and true Witness is obliged to reject him as a nauseous and loathsome thing.

I Will Spue Thee out of My Mouth.--Here the figure is still further carried out, and the rejection of the lukewarm expressed by the nauseating effects of tepid water. And this denotes a final rejection, an utter separation from his church.

Rich, and Increased with Goods.--Such the Laodiceans think is their condition. They are not hypocrites, because they “know not” that they are poor, miserable, blind, and naked.

The Counsel Given Them.--Buy of me, says the

true Witness, gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. This shows at once to the deceived Laodiceans the objects they lack, and the extent of their destitution. It shows, too, where they can obtain those things in which they are so fearfully poor; it brings before them the necessity of speedily obtaining them. The case is so urgent that our great Advocate in the court above sends us special counsel on the point; and the fact that he who has condescended to point out our lack, and counsel us to buy, is the one who has these things to bestow, and invites us to come to him for them, is the best possible guarantee that our application will be respected, and our requests granted.

But by what means can we buy these things?-- Just as we buy all other gospel graces. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1. We thus buy by the asking; buy by throwing away the worthless

baubles of earth, and receiving priceless treasures in their stead; buy by simply coming and receiving; buy, giving nothing in return. And what do we buy on these gracious terms?--Bread that perishes not, spotless raiment that soils not, riches that corrupt not, and an inheritance that fadeth not. Strange traffic, this! yet thus the Lord condescends to deal with his people. He might compel us to come in the manner and with the mien of beggars; but instead of this he gives us the treasures of his grace, and in return receives our worthlessness, that we may take the blessings he has to bestow, not as pittances dealt out to mendicants, but as the legitimate possessions of honorable purchase.

The things to be obtained demand especial notice. They are enumerated as follows:--

1. Gold Tried in the Fire.--Gold, literally considered, is the comprehensive name for all worldly wealth and riches. Figuratively, it must denote that which constitutes spiritual riches. What grace, then, is represented by the gold, or, rather, what graces? for doubtless no one single grace can

be said to answer to the full import of that term. The Lord said to the church of Smyrna that he knew their poverty, but they were rich; and the testimony shows that their riches consisted of that which was finally to put them in possession of a crown of life. Says James, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith; and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" "Faith," says Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." To be "rich toward God,"--rich in the spiritual sense,--is to have a clear title to the promises,--to be an heir of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29. And how do we obtain this heirship?--In the same way that Abraham obtained the promise; that is, through faith. (Romans 4:13, 14) No wonder, then, that Paul should devote an entire chapter in Hebrews (chapter 11) to this important subject, setting forth the mighty achievements that have been accomplished, and the precious promises that

have been obtained, through faith; and that he should, in the first verse of the next chapter, as the grand conclusion to his argument, exhort Christians to lay aside every weight, and the sin (of unbelief) that so easily besets them. Nothing will sooner dry up the springs of spirituality, and sink us into utter poverty in reference to the things of the kingdom of God, than to let faith go out and unbelief come in. For faith must enter into every action that is pleasing in his sight; and in coming to him, the first thing is to believe that he is; and it is through faith, as the chief agent under the grace which is the gift of God, that we are to be saved. (Hebrews 11:6; Ephesians 2:8)

From this it would seem that faith is a principal element of spiritual wealth. But if, as already remarked, no one grace can answer to the full import of the term gold, so, doubtless, other things are included with faith. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for," says Paul. Hence hope is an inseparable accompaniment of faith. Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24, 25. And again Paul tells us that faith works by love, and speaks in another place of

being “rich in good works.” Galatians 5:6; 1 Timothy 6:18. Hence love cannot be separated from faith. We then have before us the three objects associated together by Paul in 1 Corinthians 13,--faith, hope, and charity, or love; and the greatest of these is charity. Such is the gold tried by fire which we are counseled to buy.

2. White Raiment.--On this point there would not seem to be much room for controversy. A few texts will furnish a key to the understanding of this expression. Says the prophet, Isaiah 64:6, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” We are counseled to buy the opposite of filthy rags, which would be complete and spotless raiment. The same figure is used in Zechariah 3:3, 4. And John, in the 19th chapter of the Revelation, verse 8, says plainly that “the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

3. The Eye-salve.--On this there is as little room for a diversity of opinion as upon the white raiment. The anointing of the eyes is certainly not to be taken in a literal sense; and, reference being

made to spiritual things, the eye-salve must denote that by which our spiritual discernment is quickened. There is but one agent revealed to us in the word of God by which this is accomplished, and that is the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10:38 we read that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost.” And the same writer through whom came this Revelation from Jesus Christ, wrote to the church in his first epistle (chapter 2:20) as follows: “But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.” In verse 27 he enlarges upon this point thus: “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” By referring to his Gospel, it is found that the work which he here sets forth as accomplished by the anointing is exactly the same that he there attributes to the Holy Spirit. John 14:26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (See also John

16:13.)

Thus in a formal and solemn manner are we counseled by the faithful and true witness, under the figures of gold, white raiment, and eye-salve, to seek from him, speedily and earnestly, an increase of the heavenly graces of faith, hope, charity, that righteousness which he alone can furnish, and an unction from the Holy Spirit. But how is it possible that a people lacking these things should think themselves rich and increased with goods? A plausible inference may here be drawn, which is perhaps also a necessary one, as there is room for no other. It will be observed that no fault is found with the Laodiceans on account of the doctrines they hold. They are not accused of harboring any Jezebel in their midst, or of countenancing the doctrines of Balaam or the Nicolaitanes. So far as we can learn from the address to them, their belief is correct, and their theory sound. The inference therefore is that having a correct theory, therewith they are content. They are satisfied with a correct form of doctrine without its power. Having received light concerning the closing events of this

dispensation, and having a correct theoretical knowledge of the truths that pertain to the last generation of men, they are inclined to rest in this to the neglect of the spiritual part of religion. It is by their actions, doubtless, not by their words, that they say they are rich, and increased with goods. Having so much light and so much truth, what can they want besides? And if, with a commendable tenacity, they defend the theory, and in the letter, so far as their outward life is concerned, conform to the increasing light upon the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, is not their righteousness complete? Rich, and increased with goods, and needing nothing! Here is their failure. Their whole being should cry out for the spirit, the zeal, the fervency, the life, the power, of a living Christianity, and their righteousness should consist in a swallowing up of self and all its works in the merits of their Redeemer.

The Token of Love.--This, strange as it may seem, is chastisement. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." If we are without chastisement, we are not sons. (Hebrews 12) "A general law," says

Thompson, “of his gracious economy is here set forth. As all need chastisement in some measure, they in some measure receive it, and thus have proof of the Saviour’s attachment. This is a hard lesson to learn, and believers are dull scholars; yet here and throughout God’s word and providence it stands, that trials are his benedictions, and that no child escapes the rod. The incorrigibly misshapen and coarse-grained blocks are rejected, while those chosen for the glorious structure are subjected to the chisel and the hammer. There is no cluster on the true vine but must pass through the winepress. ‘For myself,’ said an old divine under affliction, ‘for myself, I bless God I have observed and felt so much mercy in this angry dispensation of God that I am almost transported. I am, sure, highly pleased with thinking how infinitely sweet his mercies are, when his judgments are so gracious.’ In view, then, of the origin and design of the chastisements you receive, ‘Be zealous and repent.’ Lose no time; lose not a blow of the rod, but repent at once. Be fervent in spirit. Such is the first appliance of encouragement.”

Be Zealous and Repent.--Although, as we have seen, the state represented by coldness is preferable to one of lukewarmness, yet that is not a state in which our Lord ever desires to find us. We are never exhorted to seek that state. There is a far better one which we are counseled to attain; and that is to be zealous, to be fervent, and to have our hearts all aglow in the service of our Master.

Christ Knocking at the Door.--Let us listen again to the author above quoted: "Here is the heart of hearts. Notwithstanding their offensive attitude, their unlovely character, such is his love to their souls that he humbles himself to solicit the privilege of making them blessed. 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.' Why does he? Not because he is without home elsewhere. Among the mansions in his Father's house there is not one entrance closed to him. He is the life of every heart, the light in every eye, the song on every tongue, in glory. But he goes round from door to door in Laodicea. He stands at each, and knocks, because he came to seek and to save that which is lost, because he cannot give up the purpose of

communicating eternal life to as many as the Father has given him, and because he cannot become known to the inmate unless the door be opened and a welcome given him. Have you bought a piece of ground? have you bought five yoke of oxen? is your hat in your hand, and do you pray to be excused? He knocks and knocks. But you cannot receive company at present; you are worn out with labor; you have wheeled round the sofa; you are making yourself comfortable, and send word that you are engaged. He knocks and knocks. ... It is the hour for church prayer-meeting or for monthly concert; there is opportunity to pay a Christian visit to an individual or a family; but you move not. ... Oh, nauseous lukewarmness! Oh, fatal worldliness! The Lord of glory comes all the way from his celestial palace--comes in poverty, in sweat, in blood--comes to the door of a professed friend, who owes all to him, and cannot get in!--comes to rescue a man whose house is on fire, and he will not admit him! Oh, the height, the depth, of Jesus Christ's forbearance! Even the heathen Publius received Paul, and lodged him three days courteously. Shall nominal Christians tell the Lord

of apostles that they have no room for him?”

If Any Man Hear My Voice.--The Lord entreats, then, as well as knocks. And the word if implies that some will not hear. Though he stands and knocks and entreats till his locks are wet with the dews of night, yet some will close their ears to his tender entreaties. But it is not enough simply to hear. We must hear, and open the door. And many who at first hear the voice, and for a time feel inclined to heed, will doubtless, alas! fail in the end to do that which is necessary to secure to themselves the communion of the heavenly Guest. Reader, are your ears open to the entreaties which the Saviour directs to you? Is the sound of his voice a welcome sound? Will you heed it? Will you open the door and let him in? Or is the door of your heart held fast by heaps of this world's rubbish, which you are unwilling to remove? Remember that the Lord of life never forces an entrance. He condescends to come and knock, and seek admittance; but he takes up his abode in those hearts only where he is then a welcome and invited guest.

And then the promise! “I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” How forcible and touching the figure! Friend with friend, partaking of the cheerful and social meal! Mind with mind, holding free and intimate converse! And what a festal scene must that be where the King of glory is a guest! No common degree of union, no ordinary blessing, no usual privilege, is denoted by this language. Who, under such tender entreaty and so gracious a promise, can remain indifferent? Nor are we required to furnish the table for this exalted Guest. This he does himself, not with the gross nutriment of earth, but with viands from his own heavenly storehouse. Here he sets before us foretastes of the glory soon to be revealed. Here he gives us earnest of our future inheritance, which is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. Verily, when we shall comply with the conditions, and receive this promise, we shall experience the rising of the day star in our hearts, and behold the dawn of a glorious morning for the church of God.

The Final Promise.--The promise of supping with his disciples is made by the Lord before the final promise to the overcomer is given. This shows that the blessings included in that promise are to be enjoyed in this probationary state. And now, superadded to all these, is the promise to the overcomer: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Here the promises of the Lord culminate. From being at first rebellious, and then fallen, degraded, and polluted, man is brought by the work of the Redeemer back into reconciliation with God, cleansed from his pollutions, redeemed from the fall, made immortal, and finally raised to a seat upon the very throne of his Saviour. Honor and exaltation could go no farther. Human minds cannot conceive that state, human language cannot describe it. We can only labor on till, if overcomers at last, we shall "know what it is to be there."

In this verse there is not only a glorious promise, but there is also an important doctrine. We learn by this that Christ reigns consecutively

upon two thrones. One is the throne of his Father, the other is his own throne. He declares in this verse that he has overcome, and is now set down with his Father in his throne. He is now associated with the Father in the throne of universal dominion, placed at his right hand, far above all principality, power, might, and dominion. (Ephesians 1:20-22, etc.) While in this position, he is a priest-king. He is a priest, “a minister of the sanctuary;” but at the same time he is “on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” (Hebrews 8:1, 2) This position and work of our Lord was thus predicted by the prophet Zechariah: “And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch [Christ]; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord. ... And he [Christ] shall sit and rule upon his [God’s] throne; and he [Christ] shall be a priest upon his [God’s] throne; and the counsel of peace [in the sacrifice and priestly work of Christ in behalf of repenting man] shall be between them both.” (Zechariah 6:12, 13) But the time is coming when he is to change his position, and, leaving the throne of his

Father, take his own throne; and this must be when the time comes for the reward of the overcomers; for when they enter upon their reward, they are to sit with Christ on his throne, as he has overcome, and is now seated with the Father upon his throne. This change in the position of Christ is set forth by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, as follows:--

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

The truths taught in this portion of Scripture may perhaps be most briefly expressed by a slight paraphrase, and by giving, in every instance,

instead of the pronouns, the nouns to which they respectively refer. Thus:--

“Then cometh the end (of the present dispensation), when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom (which he now holds conjointly with the Father) to God, even the Father; when God shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (that is opposed to the work of the Son). For Christ must reign (on the throne of his Father) till the Father hath put all enemies under Christ’s feet. (See Psalms 110:1) The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For God (then) hath put all things under Christ’s feet. But when God saith, All things are put under Christ (and he commences his reign upon his own throne), it is manifest that God is excepted, who did put all things under Christ. And when all things shall be subdued unto Christ, then shall Christ also himself be subject unto God that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

That this is a correct version of this scripture may be easily verified. The only question that can

be raised is concerning the persons to whom the pronouns refer; and any attempt to make the pronouns refer to Christ which in the foregoing paraphrase are referred to God, will be found, when traced through the quotation, to make poor sense of Paul's language.

From this it will be seen that the kingdom which Christ delivers up to the Father is that which he holds at the present time upon his Father's throne, where he tells us he is now seated. He delivers up this kingdom at the end of this dispensation, when the time comes for him to take his own throne. After this, he reigns on the throne of his father David, and is subject only to God, who still retains his position upon the throne of universal dominion. In this reign of Christ the saints participate. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." "And they lived," says John, dating from the first resurrection (chapter 20:4), "and reigned with Christ a thousand years." This we understand to be a special reign, or for a special purpose, as will be noticed in that chapter; for the actual reign of the saints is to be

“forever and ever.” (Daniel 7:18, 27) How can any earthly object divert our gaze from this durable and heavenly prospect?

Thus close the messages to the seven churches. How pointed and searching their testimony! What lessons do they contain for all Christians in all ages! It is as true with the last church as with the first, that all their works are known to Him who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. From his scrutinizing gaze nothing can be hidden. And while his threatenings to the hypocrites and evil workers, as in justice they may be, are awful, how ample, how comforting, how gracious, how glorious, his promises to those who love and follow him with singleness of heart!

Gracious words of counsel, messages of love,
Sent to all his children from the Lord on high;
Precious are these warnings from the throne
above,
As the world's last crisis swiftly draweth nigh.
Weak and all unworthy we, his children, are —
Pure and perfect must be ere we see his face;

Now for us the Saviour shows his tender care,
Offering for our purchase every heavenly
 grace.

Let each boundless promise every bosom thrill,
Bear us through sad ills this world has ever
 known,
Till we reach the mansions on God's holy hill,
Till we sit with Jesus on his glorious throne.

Note:

1. See exposition of the subject of the sanctuary and its cleansing, under Daniel 8:14.

Chapter 4

A New Vision The Heavenly Sanctuary

Verse 1. After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter.

In the first three chapters, John presents the vision he had of the Son of man, comprising a description of his majestic person, and a record of the words, which, with a voice as the sound of many waters, he was heard to utter. A new scene and a new vision now open before us; and the expression “after this” does not denote that what is recorded in chapter 4 and onward was to take place after the fulfillment of everything recorded in the three preceding chapters, but only that after he had seen and heard what is there recorded, he had the

new view which he now introduces.

A Door Was Opened in Heaven.--Let it be noticed that John says, "A door was opened in heaven," not into heaven. It was not an opening of heaven itself before the mind of John, as in the case of Stephen (Acts 7:56); but someplace, or apartment, in heaven was opened before him, and he was permitted to behold what was transpiring within. That this apartment which John saw open was the heavenly sanctuary, will plainly appear from other portions of the book.

Things Which Must Be Hereafter.--Compare with this chapter 1:1. The great object of the Revelation seems to be the presentation of future events, for the purpose of informing, edifying, and comforting the church.

Verse 2. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. 3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the

throne, in sight like unto an emerald. 4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold. 5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

In the Spirit.--Once before in this book we have had this expression; namely, in chapter 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," where it was taken to express the fact that John had a vision upon the Sabbath, or Lord's day. If it there expressed the state of being in vision, it would denote the same thing here; and consequently the first vision ended with chapter 3, and a new one is here introduced. Nor is it any objection to this view that John, previous to this, as is learned from the first verse of this chapter, was in such a spiritual state as to be able to look up and see a door opened in heaven, and to hear a voice, like the mighty sound of a trumpet, calling him up to a nearer

prospect of heavenly things. It is evident that there may be such states of ecstasy independent of vision, just as Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, could look up and see the heavens opened, and the Son of man on the right hand of God. To be in the Spirit denotes a still higher state of spiritual elevation. On what day this vision was given, we are not informed.

Being again fully wrapped in heavenly vision, the first object which he beholds is a throne set in heaven, and the Divine Being seated thereon. The description of the appearance of this personage, clothed in the mingled colors of the jasper, frequently a purple, and the blood-red sardine stone, is such as at once to suggest to the mind a monarch vested with his royal robes. And round about the throne there was a rainbow, both adding to the grandeur of the scene, and reminding us that though he who sits upon the throne is an almighty and absolute ruler, he is nevertheless the covenant-keeping God.

The Four and Twenty Elders.--The question

once proposed to John concerning a certain company, has frequently arisen concerning these four and twenty elders: “Who are these? and whence came they?” It will be observed that they are clothed in white raiment, and have on their heads crowns of gold, which are tokens both of a conflict completed and a victory gained. From this we conclude that they were once participants in the Christian warfare, once trod, in common with all saints, this earthly pilgrimage, but have overcome; and for some good purpose, in advance of the great multitude of the redeemed, are wearing their victor crowns in the heavenly world. Indeed, they plainly tell us as much as this in the song of praise which they, in connection with the four living beings, ascribe to the Lamb, in the 9th verse of the following chapter: “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” This song is sung before any of the events in the prophecy of the seven seals transpire; for it is sung to set forth the worthiness of the Lamb to take the

book and to open the seals, on the ground of what he had already accomplished, which was their redemption. It is not, therefore, thrown in here by anticipation, having its application in the future; but it expresses an absolute and finished fact in the history of those who sung it. These, then, were a class of redeemed persons,--redeemed from this earth, redeemed as all others must be redeemed, by the precious blood of Christ.

Do we in any other place read of such a class of redeemed ones?--We think Paul refers to the same company when he writes to the Ephesians thus: "Wherefore he saith, When he [Christ] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The marginal reading is, he led a "multitude of captives." Ephesians 4:8. Going back to the events that occurred in connection with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, we read, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." (Matthew 27:52, 53) Thus the answer to our question comes back,

gathered unmistakably from the sacred page. These are some of those who came out of their graves at the resurrection of Christ, and who were numbered with the illustrious multitude which he led up from the captivity of Death's dark domain when he ascended in triumph on high. Matthew records their resurrection, Paul their ascension, and John beholds them in heaven, performing the sacred duties which they were raised up to accomplish.

In this view we are not alone. Wesley speaks as follows concerning the four and twenty elders: "Clothed in white raiment.] This, and their golden crowns, show that they had already finished their course, and taken their places among the citizens of heaven. They are never termed souls, and hence it is probable that they had glorified bodies already. (Compare Matthew 27:52)"

The particular attention of the reader is asked to the fact that the four and twenty elders are said to be seated on thrones. Our translation, it is true, reads "seats;" but the Greek is, "thrones;" and so the Revised Version reads: "And round about

the throne were four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting.” This passage, consequently, throws light on the expression found in Daniel 7:9, “I beheld till the thrones were cast down.” These are the same thrones; and, as has been shown in comments upon that passage, the meaning is not that the thrones were overturned, or cast down, in the ordinary sense of that expression, but placed, or established; and the figure is taken from the Eastern custom of casting down, or placing, mats or divans for distinguished guests to sit upon. These four and twenty elders (see on chapter 5) are supposed to be assistants of Christ in his mediatorial work in the sanctuary on high; and when the judgment scene described in Daniel 7:9 commenced in the most holy place, their seats, or thrones, would be set, or placed, there, according to the testimony of that passage.

The Seven Lamps of Fire.--In these lamps of fire we have an appropriate antitype of the golden candlestick of the typical sanctuary, with its seven ever-burning lamps. This candlestick was placed,

by divine direction, in the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary. Exodus 25:31, 32, 37; 26:35; 27:20; etc. And now when John tells us that a door was opened in heaven, and in the apartment thus disclosed to view he sees the antitype of the candlestick of the earthly sanctuary, it is good proof that he is looking into the first apartment of the sanctuary above.

Verse 6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind. 7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. 8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, 10. The four and twenty elders fall

down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

The Sea of Glass.--Not composed of glass, but a broad expanse resembling glass; that is, says Greenfield, transparent, brilliant. This idea is further carried out by its being likened to crystal, which is defined to mean "anything concrete and pellucid, like ice or glass." The position of this sea is such as to show that it bears no analogy to the laver of the ancient typical service.

It may extend under, and be the foundation of, the throne, and even further, of the city itself. It is again brought to view in chapter 15:2, as the place where the overcomers, in the ecstatic joy of final victory, will soon stand.

The Four Beasts.--It is a very unhappy

translation which has given us the word beasts in this verse. The Greek word denotes properly a living creature. Bloomfield says, “‘Four living creatures’ (not beasts). So Heinr. renders it. ... The propriety of this correction is now, I believe, generally agreed upon by commentators. The word is very different from, used to designate the prophetic beasts in the 13th and following chapters. (Scholefield.) It may be added that Bulkeley adduces several examples of to denote, not only creature, but even a human being, especially one from Origen, who uses it of our Lord Jesus.”

Similar imagery is used in the first chapter of Ezekiel. The qualities which would seem to be signified by the emblems are strength, perseverance, reason, and swiftness,--strength of affection, perseverance in carrying out the requirements of duty, reason in comprehending the divine will, and swiftness in obeying. These living beings are even more intimately connected with the throne than are the four and twenty elders, being represented as in the midst of it, and round about it. Like the elders, these, in their song to the Lamb,

ascribe to him praise for having redeemed them from the earth. They therefore belong to the same company, and represent a part of the great multitude, who, as already described (see remarks on verse 4), have been led up on high from the captivity of death. Concerning the object of their redemption, see remarks on chapter 5:8.

They Rest Not.--“Oh! happy unrest!” beautifully exclaims John Wesley; and the theme of their constant worship is, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” No sublimer strain ever issued from created lips. And they repeat it “day and night,” or continually, these terms only denoting the manner in which time is reckoned here; for there can be no night where the throne of God is.

We mortals are apt to tire of the repetition of the simple testimony we bear here to the goodness and mercy of God; and we are sometimes tempted to say nothing, because we cannot continually say something new. But may we not learn a profitable lesson from the course of these holy beings above,

who never grow weary of the ceaseless repetition of these words, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;” and to whom these words never grow old, because their hearts ever glow with a sense of his holiness, goodness, and love? Praise does not become to them monotonous; for with every utterance they gain a new view of the attributes of the Almighty; they reach a greater height of comprehension in their vision of his perfections; the horizon expands before them; their hearts enlarge; and the new emotions of adoration, from their new standpoint, draw from them a fresh utterance of their holy salutation, new even to themselves, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!”

So, even with us here, though remarks are often, repeated in reference to the goodness, the mercy, and the love of God, the value of his truth, and the attractions of the world to come, these should not grow stale upon the ear; for we should all our lives be rising to new conceptions of the blessings embraced in these glorious themes.

Concerning the expression, “which was, and is, and is to come,” (see remarks on chapter 1:4).

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power.” How worthy, we never shall be able to realize till, like the holy beings who utter this language, changed to immortality, we are presented faultless before the presence of his glory. (Jude 24)

Thou Hast Created All Things.--The works of creation furnish the foundation for the honor, glory, and power ascribed to God. “And for thy pleasure,” or through thy will, they are, and were created. God willed, and all things came into existence; and by the same power they are preserved and sustained.

Chapter 5

The Heavenly Sanctuary (continued)

Verse 1. And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

A new chapter here opens, but not a new scene. The same view is still before the mind of the apostle. By the words, “him that sat on the throne,” is evidently meant the Father, as the Son is subsequently introduced as “a Lamb as it had been slain.” The book which John here saw, contained a revelation of scenes that were to transpire in the history of the church to the end of time. Its being held in the right hand of him that sat on the throne may signify that a knowledge of the future rests with God alone, except so far as he sees fit to reveal it to others.

The Book.--The books in use at the time the

Revelation was given were not in the form of books as now made. They did not consist of a series of leaves bound together, but were composed of strips of parchment or other material, longer or shorter, one or more, and rolled up. On this point, Wesley remarks:--

“The usual books of the ancients were not like ours, but were volumes, or long pieces of parchment, rolled upon a long stick, as we frequently roll silks. Such was this represented, which was sealed with seven seals. Not as if the apostle saw all the seals at once; for there were seven volumes wrapped up one within another, each of which was sealed; so that upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up till that was opened, and so on to the seventh.”

On the same point, Scott remarks: “It appeared as a roll consisting of several parchments, according to the custom of those times; and though it was supposed to be written within, yet nothing could be read till the seals were loosed. It was

afterward found to contain seven parchments, or small volumes, each of which was separately sealed; but if all the seals had been on the outside, nothing could have been read till they had all been loosed; whereas the loosing of each seal was followed by some discovery of the contents of the roll. Yet the appearance on the outside seems to have indicated that it consisted of seven, or at least of several parts.”

Bloomfield says: “The long rolls of parchment used by the ancients, which we call books, were seldom written but on one side; namely, that which was in rolling turned inward.” So, doubtless, this book was not written within and on the back side, as the punctuation of our common version makes it read. “Grotius, Lowman, Fuller, etc.,” says the Cottage Bible, “remove the comma, thus: ‘Written within, and on the back (or outside) sealed,’ etc.” How these seals were placed, is sufficiently explained in the notes from Wesley and Scott, given above.

Verse 2. And I saw a strong angel

proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? 3. And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. 4. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

The Challenge.--God, as it were, holds forth this book to the view of the universe, and a strong angel, one doubtless of great eminence and power, comes forth as a crier, and with a mighty voice challenges all creatures in the universe to try the strength of their wisdom in opening the counsels of God. Who can be found worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? A pause ensues. In silence the universe owns its inability and unworthiness to enter into the counsels of the Creator. "And no man in heaven," ..de.., not merely no man, but no one, no being, in heaven. Is not here proof that the faculties of angels are limited, like those of man, in respect to penetrating the future, and disclosing what is to come? And when the apostle saw that no one came forward to open

the book, he greatly feared that the counsels of God which it contained in reference to his people, would never be disclosed, and in natural tenderness of his feelings, and his concern for the church, he wept much. “How far are they,” says Wesley, “from the temper of St. John, who inquire after anything rather than the contents of this book!”

Upon the phrase, “I wept much,” Benson offers the following beautiful remarks: “Being greatly affected with the thought that no being whatever was to be found able to understand, reveal, and accomplish the divine counsels, fearing they would still remain concealed from the church. This weeping of the apostle sprang from greatness of mind. The tenderness of heart which he always had, appeared more clearly now he was out of his own power. The Revelation was not written without tears, neither without tears will it be understood.”

Verse 5. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the

book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. 6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. 7. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

Not long is John permitted to weep. God is not willing that any knowledge which can benefit his people, shall be withheld. Provision is made for the opening of the book. Hence one of the elders says to him, “Weep not; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.” Why one of the elders should impart this information to John in preference to some other being, does not appear, unless it is that having been redeemed, they would be especially interested in all that pertained to the welfare of the church on earth. Christ is here called the “Lion of the tribe of Juda.” Why called a lion? and why of the tribe of Judah?--As to the first, it is probably to denote his strength. As the

lion is the king of beasts, the monarch of the forest, he thus becomes a fit emblem of kingly authority and power. "Of the tribe of Juda." Doubtless he receives this appellation from the prophecy in Genesis 49:9, 10.

The Root of David.--The source and sustainer of David as to his position and power. That David's position was specially ordained of Christ, and that he was specially sustained by him, there can be no doubt. David was the type, Christ the antitype. David's throne and reign over Israel was a type of Christ's reign over his people. He shall reign upon the throne of his father David. (Luke 1:32, 33) As Christ appeared in the line of David's descendants when he took upon himself our nature, he is also called the offspring of David, and a root out of the stem of Jesse. (Isaiah 11:1, 10; Revelation 22:16) His connection with the throne of David being thus set forth, and his right thus shown to rule over the people of God, there was a propriety in intrusting to him the opening of the seals.

Hath Prevailed.--These words indicate that the right to open the book was acquired by a victory gained in some previous conflict; and so we find it set forth in subsequent portions of this chapter. The very next scene introduces us to the great work of Christ as the Redeemer of the world, and the shedding of his blood for the remission of sin and the salvation of man. In this work he was subjected to the fiercest assaults of Satan. But he endured his temptations, bore the agonies of the cross, rose a victor over death and the grave, made the way of redemption sure--triumphed! Hence the four living beings and the four and twenty elders sing, "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

John looks to see the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and beholds a Lamb in the midst of the throne and of the four living beings and the elders, as it had been slain.

In the Midst of the Throne.--Doddridge translates thus: "And I beheld in the middle space

between the throne and the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders there stood a Lamb,” etc. In the center of the scene was the throne of the Father, and standing in the open space which surrounded it was the Son, set forth under the symbol of a slain lamb. Around these there stood those saints who had been redeemed: first, those represented by the four living creatures, then the elders forming the second circle, and the angels (verse 11) forming a third circle. The worthiness of Christ, as he thus stands forth under the figure of a slain lamb, is the admiration of all the holy throng.

As It Had Been Slain.--Woodhouse, as quoted in the Comprehensive Commentary, says: “The Greek implies that the Lamb appeared with a wounded neck and throat, as if smitten at the altar as a victim.” On this phrase, Clarke says: “As if now in the act of being offered. This is very remarkable. So important is the sacrificial offering of Christ in the sight of God, that he is still represented as being in the very act of pouring out his blood for the offenses of man. This gives great advantage to faith; when any soul comes to the

throne of grace, he finds a sacrifice there provided for him to offer to God.”

Seven Horns and Seven Eyes.--Horns are symbols of power, eyes of wisdom; and seven is a number denoting completeness, or perfection. We are thus taught that perfect power and perfect wisdom inhere in the Lamb, through the operation of the Spirit of God, called the seven Spirits of God, to denote the fulness and perfection of its operation.

He Came and Took the Book.--Commentators have found an incongruity in the idea that the book was taken by a lamb, and have had recourse to several expedients to avoid the difficulty. But is it not a well-established principle that any action may be attributed to a symbol which could be appropriately performed by the person or being represented by the symbol? And is not this all the explanation that the passage needs? The lamb, we know, is a symbol of Christ. We know there is nothing incongruous in Christ's taking a book; and when we read that the book was taken, we think of

the action, not as performed by the lamb, but by the one of whom the lamb is a symbol.

Verse 8. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. 9. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; 10. And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Vials Full of Odors.--From this expression we form an idea of the employment of those redeemed ones represented by the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders. They have golden vials, or vessels, full of odors--or, as the margin reads, incense--which are the prayers of saints. This is a work of ministry such as pertains to priests.

Scott says: “It is indisputably manifest that the four living creatures join in, or rather lead, the worship of the Lamb as having redeemed them to God; and this proves beyond controversy that part of the redeemed church is meant by this emblem, and not angels, whose worship is next described, but in language evidently different.”

A. Barnes, in his notes on this passage, remarks: “The idea here is, therefore, that the representatives of the church in heaven, the elders, spoken of as ‘priests,’ are described as officiating in the temple above in behalf of the church still below, and as offering incense while the church is engaged in prayer.”

The reader will remember that in the ancient typical service the high priest had many assistants; and when we consider that we are now looking into the sanctuary in heaven, the conclusion at once follows that these redeemed ones are the assistants of our great High Priest above. For this purpose they were doubtless redeemed. And what could be more appropriate than that our Lord, in his priestly

work for the human race, should be assisted by noble members of that race, whose holiness of life, and purity of character, had fitted them to be raised up for that purpose? (See remarks on chapter 4:4.)

We are aware that many entertain a great aversion to the idea of there being anything real and tangible in heaven; and we can easily anticipate that the views here presented will be altogether too literal for such. To sustain themselves in their position, they dwell much on the fact that the language is highly figurative, and that we cannot suppose there are or were any such things in heaven as John describes. We reply that, though the Revelation deals largely in figures, it does not deal in fictions. There is reality in all the things described; and we gain an understanding of the reality when we get a correct interpretation of the figures. Thus, in this vision we know that the One upon the throne is God. He is really there. We know the Lamb symbolizes Christ. He too is really there. He ascended with a literal, tangible body; and who can say that he does not still retain it? If, then, our great High Priest is a literal being, he

must have a literal place in which to minister. And if the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders represent those whom Christ led up from the captivity of death at the time of his resurrection and ascension, why are they not just as literal beings while there in heaven as they were when they ascended?

The Song.--It is called "a new song," new, probably, in respect to the occasion and the composition. They were the first that could sing it, being the first that were redeemed. They call themselves kings and priests. In what sense they are priests has already been noticed, they being the assistants of Christ in his priestly work. In the same sense, doubtless, they are also kings; for Christ is set down with his Father on his throne, and doubtless these, as ministers of his, have some part to act in connection with the government of heaven in reference to this world.

The Anticipation.--"We shall reign on the earth." Thus, notwithstanding they are redeemed, and surround the throne of God, and are in the

presence of the Lamb that redeemed them, and are surrounded with the angelic hosts of heaven, where all is glory ineffable, their song contemplates a still higher state, when the great work of redemption shall be completed, and they, with the whole redeemed family of God, of every age, shall reign on the earth, which is the promised inheritance, and is to be the final and eternal residence of the saints. (Romans 4:13; Galatians 3:29; Psalms 37:11; Matthew 5:5; 2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21:1-5)

Verse 11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

The Heavenly Sanctuary.--How little conception have we of the magnitude and glory of the heavenly temple! Into that temple John was

introduced, at the opening of chapter 4, by the door which was opened in heaven. Into the same temple, be it remembered, he is still looking in verses 11 and 12. And now he beholds the heavenly hosts. (1) Round about the throne are those represented by the four living creatures. (2) Next come the four and twenty elders. (3) Then John views, surrounding the whole, a multitude of the heavenly angels. How many? How many would we suppose could convene within the heavenly temple? “Ten thousand times ten thousand!” exclaims the seer. In this expression alone we have one hundred million! And then, as if no numerical expression was adequate to embrace the countless throng, he further adds, “And thousands of thousands!” Well might Paul call this, in Hebrews 12:22, “an innumerable company of angels.” And these were in the sanctuary above. Such was the company that John saw assembled at the place where the worship of a universe centers, and where the wondrous plan of human redemption is going forward to completion. And the central object in this innumerable and holy throng was the Lamb of God; and the central act of his life, which claimed

their admiration, was the shedding of his blood for the salvation of fallen man; for every voice in all that heavenly host joined in the ascription which was raised, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” Fitting assemblage for such a place! Fitting song of adoration to be raised to Him who by the shedding of his blood became a ransom for many, and who, as our great High Priest, still pleads its merits in the sanctuary above in our behalf. And here, before such an august assemblage, must our characters soon come up in final review. What shall fit us for the searching ordeal? What shall enable us to rise and stand at last with the sinless throng above? O, infinite merit of the blood of Christ! which can cleanse us from all our pollutions, and make us meet to tread the holy hill of Zion! O, infinite grace of God! which can prepare us to endure the glory, and give us boldness to enter into his presence, even with exceeding joy!

Verse 13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,

and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. 14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped him that liveth forever and ever.

A Clean Universe.--In verse 13 we have an instance of what very frequently occurs in the Scriptures; namely, a declaration thrown in out of its chronological order for the purpose of following out to its completion some previous statement or allusion. In this instance the time is anticipated when redemption is finished. In verse 10 the four living creatures and four and twenty elders had declared, "We shall reign on the earth." Now the prophet's mind is carried forward to that time. The greatest act of Christ's intervention for man--the shedding of his blood-- having been introduced, nothing could be more natural than that the vision should, for a moment, look over to the time when the grand result of the work then inaugurated should be accomplished, the number of the

redeemed be made up, the universe be freed from sin and sinners, and a universal song of adoration go up to God and the Lamb.

It is futile to attempt to apply this to the church in its present state, as most commentators do, or to any time in the past since sin entered the world, or even since Satan fell from his high position as an angel of light and love in heaven. For at the time of which John speaks, every creature in heaven and on earth, without any exception, was sending up its anthem of blessings to God. But to speak only of this world since the fall, cursings instead of blessings have been breathed out against God and his throne from the great majority of our apostate race. And so it will ever be while sin reigns.

We find, then, no place for this scene which John describes, unless we go forward, according to the position above taken, to the time when the whole scheme of redemption is completed, and the saints enter upon their promised reign on the earth, to which the living creatures and elders looked forward in their song in verse 10. With this view,

all is harmonious and plain. That reign on the earth commences after the second resurrection. (Daniel 7:27; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1) At that resurrection, which takes place a thousand years subsequently to the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4, 5), occurs the perdition of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:7) Then fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them (Revelation 20:9); and this fire that causes the perdition of ungodly men is the fire that melts and purifies the earth, as we learn from 2 Peter 3:7-13. Then sin and sinners are destroyed, the earth is purified, the curse with all its ills is forever wiped away, the righteous “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,” and from a clean universe an anthem of praise and thanksgiving ascends to God. In all the fair domain of the great Creator, there is then no room for a vast receptacle of fire and brimstone, where myriads, preserved by the direct power of a God of mercy, shall burn and writhe in unspeakable and eternal torment. In this glad anthem of jubilee there is no room for the discordant and hopeless wailings of the damned, and the curses and blasphemies of those who are sinning and suffering beyond the

pale of hope. Every rebel voice has been hushed in death. They have been burned up root and branch,-
-Satan and all his followers, deceiver and deceived. (Malachi 4:1: Hebrews 2:14) Into smoke have they consumed away. (Psalms 37:20) Like the perishable chaff have they vanished in the flames. (Matthew 3:12) They have been annihilated, not as matter, but as conscious and intelligent beings; for they have become as though they had not been. (Obadiah 16)

To the Lamb, equally with the Father who sits upon the throne, praise is ascribed in this song of adoration. Commentators, with great unanimity, have seized upon this as proof that Christ must be coeval with the Father; for otherwise, say they, here would be worship paid to the creature which belongs only to the Creator. But this does not seem to be a necessary conclusion. The Scriptures certainly clearly intimate that the existence of Christ had a beginning (John 1:1), which was not so in the case of the Father. (See remarks on Revelation 3:14, where it is shown that Christ is not a created being.) But while he does not possess

a co-eternity of past existence with the Father, the beginning of his existence, as the begotten of the Father, antedates the entire work of creation, in relation to which he stands a joint creator with God. (John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2) Could not the Father ordain that to such a being worship should be rendered equally with himself, without its being idolatry on the part of the worshiper? He has raised him to positions which make it proper that he should be worshiped, and has even commanded that worship should be rendered him, which would not have been necessary had he been equal with the Father in eternity of existence. Christ himself declares that “as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.” (John 5:26) The Father has “highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” (Philippians 2:9) And the Father himself says, “Let all the angels of God worship him.” (Hebrews 1:6) These testimonies show that Christ is now an object of worship equally with the Father; but they do not prove that with him he holds an eternity of past existence.

Coming back from the glorious scene anticipated in verse 13 to events transpiring in the heavenly sanctuary before him, the prophet hears the four living creatures exclaim, Amen.

Chapter 6

The Seven Seals

Verse 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. 2. And I saw, and behold a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

Having taken the book, the Lamb proceeds at once to open the seals; and the attention of the apostle is called to the scenes that transpire under each seal. The number seven has already been noticed as denoting in the Scriptures completeness and perfection. The seven seals therefore embrace the whole of a certain class of events, reaching down to the close of probationary time. Hence to say, as some do, that the seals denote a series of events reaching down perhaps to the time of Constantine, and the seven trumpets another series from that time farther on, cannot be correct. The

trumpets denote a series of events which transpire contemporaneously with the events of the seals, but of an entirely different character. A trumpet is a symbol of war; hence the trumpets denote great political commotions to take place among the nations during the gospel age. The seals denote events of a religious character, and contain the history of the church from the opening of the Christian era to the coming of Christ.

Commentators have raised a question concerning the manner in which these scenes were represented before the apostle. Was it merely a written description of the events which was read to him as each successive seal was opened? or was it a pictorial illustration of the events which the book contained, and which was presented before him as the seals were broken? or was it a scenic representation which passed before him, the different actors coming forth and performing their parts? Barnes decides in favor of calling them pictorial illustrations; for he thinks a merely written description would not answer to the language of the apostle setting forth what he saw, and a mere

scenic representation could have no connection with the opening of the seals. But to the view held by Dr. Barnes there are two serious objections: (1) The book was said to contain only writing within, not pictorial illustrations; and (2) John saw the characters which made up the various scenes, not fixed and motionless upon canvas, but living and moving, and engaging actively in the parts assigned them. The view which to us seems most consistent is that the book contained a record of events which were to transpire; and when the seals were broken, and the record was brought to light, the scenes were presented before John, not by the reading of the description, but by a representation of what was described in the book being made to pass before his mind in living characters, in the place where the reality was to transpire; namely, on the earth.

The first symbol, a white horse, and the rider who bears a bow, and to whom a crown is given, and who goes forth conquering and to conquer, is a fit emblem of the triumphs of the gospel in the first century of this dispensation. The whiteness of the

horse denotes the purity of faith in that age; and the crown which was given to the rider, and his going forth conquering and to make still further conquests, the zeal and success with which the truth was promulgated by its earliest ministers. To this it is objected that the ministers of Christ and the progress of the gospel could not be properly represented by such warlike symbols. But we ask, By what symbols could the work of Christianity better be represented when it went forth as an aggressive principle against the huge systems of error with which it had at first to contend? The rider upon this horse went forth--where? His commission was unlimited. The gospel was to all the world.

Verse 3. And. when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

Perhaps the first noticeable feature in these symbols is the contrast in the color of the horses. This is doubtless designed to be significant. If the whiteness of the first horse denoted the purity of the gospel in the period which that symbol covers, the redness of the second horse would signify that in this period that original purity began to be corrupted. The mystery of iniquity already worked in Paul's day; and the professed church of Christ, it would seem, was now so far corrupted by it as to require this change in the color of the symbol. Errors began to arise. Worldliness came in. The ecclesiastical power sought the alliance of the secular. Troubles and commotions were the result. The spirit of this period perhaps reached its climax as we come down to the days of Constantine, the first so-called Christian emperor, whose conversion to Christianity is dated by Mosheim in A. D. 323.[1]

Of this period, Dr. Rice remarks: "It represents a secular period, or union of church and state. Constantine aided the clergy, and put them under obligations to him. He legislated for the church,

called the Council of Nicaea, and was most prominent in that Council. Constantine, not the gospel, had the glory of tearing down the heathen temples. The state had the glory instead of the church. Constantine made decrees against some errors, and was praised, and suffered to go on and introduce many other errors, and oppose some important truths. Controversies arose; and when a new emperor took the throne, there was a rush of the clergy to get him on the side of their peculiar tenets. Mosheim says of this period, ‘There was continual war and trouble.’”

This state of things answers well to the declaration of the prophet that power was given to him that sat on the horse “to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.” The Christianity of that time had mounted the throne, and bore the emblem of the civil power.

Verse 5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that

sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. 6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

How rapidly the work of corruption progresses! What a contrast in color between this symbol and the first one: A black horse--the very opposite of white! A period of great darkness and moral corruption in the church must be denoted by this symbol. By the events of the second seal the way was fully opened for that state of things to be brought about which is here presented. The time that intervened between the reign of Constantine and the establishment of the papacy in A. D. 538 may be justly noted as the time when the darkest errors and grossest superstitions sprung up in the church. Of a period immediately succeeding the days of Constantine, Mosheim says:--

“Those vain fictions, which an attachment to the Platonic philosophy and to popular opinions had engaged the greatest part of the Christian

doctors to adopt before the time of Constantine, were now confirmed, enlarged, and embellished in various ways. Hence arose that extravagant veneration for departed saints, and those absurd notions of a certain fire destined to purify separate souls, that now prevailed, and of which the public marks were everywhere to be seen. Hence also the celibacy of priests, the worship of images and relics, which in process of time almost utterly destroyed the Christian religion, or at least eclipsed its luster, and corrupted its very essence in the most deplorable manner. An enormous train of superstitions was gradually substituted for true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution proceeded from a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have toward a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of Christianity. Accordingly, frequent pilgrimages were undertaken to Palestine, and to the tombs of the martyrs, as if

there alone the sacred principles of virtue and the certain hope of salvation were to be acquired. The reins being once let loose to superstition, which knows no bounds, absurd notions and idle ceremonies multiplied almost every day. Quantities of dust and earth brought from Palestine, and other places remarkable for their supposed sanctity, were handed about as the most powerful remedies against the violence of wicked spirits, and were sold and bought everywhere at enormous prices. The public processions and supplications by which the pagans endeavored to appease their gods, were now adopted into the Christian worship, and celebrated in many places with great pomp and magnificence. The virtues which had formerly been ascribed to the heathen temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges that the former enjoyed under the darkness of paganism, were conferred upon the latter under the light of the gospel, or, rather, under that cloud of superstition which was obscuring its glory. It is

true that, as yet, images were not very common, nor were there any statues at all. But it is at the same time as undoubtedly certain as it is extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of the martyrs was modeled, by degrees, according to the religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ.

“From these facts, which are but small specimens of the state of Christianity at this time, the discerning reader will easily perceive what detriment the church received from the peace and prosperity procured by Constantine, and from the imprudent methods employed to allure the different nations to embrace the gospel. The brevity we have proposed to observe in this history prevents our entering into an ample detail of the dismal effects that arose from the progress and the baneful influence of superstition, which had now become universal.”

Again he says: “A whole volume would be requisite to contain an enumeration of the various frauds which artful knaves practiced with success,

to delude the ignorant, when true religion was almost entirely superseded by horrid superstition.”-
-Ecclesiastical History, 4th cent., part 2, chap. 3.

This extract from Mosheim contains a description of the period covered by the black horse of the third seal that answers accurately to the prophecy. It is seen by this how paganism was incorporated into Christianity, and how, during this period, the false system which resulted in the establishment of the papacy, rapidly rounded out to its full outlines, and ripened into all its deplorable perfection of strength and stature.

The Balances.--“The balances denoted that religion and civil power would be united in the person who would administer the executive power in the government, and that he would claim the judicial authority both in church and state. This was true among the Roman emperors from the days of Constantine until the reign of Justinian, when he gave the same judicial power to the bishop of Rome.”[2]

The Wheat and Barley.--“The measures of wheat and barley for a penny denote that the members of the church would be eagerly engaged after worldly goods, and the love of money would be the prevailing spirit of the times; for they would dispose of anything for money.”[3]

The Oil and Wine.--These “denote the graces of the Spirit, faith and love, and there was great danger of hurting these, under the influence of so much of a worldly spirit. And it is well attested by all historians that the prosperity of the church in this age produced the corruptions which finally terminated in the falling away, and the setting up of the anti-Christian abominations.”[4]

It will be observed that the voice limiting the amount of wheat for a penny, and saying, “Hurt not the oil and the wine,” is not spoken by any one on earth, but comes from the midst of the four living creatures; signifying that, though the under shepherds, the professed ministers of Christ on earth, had no care for the flock, yet the Lord was not unmindful of them in this period of darkness. A

voice comes from heaven. He takes care that the spirit of worldliness does not prevail to such a degree that Christianity should be entirely lost, or that the oil and the wine, the graces of genuine piety, should entirely perish from the earth.

Verse 7. And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. 8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The color of this horse is remarkable. The colors of the white, red, and black horses, mentioned in the preceding verses, are natural; but a pale color is unnatural. The original word denotes the “pale or yellowish color” that is seen in blighted or sickly plants. A strange state of things in the professed church must be denoted by this symbol. The rider on this horse is named Death; and Hell (.d., the grave) follows with him. The

mortality is so great during this period that it would seem as if “the pale nations of the dead” had come upon earth, and were following in the wake of this desolating power. The period during which this seal applies can hardly be mistaken. It must refer to the time in which the papacy bore its unrebuked, unrestrained, and persecuting rule, commencing about A. D. 538, and extending to the time when the Reformers commenced their work of exposing the corruptions of the papal system.

“And power was given unto them”--him, says the margin; that is, the power personified by Death on the pale horse; namely, the papacy. By the fourth part of the earth is doubtless meant the territory over which this power had jurisdiction; while the words sword, hunger, death (that is, some infliction which causes death, as exposure, torture, etc.), and beasts of the earth, are figures denoting the means by which it has put to death its martyrs, fifty million of whom, according to the lowest estimate, call for vengeance from beneath its bloody altar.

Verse 9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held: 10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? 11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The events set forth as transpiring under the fifth seal are the crying of the martyrs for vengeance, and the giving to them of white robes. The questions that at once suggest themselves for solution are, Does this seal cover a period of time? and if so, what period? Where is the altar under which these souls were seen? What are these souls, and what is their condition? What is meant by their cry for vengeance? What is meant by white robes being given to them? When do they rest for a little season? and what is signified by their brethren

being killed as they were? To all these questions we believe a satisfactory answer can be returned.

1. The Fifth Seal Covers a Period of Time.--It seems consistent that this seal, like all the others, should cover a period of time; and the date of its application cannot be mistaken, if the preceding seals have been rightly located. Following the period of the papal persecution, the time covered by this seal would commence when the Reformation began to undermine the antichristian papal fabric, and restrain the persecuting power of the Romish Church.

2. The Altar.--This cannot denote any altar in heaven, as it is evidently the place where these victims had been slain,--the altar of sacrifice. On this point, Dr. A. Clarke says: "A symbolical vision was exhibited, in which he saw an altar. And under it the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God--martyred for their attachment to Christianity--are represented as being newly slain as victims to idolatry and superstition. The altar is upon earth, not in heaven." A confirmation of this

view is found in the fact that John is beholding scenes upon the earth. The souls are represented under the altar, just as victims slain upon it would pour out their blood beneath it, and fall by its side.

3. The Souls under the Altar.--This representation is popularly regarded as a strong proof of the doctrine of the disembodied and conscious state of the dead. Here, it is claimed, are souls seen by John in a disembodied state; and they were conscious, and had knowledge of passing events; for they cried for vengeance on their persecutors. This view of the passage is inadmissible, for several reasons: (1) The popular view places these souls in heaven; but the altar of sacrifice on which they were slain, and beneath which they were seen, cannot be there. The only altar we read of in heaven is the altar of incense; but it would not be correct to represent victims just slain as under the altar of incense, as that altar was never devoted to such a use. (2) It would be repugnant to all our ideas of the heavenly state, to represent souls in heaven shut up under an altar. (3) Can we suppose that the idea of vengeance would

reign so supreme in the minds of souls in heaven as to render them, despite the joy and glory of that ineffable state, dissatisfied and uneasy till vengeance was inflicted upon their enemies? Would they not rather rejoice that persecution raised its hand against them, and thus hastened them into the presence of their Redeemer, at whose right hand there is fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore? But, further, the popular view which puts these souls in heaven, puts the wicked at the same time in the lake of fire, writhing in unutterable torment, and in full view of the heavenly host. This, it is claimed, is proved by the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, as recorded in Luke 16. Now the souls brought to view under the fifth seal were those who had been slain under the preceding seal, scores of years, and most of them centuries, before. Beyond any question, their persecutors had all passed off the stage of action, and, according to the view under consideration, were suffering all the torments of hell right before their eyes. Yet, as if not satisfied with this, they cry to God as though he were delaying vengeance on their murderers. What greater vengeance could

they want? Or, if their persecutors were still on the earth, they must know that they would, in a few years at most, join the vast multitude daily pouring through the gate of death into the world of woe. Their amiability is put in no better light even by this supposition. One thing, at least, is evident: The popular theory concerning the condition of the dead, righteous and wicked, cannot be correct, or the interpretation usually given to this passage is not correct; for they devour each other.

But it is urged that these souls must be conscious; for they cry to God. This argument would be of weight, were there no such figure of speech as personification. But while there is, it will be proper, on certain conditions, to attribute life, action, and intelligence to inanimate objects. Thus the blood of Abel is said to have cried to God from the ground. Genesis 4:9, 10. The stone cried out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber answered it. Habakkuk 2:11. The hire of the laborers kept back by fraud cried, and the cry entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. James 5:4. So the souls mentioned in our text could cry, and not thereby be

proved to be conscious.

The incongruity of the popular view on this verse is so apparent that Albert Barnes makes the following concession: “We are not to suppose that this literally occurred, and that John actually saw the souls of the martyrs beneath the altar, for the whole representation is symbolical; nor are we to suppose that the injured and the wronged in heaven actually pray for vengeance on those who wronged them, or that the redeemed in heaven will continue to pray with reference to things on earth; but it may be fairly inferred from this that there will be as real a remembrance of the wrongs of the persecuted, the injured, and the oppressed, as if such a prayer were offered there; and that the oppressor has as much to dread from the divine vengeance as if those whom he has injured should cry in heaven to the God who hears prayer, and who takes vengeance.”--Notes on Revelation 6.

On such passages as this, the reader is misled by the popular definition of the word soul. From that definition, he is led to suppose that this text

speaks of an immaterial, invisible, immortal essence in man, which soars into its coveted freedom on the death of its hindrance and clog, the mortal body. No instance of the occurrence of the word in the original Hebrew or Greek will sustain such a definition. It oftenest means life, and is not unfrequently rendered person. It applies to the dead as well as to the living, as may be seen by reference to Genesis 2:7, where the word living need not have been expressed were life an inseparable attribute of the soul; and to Numbers 19:13, where the Hebrew Concordance reads, "dead soul." Moreover, these souls pray that their blood may be avenged,--an article which the immaterial soul, as popularly understood, is not supposed to possess. The word souls may be regarded as here meaning simply the martyrs, those who had been slain, the words, souls of them, being a periphrasis for the whole person. They were represented to John as having been slain upon the altar of papal sacrifice, on this earth, and lying dead beneath it. They certainly were not alive when John saw them under the fifth seal; for he again brings to view the same company, in almost the

same language, and assures us that the first time they live after their martyrdom, is at the resurrection of the just. Revelation 20:4-6. Lying there, victims of papal bloodthirstiness and oppression, they cried to God for vengeance, in the same manner that Abel's blood cried to him from the ground. (Genesis 4:10)

4. The White Robes.--These were given as a partial answer to their cry, "How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?" How was it?--They had gone down to the grave in the most ignominious manner. Their lives had been misrepresented, their reputations tarnished, their names defamed, their motives maligned, and their graves covered with shame and reproach, as containing the dishonored dust of the most vile and despicable of characters. Thus the Church of Rome, which then molded the sentiment of the principal nations of the earth, spared no pains to make her victims an abhorring unto all flesh.

But the Reformation began its work. It began to be seen that the church was the corrupt and

disreputable party, and those against whom it vented its rage were the good, the pure, and the true. The work went on among the most enlightened nations, the reputation of the church going down, and that of the martyrs coming up, until the corruptions of the papal abominations were fully exposed, and that huge system of iniquity stood forth before the world in all its naked deformity, while the martyrs were vindicated from all the aspersions under which that anti-Christian church had sought to bury them. Then it was seen that they had suffered, not for being vile and criminal, but “for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.” Then their praises were sung, their virtues admired, their fortitude applauded, their names honored, and their memories cherished. White robes were thus given unto every one of them.

5. The Little Season.--The cruel work of Romanism did not altogether cease, even after the work of the Reformation had become wide-spread and well established. Not a few terrible outbursts of Romish hate and persecution were yet to be felt by

the church. Multitudes more were to be punished as heretics, and to join the great army of martyrs. The full vindication of their cause was to be delayed a little season. And during this time, Rome added hundreds of thousands to the vast throng of whose blood she had already become guilty. (See Buck's Theological Dictionary, art. Persecution.) But the spirit of persecution was finally restrained; the cause of the martyrs was vindicated; and the "little season" of the fifth seal came to a close.

Verse 12. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man,

hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Such are the solemn and sublime scenes that transpire under the sixth seal. And a thought well calculated to awaken in every heart an intense interest in divine things, is the consideration that we are now living amid the momentous events of this seal, as will presently be proved.

Between the fifth and sixth seals there seems to be a sudden and entire change in the language, from the highly figurative to the strictly literal. Whatever may be the cause of this change, the change itself cannot well be denied. By no principle of interpretation can the language of the preceding seals be made to be literal, nor can the language of this any more easily be made to be figurative. We must therefore accept the change, even though we should be unable to explain it.

There is a great fact, however, to which we would here call attention. It was to be in the period covered by this seal that the prophetic portions of God's word were to be unsealed, and many run to and fro, or "give their sedulous attention to the understanding of these things," and thereby knowledge on this part of God's word was to be greatly increased. And we suggest that it may be for this reason that the change in the language here occurs, and that the events of this seal, transpiring at a time when these things were to be fully understood, are couched in no figures, but are laid before us in plain and unmistakable language.

The Great Earthquake.--The first event under this seal, perhaps the one which marks its opening, is a great earthquake. As the more probable fulfillment of this prediction, we refer to the great earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, known as the earthquake of Lisbon. Of this earthquake.

"The great earthquake of Nov. 1, 1755, extended over a tract of at least 4,000,000 square miles. Its effects were even extended to the waters

in many places, where the shocks were not perceptible. It pervaded the greater portion of Europe, Africa, and America; but its extreme violence was exercised on the southwestern part of the former. In Africa, this earthquake was felt almost as severely as it had been in Europe. A great part of Algiers was destroyed. Many houses were thrown down at Fez and Mequinez, and multitudes were buried beneath the ruins. Similar effects were realized at Morocco. Its effects were likewise felt at Tangier, at Tetuan, at Funchal in the Island of Madeira. It is probable that all Africa was shaken. At the north, it extended to Norway and Sweden. Germany, Holland, France, Great Britain, and Ireland were all more or less agitated by the same great commotion of the elements. Lisbon (Portugal), previous to the earthquake in 1755, contained 150,000 inhabitants. Mr. Barretti says that 90,000 persons “were lost on that fatal day.”[5]

On page 200 of the same work, we again read: “The terror of the people was beyond description. Nobody wept; it was beyond tears. They ran hither

and thither, delirious with horror and astonishment, beating their faces and breasts, crying, ‘Misericordia; the world’s at an end!’ Mothers forgot their children, and ran about loaded with crucifixes. Unfortunately, many ran to the churches for protection; but in vain was the sacrament exposed; in vain did the poor creatures embrace the altars; images, priests, and people were buried in one common ruin.”

The Encyclopedia Americana states that this earthquake extended also to Greenland, and of its effects upon the city of Lisbon further says: “The city then contained about 150,000 inhabitants. The shock was instantly followed by the fall of every church and convent, almost all the large and public buildings, and more than one fourth of the houses. In about two hours after the shock, fires broke out in different quarters, and raged with such violence for the space of nearly three days that the city was completely desolated. The earthquake happened on a holy day, when the churches and convents were full of people, very few of whom escaped.”

Sir Charles Lyell gives the following graphic description of this remarkable phenomenon:--

“In no part of the volcanic region of southern Europe has so tremendous an earthquake occurred in modern times as that which began on the 1st of November, 1755, at Lisbon. A sound of thunder was heard underground, and immediately afterward a violent shock threw down the greater part of that city. In the course of about six minutes, sixty thousand persons perished. The sea first retired, and laid the bar dry; it then rolled in, rising fifty feet above its ordinary level. The mountains of Arrabida, Estrella, Julio, Marvan, and Cintra, being some of the largest in Portugal, were impetuously shaken, as it were from their very foundations; and some of them opened at their summits, which were split and rent in a wonderful manner, huge masses of them being thrown down into the subjacent valleys. Flames are related to have issued from these mountains, which are supposed to have been electric; they are also said to have smoked; but vast clouds of dust may have given rise to this appearance.

“The most extraordinary circumstance which occurred at Lisbon during the catastrophe, was the subsidence of the new quay, built entirely of marble, at an immense expense. A great concourse of people had collected there for safety, as a spot where they might be beyond the reach of falling ruins; but suddenly the quay sunk down with all the people on it, and not one of the dead bodies ever floated to the surface. A great number of boats and small vessels anchored near it, all full of people, were swallowed up as in a whirlpool. No fragments of these wrecks ever rose again to the surface, and the water in the place where the quay had stood is stated, in many accounts, to be unfathomable; but Whitehurst says he ascertained it to be one hundred fathoms.

“In this case, we must either suppose that a certain tract sunk down into a subterranean hollow, which would cause a ‘fault’ in the strata to the depth of six hundred feet, or we may infer, as some have done, from the entire disappearance of the substances engulfed, that a chasm opened and

closed again. Yet in adopting this latter hypothesis, we must suppose that the upper part of the chasm, to the depth of one hundred fathoms, remained open after the shock. According to the observations made at Lisbon in 1837 by Mr. Sharpe, the destroying effects of this earthquake were confined to the tertiary strata, and were most violent on the blue clay, on which the lower part of the city is constructed. Not a building, he says, on the secondary limestone or the basalt was injured.

“The great area over which this Lisbon earthquake extended is very remarkable. The movement was most violent in Spain, Portugal, and the north of Africa; but nearly the whole of Europe, and even the West Indies, felt the shock on the same day. A seaport called St. Ubes, about twenty miles south of Lisbon, was engulfed. At Algiers and Fez in Africa, the agitation of the earth was equally violent, and at the distance of eight leagues from Morocco, a village, with the inhabitants, to the number of about eight or ten thousand persons, together with all their cattle, were swallowed up. Soon after, the earth closed again over them.

“The shock was felt at sea, on the deck of a ship to the west of Lisbon, and produced very much the same sensation as on dry land. Off St. Lucas, the captain of the ship ‘Nancy’ felt his vessel so violently shaken that he thought she had struck the ground, but, on heaving the lead, found a great depth of water. Captain Clark, from Denia, in latitude 36° 24’ N., between nine and ten in the morning, had his ship shaken and strained as if she had struck upon a rock. Another ship, forty leagues west of St. Vincent, experienced so violent a concussion that the men were thrown a foot and a half perpendicularly up from the deck. In Antigua and Barbadoes, as also in Norway, Sweden, Germany, Holland, Corsica, Switzerland, and Italy, tremors and slight oscillations of the ground were felt.

“The agitation of lakes, rivers, and springs in Great Britain was remarkable. At Loch Lomond, in Scotland, for example, the water, without the least apparent cause, rose against its banks, and then subsided below its usual level. The greatest

perpendicular height of this swell was two feet four inches, It is said that the movement of this earthquake was undulatory, and that it traveled at the rate of twenty miles a minute. A great wave swept over the coast of Spain, and is said to have been sixty feet high at Cadiz. At Tangier, in Africa, it rose and fell eighteen times on the coast; at Funchal, in Madeira, it rose full fifteen feet perpendicular above high-water mark, although the tide, which ebbs and flows there seven feet, was then at half ebb. Besides entering the city and committing great havoc, it overflowed other seaports in the island. At Kinsale, in Ireland, a body of water rushed into the harbor, whirled round several vessels, and poured into the marketplace.

“It was before stated that the sea first retired at Lisbon; and this retreat of the ocean from the shore at the commencement of an earthquake, and its subsequent return in a violent wave, is a common occurrence. In order to account for the phenomenon, Mitchell imagines a subsidence at the bottom of the sea from the giving way of the roof

of some cavity, in consequence of a vacuum produced by the condensation of steam. Such condensation, he observes, might be the first effect of the introduction of a large body of water into fissures and cavities already filled with steam, before there had been sufficient time for the heat of the incandescent lava to turn so large a supply of water into steam, which, being soon accomplished, causes a greater explosion.”[6]

If the reader will look on his atlas at the countries above mentioned, he will see how large a portion of the earth’s surface was agitated by this awful convulsion. Other earthquakes may have been as severe in particular localities, but no other one of which we have any record, combining so great an extent with such a degree of severity, has ever been felt on this earth. It certainly supplies all the conditions necessary to constitute it a fitting event to mark the opening of the seal.

The Darkening of the Sun.--Following the earthquake, it is announced that “the sun became black as sackcloth of hair.” This portion of the

prediction has also been fulfilled. Into a detailed account of the wonderful darkening of the sun, May 19, 1780, we need not here enter. Most persons of general reading, it is presumed, have seen some account of it. The following detached declarations from different authorities will give an idea of its nature:--

“The dark day of Northern America was one of those wonderful phenomena of nature which will always be read of with interest, but which philosophy is at a loss to explain.”--Herschel.

“In the month of May, 1780, there was a terrific dark day in New England, when ‘all faces seemed to gather blackness,’ and the people were filled with fear. There was great distress in the village where Edward Lee lived, ‘men’s hearts failing them for fear’ that the Judgment-day was at hand; and the neighbors all flocked around the holy man,” who “spent the gloomy hours in earnest prayer for the distressed multitude.”--Tract No. 379, American Tract Society; Life of Edward Lee.

“Candles were lighted in many houses. Birds were silent and disappeared. Fowls retired to roost. It was the general opinion that the Day of Judgment was at hand.”[7]

“The darkness was such as to occasion farmers to leave their work in the field, and retire to their dwellings. Lights became necessary to the transaction of business within doors. The darkness continued through the day.”[8]

“The cocks crew as at daybreak, and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night. The alarm produced by this unusual aspect of the heavens was very great.”[9]

“It was midnight darkness at noonday. ... Thousands of people who could not account for it from natural causes, were greatly terrified; and indeed, it cast a universal gloom on the earth. The frogs and night-hawks began their notes.”[10]

“Similar days have occasionally been known, though inferior in the degree or extent of their

darkness. The causes of these phenomena are unknown. They certainly were not the result of eclipses.”[11]

“Almost, if not altogether alone, as the most mysterious and yet unexplained phenomenon of its kind in nature’s diversified range of events, during the last century, stands the dark day of May 19th, 1780,--a most unaccountable darkening of the whole visible heavens and atmosphere in New England,--which brought intense alarm and distress to multitudes of minds, as well as dismay to the brute creation, the fowls fleeing, bewildered, to their roosts, and the birds to their nests, and the cattle returning to their stalls. Indeed, thousands of the good people of that day became fully convinced that the end of all things terrestrial had come.... The extent of this darkness was also very remarkable. It was observed at the most easterly regions of New England; westward to the farthest parts of Connecticut, and at Albany; to the southward, it was observed all along the seacoast; and to the north, as far as the American settlements extended. It probably far exceeded these

boundaries, but the exact limits were never positively known.”[12]

The poet Whittier thus speaks of this event:--

“‘T was on a May-day of the far old year
Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell
Over the bloom and sweet life of the spring,
Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,
A horror of great darkness, like the night
In day of which the Norland sages tell —
The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky
Was black with ominous clouds, save where its
rim
Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which
climbs
The crater’s sides from the red hell below.
Birds ceased to sing, and all the barnyard fowls
Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars
Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leathern
wings
Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;
Men prayed, and women wept; all ears grew
sharp

To hear the doom-blast of the trumpet shatter
The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ
Might look from the rent clouds, not as he
looked

A loving guest in Bethany, but stern
As justice and inexorable law.”

The next most notable dark day, compared with that of 1780, was in 1762. Of this, Mr. Devens speaks as follows:--

“There was also a remarkable darkness at Detroit and vicinity, Oct. 19, 1762, being almost total for the greater part of the day. It was dark at daybreak, and this continued till nine o’clock, when it cleared up a little, and for the space of about a quarter of an hour, the body of the sun was visible, it appearing as red as blood, and more than three times as large as usual. The air all this time was of a dingy yellowish color. At half past one o’clock it was so dark as to necessitate the lighting of candles, in order to attend to domestic duties. At about three in the afternoon the darkness became more dense, increasing in intensity until half past

three, when the wind breezed up from the southwest, and brought on a slight fall of rain, accompanied with a profuse quantity of fine, black particles, in appearance much like sulphur, both in smell and quality. A sheet of clean paper held out in the rain was rendered quite black wherever the drops fell upon it; but when held near the fire, it turned to a yellow color, and, when burned, it fizzed on the paper like wet powder. So black did these powdery particles turn everything upon which they fell, that even the river was covered with a black froth, which, when skimmed off the surface, resembled the lather of soap, with this difference, that it was more greasy, and its color as black as ink. At seven in the evening the air was more clear. This phenomenon was observed throughout a vast region of country; and though various conjectures were indulged in as to the cause of so extraordinary an occurrence, the same degree of mystery attaches to it as to that of 1780, confounding the wisdom even of the most learned philosophers and men of science.”[13]

Let it be noticed that this darkness also falls

within the time specified in the prophecy for the occurrence of this sign; namely, between the years 1755 and 1798. This point is further discussed on pages 349-352.

The Moon Became as Blood.--The darkness of the following night, May 19, 1780, was as unnatural as that of the day had been.

“The darkness of the following evening was probably as gross as has ever been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light. I could not help conceiving at the time that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable darkness, or struck out of existence, the darkness could not have been more complete. A sheet of white paper held within a few inches of the eyes, was equally invisible with the blackest velvet.”[14]

Dr. Adams, already quoted, wrote concerning the night following the dark day:--

“Almost every one who happened to be out in

the evening got lost in going home. The darkness was as uncommon in the night as it was in the day, as the moon had fullled the day before.”

This statement respecting the phase of the moon proves the impossibility of an eclipse of the sun at that time.

And whenever on this memorable night the moon did appear, as at certain times it did, it had, according to this prophecy, the appearance of blood.

And the Stars of Heaven Fell.--The voice of history still is, Fulfilled! Being a much later event than the darkening of the sun, there are multitudes in whose memories it is as fresh as though it were but yesterday. We refer to the great meteoric shower of Nov. 13, 1833. On this point a few extracts will suffice.

“At the cry, ‘Look out of the window,’ I sprang from a deep sleep, and with wonder saw the east lighted up with the dawn and meteors. ... I called to

my wife to behold; and while robing, she exclaimed, ‘See how the stars fall!’ I replied, ‘That is the wonder;’ and we felt in our hearts that it was a sign of the last days. For truly ‘the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.’ (Revelation 6:13) This language of the prophet has always been received as metaphorical. Yesterday it was literally fulfilled. The ancients understood by aster in Greek, and stella in Latin, the smaller lights of heaven. The refinement of modern astronomy has made distinction between stars of heaven and meteors of heaven. Therefore the idea of the prophet, as it is expressed in the original Greek, was literally fulfilled in the phenomenon of yesterday, so as no man before yesterday had conceived to be possible that it should be fulfilled. The immense size and distance of the planets and fixed stars forbid the idea of their falling unto the earth. Larger bodies cannot fall in myriads unto a smaller body; and most of the planets and all the fixed stars are many times larger than our earth; but these fell toward the earth. And how did they fall? Neither myself nor

one of the family heard any report; and were I to hunt through nature for a simile, I could not find one so apt, to illustrate the appearance of the heavens, as that which St. John uses in the prophecy before quoted: 'The stars of heaven fell unto the earth.' They were not sheets, or flakes, or drops of fire; but they were what the world understands by falling stars; and one speaking to his fellow, in the midst of the scene, would say, 'See how the stars fall!' And he who heard would not stop to correct the astronomy of the speaker, any more than he would reply, 'The sun does not move,' to one who should tell him, 'The sun is rising.' The stars fell 'even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.' Here is the exactness of the prophet. The falling stars did not come as if from several trees shaken, but from one. Those which appeared in the east fell toward the east; those which appeared in the north fell toward the north; those which appeared in the west fell toward the west; and those which appeared in the south (for I went out of my residence into the park), fell toward the south. And they fell not as ripe fruit falls; far from it; but they

flew, they were cast, like the unripe, which at first refuses to leave the branch, and when, under a violent pressure, it does break its hold, it flies swiftly, straight off, descending; and in the multitude falling, some cross the track of others, as they are thrown with more or less force, but each one falls on its own side of the tree.”[15]

“Extensive and magnificent showers of shooting stars have been known to occur at various places in modern times; but the most universal and wonderful which has ever been recorded, is that of the 13th of November, 1833, the whole firmament, over all the United States, being then, for hours, in fiery commotion. No celestial phenomenon has ever occurred in this country, since its first settlement, which was viewed with such intense admiration by one class in the community, or with so much dread and alarm by another.... During the three hours of its continuance, the day of Judgment was believed to be only waiting for sunrise.”[16]

The effect of this phenomenon upon the negro population, is described by a Southern planter as

follows:--

“I was suddenly awakened by the most distressing cries that ever fell on my ears. Shrieks of horror and cries for mercy could be heard from most of the negroes of three plantations, amounting in all to some six or eight hundred. While earnestly and breathlessly listening for the cause, I heard a faint voice near the door calling my name. I arose, and taking my sword, stood at the door. At this moment I heard the same voice still beseeching me to rise, and saying, ‘O my God! the world is on fire!’ I then opened the door, and it is difficult to say which excited me most, the awfulness of the scene or the distressed cries of the negroes. Upward of one hundred lay prostrate on the ground, some speechless, and others uttering the bitterest moans, but with their hands raised, imploring God to save the world and them. The scene was truly awful: for never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same. In a word, the whole heavens seemed in motion.”[17]

“Arago computes that not less than two hundred and forty thousand meteors were at the same time visible above the horizon of Boston.” And of the display at Niagara it is said that “no spectacle so terribly grand and sublime was ever before beheld by man as that of the firmament descending in fiery torrents over the dark and roaring cataract.”[18]

These signs in the sun, moon, and stars, are the same as those so strikingly predicted by our Lord, and recorded by the evangelists in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21. In these records, not only the same signs are given, but the same time is pointed out for their fulfilment; namely, a period commencing just this side of the long and bloody persecution of the papal power. In Matthew 24:21, 22, the 1260 years of papal supremacy are brought to view; and “immediately after the tribulation of those days” (verse 29) the sun was to be darkened, etc. Mark is still more definite, and says, “In those days, after that tribulation.” The days, commencing in A. D. 538, ended in 1798; but before they ended, the spirit of persecution had been restrained by the

Reformation, and that tribulation of the church had ceased. And in this period, exactly at the time specified in the prophecy, the fulfillment of these signs commenced in the darkening of the sun and moon.

The first instance of the falling of the stars worthy of any notice, though others of local and minor importance may be mentioned before it, took place in 1799. To the great display of 1833, by far the most brilliant of any on record, we have already referred. Of the extent of this shower, Professor Olmstead, of Yale College, a distinguished meteorologist, says:--

“The extent of the shower of 1833 was such as to cover no inconsiderable part of the earth’s surface; from the middle of the Atlantic on the east to the Pacific on the west, and from the northern coast of South America to undefined regions among the British possessions on the north, the exhibition was visible, and everywhere presented nearly the same appearance.”

From this, it appears that this exhibition was confined exclusively to the Western world. But in the year 1866, another remarkable occurrence of this kind took place, this time in the East, nearly as magnificent in some places as that of 1833, and visible so far as ascertained, throughout the greater part of Europe. Thus the principal portions of the earth have now been warned by this sign.

Observation has shown that these meteoric displays occur at regular intervals of about thirty-three years. The skeptic will doubtless seize upon this as a pretext for throwing them out of the catalogue of signs. But if they are not more than ordinary occurrences, the question is to be answered why they have not occurred as regularly and prominently centuries in the past as in the last hundred years. This is a question science cannot answer, nor can it offer anything more than conjecture as to their cause.

One significant fact will be noticed in connection with all the foregoing signs: They were each instinctively associated--in the minds of the

people, at the time of their occurrence, with the great day of which they were the forerunners. And on each occasion the cry was raised, “The Judgment has come; the world’s at an end.”

But the objector answers, These phenomena in the sun, moon, and stars cannot be signs of the end, because there have been many instances of such occurrences; and pointing to some ten other periods of remarkable darkness besides that of 1780, and to several occasions when stars or meteoric showers have fallen, he asks, with an air of triumph, which one we will take for the sign. That this is not a fanciful representation of the objection, the following facts will demonstrate.

In 1878 we noticed in one of the leading dailies of Chicago a question from a correspondent in Vermont, and the reply given by the paper, as follows:--

“Will you give the causes (and proof) of the ‘dark day’ in 1780, the 19th of May, I believe? An ‘Advent preacher’ has been preaching in this

neighborhood, and alluded to it as a sign of the destruction of the world.”

And the reply is given thus:--

“The dark day of 1780 was produced by entirely natural causes, and was about as much a sign of the destruction of the world as of the advent of the potato-beetle. The darkness, said Dr. Samuel Tenney, of Exeter, N. H., was produced by common clouds. Between these common clouds and the earth intervened another stratum of great thickness. As the stratum advanced, the darkness commenced, and increased with its progress. The uncommon thickness of this stratum was occasioned by two strong currents of wind from the southward and westward, condensing the vapors and drawing them in a northwest direction. The density of this stratum was owing to the vapor and smoke it contained. These so-called dark days have not been uncommon, being known in 366 B. C., 295 B. C., 252 A. D., 746, 775, 1732, 1762, 1780, 1783, 1807, 1816. The one was as prophetic as any other, and no more so.”

It would have been a little more to the satisfaction of any one who wishes to know the reasons of his faith, if the writer of the reply had stated where he found his evidence for all his assertions. And we would like a little light on such points as this: From whence came that “stratum of great thickness”? Of what was it composed? How was it formed? This caviler’s explanation amounts to just this: It was dark because there was great darkness. He simply states the fact in another form, and calls that an explanation. His own statement needs explaining as really as the one to which he refers. “The uncommon thickness of the stratum was caused by two strong currents of wind,” etc. How did those winds chance to come just then, and just when there were vapors to condense? And what caused the vapors? Then how could currents from the west and south draw the vapors “in a northwest direction”? Common philosophy would assign them, under such circumstances, a northeasterly direction. Our friend must be careful, or he will make the dark day to be a greater phenomenon than we have ever claimed it to be.

But, further, we would ask how, according to the reply above given, the words of our Lord can ever be fulfilled. He says that the sun shall be darkened; and he means the literal sun, for he speaks of men and things on the earth in contrast with it. (Luke 21:25) And he says that when it is thus darkened, it is a sign of the end; for when we see these things come to pass, he tells us that we are to know that he is near, even at the doors. But according to the writer of the foregoing, there never can be any sign of this nature. He declares there never has been in the past; and suppose such a phenomenon should occur again, would it be a sign?--Not in his eyes: for the hypothesis of vapors, winds, natural laws, and common occurrences, would instantly fly to his scoffing lips. But something of this kind is to constitute a sign, for the Lord himself has declared it; and we would like to ask the objector how a darkening of the sun should differ from that of 1780 to answer to the prophecy and constitute it a sign?

It is also urged that there have been many such

events, hence it can be no sign; and seven dark days are mentioned by our writer before 1780, and three since, for which, however, he forgot to give his authority. But how does it happen that nobody has seemed to pay any attention to these days, or make any account of them? and why is it that all fix upon May 19, 1780, as the only one worthy of special note, giving it, by way of distinction, the title, The Dark Day?

The answer is obvious. It occupies a pre-eminent position in this respect. It towers up far above all others as the one most remarkable and noteworthy for its awful phenomena.

But we are not left to decide the matter from this evidence alone; for our Lord has not only told us that such an event should occur as a sign of his coming, but he has told us also when it should occur. "Immediately after the tribulation of those days," says Matthew. Mark is more definite, and says, "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened," etc. Mark 13:24. The days are the days of papal supremacy, the 1260 years, from

538 to 1798; the tribulation is the oppression of Christians by the Catholic power till restrained by the work of the Reformation. The tribulation may be said to have ceased about the middle of the eighteenth century. The “days” ended within two years of the close of that century. Thus, by the fixed terms of the prophecy we are shut up to a period of about fifty years in length, and ending in 1798, in which to look for that darkening of the sun which was to be a sign of the Lord’s soon coming.

Again, the darkening of the sun was to be the second great event to take place under the sixth seal. (Revelation 6:12) The first, and the one which marked the opening of that seal, was a great earthquake, shown to be, by comparison with the preceding seals, the great earthquake of Lisbon, Nov. 1, 1755. Between this point and the end of the papal period in 1798, the sun was to be darkened as a sign of the end. Here we are shut up to a period of time positively only fortythree years in length, in which to look for that darkening of the sun which was the subject of the prediction. Now it matters not if our opponents should claim seven thousand

dark days instead of seven, each as notable as the one of 1780, it would not affect the prediction or the sign in the least degree. It matters not how many nor what kind of dark days there may have been in other ages; we look for one which was to take place in that brief, specified period, as the predicted sign.

We fix our eyes upon that time, and what do we behold? We find not only the darkening of the sun, as foretold, but we find a dark day so much more notable than all others that it is set forth by way of pre-eminence as “the dark day,” while in general history all others are passed by in silence.

Viewed from one point, it is very strange that people can overlook considerations of this nature which are so decisive upon this question; from another, it is not. What a man doesn't want to see, he can very easily keep from seeing. But we apprehend the lack both of inclination and ability is accounted for by the prophet Daniel, when he says, “The wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand.”

Of the dark day, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, edition of 1884, page 1604, says:--

“Dark Day, The. May 19, 1780; so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day, extending over all New England. In some places persons could not see to read common print in the open air for several hours together. Birds sang their evening song, disappeared, and became silent; fowls went to roost; cattle sought the barn-yard; and candles were lighted in the houses. The obscuration began about ten o'clock in the morning, and continued till the middle of the next night, but with differences of degree and duration in different places. For several days previous, the wind had been variable, but chiefly from the southwest and the northeast. The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known.”

While the learned editor of Webster's Dictionary testifies so positively that “the true cause of the phenomenon is not known,” it is remarkable how flippantly many smaller minds

proceed to offer their explanations, and account for it from natural causes. Those who lived at the time, and had at least as good an opportunity to mark all its strange features and unnatural manifestations as people of the present time, were filled with awe at the occurrence, and for years, so long as those who saw it, survived, were unable to explain it; but their degenerate sons, the wondrously wise generation of the present, living over a hundred years from the time of its occurrence, and having never seen anything of the kind, assume to explain it with all the ease and nonchalance with which they would tell us that two and two make four.

As the time when we were to look for the beginning of the signs is so definitely located, it is further objected that the falling of the stars in 1833 cannot be one of the signs, because, according to Mark 13:24, 25, they also should have fallen within those days, or previous to 1798, as this event is immediately connected by the word and to the signs in the sun and moon.

We reply by calling attention to the fact that

there are more events than simply the falling of the stars that are linked to the series by the word and. Thus: “And” the stars of heaven shall fall, “and” the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken, “and” then shall they see the Son of man coming, “and” then shall he send his angels to gather the elect. Now the language certainly is not designed to convey the idea that all these things were to take place within those days; for in that case we should have the coming of Christ itself take place before the days ended. Verse 29, stating the conclusion of the argument, says, “So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.” Matthew puts it in still stronger language when he says, “So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it [margin, he, Christ] is near, even at the doors.” But it would be absurd to say that we must wait till the coming of Christ takes place before we can know that that event is near, even at the doors.

These facts, then, plainly appear; namely, that a series of associated events is given us, covering quite a period of time, beginning at some point in

the past, and reaching down to, and including the second coming of Christ. The beginning of the series is placed at a point before the close of a certain prophetic period designated as “those days,” that is, the 1260 years of papal oppression upon the church; but the end of the series lies far outside of that period, as already shown. Now, the question to be decided is, How many events of the series given us are to be looked for before the date by which “those days” are limited, that is, before 1798, where the 1260 days, or years, terminated? The only data we have on which to frame an answer are the facts already noticed; namely, that the events begin within that period, but close outside of it, and no specified number is given as belonging to that period.

The conclusion is therefore inevitable that if the first one of the events designated comes to pass within the specified time, the prophecy is fulfilled, though all the others lie outside of that time. Had the sun alone been darkened before 1798, it would have been sufficient to fulfill the prophecy. The moon even might have been darkened this side of

1798 without vitiating the prophecy in the least degree. The sun and moon were darkened together in 1780, eighteen years before the days ended; the stars fell in 1833, thirty-five years after the end of the days. We have reached the year 1897, ninety-nine years this side the ending of the days, and the shaking of the powers of heaven will be completed not far hence, as other prophecies show; and in immediate connection with that, as Joel and John plainly declare, the coming of the Lord is to take place.

If the objector still insists that according to our application the stars should have fallen before 1798, because the prophecy says, “And the stars of heaven shall fall,” we reply that then all the other events should also have taken place before 1798; for they are all connected in the same way. But this we have shown to be impossible.

And the Heaven Departed as a Scroll.--In this event our minds are turned to the future. From looking at the past, and beholding the word of God fulfilled, we are now called to look at events in the

future, which are no less sure to come. Here is our position, unmistakably defined. We stand between the 13th and 14th verses of this chapter. We wait for the heavens to depart as a scroll when it is rolled together. And these are times of unparalleled solemnity and importance; for we know not how near we may be to the fulfillment of these things.

This departing of the heavens is included in what the evangelists call, in the same series of events, the shaking of the powers of the heavens. Other scriptures give us further particulars concerning this prediction. From Hebrews 12:25-27, Joel 3:16, Jeremiah 25:30-33, Revelation 16:17, we learn that it is the voice of God, as he speaks in terrible majesty from his throne in heaven, that causes this fearful commotion in earth and sky. Once the Lord spoke, when with an audible voice he declared to his creatures the precepts of his eternal law, and the earth shook. He is to speak again, and not only the earth will shake, but the heavens also. Then will the earth “reel to and fro like a drunkard;” it will be “dissolved” and “utterly broken down” (Isaiah 24); mountains will

move from their firm bases; islands will suddenly change their location in the midst of the sea; from the level plain will arise the precipitous mountain; rocks will thrust up their ragged forms from earth's broken surface; and while the voice of God is reverberating through the earth, the direst confusion will reign over the face of nature.

To show that this is no mere conception of the imagination, the reader is requested to mark the exact phraseology which some of the prophets have used in reference to this time. Isaiah (24:19, 20) says: "The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again." Jeremiah (4:23-27) in thrilling language describes the scene as follows: "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were

fled. ... For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate.” (See also the scriptures referred to above.)

Then will the world’s dream of carnal security be effectually broken. Kings, who, intoxicated with their own earthly authority, have never dreamed of a higher power than themselves, now realize that there is One who reigns King of kings; and the great men behold the vanity of all earthly pomp, for there is a greatness above that of earth; and the rich men throw their silver and gold to the moles and bats, for it cannot save them in that day; and the chief captains forget their little brief authority, and the mighty men their might; and every bondman who is in the still worse bondage of sin, and every freeman,—all classes of the wicked, from the highest to the lowest, — join in the general wail of consternation and despair. They who never prayed to Him whose arm could bring salvation, now raise an agonizing prayer to rocks and mountains to bury them forever from the sight of Him whose presence brings to them destruction. Fain would they now avoid reaping what they have

sown by a life of lust and sin. Fain would they now shun the fearful treasure of wrath which they have been heaping up for themselves against this day. Fain would they bury themselves and their catalogue of crimes in everlasting darkness. And so they fly to the rocks, caves, caverns, and fissures, which the broken surface of the earth now presents before them. But it is too late. They cannot conceal their guilt, nor escape the long-delayed vengeance.

“It will be in vain to call,
Rocks and mountains on us fall;
For His hand will find out all,
In that day.”

The day which they thought never would come, has at last taken them as in a snare; and the involuntary language of their anguished hearts is, “The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Before it is called out by the fearful scenes of this time, we pray you, reader, give your most serious and candid attention to this subject.

Many now affect to despise the institution of prayer; but at one time or another all men will pray. Those who will not now pray to God in penitence, will then pray to the rocks and mountains in despair; and this will be the largest prayer-meeting ever held. As you read these lines, think whether you would like to have a part therein.

Ah! better far
To cease the unequal war,
While pardon, hope, and peace may yet be
found;
Nor longer rush upon the embossed shield
Of the Almighty, but repentant yield,
And all your weapons of rebellion ground.
Better pray now in love, than pray ere long in
fear.
Call ye upon him, while he waits to hear;
So in the coming end,
When down the parted sky
The angelic hosts attend
The Lord of heaven, most high,
Before whose face the solid earth is rent,
You may behold in him a friend omnipotent,

And safely rest beneath his sheltering wings,
Amid the ruin of all earthly things.

Notes:

1. Ecclesiastical Commentaries.
2. Miller's Lectures, p. 181.
3. Id.
4. Id.
5. Sears, in his Wonders of the World, pp. 50, 58, 381.
6. Library of Choice Literature, Vol. VII, pp, 162, 163.
7. Pres. Dwight, in Ct. Historical Collections.
8. Gage's History of Rowley, Mass.
9. Portsmouth Journal, May 20, 1843.
10. Dr. Adams.
11. Sears's Guide to Knowledge.
12. Our First Century, by R. M. Devens, pp. 89, 90.
13. Our First Century, p. 96.
14. Mr. Tenney, of Exeter, N. H., quoted by Mr. Gage to the "Historical Society."
15. Henry Dana Ward.
16. Our First Century, p. 329.

17. Id. p. 330.

18. Id., ib.

Chapter 7

The Sealing

Verse 1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. 2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, 3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

The chronology of the work here introduced is established beyond mistake. The sixth chapter closed with the events of the sixth seal, and the seventh seal is not mentioned until we reach the opening of chapter 8. The whole of chapter 7 is therefore thrown in here parenthetically. Why is it thus thrown in at this point?--Evidently for the purpose of stating additional particulars concerning

the sixth seal. The expression, “after these things,” does not mean after the fulfillment of all the events previously described; but after the prophet had been carried down in vision to the close of the sixth seal, in order not to break the consecutive order of events as given in chapter 6, his mind is called to what is mentioned in chapter 7, as further particulars to transpire in connection with that seal. Then we inquire, Between what events in that seal does this work come in? It must transpire before the departing of the heavens as a scroll; for after that event there is no place for such a work as this. And it must take place subsequently to the signs in the sun, moon, and stars; for these signs have been fulfilled, and such a work has not yet been accomplished. It comes in, therefore, between the 13th and 14th verses of Revelation 6; but there, as already shown, is just where we now stand. Hence the first part of Revelation 7 relates to a work the accomplishment of which may be looked for at the present time.

Four Angel’s.--Angels are ever-present agents in the affairs of the earth; and why may not these

be four of those heavenly beings into whose hands God has committed the work here described; namely, holding the winds while it is God's purpose that they should not blow, and hurting the earth with them when the time comes that they should be loosed? For it will be noticed (verse 3) that the "hurting" is a work committed to their hands equally with the "holding;" so that they do not merely let the winds go when they are to blow, but they cause them to blow; they impel forward the work of destruction with their own supernatural energy. But the hurting process here brought to view does not include the seven last plagues. That work is given into the hands of seven special angels; this, into the hands of four. Or, it may be that when the time comes for the pouring out of the plagues, the seven angels who have specific charge of these judgments, unite with the four whose mission it is to cause the winds to blow, and all together bring on that pre-eminent exhibition of divine vengeance against a generation which is pre-eminent in guilt.

Four Corners of the Earth.--An expression

denoting the four quarters, or the four points of the compass, and signifying that these angels, in their particular sphere, had charge of the whole earth.

The Four Winds.--Winds, in the Bible, symbolize political commotion, strife, and war. (Daniel 7:2; Jeremiah 25:32) The four winds, held by four angels standing in the four quarters of the earth, must denote all the elements of strife and commotion that exist in the world; and when they are all loosed, and all blow together, it will constitute the great whirlwind just referred to in the prophecy of Jeremiah.

The Angel Ascending from the East.--Another literal angel, having charge of another specific work, is here introduced. Instead of the words, "ascending from the east," some translations read, "Ascending from the sun rising," which is a more literal translation. The expression evidently refers to manner rather than locality; for as the sun arises with rays at first oblique and comparatively powerless, but increases in strength until it shines in all its meridian power and splendor, so the work

of this angel commences in weakness, moves onward with ever-accumulating influence, and closes in strength and power.

The Seal of the Living God.--This is the distinguishing characteristic of the ascending angel; he bears with him the seal of the living God. From this fact, and the chronology of his work, we are to determine, if possible, what movement is symbolized by his mission. The nature of his work is evidently embraced in his having the seal of the living God; and to ascertain what his work is, the inquiry must be answered what this seal of the living God is, which he bears with him.

1. The Term Seal Defined.--A seal is defined to be an instrument of sealing; that which “is used by individuals, corporate bodies, and states, for making impressions on wax, upon instruments of writing, as an evidence of their authenticity.” The original word in this passage is defined, “A seal, i. e., a signet ring; a mark, stamp, badge; a token, a pledge.” Among the significations of the verb are the following: “To secure to any one, to make sure;

to set a seal or mark upon anything in token of its being genuine or approved; to attest, to confirm, to establish, to distinguish by a mark.” By a comparison of Genesis 17:11 with Romans 4:11, and Revelation 7:3 with Ezekiel 9:4, in connection with the above definition, the reader will see that the words token, sign, seal, and mark are used in the Bible as synonymous terms. The seal of God, as brought to view in our text, is to be applied to the servants of God. We are not, of course, to suppose that in this case it is some literal mark to be made in the flesh, but that it is some institution or observance having special reference to God, which will serve as a “mark of distinction” between the worshipers of God and those who are not in truth his servants, though they may profess to follow him.

2. The Use of a Seal.--A seal is used to render valid or authentic any enactments, or laws, which a person or power may promulgate. Frequent instances of its use occur in the Scriptures. In 1 Kings 21:8, we read that Jezebel “wrote letters in Ahab’s name, and sealed them with his seal.”

These letters then had all the authority of King Ahab. Again, in Esther 3:12: “In the name of King Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king’s ring.” So also in chapter 8:8: “The writing which is written in the king’s name, and sealed with the king’s ring, may no man reverse.”

3. Where a Seal is Used.--Always in connection with some law or enactment that demands obedience, or upon documents that are to be made legal, or subject to the provisions of law. The idea of law is inseparable from a seal.

4. As Applied to God.--We are not to suppose that to the enactments and laws of God binding upon men, there must be attached a literal seal, made with literal instruments; but from the definition of the term, and the purpose for which a seal is used, as shown above, we must understand a seal to be strictly that which gives validity and authenticity to enactments and laws. This is found, though a literal seal may not be used, in the name or signature of the law-making power, expressed in such terms as to show what the power is, and its

right to make laws and demand obedience. Even with a literal seal, the name must always be used. (See the references above given.) An instance of the use of the name alone seems to occur in Daniel 6:8: “Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not;” that is, affix the signature of royalty, showing who it is that demands obedience, and his right to demand it.

In a gospel prophecy found in Isaiah 8, we read: “Bind up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.” This must refer to a work of reviving some of the claims of the law in the minds of the disciples, which had been overlooked, or perverted from their true meaning. And this, in the prophecy, is called sealing the law, or restoring to it its seal, which had been taken from it.

Again, the 144,000, who in the chapter before us are said to be sealed with the seal of God in their foreheads, are again brought to view in Revelation 14:1, where they are said to have the Father’s name

written in their foreheads.

From the foregoing reasoning, facts, and declarations of Scripture, two conclusions inevitably follow:--

1. The seal of God is found in connection with the law of God.

2. The seal of God is that part of his law which contains his name, or descriptive title, showing who he is, the extent of his dominion, and his right to rule.

The law of God is admitted by all the leading evangelical denominations to be summarily contained in the decalogue, or ten commandments. We have, then, but to examine these commandments to see which one it is that constitutes the seal of the law, or, in other words, makes known the true God, the law-making power. The first three commandments mention the word God; but we cannot tell from these who is meant, for there are multitudes of objects to which this

name is applied. There are “gods many and lords many,” as the apostle says. (1 Corinthians 8:5) Passing over the fourth commandment for the time being, the fifth contains the words Lord and God, but does not define them; and the remaining five precepts do not contain the name of God at all. Now what shall be done? With that portion of the law which we have examined, it would be impossible to convict the grossest idolater of sin. The worshiper of images could say, This idol before me is my god; his name is god, and these are his precepts. The worshiper of the heavenly bodies could also say, The sun is my god, and I worship him according to this law. Thus, without the fourth commandment, the decalogue is null and void, so far as it pertains to enforcing the worship of the true God. But let us now add the fourth commandment, restore to the law this precept, which many are ready to contend has been expunged, and see how the case will then stand, As we examine this commandment, which contains the declaration, “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is,” etc., we see at once that we are reading the requirements of

Him who created all things. The sun, then, is not the God of the decalogue; the true God is he who made the sun. No object in heaven or earth is the being who here demands obedience; for the God of this law is the one who made all created things. Now we have a weapon against idolatry. Now this law can no longer be applied to false gods, who “have not made the heavens and the earth.” (Jeremiah 10:11) Now the author of this law has declared who he is, the extent of his dominion, and his right to rule; for every created intelligence must at once assent that He who is the Creator of all, has a right to demand obedience from all his creatures. Thus with the fourth commandment in its place, this wonderful document, the decalogue, the only document among men which God ever wrote with his own finger, has a signature; it has that which renders it intelligible and authentic; it has a seal. But without the fourth commandment, it lacks all these things.

From the foregoing reasoning, it is evident that the fourth commandment constitutes the seal of the law of God, or the seal of God. But the Scriptures

do not leave us without direct testimony on this point.

We have seen above that in Scripture usage, sign, seal, token, and mark are synonymous terms. Now, the Lord expressly says that the Sabbath is a sign between him and his people. “Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep; for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.” (Exodus 31:13) The same fact is again stated by the prophet Ezekiel 20:12, 20. Here the Lord told his people that the very object of their keeping the Sabbath, that is, observing the fourth commandment, was that they might know that he was the true God. This is the same as if the Lord had said, “The Sabbath is a seal. On my part it is the seal of my authority, the sign that I have the right to command obedience; on your part it is a token that you take me to be your God.”

Should it be said that this principle can have no application to Christians at the present time, as the Sabbath was a sign between God and the Jews

only, it would be sufficient to reply that the terms Jew and Israel, in a true Scriptural sense, are not confined to the literal seed of Abraham. Abraham was chosen at first, because he was the friend of God, while his fathers were idolaters; and his seed were chosen to be God's people, the guardians of his law and the depositaries of his truth, because all others had apostatized from him; and it is true that these words respecting the Sabbath were spoken to them while they enjoyed the honor of being thus set apart from all others. But when the middle wall of partition was broken down, and the Gentiles were called in to be partakers of the blessings of Abraham, all God's people, both Jews and Gentiles, were brought into a new and more intimate relation to God through his Son, and they are now called "Jews inwardly," and "Israelites indeed." And now the declaration applies to all such; for they have as much occasion to know the Lord as had his people of old.

Thus the fourth commandment, or the Sabbath, is taken by the Lord as a sign between him and his people, or the seal of his law in both dispensations;

the people by that commandment signifying that they are the worshipers of the true God, and God, by the same commandment, making himself known as their rightful ruler, inasmuch as he is their Creator.

In harmony with this idea, the significant fact is to be noticed that whenever the sacred writers wish to point out the true God in distinction from false gods of every description, an appeal is made to the great facts of creation, upon which the fourth commandment is based. (See 2 Kings 19:15; 2 Chronicles 2:12; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalms 115:4-7, 15; 121:2; 124:8; 134:3; 146:6; Isaiah 37:16; 42:5; 44:24; 45:12; Job 9:8; Isaiah 51:13; Jeremiah 10:10-12; Psalms 96:5; Jeremiah 32:17; 51:15; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:23, 24, etc.)

We refer again to the fact that the same company who in Revelation 7 have the seal of the living God in their foreheads, are brought to view again in Revelation 14:1, having the Father's name in their foreheads. This is good proof that the "seal of the living God," and the "Father's name," are

used synonymously. The chain of evidence on this point is rendered complete, when it is ascertained that the fourth commandment, which has been shown to be the seal of the law, is spoken of by the Lord as that which contains his name. The proof of this will be seen by referring to Deuteronomy 16:6: “But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in, there shalt thou sacrifice the passover,” etc. What was there where they sacrificed the passover?--There was the sanctuary, having in its holiest apartment the ark with the ten commandments, the fourth of which declared the true God, and contained his name. Wherever this fourth commandment was, there God’s name was placed; and this was the only object to which the language could be applied. (See Deuteronomy 12:5, 11, 21; 14:23, 24, etc.)

Having now ascertained that the seal of God is his holy Sabbath, having his name, we are prepared to proceed with the application. By the scenes introduced in the verses before us, namely, the four winds apparently about to blow, bringing war and trouble upon the land, and this work restrained till

the servants of God should be sealed, as though a preparatory work must be done for them to save them from this trouble, we are reminded of the houses of the Israelites marked with the blood of the paschal lamb, and spared as the destroying angel passed over to slay the first-born of the Egyptians (Exodus 12); also of the mark made by the man with a writer's inkhorn (Ezekiel 9) upon all those who were to be spared by the men with the slaughtering weapons who followed after; and we conclude that the seal of God, here placed upon his servants, is some distinguishing mark, or religious characteristic, through which they will be exempted from the judgments of God that fall on the wicked around them.

As we have found the seal of God in the fourth commandment, the inquiry follows, Does the observance of that commandment involve any peculiarity in religious practice?--Yes, a very marked and striking one. It is one of the most singular facts to be met with in religious history that, in an age of such boasted gospel light as the present, when the influence of Christianity is so

powerful and wide-spread, one of the most striking peculiarities in practice which a person can adopt, and one of the greatest crosses he can take up, even in the most enlightened and Christian lands, is the simple observance of the law of God. For the fourth commandment requires the observance of the seventh day of each week as the Sabbath of the Lord; but almost all Christendom, through the combined influences of paganism and the papacy, have been beguiled into the keeping of the first day. A person has but to commence the observance of the day enjoined in the commandment, and a mark of peculiarity is upon him at once. He is distinct alike from the professedly religious world and the unconverted world.

We conclude, then, that the angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God, is a divine messenger in charge of a work of reform to be carried on among men in reference to the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. The agents of this work on the earth are of course ministers of Christ; for to men is given the commission of instructing their fellow men in Bible truth; but as

there is order in the execution of all the divine counsels, it seems not improbable that a literal angel may have the charge and oversight of this work.

We have already noticed the chronology of this work as locating it in our own time. This is further evident from the fact that, as the next event after the sealing of these servants of God, we behold them before the throne, with palms of victory in their hands. The sealing is therefore the last work to be accomplished for them prior to their redemption.

In Revelation 14 we find the same work again brought to view under the symbol of an angel flying in the midst of heaven with the most terrific warning that ever fell upon the ears of men. We shall speak of this more fully when we reach that chapter. We refer to it now, as it is the last work to be accomplished for the world before the coming of Christ, which is the next event in order in that prophecy, and hence must synchronize with the work here brought to view in Revelation 7:1-3. The

angel with the seal of the living God, mentioned in chapter 7, is therefore the same as the third angel of chapter 14. And this view strengthens the foregoing exposition of the seal. For while, as the result of the work in chapter 7, a certain company are sealed with the seal of the living God, as the result of the third message of chapter 14 a company are brought out rendering Scriptural obedience to all the “commandments of God.” Verse 12. But, excepting the fourth, there is no commandment of the decalogue upon which the Christian world theoretically needs reforming; and that this is the representative question in this message is evident from the fact that the keeping of the commandments, observing, with all the other moral precepts, the Lord’s Sabbath, is what distinguishes the servants of God from those who worship the beast and receive his mark, which is, as will be hereafter shown, the observance of a counterfeit sabbath.

Having thus briefly noticed the main points of the subject, we now come to the most striking feature of all. In exact accordance with the

foregoing chronological argument, we find this work already in process of fulfillment before our eyes. The third angel's message is going forth; the angel ascending from the east is on his mission; the reform on the Sabbath question has commenced; it is surely, though yet in comparative silence, working its way through the land; it is destined to agitate every country entitled to the light of the gospel; and it will result in bringing out a people prepared for the soon coming of the Saviour, and sealed for his everlasting kingdom.

With one more question we leave these verses, upon which we have so lengthily dwelt. Have we seen among the nations any movements which would indicate that the cry of the ascending angel, "Hurt not," etc., by the blowing of the winds, "till we have sealed the servants of our God," has in any manner been answered? The time during which the winds are held could not, from the nature of the case, be a time of profound peace. This would not answer to the prophecy. For in order to make it manifest that the winds are being held, there must be disturbance, agitation, anger, and jealousy

among the nations, with an occasional outburst of strife, like a fitful gust breaking away from the imprisoned and struggling tempest; and these outbursts must be suddenly and unexpectedly checked. Then, but not otherwise, would it be evident to him who looked at events in the light of the prophecy, that for some good purpose the restraining hand of Omnipotence was laid upon the surging elements of strife and war. And such has been the aspect of our times for nearly half a century. Commencing with the great revolution of 1848, when so many European thrones toppled into the dust, what a state of anger and political unrest has existed among all the nations of the earth! New and unlooked-for complications have suddenly sprung up, throwing matters into apparently inextricable confusion, and threatening immediate and direful war. And now and then the conflict has burst forth in fury, and a thousand voices have been raised to predict that the great crisis had come, that universal war must result, and the termination no man could foretell, when suddenly and unaccountably it has been extinguished, and all subsided into quiet again. In our own land the

terrible civil war of 1861 to 1865 is a notable instance. By the spring of the latter year, so great had become the pressure upon the nation for men and means to continue the war that it began seriously to impede the progress of the work symbolized by the ascending angel, even threatening to arrest it entirely. Those interested in these truths, believing that the time had come for the application of the prophecy, and that the words of the angel, "Hurt not," etc., indicated a movement on the part of the church, accordingly raised their petitions to the Ruler of nations to restrain the cruel work of tumult and war. Days of fasting and prayer were set apart for this purpose. The time at which this occurred was a dark and gloomy period of the war; and not a few high in political life predicted its indefinite continuance, and an appalling intensity of all its evils. But suddenly a change came; and not three months had elapsed from the time of which we speak, ere the last army of the Southern Confederacy had surrendered, and all its soldiers had laid down their arms. So sudden and entire was the collapse, and so grateful were all hearts for relief from the pressure

of the terrible strife, that the nation broke forth into a song of jubilee, and these words were conspicuously displayed at the national capitol: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes." There are those who believe there was a definite cause for this sudden cessation of the strife, of which, of course, the world is but little aware. The sudden conclusion of the Franco-German war of 1870 and the recent war between Turkey and Russia, may be cited as still later examples. Perhaps further events of this kind are yet to be witnessed to fulfill more completely this feature of the prophecy.

Verse 4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. 5. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. 6. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephtalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed

twelve thousand. 7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. 8. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

The number sealed is here stated to be one hundred and forty-four thousand; and from the fact that twelve thousand are sealed from each of the twelve tribes, many suppose that this work must have been accomplished as far back at least as about the beginning of the Christian era, when these tribes were literally in existence. They do not see how it can apply to our own time, when every trace of distinction between these tribes has been so long and so completely obliterated. We refer such persons to the opening language of the Epistle of James: “James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations,” etc.

Those whom James here addresses are (1) Christians; for they are his brethren; (2) They are not the converts to Christianity from the Jews, the twelve tribes of his own day; for he addresses them in view of the coming of the Lord. (See chapter 5.) He is thus addressing the last generation of Christians, the Christians of our own day; and he calls them the twelve tribes scattered abroad. How can this be? Paul explains in Romans 11:17-24. In the striking figure of grafting which he there introduces, the tame olive tree represents Israel. Some of the branches, the natural descendants of Abraham, were broken off because of unbelief (in Christ). Through faith in Christ the wild olive scions, the Gentiles, are grafted into the tame olive stock, and thus the twelve tribes are perpetuated. And here we find an explanation of the language of the same apostle: "They are not all Israel which are of Israel," and "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, ... but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." (Romans 9:6-8; 2:28, 29) So we find on the gates of the New Jerusalem--which is a New Testament or Christian, not a Jewish, city--the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

On the foundations of this city are inscribed the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. (Revelation 21:12-14) If the twelve tribes belong exclusively to the former dispensation, the more natural order would have been to have their names on the foundations, and those of the twelve apostles on the gates; but no, the names of the twelve tribes are on the gates. And as through these gates, so inscribed, all the redeemed hosts will go in and out, so, as belonging to these twelve tribes, will all the redeemed be reckoned, whether on earth they were Jews or Gentiles. Of course we look in vain for any marks of distinction between the tribes here on earth; and since Christ has appeared in the flesh, the preservation of the genealogy of the tribes is not necessary. But in heaven, where the names of the church of the first-born are being enrolled, we may be sure there is order, and that each name is enrolled in its own tribe. (Hebrews 12:23)

It will be observed that the enumeration of the tribes here differs from that given in other places. The twelve sons of Jacob, who became the heads

of great families, called tribes, were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, and Joseph. But Jacob, on his dying bed, adopted the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, to constitute two of the tribes of Israel. (Genesis 48:5) This divided the tribe of Joseph, making thirteen tribes in all. Yet in the distribution of the land of Canaan by lot, they numbered but twelve tribes, and made but twelve lots; for the tribe of Levi was left out, being appointed to the service of the tabernacle, and having no inheritance. But in the passage before us, Ephraim and Dan are omitted, and Levi and Joseph put in their places. The omission of Dan is accounted for by commentators on the ground that that tribe was the one chiefly addicted to idolatry. (See Judges 18, etc.) The tribe of Levi here takes its place with the rest, as in the heavenly Canaan * the reasons for their not having an inheritance will not exist, as in the earthly; and Joseph is probably put for Ephraim, it being a name which appears to have been applied to either the tribe of Ephraim or Manasseh. (Numbers 13:11)

Twelve thousand were sealed “out of ” each of the twelve tribes, showing that not all who in the records of heaven had a place among these tribes when this sealing work commenced, stood the test, and were overcomers at last; for the names of those already in the book of life will be blotted out, unless they overcome. (Revelation 3:5)

Verse 9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; 10. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. 11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, 12. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.

The sealing having been accomplished, John beholds a countless multitude worshiping God in rapture before his throne. This vast throng are undoubtedly the saved out of every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue, raised from the dead at the second coming of Christ, showing that the sealing is the last work accomplished for the people of God prior to translation.

Verse 13. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? 14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. 16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. 17. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters:

and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

The questions proposed by one of the elders to John, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?” taken in connection with John’s answer, “Sir, thou knowest,” implying that John did not know, would seem to be devoid of all point, if they had reference to the whole of the great multitude now before him. For John did know who they were, and from whence they came; inasmuch as he had just said that they were people--redeemed of course--out of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues; and John could have answered, These are the redeemed ones from all the nations of the earth. But if a special company in this vast throng were referred to, distinguished by some special mark or position, then it might not be so evident who they were, and what had given them their peculiarity; and the questions, as applied to them, would be appropriate and pertinent. We therefore incline to the view that attention is called to a special company by the questions which were proposed by one of the

elders; and no company is brought to view to which special allusion would more naturally be made than to the company spoken of in the first part of the chapter; namely, the 144,000. John had indeed seen this company in their mortal state, as they were receiving the seal of the living God amid the troublous scenes of the last days; but as they here stand among the redeemed throng, the transition is so great, and the condition in which they now appear so different, that he does not recognize them as the special company which he saw sealed upon the earth. And to this company, the specifications that follow seem to be specially applicable.

1. They Came out of Great Tribulation.--While it is true in some degree of all Christians that they must “through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God,” it is true in a very emphatic sense of the 144,000. They pass through the great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. (Daniel 12:1) They experience the mental anguish of the time of Jacob’s trouble. (Jeremiah 30:4-7) They stand without a mediator through the

terrific scenes of the seven last plagues, those exhibitions of God's unmingled wrath in the earth. (Revelation, chapters 15, 16) They pass through the severest time of trouble the world has ever known, although they are delivered out of it.

2. White Robes.--They wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb. To the last generation the testimony is very emphatic on the subject of obtaining the white raiment. Revelation 3:5, 18. And though the 144,000 are accused of rejecting Christ, and trusting to their own works for salvation, because they refuse to violate the commandments of God (Revelation 14:1, 12), in the great day that calumny will be wiped off. It will be seen that they have rested their hope of life on the merits of the shed blood of their divine Redeemer, making him their source of righteousness. There is peculiar force in saying of these that they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

3. The First-fruits.--Verse 15 describes the post of honor they occupy in the kingdom, and their

nearness to God. In another place they are called “the first-fruits unto God and the Lamb.” Revelation 14:4.

4. They Shall Hunger No More.--In verse 16 it is said, “They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.” This shows that they have once suffered hunger and thirst. To what can this refer? As it doubtless has reference to some special experience, may it not refer to their trials in the time of trouble, more especially during the last plagues? In this time the righteous will be reduced to bread and water; and though that “will be sure” (Isaiah 33:16), enough for sustenance, yet may it not be that when the pastures, with all fruits and vegetation, are dried up (Joel 1:18-20), and the rivers and fountains are turned to blood (Revelation 16:4-9), to reduce their connection with earth and earthly things to the lowest limit, the saints who pass through that time will be brought occasionally to the extreme degrees of hunger and thirst? But the kingdom once gained, “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more.” And the prophet continues, in reference to this company, “Neither

shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” We remember that the 144,000 live through the time when power is given unto the sun “to scorch men with fire.” (Revelation 16:8, 9) And though they are shielded from the deadly effect which it has upon the wicked around them, we cannot suppose that their sensibilities will be so deadened that they will feel no unpleasant sensations from the terrific heat. No; as they enter the fields of the heavenly Canaan, they will be prepared to appreciate the divine assurance that the sun shall not light upon or injure them, nor any heat.

5. And the Lamb Shall Lead Them.--Another testimony concerning the same company, and applying at the same time, says, “These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.” Revelation 14:4. Both expressions denote the state of intimate and divine companionship to which the blessed Redeemer admits them in reference to himself.

The psalmist, in the following beautiful passage, seems to allude to the same promise:

“They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.” (Psalms 36:8) The phraseology of this promise to the 144,000 is also partially found in the following glowing prophecy from the pen of Isaiah: “He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.” (Isaiah 25:8)

Chapter 8

The Seven Trumpets

We name as the subject of this chapter the seven trumpets, as these constitute the main theme of the chapter, although there are other matters introduced before the opening of that series of events. The first verse of this chapter relates to the events of the preceding chapters, and therefore should not have been separated from them by the division of the chapter.

Verse 1. And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The series of seven seals is here resumed and concluded. The sixth chapter closed with the events of the sixth seal, the eighth commences with the opening of the seventh seal; hence the seventh chapter stands parenthetically between the sixth and seventh seals, from which it appears that the sealing work of that chapter belongs to the sixth

seal.

Silence in Heaven.--Concerning the cause of this silence, only conjecture can be offered,--a conjecture, however, which is supported by the events of the sixth seal. That seal does not bring us to the second advent, although it embraces events that transpire in close connection therewith. It introduces the fearful commotions of the elements, described as the rolling of the heavens together as a scroll, caused by the voice of God, the breaking up of the surface of the earth, and the confession on the part of the wicked that the great day of God's wrath is come. They are doubtless in momentary expectation of seeing the King appear in, to them, unendurable glory. But the seal stops just short of that event. The personal appearing of Christ must therefore be allotted to the next seal. But when the Lord appears, he comes with all the holy angels with him. Matthew 25:31. And when all the heavenly harpers leave the courts above to come down with their divine Lord, as he descends to gather the fruit of his redeeming work, will there not be silence in heaven?

The length of this period of silence, if we consider it prophetic time, would be about seven days.

Verse 2. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

This verse introduces a new and distinct series of events. In the seals we have had the history of the church during what is called the gospel dispensation. In the seven trumpets, now introduced, we have the principal political and warlike events which were to transpire during the same time.

Verse 3. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. 4. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up

before God out of the angel's hand. 5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth; and there were voices, and thunderings: and lightnings, and an earthquake.

Having as it were, in verse 2, brought out the seven angels, and introduced them before us upon the stage of action, John, for a moment, in the three verses last quoted, directs attention to an entirely different scene. The angel which approaches the altar is not one of the seven trumpet angels. The altar is the altar of incense, which, in the earthly sanctuary, was placed in the first apartment. Here, then, is another proof that there exists in heaven a sanctuary with its corresponding vessels of service, of which the earthly was a figure, and that we are taken into that sanctuary by the visions of John. A work of ministration for all the saints in the sanctuary above is thus brought to view. Doubtless the entire work of mediation for the people of God during the gospel dispensation is here presented. This is apparent from the fact that the angel offers his incense with the prayers of all saints. And that

we are here carried forward to the end, is evident from the act of the angel in filling the censer with fire and casting it unto the earth; for his work is then done; no more prayers are to be offered up mingled with incense; and this symbolic act can have its application only at the time when the ministration of Christ in the sanctuary in behalf of mankind has forever ceased. And following the angel's act are voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake,--exactly such occurrences as we are elsewhere informed transpire at the close of human probation. (See Revelation 11:19; 16:17, 18.)

But why are these verses thus thrown in here?-- Answer: As a message of hope and comfort for the church. The seven angels with their warlike trumpets had been introduced; terrible scenes were to transpire under their sounding; but before they commence, the people of God are pointed to the work of mediation in their behalf above, and their source of help and strength during this time. Though they should be tossed like feathers upon the tumultuous waves of strife and war, they were to know that their great High Priest still ministered

for them in the sanctuary in heaven, and that thither they could direct their prayers, and have them offered, with incense, to their Father in heaven. Thus could they gain strength and support in all their calamities.

Verse 6. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

The subject of the seven trumpets is here resumed, and occupies the remainder of this chapter and all of chapter 9. The seven angels prepare themselves to sound. Their sounding comes in as a complement to the prophecy of Daniel 2 and 7, commencing with the breaking up of the old Roman empire into its ten divisions, of which, in the first four trumpets, we have a description.

Verse 7. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

A full exposition of the seven trumpets is given in a work entitled, *An Exposition of the Seven Trumpets of Revelation VIII and IX*, published at the Review and Herald Office, Battle Creek, Mich., to which the reader is referred for a more extended examination of the subject. To that work we are chiefly indebted for the extracts given below.

Mr. Keith has very justly remarked on the subject of this prophecy:--

“None could elucidate the texts more clearly, or expound them more fully, than the task has been performed by Gibbon. The chapters of the skeptical philosopher that treat directly of the matter, need but a text to be prefixed, and a few unholy words to be blotted out, to form a series of expository lectures on the eighth and ninth chapters of Revelation.” “Little or nothing is left for the professed interpreter to do but to point to the pages of Gibbon.”

The first sore and heavy judgment which fell

on Western Rome in its downward course, was the war with the Goths under Alaric, who opened the way for later inroads. After the death of Theodosius, the Roman emperor, in January, 395, before the end of the winter, the Goths under Alaric were in arms against the empire.

“Hail and fire, mingled with blood,” were cast upon the earth. The terrible effects of this Gothic invasion are represented as “hail,” from the fact of the northern origin of the invaders; “fire,” from the destruction by flame of both city and country; and “blood,” from the terrible slaughter of the citizens of the empire by the bold and intrepid warriors.

The blast of the first trumpet has its location about the close of the fourth century and onward, and refers to these desolating invasions of the Roman empire by the Goths.

I know not how the history of the sounding of the first trumpet can be more impressively set forth than by presenting the graphic rehearsal of the facts which are stated in Gibbon’s History, by Mr. Keith,

in his Signs of the Times, Vol. I, pp. 221-233:--

“Large extracts show how amply and well Gibbon has expounded his text in the history of the first trumpet, the first storm that pervaded the Roman earth, and the first fall of Rome. To use his words in more direct comment, we read thus the sum of the matter: The Gothic nation was in arms at the first sound of the trumpet, and in the uncommon severity of the winter, they rolled their ponderous wagons over the broad and icy back of the river. The fertile fields of Phocis and Boeotia were crowded with a deluge of barbarians; the males were massacred; the females and cattle of the flaming villages were driven away. The deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths could easily be discovered after several years. The whole territory of Attica was blasted by the baneful presence of Alaric. The most fortunate of the inhabitants of Corinth, Argos, and Sparta, were saved by death from beholding the conflagration of their cities. In a season of such extreme heat that the beds of the rivers were dry, Alaric invaded the dominion of the West. A secluded ‘old man of

Verona,' the poet Claudian, pathetically lamented the fate of his contemporary trees, which must blaze in the conflagration of the whole country [note the words of the prophecy,--'The third part of trees was burned up']; and the emperor of the Romans fled before the king of the Goths.

“A furious tempest was excited among the nations of Germany, from the northern extremity of which the barbarians marched almost to the gates of Rome. They achieved the destruction of the West. The dark cloud which was collected along the coasts of the Baltic, burst in thunder upon the banks of the upper Danube. The pastures of Gaul, in which flocks and herds grazed, and the banks of the Rhine, which were covered with elegant houses and well-cultivated farms, formed a scene of peace and plenty, which was suddenly changed into a desert, distinguished from the solitude of nature only by smoking ruins. Many cities were cruelly oppressed, or destroyed. Many thousands were inhumanly massacred; and the consuming flames of war spread over the greater part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul.

“Alaric again stretched his ravages over Italy. During four years the Goths ravaged and reigned over it without control. And, in the pillage and fire of Rome, the streets of the city were filled with dead bodies; the flames consumed many public and private buildings; and the ruins of a palace remained (after a century and a half) a stately monument of the Gothic conflagration.

“The concluding sentence of the thirty-third chapter of Gibbon’s History is of itself a clear and comprehensive commentary; for in winding up his own description of this brief but most eventful period, he concentrates, as in a parallel reading, the sum of the history and the substance of the prediction. But the words which precede it are not without their meaning: ‘The public devotion of the age was impatient to exalt the saints and martyrs of the Catholic Church on the altars of Diana and Hercules. The union of the Roman empire was dissolved; its genius was humbled in the dust; and armies of unknown barbarians, issuing from the frozen regions of the North, had established their

victorious reign over the fairest provinces of Europe and Africa.’

“The last word, Africa, is the signal for the sounding of the second trumpet. The scene changes from the shores of the Baltic to the southern coast of the Mediterranean, or from the frozen regions of the North to the borders of burning Africa; and instead of a storm of hail being cast upon the earth, a burning mountain was cast into the sea.”

Verse 8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; 9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The Roman empire, after Constantine, was divided into three parts; and hence the frequent remark, “a third part of men,” etc., in allusion to the third part of the empire which was under the scourge. This division of the Roman kingdom was

made at the death of Constantine, between his three sons, Constantius, Constantine II, and Constans. Constantius possessed the East, and fixed his residence at Constantinople, the metropolis of the empire. Constantine the Second held Britain, Gaul, and Spain. Constans held Illyricum, Africa, and Italy.[1] Of this well-known historical fact, Elliott, as quoted by Albert Barnes, in his notes on Revelation 12:4, says: “Twice, at least, before the Roman empire became divided permanently into the two parts, the Eastern and the Western, there was a tripartite division of the empire. The first occurred A. D. 311, when it was divided between Constantine, Licinius, and Maximin; the other, A. D. 337, on the death of Constantine, when it was divided between his three sons, Constantine, Constans, and Constantius.”

The history illustrative of the sounding of the second trumpet evidently relates to the invasion and conquest of Africa, and afterward of Italy, by the terrible Genseric. His conquests were, for the most part, naval; and his triumphs were “as it were a great mountain burning with fire, cast into the

sea.” What figure would better, or even so well, illustrate the collision of navies, and the general havoc of war on the maritime coasts? In explaining this trumpet, we are to look for some events which will have a particular bearing on the commercial world. The symbol used naturally leads us to look for agitation and commotion. Nothing but a fierce maritime warfare would fulfill the prediction. If the sounding of the first four trumpets relates to four remarkable events which contributed to the downfall of the Roman empire, and the first trumpet refers to the ravages of the Goths under Alaric, in this we naturally look for the next succeeding act of invasion which shook the Roman power and conducted to its fall. The next great invasion was that of “the terrible Genseric,” at the head of the Vandals. His career occurred during the years A. D. 428-468. This great Vandal chief had his headquarters in Africa. But, as Gibbon states, “The discovery and conquest of the black nations [in Africa], that might dwell beneath the torrid zone, could not tempt the rational ambition of Genseric; but he cast his eyes toward the sea; he resolved to create a naval power, and his bold

resolution was executed with steady and active perseverance.” From the port of Carthage he repeatedly made piratical sallies, and preyed on the Roman commerce, and waged war with that empire. To cope with this sea monarch, the Roman emperor, Majorian, made extensive naval preparations. Three hundred long galleys, with an adequate proportion of transports and smaller vessels, were collected in the secure and capacious harbor of Cartagena, in Spain. But Genseric was saved from impending and inevitable ruin by the treachery of some powerful subjects, envious or apprehensive of their master’s success. Guided by their secret intelligence, he surprised the unguarded fleet in the bay of Cartagena; many of the ships were sunk, taken, or burned, and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day.

Italy continued to be long afflicted by the incessant depredations of the Vandal pirates. In the spring of each year they equipped a formidable navy in the port of Carthage, and Genseric himself, though at a very advanced age, still commanded in person the most important expeditions.

The Vandals repeatedly visited the coasts of Spain, Liguria, Tuscany, Campania, Lucania, Bruttium, Apulia, Calabria, Venetia, Dalmatia, Epirus, Greece, and Sicily.

The celerity of their motion enabled them, almost at the same time, to threaten and to attack the most distant objects which attracted their desires; and as they always embarked a sufficient number of horses, they had no sooner landed than they swept the dismayed country with a body of light cavalry.

A last and desperate attempt to dispossess Genseric of the sovereignty of the seas, was made in the year 468 by Leo, the emperor of the East. Gibbon bears witness to this as follows:--

“The whole expense of the African campaign amounted to the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds of gold,--about five million two hundred thousand pounds sterling.... The fleet that sailed from Constantinople to Carthage consisted

of eleven hundred and thirteen ships, and the number of soldiers and mariners exceeded one hundred thousand men.... The army of Heraclius and the fleet of Marcellinus either joined or seconded the imperial lieutenant.... The wind became favorable to the designs of Genseric. He manned his largest ships of war with the bravest of the Moors and Vandals, and they towed after them many large barks filled with combustible materials. In the obscurity of the night, these destructive vessels were impelled against the unguarded and unsuspecting fleet of the Romans, who were awakened by a sense of their instant danger. Their close and crowded order assisted the progress of the fire, which was communicated with rapid and irresistible violence; and the noise of the wind, the crackling of the flames, the dissonant cries of the soldiers and mariners, who could neither command nor obey, increased the horror of the nocturnal tumult. While they labored to extricate themselves from the fire-ships, and to save at least a part of the navy, the galleys of Genseric assaulted them with temperate and disciplined valor; and many of the Romans who escaped the fury of the flames, were

destroyed or taken by the victorious Vandals.... After the failure of this great expedition, Genseric again became the tyrant of the sea; the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia were again exposed to his revenge and avarice; Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and before he died, in the fulness of years and of glory, he beheld the final extinction of the empire of the West.”--Gibbon, Vol. III, pp. 495-498.

Concerning the important part which this bold corsair acted in the downfall of Rome, Mr. Gibbon uses this significant language: “Genseric, a name which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila.”

Verse 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters. 11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became

wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

In the interpretation and application of this passage, we are brought to the third important event which resulted in the subversion of the Roman empire. And in finding an historical fulfillment of this third trumpet, we shall be indebted to the Notes of Dr. Albert Barnes for a few extracts. In explaining this scripture, it is necessary, as this commentator says,--

“That there should be some chieftain or warrior who might be compared to a blazing meteor; whose course would be singularly brilliant; who would appear suddenly like a blazing star, and then disappear like a star whose light was quenched in the waters. That the desolating course of this meteor would be mainly on those portions of the world which abounded with springs of water and running streams. That an effect would be produced as if those streams and fountains were made bitter; that is, that many persons would perish, and that wide desolations would be caused in the vicinity of

those rivers and streams, as if a bitter and baleful star should fall into the waters, and death should spread over lands adjacent to them, and watered by them.”[2]

It is here premised that this trumpet has allusion to the desolating wars and furious invasions of Attila against the Roman power, which he carried on at the head of his hordes of Huns. Speaking of this warrior, particularly of his personal appearance, Mr. Barnes says:--

“In the manner of his appearance, he strongly resembled a brilliant meteor flashing in the sky. He came from the East gathering his Huns, and poured them down, as we shall see, with the rapidity of a flashing meteor, suddenly on the empire. He regarded himself also as devoted to Mars, the god of war, and was accustomed to array himself in a peculiarly brilliant manner, so that his appearance, in the language of his flatterers, was such as to dazzle the eyes of beholders.”

In speaking of the locality of the events

predicted by this trumpet, Mr. Barnes has this note:—

“It is said particularly that the effect would be on ‘the rivers’ and on ‘the fountains of waters.’ If this has a literal application, or if, as was supposed in the case of the second trumpet, the language used was such as had reference to the portion of the empire that would be particularly affected by the hostile invasion, then we may suppose that this refers to those portions of the empire that abounded in rivers and streams, and more particularly those in which the rivers and streams had their origin; for the effect was permanently in the ‘fountains of waters.’ As a matter of fact, the principal operations of Attila were on the regions of the Alps, and on the portions of the empire whence the rivers flow down into Italy. The invasion of Attila is described by Mr. Gibbon in this general language: ‘The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated, by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field.’”

“And the Name of the Star is called Wormwood [denoting the bitter consequences].” These words--which are more intimately connected with the preceding verse, as even the punctuation in our version denotes--recall us for a moment to the character of Attila, to the misery of which he was the author or the instrument, and to the terror that was inspired by his name.

“‘Total extirpation and erasure,’ are terms which best denote the calamities he inflicted.” He styled himself, “The Scourge of God.”

“One of his lieutenants chastised and almost exterminated the Burgundians of the Rhine. They traversed, both in their march and in their return, the territories of the Franks; and they massacred their hostages as well as their captives. Two hundred young maidens were tortured with exquisite and unrelenting rage; their bodies were torn asunder by wild horses, or were crushed under the weight of rolling wagons; and their unburied limbs were abandoned on public roads, as a prey to

dogs and vultures.

“It was the boast of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot which his horse had trod. The Western emperor with the senate and people of Rome, humbly and fearfully deprecating the wrath of Attila. And the concluding paragraph of the chapters which record his history, is entitled, ‘Symptoms of the Decay and Ruin of the Roman Government.’ ‘The name of the star is called Wormwood.’”[3]

Verse 12. And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

We understand that this trumpet symbolizes the career of Odoacer, the barbarian monarch who was so intimately connected with the downfall of Western Rome. The symbols, sun, moon, and stars--for they are undoubtedly here used as symbols--

evidently denote the great luminaries of the Roman government,--its emperors, senators, and consuls. Bishop Newton remarks that the last emperor of Western Rome was Momyllus, who in derision was called Augustulus, or the “diminutive Augustus.” Western Rome fell A. D. 476. Still, however, though the Roman sun was extinguished, its subordinate luminaries shone faintly while the senate and consuls continued. But after many civil reverses and changes of political fortune, at length, A. D. 566, the whole form of the ancient government was subverted, and Rome itself was reduced from being the empress of the world to a poor dukedom tributary to the Exarch of Ravenna.

Under the heading, “Extinction of the Western Empire, A. D. 476 or A. D. 479,” Elder J. Litch (Prophetic Exposition, Vol. II, pp. 156-160) quotes from Mr. Keith as follows:--

“The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace; and he signified his resignation to the senate; and that assembly, in their last act of obedience to a Roman prince, still

affected the spirit of freedom and the forms of the constitution. An epistle was addressed, by their unanimous decree, to the emperor, Zeno, the son-in-law and successor of Leo, who had lately been restored, after a short rebellion, to the Byzantine throne. They solemnly ‘disclaim the necessity or even the wish of continuing any longer the imperial succession in Italy; since in their opinion the majesty of a sole monarch is sufficient to pervade and to protect, at the same time, both the East and the West, In their own name, and in the name of the people, they consent that the seat of universal empire shall be transferred from Rome to Constantinople; and they basely renounce the right of choosing their master, the only vestige which yet remained of the authority which had given laws to the world.’

“The power and glory of Rome as bearing rule over any nation, became extinct. The name alone remained to the queen of nations. Every token of royalty disappeared from the imperial city. She who had ruled over the nations sat in the dust, like a second Babylon, and there was no throne where

the Caesars had reigned. The last act of obedience to a Roman prince which that once august assembly performed, was the acceptance of the resignation of the last emperor of the West, and the abolition of the imperial succession in Italy. The sun of Rome was smitten....

“A new conqueror of Italy, Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, speedily arose, who unscrupulously assumed the purple, and reigned by right of conquest. ‘The royalty of Theodoric was proclaimed by the Goths (March 5, A. D. 493), with the tardy, reluctant, ambiguous consent of the emperor of the East.’ The imperial Roman power, of which either Rome or Constantinople had been jointly or singly the seat, whether in the West or the East, was no longer recognized in Italy, and the third part of the sun was smitten, till it emitted no longer the faintest rays. The power of the Caesars was unknown in Italy; and a Gothic king reigned over Rome.

“But though the third part of the sun was smitten, and the Roman imperial power was at an

end in the city of the Caesars, yet the moon and the stars still shone, or glimmered, for a little longer in the Western empire, even in the midst of Gothic darkness. The consulship and the senate [“the moon and the stars”] were not abolished by Theodoric. ‘A Gothic historian applauds the consulship of Theodoric as the hight of all temporal power and greatness;’--as the moon reigns by night, after the setting of the sun. And instead of abolishing that office, Theodoric himself ‘congratulates those annual favorites of fortune, who, without the cares, enjoyed the splendor of the throne.’

“But, in their prophetic order, the consulship and the senate of Rome met their fate, though they fell not by the hands of Vandals or of Goths. The next revolution in Italy was in subjection to Belisarius, the general of Justinian, emperor of the East. He did not spare what barbarians had hallowed. ‘The Roman Consulship Extinguished by Justinian, A. D. 541,’ is the title of the last paragraph of the fortieth chapter of Gibbon’s History of the Decline and Fall of Rome. ‘The

succession of the consuls finally ceased in the thirteenth year of Justinian, whose despotic temper might be gratified by the silent extinction of a title which admonished the Romans of their ancient freedom.’ The third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars. In the political firmament of the ancient world, while under the reign of imperial Rome, the emperors, the consulate, and the senate shone like the sun, the moon, and the stars. The history of their decline and fall is brought down till the two former were ‘extinguished,’ in reference to Rome and Italy, which so long had ranked as the first of cities and of countries; and finally, as the fourth trumpet closes, we see the ‘extinction of that illustrious assembly,’ the Roman senate. The city that had ruled the world, as if in mockery of human greatness, was conquered by the eunuch Narses, the successor of Belisarius. He defeated the Goths (A. D. 552), achieved ‘the conquest of Rome,’ and the fate of the senate was sealed.”

Elliott (*Horae Apocalypticae*, Vol. I, pp. 357-360) speaks of the fulfillment of this portion of the

prophecy in the extinction of the Western empire, as follows:--

“Thus was the final catastrophe preparing, by which the Western emperors and empire were to become extinct. The glory of Rome had long departed; its provinces one after another been rent from it; the territory still attached to it become like a desert; and its maritime possessions, and its fleets and commerce been annihilated. Little remained to it but the vain titles and insignia of sovereignty. And now the time was come when these too were to be withdrawn. Some twenty years or more from the death of Attila, and much less from that of Genseric (who, ere his death, had indeed visited and ravaged the eternal city in one of his maritime marauding expeditions, and thus yet more prepared the coming consummation), about this time, I say, Odoacer, chief of the Heruli,--a barbarian remnant of the host of Attila, left on the Alpine frontiers of Italy,--interposed with his command that the name and the office of Homan emperor of the West, should be abolished. The authorities bowed in submission to him. The last phantom of an emperor--

one whose name, Romulus Augustus, was singularly calculated to bring in contrast before the reflective mind the past glories of Rome and its present degradation--abdicated; and the senate sent away the imperial insignia to Constantinople, professing to the emperor of the East that one emperor was sufficient for the whole of the empire. Thus of the Roman imperial sun, that third which appertained to the Western empire was eclipsed, and shone no more. I say, That third of its orb which appertained to the Western empire; for the Apocalyptic fraction is literally accurate. In the last arrangement between the two courts, the whole of the Illyrian third had been made over to the Eastern division. Thus in the West 'the extinction of the empire' had taken place; the night had fallen.

“Notwithstanding this, however, it must be borne in mind that the authority of the Roman name had not yet entirely ceased. The senate of Rome continued to assemble as usual. The consuls were appointed yearly, one by the Eastern emperor, one by Italy and Rome. Odoacer himself governed Italy under a title (that of patrician) conferred on

him by the Eastern emperor. And as regarded the more distant Western provinces, or at least considerable districts in them, the tie which had united them to the Roman empire was not altogether severed. There was still a certain, though often faint, recognition of the supreme imperial authority. The moon and the stars might seem still to shine on the West with a dim reflected light. In the course of the events, however, which rapidly followed one on the other in the next half century, these, too, were extinguished. Theodoric, the Ostrogoth, on destroying the Heruli and their kingdom at Rome and Ravenna, ruled in Italy from A. D. 493 to 526 as an independent sovereign; and on Belisarius's and Narses's conquest of Italy from the Ostrogoths (a conquest preceded by wars and desolations in which Italy, and above all its seven-hilled city, were for a time almost made desert), the Roman senate was dissolved, the consulship abrogated. Moreover, as regards the barbaric princes of the Western provinces, their independence of the Roman imperial power became now more distinctly averred and understood. After above a century and a half of

calamities unexampled almost, as Dr. Robertson most truly represents it, in the history of nations, the statement of Jerome,--a statement couched under the very Apocalyptic figure of the text, but prematurely pronounced on the first taking of Rome by Alaric,--might be considered as at length accomplished: ‘Clarissimum terrarum lumen extinctum est,’ ‘The world’s glorious sun has been extinguished;’ and that, too, which our own poet has expressed, still under the same beautifully appropriate Apocalyptic imagery,--

‘She saw her glories star by star expire,’ till not even a single star remained, to glimmer on the vacant and dark night.”

The fearful ravages of these barbarian hordes, who, under their bold but cruel and desperate leaders, devastated and finally subdued Rome, are vividly portrayed in the following spirited lines:—

“And then a deluge of wrath it came,
And the nations shook with dread;
And it swept the earth, till its fields were flame,

And piled with the mingled dead.
Kings were rolled in the wasteful flood,
With the low and crouching slave,
And together lay, in a shroud of blood,
The coward and the brave.”

Fearful as were the calamities brought upon the empire by the first incursions of these barbarians, they were comparatively light as contrasted with the calamities which were to follow. They were but as the preliminary drops of a shower before the torrent which was soon to fall upon the Roman world. The three remaining trumpets are overshadowed with a cloud of woe, as set forth in the following verses.

Verse 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.

This angel is not one of the series of the seven

trumpet angels, but simply one who announces that the three remaining trumpets are woe trumpets, on account of the more terrible events to transpire under their sounding. Thus the next, or fifth trumpet, is the first woe; the sixth trumpet, the second woe; and the seventh, the last one in this series of seven trumpets, is the third woe.

Notes:

1. See Sabine's Ecclesiastical History, p. 155.
2. Notes on Revelation 8.
3. Keith.

Chapter 9

The Seven Trumpets (continued)

Verse 1. And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

For an exposition of this trumpet, we shall again draw from the writings of Mr. Keith. This writer truthfully says:--

“There is scarcely so uniform an agreement among interpreters concerning any other part of the Apocalypse as respecting the application of the fifth and sixth trumpets, or the first and second woes, to the Saracens and Turks. It is so obvious that it can scarcely be misunderstood. Instead of a verse or two designating each, the whole of the ninth chapter of the Revelation, in equal portions, is occupied with a description of both.

“The Roman empire declined, as it arose, by conquest; but the Saracens and the Turks were the instruments by which a false religion became the scourge of an apostate church; and hence, instead of the fifth and sixth trumpets, like the former, being designated by that name alone, they are called woes.

“Constantinople was besieged, for the first time after the extinction of the Western empire, by Chosroes, the king of Persia.”

“A star fell from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.”

“While the Persian monarch contemplated the wonders of his art and power, he received an epistle from an obscure citizen of Mecca, inviting him to acknowledge Mohammed as the apostle of God. He rejected the invitation, and tore the epistle. ‘It is thus,’ exclaimed the Arabian prophet, ‘that God will tear the kingdom, and reject the supplication of Chosroes.’ Placed on the verge of these two empires of the East, Mohammed

observed with secret joy the progress of mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs he ventured to foretell, that, before many years should elapse, victory would again return to the banners of the Romans. ‘At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment (!) since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire.’

“It was not, like that designative of Attila, on a single spot that the star fell, but upon the earth.

“Chosroes subjugated the Roman possessions in Asia and Africa. And ‘the Roman empire,’ at that period, ‘was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, with the remnant of Greece, Italy, and Africa, and some maritime cities, from Tyre to Trebizond, of the Asiatic coast. The experience of six years at length persuaded the Persian monarch to renounce the conquest of Constantinople, and to specify the annual tribute of the ransom of the Roman empire,--a thousand talents of gold, a

thousand talents of silver, a thousand silk robes, a thousand horses, and a thousand virgins. Heraclius subscribed to these ignominious terms. But the time and space which he obtained to collect those treasures from the poverty of the East, were industriously employed in the preparation of a bold and desperate attack.’

“The king of Persia despised the obscure Saracen, and derided the message of the pretended prophet of Mecca. Even the overthrow of the Roman empire would not have opened a door for Mohammedanism, or for the progress of the Saracenic armed propagators of an imposture, though the monarch of the Persians and chagan of the Avars (the successor of Attila) had divided between them the remains of the kingdom of the Caesars. Chosroes himself fell. The Persian and Roman monarchies exhausted each other’s strength. And before a sword was put into the hands of the false prophet, it was smitten from the hands of those who would have checked his career and crushed his power.

““Since the days of Scipio and Hannibal, no bolder enterprise has been attempted than that which Heraclius achieved for the deliverance of the empire. He explored his perilous way through the Black Sea and the mountains of Armenia, penetrated into the heart of Persia, and recalled the armies of the great king to the defense of their bleeding country.””

“In the battle of Nineveh, which was fiercely fought from daybreak to the eleventh hour, twentyeight standards, besides those which might be broken or torn, were taken from the Persians; the greatest part of their army was cut in pieces, and the victors, concealing their own loss, passed the night on the field. The cities and palaces of Assyria were opened for the first time to the Romans.”

“The Roman emperor was not strengthened by the conquests which he achieved; and a way was prepared at the same time, and by the same means, for the multitude of Saracens from Arabia, like locusts from the same region, who, propagating in

their course the dark and delusive Mohammedan creed, speedily overspread both the Persian and the Roman empire.

“More complete illustration of this fact could not be desired than is supplied in the concluding words of the chapter from Gibbon, from which the preceding extracts are taken.” “Although a victorious army had been formed under the standard of Heraclius, the unnatural effort seems to have exhausted rather than exercised their strength. While the emperor triumphed at Constantinople or Jerusalem, an obscure town on the confines of Syria was pillaged by the Saracens, and they cut in pieces some troops who advanced to its relief,—an ordinary and trifling occurrence, had it not been the prelude of a mighty revolution. These robbers were the apostles of Mohammed; their fanatic valor had emerged from the desert; and in the last eight years of his reign, Heraclius lost to the Arabs the same provinces which he had rescued from the Persians.”

“The spirit of fraud and enthusiasm, whose

abode is not in the heavens,' was let loose on earth. The bottomless pit needed but a key to open it, and that key was the fall of Chosroes. He had contemptuously torn the letter of an obscure citizen of Mecca. But when from his 'blaze of glory' he sunk into the 'tower of darkness,' which no eye could penetrate, the name of Chosroes was suddenly to pass into oblivion before that of Mohammed; and the crescent seemed but to wait its rising till the falling of the star. Chosroes, after his entire discomfiture and loss of empire, was murdered in the year 628; and the year 629 is marked by 'the conquest of Arabia,' and 'the first war of the Mohammedans against the Roman empire.' 'And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit.' He fell unto the earth. When the strength of the Roman empire was exhausted, and the great king of the East lay dead in his tower of darkness, the pillage of an obscure town on the borders of Syria was 'the prelude of a mighty revolution.' 'The robbers were the apostles of Mohammed, and their fanatic valor emerged from

the desert.’”

The Bottomless Pit.--The meaning of this term may be learned from the Greek *.β.σσ.*, which is defined “deep, bottomless, profound,” and may refer to any waste, desolate, and uncultivated place. It is applied to the earth in its original state of chaos. Genesis 1:2. In this instance it may appropriately refer to the unknown wastes of the Arabian desert, from the borders of which issued the hordes of Saracens, like swarms of locusts. And the fall of Chosroes, the Persian king, may well be represented as the opening of the bottomless pit, inasmuch as it prepared the way for the followers of Mohammed to issue from their obscure country, and propagate their delusive doctrines with fire and sword, till they had spread their darkness over all the Eastern empire.

Verse 2. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

“Like the noxious and even deadly vapor which the winds, particularly from the southwest, diffuse in Arabia, Mohammedanism spread from thence its pestilential influence,--arose as suddenly and spread as widely as smoke arising out of the pit, the smoke of a great furnace. Such is a suitable symbol of the religion of Mohammed, of itself, or as compared with the pure light of the gospel of Jesus. It was not, like the latter, a light from heaven, but a smoke out of the bottomless pit.”

Verse 3. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

“A false religion was set up, which, although the scourge of transgressions and idolatry, filled the world with darkness and delusion; and swarms of Saracens, like locusts, overspread the earth, and speedily extended their ravages over the Roman empire, from east to west. The hail descended from the frozen shores of the Baltic; the burning mountain fell upon the sea from Africa; and the

locusts (the fit symbol of the Arabs) issued from Arabia, their native region. They came as destroyers, propagating a new doctrine, and stirred up to rapine and violence by motives of interest and religion.

“A still more specific illustration may be given of the power, like unto that of scorpions, which was given them. Not only was their attack speedy and vigorous, but ‘the nice sensibility of honor, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, sheds its deadly venom on the quarrels of the Arabs; an indecent action, a contemptuous word, can be expiated only by the blood of the offender; and such is their patient inveteracy, that they expect whole months and years the opportunity of revenge.’”

Verse 4. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

After the death of Mohammed, he was succeeded in the command by Abubeker, A. D. 632, who, as soon as he had fairly established his authority and government, despatched a circular letter to the Arabian tribes, from which the following is an extract:--

““When you fight the battles of the Lord, acquit yourselves like men, without turning your backs; but let not your victory be stained with the blood of women and children. Destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of corn. Cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat. When you make any covenant or article, stand to it, and be as good as your word. As you go on, you will find some religious persons who live retired in monasteries, and propose to themselves to serve God that way; let them alone, and neither kill them nor destroy their monasteries. And you will find another sort of people that belong to the synagogue of Satan, who have shaven crowns; be sure you cleave their skulls, and give them no quarter till they either turn Mohammedans or pay tribute.’

“It is not said in prophecy or in history that the more humane injunctions were as scrupulously obeyed as the ferocious mandate; but it was so commanded them. And the preceding are the only instructions recorded by Gibbon, as given by Abubeker to the chiefs whose duty it was to issue the commands to all the Saracen hosts. The commands are alike discriminating with the prediction, as if the caliph himself had been acting in known as well as direct obedience to a higher mandate than that of mortal man; and in the very act of going forth to fight against the religion of Jesus, and to propagate Mohammedanism in its stead, he repeated the words which it was foretold in the Revelation of Jesus Christ that he would say.”

The Seal of God in their Foreheads.--In remarks upon chapter 7:1-3, we have shown that the seal of God is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment; and history is not silent upon the fact that there have been observers of the true Sabbath all through the present dispensation. But

the question has here arisen with many, Who were those men who at this time had the seal of God in their foreheads, and who thereby became exempt from Mohammedan oppression? Let the reader bear in mind the fact, already alluded to, that there have been those all through this dispensation who have had the seal of God in their foreheads, or have been intelligent observers of the true Sabbath; and let him consider further that what the prophecy asserts is that the attacks of this desolating Turkish power are not directed against them but against another class. The subject is thus freed from all difficulty; for this is all that the prophecy really asserts. Only one class of persons is directly brought to view in the text; namely, those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads; and the preservation of those who have the seal of God is brought in only by implication. Accordingly, we do not learn from history that any of these were involved in any of the calamities inflicted by the Saracens upon the objects of their hate. They were commissioned against another class of men. And the destruction to come upon this class of men is not put in contrast with the preservation of other

men, but only with that of the fruits and verdure of the earth; thus, Hurt not the grass, trees, nor any green thing, but only a certain class of men. And in fulfilment, we have the strange spectacle of an army of invaders sparing those things which such armies usually destroy, namely, the face and productions of nature; and, in pursuance of their permission to hurt those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, cleaving the skulls of a class of religionists with shaven crowns, who belonged to the synagogue of Satan.

These were doubtless a class of monks, or some other division of the Roman Catholic Church. Against these, the arms of the Mohammedans were directed. And it seems to us that there is a peculiar fitness, if not design, in describing them as those who had not the seal of God in their foreheads; inasmuch as that is the very church which has robbed the law of God of its seal, by tearing away the true Sabbath, and erecting a counterfeit in its place. And we do not understand, either from the prophecy or from history, that those persons whom Abubeker charged his followers not to molest were

in possession of the seal of God, or necessarily constituted the people of God. Who they were, and for what reason they were spared, the meager testimony of Gibbon does not inform us, and we have no other means of knowing; but we have every reason to believe that none of those who had the seal of God were molested, while another class, who emphatically had it not, were put to the sword; and thus the specifications of the prophecy are amply met.

Verse 5. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

“Their constant incursions into the Roman territory, and frequent assaults on Constantinople itself, were an unceasing torment throughout the empire; and yet they were not able effectually to subdue it, notwithstanding the long period, afterward more directly alluded to, during which they continued, by unremitting attacks, grievously

to afflict an idolatrous church, of which the pope was the head. Their charge was to torment, and then to hurt, but not to kill, or utterly destroy. The marvel was that they did not.” (In reference to the five months, see on verse 10.)

Verse 6. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

“Men were weary of life, when life was spared only for a renewal of woe, and when all that they accounted sacred was violated, and all that they held dear constantly endangered, and the savage Saracens domineered over them, or left them only to a momentary repose, ever liable to be suddenly or violently interrupted, as if by the sting of a scorpion.”

Verse 7. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

“The Arabian horse takes the lead throughout the world; and skill in horsemanship is the art and science of Arabia. And the barbed Arabs, swift as locusts and armed like scorpions, ready to dart away in a moment, were ever prepared unto battle.

““And on their heads were as it were crowns like gold.’ When Mohammed entered Medina (A. D. 622), and was first received as its prince, ‘a turban was unfurled before him to supply the deficiency of a standard.’ The turbans of the Saracens, like unto a coronet, were their ornament and their boast. The rich booty abundantly supplied and frequently renewed them. To assume the turban is proverbially to turn Mussulman. And the Arabs were anciently distinguished by the miters which they wore.

““And their faces were as the faces of men.’ ‘The gravity and firmness of the mind of the Arab is conspicuous in his outward demeanor; his only gesture is that of stroking his beard, the venerable symbol of manhood.’ ‘The honor of their beards is most easily wounded.’”

Verse 8. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

“Long hair” is esteemed an ornament by women. The Arabs, unlike other men, had their hair as the hair of women, or uncut, as their practice is recorded by Pliny and others. But there was nothing effeminate in their character; for, as denoting their ferocity and strength to devour, their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

Verse 9. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

The Breastplate.--“The cuirass (or breastplate) was in use among the Arabs in the days of Mohammed. In the battle of Ohud (the second which Mohammed fought) with the Koreish of Mecca (A. D. 624), ‘seven hundred of them were armed with cuirasses.’”

The Sound of their Wings.--“The charge of the Arabs was not, like that of the Greeks and Romans, the efforts of a firm and compact infantry; their military force was chiefly formed of cavalry and archers. With a touch of the hand, the Arab horses darted away with the swiftness of the wind. “The sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.” Their conquests were marvelous both in rapidity and extent, and their attack was instantaneous. Nor was it less successful against the Romans than the Persians.”

Verse 10. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. 11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Thus far, Keith has furnished us with illustrations of the sounding of the first five trumpets. But we must now take leave of him, and

proceed to the application of the new feature of the prophecy here introduced; namely, the prophetic periods.

Their Power Was to Hurt Men Five Months.--1. The question arises, What men were they to hurt five months?--Undoubtedly the same they were afterward to slay (see verse 15); “the third part of men,” or third of the Roman empire,--the Greek division of it.

2. When were they to begin their work of torment? The 11th verse answers the question.

(1.) “They had a king over them.” From the death of Mohammed until near the close of the thirteenth century, the Mohammedans were divided into various factions under several leaders, with no general civil government extending over them all. Near the close of the thirteenth century, Othman founded a government which has since been known as the Ottoman government, or empire, extending over all the principal Mohammedan tribes, consolidating them into one grand monarchy.

(2.) The character of the king. “Which is the angel of the bottomless pit.” An angel signifies a messenger, or minister, either good or bad, and not always a spiritual being. “The angel of the bottomless pit,” or chief minister of the religion which came from thence when it was opened. That religion is Mohammedanism, and the sultan is its chief minister. “The Sultan, or grand Seignior, as he is indifferently called, is also Supreme Caliph, or high priest, uniting in his person the highest spiritual dignity with the supreme secular authority.”--World as It Is, p. 361.

(3.) His name. In Hebrew, “Abaddon,” the destroyer; in Greek, “Apollyon,” one that exterminates, or destroys. Having two different names in two languages, it is evident that the character, rather than the name of the power, is intended to be represented. If so, as expressed in both languages, he is a destroyer. Such has always been the character of the Ottoman government.

But when did Othman make his first assault on

the Greek empire?--According to Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, etc., "Othman first entered the territory of Nicomedia on the 27th day of July, 1299."

The calculations of some writers have gone upon the supposition that the period should begin with the foundation of the Ottoman empire; but this is evidently an error; for they were not only to have a king over them, but were to torment men five months. But the period of torment could not begin before the first attack of the tormentors, which was, as above stated, July 27, 1299.

The calculation which follows, founded on this starting-point, was made and published in a work entitled, *Christ's Second Coming*, etc., by J. Litch, in 1838.

"And their power was to hurt men five months." Thus far their commission extended, to torment by constant depredations, but not politically to kill them. "Five months," thirty days to a month, give us one hundred and fifty days; and these days, being symbolic, signify one hundred

and fifty years. Commencing July 27, 1299, the one hundred and fifty years reach to 1449. During that whole period the Turks were engaged in an almost perpetual warfare with the Greek empire, but yet without conquering it. They seized upon and held several of the Greek provinces, but still Greek independence was maintained in Constantinople. But in 1449, the termination of the one hundred and fifty years, a change came, the history of which will be found under the succeeding trumpet.

Verse 12. One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter. 13. And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14. Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. 15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

The first woe was to continue from the rise of

Mohammedanism until the end of the five months. Then the first woe was to end, and the second to begin. And when the sixth angel sounded, it was commanded to take off the restraints which had been imposed on the nation, by which they were restricted to the work of tormenting men, and their commission was enlarged so as to permit them to slay the third part of men. This command came from the four horns of the golden altar.

The Four Angels.--These were the four principal sultanies of which the Ottoman empire was composed, located in the country watered by the great river Euphrates. These sultanies were situated at Aleppo, Iconium, Damascus, and Bagdad. Previously they had been restrained; but God commanded, and they were loosed.

In the year 1449, John Palaeologus, the Greek emperor, died, but left no children to inherit his throne, and Constantine, his brother, succeeded to it.[1] But he would not venture to ascend the throne without the consent of Amurath, the Turkish sultan. He therefore sent ambassadors to ask his consent,

and obtained it before he presumed to call himself sovereign.

Let this historical fact be carefully examined in connection with the prediction given above. This was not a violent assault made on the Greeks, by which their empire was overthrown and their independence taken away, but simply a voluntary surrender of that independence into the hands of the Turks. The authority and supremacy of the Turkish power was acknowledged when Constantine virtually said, “I cannot reign unless you permit.”

The four angels were loosed for an hour, a day, a month, and a year, to slay the third part of men. This period amounts to three hundred ninety-one years and fifteen days, during which Ottoman supremacy was to exist in Constantinople. Thus: A prophetic year is three hundred and sixty prophetic days, or three hundred and sixty literal years; a prophetic month, thirty prophetic days, is thirty literal years; one prophetic day is one literal year; and an hour, or the twenty-fourth part of a

prophetic day, would be a twenty-fourth part of a literal year, or fifteen days; the whole amounting to three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days.

But although the four angels were thus loosed by the voluntary submission of the Greeks, yet another doom awaited the seat of empire. Amurath, the sultan to whom the submission of Constantine XIII was made, and by whose permission he reigned in Constantinople, soon after died, and was succeeded in the empire, in 1451, by Mohammed II, who set his heart on securing Constantinople as the seat of his empire.

He accordingly made preparations for besieging and taking the city. The siege commenced on the 6th of April, 1453, and ended in the capture of the city, and the death of the last of the Constantines, on the 16th day of May following. And the eastern city of the Caesars became the seat of the Ottoman empire.

The arms and mode of warfare which were

used in the siege in which Constantinople was to be overthrown and held in subjection, were, as we shall see, distinctly noticed by the Revelator.

Verse 16. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

Innumerable hordes of horses, and them that sat on them! Gibbon thus describes the first invasion of the Roman territories by the Turks: “The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Taurus to Erzeroum; and the blood of 130,000 Christians was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian Prophet.” Whether the language is designed to convey the idea of any definite number or not, the reader must judge. Some suppose 200,000 twice told is meant, and, following some historians, they find that number of Turkish warriors in the siege of Constantinople. Some think 200,000,000 to mean all the Turkish warriors during the three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days of their triumph over the Greeks. Nothing can be affirmed on the point. And

it is nothing at all essential.

Verse 17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

The first part of this description may have reference to the appearance of these horsemen. Fire, representing a color, stands for red, “as red as fire” being a frequent form of expression; jacinth, or hyacinth, for blue; and brimstone, for yellow. And these colors greatly predominated in the dress of these warriors; so that the description, according to this view, would be accurately met in the Turkish uniform, which was composed largely of red, or scarlet, blue, and yellow. The heads of the horses were, in appearance, as the heads of lions, to denote their strength, courage, and fierceness; while the last part of the verse undoubtedly has reference to the use of gunpowder and firearms for purposes of war, which were then but recently

introduced. As the Turks discharged their firearms on horseback, it would appear to the distant beholder that the fire, smoke, and brimstone, issued out of the horses' mouths, as illustrated by the accompanying plate.[2]

Respecting the use of firearms by the Turks in their campaign against Constantinople, Elliott (*Horae Apocalypticae*, Vol. I, pp. 482-484) thus speaks:--

“It was to ‘the fire and the smoke and the sulphur,’ to the artillery and firearms of Mahomet, that the killing of the third part of men, i. e., the capture of Constantinople, and by consequence the destruction of the Greek empire, was owing. Eleven hundred years and more had now elapsed since her foundation by Constantine. In the course of them, Goths, Huns, Avars, Persians, Bulgarians, Saracens, Russians, and indeed the Ottoman Turks themselves, had made their hostile assaults, or laid siege against it. But the fortifications were impregnable by them. Constantinople survived, and with it the Greek empire. Hence the anxiety of the

Sultan Mahomet to find that which would remove the obstacle. ‘Canst thou cast a cannon,’ was his question to the founder of cannon that deserted to him, ‘of size sufficient to batter down the wall of Constantinople?’ Then the foundry was established at Adrianople, the cannon cast, the artillery prepared, and the siege began.

“It well deserves remark, how Gibbon, always the unconscious commentator on the Apocalyptic prophecy, puts this new instrumentality of war into the foreground of his picture, in his eloquent and striking narrative of the final catastrophe of the Greek empire. In preparation for it, he gives the history of the recent invention of gunpowder, ‘that mixture of saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal;’ tells of its earlier use by the Sultan Amurath, and also, as before said, of Mahomet’s foundry of larger cannon at Adrianople; then, in the progress of the siege itself, describes how ‘the volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of the musketry and cannon:’ how ‘the long order of the Turkish artillery was pointed against the walls, fourteen batteries

thundering at once on the most accessible places:’ how ‘the fortifications which had stood for ages against hostile violence were dismantled on all sides by the Ottoman cannon, many breaches opened, and near the gate of St. Romanus, four towers leveled with the ground:’ how, as ‘from the lines, the gallies, and the bridge, the Ottoman artillery thundered on all sides, the camp and city, the Greeks and the Turks, were involved in a cloud of smoke, which could only be dispelled by the final deliverance or destruction of the Roman-empire:’ how ‘the double walls were reduced by the cannon to a heap of ruins:’ and how the Turks at length ‘rushing through the breaches,’ ‘Constantinople was subdued, her empire subverted, and her religion trampled in the dust by the Moslem conquerors.’ I say it well deserves observation how markedly and strikingly Gibbon attributes the capture of the city, and so the destruction of the empire, to the Ottoman artillery. For what is it but a comment on the words of our prophecy? ‘By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the sulphur, which issued out of their mouths.’”

Verse 18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. 19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails; for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

These verses express the deadly effect of the new mode of warfare introduced. It was by means of these agents,--gunpowder, firearms, and cannon,--that Constantinople was finally overcome, and given into the hands of the Turks.

In addition to the fire, smoke, and brimstone, which apparently issued out of their mouths, it is said that their power was also in their tails. It is a remarkable fact that the horse's tail is a well-known Turkish standard, a symbol of office and authority. The meaning of the expression appears to be that their tails were the symbol, or emblem of their authority. The image before the mind of John would seem to have been that he saw the horses

belching out fire and smoke, and, what was equally strange, he saw that their power of spreading desolation was connected with the tails of the horses. Any one looking on a body of cavalry with such banners, or ensigns, would be struck with this unusual or remarkable appearance, and would speak of their banners as concentrating and directing their power.

This supremacy of the Mohammedans over the Greeks was to continue, as already noticed, three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. Commencing when the one hundred and fifty years ended, July 27, 1449, the period would end Aug. 11, 1840. Judging from the manner of the commencement of the Ottoman supremacy, that it was by a voluntary acknowledgment on the part of the Greek emperor that he reigned only by permission of the Turkish sultan, we should naturally conclude that the fall or departure of the Ottoman independence would be brought about in the same way; that at the end of the specified period, that is, on the 11th of August, 1840, the sultan would voluntarily surrender his

independence into the hands of the Christian powers, just as he had, three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days before, received it from the hands of the Christian emperor, Constantine XIII.

This conclusion was reached, and this application of the prophecy was made, by Elder J. Litch in 1838, two years before the predicted event was to occur. It was then purely a matter of calculation on the prophetic periods of Scripture. Now, however, the time has passed by, and it is proper to inquire what the result has been--whether such events did transpire according to the previous calculation. The matter sums itself up in the following inquiry:--

When Did Mohammedan Independence in Constantinople Depart?--For several years previous to 1840, the sultan had been embroiled in war with Mehemet Ali, pasha of Egypt. In 1838 the trouble between the sultan and his Egyptian vassal was for the time being restrained by the influence of the foreign ambassadors. In 1839, however, hostilities

were again commenced, and were prosecuted until, in a general battle between the armies of the sultan and Mehemet, the sultan's army was entirely cut up and destroyed, and his fleet taken by Mehemet and carried into Egypt. So completely had the sultan's fleet been reduced, that, when the war again commenced in August, he had only two first-rates and three frigates as the sad remains of the once powerful Turkish fleet. This fleet Mehemet positively refused to give up and return to the sultan, and declared that if the powers attempted to take it from him, he would burn it. In this posture affairs stood, when, in 1840, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia interposed, and determined on a settlement of the difficulty; for it was evident that, if let alone, Mehemet would soon become master of the sultan's throne.

The sultan accepted this intervention of the great powers, and thus made a voluntary surrender of the question into their hands. A conference of these powers was held in London, the Sheik Effendi Bey Likgis being present as Ottoman plenipotentiary. An ultimatum was drawn up to be

presented to the pasha of Egypt, whereby the sultan was to offer him the hereditary government of Egypt, and all that part of Syria extending from the Gulf of Suez to the Lake of Tiberias together with the province of Acre, for life; he on his part to evacuate all other parts of the sultan's dominions then occupied by him, and to return the Ottoman fleet. In case he refused this offer from the sultan, the four powers were to take the matter into their own hands, and use such other means to bring him to terms as they should see fit.

It is apparent that just as soon as this ultimatum should be put by the sultan into the hands of Mehemet Ali, the matter would be forever beyond the control of the former, and the disposal of his affairs would, from that moment, be in the hands of foreign powers. The sultan despatched Rifat Bey on a government steamer to Alexandria, to communicate the ultimatum to the pasha. It was put into his hands, and by him taken in charge, on the eleventh day of August, 1840! On the same day, a note was addressed by the sultan to the ambassadors of the four powers, inquiring what

plan was to be adopted in case the pasha should refuse to comply with the terms of the ultimatum, to which they made answer that provision had been made, and there was no necessity of his alarming himself about any contingency that might arise. This day the period of three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days, allotted to the continuance of the Ottoman power, ended; and where was the sultan's independence?--GONE! Who had the supremacy of the Ottoman empire in their hands?--The four great powers; and that empire has existed ever since only by the sufferance of these Christian powers. Thus was the prophecy fulfilled to the very letter.

From the first publication of the calculation of this matter in 1838, before referred to, the time set for the fulfillment of the prophecy--Aug. 11, 1840--was watched by thousands with intense interest. And the exact accomplishment of the event predicted, showing, as it did, the right application of the prophecy, gave a mighty impetus to the great Advent movement then beginning to attract the attention of the world.

Verse 20. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: 21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

God designs that men shall make a note of his judgments, and receive the lessons he thereby designs to convey. But how slow are they to learn! and how blind to the indications of providence! The events that transpired under the sixth trumpet constituted the second woe; yet these judgments led to no improvement in the manners and morals of men. Those who escaped them learned nothing by their manifestation in the earth. The worship of devils (demons, dead men deified) and of idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, may find a fulfillment in the saint worship and image worship of the Roman Catholic Church; while of murders,

sorceries (pretended miracles through the agency of departed saints), fornications, and thefts, in countries where the Roman religion has prevailed, there has been no lack.

The hordes of Saracens and Turks were let loose as a scourge and punishment upon apostate Christendom. Men suffered the punishment, but learned therefrom no lesson.

Notes:

1. Some historians have given this date as 1448, but the best authorities sustain the date here given, 1449. See Chambers's Encyclopedia, art. Palaeologus.
2. Quite an agreement exists among commentators in applying the prophecy concerning the fire, smoke, and brimstone to the use of gunpowder by the Turks in their warfare against the Eastern empire. (See Clarke, Barnes, Elliott, Cottage Bible, etc.) But they generally allude simply to the heavy ordnance, the large cannon, employed by that

power; whereas the prophecy mentions especially the “horses,” and the fire “issuing from their mouths,” as though smaller arms were used, and used on horseback. Barnes thinks this was the case; and a statement from Gibbon confirms this view. He says (IV, 343): “The incessant volleys of lances and arrows were accompanied with the smoke, the sound, and the fire of their musketry and cannon.” Here is good historical evidence that muskets were used by the Turks; and, secondly, it is undisputed that in their general warfare they fought principally on horseback. The inference is therefore well supported that they used firearms on horseback, accurately fulfilling the prophecy, according to the illustration above referred to.

Chapter 10

The Proclamation of the Advent

Verse 1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. 2. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

IN this scripture we have another instance in which the consecutive line of thought is for a time interrupted; and this chapter comes in as--

A Parenthetical Prophecy.--Chapter 9 closed with the events of the sixth trumpet. The sounding of the seventh trumpet is not introduced until we reach the 15th verse of chapter 11. The whole of chapter 10, and a portion of chapter 11, therefore, come in parenthetically between the sixth and

seventh trumpets. That which is particularly connected with the sounding of the sixth trumpet is recorded in chapter 9. The prophet has other events to introduce before the opening of another trumpet, and takes occasion to do it in the scripture which intervenes to the 15th verse of chapter 11. Among these is the prophecy of chapter 10. Let us first look at the chronology of the message of this angel.

The Little Book.--“He had in his hand a little book open.” There is a necessary inference to be drawn from this language, which is, that this book was at some time closed up. We read in Daniel of a book which was closed up and sealed to a certain time: “But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Daniel 12:4. Since this book was closed up only till the time of the end, it follows that at the time of the end the book would be opened; and as its closing was mentioned in prophecy, it would be but reasonable to expect that in the predictions of events to take place at the time of the end, the opening of this book would also be mentioned.

There is no book spoken of as closed up and sealed except the book of Daniel's prophecy; and there is no account of the opening of that book, unless it be here in the 10th of Revelation. We see, furthermore, that in both places the contents ascribed to the book are the same. The book which Daniel had directions to close up and seal had reference to time: "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" And when the angel of this chapter comes down with the little book open, on which he bases his proclamation, he gives a message in relation to time: "Time shall be no longer." Nothing more could be required to show that both expressions refer to one book, and to prove that the little book which the angel had in his hand open, was the book of the prophecy of Daniel.

An important point is now determined toward settling the chronology of this angel; for we have seen that the prophecy, more particularly the prophetic periods of Daniel, were not to be opened till the time of the end; and if this is the book which the angel had in his hand open, it follows that he proclaims his message this side of the time

when the book should be opened, or somewhere this side of the commencement of the time of the end. All that now remains on this point is to ascertain when the time of the end commenced; and the book of Daniel itself furnishes data from which this can be done. In Daniel 11, from verse 30, the papal power is brought to view. In verse 35 we read, “And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and make them white, even to the time of the end.” Here is brought to view the period of the supremacy of the little horn, during which time the saints, times, and laws were to be given into his hand, and from him suffer fearful persecutions. This is declared to reach to the time of the end. It ended A. D. 1798, where the 1260 years of papal rule expired. There the time of the end commenced, and the book was opened. And since that time, many have run to and fro, and knowledge on these prophetic subjects has marvelously increased.

The chronology of the events of Revelation 10 is further ascertained from the fact that this angel is identical with the first angel of Revelation 14. The

points of identity between them are easily seen: (1) They both have a special message to proclaim; (2) they both utter their proclamation with a loud voice; (3) they both use similar language, referring to the great Creator as the maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and the things that are therein; and (4) they both proclaim time, one swearing that time should be no more, and the other proclaiming that the hour of God's Judgment has come. But the message of Revelation 14:6 is located this side of the commencement of the time of the end. It is a proclamation of the hour of God's Judgment come, and hence must have its application in the last generation. Paul did not preach the hour of Judgment come. Luther and his coadjutors did not preach it. Paul reasoned of a Judgment to come, indefinitely future; and Luther placed it at least three hundred years off from his day. Moreover, Paul warns the church against any such preaching as that the hour of God's Judgment has come, until a certain time. In 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, he says: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in

mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition,” etc. Here Paul introduces to our view the man of sin, the little horn, the papacy, and covers with a caution the whole period of his supremacy, which, as already noticed, continued 1260 years, ending in 1798. In 1798, therefore, the restriction against proclaiming the day of Christ at hand ceased; in 1798, the time of the end commenced, and the seal was taken from the little book. Since that period, therefore, the angel of Revelation 14 has gone forth proclaiming the hour of God’s Judgment come; and it is since that time, too, that the angel of chapter 10 has taken his stand on sea and land, and sworn that time shall be no more. Of their identity there can now be no question; and all the arguments which go to locate the one, are equally effective in the case of the other. We need not enter into any argument here to show that the present generation is witnessing the fulfillment of these two prophecies. In the

preaching of the advent, more especially from 1840 to 1844, began their full and circumstantial accomplishment. The position of this angel, one foot upon the sea and the other on the land, denotes the wide extent of his proclamation by sea and by land. Had this message been designed for only one country, it would have been sufficient for the angel to take his position on the land only. But he has one foot upon the sea, from which we may infer that his message would cross the ocean, and extend to the various nations and divisions of the globe; and this inference is strengthened by the fact that the Advent proclamation, above referred to, did go to every missionary station in the world. More on this under chapter 14.

Verse 3. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

The Seven Thunders.--It would be vain to speculate to any great length upon the seven thunders, in hope of gaining a definite knowledge of what they uttered. We must acquiesce in the directions given to John concerning them, and leave them where he left them, sealed up, unwritten, and consequently to us unknown. There is, however, a conjecture extant in relation to them, which may not inappropriately be mentioned here. It is that what the seven thunders uttered is the experience of the Adventists engaged in that movement, embracing their sore disappointment and trial. Something, evidently, was uttered which it would not be well for the church to know; and for God to have given an inspired record of the Advent movement in advance, would have been simply to defeat that movement, which we verily believe was in all its particulars an accomplishment of his purposes, and according to his will. Why, then, any mention of the seven thunders at all? Following out the above-noticed conjecture, the conclusion would be that we, having met in our history with sudden, mysterious, and unexpected

events, as startling and strange as thunders from an unclouded sky, might not give up in utter perplexity, inferring, as we may, that all is in the order and providence of God, since something of this nature was sealed up, and hidden from the church.

Verse 5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven. 6. And sware by him that liveth forever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.

Time No Longer.--What is the meaning of this most solemn declaration? It cannot mean that with the message of this angel, time, as computed in this world, in comparison with eternity, should end; for the next verse speaks of the days of the voice of the seventh angel; and chapter 11:15-19 gives us some of the events to take place under this trumpet, which transpire in the present state. And it cannot

mean probationary time; for that does not cease till Christ closes his work as priest, which is not till after the seventh angel has commenced to sound. Revelation 11:19. It must therefore mean prophetic time; for there is no other to which it can refer. Prophetic time shall be no more--not that time should never be used in a prophetic sense; for the "days of the voice of the seventh angel," spoken of immediately after, doubtless mean the years of the seventh angel; but no prophetic period should extend beyond this message; those that reach to the latest point would all close there. Arguments on the prophetic periods, showing that the longest ones did not extend beyond the autumn of 1844, will be found in remarks on Daniel 8:14.

Verse 7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

The Days of the Voice of the Seventh Angel.-- This seventh trumpet is not that which is spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15:52 as the last trump, which

wakes the sleeping dead; but it is the seventh of the series of the seven trumpets, and like the others of the series, occupies days (years) in sounding. In the days when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. Not in the day when he shall begin to sound, not in the very commencement of his sounding, but in the early years of his sounding, the mystery of God shall be finished.

Commencement of the Seventh Trumpet.-- From the events to take place under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, its commencement may be located with sufficient definiteness at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. Not many years from that date, then, the mystery of God is to be finished. The great event, whatever it is, is right upon us. Some closing and decisive work, with whatever of importance and solemnity it bears in its train, is near at hand. There is an importance connected with the finishing of any of the works of God. Such an act marks a solemn and important era. Our Saviour, when expiring upon the cross, cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30); and when the great work of mercy for fallen man is completed, it

will be announced by a voice from the throne of God, proclaiming, in tones which roll like thunder through all the earth, the solemn sentence, “It is done!” Revelation 16:17. It is therefore no uncalled-for solicitude which prompts us to inquire what bearing such events have upon our eternal hopes and interests; and, when we read of the finishing of the mystery of God, to ask what that mystery is, and in what its finishing consists.

The Mystery of God.--A few direct testimonies from that Book which has been given as a lamp to our feet, will show what this mystery is. Ephesians 1:9, 10: “Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” Here God’s purpose to gather together all in Christ is called the “mystery” of his will. This is accomplished through the gospel. Ephesians 6:19: “And for me [Paul asks that prayers be made], that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth

boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.” Here the gospel is declared plainly to be a mystery. It is called in Colossians 4:3, the mystery of Christ. Ephesians 3:3, 6: “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words),” etc., “that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” Paul here declares that the mystery was made known to him by revelation, as he had before written. In this he refers to his Epistle to the Galatians, where he recorded what had been given him “by revelation,” in these words: “But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man; for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 1:11, 12) Here Paul tells us plainly that what he received through revelation was the gospel. In Ephesians 3:3, he calls it the mystery made known to him by revelation, as he had written before. The Epistle to the Galatians was written in A. D. 58, and that to the Ephesians in A. D. 64.

In view of these testimonies, few will be

disposed to deny that the mystery of God is the gospel. It is the same, then, as if the angel had declared, In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the gospel shall be finished. But what is the finishing of the gospel? Let us first inquire for what it was given. It was given to take out from the nations a people for God's name. Acts 15:14. Its finishing must, as a matter of course, be the close of this work. It will be finished when the number of God's people is made up, mercy ceases to be offered, and probation closes.

The subject is now before us in all its magnitude. Such is the momentous work to be accomplished in the early days of the voice of the seventh angel, whose trumpet notes have been reverberating through the world since the memorable epoch of 1844. God is not slack; his work is not uncertain; are we ready for the issue?

Verse 8. And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of

the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. 9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. 10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

In verse 8, John himself is brought in to act a part as a representative of the church, probably on account of the succeeding peculiar experience of the church, which the Lord of the prophecy would cause to be put on record, but which could not well be presented under the symbol of an angel. When only a straightforward proclamation is brought to view, without including the peculiar experience which the church is to pass through in connection therewith, angels may be used as symbols to represent the religious teachers who proclaim that message, as in Revelation 14; but when some particular experience of the church is to be presented, the case is manifestly different. This

could most appropriately be set forth in the person of some member of the human family; hence John is himself called upon to act a part in this symbolic representation. And this being the case, the angel who here appeared to John may represent that divine messenger, who, in the order which is observed in all the work of God, has charge of this message; or he may be introduced for the purpose of representing the nature of the message, and the source from which it comes.

There are not a few now living who have in their own experience met a striking fulfillment of these verses, in the joy with which they received the message of Christ's immediate second coming, the honey-like sweetness of the precious truths then brought out, and the sadness and pain that followed, when at the appointed time in 1844 the Lord did not come, but a great disappointment did. A mistake had been made which apparently involved the integrity of the little book they had been eating. What had been so like honey to their taste, suddenly became like wormwood and gall. But those who had patience to endure, so to speak,

the digesting process, soon learned that the mistake was only in the event, not in the time, and that what the angel had given them was not unto death, but to their nourishment and support. (See the same facts brought to view under a similar figure in Jeremiah 15:16-18.)

Verse 11. And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

John, standing as the representative of the church, here receives from the angel another commission. Another message is to go forth after the time when the first and second messages, as leading proclamations, ceased. In other words, we have here a prophecy of the third angel's message, now, as we believe, in process of fulfilment. Neither will this work be done in a corner; for it is to go before "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." (See on chapter 14.)

Chapter 11

The Two Witnesses

Verse 1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. 2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

We here have a continuation of the instruction which the angel commenced giving to John in the preceding chapter; hence these verses properly belong to that chapter, and should not be separated by the present division. In the last verse of chapter 10, the angel gave to John, as a representative of the church, a new commission. In other words, as already shown, we have in that verse a prophecy of the third angel's message. Now follows testimony showing what the nature of that message is to be. It is connected with the temple of God in heaven, and

is designed to fit up a class of people as worshipers therein. The temple here cannot mean the church; for the church is brought to view in connection with this temple as “them that worship therein.” The temple is therefore the literal temple in heaven, and the worshipers the true church on earth. But of course these worshipers are not to be measured in the sense of ascertaining the height and circumference of each one in feet and inches; they are to be measured as worshipers; and character can be measured only by some standard of right, namely, a law, or rule of action. We are thus brought to the conclusion that the ten commandments, the standard which God has given by which to measure “the whole duty of man,” are embraced in the measuring rod put by the angel into the hands of John; and in the fulfillment of this prophecy, this very law has been put, under the third message, into the hands of the church. This is the standard by which the worshipers of God are now to be tested.

Having seen what it is to measure those who worship in the temple, we inquire further, What is

meant by measuring the temple? To measure any object requires that we give especial attention to that object; so, doubtless, the call to rise and measure the temple of God is a prophetic command to the church to give the subject of the temple, or sanctuary, a special examination. But how is this to be done with a measuring rod given to the church? With the ten commandments alone we could not do it. When, however, we take the entire message, we find ourselves led by it to an examination of the sanctuary on high, with the commandments of God and the ministration of Christ connected therewith. Hence we conclude that the measuring rod, taken as a whole, is the special message now given to the church, which embraces the great truths peculiar to this time, including the ten commandments. By this message, our attention has been called to the temple above, and through it the light and truth on this subject has come out. Thus we measure the temple and the altar, or the ministration connected with the temple, the work and the position of our great High Priest; and we measure the worshipers with that portion of the rod which relates to character, namely, the ten commandments.

“But the court which is without the temple leave out.” As much as to say, The attention of the church is now directed to the inner temple, and the service there. Matters pertaining to the court are of less consequence now. It is given to the Gentiles. That the court refers to this earth is proved thus: The court is the place where the victims were slain whose blood was to be ministered in the sanctuary. The antitypical victim must die in the antitypical court; and he died on Calvary in Judea. Having thus introduced the Gentiles, the attention of the prophet is directed to the great feature of Gentile apostasy; namely, the treading down of the holy city forty and two months during the period of papal supremacy. He is then directed to the condition of the word of God, the truth, and the church during that time. Thus by an easy and natural transition, we are carried back into the past, and our attention is called to a new series of events.

Verse 3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in

sackcloth.

These days are the same as the forty-two months of the preceding verse, and refer to the period of papal triumph. During this time, the witnesses are in a state of sackcloth, or obscurity, and God gives them power to endure and maintain their testimony through that dark and dismal period. But who or what are these witnesses?

Verse 4. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

Evident allusion is here made to Zechariah 4:3-6, where it is explained that the two olive trees are taken to represent the word of God; and David testifies, “The entrance of thy words giveth light;” and, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” Written testimony is stronger than oral. Jesus declares of the Old Testament Scriptures, “They are they which testify of me.” In this dispensation, he says that his works bear witness of him. By what means do they bear

witness of him? Ever since those disciples who were personally associated with him while on earth passed off the stage of life, his works have borne witness of him only through the medium of the New Testament, where alone we find them recorded. This gospel of the kingdom, it was once declared, shall be preached in all the world for a witness to all nations, etc.

These declarations and considerations are sufficient to sustain the conclusion that the Old and New Testaments, one given in one dispensation, and the other in the other, are Christ's two witnesses.

Verse 5. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

To hurt the word of God is to oppose, corrupt, or pervert its testimony, and turn people away from it. Against those who do this work, fire proceedeth out of their mouth to devour them; that is,

judgment of fire is denounced in that word against such. It declares that they will have their portion at last in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Malachi 4:1; Revelation 20:15; 22:18, 19; etc.

Verse 6. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

In what sense have these witnesses power to shut heaven, turn waters to blood, and bring plagues on the earth? Elijah shut heaven that it rained not for three years and a half; but he did it by the word of the Lord. Moses, by the word of the Lord, turned the waters of Egypt to blood. And just as these judgments, recorded in their testimony, have been fulfilled, so will every threatening and judgment denounced by them against any people surely be accomplished. "As often as they will." As often as judgments are recorded on their pages to take place, so often they will come to pass. An

instance of this the world is yet to experience in the infliction of the seven last plagues.

Verse 7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. 8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

“When they shall finished their testimony,” that is, “in sackcloth.” The sackcloth state ended, or, as elsewhere expressed, the days of persecution were shortened (Matthew 24:22), before the period itself expired. A “beast” in prophecy, denotes a kingdom, or power. (See Daniel 7:17, 23.) The question now arises, When did the 1260-year period of the witnesses close? and did such a kingdom as described make war on them at the time spoken of? If we are correct in fixing upon A. D. 538 as the time of the commencement of the papal supremacy, the forty-two months, being 1260 prophetic days, or years, would bring us down to

A. D. 1798. About this time, then, did such a kingdom as described appear, and make war on them, etc.? Mark! this beast, or kingdom, is out of the bottomless pit; it has no foundation, is an atheistical power, is “spiritually Egypt.” (See Exodus 5:2: “And Pharaoh said, Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.”) Here is atheism. Did any kingdom, about 1798, manifest the same spirit?--Yes, France; in her national capacity she denied the being of God, and made war on the “Monarchy of heaven.”

“Spiritually,” this power “is called Sodom.” What was the characteristic sin of Sodom?--Licentiousness. Did France have this character?--She did; fornication was established by law during the period spoken of. “Spiritually,” the place was “where our Lord was crucified.” Was this true in France?--It was, in more senses than one. A plot was laid in France to destroy all the pious Huguenots; and in one night (Aug. 24, 25, 1572) fifty thousand of them were murdered in cold blood, and the streets of Paris literally ran with

blood. Thus our Lord was “spiritually crucified” in his members. Again, the watchword and motto of the French infidels was, “CRUSH THE WRETCH,” meaning Christ. Thus it may be truly said, “where our Lord was crucified.” The very spirit of the “bottomless pit” was poured out in that wicked nation.

But did France “make war” on the Bible?--She did; and in 1793 a decree passed the French Assembly forbidding the Bible; and under that decree, the Bibles were gathered and burned, every possible mark of contempt was heaped upon them, and all the institutions of the Bible were abolished; the weekly rest-day was blotted out, and every tenth day substituted, for mirth and profanity. Baptism and the communion were abolished. The being of God was denied, and death pronounced an eternal sleep. The Goddess of Reason, in the person of a vile woman, was set up, and publicly worshiped. Surely, here is a power that exactly answers the prophecy. But let us examine this point still further.

Verse 9. And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

The language of this verse describes the feelings of other nations besides the one committing the outrage on the witnesses. They would see what war infidel France had made on the Bible, but would not be led nationally to engage in the wicked work, nor suffer the murdered witnesses to be buried, or put out of sight among themselves, though they lay dead three days and a half, that is, three years and a half, in France. No; this very attempt on the part of France served to arouse Christians everywhere to put forth new exertions in behalf of the Bible, as we shall presently see.

Verse 10. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

This denotes the joy those felt who hated the Bible, or were tormented by it. Great was the joy of infidels everywhere for awhile. But the “triumphing of the wicked is short;” so was it in France, for their war on the Bible and Christianity well-nigh swallowed them all up. They set out to destroy Christ’s “two witnesses,” but they filled France with blood and terror, so that they were horror-struck at the result of their own wicked deeds, and were soon glad to remove their impious hands from the Bible.

Verse 11. And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

In 1793, a decree passed the French Assembly suppressing the Bible. Just three years after, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly superseding the decree, and giving toleration to the Scriptures. That resolution lay on the table six months, when it was taken up, and passed without

a dissenting vote. Thus, in just three years and a half, the witnesses “stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them that saw them.” Nothing but the appalling results of the rejection of the Bible, could have induced France to take her hands off these witnesses.

Verse 12. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

“Ascended up to Heaven.”--To understand this expression, see Daniel 4:22: “Thy greatness is grown, and reacheth unto heaven.” Here we see that the expression signifies great exaltation. Have the Scriptures attained to such a state of exaltation as here indicated, since France made war upon them?--They have. Shortly after, the British Bible Society was organized (1804); then followed the American Bible Society (1817); and these, with their almost innumerable auxiliaries, are scattering the Bible everywhere. Since that period, the Bible has been translated into nearly two hundred

different languages that it was never in before; and the improvements in paper-making and printing within the last seventy-five years have given an impetus to the work of scattering Bibles, which is without a parallel.

The Bible has been sent to the destitute, literally by shiploads. One vessel carried out from England fifty-nine tons of Bibles for the emancipated slaves in the West Indies. The Bible has risen to be respected by almost every one, whether saint or sinner. Within the present century, translations of the Scriptures have increased fivefold, and the circulation of the Scriptures thirty fold.[1] No other book approaches it in cheapness or number of copies sold. According to the *Missionary Review* of September, 1896, it has been translated into languages embracing nine tenths of the human race. And the American Bible Society, in its eightieth annual report, dated May, 1896, gives the number of Bibles and parts of Bibles issued by that society alone, as 61,705,841. Add the issues by the British Bible Society and other publishers, and how vastly would the number be

increased! What other book has the world ever seen which approaches the Bible in this respect? It is exalted as above all price, as, next to his Son, the most invaluable blessing of God to man, and as the glorious testimony concerning that Son. Yes; the Scriptures may truly be said to be exalted “to heaven in a cloud,” a cloud being an emblem of heavenly elevation.

Verse 13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

What city? (See chapter 17:18: “And the woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings [kingdoms] of the earth.”) That city is the papal Roman power. France is one of the “ten horns” that gave “their power and strength unto the [papal] beast;” or is one of the ten kingdoms that arose out of the Western empire of Rome, as indicated by the ten toes of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, the ten horns of Daniel’s beast (Daniel

7:24), and John's dragon. Revelation 12:3. France, then, was "a tenth part of the city," and was one of the strongest ministers of papal vengeance; but in this revolution it "fell," and with it fell the last civil messenger of papal fury. "And in the earthquake were slain of men [margin, names of men, or titles of men] seven thousand." France made war, in her revolution of 1793-98 and onward, on all titles of nobility. It is said by those who have examined the French records, that just seven thousand titles of men were abolished in that revolution. "And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven." Their God-dishonoring and Heaven-defying work filled France with such scenes of blood, carnage, and horror, as made even the infidels themselves tremble, and stand aghast; and the "remnant" that escaped the horrors of that hour "gave glory to God"--not willingly, but the God of heaven caused this "wrath of man to praise him," by causing all the world to see that those who make war on heaven make graves for themselves; thus glory redounded to God by the very means that wicked men employed to tarnish that glory.

For the statistics and many of the foregoing thoughts on the two witnesses, we are indebted to an exposition of the subject of The Two Witnesses, by the late George Storrs.

Verse 14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The series of seven trumpets is here again resumed. The second woe ended with the sixth trumpet, Aug. 11, 1840; and the third woe occurs under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which commenced in 1844.

Then where are we? “Behold!” that is to say, mark it well, “the third woe cometh quickly.” The fearful scenes of the second woe are past, and we are now under the sounding of the trumpet that brings the third and last woe. And shall we now look for peace and safety, a temporal millennium, a thousand years of righteousness and prosperity? Rather let us earnestly pray the Lord to awaken a slumbering world.

Verse 15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. 16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, 17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

From the 15th verse to the end of the chapter, we seem to be carried over the ground, from the sounding of the seventh angel to the end, three distinct times. In the verses last quoted, the prophet glances forward to the full establishment of the kingdom of God. Although the seventh trumpet has begun to sound, it may not yet be a fact that the great voices in heaven have proclaimed that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, except it be in anticipation of the speedy accomplishment of this event; but the seventh trumpet, like the preceding

six, covers a period of time; and the transfer of the kingdoms from earthly powers to Him whose right it is to reign, is the principal event to occur in the early years of its sounding; hence this event, to the exclusion of all else, here engages the mind of the prophet. (See remarks on verse 19.) In the next verse John goes back and takes up intervening events as follows:--

Verse 18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

“The Nations Were Angry.”--Commencing with the wonderful revolution in Europe in 1848, that spontaneous outburst of violence among the nations, their anger toward one another, their jealousy and envy, have been constantly increasing. Almost every paper shows the fearful degree to which they are now excited, and how

tense has become the strain on the relations between them.

“And Thy Wrath Is Come.”--The wrath of God for the present generation is filled up in the seven last plagues (chapter 15:1), which consequently must here be referred to, and which are soon to be poured out upon the earth.

The Judgment of the Dead.--“And the time of the dead, that they should be judged.” The great majority of the dead, that is, the wicked, are still in their graves after the visitation of the plagues, and the close of this dispensation. A work of judgment, of allotting to each one the punishment due to his crimes, is carried on in reference to them by the saints, in conjunction with Christ, during the one thousand years following the first resurrection. 1 Corinthians 6:2; Revelation 20:4. Inasmuch as this judgment of the dead follows the wrath of God, or the seven last plagues, it would seem necessary to refer it to the one thousand years of judgment upon the wicked, above mentioned; for the investigative Judgment takes place before the plagues are poured

out.

The Reward of the Righteous.--“And that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets.” This carries us forward to the full possession of the heavenly inheritance at the end of the thousand years; for the full reward of the saints is not reached till they enter upon the possession of the new earth. Matthew 25:34.

The Punishment of the Wicked.--“And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth,” referring to the time when all the wicked will be forever devoured by those purifying fires which come down from God out of heaven upon them, and which melt and renovate the earth. 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 20:9. By this we learn that the seventh trumpet reaches over to the end of the one thousand years. Momentous, startling, but yet joyous thought! that the trumpet is now sounding which is to see the final destruction of the wicked, and to behold the saints, clothed in a glorious immortality, safely located on the earth made new.

Once more the prophet carries us back to the commencement of the trumpet, in the following language:--

Verse 19. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

Having introduced the seventh trumpet in verse 15, the first great event that strikes the mind of the seer is the transfer of the kingdom from earthly to heavenly rule. God takes to him his great power, and forever crushes the rebellion of this revolted earth, establishes Christ upon his own throne, and remains himself supreme over all. This picture being completed, we are pointed back, in verse 18, to the state of the nations, the judgment to fall upon them, and the final destiny of both saints and sinners. This field of vision having been scanned, we are taken back once more in the verse now under notice, and our attention is called to the close of the priesthood of Christ, the last scene in the

work of mercy for a guilty world. The temple is opened; the second apartment of the sanctuary is entered. We know it is the holy of holies that is here opened; for the ark is seen; and in that apartment alone the ark was deposited. This took place at the end of the 2300 days, when the sanctuary was to be cleansed, the time when the prophetic periods expired, and the seventh angel commenced to sound. Since that time, the people of God have seen by faith the open door in heaven, and the ark of God's testament there. They are endeavoring to keep every precept of the holy law written upon the tables therein deposited. And that the tables of the law are there, just as in the ark in the sanctuary erected by Moses, is evident from the terms which John uses in describing the ark. He calls it the "ark of his testament." The ark was called the ark of the covenant, or testament, because it was made for the express purpose of containing the tables of the testimony, or ten commandments. (Exodus 25:16; 31:18; Deuteronomy 10:2, 5) It was put to no other use, and owed its name solely to the fact that it contained the tables of the law. If the tables were

not therein, it would not be the ark of his (God's) testament, and could not truthfully be so called. Yet John, beholding the ark in heaven under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, still calls it the "ark of his testament," affording unanswerable proof that the law is still there, unaltered in one jot or tittle from the copy which for a time was committed to the care of men in the typical ark of the tabernacle during the Mosaic dispensation.

The followers of the prophetic word have also received the reed, and are measuring the temple, the altar, and them that worship therein. Verse 1. They are uttering their last prophecy before nations, peoples, and tongues. Chapter 10:11. And the drama will soon close with the lightnings, thunderings, voices, the earthquake, and great hail, which will constitute nature's last convulsion before all things are made new at the close of the thousand years. (Revelation 21:5; see on chapter 16:17-21)

Note:

1. Increase of Crime, by D. T. Taylor, p. 5.

Chapter 12

The Gospel Church

Verse 1. And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: 2. And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. 3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

AN elucidation of this portion of the chapter will involve little more than a mere definition of the symbols introduced. This may be given in few words, as follows:--

“A woman,” the true church. A corrupt woman is used to represent an apostate or corrupt church. Ezekiel 23:2-4; Revelation 17:3-6, 15, 18. By parity of reasoning, a pure woman, as in this instance, would represent the true church.

“The sun,” the light and glory of the gospel dispensation.

“The moon,” the Mosaic dispensation. As the moon shines with a borrowed light derived from the sun, so the former dispensation shone with a light borrowed from the present. There they had the type and shadow; here we have the antitype and substance.

“A crown of twelve stars,” the twelve apostles.

“A great red dragon,” pagan Rome. (See under verses 4 and 5.)

“Heaven,” the space in which this representation was seen by the apostle. We are not to suppose that the scenes here represented to John took place in heaven where God resides; for they are events which transpired upon this earth; but this scenic representation which passed before the eye of the prophet, appeared as if in the region occupied by the sun, moon, and stars, which we

speak of as heaven.

Verses 1 and 2 cover a period of time commencing just previous to the opening of the present dispensation, when the church was earnestly longing for and expecting the advent of the Messiah, and extending to the time of the full establishment of the gospel church with its crown of twelve apostles. (Luke 2:25, 26, 38)

No symbols more fitting and impressive could be found than are here employed. The Mosaic dispensation shone with a light borrowed from the Christian dispensation, just as the moon shines with light borrowed from the sun. How appropriate, therefore, to represent the former by the moon, and the latter by the sun. The woman, the church, had the moon under her feet; that is, the Mosaic dispensation had just ended, and the woman was clothed with the light of the gospel sun, which had just risen. By the figure of prolepsis, the church is represented as fully organized, with its twelve apostles, before the man child, Christ, appeared upon the scene. This is

easily accounted for by the fact that it was to be thus constituted immediately after Christ should commence his ministry; and he is more especially connected with this church than with that of the former dispensation. There is no ground for any misunderstanding of the passage; and hence no violence is done to a correct system of interpretation by this representation.

Verse 4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. 5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. 6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she had a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

“The Third Part of the Stars of Heaven.”--The dragon drew the third part of the stars from heaven.

If the twelve stars with which the woman is crowned, here used symbolically, denote the twelve apostles, then the stars thrown down by the dragon before his attempt to destroy the man child, or before the Christian era, may denote a portion of the rulers of the Jewish people. That the sun, moon, and stars are sometimes used in this symbolic sense, we have already had evidence in chapter 8:12. The dragon being a symbol, could deal only with symbolic stars; and the chronology of the act here mentioned would confine it to the Jewish people. Judea became a Roman province sixty-three years before the birth of the Messiah. The Jews had three classes of rulers,--kings, priests, and the Sanhedrim. A third of these, the kings, were taken away by the Roman power. Philip Smith, *History of the World*, Vol. III, p. 181, after describing the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans and Herod, and its capitulation in the spring of B. C. 37, after an obstinate resistance of six months, says: "Such was the end of the Asmonean dynasty, exactly 130 years after the first victories of Judas Maccabaeus, and in the seventieth year from the assumption of the diadem by Aristobulus I."

The dragon stood before the woman, to devour her child. It now becomes necessary to identify the power symbolized by the dragon; and this can very easily be done. The testimony concerning the “man child” which the dragon seeks to destroy, is applicable to only one being that has appeared in this world, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ. No other one has been caught up to God and his throne; but he has been thus exalted. (Ephesians 1:20, 21; Hebrews 8:1; Revelation 3:21) No other one has received from God the commission to rule all nations with a rod of iron; but he has been appointed to this work. (Psalms 2:7-9)

There can certainly be no doubt that the man child represents Jesus Christ. The time to which the prophecy refers is equally evident. It was the time when Christ appeared in this world as a babe in Bethlehem.

Having now ascertained who the man child was, namely, Christ; and having fixed the chronology of the prophecy at the time when he

was born into this world, it will be easy to find the power symbolized by the dragon; for the dragon represents some power which did attempt to destroy him at his birth. Was any such attempt made? and who made it? No formal answer to this question need be given to any one who has read how Herod, in a fiendish effort to destroy the infant Jesus, sent forth and slew all the children in Bethlehem, from two years old and under. But who was Herod?--A Roman governor. From Rome, Herod derived his power. Rome ruled at that time over all the world (Luke 2:1), and was therefore the responsible party in this transaction. Moreover, Rome was the only earthly government which at that time could be symbolized in prophecy, for this very reason that its dominion was universal. It is not, therefore, without the most conclusive reason that the Roman empire is considered by Protestant commentators generally to be the power indicated by the great red dragon. And it may be a fact worth mentioning that during the second, third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Christian era, next to the eagle the dragon was the principal standard of the Roman legions; and that dragon was painted red, as

though, in faithful response to the picture held up by the seer of Patmos, they would exclaim to the world, We are the nation which that picture represents.

As we have said, Rome, in the person of Herod, attempted to destroy Jesus Christ when he sent forth and destroyed all the children of Bethlehem from two years old and under. The child which was born to the expectant desires of a waiting and watching church, was our adorable Redeemer, who is soon to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Herod could not destroy him; the combined powers of earth and hell could not overcome him; and though held for a time under the dominion of the grave, he rent its cruel bands, opened a way of life for mankind, and was caught up to God and his throne, or ascended up to heaven in the sight of his disciples, leaving to them, by the words of the angels, this sweetest of all his promises, that like as he was taken away from them, so he would come again.

And the church fled into the wilderness at the

time the papacy was established, in 538, where it was nourished by the word of God and the ministration of angels during the long, dark, and bloody rule of that power, 1260 years.

Verse 7. And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12. Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and

of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

The first six verses of this chapter, as has been seen, take us down to the close of the 1260 years, which marked the end of the papal supremacy in 1798. In the 7th verse it is equally plain that we are carried back into previous ages. How far?--To the time first introduced in the chapter, — the days of the first advent. “And there was war in heaven,” the same heaven where the woman and the dragon were seen at first; but they were actors in scenes that took place here upon the earth; hence we understand this war to be located in the same place. And to what point are we carried back?--Evidently to the commencement of Christ’s ministry here upon earth. To prove that Michael is Christ, (see Jude 9; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; John 5:28, 29) and that this was a special time of warfare between him and Satan need not be argued.

Another symbol is here introduced, and John hastens to tell us what this symbol represents. It is

the Devil and Satan. But this is not the same as the dragon of verses 3 and 4. That was a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. It would be most grotesque to try to apply this to Satan personally. Satan is not said anywhere in the Bible to be red, and he is not blessed with the number of heads and horns there stated; and while he might, as the god of this world, have one crown, how would he manage to wear seven? But all these features are very appropriate as applied to pagan Rome.

When it is desired to set forth Satan by a symbol, no more appropriate one can be chosen than a great dragon, or serpent, unqualified. And why a similar symbol is also employed to represent Rome with some of its peculiar features is evident. It was because Rome, as a universal empire, was then the only possible general agent to carry out Satan's will in the earth. But there is no occasion to confound the two symbols.

In reference to the war mentioned, Satan had looked forward to Christ's mission to this earth as

his last chance of success in overthrowing the plan of salvation. He came to Christ with specious temptations, in hope of overcoming him; he tried in various ways to destroy him during his ministry; and when he had succeeded in laying him in the tomb, he endeavored, in malignant triumph, to hold him there. But in every encounter the Son of God came off triumphant; and he sends back this gracious promise to his faithful followers: “To him that over-cometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” This shows us that Jesus while on earth waged a warfare, and obtained the victory. Satan saw his last effort fail, his last scheme miscarry. He had boasted that he would overcome the Son of God in his mission to this world, and thus render the plan of salvation an ignominious failure; and well he knew that if he was foiled in this his last desperate effort to thwart the work of God, his last hope had perished, and all was lost.[1]

But, in the language of verse 8, he “prevailed not;” and hence the song may well be sung,

“Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.”

It is held by some that this war took place when Satan, then an angel of light and glory, rebelled in heaven; and that the “casting out” of which John speaks, was his expulsion from heaven at that time. But we are unable to harmonize this view with the testimony before us. Thus, in verse 13 we read: “And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.” This shows that just as soon as the Devil saw that he was cast out, he turned his wrath against the woman, the church, which, not far from that time, fled into the wilderness. When Satan therefore found himself thus overthrown, the man child had already been brought forth, or, in other words, the first advent of Christ had taken place. Hence this war and defeat of Satan, taking place this side of the Christian era, and not a great length of time before the church went into the wilderness in 538, cannot be his fall from heaven before the creation of the world; though that was a war in heaven.

Again, there seem to be a number of instances in which Satan is spoken of as defeated, or cast down. One was his first rejection from heaven; another, when Christ overcame him at his first advent; and there will be another in the future, when he is cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up for a thousand years. And on each successive occasion, we behold a regularly increasing limitation of his power. He falls a degree lower in every succeeding combat. The first time, as we may plainly infer from certain scriptures, the contest was between him and God the Father (see 2 Peter 2:4); the second time between him and Christ the Son, as in the scripture before us; while the third time an angel suffices to accomplish the work of his humiliation. Revelation 20:1, 2. Since his first contest, he has not been permitted to rise to the dignity of contending with the Father; since the second, he has not had the privilege, if such it may be called, of a personal encounter with the Son. The war mentioned in the scripture now before us is between the Devil and Michael, Christ. The great effort of the former against the latter, personally,

was during his mission here on earth; and Christ's great personal victory over him was in that very contest.

“Neither was their place found any more in heaven.” Heaven, we have seen, does not mean, in this chapter, the place which is the abode of God and his celestial messengers. It here doubtless denotes condition rather than place; and the expression would then signify that they were here humiliated, and never to regain their former position. They had suffered a terrible defeat, which Christ describes by saying, “I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” The hope which he had all along cherished, of overcoming the Son of man when he took upon himself our nature, had forever perished. His power was limited. He could no more aspire to a personal encounter with the Son of God,--a fact which hitherto had given, in a comparative degree, dignity and prestige to his position. Henceforth the church (the woman) is the object of his malice, and he resorts to all those nefarious means against her that would naturally characterize a baffled and hopeless rage.[2]

But hereupon a song is sung in heaven, “Now is come salvation,” etc. How is this, if these scenes are in the past? Had salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of God, and the power of his Christ, then come? Not at all; but this song was sung prospectively. These things were made sure. The great victory had been won by Christ which put the question of their establishment forever at rest. Just as we read in other scriptures, “We have eternal life,” “We have redemption through his blood,” etc., as though we were now in actual possession of these blessings; whereas we only have them by faith, and the language is simply an assurance that they are forever sure to the final overcomers.

The prophet then glances rapidly over the working of Satan from that time to the end (verses 11, 12), during which time the faithful “brethren” overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony, while his wrath increases as his time grows short. Though working through earthly powers, Satan, personally, is the chief agent from verse 9 to 17.

Verse 13. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. 14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. 17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

But little comment is necessary on the verses last introduced. Suffice it to say that here we are again carried back to the time when Satan became fully aware that he had utterly failed in all his

attempts against the Lord of glory in his earthly mission; and seeing this, he turned with tenfold fury, as already noticed, upon the church which Christ had established. Then we have again brought to view the church going into that condition here denominated being “in the wilderness.” This must denote a state of seclusion from the public gaze, and of concealment from her foes. That church which during all the dark ages trumpeted her lordly commands into the ears of listening Christendom, and flaunted her ostentatious banners before gaping crowds, was not the church of Christ; it was the body of the mystery of iniquity. The “mystery of godliness” was God manifested here as a man; the “mystery of iniquity” was a man pretending to be God. This was the great apostasy, the mongrel produced by the union of heathenism and Christianity. The true church was out of sight; in secret places they worshiped God; the caves and the hidden recesses of the valleys of the Piedmont may be taken as representative places, where the truth of the gospel was sacredly cherished from the rage of its foes. Here God watched over his church, and by his

providence protected and nourished her.

The eagles' wings given her appropriately signify the haste with which the true church was obliged to provide for her own safety when the man of sin was installed in power, together with the assistance God provided her to this end. The like figure is used to describe God's dealings with ancient Israel. By Moses he said to them: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." (Exodus 19:4)

The mention of the period during which the woman is nourished in the wilderness as "a time and times and half a time," the exact phraseology used in Daniel 7:25, furnishes a key for the explanation of the latter passage; for the very same period is called in verse 6 of Revelation 12, "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." This shows that a "time" is one year, 360 days; two "times," two years, or 720 days; and "half a time," half a year, or 180 days, making in all 1260 days; and this, being symbolic, signifies 1260 literal

years.

The serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood to carry away the church. By its false doctrines the papacy had so corrupted all nations as to have control absolutely, for long centuries, of the civil power. Through it Satan could hurl a mighty flood of persecution against the church in every direction; and this he was not slow to do. (See reference to the terrible persecutions of the church in remarks on Daniel 7:25.) From fifty to one hundred million were carried away by the flood; but the church was not entirely swallowed up; the days were shortened for the elect's sake. (Matthew 24:22)

“The earth helped the woman” by opening its mouth and swallowing up the flood. The Reformation of the sixteenth century began its work. God raised up the noble Luther and his colaborers to expose the true character of the papacy, and break the power with which superstition had enslaved the minds of the people. Luther nailed his theses to the door of the church at

Wittenberg; and the pen with which he wrote them, according to the symbolic dream of the good elector Frederick of Saxony, did indeed span the continent, and shake the triple crown on the pope's head. Princes began to espouse the cause of the Reformers. It was the dawning of religious light and liberty, and God would not suffer the darkness to swallow up its radiance. Tetzels, the indulgence-peddler, swelled and bellowed with wrath, and Pope Leo roared with rage; but all in vain. The spell was broken. Men found that the bulls and anathemas of the pope fell harmless at their feet, just as soon as they dared exercise their God-given right to regulate their consciences by his word alone. Defenders of the true faith multiplied. And soon there was enough Protestant soil found in Switzerland, Germany, Holland, England, Norway, and Sweden, to swallow up the flood of papal fury, and rob it of its power to harm the church. Thus the earth helped the woman, and has continued to help to the present day, as the spirit of the Reformation and religious liberty has been fostered by the leading nations of Christendom.

But the dragon is not yet through with his work. Verse 17 brings to view another and a final outburst of his wrath, this time against the last generation of Christians to live on the earth. We say the last generation; for the war of the dragon is directed against the remnant of the woman's seed; that is, the remnant of the seed, or individuals, that constitute the true church; and no generation but the last can truthfully be represented by the remnant. If the view is correct that we have already reached the generation which is to witness the closing up of earthly scenes, this warfare against the truth cannot be far in the future.

This remnant is characterized by their keeping of the commandments of God, and having the testimony of Jesus Christ. This points to a Sabbath reform to be accomplished in the last days; for on the Sabbath alone, as pertaining to the commandments, is there a difference of faith and practice among those who accept the decalogue as the moral law? This is more particularly brought to view in the message of Revelation 14:9-12.

It may be proper to notice that according to the testimony of this chapter, three powers are made use of by the Devil to carry out his work, and hence are all spoken of as the dragon, he being the inspiring agent in them all. These are, (1) pagan Rome; (2) papal Rome; (3) the twohorned beast, our own government under the control of apostate Protestantism, which is the chief agent, as will hereafter appear, in making war upon those who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus.

Notes:

1. See *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. I, p. 67.
2. See *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol. I, p. 79.

Chapter 13

Persecuting Powers Professedly Christian

Verse 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4. And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? 5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty

and two months. 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9. If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

The sea is a symbol of “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.” Revelation 17:15. A beast is the Bible symbol of an unrighteous nation, or power, representing sometimes the civil power alone, sometimes the ecclesiastical in connection with the civil. Whenever a beast is seen to come up out of the sea, it denotes that the power arises in a thickly

populated territory; and if the winds are represented as blowing upon the sea, as in Daniel 7:2, 3, political commotion, civil strife, and revolution are indicated.

By the dragon of the previous chapter, and the beast first introduced in this, we have the Roman power as a whole brought to view in its two phases, pagan and papal; hence these two symbols have each the seven heads and ten horns. (See on chapter 17:10.)

The seven-headed and ten-horned beast, or, more briefly, the leopard beast, here introduced, symbolizes a power which exercises ecclesiastical as well as civil authority. This point is of sufficient importance to justify the introduction of a few of the conclusive arguments which go to prove it.

The line of prophecy in which this symbol occurs commences with chapter 12. The symbols of earthly governments embraced in the prophecy are, the dragon of chapter 12, and the leopard beast and two-horned beast of chapter 13. The same line

of prophecy evidently continues into chapter 14, closing with verse 5 of that chapter. Commencing, therefore, with verse 1 of chapter 12, and ending with verse 5 of chapter 14, we have a line of prophecy distinct and complete in itself.

Each of the powers here introduced is represented as fiercely persecuting the church of God. The scene opens with the church, under the symbol of a woman, anxiously longing for the promise to be fulfilled that the seed of the woman, the Lord of glory, should appear among men. The dragon stood before the woman for the purpose of devouring her child. His evil design is thwarted, and the child is caught up to God and his throne. A period follows in which the church suffers severe oppression from this dragon power. And though in this part of the scene the prophet occasionally glances forward, once even down almost to the end, because all the enemies of the church were to be actuated by the spirit of the dragon, yet in verse 1 of chapter 13 we are carried back to the time when the leopard beast, the successor of the dragon, commences his career. From this power,

for the long period of 1260 years, the church suffers war and persecution. Following this period of oppression, the church has another conflict, brief, but sharp and severe, with the two-horned beast. Then comes deliverance; and the prophecy closes with the church brought safely through all her persecutions, and standing victorious with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Thank God for the sure promise of final victory!

The one character which ever appears the same in all these scenes, and whose history is the leading theme through all the prophecy, is the church of God. The other characters are her persecutors, and are introduced simply because they are such. And here, as an introductory inquiry, we raise the question, Who, or what is it that persecutes the true church?--It is a false or apostate church. What is it that is ever warring against true religion?--It is a false and counterfeit religion. Who ever heard of the civil power, merely, of any nation, persecuting the people of God? Governments may war against other governments, to avenge some wrong, real or imaginary, or to acquire territory and extend their

power, as nations have often warred against the Jews; but governments do not persecute (mark the word--do not persecute) people on account of their religion, unless under the control of some opposite and hostile system of religion. But the powers introduced in this prophecy,--the dragon, the leopard beast, and the two-horned beast,--are all persecuting powers. They are actuated by rage and enmity against the people and church of God. And this fact is of itself sufficiently conclusive evidence that in each of these powers the ecclesiastical or religious element is the controlling power.

Take the dragon: what does it symbolize? The Roman empire, is the undeniable answer. But this is not enough. No one would be satisfied with this answer and no more. It must be more definite. We then add, The Roman empire in its pagan form, to which all must also agree. But just as soon as we say pagan, we introduce a religious element; for paganism is one of the hugest systems of counterfeit religion that Satan ever devised. The dragon, then, is so far an ecclesiastical power that the very characteristic by which it is distinguished

is a false system of religion. And what made the dragon persecute the church of Christ?--It was because Christianity was prevailing against paganism, sweeping away its superstitions, overturning its idols, and dismantling its temples. The religious element of that power was touched, and persecution was the result.

We now come to the leopard beast of chapter 13. What does that symbolize? The answer still is, The Roman empire. But the dragon symbolized the Roman empire, and why does not the same symbol represent it still?--Ah! there has been a change in the religious character of the empire; and this beast symbolizes Rome in its professedly Christian form. And it is this change of religion, and this alone, which makes a change in the symbol necessary. This beast differs from the dragon only in that he presents a different religious aspect. Hence it would be altogether wrong to affirm that it denotes simply the Roman civil power.

To this beast the dragon gives his seat, his power, and great authority. By what power was

pagan Rome succeeded? We all know that it was by papal Rome. It matters not to our present purpose when or by what means this change was effected; the great fact is apparent, and is acknowledged by all, that the next great phase of the Roman empire after its pagan form was its papal. It would not be correct, therefore, to say that pagan Rome gave its seat and power to a form of government merely civil, having no religious element whatever. No stretch of the imagination can conceive of such a transaction. But two phases of empire are here recognized; and in the prophecy, Rome is pagan until Rome is papal. The statement that the dragon gave to the leopard beast his seat and power, is further evidence that the dragon of Revelation 12:3 is not a symbol of Satan personally; for Satan has not abdicated in favor of any other malevolent being; and he has not given up his seat to any earthly power.

But it may be said that it takes the leopard beast and two-horned beast together to constitute the papacy, and hence it is to these that the dragon gives his power, seat, and great authority. But the

prophecy does not say so. It is the leopard beast alone with which the dragon has to do. It is to that beast alone that he gives his power, seat, and great authority. It is that beast that has a head that is wounded to death, which is afterward healed; that beast that the whole world wonders after; that beast that receives a mouth speaking blasphemies, and that wears out the saints for 1260 years; and all this before the succeeding power, the two-horned beast, comes upon the stage of action at all. The leopard beast alone, therefore, symbolizes the Roman empire in its papal form, the controlling influence being ecclesiastical.

To show this more fully, we have but to draw a parallel between the little horn of Daniel 7:8, 20, 24, 25, and this power. From this comparison it will appear that the little horn referred to and the leopard beast symbolize the same power; but the little horn is acknowledged on all hands to be a symbol of the papacy. There are six points of identity, as follows:--

1. The little horn was a blasphemous power.

“He shall speak great words against the Most High.” (Daniel 7:25) The leopard beast of Revelation 13:6 does the same. “He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.”

2. The little horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. (Daniel 7:21) This beast also Revelation 13:7 makes war with the saints, and overcomes them.

3. The little horn had a mouth speaking great things. Daniel 7:8, 20. And of this beast we read, Revelation 13:5:

“And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.”

4. The little horn arose on the cessation of the pagan form of the Roman empire. The beast of Revelation 13:2 arises at the same time; for the dragon, pagan Rome, gives him his power, his seat, and great authority.

5. Power was given to the little horn to

continue for a time, times, and the dividing of time, or 1260 years. (Daniel 7:25) To this beast also power was given for forty-two months, or 1260 years. Revelation 13:5.

6. At the end of that specified period, the dominion of the little horn was to be taken away. (Daniel 7:26) At the end of the same period, the leopard beast was himself to be “led into captivity.” (Revelation 13:10) Both these specifications were fulfilled in the captivity and exile of the pope, and the temporary overthrow of the papacy by France in 1798.

Here are points that prove identity; for when we have in prophecy two symbols, as in this instance, representing powers that come upon the stage of action at the same time, occupy the same territory, maintain the same character, do the same work, exist the same length of time, and meet the same fate, those symbols represent the same identical power.

Now all the particulars above specified do

apply alike to the little horn, and the leopard beast of chapter 13, showing that these two symbols represent the same power. It is admitted on all hands that the little horn represents the papacy; and he who claims that this leopard beast does not represent the same, must, to be consistent, show that at the same time that the papacy arose, there arose another great power exactly like it, occupying the same territory, bearing the same character, doing the same work, continuing the same length of time, and meeting the same fate, and yet a separate and distinct power; which would be as absurd as it would be impossible.

The head that was wounded to death was the papal head. We are held to this conclusion by the very obvious principle that whatever is spoken in prophecy of the symbol of any government, applies to that government only while it is represented by that symbol. Now Rome is represented by two symbols, the dragon and the leopard beast, because it has presented two phases, the pagan and the papal; and whatever is said of the dragon applies to Rome only in its pagan form, and whatever is said

of the leopard beast applies to Rome only in its professedly Christian form. But Rome was pagan in John's day, who lived under the sixth or imperial head. This shows us at once that six of the heads, including the imperial, belong to the dragon; and if it was any one of these heads which was wounded to death, then it was one of the heads of the dragon, or one of the forms of government that belonged to Rome in its pagan form, and not one of the heads of the beast; and John should have said, I saw one of the heads of the dragon wounded to death. But he says that it was one of the heads of the beast that was wounded to death. In other words, this wound fell upon some form of government that existed in the Roman empire after its change, from paganism to Christianity. But after this change, there was but one head, and that was the papal.[1] Thus it is placed beyond controversy that it was none other than the papal head that was wounded to death, and his deadly wound was healed. This wounding is the same as the going into captivity. Revelation 13:10. It was inflicted when the pope was taken prisoner by Berthier, the French general, and the papal government was for a time abolished, in 1798.

Stripped of his power, both civil and ecclesiastical, the captive pope, Pius VI, died in exile at Valence in France, Aug. 29, 1799. But the deadly wound was healed when the papacy was re-established, though with a diminution of its former power, by the election of a new pope, March 14, 1800.[2]

This beast opens his mouth in blasphemy against God to blaspheme his name. (See mention under Daniel 7:25 of the presumptuous titles assumed by the popes.)

He blasphemes the tabernacle in heaven by turning the attention of his subjects to his own throne and palace instead of to the tabernacle of God; by turning their attention away from the city of God, Jerusalem above, and pointing them to Rome as the eternal city; and he blasphemes them that dwell in heaven by assuming to exercise the power of forgiving sins, and so turning away the minds of men from the mediatorial work of Christ and his heavenly assistants in the sanctuary above.

By verse 10 we are again referred to the events

of 1798, when that power that had for 1260 years led the saints of God into captivity, was led into captivity itself, as already noticed.

Verse 11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. 16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and

poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: 17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

These verses bring to view the third great symbol in the line of prophecy we are examining, usually denominated the two-horned beast. We inquire for its application. The dragon, pagan Rome, and the leopard beast, papal Rome, present before us great organizations standing as the representatives of two great systems of false religion. Analogy would seem to require that the remaining symbol, the two-horned beast, have a similar application, and find its fulfillment in some nationality which is the representative of still another great system of religion. But the only remaining system which is exercising a controlling influence in the world to-day is Protestantism.

Abstractly considered, paganism embraces all heathen lands, containing more than half the population of the globe. Catholicism, which may

perhaps be considered as embracing the religion of the Greek Church, so nearly identical with it, belongs to nations which compose a great portion of Christendom. Mohammedanism is an effete system, which has ceased to be any important factor in the world's progress. Moreover, it seems to have received enough prophetic attention in Daniel 11 and Revelation 9. But Protestantism is the religion of nations which constitute the vanguard of the world in liberty, enlightenment, progress, and power.

If, then, Protestantism is the religion to which we are to look, to what nationality, as the representative of that religion, does the prophecy have application? There are notable Protestant nations in Europe; but for reasons which will hereafter appear, the symbol cannot apply to any of these. A careful investigation has led to the conclusion that it does apply to Protestant America, or the government of the United States. We trust the reader will now feel impatient for some of the reasons for such an application, and will carefully consider the evidence by which it is supported.

1. Probabilities Considered.--Are there any reasons why we should expect that our own government would be mentioned in prophecy? On what conditions have other nations found a place in the prophetic record?--First, if they have acted any prominent part in the world's history; and secondly, and above all, if they have had jurisdiction over, or maintained any relations with, the people of God. In the records of the Bible and of secular history, we find data from which to deduce this rule respecting the prophetic mention of earthly governments; namely, whenever the relations of God's people to any nation are such that a true history of the former, which is the object of all revelation, could not be given without a notice of the latter, such nation is mentioned in prophecy. And all these conditions are certainly fulfilled in our government. No nation has ever attracted more attention, excited more profound wonder, or given promise of greater eminence or influence. And certainly here, if anywhere on the globe, are to be found a strong array of Christians, such as are the salt of the earth and the light of the

world, whose history could not be written without mention of that government under which they live and enjoy their liberty.

And the conviction has fastened itself upon many minds that the hand of Providence has been conspicuously manifest in the rise and progress of this nation.

Governor Pownal, an English statesman, in 1780, while our Revolution was in progress, predicted that this country would become independent, and that a civilizing activity, beyond what Europe could ever know, would animate it; and that its commercial and naval power would be found in every quarter of the globe. He then speaks of the probable establishment of this country as a free and sovereign power as--

“A revolution that has stronger marks of divine interposition superseding the ordinary course of human affairs, than any other event which this world has experienced.”

De Tocqueville, a French writer, speaking of the separation of the United States from England, says:--

“It might seem their folly, but was really their fate; or rather, the providence of God, who has doubtless a work for them to do in which the massive materiality of the English character would have been too ponderous a dead-weight upon their progress.”

Geo. Alfred Townsend, speaking of the misfortunes that have attended the other governments on this continent [3], says:--

“The history of the United States was separated by a beneficent Providence far from the wild and cruel history of the rest of the continent.”

Such considerations as these are calculated to arouse in every mind a strong expectation that this government will be found to have some part to act in the carrying out of God’s providential purposes in this world, and that somewhere it will be spoken

of in the prophetic word.

2. The Chronology of This Power.--At what period in this world's history is the rise of this power placed in the prophecy? On this point, the foundation for the conclusions at which we must arrive is already laid in the facts elicited in reference to the preceding or leopard beast. It was at the time when this beast went into captivity, or was killed (politically) with the sword (verse 10), or (which we suppose to be the same thing) had one of its heads wounded to death (verse 3), that John saw the two-horned beast coming up. If the leopard beast, as we have conclusively proved, signifies the papacy, and the going into captivity met its fulfillment in the temporary overthrow of the popedom by the French in 1798, then we have the time definitely specified when we are to look for the rise of this power. The expression "coming up" must signify that the power to which it applies was but newly organized, and was then just rising into prominence and influence. The power represented by this symbol must, then, be some power which in 1798 stood in this position before

the world.

And in what condition stood the United States of America at that time? Macmillan and Co., the London publishers, in announcing their Statesman's Year Book for 1867, make an interesting statement of the changes that took place among the leading nations of the world, during the half century between the years 1817 and 1867. They say:--

“The half century has extinguished three kingdoms, one grand duchy, eight duchies, four principalities, one electorate, and four republics. Three new kingdoms have arisen, and one kingdom has been transformed into an empire. There are now forty-one states in Europe against fifty-nine which existed in 1817. Not less remarkable is the territorial extension of the superior states in the world. Russia has annexed 567,364 square miles; the United States, 1,968,009; France, 4,620; Prussia, 29,781; Sardinia, expanding into Italy, has increased by 83,041; the Indian empire has been augmented by 431,616. The principal states that

have lost territory are Turkey, Mexico, Austria, Denmark, and the Netherlands.”

In their bearing upon the prophecy before us, these statements are worthy the particular attention of the reader. During the half century named, twenty-one governments disappeared altogether, and only three new ones arose. Five lost in territory instead of gaining. Only five besides the United States added to their domain, and the one which did the most in this direction, added only a little over half a million of square miles; while the United States added nearly two million square miles. Thus the American government added over fourteen hundred thousand square miles of territory, during the fifty years named, more than any other single nation, and over eight hundred thousand more than were added, during that time, by all the other nations of the earth put together. Can any one doubt what nation was emphatically “coming up” during the period covered by these statistics? Certainly it must be admitted that the United States is the only power that meets the specification of the prophecy on this point of

chronology.

Mr. Wesley, in his notes on Revelation 14, written in 1754, says of the two-horned beast:--

“He has not yet come, though he cannot be far off; for he is to appear at the end of the fortytwo months of the first beast.”

3. Age of This Power.--There is good evidence to show that the government symbolized by the two-horned beast is introduced into prophecy in the early part of its career; that is, when first brought to view, a youthful power. John's words are, “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb.” Why does not John simply say, “He had two horns”? Why does he add, “like a lamb”? It must be for the purpose of denoting the character of this beast, showing that it is not only of a very innocent and harmless demeanor, ostensibly, but also that it is a very youthful power; for the horns of a lamb are horns that have but just begun to grow.

Bear in mind that by the preceding argument on chronology, our gaze is fixed to the year 1798; and the power symbolized was then a youthful power, according to the present argument. Question: What notable power was at that time coming into prominence, but still in its youth? England was not, nor was France, nor Russia, nor any European power. For a young and rising power at that epoch, we are obliged to turn our eyes to the New World. But as soon as we turn them to this continent, they rest inevitably upon this country as the power in question. No other power this side of the ocean is entitled to any mention in comparison with it.

4. Location of the Two-horned Beast.--A single declaration of the prophecy is sufficient to guide us to important and correct conclusions on this point. John calls it "another beast." It is a symbol in addition to, and different from, the papal beast which the prophet had just had under consideration; that is, it symbolizes a power separate and distinct from that which is denoted by the preceding beast. This which John calls "another beast" is certainly no part of the first beast; and the

power symbolized by it is likewise no part of that which is intended by that beast. This is fatal to the claim of those, who, to avoid the application of this symbol to our own government, say that it denotes some phase of the papacy; for in that case it would be a part of the preceding, or leopard beast.

If this is “another” beast, it must be found in some locality not covered by any other symbols. Let us, then, take a brief survey of those symbols found in the word of God, which represent earthly governments. These are found chiefly, if not entirely, in the books of Daniel and the Revelation. In Daniel 2, a symbol is introduced in the form of a great image, consisting of four parts, — gold, silver, brass, and iron,—which is finally dashed to atoms, and a great mountain, taking its place, fills the whole earth. In Daniel 7, we find a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a great and terrible nondescript beast, which, after passing through a new and remarkable phase, goes into the lake of fire. In Daniel 8, we have a ram, a he-goat, and a horn, little at first, but waxing exceeding great. In Revelation 9, we have locusts like unto horses. In

Revelation 12, we have a great red dragon. In Revelation 13, we have a blasphemous leopard beast, and a beast with two horns like a lamb. In Revelation 17, we have a scarlet-colored beast, upon which a woman sits, holding in her hand a golden cup full of filthiness and abomination.

What governments and what powers are represented by all these? Do any of them symbolize the United States? Some of them certainly represent earthly kingdoms, for so the prophecies themselves expressly inform us; and in the application of nearly all of them there is quite a uniform agreement among expositors. The four parts of the great image of Daniel 2 represent four kingdoms, — Babylon, or Chaldea, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. The lion of the seventh chapter also represents Babylon; the bear, Medo-Persia; the leopard, Grecia; and the great and terrible beast, Rome. The horn with human eyes and mouth, which appears in the second phase of this beast, represents the papacy, and covers its history down to the time when it was temporarily overthrown by the French in 1798. In Daniel 8, likewise, the ram

represents Medo-Persia; the he-goat, Grecia; and the little horn, Rome. All these have a very clear and definite application to the governments named; none of them thus far can have any reference to the United States.

The symbols brought to view in Revelation 9, all are agreed in applying to the Saracens and Turks. The dragon of Revelation 12 is the acknowledged symbol of pagan Rome. The leopard beast of chapter 13 can be shown to be identical with the eleventh horn of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, and hence to symbolize the papacy. The scarlet beast and woman of Revelation 17 as evidently apply also to Rome under pagan and papal rule, the symbols having especial reference to the distinction between the civil power and the ecclesiastical, the one being represented by the beast, the other by the woman seated thereon.

There is one symbol left, and that is the two-horned beast of Revelation 13. On this there is more difference of opinion; and before seeking for an application, let us look at the ground covered by

those already examined. Babylon and Medo-Persia covered all the civilized portion of Asia. Greece covered Eastern Europe, including Russia. Rome, with the ten kingdoms into which it was divided, as represented by the ten toes of the image, the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel 7, the ten horns of the dragon of Revelation 12, and the ten horns of the leopard beast of Revelation 13, covered all Western Europe. (See Map of the Four Kingdoms, on page 51.) In other words, all the Eastern Hemisphere known to history and civilization, is absorbed by the symbols already examined, respecting the application of which there is scarcely any room for doubt.

But there is a mighty nation in the Western Hemisphere, worthy, as we have seen, of being mentioned in prophecy, which is not yet brought in; and there is one symbol remaining, the application of which has not yet been made. All the symbols but one are applied, and all the available portions of the Eastern Hemisphere are covered by the applications. Of all the symbols mentioned, one alone, the two-horned beast of Revelation 13, is

left; and of all the countries of the earth respecting which any reason exists why they should be mentioned in prophecy, one alone, the United States government, remains. Do the two-horned beast and the United States belong together? If they do, then all the symbols find an application, and all the ground is covered. If they do not, it follows, first, that the United States is not represented in prophecy; and secondly, that the symbol of the two-horned beast finds no government to which it can apply. But the first of these suppositions is not probable, and the second is not possible.

But one conclusion can be drawn from these arguments, and that is that the two-horned beast must be located in the Western Hemisphere, and that it symbolizes the United States.

Another consideration pointing to the locality of this power is drawn from the fact that John saw it arising from the earth. If the sea, from which the leopard beast arose (Revelation 13:1), denotes peoples, nations, and multitudes (Revelation 17:15), the earth would suggest, by contrast, a new

and previously unoccupied territory.

Being thus excluded from Eastern continents, and impressed with the idea of looking to territory not previously known to civilization, we turn of necessity to the Western Hemisphere.

5. The Manner of Its Rise.--The manner in which the two-horned beast was seen coming up shows, equally with its location, age, and chronology that it is a symbol of the United States. John says he saw the beast coming up "out of the earth." And this expression must have been designedly used to point out the contrast between the rise of this beast and that of other national prophetic symbols. The four beasts of Daniel 7 and the leopard beast of Revelation 13 all arose out of the sea. New nations generally arise by overthrowing other nations, and taking their place. But no other nation was overturned in order to make room for the United States, and the struggle for its independence was already fifteen years in the past when it came into the field of prophecy. The prophet saw only peace.

The word which is used in verse 11, to describe the manner in which this beast comes up, is very expressive. It is ..αβα.... (anabainon), one of the prominent definitions of which is, “To grow or spring up as a plant.” And it is a remarkable fact that this very figure has been chosen by political writers, without any reference to the prophecy, as the one conveying the best idea of the manner in which this government has arisen. [4], says:--

“In this web of islands--the West Indies--began the life of both [North and South] Americas. There Columbus saw land; there Spain began her baneful and brilliant Western empire; thence Cortez departed for Mexico, De Soto for the Mississippi, Balboa for the Pacific, and Pizarro for Peru. The history of the United States was separated by a beneficent Providence far from this wild and cruel history of the rest of the continent, and like a silent seed we grew into empire; while empire itself, beginning in the South, was swept by so interminable a hurricane that what of its history we can ascertain is read by the very lightnings that

devastated it. The growth of English America may be likened to a series of lyrics sung by separate singers, which, coalescing, at last make a vigorous chorus, and this, attracting many from afar, swells and is prolonged, until presently it assumes the dignity and proportions of epic song.”

A writer in the Dublin Nation, about the year 1850, spoke of the United States as a wonderful empire which was “emerging,” and “amid the silence of the earth daily adding to its power and pride.”

In [5], is an extract from an oration delivered by Edward Everett on the English exiles who founded this government, in which he says:--

“Did they look for a retired spot, inoffensive from its obscurity, safe in its remoteness from the haunts of despots where the little church of Leyden might enjoy freedom of conscience? Behold the mighty regions over which, in peaceful conquest--victoria sine clade--they have borne the banners of the cross.”

Will the reader now look at these expressions side by side,--“coming up out of the earth,” “emerging amid the silence of the earth,” “like a silent seed we grew into empire,” “mighty regions” secured by “peaceful conquest.” The first is from the prophet, stating what would be when the two-horned beast should arise; the others are from political writers, telling what has been in the history of our own government. Can any one fail to see that the last three are exactly synonymous with the first, and that they record a complete accomplishment of the prediction?

Another inquiry naturally follows: Has the United States “come up” in a manner to meet the specifications of the prophecy? Let us see. A short time before the great Reformation in the days of Martin Luther, not four hundred years ago, this Western Hemisphere was discovered. The Reformation awoke the nations, that were fast fettered in the galling bonds of superstition, to the fact that it is the heaven-born right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own

conscience. But rulers are loth to lose their power, and religious intolerance still oppressed the people. Under these circumstances, a body of religious heroes at length determined to seek in the wilds of America that measure of civil and religious freedom which they so much desired. In pursuance of their noble purpose, one hundred of these voluntary exiles landed from the Mayflower, on the coast of New England, Dec. 22, 1620. "Here," says Martyn, "New England was born," and this was "its first baby cry,--a prayer and a thanksgiving to the Lord."

Another permanent English settlement was made at Jamestown, Va., in 1607. In process of time, other settlements were made and colonies organized, which were all subject to the English crown till the Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

The population of these colonies, according to the United States Magazine of August, 1855, amounted in 1701 to 262,000; in 1749, to 1,046,000; in 1775, to 2,803,000. Then

commenced the struggle of the American colonies for independence. In 1776, they declared themselves a free and independent nation. In 1777, delegates from the thirteen original States,--New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia,--in Congress assembled, adopted Articles of Confederation. In 1783, the war of the Revolution closed with a treaty of peace with Great Britain, whereby the independence of the United States was acknowledged, and territory ceded to the extent of 815,615 square miles. In 1787, the Constitution was framed, and ratified by the foregoing thirteen States; and on the 1st of March, 1789, it went into effect. Then the American ship of state was fairly launched, with less than one million square miles of territory, and about three million souls. Thus are we brought to the year 1798, when this government is introduced into prophecy. And now, passing over a little more than a hundred years, to the last decade of the nineteenth century, the territory of the United States government has expanded to

3,678,392 square miles, and its population has increased to about 70,000,000 people. Its growth in all industrial pursuits, agricultural productions, cattle raising, newspapers, schools, production of the precious metals, and wealth of all kinds which pertain to a civilized people, has been equally remarkable, and furnishes an ample basis for the application of the prophecy.

6. Character of the Government Symbolized by the Two-horned Beast.--Under this division of the subject we find still further evidence that the symbol represents the United States government. In describing this power, John says that it had "two horns like a lamb." The horns of a lamb indicate, first, youthfulness, and secondly, innocence and gentleness. As a power which has but recently arisen, the United States answers to the symbol admirably in respect to age; while no other power, as has already been proved, can be found to do this. And considered as an index of power and character, it can be decided what constitutes the two horns of the government, if it can be ascertained what is the secret of its strength and

power, and what reveals its apparent character, or constitutes its outward profession. The Hon. J. A. Bingham gives us the clue to the whole matter when he states that the object of those who first sought these shores was to found “what the world had not seen for ages; viz., a church without a pope, and a state without a king.” Expressed in other words, this would be a government in which the ecclesiastical should be separate from the civil power, and civil and religious liberty reign supreme.

It needs no argument to show, and even the statement is unnecessary, that this is precisely the profession of the American government. Article IV, sec. 4 of the Constitution of the United States, reads: “The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government.” Article VI: “No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.” The first amendment of the Constitution (Art. I) begins as follows: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free

exercise thereof.” These articles profess the amplest guarantee of civil and religious liberty, the entire and perpetual separation of church and state; and what better symbols of them could be given than “two horns like a lamb”? In what other country can be found a condition of things which would meet so completely this feature of the symbol?

7. A Republican Government.--The two-horned beast symbolizes a nation with a republican form of government. This is shown by the absence of crowns both upon its head and its horns. A crown is an appropriate symbol of a kingly or monarchical form of government; and the absence of crowns, as in this case, would suggest a government in which the power is not vested in any such ruling member, but is, per consequence, lodged in the hands of the people.

But this is not the most conclusive proof that the nation here symbolized is republican in its form of government. From verse 14 we learn that appeal is made to the people when any national action is

to be performed: “Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast,” etc. Were the government a monarchy, national questions would hardly be submitted in this unqualified manner, to the people; and the fact that appeal is here made to the people shows that the form of the government is such that the power is vested in their hands; and this is emphatically the case in the United States government, but not in any other government to which any one could reasonably think of applying this symbol. This is another strong link in the chain of evidence that this symbol must apply to the United States of America.

8. A Protestant Nation.--The two-horned beast also symbolizes a government which is Protestant in religion, or which, at least, is a non-Catholic power. It has been shown that the preceding beast symbolized the papacy; and of the two-horned beast we read that he causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast. But in all Catholic countries, the people voluntarily worship the beast, or obey the dictates of

Catholicism, without being “caused,” or compelled, to do so by the government. The fact that the people of this government do not render this worship till caused to do so by the civil power, shows that the religion they entertain is not Catholicism. As an almost inevitable consequence, it follows that it is Protestantism; for these are the only two religions of any consequence in Christendom. The United States is a Protestant nation, and meets the requirements of the prophecy admirably in this respect. Thus again the prophecy points directly to this government.

9. The Dragon Voice.--After contemplating all the good features presented in this symbol, it is with pain we read that “he spake as a dragon.” Before entering upon a discussion of this topic, let us look at the points already established. It has been shown,--

(1.) That the government symbolized by the two-horned beast must be some government distinct from the powers of the Old World, whether civil or ecclesiastical.

(2.) That it must arise in the Western Hemisphere.

(3.) That it must be seen assuming a position of prominence and influence about the year 1798.

(4.) That it must rise in a peaceful and quiet manner, not augmenting its power, as other nations have done, by aggressive wars and successful conquests.

(5.) That its progress must be so rapid as to strike the beholder with as much wonder as would the perceptible growth of an animal before his eyes.

(6.) That it must be republican in its form of government.

(7.) That it must be Protestant in its religion.

(8.) That it must exhibit before the world, as an index of its character and the elements of its

government, two great principles which are in themselves perfectly just, innocent, and lamblike.

(9.) That it must perform its work in the present century, or this side of 1798.

And we have seen that of these nine specifications, it can be said: first, that they are all perfectly met in the history of the United States thus far; and secondly, that they are not met in the history of any other government on the face of the earth. It is therefore impossible to apply the symbol of Revelation 13:11 to any other government but that of the United States.

But after describing the lamblike appearance of this symbol, the prophet immediately adds this, “And he spake as a dragon.” The dragon, the first link in this chain of prophecy, was a relentless persecutor of the church of God. The leopard beast, which follows, was likewise a persecuting power, grinding out for 1260 years the lives of millions of the followers of Christ. The third actor in the scene, the two-horned beast, speaks like the first, and thus

shows himself to be a dragon at heart; “for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh,” and in the heart, actions are conceived. This, then, like the others, is to be a persecuting power; and the reason that any of them are mentioned in prophecy, is simply because they are persecuting powers. And if the United States is the power intended by this symbol which speaks as a dragon, it follows that this government is to enact unjust and oppressive laws against the religious profession and practice of some of its subjects.

Nor is this so improbable an event as might at first appear. We must remember that in the last days the vast majority of the people of the most favored lands are to relapse into the low moral condition described in such scriptures as Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:3, 4; Luke 17:26-30; 18:8 and it is from such that those who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)

Evil is also threatening from another quarter. Roman Catholicism which has grown strong

through immigration, has fixed its rapacious eyes on the United States, determined to bring this government under its power. Votes rule here, and Romanism controls an immense suffrage, which it carefully manipulates to its own ends. With such a weapon in its hands, its power for evil is almost unlimited; for multitudes of unscrupulous politicians, who under their country's pay, labor not for their country's good but for their own selfish aggrandizement, stand ready to help any party carry out any scheme, no matter how wicked, if that party will keep them in office.

And in the Protestant churches there is that which threatens to lead to equally serious evils. Wealth, pride, selfishness, love of display, and worldliness in general, are fostering a spirit of religious aristocracy fatal to godliness and true piety. But above all the creed-power is binding--perhaps it may be said, has bound--the churches as in iron bands. Charles Beecher's celebrated sermon on creeds arraigns the whole church polity of Protestantism as ruinous in this respect to religious liberty. Though uttered many years ago, it is still

growing more true each day. He says:--

“Our best, most humble, most devoted servants of Christ are fostering in their midst what will one day, not long hence, show itself to be the spawn of the dragon. They shrink from any rude word against creeds with the same sensitiveness with which those holy fathers would have shrunk from a rude word against the rising veneration of saints and martyrs which they were fostering. ... The Protestant evangelical denominations have so tied up one another’s hands, and their own, that, between them all, a man cannot become a preacher at all, anywhere, without accepting some book besides the Bible. ... There is nothing imaginary in the statement that the creed-power is now beginning to prohibit the Bible as really as Rome did, though in a subtler way.”

In addition to this, we have Spiritualism, infidelity, socialism, free love, and trades unions, or labor against capital, and communism,--all assiduously spreading their principles among the masses. These are the very principles that worked

among the people, as the exciting cause, just prior to the terrible French Revolution of 1783-1800. Human nature is the same in all ages, and like causes will surely produce like effects.

10. Great Wonders.--In that part of the prediction which sets forth the work of the twohorned beast, we read that “he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.” In this specification we have still further proof that the United States is the government represented by the two-horned beast. That we are living in an age of wonders, none deny. (See on Daniel 12:4, remarks on the wonderful achievements of the present age, and two plates of vignettes illustrating some of the leading triumphs of scientific and inventive skill.)

But this prophecy is not fulfilled in the great advancement in knowledge, the discoveries and inventions, so notable at the present time; for the wonders to which the prophet had reference are evidently wrought for the purpose of deceiving the people, as we read in verse 14: “And deceiveth

them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast.” This identifies the two-horned beast with the false prophet of Revelation 19:20 for this false prophet is the power that works miracles before the beast, “with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image,”--the identical work of the two-horned beast. We can now ascertain by what means the miracles in question are wrought; for Revelation 16:13, 14 speaks of spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of the great day of God Almighty; and these miracle-working spirits go forth out of the mouths of certain powers, one of which is this very false prophet, or two-horned beast.

The Saviour, predicting events to occur just before his second coming, says, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” Here, again, are wonders foretold, wrought for the

purpose of deception, so powerful, that, were it possible, even the very elect would be deceived by them.

Thus we have a prophecy (and there are many others) setting forth the development, in the last days, of a wonderworking power, manifested to a startling and unprecedented degree in the interest of falsehood and error. The earthly government with which it was to be especially connected is that represented by the two-horned beast, or false prophet. The agency lying back of the outward manifestations was to be Satanic, the spirit of devils. The prophecy calls for such a work as this in America at the present time. Do we behold anything like it? Read the answer in the lamentation of the prophet: “Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the Devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.” Stand aghast, O earth! tremble, ye people, but be not deceived! The huge specter of evil confronts us, as the prophet declared. Satan is loosed. From the depth of Tartarus myriads of demons swarm over

the land. The prince of darkness manifests himself as never before, and throwing over his work a would-be heavenly garb, he calls it--Spiritualism.

(1.) Does Spiritualism, then, bear these marks of Satanic agency?

a. The spirits which communicate, claim to be the spirits of our departed friends. But the Bible, in the most explicit terms, assures us that the dead are wholly inactive and unconscious till the resurrection; that the dead know not anything Ecclesiastes 9:5; that every operation of the mind has ceased (Psalms 146:4; that every emotion of the heart is suspended Ecclesiastes 9:6; and that there is neither work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, where they lie. Ecclesiastes 9:10. Whatever intelligence, therefore, comes to us professing to be one of our dead friends, comes claiming to be what, from the word of God, we know he is not. But angels of God do not lie; therefore these are not the good angels. Spirits of devils will lie; this is their work; and these are the credentials which at the very outset

they hand us.

b. The doctrines which they teach are also directly contrary to the Bible. They deny God. They deny Christ. They deny the atonement. They deny the Bible. They deny the existence of sin, and all distinction between right and wrong. They deny the sacredness of the marriage covenant; and, interspersing their utterances with blasphemies against God and his Son, and everything that is lovely, and good, and pure, they give the freest license to every propensity to sin, and to every carnal and fleshly lust. Tell us not that these things, openly taught under the garb of religion, and backed up by supernatural sights and sounds, are anything less than Satan's masterpiece. For proof that these charges are none too severe, see *Spiritualism a Subject of Prophecy*, containing quotations from their own writings. (Review and Herald Publishing House, Battle Creek, Mich.)

(2.) Spiritualism answers accurately to the prophecy in the exhibition of great signs and wonders. Among its many achievements, these

may be mentioned. Various articles have been transported from place to place by spirits alone; beautiful music has been produced independently of human agency, with and without the aid of visible instruments; many well-attested cases of healing have been presented; persons have been carried through the air by the spirits in the presence of many others; tables have been suspended in the air with several persons upon them; and, finally, spirits have presented themselves in bodily form, and talked with an audible voice.

(3.) Spiritualism answers to the prophecy in that it had its origin in the United States, thus connecting its wonders with the work of the two-horned beast. Commencing in Hydesville, N. Y., in the family of Mr. John D. Fox, in the latter part of March, 1848, it spread with incredible rapidity through all the world. A letter to the writer from a leading Spiritualist publisher, December, 1895, claims five million believers in the United States, and fifty million throughout the world. Of those who have become its devotees, Judge Edmonds said, as long ago as 1853:--

“Besides the undistinguished multitude, there are many now of high standing and talent ranked among them,--doctors, lawyers, and clergymen in great numbers, a Protestant bishop, the learned and reverend president of a college, judges of our higher courts, members of Congress, foreign ambassadors, and ex-members of the United States Senate.”

The foregoing statement was written many years ago; and from that time to this the work of the spirits has been steadily progressing, and spreading among all classes of people.

One reason why it is now difficult to estimate the number of those who might properly be denominated Spiritualists, is that the more prominent and respectable of the adherents of this movement are drawing under cover the obnoxious and immoral features of the system, heretofore so prominent, and assuming a Christian garb. By this move they bring themselves and a multitude of church-members upon common ground, where

there is no distinction between them in fact, though there still may be in name; the latter still remaining with their various denominations.

A little work by Hudson Tuttle, *What is Spiritualism?* p. 6, gives a list of twenty-two emperors, queens, princes, and members of the nobility, who have, through Spiritualism sought counsel in their affairs, or favored and supported its claims. It is thus preparing to fulfill Revelation 16:14, and gather the nations to the battle of the great day.

11. An Image to the Beast.--Closely associated with this working of miracles is the erection of an image to the beast. The prophet thus connects the two in verse 14: "And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live." The deception accomplished by the working of the miracles prepares the way for compliance with this demand for the formation of

an image to the beast.

To understand what would be an image of the papacy, we must first gain some definite idea of what constitutes the papacy itself. The full development of the beast, or the establishment of papal supremacy, dates from the famous letter of Justinian, which was made effective in A. D. 538, constituting the pope the head of the church and the corrector of heretics. The papacy was a church clothed with civil power,--an ecclesiastical body having authority to punish all dissenters with confiscation of goods, imprisonment, torture, and death. What would be an image of the papacy?-- Another ecclesiastical establishment clothed with similar power. How could such an image be formed in the United States? Let the Protestant churches be clothed with power to define and punish heresy, to enforce their dogmas under the pains and penalties of the civil law, and should we not have an exact representation of the papacy during the days of its supremacy?

It may be objected that whereas the papal

church was comparatively a unit, and hence could act in harmony in all its departments in enforcing its dogmas, the Protestant church is so divided as to be unable to agree in regard to what doctrines shall be made imperative on the people. The answer is, There are certain points which they hold in common, and which are sufficient to form a basis of co-operation. Chief among these may be mentioned the doctrine of the conscious state of the dead and the immortality of the soul, which is both the foundation and superstructure of Spiritualism; and also the doctrine that the first day of the week is the Christian Sabbath.

Let, now, an ecclesiastical organization be formed by these churches; let the government legalize such organization, and give it power (a power which it will not have till the government does grant it) to enforce upon the people the dogmas which the different denominations can all adopt as the basis of union, and what do we have?-- Just what the prophecy represents,--an image to the papal beast, endowed with life by the two-horned beast, to speak and act with power.

And are there any indications of such a movement? The preliminary question--that of the grand union of all the churches--is now profoundly agitating the religious world.

Chas. Beecher, in his sermon at the dedication of the Second Presbyterian church, Ft. Wayne, Ind., Feb. 22, 1846, before referred to, said:--

“Thus are the ministry of the evangelical Protestant denominations not only formed all the way up under a tremendous pressure of merely human fear, but they live, and move, and breathe in a state of things radically corrupt, and appealing every hour to every baser element of their nature to hush up the truth, and bow the knee to the power of apostasy. Was not this the way things went with Rome? Are we not living her life over again? And what do we see just ahead? — Another general council! a world’s convention! evangelical alliance, and universal creed!”

The Banner of Light of July 30, 1864, said:--

“A system will be unfolded sooner or later that will embrace in its folds church and state; for the object of the two should be one and the same.”

The Church Advocate, in March, 1870, speaking of the formation of an “Independent American Catholic Church,” a movement now agitated in this country, said:--

“There is evidently some secret power at work, which may be preparing the world for great events in the near future.”

A Mr. Havens, in a speech delivered in New York a few years ago, said:--

“For my own part, I wait to see the day when a Luther shall spring up in this country, who shall found a great American Catholic Church, instead of a great Roman Catholic Church; and who shall teach men that they can be good Catholics without professing allegiance to a pontiff on the other side of the Atlantic.”

In favor of this union, or rather, confederacy, of churches, journals are published, and speakers are pleading to-day. Thus there are indications that at no distant day such a church will be seen, not, indeed, raised up through the instrumentality of a Luther, but rather through the operation of the same spirit that inspired a Fernando Nunez or a Torquemada. This being done, another instalment of the prophecy will be accomplished, and the image will be formed. And inasmuch as the United States is the only country where such a move can be looked for, and as events are here openly tending to such a result, the evidence is hereby still further strengthened that the prophecy applies to this government.

12. The Mark of the Beast.--The two-horned beast enforces upon its subjects the mark of the first beast. We have now in the prophecy three agents introduced, which we must carefully distinguish from one another to avoid confusion.

(1.) The papal beast. This power is designated

as “the beast,” “the first beast,” “the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live,” and “the beast whose deadly wound was healed.” These expressions all refer to the same power; and wherever they occur in this prophecy, they have exclusive reference to the papacy.

(2.) The two-horned beast. This power, after its introduction in verse 11 of chapter 13, is represented through the remainder of the prophecy by the pronoun he; and wherever this pronoun occurs, down to the 17th verse (with possibly the exception of the 16th verse, which perhaps may refer to the image), it refers invariably to the two-horned beast.

(3.) The image of the beast. This is, every time, with the possible, but not probable exception just stated, called the image; so that there is no danger of confounding this with any other agent.

The acts ascribed to the image are, speaking, and enforcing the worship of itself under the penalty of death; and this is the only enactment

which the prophecy mentions as enforced under the death penalty.

The mark of the beast is enforced by the two-horned beast, either directly or through the image. The penalty attached to a refusal to receive this mark is a forfeiture of all social privileges, a deprivation of the right to buy and sell. The mark is the mark of the papal beast. Against this worship of the beast and his image, and the reception of his mark, the third angel's message of Revelation 14:9-12 is a most solemn and thrilling warning.

This, then, is the issue, which, according to this prophecy, we are soon to be called upon to meet; namely, human organizations, controlled and inspired by the spirit of the dragon, are to command men to do those acts which are in reality the worshiping of an apostate religious power and the receiving of his mark; and if they refuse to do this, they lose the rights of citizenship, and become outlaws in the land; and they must do that which constitutes the worship of the image of the beast, or forfeit their lives. On the other hand, God sends

forth a message a little before the fearful crisis is upon us, as we shall see under chapter 14:9-12, declaring that all who do any of these things “shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.” He who refuses to comply with these demands of earthly powers exposes himself to the severest penalties which human beings can inflict; and he who does comply, exposes himself to the most terrible threatenings of divine wrath to be found in the word of God. The question whether they will obey God or man is to be decided by the people of the present age, under the heaviest pressure, from either side, that has ever been brought to bear upon any generation.

The worship of the beast and his image, and the reception of his mark, must be something that involves the greatest offense that can be committed against God, to call down so severe a denunciation of wrath against it. This is a work, as has already been shown, which takes place in the last days; and as God has given us in his word most abundant evidence to show when we are in the last days, that

no one need be overtaken by the day of the Lord as by a thief, so, likewise, it must be that he has given us the means whereby we may determine what the receiving of the mark of the beast is, which he has so strongly condemned, that we may avoid the fearful penalty so sure to follow the commission of this act. God does not so trifle with human hopes and human destinies as to denounce a most fearful doom against a certain sin, and then place it out of our power to understand what that sin is, so that we have no means of guarding against it.

We therefore now call attention to the very important inquiry, What constitutes the mark of the beast? The figure of a mark is borrowed from an ancient custom. Bishop Newton (Dissertations on the Prophecies, Vol. III, p. 241) says:--

“It was customary among the ancients for servants to receive the mark of their master, and soldiers of their general, and those who were devoted to any particular deity, of the particular deity to whom they were devoted. These marks were usually impressed on their right hand or on

their forehead, and consisted of some hieroglyphic character, or of the name expressed in vulgar letters, or of the name disguised in numerical letters, according to the fancy of the imposer.”

Prideaux says that Ptolemy Philopater ordered all the Jews who applied to be enrolled as citizens of Alexandria to have the form of an ivy leaf (the badge of his god, Bacchus) impressed upon them with a hot iron, under pain of death. (Prideaux’s Connection, Vol. II, p. 78.)

The word used for mark in this prophecy is ...α.μα (charagma), and is defined to mean, “a graving, sculpture; a mark cut in or stamped.” It occurs nine times in the New Testament, and with the single exception of Acts 17:29, refers every time to the mark of the beast. We are not, of course, to understand in this symbolic prophecy that a literal mark is intended; but the giving of the literal mark, as practiced in ancient times, is used as a figure to illustrate certain acts that will be performed in the fulfillment of this prophecy. And from the literal mark as formerly employed, we

learn something of its meaning as used in the prophecy; for between the symbol and the thing symbolized there must be some resemblance. The mark, as literally used, signified that the person receiving it was the servant of, acknowledged the authority of, or professed allegiance to, the person whose mark he bore. So the mark of the beast, or of the papacy, must be some act or profession by which the authority of that power is acknowledged. What is it?

It would naturally be looked for in some of the special characteristics of the papal power. Daniel, describing that power under the symbol of a little horn, speaks of it as waging a special warfare against God, wearing out the saints of the Most High, and thinking to change times and laws. The prophet expressly specifies on this point: "He shall think to change times and laws." These laws must certainly be the laws of the Most High. To apply it to human laws, and make the prophecy read, "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change human laws," would be doing

evident violence to the language of the prophet. But apply it to the laws of God, and let it read, “And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and shall think to change the times and laws of the Most High,” and all is consistent and forcible. The Hebrew has (dath), law, and the Septuagint reads, ..μ.. (nomos) in the singular, “the law,” which more directly suggests the law of God. The papacy has been able to do more than merely “think” to change human laws. It has changed them at pleasure. It has annulled the decrees of kings and emperors, and absolved subjects from allegiance to their rightful sovereigns. It has thrust its long arm into the affairs of nations, and brought rulers to its feet in the most abject humility. But the prophet beholds greater acts of presumption than these. He sees it endeavor to do what it was not able to do, but could only think to do; he sees it attempt an act which no man, nor any combination of men, can ever accomplish; and that is, to change the law of the Most High. Bear this in mind while we look at the testimony of another sacred writer on this very point.

The apostle Paul speaks of the same power in 2 Thessalonians 2; and he describes it, in the person of the pope, as “the man of sin,” and as “sitting as God in the temple of God” (that is, the church), and as exalting himself “above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.” According to this, the pope sets himself up as the one for all the church to look to for authority, in the place of God. And now we ask the reader to ponder carefully the question how he can exalt himself above God. Search through the whole range of human devices, go to the extent of human effort; by what plan, by what move, by what claim, could this usurper exalt himself above God? He might institute any number of ceremonies, he might prescribe any form of worship, he might exhibit any degree of power; but so long as God had requirements which the people felt bound to regard in preference to his own, so long he would not be above God. He might enact a law, and teach the people that they were under as great obligations to that as to the law of God; then he would only make himself equal with God. But he is to do more than this; he is to attempt to raise

himself above him. Then he must promulgate a law which conflicts with the law of God, and demand obedience to his own law in preference to God's law. There is no other possible way in which he could place himself in the position assigned in the prophecy. But this is simply to change the law of God; and if he can cause this change to be adopted by the people in the place of the original enactment, then he, the law-changer, is above God, the law-maker. And this is the very work that Daniel said he should think to do.

Such a work as this, then, the papacy must accomplish according to the prophecy; and the prophecy cannot fail. And when this is done, what do the people of the world have? They have two laws demanding obedience,--one, the law of God as originally enacted by him, an embodiment of his will, and expressing his claims upon his creatures; the other, a revised edition of that law, emanating from the pope of Rome, and expressing his will. And how is it to be determined which of these powers the people honor and worship?--It is determined by the law which they keep. If they

keep the law of God as given by him, they worship and obey God. If they keep the law as changed by the papacy, they worship that power. But further: the prophecy does not say that the little horn, the papacy, should set aside the law of God, and give one entirely different. This would not be to change the law, but simply to give a new one. He was only to attempt a change, so that the law that comes from God, and the law that comes from the papacy, are precisely alike, excepting the change which the papacy has made in the former. They have many points in common. But none of the precepts which they contain in common can distinguish a person as the worshiper of either power in preference to the other. If God's law says, "Thou shalt not kill," and the law as given by the papacy says the same, no one can tell by a person's observance of that precept whether he designed to obey God rather than the pope, or the pope rather than God. But when a precept that has been changed is the subject of action, then whoever observes that precept as originally given by God, is thereby distinguished as a worshiper of God; and he who keeps it as changed is thereby marked as a follower of the

power that made the change. In no other way can the two classes of worshipers be distinguished. From this conclusion, no candid mind can dissent; but in this conclusion we have a general answer to the question, “What constitutes the mark of the beast?” and that answer is simply this: The mark of the beast is the change which the beast has attempted to make in the law of God.

We now inquire what that change is. By the law of God, we mean the moral law, the only law in the universe of immutable and perpetual obligation,--the law of which Webster says, defining the term according to the sense in which it is almost universally used in Christendom, “The moral law is summarily contained in the decalogue, written by the finger of God on two tables of stone, and delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai.”

If now the reader will compare the ten commandments as found in Roman Catholic catechisms with those commandments as found in the Bible, he will see in the catechisms--we mean those portions specially devoted to instruction--that

the second commandment is left out, that the tenth is divided into two to make up the lack caused by leaving out the second, and keep good the number ten, and that the fourth commandment (called the third in their enumeration) is made to enjoin the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath, and prescribe that the day shall be spent in hearing mass devoutly, attending vespers, and reading moral and pious books. Here are several variations from the decalogue as found in the Bible. Which of them, if any, constitutes the change of the law intended in the prophecy? or are they all included in that change? Let it be borne in mind, that, according to the prophecy, he was to think to change times and laws. This plainly conveys the idea of intention and design, and makes these qualities essential to the change in question. But respecting the omission of the second commandment, Catholics argue that it is included in the first, and hence should not be numbered as a separate commandment; and on the tenth they claim that there is so plain a distinction of ideas as to require two commandments; so they make the coveting of a neighbor's wife the ninth command,

and the coveting of his goods the tenth.

In all this they claim that they are giving the commandments exactly as God intended to have them understood; so, while we may regard them as errors in their interpretation of the commandments, we cannot set them down as intentional changes. Not so, however, with the fourth commandment. Respecting this commandment, they do not claim that their version is like that given by God. They expressly claim a change here, and also that the change has been made by the church. A few quotations from standard Catholic works will make this matter plain. In a work entitled, *Treatise of Thirty Controversies*, we find these words:--

“The word of God commandeth the seventh day to be the Sabbath of our Lord, and to be kept holy; you [Protestants], without any precept of Scripture, change it to the first day of the week, only authorized by our traditions. Divers English Puritans oppose, against this point, that the observation of the first day is proved out of Scripture, where it is said, the first day of the week.

(Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10)
Have they not spun a fair thread in quoting these places? If we should produce no better for purgatory and prayers for the dead, invocation of the saints, and the like, they might have good cause, indeed, to laugh us to scorn; for where was it written that these were Sabbath days in which those meetings were kept? or where is it ordained they should be always observed? or, which is the sum of all, where is it decreed that the observation of the first day should abrogate, or abolish, the sanctifying of the seventh day, which God commanded everlastingly to be kept holy? Not one of these is expressed in the written word of God.”

In the [6], on the subject of the third (fourth) commandment, we find these questions and answers:--

“Ques. What does God ordain by this commandment?

“Ans. He ordains that we sanctify, in a special manner, this day on which he rested from the labor

of creation.

“Q. What is this day of rest?

“A. The seventh day of the week, or Saturday; for he employed six days in creation, and rested on the seventh. (Genesis 2:2; Hebrews 4:1; etc.)

“Q. Is it, then, Saturday we should sanctify, in order to obey the ordinance of God?

“A. During the old law, Saturday was the day sanctified; but the church, instructed by Jesus Christ, and directed by the Spirit of God, has substituted Sunday for Saturday; so now we sanctify the first, not the seventh day. Sunday means, and now is, the day of the Lord.”

In [7] we read:--

“Ques. What warrant have you for keeping the Sunday preferable to the ancient Sabbath, which was the Saturday?

“Ans. We have for it the authority of the Catholic Church, and apostolic tradition.

“Q. Does the Scripture anywhere command the Sunday to be kept for the Sabbath?

“A. The Scripture commands us to hear the church (Matthew 18:17; Luke 10:16), and to hold fast the traditions of the apostles. (2 Thessalonians 2:15) But the Scriptures do not in particular mention this change of the Sabbath.”

In [8], we find further testimony to the same point:--

“Ques. Have you any other way of proving that the church has power to institute festivals of precept?

“Ans. Had she not such power, she could not have done that in which all modern religionists agree with her--she could not have substituted the observance of Sunday, the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday, the seventh day, a

change for which there is no Scriptural authority.”

In [9], we find this testimony:--

“Ques. How prove you that the church hath power to command feasts and holy days?

“Ans. By the very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday, which Protestants allow of; and therefore they fondly contradict themselves by keeping Sunday strictly, and breaking most other feasts commanded by the same church.

“Q. How prove you that?

“A. Because by keeping Sunday they acknowledge the church’s power to ordain feasts, and to command them under sin.”

And finally, [10] offered the following “challenge” to all the Protestants of Ireland,--a challenge as well calculated for this latitude as that. He says:--

“I do therefore solemnly challenge the Protestants of Ireland to prove, by plain texts of Scripture, these questions concerning the obligations of the Christian Sabbath: (1) That Christians may work on Saturday, the old seventh day; (2) that they are bound to keep holy the first day, namely, Sunday; (3) that they are not bound to keep holy the seventh day also.”

This is what the papal power claims to have done respecting the fourth commandment. Catholics plainly acknowledge that there is no Scriptural authority for the change they have made, but that it rests wholly upon the authority of the church; and they claim it as a token, or mark, of the authority of that church; the “very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday” being set forth as proof of its power in this respect. For further testimony on this point, the reader is referred to a tract published at the Review Office, Battle Creek, Mich., entitled *Who Changed the Sabbath?* in which are also extracts from Catholic writers refuting the arguments usually relied upon to prove the Sunday Sabbath, and showing that its only

authority is the Catholic Church.

“But,” says one, “I supposed that Christ changed the Sabbath.” A great many suppose so, and it is natural that they should; for they have been so taught. And while we have no words of denunciation to utter against any such persons for so believing, we would have them at once understand that it is, in reality, one of the most enormous of errors. We would therefore remind such persons that, according to the prophecy, the only change ever to be made in the law of God, was to be made by the little horn of Daniel 7, the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians 2; and the only change that has been made in it, is the change of the Sabbath. Now, if Christ made this change, he filled the office of the blasphemous power spoken of by both Daniel and Paul,—a conclusion sufficiently hideous to drive any Christian from the view which leads thereto.

Why should any one labor to prove that Christ changed the Sabbath? Whoever does this is performing a thankless task. The pope will not

thank him; for if it is proved that Christ wrought this change, then the pope is robbed of his badge of authority and power. And no truly enlightened Protestant will thank him; for if he succeeds, he only shows that the papacy has not done the work which it was predicted that it should do, and so that the prophecy has failed, and the Scriptures are unreliable. The matter would better stand as the prophecy has it, and the claim which the pope unwittingly puts forth would better be granted. When a person is charged with any work, and that person steps forth and confesses that he has done the work, that is usually considered sufficient to settle the matter. So, when the prophecy affirms that a certain power shall change the law of God, and in due time that very power arises, does the work foretold, and then openly claims that he has done it, what need have we of further evidence? The world should not forget that the great apostasy foretold by Paul has taken place; that the man of sin for long ages held almost a monopoly of Christian teaching in the world; that the mystery of iniquity has cast the darkness of its shadow and the errors of its doctrines over almost all Christendom;

and that out of this era of error and darkness and corruption, the theology of our day has come. Would it, then, be anything strange if there were yet some relics of popery to be discarded ere the reformation will be complete? [11] speaking of the different Protestant sects, says:--

“All of them retain in their bosom,--in their ecclesiastical organizations, worship, doctrines, and observances,--various relics of popery. They are at best a reformation of popery, and only reformations in part. The doctrines and traditions of men yet impair the power and progress of the gospel in their hands.”

The nature of the change which the little horn has attempted to effect in the law of God is worthy of notice. True to his purpose to exalt himself above God, he undertakes to change that commandment which, of all others, is the fundamental commandment of the law, the one which makes known who the lawgiver is, and contains his signature of royalty. The fourth commandment does this; no other one does. Four

others, it is true, contain the word God, and three of them the word Lord, also. But who is this Lord God of whom they speak? Without the fourth commandment, it is impossible to tell; for idolaters of every grade apply these terms to the multitudinous objects of their adoration. With the fourth commandment to point out the Author of the decalogue, the claims of every false god are annulled at one stroke; for the God who here demands our worship is not any created being, but the One who created all things. The maker of the earth and sea, the sun, and moon, and all the starry host, the upholder and governor of the universe, is the One who claims, and who, from his position, has a right to claim, our supreme regard in preference to every other object. The commandment which makes known these facts is therefore the very one we might suppose that power which designed to exalt itself above God would undertake to change. God gave the Sabbath as a memorial of himself, a weekly reminder to the sons of men of his work in creating the heavens and the earth, a great barrier against atheism and idolatry. It is the signature and seal of the law. This

the papacy has torn from its place, and erected in its stead, on its own authority, another institution, designed to serve another purpose.

This change of the fourth commandment must therefore be the change to which the prophecy points, and Sunday-keeping must be the mark of the beast! Some who have long been taught to regard this institution with reverence will perhaps start back with little less than feelings of horror at this conclusion. We have not space, nor is this, perhaps, the place, to enter into an extended argument on the Sabbath question, and an exposition of the origin and nature of the observance of the first day of the week. Let us submit this one proposition: If the seventh day is still the Sabbath enjoined in the fourth commandment; if the observance of the first day of the week has no foundation whatever in the Scriptures; if this observance has been brought in as a Christian institution, and designedly put in place of the Sabbath of the decalogue by that power which is symbolized by the beast, and placed there as a badge and token of its power to

legislate for the church,--is it not inevitably the mark of the beast? The answer must be in the affirmative. But these hypotheses are all certainties.[12]

It will be said again, Then all Sunday-keepers have the mark of the beast; then all the good of past ages who kept this day had the mark of the beast; then Luther, Whitefield, the Wesleys, and all who have done a good and noble work of reformation, had the mark of the beast; then all the blessings that have been poured upon the reformed churches have been poured upon those who had the mark of the beast; and all Christians of the present day who are keeping Sunday as the Sabbath, have the mark of the beast. We answer, Not so! And we are sorry to say that some professedly religious teachers, though many times corrected, persist in misrepresenting us on this point. We have never so held; we have never so taught. Our premises lead to no such conclusions. Give ear: The mark and worship of the beast are enforced by the two-horned beast. The receiving of the mark of the beast is a specific act which the two-horned beast is

to cause to be done. The third message of Revelation 14 is a warning mercifully sent out in advance to prepare the people for the coming danger. There can therefore be no worship of the beast, nor reception of his mark, such as the prophecy contemplates till it is enforced by the two-horned beast. We have seen intention was essential to the change which the papacy has made in the law of God, to constitute it the mark of that power; so intention is necessary in the adoption of that change to make it, on the part of any individual, the reception of that mark. In other words, a person must adopt the change knowing it to be the work of the beast, and receive it on the authority of that power, in opposition to the requirement of God.

But how is it with those mentioned above, who have kept Sunday in the past, and the majority of those who are keeping it to-day? Do they keep it as an institution of the papacy?-- No. Have they decided between this and the Sabbath of our Lord, understanding the claims of each?--No. On what ground have they kept it, and on what do they still

keep it?--They suppose they are keeping a commandment of God. Have such the mark of the beast?--By no means. Their course is attributable to an error unwittingly received from the Church of Rome, not to an act of worship rendered to it.

But how is it to be in the future? The church which is to be prepared for the second coming of Christ must be entirely free from papal errors and corruptions. A reform must hence be made on the Sabbath question. The third angel proclaims the commandments of God, leading men to the true in the place of the counterfeit. The dragon is stirred, and so controls the wicked governments of the earth that all the authority of human power shall be exerted to enforce the claims of the man of sin. Then the issue is fairly before the people. They are required to keep, on the one hand, the true Sabbath; on the other, a counterfeit. For refusing to keep the true, the message threatens the unmingled wrath of God; for refusing the false, earthly governments threaten them with persecution and death. With this issue before the people, what does he do who yields to the human requirement?--He virtually

says to God, I know your claims, but I will not heed them. I know that the power I am required to worship is anti-Christian, but I yield to it to save my life. I renounce your allegiance, and bow to the usurper. The beast is henceforth the object of my adoration; under his banner, in opposition to your authority, I henceforth array myself; to him, in defiance of your claims, I henceforth yield the obedience of my heart and life.

Such is the spirit which will actuate the hearts of the beast-worshippers,--a spirit which insults the God of the universe to his face, and is prevented only by lack of power from overthrowing his government and annihilating his throne. Is it any wonder that Jehovah denounces against so Heaven-daring a course the most terrible threatening that his word contains?

13. The Closing Work.--We have now seen what would properly constitute an image to the beast, such as the two-horned beast is to erect, and also the probability that such an image will soon be perfected in this country; and we have also learned

what constitutes the mark of the beast, which is to be enforced upon all the people. An ecclesiastical organization composed of a greater or less number of the different sects of our land, with some degree of coalition also between these bodies and Roman Catholicism, together with the promulgation and enforcement of a general Sunday-Sabbath law, would fulfill what the prophecy sets forth in reference to the image and the mark of the beast; and these movements, or their exact equivalent, the prophecy calls for. The line of argument leading to these conclusions is so direct and well-defined that there is no avoiding them. They are a clear and logical sequence from the premises given us.

When the application of (Revelation 13:11-17) to the United States was first made, as early as the year 1850, these positions respecting a union of the churches and a grand Sunday movement were taken. But at that time no sign appeared above or beneath, at home or abroad,--no token was seen, no indication existed, that such an issue would ever be made. But there was the prophecy, and that must stand. The United States government had given

abundant evidence, by its location, the time of its rise, the manner of its rise, and its apparent character, that it was the power symbolized by the two-horned beast. There could be no mistake in the conclusion that it was the very nation intended by that symbol. This being so, it must take the course and perform the acts foretold. But here were predictions which could be fulfilled by nothing less than the above-named movement respecting church and state, and the enforcement of the papal Sabbath as a mark of the beast.

To take the position at that time that this government was to pursue such a policy and engage in such a work, without any apparent probability in its favor, was no small act of faith. On the other hand, to deny or ignore it, while admitting the application of the symbol to this government, would not be in accordance with either Scripture or logic. The only course for the humble, confiding student of prophecy to pursue in such cases is to take the light as it is given, and believe the prophecy in all its parts. So the stand was boldly taken; and open proclamation has been

made from that day to this, that such a work would be seen in the United States. With every review of the argument, new features of strength have been discovered in the application; and amid a storm of scornful incredulity we have watched the progress of events, and awaited the hour of fulfilment.

Meanwhile, Spiritualism has astonished the world with its terrible progress, and shown itself to be the wonder-working element which was to exist in connection with this power. This has mightily strengthened the force of the application. And now, within a few years past, what have we further seen?--No less than the commencement of that very movement respecting the formation of the image, and the enactment of Sunday laws, which we have so long expected, and which is to complete the prophecy and close the scene.

Reference has already been made to the movement to secure a union of the churches for the purpose of adding strength and influence to ecclesiastical movements in certain directions. And now a class of men is suddenly springing up all

over the land whose souls are absorbed with the cognate idea of Sunday reform, and who have dedicated themselves, heads, hands, and pockets, to the carrying forward of this kindred movement. Organizations called Sabbath Committees have been formed in various places, and have labored zealously, by means of books, tracts, speeches, and sermons, to create a strong public sentiment in behalf of Sunday. Making slow progress through moral suasion, they seek a shorter path to the accomplishment of their purposes through political power. And why not? Christianity has become popular, and her professed adherents are numerous. Why not avail themselves of the power of the ballot to secure their ends? Rev. J. S. Smart (Methodist), in a published sermon on the Political Duties of Christian Men and Ministers, expresses a leading sentiment on this question, when he says:--

“I claim that we have, and ought to have, just as much concern in the government of this country as any other men. ... We are the mass of the people. Virtue in this country is not weak; her ranks are strong in numbers, and invincible from the

righteousness of her cause,--invincible if united. Let not her ranks be broken by party names.”

In accordance with the logical development of these feelings, an association has been formed, now called “The National Reform Association,” which has for its object the securing of legal enactments for religious institutions, by means of such an amendment to the national Constitution as shall “place all Christian laws, institutions, and usages of the government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the land.” Here is the germ of religious revolution, the entering wedge of church and state.

This movement originated at Xenia, Ohio, in February, 1863, in a convention composed of eleven different religious denominations, who assembled for prayer and conference.

To be sure the leaders in this movement disclaim vehemently any such purpose as a union of church and state; but a sentence now and then escapes them which reveals more than they

intended. Thus, in the Pittsburgh Convention, Dr. Stevenson said:--

“Through the immense largesses it receives from corrupt politicians, the Roman Catholic Church is, practically, the established church of the city of New York. These favors are granted under the guise of a seeming friendliness to religion. We propose to put the substance for the shadow,--to drive out the counterfeit by the completer substitution of the true.”

There are several guess-roads through which we may look for the intent of this language; but inasmuch as they all arrive at one conclusion, this conclusion is neither ambiguous nor doubtful; it is simply that the Protestant Church shall become really established, as the Roman Catholic now is practically. This is confirmed by the very next sentence, which reads:--

“What we propose is nothing of a sectarian character. It will give no branch of American Christians any advantage over any other.”

Professor Blanchard undertakes to give a definition of what they mean by a “union of church and state,” as follows:--

“But union of church and state is the selection by the nation of one church, the endowment of such a church, the appointment of its officers, and the oversight of its doctrines. For such a union, none of us plead. To such a union, we are all of us opposed.”

The reader is requested to mark this well. Here is given a definition of a union of church and state, such as no one expects or fears; such in fact, as is not possible in the existing state of the churches, and then a special plea is set up that they are opposed to a union of church and state! To such an impossible combination as they describe, they may safely write themselves opposed; but to a union of church and state in the popular sense of the phrase,--a union, not of one church, but of all the churches recognized as orthodox, or evangelical,--a union not giving the state power to elect church

officers nor to take the oversight of church doctrines, but giving the churches the privilege of enforcing, by civil laws, institutions and usages of religion, according to the faith of the churches, or to the construction put upon those institutions and usages by the churches,--to such a union, we say, they are not opposed. They are essentially and practically, despite their professions, open advocates of a union of church and state.

We are not alone in this view of the subject. [13] says:--

“Church and state has several times crept into American politics, as in the contentions over the Bible in the public schools, the anti-Catholic party of 1844, etc. Our people have been wise enough heretofore to respect the clergy in all religious questions, and to entertain a wholesome jealousy of them in politics. The latest politico-theological movement [*italics ours*] is to insert the name of the Deity in the Constitution.”

[14], said:--

“If the proposed amendment is anything more than a bit of sentimental cant, it is to have a legal effect. It is to alter the status of the non-Christian citizen before the law. It is to affect the legal oaths and instruments, the matrimonial contracts, the sumptuary laws, etc., etc., of the country. This would be an outrage on natural right.”

The Janesville (Wis.) Gazette, at the close of an article on the proposed amendment, speaks thus of the effect of the movement, should it succeed:--

“But, independent of the question as to what extent we are a Christian nation, it may well be doubted whether, if the gentlemen who are agitating this question should succeed, they would not do society a very great injury. Such measures are but the initiatory steps which ultimately lead to restrictions of religious freedom, and to commit the government to measures which are as foreign to its powers and purposes as would be its action if it should undertake to determine a disputed question of theology.”

[15], said:--

“The parties who have been recently holding a convention for the somewhat novel purpose of procuring an amendment to the Constitution of the United States recognizing the Deity, do not fairly state the case when they assert that it is the right of a Christian people to govern themselves in a Christian manner. If we are not governing ourselves in a Christian manner, how shall the doings of our government be designated? The fact is, that the movement is one to bring about in this country that union of church and state which all other nations are trying to dissolve.”

The Champlain Journal, speaking of incorporating the religious principle into the Constitution, and its effect upon the Jews, said:--

“However slight, it is the entering wedge of church and state. If we may cut off ever so few persons from the right of citizenship on account of difference of religious belief, then with equal

justice and propriety may a majority at any time dictate the adoption of still further articles of belief, until our Constitution is but a text-book of a sect, beneath whose tyrannical sway all liberty of religious opinion will be crushed.”

Petitions and remonstrances are both being circulated with activity; and shrewd observers, who have watched the movement with a jealous eye, and heretofore hoped it would amount to nothing, now confess that it “is formidable.” No movement of equal magnitude of purpose has ever sprung up and become strong, and secured favor so rapidly as this. Indeed, none of equal magnitude has ever been sprung upon the American mind, as this aims to remodel the whole framework of our government, and give to it a strong religious cast,—a thing which the framers of our Constitution were careful to exclude from it. They not only ask that the Bible, God, and Christ shall be recognized in the Constitution, but that it shall indicate this as “a Christian nation, and place all Christian laws, institutions, and usages of the government, on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of

the nation.”

Of course, appropriate legislation will be required to carry such amendments into effect, and somebody will have to decide what are “Christian laws and institutions.” From what we learn of such movements in the past in other countries, and of the temper of the churches of this country, and of human nature when it has power suddenly conferred upon it, we look for no good from this movement. From a lengthy article in the Lansing (Mich.) State Republican in reference to the Cincinnati Convention, held in 1872, we take the following extract:--

“Now there are hundreds and thousands of moral and professedly Christian people in this nation to-day who do not recognize the doctrine of the Trinity,--do not recognize Jesus Christ the same as God. And there are hundreds and thousands of men and women who do not recognize the Bible as the revelation of God. The attempt to make any such amendment to the Constitution would be regarded by a large minority, perhaps a majority, of

our nation as a palpable violation of liberty of conscience. Thousands of men, if called upon to vote for such an amendment, would hesitate to vote against God, although they might not believe that the amendment is necessary or that it is right; and such men would either vote affirmatively or not at all. In every case, such an amendment would be likely to receive an affirmative vote which would by no means indicate the true sentiment of the people. And the same rule would hold good in relation to the adoption of such an amendment by Congress or by the legislatures of three quarters of the States. Men who make politics a trade would hesitate to record their names against the proposed Constitutional Amendment, advocated by the leaders of the great religious denominations of the land, and endorsed by such men as Bishop Simpson, Bishop McIlvaine, Bishop Eastburn, President Finney, Professor Lewis, Professor Seelye, Bishop Huntington, Bishop Kerfoot, Dr. Patterson, Dr. Cuyler, and many other divines who are the representative men of their respective denominations.”

Among the first bills to be presented to the United States Congress on its assembling in December, 1895, was this same religious amendment of the Constitution. This shows the unmitigated persistence with which this matter is to be pressed.

Not only the representative men of the churches are pledged to this movement, but governors, judges, and many of the most eminent men of the land, are working for it. Who doubts the power of the “representative men of the denominations” to rally the strength of their denominations to sustain this work at their call? We utter no prophecy of the future; it is not needed. Events transpire in these days faster than our minds are prepared to grasp them. Let us heed the admonition to “watch !” and, with reliance upon God, prepare for “those things which are coming on the earth.”

But it may be asked how the Sunday question is to be affected by the proposed Constitutional Amendment. Answer: The object, or, to say the least, one object of this amendment, is to put the

Sunday institution on a legal basis, and compel its observance by the arm of the law. At the national convention held in Philadelphia, Jan. 18, 19, 1871, the following resolution was among the first offered by the business committee:--

“Resolved, That, in view of the controlling power of the Constitution in shaping State as well as national policy, it is of immediate importance to public morals and to social order, to secure such an amendment as will indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all Christian laws, institutions, and usages in our government on an undeniable legal basis in the fundamental law of the nation, specially those which secure a proper oath, and which protect society against blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, and polygamy.”

By Sabbath-breaking is meant nothing else but Sundaybreaking. In a convention of the friends of Sunday, assembled Nov. 29, 1870, in New Concord, Ohio, one of the speakers is reported to have said: “The question [of Sunday observance] is closely connected with the National Reform

Movement; for until the government comes to know God and honor his law, we need not expect to restrain Sabbath-breaking corporations.” Here, again, the idea of the legal enforcement of Sunday observance stands foremost; and the same principle would apply equally to individuals.

Once more: the Philadelphia Press of Dec. 5, 1870, stated that some congressmen arrived in Washington by Sunday trains, December 4, on which the Christian Statesman commented as follows (we give italics as we find them):--

“1. Not one of those men who thus violated the Sabbath is fit to hold any official position in a Christian nation....

“2. The sin of these congressmen is a national sin, because the nation hath not said to them in the Constitution, the supreme rule for our public servants, ‘We charge you to serve us in accordance with the higher law of God.’ These Sabbath-breaking railroads, moreover, are corporations created by the state, and amenable to it. The state is

responsible to God for the conduct of these creatures which it calls into being. It is bound, therefore, to restrain them from this as from other crimes, and any violation of the Sabbath by any corporation should work immediate forfeiture of its charter. And the Constitution of the United States, with which all State legislation is required to be in harmony, should be of such a character as to prevent any State from tolerating such infractions of fundamental moral law.

“3. Give us in the national Constitution the simple acknowledgment of the law of God as the supreme law of nations, and all the results indicated in this note will ultimately be secured. Let no one say that the movement does not contemplate sufficiently practical ends.”

No less significant is the fact that the Sunday agitation is appearing in other countries simultaneously with the Sunday movement in America. Who can explain the fact that Sunday seems everywhere coming to the front, except on the ground that we have reached the time pointed

out in prophecy when such a movement should be seen? The Chester (Eng.) Chronicle of July 9, 1881, reported a meeting of three thousand persons in Liverpool in favor of closing all public houses on Sunday. The Christian Statesman of July 22, 1880, gave information from England to the effect that a “Working-man’s Lord’s-day Rest Association” had been formed there, and that two of England’s prime ministers, Beaconsfield and Gladstone, had given their voice against the opening of museums, etc., on Sunday. The same policy is enforced by some, at least, of the English in their dependencies. One of the first acts of the Marquis of Ripon, who was made viceroy of India in 1880, was, according to the Christian Weekly, to issue an order forbidding official work of any kind on Sunday.

In France the question is also agitated. The senate having occasion to consider some proposed changes in the Sunday laws, an eminent senator, M. Barthélemy Saint Hilaire, according to the French journal, *Le Christianisme au 19e Siècle*, of June 11, 1880, opened the eyes of his hearers by

clear argument showing that the seventh day, and not the first day, is the Sabbath of the Bible.

In Switzerland and Germany also this question is before the people. In the latter country, according to the New York Independent, a meeting was held a few years ago, numbering some five thousand persons, to encourage a more strict observance of Sunday. Many of these were socialists.

Austria also shares in the general movement. A New York paper, in January, 1883, published this item:--

“A telegram from Vienna, Austria, says: ‘A meeting of 3000 workmen was held to-day, at which a resolution was passed protesting against Sunday work. A resolution was also passed in favor of legal prohibition of newspaper and other work on that day.’”

There is a local Sabbath [Sunday] Committee in many of the great cities, and an International

Sabbath [Sunday] Association to secure the co-operation of other nations. This Association has its headquarters in Washington, D. C.

Another organization, called The American Sabbath Union, has come into existence to forward the movement in behalf of Sunday observance; and other reform organizations have swung into the same line. Notable among these is the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, which has great strength in the United States, and many auxiliaries in other lands, as well. This organization, having at first in view the one specific object of temperance reform, has now added to its declared intention, the enthroning of Christ in American politics, in order to secure, in this land, a theocracy, and the better observance of the Sunday. In this theocracy, of course, if established, theological leaders would be the interpreters of Christ's will, and their decisions be enforced upon the people by the civil law. And what would this be but the papacy over again, well called in the prophecy "an image" of that beast?

What these National Reformers desire and

design to secure in their campaign, is expressed by one of the secretaries of said association, [16]. He says:--

“But one danger lies in this: The church does not speak as a church. The American Sabbath Union has done a good work. The denominations have spoken. But the Christian organized church has not officially gone to Washington and spoken. The work there has been largely turned over to associations. But the voice of God, authoritative, official, is through his church. Should there not be joint action of the denominations in this? They should, it would appear, appoint a joint committee to speak for God; and properly and courageously done, there can follow but the very best results.... Much is lost by the church failing officially to speak at the right time, and in the right place. No association is clothed with this authority. They are individual and social; but the church is divine. She can, and ought to, utter the voice of God in the halls of Congress, as an organized church.”

The italics are as we find them; but other

declarations in the foregoing extract, are equally deserving of emphasis. It may well be questioned whether any more arrogant and pompous words were uttered previous to the setting up of the papacy itself. What they complain that they lack, they of course intend to have. And look at the picture: The church (that is the different denominations, confederating on dogmas held in common, and represented by a “joint committee,” — a central authority) is divine, and woe unto all dissenters from the authority of a divine church! So said Rome in its palmiest days of dungeons, stakes, and blood; so she would say to-day had she the power; and so apostatized Protestantism will say when it gets the power! And this “joint committee” is to “speak for God,” “utter the voice of God” (a second vicegerent of the Most High, now claimed as a monopoly by the pope), and authoritatively and officially, lay upon Congress the commands of God, for it to perform! Such are the dark schemes for which these men are now working. Alas! that the realization of them should now stand as an attainable prospect before their eyes! Did ever Rome ask for more? And when these would-be

spokesmen for God secure their object, will it not be, we still ask, Rome over again in a Protestant garb--a very image of the beast itself?

Another most significant and alarming step toward the accomplishment of these evil designs, is the position taken by the great "Christian Endeavor" movement, which has risen to a membership of millions within a few years, and is a common channel through which all denominations can work. The political functions of this great body are centered in a "Christian Citizenship League," which boasts that it will have branches in every State, county, city, village, and hamlet, in the United States, and see to it that only Christian men are put into office. What remarkable "conversions" will then take place! How politicians will become "Christians," and the "millennium" hasten on! At [17], said:--

"Here is a power that is going to wrest the control of affairs from the hands of political demagogues, and place it in the hands of Him who is King over all, and rules the world in

righteousness. Our political leaders have been counting the saloon vote, the illiterate vote, and the stay-at-home vote, and all other elements that have hitherto entered into their canvassings of probabilities; but they have not yet learned to count the Christian Endeavor vote. I want to serve notice on them now that the time is drawing near when they will discover that a political revolution has occurred, and they will be found coming home from Washington and our State capitals without a job.”

These sentiments were cheered to the echo in the convention; and it is not difficult to foresee the effect they will have; for they were intended for that class of men among whom they “will do the most good,” that is, the body of average politicians, who when threatened with a boycott, become the most abject sycophants on the face of the earth.

All this, however, would be of no avail, if those who are really patriots at heart would awake to this danger before they find themselves committed to movements, the effects of which they did not

foresee, and if the two houses of Congress would stand true to the Constitution which they are sworn to maintain; for this movement means nothing less than a subversion of that noble instrument.

But alas! Congress has already turned its back on its sacred trust to fawn upon the church influence so rapidly rising. When the managers of the World's Fair of 1893, in Chicago, asked Congress for an appropriation in their behalf, churchmen brought their influence to bear upon the national legislators, and induced them to make it a condition of the gift that the gates of the Fair be closed on Sunday. In carrying this point a most remarkable scene occurred. A senator called for a Bible and caused the clerk to read the fourth commandment of the decalogue; whereupon grave statesmen argued, and at length by vote decided, that the day enjoined by that commandment as the Sabbath, is Sunday!

This was legislating upon a religious question, which the Constitution expressly forbids. [18] It broke down the barriers against the union of church

and state, and opened the flood-gates for all the evils that invariably accompany such a union. The religious amendment clergy hailed the event as a great triumph, and now openly boast that they have Congress in their hands, and can compel it to do their bidding. How far away, then, is that “image,” the coming of which the Scriptures have foretold? The outlines of every element necessary for its erection are clearly developed; all the agents sufficient for an assault upon the bulwarks of American liberty are being rapidly enrolled and drilled; the outposts have already been carried; and as these pages go to press, the leaders of this fatal revolution are again clamoring around the citadel of the nation’s strength. It needs but another step to turn the nation entirely from its high commission as the conservator of the principles of the gospel; that is, to “render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” and lead it to form and foster a religious tyranny which will fetter the consciences of men, and crush out soul liberty among the people. And this tyranny will be as much more wicked than any that has gone before it, as men have now more light, and

the experience of all the past to guide them.

What the practical working of these changes will be is already made apparent. On the statute-books of most of the States of the American Union, are found Sunday laws; and as the agitation in behalf of the seventh day increases, religious zealots are not slow to use these laws to put the machinery of persecution in operation. Observers of the seventh day manifest no defiance of these laws, in laboring on Sunday, as the higher law of God gives them an unalienable right to do; and they studiously refrain from disturbing others, or in any way infringing upon their rights, by boisterous or offensive labor. Yet it is construed to be "disturbance," if they are even seen anywhere at work, or even if it is known that they are at work anywhere, though unseen or unheard. If no other way appears for detection, they are searched out by ministers or church-members, or the police acting under their direction. Then follow arrest, conviction, and penalty by fine, imprisonment, or the chain-gang. Up to Jan. 1, 1896, ninety arrests of this kind had been made, some of them under

circumstances of great oppression and cruelty, and prisoners had served an aggregate of nearly fifteen hundred days in jail and chain-gangs. And from the windows of some of these jails these very seventh-day keepers, who were there confined in “durance vile,” for not resting on Sunday, could behold on Sundays train-loads of workmen going to their labor, picnickers to their frolic, hunters to their game, and railroad cars to their traffic. But these, it is to be observed, were not keepers of the seventh day. National Reformers, years ago, professed to smile at the apprehensions of those who keep the seventh day, that their work would result in persecution. Now they only smile a little more grimly and call for stricter laws--for the seventh-day people.

Most of the State governments have in their constitutions, or in their adopted “Bill of Rights,” provisions guaranteeing the fullest religious liberty; and the inconsistency of legislating on religious questions, under these circumstances, is at once seen; while the treachery of oppressing people for opinion’s sake, in such lands, is keenly felt. Every

conceivable invention is therefore resorted to, to make it appear that it is not religious persecution at all, but only the question of obedience to civil law. One of these inventions is that Sunday is only a civil institution, and its enforcement only a police regulation, a civil requirement necessary for the public good. But this is impossible; for every one knows that Sunday in its origin, history, and very nature, is a religious institution. No claims in its behalf would ever have been heard of, but for its religious basis. Hence any enactment to enforce it by pains and penalties is religious legislation and religious oppression.

But if there is a law for it, should not that law be obeyed until repealed? Every law that does not trench upon the domain of conscience, if it becomes unacceptable to the people, should nevertheless be obeyed, till it can be changed or repealed. But Sunday laws interfere with the conscience of the observer of another day, and for that reason cannot “bear upon all alike.” And no true Christian can make his obedience to God depend upon the permission of his fellow men. It

may be said again, In a country like the United States, do not majorities rule? and must not their decisions be obeyed? And the answer again is, Yes, in everything but questions of conscience, but never there. “Render... unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.” Men may legislate to guard the mutual rights of all members of society, but no further; and in this they will never infringe upon the rights of any one’s conscience; for a “good” conscience (1 Peter 3:21) will never invade the rights of others, like the polygamy of the Mormons, or the human sacrifices of the heathen.

The founders of the American republic never intended that any trouble should arise, through the laws of the land, over any question of conscience; but they permitted the evil principle of religious laws to remain in their political structure, a principle sure to spring to life at the first opportunity. In the further development of religious truth, it is now found that these laws forbid men to render obedience to what the Bible requires of them, and thus conflict with their unalienable

rights. Such laws, therefore, the Christian cannot regard, and the government, to be true to its professed principles, should wipe them off the statute-books wherever found. But this the religio-political clergy will not permit; and the nation is doomed; for it will thus put itself in line with the religious despotisms of the past; and the cry will go up from God's suffering children, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law." (Psalms 119:126)

And this work is not confined to America. In Switzerland, by an iniquitous application of a so-called "Factory Law," in behalf of Sunday, the authorities have closed the large printing establishment of the Seventh-day Adventists, although state troops drill, and target practice is performed, on Sunday, with all the accompaniments of such exercises, in the campus immediately in front of the building. This has been repeated in London, where the office of a Seventh-day Adventist paper, *The Present Truth*, has been closed by the English authorities, on the same grounds.

While, according to the prophecy, the “image” can be looked for only in the United States, the worship of the beast will prevail in other countries also; for all the world is to wonder after the beast.

Some one may now say, As you expect this movement to carry, you must look for a period of religious persecution in the United States; nay, more, you must take the position that all the saints of God are to be put to death; for the image is to cause that all who will not worship it shall be killed.

A period of persecution has been, for about fifty years expected and predicted. It has now begun and is thus demonstrating the correctness of the application of the prophecy as set forth in this work; but it does not by any means follow that all, and we do not think that even many, will be put to death, though a decree to that effect will be promulgated; for, as the prophet elsewhere declares, God does not abandon his people to defeat in this dire conflict, but grants them a

complete victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name. Revelation 15:2. We further read respecting this earthly power, that he causeth all to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads; yet chapter 20:4 speaks of the people of God as those who do not receive the mark, nor worship the image. If, then, he could “cause” all to receive the mark, and yet all not actually receive it, in like manner his causing all to be put to death who will not worship the image does not necessarily signify that their lives are actually to be taken.

But how can this be? Answer: It evidently comes under that rule of interpretation in accordance with which verbs of action sometimes signify merely the will and endeavor to do the action in question, and not the actual performance of the thing specified. The late George Bush, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in New York City University, makes this matter plain. In his notes on Exodus 7:11 he says:--

“It is a canon of interpretation of frequent use

in the exposition of the sacred writings that verbs of action sometimes signify merely the will and endeavor to do the action in question. Thus in Ezekiel 24:13: ‘I have purified thee, and thou wast not purged;’ i. e., I have endeavored, used means, been at pains, to purify thee. John 5:44: ‘How can ye believe which receive honor one of another;’ i. e., endeavor to receive. Romans 2:4: ‘The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance;’ i. e., endeavors, or tends, to lead thee. Amos 9:3: ‘Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea;’ i. e., though they aim to be hid. 1 Corinthians 10:33: ‘I please all men;’ i. e., endeavor to please. Galatians 5:4: ‘Whosoever of you are justified by the law;’ i. e., seek or endeavor to be justified. Psalms 69:4: ‘They that destroy me are mighty;’ i. e., that endeavor to destroy me; English, ‘That would destroy me.’ Acts 7:26: ‘And set them at one again;’ i. e., wished and endeavored, English, ‘Would have set them.’”

So in the passage before us. He causes all to receive a mark, and all who will not worship the image to be killed; that is, he wills, purposes, and

endeavors to do this. He makes such an enactment, passes such a law, but is not able to execute it; for God interposes in behalf of his people; and then those who have kept the word of Christ's patience are kept from falling in this hour of temptation, according to (Revelation 3:10; then those who have made God their refuge are kept from all evil, and no plague comes nigh their dwelling, according to Psalms 91:9, 10; then all who are found written in the book are delivered, according to Daniel 12:1; and, being victors over the beast and his image, they are redeemed from among men, and raise a song of triumph before the throne of God, according to Revelation 14:2-4.

The objector may further say, You are altogether too credulous in supposing that the masses of our people, many of whom are either indifferent or wholly opposed to the claims of religion, can be so far brought to favor the religious observance of Sunday that a general law can be promulgated in its behalf.

We answer, The prophecy must be fulfilled,

and if the prophecy requires such a revolution, it will be accomplished.

To receive the mark of the beast in the forehead, is, we understand, to give the assent of the mind and judgment to his authority in the adoption of that institution which constitutes the mark. By parity of reasoning, to receive it in the hand would be to signify allegiance by some outward act.[19]

Verse 18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

The Number of his Name.--The number of the beast, says the prophecy, "is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (666). This number, some attempt to find in the word Lateinos, the "Latin" kingdom. Thus they make, by what rule we do not understand, L stand for 30; A, for 1; T, for 300; E, for 5; I, for 10; N, for 50; O, for 70; and S, for 200; which numbers,

added together, make 666. Deriving the number from the name in this manner, must be regarded as rather conjectural than otherwise, seeing that names making just that number can be found to almost any extent. We think we discover, however, a serious objection to the name here suggested. The number, says the prophecy, is the number of a man; and if it is to be derived from a name or title, the natural conclusion would be that it must be the name or title of some particular man. But in this we have the name of a people, or kingdom, not of “a man,” as the prophecy says.

The most plausible name we have ever seen suggested as containing the number of the beast, is the title which the pope applies to himself, and allows others to apply to him. That title is this: Vicarius Filii Dei, “Vicegerent of the Son of God.” Taking the letters out of this title which the Latins used as numerals, and giving them their numerical value, we have just 666. Thus we have V, 5; I, 1; C, 100 (a and r not used as numerals); I, 1; U (formerly the same as V), 5; (s and f not used as numerals); I, 1; L, 50; I, 1; I, 1; D, 500; (e not used

as a numeral); I, 1. Adding these numbers together, we have just 666.

The following extract on this point is from a work entitled *The Reformation*, bearing the date of 1832:--

“‘Mrs. A.,’ said Miss Emmons, ‘I saw a very curious fact the other day; I have dwelt upon it much, and will mention it. A person, lately, was witnessing a ceremony of the Romish Church As the pope passed him in the procession, splendidly dressed in his pontifical robes, the gentleman’s eye rested on these full, blazing letters in front of his miter: “VICARIUS FILII DEI,” the Vicar of the Son of God. His thoughts, with the rapidity of lightning, reverted to Revelation 13:18.’ ‘Will you turn to it?’ said Mrs. A. Alice opened the New Testament, and read: ‘Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.’ She paused, and Miss Emmons said, ‘He took out his pencil, and marking the numerical letters of the inscription on his tablet,

it stood 666.”

Here we have indeed the number of a man, even the “man of sin;” and it is a little singular, perhaps providential, that he should select a title which shows the blasphemous character of the beast, and then cause it to be inscribed upon his miter, as if to brand himself with the number 666. The foregoing extract doubtless refers to a particular pope on a particular occasion. Other popes might not wear the title emblazoned on the miter, as there stated. But this does not affect the application at all; for the popes all assume to be the “Vicar of Christ” (see Standard Dictionary under “vicar”) and the Latin words given above, are the words which express that title, in the form “vicar of the Son of God;” and their numerical value is 666.

Thus closes chapter 13, leaving the people of God with the powers of earth in deadly array against them, and the decrees of death and banishment from society out upon them, for their adherence to the truth. Spiritualism will be, at the time specified, performing its most imposing

wonders, deceiving all the world except the elect. (Matthew 24:24; 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12) This will be the “hour of temptation,” or trial, which is to come, as the closing test, upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth as mentioned in (Revelation 3:10). What is the issue of this conflict? This important inquiry is not left unanswered. The first five verses of the following chapter, which should have been numbered as a part of this, complete the chain of this prophecy, and reveal the glorious triumph of the champions of the truth.

Notes:

1. The symbol as here presented has but seven heads, denoting seven forms of government, not contemporaneous but successive. Of course only one head is ruling at any one time; but all are placed alike upon the dragon and beast to identify both these symbols as denoting the Roman power. Six heads belonged to the dragon; that is, six forms of government were developed and passed away

one after another, while the religion of Rome was pagan; and only one remained to be developed after the change to Christianity, and that was the papal; which as a spiritual power continues to the end (2 Thessalonians 2:8), and as a temporal power to the time when his dominion is taken away just before the end. (Daniel 7:26)

2. See Bower's History of the Popes, pp. 404-428; Croly on the Apocalypse, London edition, p. 251.
3. New World and Old, p. 635.
4. Mr. G. A. Townsend, in his work entitled The New World Compared with the Old, page 635.
5. Martyn's History of the Great Reformation, Vol. IV, p. 238.
6. Catechism of the Christian Religion, by Stephen Keenan (Boston, Patrick Donahoe, 1857), p. 206.
7. The Catholic Christian Instructed (J. P. Kenedy, New York, 1884), p. 202.
8. The Doctrinal Catechism (Kenedy, New York), p. 174.
9. Abridgment of Christian Doctrine (Kenedy,

- New York), p. 58.
10. W. Lockhart, late B. A. of Oxford, in the Toronto (Catholic) Mirror.
 11. A. Campbell (Baptism, p. 15)
 12. See History of the Sabbath, and other works on the subject, published at the Review Office. To these we can only refer the reader, in passing.
 13. Mr. G. A. Townsend (New World and Old, p. 212)
 14. The Christian Union, January, 1871.
 15. The Weekly Alta Californian, of San Francisco, March 12, 1870.
 16. F. M. Foster, in the Christian Statesman, October, 1892
 17. The great Christian Endeavor convention, held in Boston, Mass., July 10-15, 1895, W. H. McMillan, as given in the published Proceedings, p. 19.
 18. See Amendment I.
 19. For a much more full exposition of this portion of the prophecy, see works entitled, The United States in the Light of Prophecy, and The Coming Conflict, published at the Review and Herald Office, Battle Creek, Mich.

Chapter 14

The Three Messages

“The Hour of His Judgment is Come”,
“Babylon Is Fallen”, “The Commandments of God
and the Faith of Jesus”

Verse 1. And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. 2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: 3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. 4. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among

men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. 5. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

It is a pleasing feature of the prophetic word that the people of God are never brought into positions of trial and difficulty, and there abandoned. Taking them down into scenes of danger, the voice of prophecy does not there cease, leaving them to guess their fate, in doubt, perhaps despair, as to the final result; but it takes them through to the end, and shows the issue in every conflict. The first five verses of Revelation 14 are an instance of this. The 13th chapter closed with the people of God, a small and apparently weak and defenseless company, in deadly conflict with the mightiest powers of earth which the dragon is able to muster to his service. A decree is passed, backed up by the supreme power of the land, that they shall worship the image and receive the mark, under pain of death if they refuse to comply. What can the people of God do in such a conflict and in such an extremity? What will become of them?

Glance forward with the apostle to the very next scene in the program, and what do we behold?-- The very same company standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb,--a victorious company, harping on symphonious harps their triumph in the court of heaven. Thus are we assured that when the time of our conflict with the powers of darkness comes, deliverance is not only certain, but will immediately be given.

That the 144,000 here seen on Mount Zion are the saints who were just before brought to view as objects of the wrath of the beast and his image, there are the very best of reasons for believing.

1. They are identical with those sealed in Revelation 7, who have already been shown to be the righteous who are alive at the second coming of Christ.

2. They are the overcomers in the sixth or Philadelphian state of the church. (See Revelation 3:11, 12.)

3. They are “redeemed from among men” (verse 4), an expression which can be applicable only to those who are translated from among the living. Paul labored, if by any means he might attain to a resurrection out from among the dead. Philippians 3:11. This is the hope of those who sleep in Jesus,--a resurrection from the dead. A redemption from among men, from among the living, must mean a different thing, and can mean only one thing, and that is translation. Hence the 144,000 are the living saints, who will be translated at the second coming of Christ. (See on verse 13, note.)

On what Mount Zion does John see this company standing?--The Mount Zion above; for the voice of harpers, which no doubt is uttered by these very ones, is heard from heaven; the same Zion from which the Lord utters his voice when he speaks to his people in close connection with the coming of the Son of man. Joel 3:16; Hebrews 12:26-28; Revelation 16:17. A just consideration of the fact that there is a Mount Zion in heaven, and a Jerusalem above, would be a powerful antidote for

the hallucination of the doctrine known as “The Age to Come.”

A few more particulars only respecting the 144,000, in addition to those given in chapter 7, will claim notice in these brief remarks.

1. They have the name of the Lamb’s Father in their foreheads. In chapter 7, they are said to have the seal of God in their foreheads. An important key to an understanding of the seal of God is thus furnished us; for we at once perceive that the Father regards his name as his seal. That commandment of the law which contains God’s name is therefore the seal of the law. The Sabbath commandment is the only one which has this; that is, that contains the descriptive title which distinguishes the true God from all false gods. Wherever this was placed, there the Father’s name was said to be (Deuteronomy 12:5, 14, 18, 21; 14:23; 16:2, 6; etc.); and whoever keeps this commandment has, consequently, the seal of the living God.

2. They sing a new song which no other company is able to learn. In chapter 15:3, it is called the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses, as may be seen by reference to Exodus 15, was the song of his experience and deliverance. Therefore the song of the 144,000, is the song of their deliverance. No others can join in it; for no other company will have had an experience like theirs.

3. They were not defiled with women. A woman is in Scripture the symbol of a church, a virtuous woman representing a pure church, a corrupt woman an apostate church. It is, then, a characteristic of this company that at the time of their deliverance they are not defiled with, or have no connection with, the fallen churches of the land. Yet we are not to understand that they never had any connection with these churches; for it is only at a certain time that people become defiled by them. In chapter 18:4, we find a call issued to the people of God while they are in Babylon, to come out, lest they become partakers of her sins. Heeding that call, and leaving her connection, they escape the

defilement of her sins. So of the 144,000; though some of them may have once had a connection with corrupt churches, they sever that connection when it would become sin to retain it longer.

4. They follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth. We understand that this is spoken of them in their redeemed state. They are the special companions of their glorified Lord in the kingdom. Chapter 7:17, speaking of the same company and at the same time, says, “For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.”

5. They are “first-fruits” unto God and the Lamb. This term appears to be applied to different ones to denote especial conditions. Christ is the first-fruits as the antitype of the wave-sheaf. The first receivers of the gospel are called by James (chapter 1:18) a kind of first-fruits. So the 144,000, ripening up for the heavenly garner here on earth during the troublous scenes of the last days, being translated to heaven without seeing death, and occupying a pre-eminent position, are, in this

sense, as would seem very consistent, called first-fruits unto God and the Lamb. With this description of the 144,000 triumphant, the line of prophecy commencing with chapter 12 comes to a close.

Verse 6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, 7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. 8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. 9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into

the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. 12. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

The First Message.--Another scene and another chain of prophetic events is introduced in these verses. We know that this is so, because the preceding verses of this chapter describe a company of the redeemed in the immortal state--a scene which constitutes a part of the prophetic chain commencing with the first verse of chapter 12, and with which that chain of events closes; for no prophecy goes beyond the immortal state; and whenever we are brought in a line of prophecy to the end of the world, we know that that line there ends, and that what is introduced subsequently

belongs to a new series of events. The Revelation in particular is composed of these independent prophetic chains, as has already been set forth, of which fact, previous to this instance, we have had a number of examples.

The messages described in these verses are known as “the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14.” We are justified in applying to them the ordinals, first, second, and third, by the prophecy itself; for the last one is distinctly called “the third angel,” from which it follows that the one preceding was the second angel; and the one before that, the first angel.

These angels are evidently symbolic; for the work assigned them is that of preaching the everlasting gospel to the people. But the preaching of the gospel has not been intrusted to literal angels; it has been committed unto men, who are responsible for this sacred trust placed in their hands. Each of these three angels, therefore, symbolizes a body of religious teachers, who are commissioned to make known to their fellow men

the special truths which constitute the burden of these messages respectively.

But we are to consider further that angels, literally, are intensely interested in the work of grace among men, being sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. And as there is order in all the movements and appointments of the heavenly world, it may not be fanciful to suppose that a literal angel has charge and oversight of the work of each message. (Hebrews 1:14; Revelation 1:1; 22:16)

In these symbols we see the sharp contrast the Bible draws between earthly and heavenly things. Whenever earthly governments are to be represented,--even the best of them,--the most appropriate symbol that can be found is a cruel and ravenous wild beast; but when the work of God is to be set forth, an angel, clad in beauty and girt with power, is taken to symbolize it.

The importance of the work set forth in the verses last quoted will be apparent to any one who

will attentively study them. Whenever these messages are due, and are proclaimed, they must, from the very nature of the case, constitute the great theme of interest for that generation. We do not mean that the great mass of mankind then living will give them attention; for in every age of the world, the present truth for that time has been generally overlooked; but they will constitute the theme to which the people would pay most earnest regard if they were awake to that which concerns their highest interests. When God commissions his ministers to announce to the world that the hour of his Judgment is come, that Babylon has fallen, and that whoever worships the beast and his image must drink of his wrath poured out unmingled into the cup of his indignation, -- a threatening more terrible than any other which can be found in the Scriptures of truth, -- no man, except at the peril of his soul, can treat these warnings as non-essential, passing them by with neglect and disregard. Hence the necessity for the most earnest endeavor in every age, and especially in the present age, when so many evidences betoken the soon-coming of earth's final crisis, to understand the work of the

Lord, lest we lose the benefit of the present truth.

This angel of Revelation 14:6 is called “another angel,” from the fact that John had previously seen an angel flying through heaven in a similar manner, as described in chapter 8:13, proclaiming that the last three of the series of seven trumpets were woe trumpets. This was near the close of the sixth century (See under chapter 8:12.)

The first point to be determined is the chronology of this message. When may the proclamation, “The hour of his Judgment is come,” be consistently expected? The bare possibility that it may be in our own day renders it very becoming in us to examine this question with serious attention; but the great probability, nay, more, the positive proof that this is so, which will appear in the development of this argument, should set every pulse bounding, and every heart beating high with a sense of the thrilling importance of this hour.

Three positions only are possible on this question of the chronology of this prophecy, and as

might be expected, all of them are taken by different expositors. These positions are (1) That this message has been given in the past; as, first, in the days of the apostles; or, secondly, in the days of the Reformers; (2) that it is to be given in a future age; or (3) that it belongs to the present generation.

We inquire, first, respecting the past. The very nature of the message forbids the idea that it could have been given in the apostles' days. They did not proclaim that the hour of God's Judgment had come. If they had, it would not have been true, and their message would have been stamped with the infamy of falsehood. They did have something to say, however, respecting the Judgment; but they pointed to an indefinite future for its accomplishment. In Matthew 10:15; 11:21-24, a quotation from Christ's own words, the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre, Sidon, Chorazin, and Capernaum, was located indefinitely in the future from that day. Paul declared to the superstitious Athenians that God had appointed a day in which he would judge the world. (Acts 17:31) He reasoned before Felix "of righteousness,

temperance, and judgment to come.” (Acts 24:25) To the Romans he wrote, directing their minds forward to a day when God should judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. (Romans 2:16) He pointed the Corinthians forward to a time when we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:10) James wrote to the brethren scattered abroad that they were, at some time in the future, to be judged by the law of liberty. (James 2:12) And both Peter and Jude speak of the first rebel angels as reserved unto the Judgment of the great day, still in the future at that time (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6), to which the ungodly in this world are also reserved. (2 Peter 2:9) How different is all this from ringing out upon the world the startling declaration that “the hour of his Judgment is come!” -- a sound which must be heard whenever the solemn message before us is fulfilled.

From the days of the apostles nothing has taken place which any one, so far as we are aware, could construe into a suggestion of the fulfillment of the message, till we come to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Here some seem disposed to

make quite a determined stand, claiming that Luther and his collaborators gave the first message, and that the two following messages have been given since his day. This is a question to be decided by historical fact rather than by argument; and hence we inquire for the evidence that the Reformers made any such proclamation. Their teaching has been very fully recorded, and their writings preserved. When and where did they arouse the world with the proclamation that the hour of God's Judgment had come? We find no record that such was the burden of their preaching at all. On the contrary, it is recorded of Luther that he placed the Judgment some three hundred years in the future from his day. Such records ought to be decisive, so far as the Reformers are concerned.

The foregoing considerations being sufficient to forbid utterly the application of the message to the past, we now turn to that view which locates it in a future age. By "future age" is meant a period subsequent to the second advent; and the reason urged for locating the message in that age is the fact that John saw the angel flying through heaven,

immediately after having seen the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000, which is a future event. If the book of Revelation were one consecutive prophecy, there would be force in this reasoning; but as it consists of a series of independent lines of prophecy, and as it has already been shown that one such chain ends with verse 5 of this chapter, and a new one begins with verse 6, the foregoing view cannot be urged. To show that the message cannot have its fulfillment in a future age, it will be sufficient to remark:--

1. The apostolic commission extended only to the "harvest," which is the end of the world. If, therefore, this angel with the "everlasting gospel" comes after that event, he preaches another gospel, and subjects himself to the anathema of Paul in Galatians 1:8.

2. The second message cannot, of course, be given before the first; but the second message announces the fall of Babylon, and a voice is heard from heaven after that, saying, "Come out of her, my people." How absurd to locate this after the

second advent of Christ, seeing that all God's people, both living and dead, are at that time caught up to meet the Lord in the air, to be thence forward forever with him. They cannot be called out of Babylon after this. Christ does not take them to Babylon, but to the Father's house, where there are many mansions. (John 14:2, 3)

3. A glance at the third angel's message, which must be fulfilled in a future age if the first one is, will still further show the absurdity of this view. This message warns against the worship of the beast, which refers, beyond question, to the papal beast. But the papal beast is destroyed and given to the burning flame when Christ comes. (Dan. 7:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:8) He goes into the lake of fire at that time, to disturb the saints of the Most High no more. (Revelation 19:20) Why will people involve themselves in the absurdity of locating a message against the worship of the beast at a time when the beast has ceased to exist, and his worship is impossible?

In verse 18 of Revelation 14, a blessing is

pronounced upon the dead which die in the Lord “from henceforth;” that is, from the time the third message begins to be given. This is a complete demonstration of the fact that the message must be given prior to the first resurrection; for after that event all who have a part therein (and this includes all, both living and dead, who are not assigned to the second death) become as the angels of God, and can die no more. We therefore dismiss this view concerning the future age as unscriptural, absurd, and impossible.

We are now prepared to examine the third view, that the message belongs to the present generation. The argument on the two preceding points has done much to establish the present proposition; for if the message has not been given in the past, and cannot be given in the future after Christ comes, where else can we locate it but in the present generation, if we are in the last days, as we suppose? Indeed, the very nature of the message itself confines it to the last generation of men. It proclaims the hour of God’s Judgment come. But the Judgment pertains to the closing up of the work

of salvation for the world; and the proclamation announcing its approach can therefore be made only as we come near the end. It is further shown that the message belongs to the present time when it is proved that this angel is identical with the angel of Revelation 10, who utters his message in this generation. That the first angel of Revelation 14 and the angel of Revelation 10 are identical, see argument on the latter chapter.

But the strongest and most conclusive evidence that the message belongs to the present time will consist in finding some movement in this generation through which its fulfillment has been, or is, going forward. On this point we refer to a movement of which it would now be hard to find any one who is wholly ignorant. It is the great Advent movement of the present century. As early as 1831, Wm. Miller, of Low Hampton, N. Y., by an earnest and consistent study of the prophecies, was led to the conclusion that the gospel dispensation was near its close. He placed the termination, which he thought would occur at the end of the prophetic periods, about the year 1843.

This date was afterward extended to the autumn of 1844. (See diagram and argument under Daniel 9:24-27.) We call his investigations a consistent study of the prophecies, because he adopted that rule of interpretation which will be found lying at the base of every religious reformation, and of every advance movement in prophetic knowledge; namely, to take all the language of the Scriptures, just as we would that of any other book, to be literal, unless the context or the laws of language require it to be understood figuratively; and to let scripture interpret scripture. True, on a vital point he made a mistake, as will be explained hereafter; but in principle, and in a great number of particulars, he was correct. He was on the right road, and made an immense advance over every theological system of his day. When he began to promulgate his views, they met with general favor, and were followed by great religious awakenings in different parts of the land. Soon a multitude of colaborers gathered around his standard, among whom may be mentioned such men as F. G. Brown, Chas. Fitch, Josiah Litch, J. V. Himes, and others, who were then eminent for piety, and men

of influence in the religious world. The period marked by the years 1840-1844 was one of intense activity and great progress in this work. A message was proclaimed to the world which bore every characteristic of a fulfillment of the proclamation of Revelation 14:6, 7. The preaching was emphatically such as might be called the everlasting (age-lasting) gospel. It pertained to the closing up of this age, and the incoming of the everlasting age (a...) of the King of righteousness. It was that gospel of the kingdom which Christ declared should be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then the end should come. Matthew 24:14. The fulfillment of either of these scriptures involves the preaching of the nearness of the end. The gospel could not be preached to all nations as a sign of the end, unless it was understood to be such, and the proximity of the end was at least one of its leading themes. The Advent Herald of Dec. 14, 1850, well expressed the truth on this point in the following language:--

“As an indication of the approach of the end, there was, however, to be seen another angel flying

through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. Revelation 14:6. The burden of this angel was to be the same gospel which had been before proclaimed; but connected with it was the additional motive of the proximity of the kingdom--‘saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his Judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.’ Verse 7. No mere preaching of the gospel, without announcing its proximity, could fulfill this message.”

The persons who were engaged in this movement supposed it to be a fulfillment of prophecy, and claimed that they were giving the message of Revelation 14:6, 7.

With this movement also began the fulfillment of the parable of the ten virgins, recorded in Matthew 25, which our Lord uttered to illustrate and enforce the doctrine of his second coming, and the end of the world, which he had just set forth in

Matthew 24. Those who became interested in this movement went forth to meet the Bridegroom; that is, they were aroused to expect the coming of Christ, and to look and wait for his return from heaven. The Bridegroom tarried. The first point of expectation, the close of the year 1843, which according to Jewish reckoning ended in the spring of 1844, passed by, and the Lord did not come. While he tarried, they all slumbered and slept. Surprised by the unexpected doubt and uncertainty into which they were thrown, the interest of the people began to wane, and their efforts to flag. At midnight there was a cry made, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! go ye out to meet him." Midway between the spring of 1844, where it was at first supposed that the 2300 days would terminate, and that point in the autumn of 1844 to which it was afterward ascertained that they really extended, just such a cry as this was suddenly raised. Involuntarily, this very phraseology was adopted: "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh." The cause of this sudden arousing was the discovery that the great prophetic period of 2300 days (years) of Daniel 8:14, did not end in the spring of 1844,

but would extend to the autumn of that year, and consequently that the time at which they supposed they were warranted to look for the appearing of the Lord had not passed by, but was indeed at the door. At the same time, the relation between the type and the antitype relating to the cleansing of the sanctuary was partially seen. The prophecy declared that at the end of the 2300 days, the sanctuary should be cleansed; and as in the type the sanctuary was cleansed on the tenth day of the seventh month of the Jewish year, that point in the autumn of 1844 was accordingly fixed upon for the termination of the 2300 years. It fell on the 22d of October. Between the midsummer of 1844, when the light on these subjects was first seen, and the day and month above named when the 2300 years terminated, perhaps no movement ever exhibited greater activity than this respecting the soon coming of Christ, and in no cause was ever more accomplished in so short a space of time. A religious wave swept over this country, and the nation was stirred as no people have been stirred since the opening of the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. This was called the “seventh-

month movement,” and was more particularly confined to the United States and Canada.

But the general movement respecting the second advent of Christ, and the proclamation that “the hour of his Judgment is come,” was not confined to this hemisphere. It was worldwide. It fulfilled in this respect the proclamation of the angel “to every nation and kindred and tongue and people.” In [1], an English writer, is quoted as saying:--

“It is not merely in Great Britain that the expectation of the near return of the Redeemer is entertained, and the voice of warning raised, but also in America, India, and on the continent of Europe. In America, about three hundred ministers of the word are thus preaching ‘this gospel of the kingdom;’ while in this country [Great Britain], about seven hundred of the Church of England are raising the same cry.”

Dr. Joseph Wolff traveled in Arabia Felix, through the region inhabited by the descendants of

Hobab, Moses' father-in-law. In his Mission to Bokhara, he speaks as follows of a book which he saw in Yemen:--

“The Arabs of this place have a book called ‘Seera,’ which treats of the second coming of Christ, and his reign in glory! In Yemen, I spent six days with the Rechabites. ‘They drink no wine, plant no vineyards, sow no seed, live in tents, and remember the words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab.’ With them were the children of Israel of the tribe of Dan, who reside near Terim in Hatramawt, who expect, in common with the children of Rechab, the speedy arrival of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven.”

[2], speaks as follows concerning the wide diffusion of the advent sentiment:--

“In Wurtemberg, there is a Christian colony numbering hundreds, who look for the speedy advent of Christ; also another of like belief on the shores of the Caspian; the Molokaners, a large body of Dissenters from the Russian Greek

Church, residing on the shores of the Baltic--a very pious people, of whom it is said, 'Taking the Bible alone for their creed, the norm of their faith is simply the Holy Scriptures'--are characterized by the 'expectation of Christ's immediate and visible reign upon earth.' In Russia, the doctrine of Christ's coming and reign is preached to some extent, and received by many of the lower class. It has been extensively agitated in Germany, particularly in the south part among the Moravians. In Norway, charts and books on the advent have been circulated extensively, and the doctrine has been received by many. Among the Tartars in Tartary, there prevails an expectation of Christ's advent about this time. English and American publications on this doctrine have been sent to Holland, Germany, India, Ireland, Constantinople, Rome, and to nearly every missionary station on the globe. At the Turk's Islands, it has been received to some extent among the Wesleyans.

“Mr. Fox, a Scottish missionary to the Teloogoo people, was a believer in Christ's soon coming. James McGregor Bertram, a Scottish

missionary of the Baptist order at St. Helena, has sounded the cry extensively on that island, making many converts and premillennialists; he has also preached it at South Africa at the missionary stations there. David N. Lord informs us that a large proportion of the missionaries who have gone from Great Britain to make known the gospel to the heathen, and who are now laboring in Asia and Africa, are millenarians; and Joseph Wolff, D. D., according to his journals, between the years 1821 and 1845, proclaimed the Lord's speedy advent in Palestine, Egypt, on the shores of the Red Sea, Mesopotamia, the Crimea, Persia, Georgia, throughout the Ottoman empire, in Greece, Arabia, Toorkistan, Bokhara, Afghanistan, Cashmere, Hindostan, Thibet, Holland, Scotland, and Ireland, at Constantinople, Jerusalem, St. Helena, also on shipboard in the Mediterranean, and at New York City to all denominations. He declares he has preached among Jews, Turks, Mohammedans, Parsees, Hindoos, Chaldeans, Yeseedes, Syrians, Sabeans, to pashas, sheiks, shahs, the kings of Organtsh and Bokhara, the queen of Greece, etc.; and of his extraordinary labors, the Investigator

says, ‘No individual has, perhaps, given greater publicity to the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ than has this well-known missionary to the world. Wherever he goes, he proclaims the approaching advent of the Messiah in glory.’”

Elder J. N. Andrews, in his work on *The Three Messages of Revelation 14:32-35;6-12*, speaks as follows concerning the message under consideration:--

“None can deny that this world-wide warning of impending judgment has been given. The nature of the evidence adduced in its support now claims our attention, as furnishing the most conclusive testimony that it was a message from Heaven.

“All the great outlines of the world’s prophetic history were shown to be complete in the present generation. The great prophetic chain of Daniel 2, also those of chapters 7, 8, 11, and 12, were shown to be just accomplished. The same was true of our Lord’s prophetic description of the gospel

dispensation. (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21) The prophetic periods of Daniel 7, 8, 9, 12; Revelation 11, 12, 13, were shown to harmonize with, and unitedly to sustain, this great proclamation. The signs in the heavens and upon the earth and sea, in the church and among the nations, with one voice bore witness to the warning which God addressed to the human family. (Joel 2:30, 31; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:24-26; Luke 21:25-36; 2 Timothy 3; 2 Peter 3; Revelation 6:12, 13) And besides the mighty array of evidence on which this warning was based, the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in connection with this proclamation set the seal of Heaven to its truth.

“The warning of John the Baptist, which was to prepare the way for the first advent of our Lord, was of short duration, and limited in its extent. For each prophetic testimony which sustained the work of John, we have several which support the proclamation of Christ’s near advent. John had not the aid of the press to disseminate his proclamation, nor the facility of Nahum’s chariots; he was a humble man, dressed in camel’s hair, and

he performed no miracles. If the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves in not being baptized of John, how great must be the guilt of those who reject the warning sent by God to prepare the way of the second advent!

“But those were disappointed who expected the Lord in 1843 and 1844. This fact is with many a sufficient reason for rejecting all the testimony in this case. We acknowledge the disappointment, but cannot acknowledge that this furnishes a just reason for denying the hand of God in this work. The Jewish church was disappointed when, at the close of the work of John the Baptist, Jesus presented himself as the promised Messiah. And the trusting disciples were most sadly disappointed when he whom they expected to deliver Israel was by wicked hands taken and slain. And after his resurrection, when they expected him to restore again the kingdom to Israel, they could not but be disappointed when they understood that he was going away to his Father, and that they were to be left for a long season to tribulation and anguish.

But disappointment does not prove that God has no hand in the guidance of his people. It should lead them to correct their errors, but it should not lead them to cast away their confidence in God. It was because the children of Israel were disappointed in the wilderness that they so often denied divine guidance. They are set forth as an admonition to us, that we should not fall after the same example of unbelief.

“But it must be apparent to every student of the Scriptures, that the angel who proclaims the hour of God’s Judgment does not give the latest message of mercy. Revelation 14 presents two other and latest proclamations before the close of human probation. This fact alone is sufficient to prove that the coming of the Lord does not take place until the second and third proclamations have been added to the first. The same thing may also be seen in the fact that after the angel of chapter 10 has sworn that time shall be no longer, another work of prophesying before many people and nations is announced. Hence we understand that the first angel preaches the hour of God’s

Judgment come; that is, he preaches the termination of the prophetic periods; and that this is the time which he swears shall be no longer.

“The Judgment does of necessity commence before the advent of Christ; for he comes to execute the judgment (Jude 14, 15; Revelation 22:12; 2 Timothy 4:1); and at the sound of the last trumpet he confers immortality upon every one of the righteous, and passes by all the wicked. The investigative Judgment does therefore precede the execution of the same by the Saviour. It is the province of the Father to preside in this investigative work, as set forth in Daniel 7. At this tribunal, the Son closes up his work as high priest, and is crowned king. Thence he comes to earth to execute the decisions of his Father. It is this work of judgment by the Father which the first angel introduces.

“The great period of 2300 days, which was the most important period in marking the definite time in that proclamation, extends to the cleansing of the sanctuary. That the cleansing of the sanctuary is

not the cleansing of any part of the earth, but that it is the last work of our great High Priest in the heavenly tabernacle before his advent to the earth, has been clearly shown. [See on Daniel 8:14.] And we understand that it is while the work of cleansing the sanctuary is taking place, that the latest message of mercy is proclaimed. Thus it will be seen that the prophetic periods, and the proclamation which is based upon them, do not extend to the coming of the Lord.”

That the mistake made by Adventists in 1844 was not in the time, has been shown by the argument on the seventy weeks and twenty-three hundred days in Daniel 9; that it was in the nature of the event to occur at the end of those days, has been shown in the argument on the sanctuary in Daniel 8. Supposing that the earth was the sanctuary, and that its cleansing was to be accomplished by fire at the revelation of the Lord from heaven, they naturally looked for the appearing of Christ at the end of the days. And through their misapprehension on this point, they met with a crushing disappointment, though

everything which the prophecy declared, and everything which they were warranted to expect, took place with absolute accuracy at that time. There the cleansing of the sanctuary began; but this did not bring Christ to this earth, for the earth is not the sanctuary; and its cleansing does not involve the destruction of the earth, for it is accomplished with the blood of a sacrificial offering, not with fire. Here was the bitterness of the little book to the church. Revelation 10:10. Here was the coming of one like the Son of man, not to this earth, but to the Ancient of days. Daniel 7:13, 14. Here was the coming of the Bridegroom to the marriage, as set forth in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25. We have spoken of the midnight cry of that parable in the summer of 1844. The foolish virgins then said to the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone [margin, going] out." The wise answered, "Go and buy for yourselves." And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came. This is not the coming of Christ to this earth; for it is a coming which precedes the marriage; but the marriage, that is, the reception of the kingdom (see on chapter 21), must precede his coming to this earth to

receive to himself his people, who are to be the guests at the marriage supper. (Luke 19:12; Revelation 19:7-9) This coming, in the parable, must therefore be the same as the coming to the Ancient of days spoken of in Daniel 7:13, 14.

And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. After the Bridegroom comes to the marriage, there is an examination of guests to see who are ready to participate in the ceremony, according to the parable of Matthew 22:1-13. As the last thing before the marriage, the King comes in to see the guests, to ascertain if all are properly arrayed in the wedding garment; and whoever, after due examination, is found with the garment on, and is accepted by the King, never after loses that garment, but is sure of immortality. But this question of fitness for the kingdom can be determined only by the investigative Judgment of the sanctuary. This closing work in the sanctuary, therefore, which is the cleansing of the sanctuary, and the atonement, is nothing else than the examination of the guests to see who have on the

wedding garment; and, consequently, until this work is finished, it is not determined who are “ready” to go in to the marriage. “They that were ready went in with him to the marriage.” By this short expression we are carried from the time when the Bridegroom comes to the marriage, entirely through the period of the cleansing of the sanctuary, or the examination of the guests; and when this is concluded, probation will end, and the door will be shut.

The connection of the parable with the message under examination is now apparent. It brings to view a period of making ready the guests for the marriage of the Lamb, which is the work of Judgment to which the message brings us when it declares, “The hour of his Judgment is come.” This message was to be proclaimed with a loud voice. It went forth with the power thus indicated between the years 1840-44, more especially in the seventh-month movement of the latter year, bringing us to the end of the 2300 days, when the work of Judgment commenced as Christ began the work of cleansing the sanctuary.

But, as has been already shown, this did not bring the close of probation, but only the period of the investigative Judgment. In this Judgment we are now living; and during this time other messages are proclaimed, as the prophecy further declares.

The Second Message.--This message, following the first, is announced (verse 8) in these few words: "And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." The chronology of this message is determined, to a great extent, by that of the first message. This cannot precede that; but that, as has been shown, is confined to the last days; yet this must be given before the end, for no move of this kind is possible after that event. It is therefore a part of that religious movement which takes place in the last days with especial reference to the coming of Christ.

The inquiries therefore naturally follow: What is meant by the term Babylon? what is its fall? and

how is it fulfilled? As to the etymology of the word, we learn something from the marginal readings of Genesis 10:10 and 11:9. The beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel, or Babylon; and the place was so called because God there confounded the language of the builders of the tower; and the word means confusion. The word is here used figuratively to designate the great symbolic city of the book of Revelation, probably with special reference to the signification of the term, and the circumstances from which it originated. It applies to something on which, as specifying its chief characteristic, may be written the word "confusion."

There are but three possible objects to which the word can be applied; and these are (1) the apostate religious world in general, (2) the papal church in particular, and (3) the city of Rome. In examining these terms, we shall first show what Babylon is not.

1. Babylon is not confined to the Romish Church. That this church is a very prominent

component part of great Babylon, is not denied. The descriptions of chapter 17 seem to apply very particularly to that church. But the name which she bears on her forehead, “Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth,” reveals other family connections. If this church is the mother, who are the daughters? The fact that these daughters are spoken of, shows that there are other religious bodies besides the Romish Church which come under this designation. Again, there is to be a call made in connection with this message, “Come out of her, my people” (Revelation 18:1-4); and as this message is located in the present generation, it follows, if no other church but the Romish is included in Babylon, that the people of God, as a body, are now found in the commission of that church, and are to be called out. But this conclusion, no Protestant, at least, will be willing to adopt.

2. Babylon is not the city of Rome. The argument relied upon to show that the city of Rome is the Babylon of the Apocalypse runs thus: “The angel told John that the woman which he had seen

was the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth, and that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains upon which the woman sitteth.” And then, taking the city and the mountains to be literal, and finding Rome built upon just seven hills, the application is made at once to literal Rome.

The principle upon which this interpretation rests is the assumption that the explanation of a symbol must always be literal. It falls to the ground the moment it can be shown that symbols are sometimes explained by substituting for them other symbols, and then explaining the latter. This can easily be done. In Revelation 11:3, the symbol of the two witnesses is introduced. The next verse reads: “These are the two olive trees and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.” In this case, the first symbol is said to be the same as another symbol which is elsewhere clearly explained. So in the case before us. “The seven heads are seven mountains,” and “The woman is that great city;” and it will not be difficult to show that the mountains and the city are both used

symbolically. The reader's attention is asked to the following points:--

(1.) We are informed in chapter 13 that one of the seven heads was wounded to death. This head therefore cannot be a literal mountain; for it would be folly to speak of wounding a mountain to death.

(2.) Each of the seven heads has a crown upon it. But whoever saw a literal mountain with a crown upon it?

(3.) The seven heads are evidently successive in order of time; for we read, "Five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come." Revelation 17. But the seven hills on which Rome is built, are not successive, and it would be absurd to apply such language to them.

(4.) According to Daniel 7:6, compared with Daniel 8:8, 22, heads denote governments; and according to Daniel 2:35, 44; Jeremiah 51:25, mountains denote kingdoms. According to these facts, the version of Revelation 17:9, 10 given by

Professor Whiting, which is a literal translation of the text, removes all obscurity: “The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth, and they are seven kings.” It will thus be seen that the angel represents the heads as mountains, and then explains the mountains to be seven successive kings, or forms of government. The meaning is transferred from one symbol to another, and then an explanation given of the second symbol.

From the foregoing argument, it follows that the “woman” cannot represent a literal city; for the mountains upon which the woman sitteth being symbolic, a literal city cannot sit upon symbolic mountains. Again, Rome was the seat of the dragon of chapter 12, and this was transferred to the beast (Revelation 13:2), thus becoming the seat of the beast; but it would be a singular mixing of figures to take the seat, which is sat upon by the beast, and make that a woman sitting upon the beast.

(5.) Were the city of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse, what nonsense should we have in chapter 18:1-4; for in this case the fall of Babylon

would be the overthrow and destruction of the city, in fact, its utter consumption by fire, according to verse 8. But mark what takes place after the fall. Babylon becomes a habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. How can this happen to a city after that city is destroyed, even being utterly burned with fire? But worse still, after all this a voice is heard, saying, "Come out of her, my people." Are God's people in Rome?--Not to any great extent, even in her best estate. But how many can we suppose to be there, to be called out, after the city is burned with fire? It is not necessary to say more to show that Babylon cannot be the city of Rome.

3. Babylon signifies the universal worldly church. Having seen that it cannot be any one of the only other three possible objects to which it could be applied, it must mean this. But we are not left to this a priori kind of reasoning on this subject. Babylon is called a woman. A woman, used as a symbol, signifies a church. The woman of chapter 12 was interpreted to mean a church. The woman of chapter 17 should undoubtedly be

interpreted as signifying also a church. The character of the woman determines the character of the church represented, a chaste woman standing for a pure church, a vile woman for an impure or apostate church. The woman Babylon is herself a harlot, and the mother of daughters like herself. This circumstance, as well as the name itself, shows that Babylon is not limited to any single ecclesiastical body, but must be composed of many. It must take in all of a like nature, and represent the entire corrupt or apostate church of the earth. This will perhaps explain the language of Revelation 18:24, which represents that when God makes requisition upon great Babylon for the blood of his martyrs, in her will be found “the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all” that have been slain upon the earth. The Greek Church is the established church of Russia and Greece; the Lutheran Church is the established church of Prussia, Holland, Sweden, Norway, and a part of the smaller German states; England has Episcopacy for her state religion; and other countries have their established religions, and zealously oppose dissenters. Babylon has made all nations drunken

with the wine of her fornication, that is, her false doctrines; it can therefore symbolize nothing less than the universal worldly church.

The great city, Babylon, is spoken of as composed of three divisions. So the great religions of the world may be arranged under three heads. The first, oldest, and most wide-spread is paganism, separately symbolized under the form of a dragon; the second is the great Romish apostasy, symbolized by the beast; and the third is the daughters, or descendants from that church. Under this head comes the two-horned beast, though that does not embrace it all. War, oppression, conformity to the world, the worship of mammon, the creed-power, pursuit of pleasure, and the maintenance of very many errors of the old Romish Church, identify, with sad and faithful accuracy, the great body of the Protestant churches as an important constituent part of this great Babylon.

A glance at some of the ways in which the Protestant church has deported herself will still further show this. Rome, having the power,

destroyed vast multitudes of those whom she adjudged heretics. The Protestant church has shown the same spirit. Witness the burning of Michael Servetus by the Protestants of Geneva with John Calvin at their head. Witness the long-continued oppression of dissenters by the Church of England. Witness the hanging of Quakers and whipping of Baptists even by the Puritan fathers of New England, themselves fugitives from like oppression by the Church of England. But these, some may say, are things of the past. Very true; yet they show that when persons governed by strong religious prejudice have the power to coerce dissenters, they cannot forbear to use it--a state of things which we look for in this country under a further fulfillment of the closing prophecy of chapter 13.

Mark also how far they have departed from the teachings of Christ in other respects. Christ forbade his people to seek after the treasures of this world. But the popular church, as a body, exhibits greater eagerness for wealth than do worldlings themselves. In how many churches does mammon

bear rule! Christ says, “Be not ye called Rabbi,” that is, master, or doctor; “for one is your Master, even Christ.” To do this is to partake of that same spirit which has led aspiring men to assume to be the head of the church, the successors of St. Peter, the vicegerent of Christ, and a god upon earth. Yet how many in the Protestant church, in imitation of the Romish, adopt the title of “Reverend,” which in our version of the Scriptures is applied to God alone: “Holy and reverend is his name.” But not content with this, some become “Very Reverend,” and “Right Reverend,” and “Doctors of Divinity.” The New Testament speaks in the most decided terms against adornments and extravagance in dress; yet where shall we look for a display of the latest fashions, the most costly attire, the most gaudy adornments, the richest diamonds, and the most dazzling jewelry, except in a fashionable assembly in a Protestant church on a pleasant Sunday? Such is now the state of the religious world, that many, in pursuit of their vocation as lawyers, doctors, politicians, merchant kings, etc., seek through the avenue of church connection success in business, honor in society, high offices

in the nation, and lucrative positions everywhere. And much more of this will be seen, when, as already explained, church and state shall be united in America, and a religious profession shall become a qualification for political office. To adopt the form of godliness from such motives must be most abominable in the sight of God; yet these very classes are welcomed by the churches, because it will make them still more popular.

Babylon is represented as trafficking in the souls of men. A custom common in the Church of England would seem to come under this head. There, vacant livings are sometimes set up for sale, and the highest bidder, regardless of his moral qualifications or religious standing, becomes the possessor of the revenue belonging to the position, and the pastor of the people of that parish. To come to the United States, look at all the arts and devices resorted to, to draw the multitude, not to convert and save them, but to gain their patronage and influence. The most disastrous result of all this is that the minister must preach smooth things, and tickle fashionable ears with pleasing fables.

It was the will of Christ that his, church should be one. He prayed that his disciples might be one, as he and the Father were one; for this would give power to his gospel, and cause the world to believe in him. Instead of this, look at the confusion that exists in the Protestant world, the many sectional walls that divide it up into a network of societies, and the many creeds, discordant as the languages of those who were dispersed at the tower of Babel. God is not the author of all these. It is just this state of things which the word Babylon, as a descriptive term, appropriately designates. It is evidently used for this very purpose, and not at all as a term of reproach. Instead of being stirred with feelings of resentment when this term is mentioned, people should rather examine their position, to see if in faith or practice they are guilty of any connection with this great city of confusion, and if so, separate at once therefrom.

The true church is a chaste virgin. (2 Corinthians 11:2) The church that is joined with the world in friendship, is a harlot. It is this

unlawful connection with the kings of the earth that constitutes her the great harlot of the Apocalypse. (Revelation 17) Thus the Jewish Church, at first espoused to the Lord (Jeremiah, chapters 2, 3, and 31:32), became a harlot. Ezekiel 16. This church, when thus apostatized from God, was called Sodom (Isaiah 1), just as “the great city” (Babylon) is so called in Revelation 11. The unlawful union with the world, of which Babylon is guilty, is positive proof that it is not the civil power. That the people of God are in her midst just before her overthrow is proof that she is professedly a religious body. For these reasons, it is not very evident that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the professed church united with the world.

The fall of Babylon will next claim attention. Having now learned what constitutes Babylon, it will not be difficult to decide what is meant by the declaration that Babylon is fallen. As Babylon is not a literal city, the fall cannot be a literal overthrow. We have already seen what an absurdity this would involve. And besides, between the fall and the destruction of Babylon, the clearest

distinction is maintained by the prophecy itself. Babylon “falls” before it is with violence “thrown down,” as a millstone cast into the sea, and “utterly burned with fire.” The fall is therefore a moral fall; for after the fall, the voice is addressed to the people of God who are still in her connection, “Come out of her, my people;” and the reason is immediately given,--“that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Babylon therefore still exists to sin, and her plagues are still future, after the fall.

Those who make Babylon apply exclusively to the papacy, claim that the fall of Babylon is the loss of civil power by the papal church. But such a view would be inconsistent with the prophecy in several particulars:--

1. Babylon falls because she makes all nations drink of her wine, or instils among them her false doctrines. But this by no means caused the loss of the pope’s temporal power; on the contrary, it was the very means by which he so long maintained his supremacy.

2. Because of the fall of Babylon, she becomes the hold of foul spirits and hateful birds; but such is not at all the result to Rome of the loss of civil power.

3. The people of God are called out of Babylon on account of her increasing sinfulness resulting from the fall; but the loss of the temporal power of the papacy constitutes no additional reason why the people of God should leave that church.

The reason given why Babylon meets with this moral fall is “because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath [not anger, but intense passion] of her fornication.” There is but one thing to which this can refer, and that is false doctrines. She has corrupted the pure truths of God’s word, and made the nations drunken with pleasing fables. Among the doctrines she teaches contrary to the word of God, may be mentioned the following:--

1. The doctrine of a temporal millennium, or a thousand years of peace and prosperity and

righteousness all over the earth before the second coming of Christ. This doctrine is especially calculated to shut the ears of the people against the evidences of the second advent near, and will probably lull as many souls into a state of carnal security which will lead to their final ruin as any heresy which has ever been devised by the great enemy of truth.

2. Sprinkling instead of immersion, which is the only Scriptural mode of baptism, and a fitting memorial of the burial and resurrection of our Lord, for which purpose it was designed. Having corrupted this ordinance, and destroyed it as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ, the way was prepared for the substitution of something else for this purpose, which she attempted in--

3. The change of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, the seventh day, into the festival of Sunday, as the rest-day of the Lord and a memorial of his resurrection, which has never been commanded, and can by no possible means appropriately commemorate that event. Fathered

by heathenism as “the wild solar holiday of all pagan times,” Sunday was led to the font by the pope, and christened as an institution of the gospel church. Thus an attempt was made to destroy a memorial which the great God had set up of his own magnificent creative work, and erect another in its stead to commemorate the resurrection of Christ, for which there was no occasion, as the Lord himself had already provided a memorial for that purpose.

4. The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. This also was derived from the pagan world. As distinguished converts from heathenism entered the ranks of Christians, they soon became “Fathers of the church,” and foster-fathers of this pernicious doctrine as a part of divine truth. This error nullifies the two great Scripture doctrines of the resurrection and the general Judgment, and furnishes a well-laid track for the car of modern Spiritualism with its load of pollution. From it have sprung such other evil doctrines as the conscious state of the dead, saint-worship, Mariolatry, purgatory, reward at death, prayers and baptisms

for the dead, eternal torment, and Universalism.

5. The doctrine that the saints, as unclothed, immaterialized spirits, find their eternal inheritance in far-away, indefinable regions, “beyond the bounds of time and space.” Thus multitudes have been turned away from the Scriptural view that this present earth is to be destroyed by fire at the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men, and that from its ashes the voice of Omnipotence will evoke a new earth, which will be the future everlasting kingdom of glory, and which the saints will possess as their eternal inheritance.

6. That the coming of Christ is a spiritual, not a literal event, and was fulfilled at the destruction of Jerusalem, or is fulfilled in conversion, in death, in Spiritualism, etc. How many minds have by such teaching been forever closed against the Scriptural view that the second coming of Christ is a future, definite event, literal, personal, visible, resulting in destruction to all his foes, and everlasting life to all his people!

7. Trailing the standard of godliness into the very dust. Men are made to believe that a form of godliness is all-sufficient, and that the words, "Lord, Lord," though repeated as an empty formula, will be a safe passport to the kingdom of heaven. If any one doubts this statement, let him listen to the next funeral discourse, or visit the cemetery, and mark what the tombstones say.

The world has gone almost stark mad in the pursuit of riches and honor; but in these things the church takes the lead, and thus openly sanctions what the Lord strictly forbade. If the churches were united as they should be, what a stumbling-block would be taken out of the way of sinners! And if it were not for the false doctrines which she has instilled into the minds of all men, how the plain truths of the Bible would move the world! But people are held by these, as under the stupefying influence of the most powerful intoxicant.

To come now more particularly to the application of the prophecy concerning the fall of Babylon, let us see how the religious world stood

with reference to the possibility of such a change, when the time came for the proclamation of this message, in connection with the first message, about the year 1844. Paganism was only apostasy and corruption in the beginning, and is so still; and no moral fall is possible there. Catholicism has been for centuries about as low in the scale as it is possible for a church to sink. No room for a moral fall in that church. Two great branches of Babylon were, therefore, when the second message became due, in so low a condition morally that a further declension with them was scarcely possible. Not so, however, with the Protestant branch of this great city. These churches, which commenced the great work of reformation from papal corruption, had done some noble work. They had run well for a season. They reached a moral plane vastly higher than that of the other divisions named. They were, in a word, in such a position that with them a moral fall was possible. The conclusion is therefore inevitable that the message announcing the fall had reference almost wholly to the Protestant churches.

The question may then be asked why this

announcement was not made sooner, if so large a portion of Babylon, the pagan and papal divisions, had been so long fallen. And the answer is at hand: Babylon, as a whole, could not be said to be fallen so long as one division of it remained unfallen. It could not be announced, therefore, till a change for the worse came over the Protestant world, and the truth, through which alone the path of progress lay, had been deliberately discarded. But when this took place, and a moral fall was experienced in this last division, then the announcement concerning Babylon as a whole could be made, as it could not have been made before,--“Babylon is fallen.”

It may be proper to inquire further how the reason assigned for the fall of Babylon, namely, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, would apply to the Protestant churches at the time in question. And the answer is, It would apply most pertinently. The fault with Babylon lies in her confusion and false doctrines. Because she industriously propagates these, clinging to them when light and truth which would correct them is offered, she falls. With the

Protestant churches, the time had come for an advance to higher religious ground. They could accept the proffered light and truth, and reach the higher attainment, or they could reject it, and lose their spirituality and favor with God, or, in other words, experience a moral fall. The truth which God saw fit to use as an instrument in this work was the first message. The hour of God's Judgment come, and the approximate second advent of Christ, was the doctrine preached. After listening long enough to see the blessing that attended the doctrine, and the good results that flowed from it, the churches, as a whole, rejected it with scorn and scoffing. They were thereby tested; for they then plainly betrayed the fact that their hearts were with the world, not with the Lord, and that they preferred to have it so. But the message would have healed the evils then existing in the religious world. The prophet exclaims, perhaps with reference to this very time, "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed." Jeremiah 51:9. Do you ask how we know this would have been the effect of receiving the message? We answer, Because this was the effect with all who did

receive it. They came from different denominations, and their denominational barriers were leveled to the ground; conflicting creeds were shivered to atoms; the unscriptural hope of a temporal millennium was abandoned; false views of the second advent were corrected; pride and conformity to the world were swept away; wrongs were made right; hearts were united in the sweetest fellowship; and love and joy reigned supreme. If the doctrine did this for the few who did receive it, it would have done the same for all, if all had received it.

But the message was rejected; and what was the result? The result upon those who rejected it will be spoken of by and by; the result upon those who received it, demands mention here. Everywhere throughout the land the cry was raised, "Babylon is fallen," and, in anticipation of the movement brought to view in Revelation 18:1-4, they added, "Come out of her, my people;" and about fifty thousand severed their connection with the denominations where they were not allowed to hold and proclaim their views in peace.

A marked change then came over the churches in respect to their spiritual condition. On the hypothesis that the proclamation of the second coming of Christ was in the order of prophetic fulfilment, and that the message was the “present truth” for that time, the result could not have been different. When a person refuses the light, he necessarily shuts himself in darkness; when he rejects truth, he inevitably forges the shackles of error about his own limbs. Loss of spirituality--a moral fall--must follow. This the churches experienced. They chose to adhere to old errors, and still promulgate their false doctrines among the people. The light of truth must therefore leave them. Some of them felt and deplored the change. A few testimonies from their own writers will describe their condition at that time.

The Christian Palladium of May 15, 1844, spoke in the following mournful strain: “In every direction we hear the dolorous sound, wafting upon every breeze of heaven, chilling as the blast from the icebergs of the north, settling like an incubus

on the breasts of the timid, and drinking up the energies of the weak, that lukewarmness, division, anarchy, and desolation are distressing the borders of Zion.”

In 1844 the Religious Telescope used the following language: “We have never witnessed such a general declension of religion as at the present. Truly, the church should awake, and search into the cause of this affliction; for as an affliction every one that loves Zion must view it. When we call to mind how ‘few and far between’ cases of true conversion are, and the almost unparalleled impenitence and hardness of sinners, we almost involuntarily exclaim, ‘Has God forgotten to be gracious? or is the door of mercy closed?’”

About that time, proclamations of fasts and seasons of prayer for the return of the Holy Spirit were sent out in the religious papers. Even the Philadelphia Sun of Nov. 11, 1844, had the following: “The undersigned ministers and members of various denominations in Philadelphia

and vicinity, solemnly believing that the present signs of the times--the spiritual dearth of our churches generally and the extreme evils in the world around us--seem to call loudly on all Christians for a special season of prayer, do therefore hereby agree, by divine permission, to unite in a week of special prayer to Almighty God, for the outpouring of his Holy Spirit on our city, our country, and the world.”

Professor Finney, editor of the Oberlin Evangelist, in February, 1844, said: “We have had the facts before our minds, that, in general, the Protestant churches of our country, as such, were either apathetic or hostile to nearly all the moral reforms of the age. There are partial exceptions, yet not enough to render the fact otherwise than general. We have also another corroborative fact,--the almost universal absence of revival influence in the churches. The spiritual apathy is almost allpervading, and is fearfully deep; so the religious press of the whole land testifies. Very extensively, church-members are becoming devotees of fashion, joining hands with the ungodly in parties of

pleasure, in dancing, in festivities, etc. But we need not expand this painful subject. Suffice it that the evidence thickens and rolls heavily upon us, to show that the churches generally are becoming sadly degenerate. They have gone very far from the Lord, and he has withdrawn himself from them.”

Should it be said that our views of the moral fall and spiritual dearth of the churches are shown to be incorrect by the great revivals of 1858, the testimony of the leading Congregational and Baptist papers of Boston relative to these revivals would correct that impression.

The Congregationalist, November, 1858, said: “The revival piety of our churches is not such that one can confidently infer, from its mere existence, its legitimate, practical fruits. It ought, for example, to be as certain, after such a shower of grace, that the treasuries of our benevolent societies would be filled, as it is after a plentiful rain that the streams will swell in their channels. But the managers of our societies are bewailing the feebleness of the sympathy and aid of the churches.

“There is another and sadder illustration of the same general truth. The Watchman and Reflector recently stated that there had never been among the Baptists so lamentable a spread of church dissension as prevails at present; and the sad fact is mentioned that this sin infects the very churches which shared most largely in the late revival. And the still more melancholy fact is added that these alienations date back their origin, in most cases, to the very midst of that scene of awakening. Even a glance at the weekly journals of our own denomination will evince that the evil is by no means confined to the Baptists. Our own columns have, perhaps, never borne so humiliating a record of contentions and ecclesiastical litigations as during the last few months.”

A Presbyterian pastor of Belfast, Ireland (1858), used the following language respecting the then recent revivals in this country, according to the New York Independent of December, 1859: “The determination to crush all ministers who say a word against their national sin [slavery], the

determination to suffocate and suppress the plain teachings of Scripture, can be persisted in and carried out at the very time these New York Christians are expecting the religious world to hail their revivals. Until the wretchedly degraded churches of America do the work of God in their own land, they have no spiritual vitality to communicate to others; their revivals are in the religious world what their flaunted cries of liberty, intermingled with the groans of the slave, are in the political.”

During the time of the great Irish revival of 1859, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland held its session in Belfast. Of a strange scene that occurred in that Assembly the Belfast News Letter of September 30, said: “Here in this venerable body of ministers and elders, we find two ministers openly giving each other the lie, and the whole General Assembly turned into a scene of confusion bordering upon a riot.”

This is a sad and deplorable picture; and what has been the course of events, and the tendency in

the deportment of professed Christians, since that time? There is considerable spasmodic action in some localities, and much effort put forth by sensational revivalists to excite the emotions, but no permanent good seems to be accomplished, and the standard of godliness sinks lower and lower.

Some new features have been added to the facilities for church work, and have now come to be considered almost indispensable appendages to the house of worship; and one of these is nothing less than a well-appointed kitchen, where the feast can be made ready, and dainty delicacies prepared for the most perverted appetite. One instance may serve as an illustration of all in this line. When the “Centenary Methodist Episcopal Church” was erected in Chicago, the Tribune, of that city, in its description of the building, made particular mention of the following features:--

“Beneath the vestibule and parlors is a basement, consisting of a large dining-hall, furnished with table accommodations for one hundred and fifty persons; a kitchen, with cooking

apparatus, sinks, closets, dressing-rooms, etc. The basement, under the vestibule and parlors, secures some desirable advantages; the social gatherings can be made agreeable and pleasant without introducing the refreshments into the lecture room or parlors.”

Think of a kitchen as being considered a necessary apartment in a house of worship! What would the venerable and godly church fathers and mothers of a generation ago have thought of this? The Scriptures declare that eating and drinking and pleasure-seeking, instead of God-serving, even on the part of professed Christians, will characterize the last days as a sign of the times. Luke 17:26-30; 2 Timothy 3:4, 5. Have we not reached the time when this is fulfilled? What indulgence is there in the whole catalogue of worldly pleasures which is not openly tolerated in the church--nay, which is not largely fostered by the church? Dancing, card-playing, theater-going, horse-racing, gambling, lotteries, festivals, fairs, and all forms of gluttony, are freely patronized in religious circles, and many of these things for so-called religious purposes.

Not many years ago, an entertainment was devised for the benefit of a church in New Orleans, of such a nature that it required a handbill to describe it, reading as follows:-- “Benefit of Christ’s Church Parochial School. Near the dancing platform are a splendid booth and a large canvas tent, with seats reserved for the accommodation of ladies and children. The patrons of this church, as well as the public, will here find a soda-water stand and confectionery, a restaurant filled with everything to satisfy the appetites of epicureans; and also a splendid bar, stocked with the choicest kinds of liquors, cigars, etc.”

The New York Observer copied this, with the following remarks:--

“This is a copy of a handbill conspicuously posted in New Orleans at the present time. The church for which this splendid bar is to be opened is called Christ’s church; but our private opinion is, if Christ attends the fair, he will come with a scourge of large cords, and drive out every man

and woman who dishonors his house and name with such things as these. Call it a church if you will; but for Christ's sake, O New Orleans people, don't call it Christ's church. Anything but that!"

To whatever denomination this church belonged, it shows just the same what is done in these days in the name of religion.

As an illustration of the effect of church lotteries, the Watchman relates the following:--

“A member of a church went to his pastor, and entreated his personal intercession with his favorite son, who had become ruinously addicted to the vice of gambling. The pastor consented, and seeking the young man, found him in his chamber. He commenced his lecture; but before he concluded, the young man laid his hand upon his arm, and drew his attention to a pile of splendid volumes that stood upon the table. ‘Well,’ said the young man, ‘these volumes were won by me at a fair given in your church; they were my first venture. But for that lottery, under the patronage of

a Christian church, I should never have become a gambler.’”

A minister, B. F. Booth, speaks as follows in the Golden Censer:--

“I hide my face in shame, when I hear of a governor of a State being compelled to call upon the law-making department of his State to pass laws to counteract the swindling carried on under the auspices of the church, under the name of church fairs, festivals, and other forms of ‘pious’ church gambling.”

Pages might be filled with statements from leading men and papers in the religious world, acknowledging the low condition of the churches generally, and the many evil practices of which they are unblushingly guilty; but it is unnecessary to multiply testimony on this point. The sad and deplorable fact is too evident to be denied.

The leading Methodist paper, the Christian Advocate, of Aug. 30, 1883, contains an article

headed “The Greatest of Questions,” from which we copy these statements:--

“1. Disguise it as you like, the church, in a general sense, is spiritually in a rapid decline. While it grows in numbers and money, it is becoming extremely feeble and limited in its spirituality, both in the pulpit and the pew. It is assuming the shape and character of the church at Laodicea.

“2. There are thousands of ministers, local and Conference, and many thousands of the laity, who are as dead and worthless as barren fig-trees. They contribute nothing of a temporal or spiritual nature to the progress and triumphs of the gospel throughout the earth. If all these dry bones in our church and its congregations could be resurrected, and brought into requisition by faithful, active service, what new and glorious manifestations of divine power would break forth!”

The New York Independent of Dec. 3, 1896, gave an article from D. L. Moody, from which the

following is an extract:--

“In a recent issue of your paper I saw an article from a contributor which stated that there were over three thousand churches in the Congregational and Presbyterian bodies of this country that did not report a single member added by profession of faith last year. Can this be true? The thought has taken such hold of me that I can’t get it out of my mind. It is enough almost to send a thrill of horror through the soul of every Christian.

“If this is the case with these two large denominations, what must be the condition of the others also? Are we all going to sit still and let this thing continue? Shall our religious newspapers and our pulpits keep their mouths closed like ‘dumb dogs that cannot bark’ to warn people of approaching danger? Should we not all lift up our voice like a trumpet about this matter? What must the Son of God think of such a result of our labor as this? What must an unbelieving world think about a Christianity that can’t bring forth any more fruit? And have we no care for the multitudes of

souls going down to perdition every year while we all sit and look on? And this country of ours, where will it be in the next ten years, if we don't awake out of sleep?"

The second angel's message is addressed to those organizations where the people of God are mainly to be found; for they are specially addressed as being in Babylon, and at a certain time are called out. The message applies to the present generation; and now God's people are to be looked for, certainly, in the Protestant organizations of Christendom. But as these churches depart farther and farther from God, they at length reach such a condition that true Christians can no longer maintain a connection with them; and then they will be called out. This we look for in the future, in fulfillment of Revelation 18:1-4. We believe it will come, when, in addition to their corruptions, the churches begin to raise against the saints the hand of oppression. (See further under the chapter last named.)

The Third Message.--Commencing with verse

9, the third message reads as follows: “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

This is a message of most fearful import. No severer threatening of divine wrath can be found in all the Bible. The sin against which it warns must be a terrible sin, and it must be one so plainly defined that all who will may understand it, and thus know how to avoid the judgments denounced against it.

It will be noticed that these messages are cumulative; that is, one does not cease when another is introduced. Thus, for a time the first message was the only one going forth. The second message was introduced, but that did not put an end to the first. From that time there were two messages. The third followed them, not to supersede them, but only to join with them, so that we now have three messages going forth simultaneously, or, rather, a threefold message, embracing the truths of all three, the last one, of course, being the leading proclamation. Till the work is done, it will never cease to be true that the hour of God's judgment has come, nor that Babylon has fallen; and these facts still continue to be proclaimed in connection with the truths introduced by the third message.

There will also be noticed a logical connection between the messages themselves. Taking our stand just before the first message was introduced, we see the Protestant religious world sadly in need of reformation. Division and confusion reigned among the churches. They were still clinging to

many papal errors and superstitions. The power of the gospel was impaired in their hands. To correct these evils, the doctrine of the second coming of Christ was introduced, and proclaimed with power. They should have received it, and been quickened by it into new life, as they would have been had they received it. Instead of this, they rejected it, and suffered the consequences spiritually. Then followed the second message, announcing the result of that rejection, and declaring what was not only a fact in itself, but a judicial judgment of God upon them for their recreancy in this respect; namely, that God had departed from them, and they had met with a moral fall.

This did not have the effect to arouse them, and lead them to correct their errors, as it was sufficient to do had they been willing to be admonished and corrected. And now what follows? -- The way is open for a still further retrograde movement,--for deeper apostasy and still greater evils. The powers of darkness will press forward their work, and if the churches still persist in this course of shunning light and rejecting truth, they will soon find

themselves worshiping the beast and receiving his mark. This will be the logical sequence of that course of action which commenced with the rejection of the first message. And now another proclamation is sent forth, announcing in solemn tones that if any man shall do this, he shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation. That is to say, you rejected the first message, and met with a moral fall; continue to reject truth and disregard the warnings sent out, and you will exhaust God's last means of grace, and by and by meet with a literal destruction for which there will be no remedy. This is as severe a threatening as God can make to be inflicted in this life, and it is the last. A few will heed it and be saved; the multitude will pass on, and perish.

The proclamation of the third message is the last special religious movement to be made before the Lord appears; for immediately following this, John beholds one like the Son of man coming upon a great white cloud to reap the harvest of the earth. This can represent nothing else than the second

coming of Christ. If, therefore, the coming of Christ is at the door, the time has come for the proclamation of this message. There are many who claim the name "Adventist," and who with voice and pen are earnestly teaching that we are in the last days of time, and that the coming of Christ is at the door; but when we remind them of this prophecy, they are suddenly at sea, without anchor, chart, or compass. They know not what to do with it. They can see as well as we that if what they are teaching respecting the coming of Christ is true, and the Lord is at hand, somewhere--yes, all over the land--should be heard the warning notes of this third message. It is now due; and if it is not now going forth, it follows that we are not in the last days, or that this prophecy is a failure; but this they cannot consistently admit. At the same time, they know that they are not giving it, and they do not claim to be giving it; and they can point to none who are giving it, except it be a certain class who profess that that is the very work they are doing. But to admit the claims of this class would be to condemn themselves. Their perplexity would be deserving of commiseration, were it not that those

who will accept an embarrassing dilemma rather than acknowledge the truth, are not justly entitled to much sympathy.

The arguments on the two preceding messages fix the chronology of the third, and show that it belongs to the present time; but, as in the case of the former, the best evidence in behalf of the proposition that the message is now going to the world, is to be able to point to events which demonstrate the fulfilment. Having identified the first message as a leading proclamation with the great Advent movement of 1840-44, and having seen the fulfillment of the second message in connection with that movement in the latter year, let us look at what has transpired since that time.

When the time passed in 1844, the whole Adventist body was thrown into more or less confusion. Many gave up the movement entirely; more jumped to the conclusion that the argument on the time was wrong, and immediately went to work to readjust the prophetic periods, and set a new time for the Lord to come--a work in which

they have continued more or less to the present time, fixing a new date as each one passed by, to the scandal of the Advent movement, and the discredit, so far as their limited influence extended, of all prophetic study; a few, searching closely and candidly for the cause of the mistake, were confirmed in their views of the providential character of the Advent movement, and the correctness of the argument on the time, but saw that a mistake had been made on the subject of the sanctuary, by which the disappointment could be explained. They learned, that the sanctuary was not this earth, as had been supposed; that the cleansing was not to be by fire; and that the prophecy on this point did not involve the coming of the Lord at all. They found in the Scriptures very clear evidence, that the sanctuary referred to was the temple in heaven, which Paul calls “the sanctuary,” the “true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man;” and that its cleansing, according to the type, would consist of the final ministration of the priest in the second apartment, or most holy place. They then saw that the time had come for the fulfillment of Revelation 11:19: “And the temple of God was

opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.”

Having their attention thus called to the ark, they were naturally led to an examination of the law contained in the ark. That the ark contained the law was evident from the very name applied to it. It was called “the ark of his testament;” but it would not have been the ark of his “testament,” and it could not have been so called, had it not contained the law. Here, then, was the ark in heaven, the great antitype of the ark, which, during the typical dispensation, existed here on earth; and the law which this heavenly ark contained must consequently be the great original of which the law on the tables in the earthly ark was but a transcript, or copy; and both must read precisely alike, word for word, jot for jot, tittle for tittle. To suppose otherwise would involve not only falsehood, but the greatest absurdity. That law, then, is still the law of God’s government, and its fourth precept, now as in the beginning, demands the observance of the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath. No one who admits the argument on the sanctuary

pretends to dispute this point. Thus the Sabbath reform was brought to view; and it was seen that whatever had been done in opposition to this law, especially in the introduction of a day of rest and worship which destroyed the Sabbath of Jehovah, must be the work of the papal beast, that power which was to oppose God, and try to exalt himself above him. But this is the very work in reference to which the third angel utters his warning; hence it began to be seen that the period of the third message synchronizes with the period of the cleansing of the sanctuary, which began with the ending of the 2300 days in 1844, and that the proclamation is based on the great truths developed by this subject.

Thus the dawning light of the third message rose upon the church. But they saw at once that the world would have a right to demand of those who professed to be giving that message, an explanation of all the symbols which it contains,--the beast, the image, the worship, and the mark; hence these points were made subjects of special study. The testimony of the Scriptures was found to be clear

and abundant; and it did not take a great while to formulate from the truths revealed, definite statements and propositions in explanation of all these points.

The argument showing what constitutes the beast, the image, and the mark, has already been given in chapter 13; and it has been shown that the two-horned beast, which erects the image and enforces the mark, is our own country, now in mid career, and hastening forward to perform the very work assigned it in the prophecy. It is this work, and these agents, against which the third message utters its warning, which is still further proof that this message is now in order, and shows the most conclusive harmony in all these prophecies. The arguments we need not here repeat; it will be sufficient to recapitulate the points established.

1. The “beast” is the Roman Catholic power.

2. The “mark of the beast” is that institution which this power has set up as proof of its authority to legislate for the church, and command

the consciences of men under sin. It consists in a change of the law of God, by which the signature of royalty is taken from the law,--the seventh-day Sabbath, the great memorial of Jehovah's creative work, is torn from its place in the decalogue, and a false and counterfeit Sabbath, the first day of the week, is set up in its stead.

3. The "image of the beast" is some ecclesiastical combination, which will resemble the beast in being clothed with power to enforce its decrees with the pains and penalties of the civil law.

4. The two-horned beast, by which the image, after being made by the people, is given power to speak and act, is the United States; and all but the final steps toward the formation of the image are already seen.

5. The two-horned beast enforces the mark of the beast; that is, he establishes by law the observance of the first day of the week, or Sunday Sabbath. What is being done in this direction has

already been noticed. The movement is urged on by individuals, by organized Sabbath committees, by politicians, indirectly by the infidel element, by the National Reform Association, by the American Sabbath (Sunday) Union, by the W. C. T. U., and by the Christian Endeavorers, with their Good Citizenship Leagues, etc.

But the people are not to be left to act in the dark in this matter. The third message utters a solemn protest against all this evil. It exposes the work of the beast, shows the nature of its opposition to the law of God, warns the people against compliance with its demands, and points out to all the way of truth. This naturally excites opposition; and the church is led so much the more to seek the aid of human authority in behalf of its dogmas as they are shown to lack the divine.

In the interests of these messages, the publication of a paper called the Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, was commenced in 1850, which has continued to the present time, circulating in every State and Territory of the Union, and in

many foreign countries. The Signs of the Times, published weekly in Oakland, Cal., has attained a still larger circulation. The American Sentinel, published in New York, devoted more especially to the subject of Religious Liberty, discussed in previous pages of this book, has a large and growing subscription list. The Present Truth, published in London, England, and the Bible Echo, and the Southern Sentinel, in Melbourne, Australia, are devoted to the advocacy of the same views. The South African Sentinel, has recently been started in Cape Town, South Africa. Other periodicals have been established in different places, and in different languages, to the number of nineteen. Besides the Central Publishing House at Battle Creek, Mich. (with a branch office in Atlanta, Ga.), publishing houses have been established in Oakland, Cal. (with branch offices in New York City and Kansas City); London, England; Christiania, Norway; Melbourne, Australia; Cape Town, South Africa; Hamburg, Germany; Basel, Switzerland; Toronto, Canada; and Chicago, Ill. The catalogue of books comprises a long list, from the penny tract, to the three-dollar volume; and the

total number of pages issued up to Jan. 1, 1897, was over one thousand million. The list comprises books and papers in thirty-one different languages. Thirty-six conferences have been organized in the American Union, Europe, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa. In all these conferences, tract and missionary societies are organized. Hundreds of ministers and evangelists are proclaiming the principles of this message all around the world. This is a beginning, and a promise of greater things.

This movement is at least a phenomenon to be explained. We have found movements which fulfill most strikingly and accurately the first and second messages. Here is another which now challenges the attention of the world as a fulfillment of the third. It claims to be a fulfilment, and asks the world to examine the credentials on which it bases its right to such a claim. Let us look at them.

1. “The third angel followed them.” So this movement follows the two previously mentioned. It takes up and continues the promulgation of the

truths they uttered, and adds to them what the third message involves besides.

2. The third message is characterized as a warning against the beast. So this movement holds prominent among its themes an explanation of this symbol, telling the people what it is, and exposing its blasphemous claims and works.

3. The third message warns all against worshiping the beast. So this movement explains how this beast-power has brought into Christendom certain institutions which antagonize the requirements of the Most High, and shows that if we yield to these, we worship this power. “Know ye not,” says Paul, “that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?” Romans 6:16.

4. The third message warns all against receiving the mark of the beast. So this movement makes it the burden of its work to show what the mark of the beast is, and to warn against its reception. It is the more solicitous to do this,

because this anti-Christian power has worked so cunningly that the majority are deceived into making unconscious concessions to its authority. It is shown that the mark of the beast is an institution which has been arrayed in Christian garb, and insidiously introduced into the Christian church in such a way as to nullify the authority of Jehovah and enthrone that of the beast. Stripped of all disguises, it is simply setting up a counterfeit Sabbath of its own on the first day of the week, in place of the Sabbath of the Lord on the seventh day,--a usurpation which the great God cannot tolerate, and from which the remnant church must fully clear itself before it will be prepared for the coming of Christ. Hence the urgent warning, Let no man worship the beast or receive his mark.

5. The third message has something to say against the worship of the image of the beast. So this movement speaks of this subject also, telling what the image will be, or at least explaining the prophecy of the two-horned beast, which makes the image, showing that it is our own government; that here the image is to be formed; that the prophecy

concerns this generation; and that it is evidently on the very verge of fulfilment.

There is no religious enterprise going forward in the land except this by the Seventh-day Adventists, which claims to be a fulfillment of the third angel's message,--no other which holds forth, as its prominent themes, the very subjects of which this message is composed. What shall we do with these things? Is this the fulfilment?--It must so stand, unless its claims can be disproved; unless it can be shown that the first and second messages have not been heard; that the positions taken in reference to the beast, image, mark, and worship are not correct; and that all the prophecies, and signs, and evidences which show that the coming of Christ is near, and consequently that this message is due, can be wholly set aside. But this the intelligent Bible student will hardly undertake.

The result of the proclamation, as declared in verse 12, still further proves the correctness of the positions here taken. It brings out a company of whom it can be said, "Here are they that keep the

commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” In the very heart of Christendom this work is done; and those who receive the message are rendered peculiar by their practice in reference to the commandments of God. What difference is there in practice, and what only difference, among Christians, in this respect?--Just this; some think that the fourth commandment is kept by devoting the first day of the week to rest and worship; others claim that the seventh day is the one set apart to such duties, and accordingly spend its hours in this manner, resuming on the first day their ordinary labor. No plainer line of demarcation could be drawn between two classes. The time which one class regard as sacred, and devote to religious uses, the other look upon as only secular, and devote to ordinary labor. One class are devoutly resting, the other zealously laboring. One class, pursuing their worldly vocations, find the other class withdrawn from all such pursuits, and the avenue of commercial intercourse abruptly closed. Thus for two days in the week these two classes are kept apart by difference of theory and practice in regard to the fourth commandment. On no other

commandment could there be so marked a difference.

The message brings its adherents to the seventh day; for in this way only are they made peculiar, inasmuch as an observance of the first day would not distinguish a person from the masses who were already observing that day when the message was introduced. And in this we find still further evidence that Sunday-keeping is the mark of the beast; for the message, presenting as its chief burden a warning against receiving the mark of the beast, will of course bring its adherents to discard that practice which constitutes the mark, and to adopt the opposite. It does lead them to discard the observance of the first day of the week, and adopt that of the seventh day. In view of this, it is at once seen that there is here more than an inference that Sundaykeeping is the mark of the beast against which it warns us, and the observance of the seventh day, to which it leads us, is its opposite.

This is in harmony with the argument on the seal of God, as given in chapter 7. It was there

shown that sign, seal, mark, and token are synonymous terms, and that God takes his Sabbath to be his sign, mark, or seal, in reference to his people. Thus God has a seal, or mark, which is his Sabbath. The beast also has a seal, or mark, which is his Sabbath. One is the seventh day; the other is just as far removed from it as possible, even to the other extremity of the week, namely, the first day. Christendom will at last be divided into just two classes; to wit, those who are sealed with the seal of the living God, that is, have his mark, or keep his Sabbath; and those who are sealed with the seal of the beast, that is, have his mark, or keep his Sabbath. In reference to this issue, the third angel's message both enlightens and warns us.

As so much importance, according to this argument, attaches to the seventh day, the reader may ask for some evidence that a person cannot be said to keep the commandments of God unless he does keep the seventh day. This would involve a discussion of the whole Sabbath question, which it is not the province of this work to give. Though it may be proper to present here, as this much

perhaps is called for in this connection, the leading facts connected with the Sabbath institution,--facts which are fully sustained in the works referred to in note below. [3]

1. The Sabbath was instituted in the beginning, at the conclusion of the first week of time. Genesis 2:1, 2.

2. It was the seventh day of that week, and was based on facts which are inseparably connected with its very name and existence,--facts which never can become untrue, and never can be changed. God's resting on the seventh day made it his rest-day, or the Sabbath (rest) of the Lord; and it can never cease to be his rest-day, as that fact never can be changed. He sanctified, or set apart, the day then and there, the record states; and that sanctification can never cease, unless it be removed by an act on the part of Jehovah as direct and explicit as that by which he placed it upon the day in the beginning. No one claims that this has ever been done, and he could not prove it if he did so claim.

3. The Sabbath has nothing in it of a typical, shadowy, or ceremonial nature; for it was instituted before man sinned, and hence belongs to a time when, in the very nature of things, a type, or shadow, could not exist.

4. The laws and institutions which existed before man's fall were primary in their nature; they grew out of the relation between God and man, and man and man, and were such as would always have remained if man never had sinned, and were not affected by his sin. In other words, they were, in the very nature of things, immutable and eternal. Ceremonial and typical laws owed their origin to the fact that man had sinned, as they never would have existed had this never been a fact. These were from dispensation to dispensation subject to change; and these, and these only, were abolished at the cross. The Sabbath law was a primary law, and therefore immutable and eternal.

5. The sanctification of the Sabbath in Eden renders its existence certain from creation to Sinai.

Here it was placed in the very bosom of the decalogue as God spoke it with an audible voice, and wrote it with his finger on tables of stone,--circumstances which forever separate it from ceremonial laws, and place it among the moral and eternal.

6. The Sabbath is not indefinite, any seventh day after six of labor. The law from Sinai (Exodus 20:8-11) makes it as definite as language can make it; the events that gave it birth (Genesis 2:1-3) confine it to the definite seventh day; and the 6240 Sabbath miracles in the wilderness, three each week for forty years; namely, (1) a double portion of manna on the sixth day, (2) the preservation of the sixth-day manna on the seventh day, and (3) none on the seventh day (see Exodus 16), show that it is one particular day, and not simply a proportion of time. To claim otherwise would be like claiming that Washington's birthday or Independence day was only a 365th part of a year, and might be celebrated on any other day as well as the day upon which it occurred.

7. The Sabbath is a part of that law which our Lord openly declared that he came not to destroy. On the other hand, he most solemnly affirmed that it should endure in every jot and tittle while the earth should continue. Matthew 5:17-20.

8. It is a part of that law which Paul declares is not made void, but established, by faith in Christ. Romans 3:31. The ceremonial, or typical, law, which pointed to Christ and ceased at the cross, is made void, or superseded, by faith in him. Ephesians 2:15.

9. It is a part of that royal law, a law pertaining to the King Jehovah, which James declares is a law of liberty, and which shall judge us at the last day. God does not have different standards of judgment for different ages of the world. James 2:11, 12.

10. It is the “Lord’s day” of Revelation 1:10. (See argument on that verse.)

11. It appears as the institution in reference to which a great reform is predicted in the last days.

Isaiah 56:1, 2 compared with 1 Peter 1:5. Under this head would also come the message under consideration.

12. And in the new creation, the Sabbath, true to its origin and nature, again appears, and will thenceforward shed its blessings upon God's people through all eternity. Isaiah 66:22, 23.

Such is a brief synopsis of some of the arguments to show that the Sabbath law has been in no wise relaxed, and the institution in no way changed; and that a person cannot be said to keep the commandments of God unless he keeps it. To have to do with such an institution is a high honor. To pay heed to its claims will prove an infinite blessing.

The Punishment of Beast-worshippers.--These shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. When is this torment inflicted? Chapter 19:20 shows that at the second coming of Christ there is a manifestation of fiery judgments which may be

called a lake of fire and brimstone, into which the beast and false prophet are cast alive. This can refer only to the destruction visited upon them at the commencement, not at the end, of the thousand years. Again, there is a remarkable passage in Isaiah to which we are obliged to refer in explanation of the phraseology of the threatening of the third angel, and which unquestionably describes scenes to take place here at the second advent, and in the desolate state of the earth during the thousand years following. That the language in the Revelation was borrowed from this prophecy can hardly fail to be seen. After describing the Lord's anger upon the nations, the great slaughter of their armies, the departing of the heavens as a scroll, etc., the prophet says: "For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever; from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it forever and ever."

Isaiah 34:8-10. And since it is expressly revealed that there is to be a lake of fire in which all sinners perish at the end of the thousand years, we can only conclude that the destruction of the living wicked at the commencement of this period, and the final doom of all the ungodly at its close, are very similar.

Duration of the Punishment.--The expression “forever and ever” cannot here denote eternity. This is evident from the fact that this punishment is inflicted on this earth, where time is measured by day and night. This is further shown from the passage in Isaiah already referred to, if that is, as above suggested, the language from which this is borrowed, and applies to the same time. That language is spoken of the land of Idumea; but whether it be taken to mean literally the land of Edom, south and east of Judea, or to represent, as it doubtless does, this whole earth at the time when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, and the year of recompenses for the controversy of Zion comes, in either case the scene must eventually terminate; for this earth is finally

to be made new, cleansed of every stain of sin, every vestige of suffering and decay, and to become the habitation of righteousness and joy throughout eternal ages. The word a... here translated forever, Schrevelius, in his Greek Lexicon, defines thus: "An age; a long period of time; indefinite duration; time, whether longer or shorter." (For a discussion of the meaning of this term, see the work entitled, Here and Hereafter. Review and Herald Office, Battle Creek, Mich.)

The period of the third message is a time of patience with the people of God. Paul and James both give us instruction on this point. Hebrews 10:36; James 5:7, 8. Meanwhile, this waiting company are keeping the commandments of God--the ten commandments, and the faith of Jesus--all the teachings of Christ and his apostles as contained in the New Testament. The true Sabbath, as given in the decalogue, is thus brought out in vivid contrast with the counterfeit Sabbath, the mark of the beast, which finally distinguishes those who reject the third message, as already set forth.

Verse 13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them. 14. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. 15. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

A Solemn Crisis.--Events grow solemn as we near the end. It is this fact which gives to the third angel's message, now going forth, its unusual degree of solemnity and importance. It is the last warning to go forth prior to the coming of the Son of man, here represented as seated upon a white cloud, a crown upon his head, and a sickle in his hand, to reap the harvest of the earth. We are fast

passing over a line of prophecy which culminates in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on his foes, and to reward his saints. Not only so, but we have come so near its accomplishment that the very next link in the chain is this crowning and momentous event. And time never rolls back. As the river does not flinch and fly as it approaches the precipice, but bears all floating bodies over with resistless power; and as the seasons never reverse their course, but summer follows in the path of the budding fig-tree, and winter treads close upon the falling leaf; so we are borne onward and onward, whether we will or not, whether prepared or not, to the unavoidable and irreversible crisis. Ah! how little dream the proud professor and the careless sinner of the doom that is impending! And how hard for even those who know and profess the truth to realize it as it is!

A Blessing Promised.--John is commanded by a voice from heaven to write, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth;" and the response of the Spirit is, "Yea, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them."

“From henceforth” must signify from some particular point of time. What point?--Evidently from the commencement of the message in connection with which this is spoken. But why are those who die after this point of time blessed? There must be some special reason for pronouncing this benediction upon them. Is it not because they escape the time of fearful peril which the saints are to encounter as they close their pilgrimage? And while they are thus blessed in common with all the righteous dead, they have an advantage over them in being, doubtless, that company spoken of in Daniel 12:2, who are raised to everlasting life at the standing up of Michael. Thus, escaping the perils through which the rest of the 144,000 pass, they rise, and share with them in their final triumph here, and occupy with them their pre-eminent place in the kingdom.[4] In this way, we understand, their works follow them: these works are held in remembrance, to be rewarded at the Judgment; and the persons receive the same recompense that they would have had, had they lived and faithfully endured all the perils of the time of trouble.

It will be noticed that in this line of prophecy, three angels precede the Son of man on the white cloud, and three are introduced after that symbol. The opinion has already been expressed that literal angels are engaged in the scenes here described. The first three have charge of the

The Wheat Garnered.--“And he that sat on the cloud,” says the prophecy, “thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.” By this language we are carried down past the second Advent, with its accompanying scenes of destruction to the wicked and salvation to the righteous. Beyond these scenes we must therefore look for the application of the following verses:--

Verse 17. And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19. And the angel

thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The Winepress of God's Wrath.--The last two angels have to do with the wicked,--the wicked, most fitly represented by the bloated and purple clusters of the vine of the earth. May it not be that the closing doom of that class at the end of the thousand years is here presented, the prophecy thus making a final disposition of both the righteous and the wicked; the righteous clothed with immortality, and safely established in the kingdom, the wicked perishing around the city at the time of its ultimate location upon the earth?

This can hardly be applied at the time of the second advent; for events are here given in chronological order; and the destruction of the wicked would be contemporaneous with the

gathering of the righteous. Again, the living wicked at Christ's coming drink of the "cup" of his indignation; but this passage brings to view the time when they perish in the "winepress" of his wrath, which is said to be trodden "without the city," answering completely to the description of Revelation 20:9; and this latter expression would more naturally denote their complete and final destruction.

The angel comes out of the temple, where the records are kept and the punishment is determined. The other angel has power over fire. This may have some connection with the fact that fire is the element by which the wicked are at last to be destroyed, although, to carry out the figure, the wicked, having been likened to the clusters of the vine of the earth, are said to be cast into the great winepress, which is trodden without the city. And blood comes out of the winepress, even to the horses' bridles. We know that the wicked are doomed to be swallowed up at last in a flood of alldevouring flame descending from God out of heaven; but what preceding slaughter may take

place among the doomed host, we know not. It is not improbable that this language will be literally fulfilled. As the first four angels of this series denoted a marked movement on the part of the people of God, the last two may denote the same; for the saints are to have some part to act in meting out and executing the final punishment of the wicked. (1 Corinthians 6:2; Psalms 149:9)

The Saints Triumphant.--Thus closes this chain of prophecy--closes as others close, with the complete triumph of God and Christ over all their foes, and with the glorious salvation that awaits the faithful followers of the Prince of life, forever secured.

Notes:

1. Advent Tracts, Vol. II, p. 135, Mourant Brock.
2. The Voice of the Church, by D. T. Taylor, pp. 342-344.
3. As a standard work on the question, we refer the reader to the History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week, by Elder J. N.

Andrews, published at the Review and Herald Office, Battle Creek, Mich., in which the question as related to the two days is thoroughly discussed from both a Biblical and a historical standpoint. But many less exhaustive works are issued at the Office above named, according to its catalogue, and at other offices herein named, which are conclusive, so far as they carry the argument.

4. Those who die after having become identified with the third angel's message, are evidently numbered as a part of the 144,000; for this message is the same as the sealing message of Revelation 7, and by that message only 144,000 were sealed. But there are many who have had their entire religious experience under this message, but have fallen in death. They die in the Lord, and hence are counted as sealed; for they will be saved. But the message results in the sealing of only 144,000; therefore these must be included in that number. Being raised in the special resurrection (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 1:7) which occurs when the voice of God is uttered

from the temple, at the beginning of the seventh and last plague (Revelation 16:17; Joel 3:16; Hebrews 12:26), they pass through the period of that plague, and hence may be said to come “out of great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14), and being raised from the grave only to mortal life, they take their stand with believers who have not died, and with them receive immortality at the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:52), being then, with the others, changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Thus, though they have passed through the grave, it can be said of them at last, that they are “redeemed from among men” (Revelation 14:4), that is, from among the living; for the coming of Christ finds them among the living, waiting for the change to immortality, like those who have not died, and as if they themselves had never died. three special messages, and may also symbolize a body of religious teachers. The message of the fourth angel is evidently to be uttered after the Son of man, having finished his priestly work, takes his seat upon the white cloud, but before he

appears in the clouds of heaven. As the language is addressed to Him who is seated upon the white cloud, having in his hand a sharp sickle ready to reap, it must denote a message of prayer on the part of the church, after their work for the world is done and probation has ceased, and nothing remains but for the Lord to appear and take his people to himself. It is doubtless the day-and-night cry spoken of by our Lord in Luke 18:7, 8 in connection with the coming of the Son of man. And this prayer will be answered; the elect will be avenged; for does not the parable read, “And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?” He that is seated upon the cloud will thrust in his sickle, and the saints, under the figure of the wheat of the earth, will be gathered into the heavenly garner.

Chapter 15

The Seven Last Plagues

This chapter introduces the seven last plagues, a manifestation of Heaven's unmingled wrath, and the fullness of its measure, for the last generation of the wicked. The work of mercy is then forever past.

Verse 1. And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God. 2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. 3. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for

thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest. 5. And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened: 6. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles. 7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth forever and ever. 8. And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

A Preparatory Scene.--Thus reads the fifteenth chapter entire. By it we are carried back to a new series of events. The whole chapter is but an introduction to the most terrific judgments of the Almighty that ever have been, or are to be, visited upon this earth in its present state; namely, the seven last plagues. The most that we here behold is a solemn preparation for the outpouring of these

unmixed vials. Verse 5 shows that these plagues fall after the close of the ministration in the sanctuary; for the temple is opened before they are poured out. They are given in charge to seven angels, and these angels are clothed in linen pure and white, a fit emblem of the purity of God's righteousness and justice in the infliction of these judgments. They receive these vials from one of the four beasts, or living creatures. These living beings were proved (see on chapter 4) to be a class of Christ's assistants in his sanctuary work. How appropriate, then, that they should be the ones to deliver to the ministers of vengeance the vials of wrath to be poured upon those who have slighted Christ's mercy, abused his long-suffering, heaped contumely upon his name, and crucified him afresh in the treatment of his followers! While the seven angels are performing their fearful mission, the temple is filled with the glory of God, and no man--(oudeis), no one, no being, referring to Christ and his heavenly assistants--can enter therein. This shows that the work of mercy is closed, as there is no ministration in the sanctuary during the infliction of the plagues; hence they are

manifestations of the wrath of God without any mixture of mercy.

God's People Remembered.--In this scene the people of God are not forgotten. The prophet is permitted to anticipate a little in verses 2-4, and behold them as victors upon the sea of glass as it were mingled with fire, or sparkling and refulgent with the glory of God, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. The sea of glass, upon which these-victors stand, is the same as that brought to view in chapter 4:6, which was before the throne in heaven. And as we have no evidence that it has yet changed its location, and the saints are seen upon it, we have here indubitable proof, in connection with chapter 14:1-5, that the saints are taken to heaven to receive a portion of their reward. Thus, like the bright sun bursting through the midnight cloud, some scene is presented, or some promise given, to the humble followers of the Lamb, in every hour of temptation, as if to assure and reassure them of God's love and care for them, and of the certainty of their final reward. Verily the words of the prophet are among the true sayings of God: "Say

ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him;” but “Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him.” (Isaiah 3:10, 11)

The song the victors sing, the song of Moses and the Lamb, given here in epitome in these words: “Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints,” is a song of infinite grandeur. How comprehensive in its terms! how sublime in its theme! It appeals to the works of God which are a manifestation of his glory. With immortal vision the saints will be able to comprehend them as they cannot here; and yet astronomy reveals enough to fill all hearts with admiration. From our little world we pass out to our sun ninety-three million miles away; on to its nearest neighboring sun, nineteen thousand million miles away; on to the great double pole-star, from which it takes light in its electric flight of one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles a second, forty years to reach our world; on past systems, groups, constellations, till we reach the great star Alcyone, in the Pleiades, shining with a power of twelve thousand suns like

ours! What, then, must be the grand center around which these myriads of shining orbs revolve! Well may the song be raised, "Great and marvelous are thy works." But the song covers another field also--the field of God's providence and grace: "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." All the dealings of God with all his creatures in the eyes of the redeemed, and the sight of all worlds, will be forever vindicated. After all our blindness, all our perplexities, all our trials, we shall be able to exclaim at last in the exuberance of satisfied joy, "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

Chapter 16

The Plagues Poured Out

This chapter gives a description of the seven vials of the unmingled wrath of God, and the effects that follow as they are poured upon the earth. Concerning the character and chronology of these plagues, there is a difference of opinion among Bible readers. Our first inquiry therefore is, What is the true position on these points? Are they symbolical, and mostly fulfilled in the past, as some contend? or are they literal, and all future, as others no less confidently affirm? A brief examination of the testimony will, we think, conclusively settle these questions.

Verse 1. And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth. 2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which

worshiped his image.

The Chronology of the Plagues.--The description of this plague clearly reveals at once their chronology; for it is poured out upon those who have the mark of the beast, and who worship his image,--the identical work against which the third angel warns us. This is conclusive proof that these judgments are not poured out till after this angel closes his work, and that the very class who hear his warning, and reject it, are the ones to receive the first drops from the overflowing vials of God's indignation. Now, if these plagues are in the past, the image of the beast and his worship are in the past. If these are past, the two-horned beast, which makes this image, and his work, are in the past. If these are past, then the third angel's message, which warns us in reference to this work, is in the past; and if this is past,--that is, ages in the past, where this view locates the commencement of the plagues,--then the first and second messages, which precede that, were also ages in the past. Then the prophetic periods, on which the messages are based, especially the 2300 days, ended ages

ago. And if this is so, the seventy weeks of Daniel 9 are thrown wholly into the Jewish dispensation, and the great proof of the Messiahship of Christ is destroyed. But it has been shown on chapters 7, 13, and 14, that the first and second messages have been given in our own day; that the third is now in process of accomplishment; that the two-horned beast has come upon the stage of action, and is preparing to do the work assigned him; and that the formation of the image and the enforcement of the worship are just in the future. And unless all these positions can be overthrown, the seven last plagues must also be assigned wholly to the future.

But there are other reasons for locating them in the future and not in the past.

1. Under the fifth plague, men blaspheme God because of their sores, the same sores, of course, caused by the outpouring of the first plague. This shows that these plagues all fall upon one and the same generation of men, some being, no doubt, swept off by each one, yet some surviving through the terrible scenes of them all; a fact utterly

subversive of the position that they commenced far in the past, and occupy centuries each in their fulfilment, for how, then, could those who experience the first plague be alive under the fifth?

2. These plagues are the wine of God's wrath without mixture, threatened by the third angel. (Chapter 14:10; 15:1) Such language cannot be applied to any judgments visited upon the earth while Christ pleads between his Father and our fallen race; hence we must locate them in the future, when probation shall have closed.

3. Another and more definite testimony as to the commencement and duration of these plagues is found in chapter 15:8: "And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled." The temple here introduced is evidently that which is mentioned in chapter 11:19, where it says, "The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament." In other words, we have before us

the heavenly sanctuary. The testimony is, then, that when the seven angels with the seven golden vials receive their commission, the temple is filled with smoke from the glory of God, and no being can enter into the temple, or sanctuary, till they have fulfilled their work; there will therefore be no ministration in the sanctuary during this time. Consequently, these vials are not poured out till the close of the ministration in the tabernacle above, but immediately follow that event; for Christ is then no longer a mediator; mercy, which has long stayed the hand of vengeance, pleads no more; the servants of God are all sealed. What could then be expected but that the “storm of vengeance should fall,” and earth be swept with the besom of destruction?

Having now shown the chronology of these judgments, that they are before us in the very near future, treasured up against the day of wrath, we proceed to inquire into their nature, and what will result when the solemn and fearful mandate shall go forth from the temple to the seven angels, saying, “Go your ways, and pour out the vials of

the wrath of God upon the earth.” Here we are called to look into the “armory” of the Lord, and behold the “weapons of his indignation.” (Jeremiah 50:25) Here are brought forth the treasures of hail, which have been reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war. (Job 38:22, 23)

The First Plague.--“And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.”

There is no apparent reason why this should not be regarded as strictly literal. These plagues are almost identical with those which God inflicted upon the Egyptians as he was about to deliver his people from the yoke of bondage, the literality of which is seldom, if ever, called in question. God is now about to crown his people with their final deliverance and redemption, and his judgments will be manifested in a manner no less literal and terrible. What the sore here threatened is, we are

not informed. Perhaps it may be similar to the parallel plague which fell upon Egypt. (Exodus 9:8-11)

Verse 3. And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man; and every living soul died in the sea.

The Second Plague.--A more infectious and deadly substance can scarcely be conceived of than the blood of a dead man; and the thought that the great bodies of water on the earth, which are doubtless meant by the term sea, will be changed to such a state under this plague, presents a fearful picture. We have here the remarkable fact that the term living soul is applied to irrational animals, the fish and living creatures of the sea. This is, we believe, the only instance of such an application in the English Version; in the original, however, it occurs frequently; showing that the term as applied to man in the beginning (Genesis 2:7) cannot be taken as furnishing any evidence that he is endowed with an immaterial and immortal essence,

called the soul.

Verse 4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood. 5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. 6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy. 7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

The Third Plague.--Such is the description of the terrible retribution for the "blood of saints" shed by violent hands, which will be given to those who have done, or wish to do, such deeds. And though the horrors of that hour when the fountains and rivers of water shall be like blood, cannot now be realized, the justice of God will stand vindicated, and his judgments approved. Even the angels are heard exclaiming, Thou art righteous, O Lord, because thou hast judged thus; for they have

shed the blood of saints and prophets. Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

It may be asked how the last generation of the wicked can be said to have shed the blood of saints and prophets, since the last generation of saints are not to be slain. A reference to Matthew 23:34, 35; 1 John 3:15, will explain. These scriptures show that guilt attaches to motive no less than to action; and no generation ever formed a more determined purpose to devote the saints to indiscriminate slaughter than the present generation will, not far in the future. (See chapter 12:17; 13:15.) In motive and purpose, they do shed the blood of saints and prophets, and are every whit as guilty as though they were able to carry out their wicked intentions.

It would seem that none of the human family could long survive a continuance of a plague so terrible as this. It must therefore be limited in its duration, as was the similar one on Egypt. (Exodus 7:17-21, 25)

Verse 8. And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire. 9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

The Fourth Plague.--It is worthy of notice that every succeeding plague tends to augment the calamity of the previous ones and heighten the anguish of the guilty sufferers. We have now a noisome and grievous sore preying upon men, inflaming their blood, and pouring its feverish influence through their veins. In addition to this, they have only blood to allay their burning thirst; and, as if to crown all, power is given unto the sun, and he pours upon them a flood of liquid fire, and they are scorched with great heat. Here, as the record runs, their woe first seeks utterance in fearful blasphemy.

Verse 10. And the fifth angel poured but his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom

was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain. 11. And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

The Fifth Plague.--An important fact is established by this testimony; namely, that the plagues do not at once destroy all their victims; for some who were at first smitten with sores, we find still living under the fifth vial, and gnawing their tongues for pain. An illustration of this vial will be found in Exodus 10:21-23. It is poured upon the seat of the beast, the papacy. The seat of the beast is wherever the papal See is located, which has been thus far, and without doubt will continue to be, the city of Rome. "His kingdom" probably embraces all those who are subjects of the pope in an ecclesiastical point of view, wherever they may be.

As those who place the plagues in the past have the first five already wholly accomplished, we here pause a moment to inquire where, in past ages, the judgments here threatened have been fulfilled. Can

judgments so terrible be inflicted, and nobody know it? If not, where is the history of the fulfilment? When did a noisome and grievous sore fall upon a specified and extensive portion of mankind? When did the sea become as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul die in it? When did the fountains and rivers become blood, and people have blood to drink? When did the sun so scorch men with fire as to extort from them curses and blasphemy? And when did the subjects of the beast gnaw their tongues for pain, and at the same time blaspheme God on account of their sores? Interpreters who thus put such scenes in the past, where a shadow of fulfillment cannot be shown, openly invite the scoffs and ridicule of the skeptically minded against God's holy book, and furnish them with potent weapons for their deplorable work. In these plagues, says Inspiration, is filled up the wrath of God; but if they can be fulfilled and nobody know it, who shall henceforth consider his wrath so terrible a thing, or shrink from his judgments when they are threatened?

Verse 12. And the sixth angel poured out his

vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. 13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. 15. Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame. 16. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

The Sixth Plague.--What is the great River Euphrates, upon which this vial is poured out? — One view is that it is the literal River Euphrates in Asia; another is that it is a symbol of the nation occupying the territory through which that river flows. The latter opinion is preferable for the following reasons:--

1. It would be difficult to see what end would be gained by the drying up of the literal river, as that would not offer an obstruction at all serious to the progress of an advancing army; and it should be noticed that the drying up takes place to prepare the way of the kings of the East; that is, regular military organizations, and not a promiscuous and unequipped crowd of men, women, and children, like the children of Israel at the Red Sea or at the Jordan. The Euphrates is only about 1400 miles in length, or about one third the size of the Mississippi. Cyrus, without difficulty, turned the whole river from its channel at his siege of Babylon; and notwithstanding the numerous wars that have been carried on along its banks, and the mighty hosts that have crossed and recrossed its stream, it never yet had to be dried up to let them pass.

2. It would be as necessary to dry up the River Tigris as the Euphrates; for that is nearly as large as the latter. Its source is only fifteen miles from that of the Euphrates, in the mountains of Armenia, and it runs nearly parallel with it, and but a short

distance from it throughout its whole course; yet the prophecy says nothing of the Tigris.

3. The literal drying up of the rivers takes place under the fourth vial, when power is given to the sun to scorch men with fire. Under this plague occur, beyond question, the scenes of drought and famine so graphically described by Joel 1:14-20; and as one result of these, it is expressly stated that “the rivers of waters are dried up.” The Euphrates can hardly be an exception to this visitation of drought; hence not much would remain to be literally dried up under the sixth vial.

4. These plagues, from the very nature of the case, must be manifestations of wrath and judgments upon men; but if the drying up of the literal Euphrates is all that is brought to view, this plague is not of such a nature, and turns out to be no serious affair, after all.

These objections existing against considering it a literal river, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of the

territory watered by that river, which is the Ottoman, or Turkish, empire.

1. It is so used in other places in the Scriptures. (See Isaiah 8:7; Revelation 9:14.) In this latter text, all must concede that the Euphrates symbolizes the Turkish power; and being the first and only other occurrence of the word in the Revelation, it may well be considered as governing its use in this book.

2. The drying up of the river in this sense would be the consumption of the Turkish empire, accompanied with more or less destruction of its subjects. Thus we should have literal judgments upon men as the result of this plague, as in the case of all the others.

But it may be objected to this, that while contending for the literality of the plagues, we nevertheless make one of them a symbol. We answer, No. A power is introduced, it is true, under the sixth vial, in its symbolic form, just as it is under the fifth, where we read of the seat of the

beast, which is a well-known symbol; or as we read again in the first plague of the mark of the beast, his image, and its worship, which are also symbols. All that is here insisted upon, is the literality of the judgments that result from each vial, which are literal in this case as in all the others, though the organizations which suffer these judgments, may be brought to view in their symbolic form.

Again: it may be asked how the way of the kings of the East will be prepared by the drying up, or consumption, of the Ottoman power? The answer is obvious. For what is the way of these kings to be prepared? Answer: To come up to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Where is the battle to be fought?--Near Jerusalem. (Joel and Zephaniah.) But Jerusalem is in the hands of the Turks; they hold possession of the land of Palestine and the sacred sepulchers. This is the bone of contention; on these the nations have fixed their covetous and jealous eyes. But though Turkey now possesses them, and others want them, it is nevertheless thought necessary to the tranquillity of Europe that Turkey should be maintained in her

position, in order to preserve what is called the “balance of power.” For this the Christian nations of Europe have cooperated to sustain the integrity of the sultan’s throne, because they cannot agree as to the division of the spoils, when Turkey falls. By their sufferance alone that government now exists, and when they shall withdraw their support, and leave it to itself, as they will do under the sixth plague, that symbolic river will be wholly dried up; Turkey will be no more, and the way will be all open for the nations to make their last grand rally to the Holy Land. The kings of the East, the nationalities, powers, and kingdoms lying east of Palestine, will act a conspicuous part in the matter; for Joel says in reference to this scene, “Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat.” The millions of Mohammedans of Persia, Afghanistan, Toorkistan, and India will rush to the field of conquest in behalf of their religion. (See more about Turkey in Daniel 11:40-45.)

Those who place five of the plagues in the past, and contend that we are now living under the sixth, urge, as one of their strongest arguments, the fact

that the Turkish empire is now wasting away, and this takes place under the sixth vial. It is hardly necessary to reply, The event that takes place under the sixth vial is the entire and utter consumption of that power, not its preliminary state of decay, which is all that now appears. It is necessary that the empire should for a time grow weak and powerless, in order to its utter dissolution when the plague shall come. This preliminary condition is now seen, and the full end cannot be far in the future.

Another event to be noticed under this plague is the issuing forth of the three unclean spirits to gather the nations to the great battle. The agency now already abroad in the world, known as modern Spiritualism, is every way a fitting means to be employed in this work. But it may be asked how a work which is already going on, can be designated by that expression, when the spirits are not introduced into the prophecy until the pouring out of the sixth plague, which is still future. We answer that in this, as in many other movements, the agencies which Heaven designs to employ in the

accomplishment of certain ends, go through a process of preliminary training for the part which they are to act. Thus, before the spirits can have such absolute authority over the race as to gather them to battle against the King of kings and Lord of lords, they must first win their way among the nations of the earth, and cause their teaching to be received as of divine authority, and their word as law. This work they are now doing; and when they shall have once gained full influence over the nations in question, what fitter instruments could be employed to gather them to so rash and hopeless an enterprise?

To many it may seem incredible that the nations should be willing to engage in such an unequal warfare as to go up to battle against the Lord of Hosts; but it is one province of these spirits of devils to deceive, for they go forth working miracles, and thereby deceive the kings of the earth, that they should believe a lie.

The sources from which these spirits issue, denote that they will work among three great

religious divisions of mankind, represented by the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, or Paganism, Catholicism, and Protestantism.

But what is the force of the caution thrown out in verse 15? Probation must have closed, and Christ have left his mediatorial position, before the plagues begin to fall. And is there danger of falling after that? It will be noticed that this warning is spoken in connection with the working of the spirits. The inference therefore is, that it is retroactive, applying from the time these spirits begin to work to the close of probation; that by an interchange of tenses common to the Greek language, the present tense is put for the past; as if it had read, Blessed is he that hath watched and kept his garments, as the shame and nakedness of all who have not done this will at this time especially appear.

“And he gathered them.” Who are the ones here spoken of as “gathered,” and what agency is to be used in gathering them? If the word them refers to the kings of verse 14, it is certain that no good

agency would be made use of to gather them; and if the spirits are referred to by the word he, why is it in the singular number? The peculiarity of this construction has led some to read the passage thus: “And he [Christ] gathered them [the saints] into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon [the illustrious city, or New Jerusalem].” But this position is untenable. The following criticism, which appeared not long since in a religious magazine, seems to shed the true light upon this passage. The writer says:--

“It seems to me that verse 16 is a continuation of verse 14, and that the antecedent of a.t... [them] is ‘the kings’ mentioned in verse 14. For this latter verse says, ‘Which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them,’ etc., and in verse 16 it says, ‘And he gathered them.’ Now, in the Greek, ‘a neuter plural regularly takes a verb in the singular.’ (See Sophocles’s Greek Grammar, Sec. 151, 1.) Might not, therefore, the subject of the verb s....a.e. [gathered] (verse 16) be t. p.e.µata [the spirits] of verse 14, and thus the ‘gathering’ mentioned in the two verses be one and

the same?

“And if this is to be a gathering of ‘the kings of the earth and of the whole world,’ will it not be for the purpose mentioned in the text; namely, ‘to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty’?”

In accordance with this criticism, several translations use the plural instead of the singular pronoun.

Mr. Wakefield, in his translation of the New Testament, renders this verse thus: “And the spirits gathered the kings together at a place called in Hebrew Armageddon.”

The Syriac Testament reads: “And they collected them together in a place called in Hebrew Armageddon.”

Sawyer’s translation renders it: “And they assembled them in the place called in Hebrew Armageddon.”

Mr. Wesley's version of the New Testament reads: "And they gathered them together to the place which is called in the Hebrew Armageddon."

Whiting's translation gives it: "And they gathered them into a place called in Hebrew Armageddon."

Professor Stuart of Andover College, a distinguished critic, though not a translator of the Scriptures, renders it: "And they gathered them together," etc. De Wette, a German translator of the Bible, gives it the same turn as Stuart and the others.

Mr. Albert Barnes, whose notes on the New Testament are so extensively used, refers to the same grammatical law as suggested by the criticism above quoted, and says, "The authority of He Wette and Professor Stuart is sufficient to show that the construction which they adopt is authorized by the Greek, as indeed no one can doubt, and perhaps this construction accords better with the

context than any other construction proposed.” Thus it will be seen that there are weighty reasons for reading the text, “They gathered them together,” etc., instead of “he gathered.” And by these authorities it is shown that the persons gathered are the minions of Satan, not saints; that it is the work of the spirits, not of Christ; and that the place of assemblage is not in the New Jerusalem at the marriage supper of the Lamb, but at Armageddon (or Mount Megiddo), “at the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

The hills of Megiddo, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, was the place where Barak and Deborah destroyed Sisera’s army, and where Josiah was routed by the Egyptian king Pharaoh-Necho.

Verse 17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an

earthquake, and so great. 19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. 20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

The Seventh Plague.--Thus has Inspiration described the last judgment which is to be inflicted in the present condition of things upon those who are incorrigibly rebellious against God. Some of the plagues are local in their application; but this one is poured out into the air. The air envelops the whole earth; it follows that this plague will envelop equally the habitable globe. It will be universal. The very air will be deadly.

The gathering of the nations having taken place under the sixth vial, the battle remains to be fought

under the seventh; and here are brought to view the instrumentalities with which God will slay the wicked. At this time it may be said, “The Lord hath opened his armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation.”

“There were voices.” Above all will be heard the voice of God. “The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake; but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.” Joel 3:16. (See also Jeremiah 25:30; Hebrews 12:26.) This will cause the great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth.

“And thunders and lightnings”--another allusion to the judgments of Egypt. (See Exodus 9:23.) The great city is divided into three parts; that is, the three grand divisions of the false and apostate religion of the world (the great city), Paganism, Catholicism, and relapsed Protestantism, seem to be set apart each to receive its appropriate doom. The cities of the nations fall; universal

desolation spreads over the earth; every island flees away, and the mountains are not found; and great Babylon comes in remembrance before God. Read her judgments, as more fully described in chapter 18.

“And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven.” This is the last instrumentality used in the infliction of punishment upon the wicked,—the bitter dregs of the seventh vial. God has solemnly addressed the wicked, saying, “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place.” Isaiah 28:17. (See also Isaiah 30:30.) And he asks Job if he has seen the treasures of the hail, which he has “reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war.” Job 38:22, 23.

“Every stone about the weight of a talent.” A talent, according to various authorities, as a weight, is about fifty-seven pounds avoirdupois. What could withstand the force of stones of such an enormous weight falling from heaven? But

mankind, at this time, will have no shelter. The cities have fallen in a mighty earthquake, the islands have fled away, and the mountains are not found. Again the wicked give vent to their woe in blasphemy; for the plague of the hail is “exceeding great.”

Some faint idea of the terrible effect of such a scene as is here predicted, may be inferred from the following sketch of a hailstorm on the Bosphorus, by our countryman, the late Commodore Porter, in his Letters from Constantinople and its Environs, Vol. I, p. 44. He says:--

“We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way, when a cloud rising in the west, gave indications of approaching rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and with a whitish appearance. I could not conceive what it was, but observing some gulls near, I supposed it to be them darting for fish, but soon after discovered that they were large balls of ice falling. Immediately we heard a sound like rumbling thunder, or ten

thousand carriages rolling furiously over the pavement. The whole Bosphorus was in a foam, as though heaven's artillery had been charged upon us and our frail machine. Our fate seemed inevitable; our umbrellas were raised to protect us, but the lumps of ice stripped them into ribbons. We fortunately had a bullock's hide in the boat, under which we crawled, and saved ourselves from further injury. One man of the three oarsmen had his hand literally smashed; another was much injured in the shoulder; Mr. H. received a blow in the leg; my right hand was somewhat disabled, and all were more or less injured.

“It was the most awful and terrific scene I ever witnessed, and God forbid that I should ever be exposed to another! Balls of ice as large as my two fists fell into the boat, and some of them fell with such violence as certainly to have broken an arm or leg had they struck us in those parts. One of them struck the blade of an oar, and split it. The scene lasted perhaps five minutes; but it was five minutes of the most awful feelings I ever experienced. When it passed over, we found the surrounding

hills covered with masses of ice, I cannot call it hail, the trees stripped of their leaves and limbs, and everything looking desolate. The scene was awful beyond all description.

“I have witnessed repeated earthquakes; the lightning has played, as it were, about my head; the wind has roared, and the waves at one moment have thrown me to the sky, and the next have sunk me into a deep abyss. I have been in action, and have seen death and destruction around me in every shape of horror; but I never before had the feeling of awe which seized me on this occasion, and still haunts, and I fear forever will haunt me. My porter, the boldest of my family, who had ventured an instant from the door, had been knocked down by a hailstone, and had they not dragged him in by the heels, would have been battered to death. Two boatmen were killed in the upper part of the village, and I have heard of broken bones in abundance. Imagine to yourself the heavens suddenly frozen over, and as suddenly broken to pieces in irregular masses of from half a pound to a pound weight, and precipitated to the

earth.”

Reader, if such were the desolating effects of a hailstorm of ice, which discharged stones the size of a man’s fist, weighing at most a pound or so, who can depict the consequences of that coming storm in which “every stone” shall be of the weight of a talent? As surely as God’s word is truth, he is thus soon to punish a guilty world. May it be ours, according to the promise, to have “sure dwellings” and “quiet resting-places” in that terrific hour. Isaiah 32:18, 19.

“And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven from the throne, saying, It is done!” Thus all is finished. The cup of human guilt has been filled up. The last soul has availed itself of the plan of salvation. The books are closed. The number of the saved is completed. The final period is placed to this world’s history. The vials of God’s wrath are poured out upon a corrupt generation. The wicked have drunk them to the dregs, and sunk into the realm of death for a thousand years. Reader, where do you wish to be found after that

great decision?

But what is the condition of the saints while the “overflowing scourge” is passing over? They are the special subjects of God’s protection, without whose notice not a sparrow falls to the ground. Many are the promises which come crowding in to afford them comfort, summarily contained in the beautiful and expressive language of the 91st psalm, which alone we have space to quote:--

“I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” (Psalms 91:2-10)

Chapter 17

Babylon, the Mother

Verse 1. And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3. So 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, having seven heads and ten horns. 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

In verse 19 of the preceding chapter, we were informed that “great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.” The prophet now takes up more particularly the subject of this great Babylon; and in order to give a full presentation of it, goes back and gives some of the facts of her past history. That this apostate woman, as presented in this chapter, is a symbol of the Roman Catholic Church, is generally believed by Protestants. Between this church and the kings of the earth there has been illicit connection, and with the wine of her fornication, or her false doctrines, the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk.

Church and State.--This prophecy is more definite than others applicable to the Roman power, in that it distinguishes between church and state. We here have the woman, the church, seated upon a scarlet-colored beast, the civil power, by which she is upheld, and which she controls and guides to her own ends, as a rider controls the animal upon which he is seated.

The vesture and decorations of this woman, as brought to view in verse 4, are in striking harmony with the application made of this symbol; for purple and scarlet are the chief colors in the robes of popes and cardinals; and among the myriads of precious stones which adorn her service, according to an eye-witness, silver is scarcely known, and gold itself looks but poorly. And from the golden cup in her hand,--symbol of purity of doctrine and profession, which should have contained only that which is unadulterated and pure, or, explaining the figure, only that which is in full accordance with truth,--there came forth only abominations, and wine of her fornication, fit symbol of her abominable doctrines, and still more abominable practices.

This woman is explicitly called Babylon. Is Rome, then, Babylon, to the exclusion of all other religious bodies?--No, from the fact that she is called the mother of harlots, as already noticed, which shows that there are other independent religious organizations that constitute the apostate

daughters, and belong to the same great family.

Verse 6. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. 7. And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

A Cause of Wonder.--Why should John wonder with great astonishment when he saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints? Was persecution of the people of God any strange thing in his day? Had he not seen Rome launch its most fiery anathemas against the church, being himself in banishment under its cruel power at the time he wrote? Why, then, should he be astonished, as he looked forward, and saw Rome still persecuting the saints? The secret of his wonder was just this: all the persecution he had witnessed had been from pagan Rome, the open enemy of Christ. It was not strange that pagans should persecute Christ's

followers; but when he looked forward, and saw a church professedly Christian persecuting the followers of the Lamb, and drunken with their blood, he could but wonder with great amazement.

Verse 8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. 9. And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. 10. And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space. 11. And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

Rome in Three Phases.--The beast of which the angel here speaks is evidently the scarlet beast. A wild beast, like the one thus introduced, is the

symbol of an oppressive and persecuting power; and while the Roman power as a nation had a long, uninterrupted existence, it passed through certain phases during which this symbol would be inapplicable to it, and during which time, consequently, the beast, in such prophecies as the present, might be said not to be, or not to exist. Thus Rome in its pagan form was a persecuting power in its relation to the people of God, during which time it constituted the beast that was; but the empire was nominally converted to Christianity; there was a transition from paganism to another phase of religion falsely called Christian; and during a brief period, while this transition was going on, it lost its ferocious and persecuting character, and then it could be said of the beast that it was not. Time passed on, and it degenerated into popery, and again assumed its bloodthirsty and oppressive character, and then it constituted the beast that “yet is,” or in John’s day was to be.

The Seven Heads.--The seven heads are explained to be, first, seven mountains, and then seven kings, or forms of government; for the

expression in verse 10, “And there are seven kings,” should read, and these are seven kings. “Five are fallen,” says the angel, or passed away; “one is;” the sixth was then reigning; another was to come, and continue for a short space; and when the beast reappeared in its bloody and persecuting character, it was to be under the eighth form of government, which was to continue till the beast went into perdition. The seven forms of government that have existed in the Roman empire are usually enumerated as follows: (1) kingly; (2) consular; (3) decemvirate; (4) dictatorial; (5) triumvirate; (6) imperial; and (7) papal. Kings, consuls, decemvirs, dictators, and triumvirs had passed away in John’s day. He was living under the imperial form. Two more were to arise after his time. One was only to continue a short space, and hence is not usually reckoned among the heads; while the last, which is usually denominated the seventh, is in reality the eighth. The head which was to succeed the imperial, and continue a short space, could not be the papal; for that has continued longer than all the rest put together. We understand, therefore, that the papal head is the

eighth, and that a head of short continuance intervened between the imperial and papal. In fulfillment of this, we read that after the imperial form had been abolished, there was a ruler who for about the space of sixty years governed Rome under the title of the “Exarch of Ravenna.” Thus we have the connecting link between the imperial and papal heads. The third phase of the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, is the Roman power under the rule of the papacy; and in this form it ascends out of the bottomless pit, or bases its power on pretensions which have no foundation but a mixture of Christian errors and pagan superstitions.

Verse 12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. 13. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. 14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and

faithful.

The Ten Horns.--On this subject, see remarks on Daniel 7:8, where they are shown to represent the ten kingdoms that arose out of the Roman empire. They receive power one hour (Gr. ..a, hora, an indefinite space of time) with the beast; that is, they reign a length of time contemporaneously with the beast, during which time they give to it their power and strength.

Croly, in his work on the Apocalypse, offers this comment on verse 12: "The prediction defines the epoch of the papacy by the formation of the ten kingdoms of the Western empire. 'They shall receive power one hour with the beast.' The translation should be, 'in the same era' (μ.a. ..a.). The ten kingdoms shall be contemporaneous, in contradistinction to the 'seven heads,' which were successive."

This language must refer to the past, when the kingdoms of Europe were unanimous in giving their support to the papacy, and upholding it in all

its pretensions. It cannot apply to the future; for after the commencement of the time of the end, they were to take away its dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end (Daniel 7:26); and the treatment which these kingdoms are finally to bestow upon the papacy, is expressed in verse 16, where it is said that they shall hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. A part of this work the nations of Europe have been doing for years. The completion of it, burning her with fire, will be accomplished when Revelation 18:8 is fulfilled.

These make war with the Lamb. Verse 14. Here we are carried into the future, to the time of the great and final battle; for at this time the Lamb has assumed the title of King of kings and Lord of lords, a title which he does not assume till his second coming. (Chapter 19:11-16)

Verse 15. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. 16. And the ten horns which thou

sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. 17. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled. 18. And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

An Important Symbol Defined.--In verse 15 we have a plain definition of the Scripture symbol of waters; they denote peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. The angel told John, while calling his attention to this subject, that he would show him the judgment of this great harlot. In verse 16 that judgment is specified. This chapter has, naturally, more especial reference to the old mother, or Catholic Babylon. The next chapter, if we mistake not, deals with the character and destiny of another great branch of Babylon, the harlot daughters.

Chapter 18

Babylon, the Daughters

Verse 1. And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. 2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. 3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

Some movement of mighty power is symbolized in these verses. (See under verse 4.) The consideration of a few facts will guide us unmistakably to the application. In chapter 14 we had a message announcing the fall of Babylon. Babylon is a term which embraces not only the

Roman Catholic Church, but religious bodies which have sprung from her, bringing many of her errors and traditions along with them.

A Moral Fall.--The fall of Babylon here spoken of cannot be literal destruction; for there are events to take place in Babylon after her fall which utterly forbid this idea; as, for instance, the people of God are there after her fall, and are called out in order that they may not receive of her plagues; and in these plagues is embraced her literal destruction. The fall is therefore a moral one; for the result of it is that Babylon becomes the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. These are terrible descriptions of apostasy, showing that, as a consequence of her fall, she piles up an accumulation of sins even to the heavens, and becomes subject to the judgments of God, which can no longer be delayed.

And since the fall here introduced is a moral one, it must apply to some branch of Babylon besides, or outside of, the pagan or papal divisions;

for from the beginning of their history, paganism has been a false religion, and the papacy an apostate one. And further, as this fall is said to occur but a short period before Babylon's final destruction, certainly this side of the rise and predicted triumph of the papal church, this testimony cannot apply to any religious organizations but such as have sprung from that church. These started out on reform. They ran well for a season, and had the approbation of God; but fencing themselves about with creeds, they have failed to keep pace with the advancing light of prophetic truth, and hence have been left in a position where they will finally develop a character as evil and odious in the sight of God as that of the church from which they first withdrew as dissenters, or reformers. As the point before us is to many a very sensitive one, we will let members of these various denominations here speak for themselves.

The Tennessee Baptist says: "This woman [popery] is called the mother of harlots and abominations. Who are the daughters? The

Lutheran, the Presbyterian, and the Episcopalian churches are all branches of the [Roman] Catholic. Are not these denominated ‘harlots and abominations’ in the above passage?--I so decide. I could not, with the stake before me, decide otherwise. Presbyterians and Episcopalians compose a part of Babylon. They hold the distinctive principles of papacy in common with papists.”

Alexander Campbell says: “The worshipping establishments now in operation throughout Christendom, incased and cemented by their respective voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that mother of harlots, the Church of Rome.”

Again he says: “A reformation of popery was attempted in Europe full three centuries ago. It ended in a Protestant hierarchy, and swarms of dissenters. Protestantism has been reformed into Presbyterianism, that into Congregationalism, and that into Baptistism, etc., etc. Methodism has

attempted to reform all, but has reformed itself into many forms of Wesleyanism. All of them retain in their bosom--in their ecclesiastical organizations, worship, doctrines, and observances--various relics of popery. They are at best a reformation of popery, and only reformations in part. The doctrines and traditions of men yet impair the power and progress of the gospel in their hands.”[1]

Mr. O. Scott (Wesleyan Methodist) says: “The church is as deeply infected with a desire for worldly gain as the world.

“The churches are making a god of this world.

“Most of the denominations of the present day might be called churches of the world with more propriety than churches of Christ.

“The churches are so far gone from primitive Christianity that they need a fresh regeneration, a new kind of religion.”

Says the Golden Rule: “The Protestants are out-doing the popes in splendid, extravagant folly in church-building. Thousands on thousands are expended in gay and costly ornaments to gratify pride and a wicked ambition, that might and should go to redeem the perishing millions! Does the evil, the folly, and the madness of these proud, formal, fashionable worshipers stop here?

“These splendid monuments of popish pride, upon which millions are squandered in our cities, virtually exclude the poor, for whom Christ died, and for whom he came especially to preach.”

The report of the Michigan Yearly Conference, published in the True Wesleyan of Nov. 15, 1851, says: “The world, commercial, political, and ecclesiastical, are alike, and are together going in the broad way that leads to death. Politics, commerce, and nominal religion, all connive at sin, reciprocally aid each other, and unite to crush the poor. Falsehood is unblushingly uttered in the forum and in the pulpit; and sins that would shock the moral sensibilities of the heathen go unrebuked

in all the great denominations of our land. These churches are like the Jewish church when the Saviour exclaimed, ‘Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.’” Is their condition any better now than it was then?

Robert Atkins, in a sermon preached in London, says: “The truly righteous are diminished from the earth, and no man layeth it to heart. The professors of religion of the present day, in every church, are lovers of the world, conformers to the world, lovers of creature-comfort, and aspirers after respectability. They are called to suffer with Christ, but they shrink even from reproach.

“Apostasy, apostasy, apostasy, is engraven on the very front of every church; and did they know it, and did they feel it, there might be hope, but alas! they cry, ‘We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.’”

G. F. Pentecost, the noted evangelist, said in the Independent, in February, 1883, that the conversion of sinners was becoming “a lost art.”

Abundance of similar testimony might be produced from persons in high standing in these various denominations, written, not for the purpose of being captious and finding fault, but from a vivid sense of the fearful condition to which these churches have fallen. The term Babylon, as applied to them, is not a term of reproach, but is simply expressive of the confusion and diversity of sentiment that exists among them. Babylon need not have fallen, but might have been healed (Jeremiah 51:9) by the reception of the truth; but she rejected it, and confusion and dissensions still reign within her borders, and worldliness and pride are fast choking out every plant of heavenly growth.

Chronology of this Movement.--At what time do these verses have their application? When may this movement be looked for? If the position here taken is correct, that these churches, this branch of Babylon, experienced a moral fall by the rejection of the first message of chapter 14, the announcement in the chapter under consideration

could not have gone forth previous to that time. It is, then, either synchronous with the message of the fall of Babylon, in chapter 14, or it is given at a later period than that. But it cannot be synonymous with that; for that merely announces the fall of Babylon, while this adds several particulars which at that time were neither fulfilled nor in process of fulfilment. As we are therefore to look this side of 1844, where the previous message went forth, for the announcement brought to view in this chapter, we inquire, Has any such message been given from that time to the present? The answer must still be in the negative; hence this message is yet future. But we are now having the third angel's message, which is the last to be given before the coming of the Son of man. We are therefore held to the conclusion that the first two verses of this chapter constitute a feature of the third message which is to appear when this message shall be proclaimed with power, and the whole earth be lightened with its glory.

The work brought to view in verse 2 is in process of accomplishment, and will soon be

completed, by the work of Spiritualism. What are called in Revelation 16:14 “spirits of devils working miracles” are secretly but rapidly working their way into the religious denominations above referred to; for their creeds have been formulated under the influence of the wine (errors) of Babylon, one of which is that the spirits of our dead friends, conscious, intelligent, and active, are all about us; and this renders such denominations unable to resist the approach of evil spirits who come to them under the names and impersonations of their dead friends.

A significant feature in the work of Spiritualism, just now, is the religious garb it is assuming. Keeping in the background its grosser principles, which it has heretofore carried so largely in the front, it now assumes to appear as respectably religious in some quarters as any other denomination in the land. It talks of sin, repentance, the atonement, salvation through Christ, etc., almost as orthodoxly as the most approved standards. Under the guise of this profession, what is to hinder it from intrenching

itself in almost every denomination in Christendom? The basis of Spiritualism is a fundamental dogma in the creeds of almost all the churches. Its secret principles are, alas! too commonly cherished, and its dark practices too commonly followed, to put them at variance on that ground, so long as they seek a common concealment. What, then, can save Christendom from its seductive influence? Herein is seen another sad result of rejecting the truths offered to the world by the messages of chapter 14. Had the churches received these messages, they would have been shielded against this delusion; for among the great truths developed by the religious movement there brought to view, is the important doctrine that the soul of man is not naturally immortal; that eternal life is a gift suspended on conditions, and to be acquired through Christ alone; that the dead are unconscious; and that the rewards and punishments of the future world lie beyond the resurrection and the day of Judgment. This strikes a death-blow to the first and vital claim of Spiritualism. What foothold can that doctrine secure in any mind fortified by this truth? The spirit comes, and claims

to be the disembodied soul, or spirit, of a dead man. It is met with the fact that that is not the kind of soul, or spirit, which man possesses; that the “dead know not anything;” that this, its first pretension, is a lie, and that the credentials it offers, show it to belong to the synagogue of Satan. Thus it is at once rejected, and the evil it would do is effectually prevented. But the great mass of religionists stand opposed to the truth which would thus shield them, and thereby expose themselves to this last manifestation of satanic cunning.

And while Spiritualism is thus working, startling changes are manifesting themselves in high places in some of the denominations. The infidelity of the present age, under the seductive names of “science,” “the higher criticism,” “evolution,” etc., is making not a few notable converts. As typical cases, we may mention such men as the late Henry Ward Beecher, and such papers as *The Outlook*, formerly the *Christian Union*. Mr. Beecher was considered a leader of thought in the religious world, and his fame and influence were not confined to one hemisphere. He

became very outspoken in his denial of doctrines which have been considered by all believers in the Bible as among the fundamental truths of revelation. As an illustration, we quote the following from the [2]. It is from a reply by Mr. Beecher to J. S. Kennard, D. D., who had criticised some of Mr. B.'s views and utterances. He says:--

“I am a cordial Christian evolutionist. I do not agree, by any means, with all of Spencer--his agnosticism--nor all of Huxley, Tyndall, and their school. They are agnostic; I am not, emphatically. But I am an evolutionist; and that strikes at the root of all medieval and orthodox modern theology,--the fall of man in Adam, and the inheritance by his posterity of his guilt, and, by consequence, any such view of atonement as has been constructed to meet this fabulous disaster. Men have not fallen as a race; men have come up. No great disaster met the race at the start. The creative decree of God was fulfilled, and any theory of atonement must be one which shall meet the fact that man was created at the lowest point, and, as I believe, is, as to his physical being, evolved from the animal race

below him; but as to his moral and spiritual nature, is a son of God, a new element having come in, in the great movement of evolution at the point of man's appearance."

When the great facts which alone account for the existence of sin in our world, and for all the anomalies of the present state, are denominated "a fabulous disaster;" when it is avowed that man has not fallen, that the race did not meet the disaster of the introduction of sin by disobedience in the beginning, and that no atonement to meet this state of things is necessary,--what becomes of all those portions of the Scriptures in which these facts are recorded, and by which they are recognized? They must be relegated to the realm of fable. And when professed ministers of the gospel, to whom the people look for instruction, and on whose views they depend in these matters, lead out with such teaching, what reverence for the word of God can be expected from the masses? "Like priest, like people." Such ministers are doing more for the cause of infidelity than all the Voltaires and Paines of a past age have done, or all the Ingersolls of the

present age are doing. Worse than wolves without the fold, they are wolves within it, and all the more dangerous because arrayed in sheep's clothing.

Others in high positions, and influential journals in the Christian world, speak in a similar strain. It has come to be a very easy thing to accuse the record of inaccuracy, and charge the sacred writers with a failure to comprehend their subjects. Much of the body of modern dogmatic theology may be classified under two heads,--funguses and fossils; and whatever declarations of Scripture do not agree with these conceptions, are set down as incorrect. Paul, they say, held erroneous ideas on a number of questions, more especially in reference to the second coming of Christ; and one learned doctor of divinity, as quoted without dissent in a leading religious journal, has asserted that even Christ himself misapprehended the question he was discussing, according to the record of Matthew 24! From the standpoint of such a lamentable outlook, and under the leadership of such men, how long before Babylon will become full of spirits that are foul, and birds that are hateful and unclean? What

progress has already been made in this direction! How would the godly fathers and mothers of the generation that lived just before the first message was given, could they rise from their graves, and comprehend the present condition of the religious world, hearing its teaching and beholding its practices, stand aghast at the fearful contrast between their time and ours, and deplore the sad degeneracy! And Heaven is not to let all this pass in silence; for a mighty proclamation is to be made, calling the attention of all the world to the fearful counts in the indictment against these unfaithful religious bodies, that the justice of the judgments that follow may plainly appear.

Verse 3 shows the wide extent of the influence of Babylon, and the evil that has resulted and will result from her course, and hence the justness of her punishment. The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicades. Who take the lead in all the extravagances of the age? Who load their tables with the richest and choicest viands? Who are foremost in extravagance in dress, and all costly attire? Who are the very

personification of pride and arrogance?--Are they not church-members? Where shall we look for the very highest exhibition of the luxury, vain show, and pride of life, resulting from the vanity and sin of the race?--Is it not to a modern church assembly on a pleasant Sunday?

But there is a redeeming feature in this picture. Degenerate as Babylon has become as a body, there are exceptions to the general rule; for God has still a people there, and she must be entitled to some regard on their account until they are called from her communion. Nor will it be necessary to wait long for this call. Soon Babylon will become so thoroughly leavened with the influence of these evil agents that her condition will be fully manifest to all the honest in heart, and the way be all prepared for the work which the apostle now introduces.

Verse 4. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. 5. For her sins have

reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. 6. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double. 7. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her; for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow. 8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

The voice coming from heaven denotes that it will be a message of power attended with heavenly glory. How marked becomes the interposition of Heaven, and how the agents for the accomplishment of God's work multiply, as the great crisis approaches! This voice from heaven is called "another" voice, showing that a new agency is here introduced. We now have five celestial messengers expressly mentioned as engaged in this last religious reformation. These are the first,

second, and third angels of chapter 14; fourth, the angel of verse one of this chapter; and fifth, the agency indicated by the “voice” of verse 4, now before us. Three of these are already in operation. The second angel has joined the first, and the third has joined them. The first and second have not ceased. All three now have the field. The angel of verse 1, is entering upon his mission, as the conditions which call for his work are supplied; and the divine call from heaven must take place in connection with his work.

Proof has already been offered to show that the message of verses 1 and 2 of this chapter is to be given in connection with the now current third message, and will mark a new era in this work. An idea of its extent and power may be gathered from the description of the angel there given. The first message is said to go with a “loud voice;” the same is also said of the third message; but this angel, instead of simply flying “in the midst of heaven,” like the others, is said to “come down from heaven.” He comes, as it were, nearer to the earth, with a message more pointed and direct; and he has

“great power,” and the earth is “lightened with his glory.” No such description of a message from heaven to man is elsewhere to be found in all the Bible. This is the last; and as is meet, it comes with surpassing glory and unwonted power. It is an awful hour when a world’s destiny is to be decided,—a most solemn crisis when an entire contemporaneous generation of the human family is to pass the bounds of probation, as the last note of mercy is sounded in their ears. In such a time, the world must not be left without warning. So amply must the great fact be heralded, that none can plead a reasonable ignorance of the impending doom. Every excuse must be taken away. The justice and long-suffering and forbearance of God in delaying threatened vengeance till all have had an opportunity to receive a knowledge of his will, and space to repent, must be vindicated. An angel is sent forth, panoplied with Heaven’s power. The light that encircles the throne enshrouds him. He comes to the earth. None but the spiritually dead—yea, “twice dead, and plucked up by the roots”—will fail to realize his presence. Light flashes everywhere. The dark places are lighted up. And

while his presence dispels the shadows, his voice in thunder tones utters a warning. He cries “mightily.” He speaks in no feeble tones, and with no uncertain sound. It is no parlor announcement, but a cry, a mighty cry, a cry with a strong voice. The fatal defects in the profession of a worldly church are again pointed out. Their errors are once more, and for the last time, exposed. The inadequacy of the present standard of godliness to meet the final crisis is emphasized beyond all mistaking. The inevitable connection between their cherished errors and irretrievable and everlasting destruction, is heralded till the earth resounds with the cry. Meanwhile, great Babylon’s sins mount up to the heavens, and the remembrance of her iniquities comes up before God. The storm of vengeance gathers. The great tidal wave of supernal wrath rolls onward. The feathery foam plays along its crest, indicating that but an instant remains ere it will burst upon the great city of confusion, and proud Babylon will go down as a millstone sinks in the depths of the sea. Suddenly another voice rings out from heaven, “Come out of her, my people!” The humble, sincere, devoted children of God, of

whom there are some still left, and who sigh and cry over the abominations done in the land, heed the voice, wash their hands of her sins, separate from her communion, escape, and are saved, while Babylon becomes the victim of the just judgments of God. There are stirring times before the church. Let us be ready for the crisis.

The fact that God's people are called out so as not to be partakers of her sins, shows that it is not till a certain time that people become guilty by being connected with Babylon; and this explains how it can be said of the 144,000 (Revelation 14:4), many of whom are the very ones here called out, that they were not defiled with women.

Verses 6 and 7 are a prophetic declaration that she will be rewarded, or punished, according to her works. Bear in mind that this testimony applies to that portion of Babylon which is subject to a moral fall. As already pointed out, it must apply especially to the "daughters," the denominations who persist in clinging to the personal traits of the "mother," and keeping up the family resemblance.

These, as pointed out on a previous page, are to attempt a sweeping persecution against the truth and the people of God. By these the “image of the beast” is to be formed. These are to have what will be to them a new experience,--the use of the civil arm to enforce their dogmas. And it is doubtless this first intoxication of power that leads this branch of Babylon to cherish in her heart the boast, “I sit a queen, and am no widow;” that is, I am no longer ...a, “one bereaved,” or destitute of power, as I have been; but now I rule like a queen; I shall see no sorrow; God is in the Constitution; the church is enthroned, and shall henceforth bear sway. The expression, “Reward her even as she rewarded you,” seems to show that the time for this message to be given, and for the saints to be called out, will be when she begins to raise against them the arm of oppression. As she fills up the cup of persecution to the saints, so the angel of the Lord will persecute her (Psalms 35:6); and judgments from on high will bring upon her, in a twofold degree, the evil which she thought to bring upon the humble servants of the Lord.

On page 137 of *Spiritual Gifts*, as found in *Early Writings*, by Mrs. E. G. White, we find testimony showing that the first part of Revelation 18 has special reference to the religious oppression to be developed in the United States by professed Christians. Thus: "It will be more tolerable for the heathen and for papists in the day of the execution of God's judgment than for such men. ... The names of the oppressors are written in blood, crossed with stripes, and flooded with agonizing, burning tears of suffering. God's anger will not cease until he has caused this land of light to drink the dregs of the cup of his fury, until he has rewarded unto Babylon double. 'Reward her even as she rewarded you, double unto her double according to her works; in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.'"

The day in which her plagues come, mentioned in verse 8, must be a prophetic day, or at least cannot be a literal day; for it would be impossible for famine to come in that length of time. The plagues of Babylon are without doubt the seven last plagues, which have already been examined;

and the plain inference from the language of this verse, in connection with Isaiah 34:8, is that a year will be occupied in that terrible visitation.

Verse 9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, 10. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. 11. And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more.

A Fitting Retribution.--The infliction of the very first plague must result in a complete suspension of traffic in those articles of luxury for which Babylon is noted. And when the merchants of these things, who are to a great extent citizens of this symbolic city, and who have been made rich by their traffic in these things, suddenly find themselves and their neighbors smitten with putrefying sores, their traffic suspended, and vast

stores of merchandise on hand, but none to buy them, they lift up their voices in lamentation for the fate of this great city; for if there is anything which will draw from the men of this generation a sincere cry of distress, it is that which touches their treasures. And there is a fitness in this retribution, They who but a short time before had issued a decree that the saints of God should neither buy nor sell, now find themselves put under the same restriction by a far more effectual process.

The question may arise how persons involved in the same calamity can stand afar off and lament, etc.; but it must be remembered that this desolation is brought to view under a figure, and the figure is that of a city visited with destruction. Should calamity come upon a literal city, it would be natural for its inhabitants to flee from that city if they had opportunity, and standing afar off, lament its fall; and just in proportion to their terror and amazement at the evil impending, would be the distance at which they would stand from their devoted city. Now the figure the apostle uses would not be complete without a feature of this

kind; and so he uses it, not to imply that people would literally flee from the symbolic city, which would be impossible, but to denote their terror and amazement at the descending judgments.

Verse 12. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, 13. And cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

Babylon's Merchandise.--In these verses we have an enumeration of great Babylon's merchandise, which includes everything pertaining to luxurious living, pomp, and worldly display. All kinds of mercantile traffic are brought to view. The declaration concerning "slaves and souls of men" may pertain more particularly to the spiritual domain, and have reference to slavery of

conscience by the creeds of these bodies, which in some cases is more oppressive than physical bondage.

Verse 14. And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

Gluttony Rebuked.--The fruits here mentioned are, according to the original, "autumnal fruits;" and in this we find a prophecy that the "delicacies of the season," upon which the luxurious gormand so sets his pampered appetite, will be suddenly cut off. This, of course, is the work of the famine, which is the result of the fourth vial. Chapter 16:8. And we may be even now having a premonition of this destruction in the phylloxera of the vineyards, the "yellows" of the peach orchards, and other recent enemies to vegetation.

In this connection we can hardly forbear glancing at the general aspect of the times in

respect to the remarkable physical phenomena everywhere manifesting themselves, as they seem so plainly to indicate that all the courses of nature are disturbed, and that the earth itself is waxing old in anticipation of the time when it shall vanish away. Within a few years past, how many unnatural visitations of storm and fire and flood have wrought ruin in different localities, and awakened forebodings of fear in the hearts of men in general. Witness the Chicago fire, the Wisconsin fires, the Michigan fires, in connection with all which there were manifested strange and unaccountable phenomena; the floods of the Ohio, the Mississippi, and other Western rivers; the devastating floods of Europe; the famines of China and India; the cyclones and tidal waves, sweeping away the proudest works of man, and hurling thousands of human beings into untimely graves.

But we have no need to go so far into the past. Look at the occurrences of more recent times. The year 1882 was considered a phenomenal and fatal year; but the disasters of the first seven months of 1883 overbalanced those of the whole year

preceding. In January, one hundred and ten persons perished by floods and fires; in February, one hundred and twenty-seven by floods; in March, eleven by fire; in April, three hundred and four by tornadoes; in May, one hundred and thirty-two by the Brooklyn-bridge panic and by tornadoes; in June, fifty-eight by tornadoes and floods; in July, one hundred and one by disasters. The foregoing casualties occurred in this country. In the Old World, the fatalities were still more appalling. There, during the same time, two thousand two hundred and sixty-three persons perished by floods, fires, and other disasters. To mention some, in India and Egypt, nearly twenty-two thousand fell victims to the cholera. Then comes the earthquake at Ischia, Italy, July 28, with nine thousand victims, and the volcanic eruptions and subaqueous earthquake of Java, August 26, in which a tract of country fifty miles square, containing a range of mountains sixtyfive miles in length, sunk below the level of the ocean, whose waters rushed in, and now cover all that space. Islands also in the adjacent straits of Sunda disappeared, and in all one hundred thousand persons are supposed to

have perished. This gives the appalling aggregate of over one hundred and thirty thousand persons who perished by violent deaths, chiefly through disturbances of the elements and the convulsions of nature, during that fateful year. And similar disturbances have followed with more or less severity in subsequent years. Look at the disastrous earthquakes in Japan in 1896, in which more than ten thousand persons lost their lives, and the panic in which thousands of Russian peasants perished at the coronation of the czar, in the same year.

Verse 15. The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16. And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! 17. For in one hour so great riches is come to naught. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, 18. And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! 19.

And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

Emotions of the Wicked.--The reader can readily imagine the cause of this universal voice of mourning, lamentation, and woe. Imagine the plague of sores preying upon men, the rivers turned to blood, the sea like the blood of a dead man, the sun scorching men with fire, their traffic gone, and their silver and gold unable to deliver them, and we need not wonder at their exclamations of distress, nor that shipmasters and sailors join in the general wail. Very different is the emotion the saints are called upon to exercise, as the following testimony shows:--

Verse 20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. 21. And 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, and shall be found no more at all. 22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee: and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee: and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. 24. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

Emotions of the Righteous.--The apostles and prophets are here called upon to rejoice over great Babylon in her destruction, as it is in close connection with this destruction that they will all be delivered from the power of death and grave by the first resurrection.

Like a great millstone, Babylon sinks to rise no

more. The various arts and crafts that have been employed in her midst, and have ministered to her desires, shall be practiced no more. The pompous music that has been employed in her imposing but formal and lifeless service, dies away forever. The scenes of festivity and gladness, when the bridegroom and the bride have been led before her altars, shall be witnessed no more.

Her sorceries constitute her leading crime; and sorcery is a practice which is involved in the Spiritualism of to-day. “And in her was found the blood” of “all that were slain upon the earth.” From this it is evident that ever since the introduction of a false religion into the world, Babylon has existed. In her has been found, all along, opposition to the work of God, and persecution of his people. In reference to the guilt of the last generation. (See on chapter 16:6)

Notes:

1. On Baptism p. 15.
2. National Baptist of Sept. 6, 1883.

Chapter 19

The Triumph of the Saints

Verse 1. And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: 2. For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. 3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever.

Continuing the subject of chapter 18, the apostle here introduces the song of triumph which the redeemed saints strike up on victor harps, when they behold the complete destruction of that great system of opposition to God and his true worship comprehended in great Babylon. This destruction takes place, and this song is sung, in connection with the second coming of Christ at the commencement of the thousand years.

Forever and Ever.--There can but one query arise on this scripture, and that is how it can be said that her smoke rose up forever and ever. Does not this language imply eternity of suffering? Let it be remembered that this is borrowed language; and to gain a correct understanding of it, we must go back to its first introduction, and consider its import as there used. In Isaiah 34 will be found the language from which, in all probability, such expressions as these are borrowed. Under the figure of Idumea, a certain destruction is brought to view; and it is said of that land that its streams should be turned into pitch, its dust into brimstone, that it should become burning pitch, and not be quenched night nor day, but that its smoke should go up forever. Now this language is spoken, as all must concede, of one of two things; either of the particular country called Idumea, or of the whole earth under that name. In either case it is evident that the language must be limited. Probably the whole earth is meant, from the fact that the chapter opens with an address to the earth and all that is therein, the world and all that come forth of it; and the indignation of the

Lord is declared to be upon all nations. Now, whether this refers to the depopulation and desolation of the earth at the second advent, or to the purifying fires that shall purge it of the effects of the curse at the end of the thousand years, the language must still be limited; for after all this, a renovated earth is to come forth, to be the abode of the nations of the saved throughout eternity. Three times this expression of smoke going up forever is used in the Bible: once here in Isaiah 34, of the land of Idumea as a figure of the earth; in Revelation 14 (which see), of the worshipers of the beast and his image; and again in the chapter we are now considering, referring to the destruction of great Babylon; and all of them apply to the very same time, and describe the same scenes; namely, the destruction visited upon this earth, the worshipers of the beast, and all the pomp of great Babylon, at the second advent of our Lord and Saviour.

Verse 4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. 5.

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

A Song of Triumph.--The Lord God omnipotent, the Father, reigneth, is the language of this song. He reigns at the present time, and has ever reigned, in reality, though sentence against an evil work has not been executed speedily; but now he reigns by the open manifestation of his power in the subjugation of all his foes.

“Rejoice, ... for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” Who

is the “bride, the Lamb’s wife,” and what is the marriage? A vast field for thought is here opened, and material furnished for a more lengthy exposition than falls within the design of this work. The Lamb’s wife is the New Jerusalem which is above. This will be noticed more fully on chapter 21. The marriage of the Lamb is his reception of this city. When he receives this city, he receives it as the glory and metropolis of his kingdom; hence with it he receives his kingdom, and the throne of his father David. This may well be the event designated by the marriage of the Lamb. That the marriage relation is often taken to illustrate the union between Christ and his people, is granted; but the marriage of the Lamb here spoken of is a definite event to take place at a definite time; and if the declaration that Christ is the head of the church as the husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23), proves that the church is now the Lamb’s wife, then the marriage of the Lamb took place long ago; but that cannot be, according to this scripture, which locates it in the future. Paul told his Corinthian converts that he had espoused them to one husband, even Christ. This is true of all

converts. But while this figure is used to denote the relation that they then assumed to Christ, was it a fact that the marriage of the Lamb took place in Corinth in Paul's day, and that it has been going on for the past eighteen hundred years? Further remarks on this point are deferred to a consideration of chapter 21.

But if the city is the bride, it may be asked how it can be said that she made herself ready. Answer: By the figure of personification, which attributes life and action to inanimate objects. (See a notable instance in Psalms 114.) Again, the query may arise on verse 8 how a city can be arrayed in the righteousness of the saints; but if we consider that a city without inhabitants would be but a dreary and cheerless place, we see at once how this is. Reference is had to the countless number of its glorified inhabitants in their shining apparel. The raiment was granted to her. What is granted to her? Isaiah 54 and Galatians 4:21-31 will explain. To the new-covenant city are granted many more children than to the old; these are her glory and rejoicing. The goodly apparel of this city, so to

speak, consists of the hosts of the redeemed and immortal ones who walk its golden streets.

Verse 9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. 10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The Marriage Supper.--Many are the allusions to this marriage supper in the New Testament. It is referred to in the parable of the marriage of the king's son (Matthew 22:1-14), again in Luke 14:16-24. It is the time when we shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, when we are recompensed at the resurrection of the just. Luke 14:12-15. It is the time when we shall drink the fruit of the vine new with our Redeemer in his heavenly kingdom. Matthew 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18. It is the time when we shall sit at his table in the kingdom

(Luke 22:30), and he will gird himself and come forth and serve us. Luke 12:37. Blessed indeed are they who have the privilege of partaking of this glorious feast.

John's Fellow Servant.--A word on verse 10, in reference to those who think they find here an argument for consciousness in death. The mistake which such persons make on this scripture is in supposing that the angel declares to John that he is one of the old prophets come back to communicate with him. The person employed in giving the Revelation to John is called an angel, and angels are not the departed spirits of the dead. Whoever takes the position that they are, is to all intents a Spiritualist; for this is the very foundation-stone of their theory. But the angel says no such thing. He simply says that he is the fellow servant of John, as he had been the fellow servant of his brethren the prophets. The term fellow servant implies that they were all on a common footing as servants of the great God; hence he was not a proper object for John to worship. (See on chapter 1:1, "His Angel.")

Verse 11. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. 12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew but he himself. 13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. 14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. 15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. 17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty

men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. 19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. 20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. 21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

Christ's Second Coming.--With verse 11 a new scene is introduced. We are here carried back to the second coming of Christ, this time under the symbol of a warrior riding forth to battle. Why is he represented thus?--Because he is going forth to war,--to meet "the kings of the earth and their armies," and this would be the only proper

character in which to represent him on such a mission. His vesture is dipped in blood. (See a description of the same scene in Isaiah 63:1-4.) The armies of heaven, the angels of God, follow him. Verse 15 shows how he rules the nations with a rod of iron, when they are given him for an inheritance, as recorded in the second psalm, which popular theology interprets to mean the conversion of the world. But would not such expressions as “treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God,” be a very singular description of a work of grace upon the hearts of the heathen for their conversion? The great and final display of the “winepress of God’s wrath,” and also of “the lake of fire,” occurs at the end of the thousand years, as described in chapter 20; and to that it would seem that the full and formal description of Revelation 14:18-20 must apply. But the destruction of the living wicked at the second coming of Christ, at the beginning of the thousand years, furnishes a scene on a smaller scale, similar, in both these respects, to what takes place at the close of that period. Hence in the verses before us we have this mention of both the winepress of wrath and the lake of fire.

Christ has at this time closed his mediatorial work, and laid off his priestly robes for kingly attire; for he has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. This is in harmony with the character in which he here appears; for it was the custom of warriors anciently to have some kind of title inscribed upon their vesture. Verse 17. What is to be understood by the angel standing in the sun? In chapter 16:17, we read of the seventh vial being poured out into the air, from which it was inferred that as the air envelops the whole earth, that plague would be universal. May not the same principle of interpretation apply here, and show that the angel standing in the sun, and issuing his call from thence to the fowls of heaven to come to the supper of the great God, denotes that this proclamation will go wherever the sun's rays fall upon this earth? And the fowls will be obedient to the call, and fill themselves with the flesh of horses, kings, captains, and mighty men. Thus, while the saints are partaking of the marriage supper of the Lamb, the wicked in their own persons furnish a great

supper for the fowls of heaven.

The beast and false prophet are taken. The false prophet is the one that works miracles before the beast. This proves him to be identical with the two-horned beast of chapter 13, to whom the same work, for the very same purpose, is there attributed. The fact that these are cast alive into the lake of fire, shows that these powers will not pass away and be succeeded by others, but be living powers at the second advent of Christ.

The papacy has long been in the field, and has come to the closing scenes in its career. And its overthrow is emphatically predicted in other prophecies than the one now before us, notably in Daniel 7:11, in which the prophet says that he beheld till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. And this followed close upon the utterance of great words which the horn spake, which words were doubtless heard in the decree of papal infallibility in the great ecumenical council of 1870. This power must therefore be very near the close of its existence.

But it does not perish till Christ appears, for it then goes alive into the lake of fire.

The other power associated with it, the two-horned beast, we see fast approaching the very climax of the work it has to do before it also goes alive into the lake of fire. And how thrilling is the thought that we see before us two great prophetic agencies which are, by all the evidences, near the close of their history, which yet are not to cease till the Lord shall appear in all his glory.

It appears from verse 21 that there is a remnant not numbered with the beast or false prophet. These are slain by the sword of Him that sits upon the horse, which sword proceeds out of his mouth. This sword is doubtless what is spoken of elsewhere as “the spirit of his mouth” and “the breath of his lips,” with which the Lord shall slay the wicked at his appearing and kingdom. (Isaiah 11:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:8)

Chapter 20

The First and Second Resurrections

Verse 1. And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

The event with which this chapter opens seems to follow, in chronological order, the events of the preceding chapter. The inquiries that here arise are, Who is the angel that comes down from heaven? what are the key and chain which he has in his hand? what is the bottomless pit? and what is meant by binding Satan a thousand years?

1. The Angel.--Is this angel Christ, as some suppose?--Evidently not. A bright ray of light is thrown from the old typical service directly upon this passage. Thus, Christ is the great High Priest of this dispensation. On the day of atonement, anciently, two goats were taken by the priest, upon which lots were cast, one for the Lord, and the other for the scape-goat. The one upon which the Lord's lot fell, was then slain, and his blood carried into the sanctuary to make an -atonement for the children of Israel, after which the sins of the people were confessed upon the head of the other, or scapegoat, and he was sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, or a place not inhabited. Now, as Christ is the priest of this dispensation, so by arguments, a few of which we here introduce, Satan is shown to be the antitypical scape-goat.

(1.) The Hebrew word for scape-goat, as given in the margin of Leviticus 16:8, is Azazel. On this verse, Jenks, in his Comprehensive Commentary, remarks: "Scape-goat. (See diff. opin. in Bochart.)"

Spencer, after the oldest opinion of the Hebrews and Christians, thinks Azazel is the name of the devil; and so Rosenmüller, whom see. The Syriac has Azzail, the angel (strong one) who revolted.” The Devil is here evidently pointed out. Thus we have the definition of the Scripture term in two ancient languages, with the oldest opinion of the Christians, in favor of the view that the scape-goat is a type of Satan.

[1], says: “What goes to confirm this is that the most ancient paraphrases and translations treat Azazel as a proper name. The Chaldee paraphrase and the targums of Onkelos and Jonathan would certainly have translated it if it was not a proper name, but they do not. The Septuagint, or oldest Greek version, renders it by (apompaios), a word applied by the Greeks to a malign deity sometimes appeased by sacrifices. Another confirmation is found in the book of Enoch, where the name Azazel, evidently a corruption of Azazel, is given to one of the fallen angels, thus plainly showing what was the prevalent understanding of the Jews at that day.

“Still another evidence is found in the Arabic, where Azazel is employed as the name of the evil spirit. In addition to these, we have the evidence of the Jewish work Zohar, and of the Cabalistic and Rabbinical writers. They tell us that the following proverb was current among the Jews: ‘On the day of atonement, a gift to Sammael.’ Hence Moses Gerundinensis feels called to say that it is not a sacrifice, but only done because commanded by God.

“Another step in the evidence is when we find this same opinion passing from the Jewish to the early Christian church. Origen was the most learned of the Fathers, and on such a point as this, the meaning of a Hebrew word, his testimony is reliable. Origen says: ‘He who is called in the Septuagint, and in the Hebrew Azazel, is no other than the Devil.’

“In view, then, of the difficulties attending any other meaning, and the accumulated evidence in favor of this, Hengstenberg affirms with great

confidence that Azazel cannot be anything else than another name for Satan.”

(2.) In the common acceptation of the word, the term scapegoat is applied to any one who has become obnoxious to the claims of justice; and while it is revolting to all our conceptions of the character and glory of Christ to apply this term to him, it must strike every one as a very appropriate designation of the Devil, who is styled in Scripture the accuser, adversary, angel of the bottomless pit, Beelzebub, Belial, dragon, enemy, evil spirit, father of lies, murderer, prince of devils, serpent, tempter, etc., etc.

(3.) The third reason for this position is the very striking manner in which it harmonizes with the events to transpire in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as far as revealed to us in the Scriptures of truth.

We behold in the type, (a) the sin of the transgressor transferred to the victim; (b) we see that sin borne by the ministration of the priest and

the blood of the offering into the sanctuary; (c) on the tenth day of the seventh month we see the priest, with the blood of the sin-offering for the people, remove all their sins from the sanctuary, and lay them upon the head of the scape-goat; and (d) the goat bears them away into a land not inhabited. Leviticus 1:1-4; 4:3-6; 16:5-10, 15, 16, 20-22.

Answering to these events in the type, we behold in the antitype, (a) the great offering for the world made on Calvary; (b) the sins of all those who avail themselves of the merits of Christ's shed blood by faith in him, borne, by the ministration of Christ while pleading his own blood, into the new-covenant sanctuary; (c) after Christ, the minister of the true tabernacle (Hebrews 8:2), has finished his ministration, he will remove the sins of his people from the sanctuary, and lay them upon the head of their author, the antitypical scape-goat, the Devil; and (d) the Devil will be sent away with them into a land not inhabited.

This we believe to be the very event described

in the verses under notice. The sanctuary service is, at the time here specified, closed. Christ lays upon the head of the Devil the sins which have been transferred to the sanctuary, and which are imputed to the saints no more, and the Devil is sent away, not by the hand of the High Priest, but by the hand of another person, according to the type, into a place here called the bottomless pit. Hence this angel is not Christ. For a full exposition of this subject, see the work, *Looking unto Jesus; or Christ in Type and Antitype*.

2. The Key and Chain.--It cannot be supposed that the key and chain are literal; they are rather used merely as symbols of the power and authority with which this angel is clothed upon this occasion.

3. The Bottomless Pit.--The original word signifies an abyss, bottomless, deep, profound. Its use seems to be such as to show that the word denotes any place of darkness, desolation, and death. Thus in Revelation 9:1, 2, it is applied to the barren wastes of the Arabian desert, and in Romans 10:7, to the grave; but the passage which specially

throws light upon the meaning of the word here is Genesis 1:2, where we read that “darkness was upon the face of the deep.” The word there rendered deep is the same word that is here rendered bottomless pit; so that passage might have been translated, “Darkness was upon the face of the abyss, or bottomless pit.” But we all know what is meant by the word deep as there used; it is applied to this earth in its chaotic state. Precisely this it must mean in this third verse of Revelation 20. At this time, let it be borne in mind, the earth is a vast charnel-house of desolation and death. The voice of God has shaken it to its foundations; the islands and mountains have been moved out of their places; the great earthquake has leveled to the earth the mightiest works of man; the seven last plagues have left their all-desolating footprints over the earth; the burning glory attending the coming of the Son of man has borne its part in accomplishing the general desolation; the wicked have been given to the slaughter, and their putrefying flesh and bleaching bones lie unburied, ungathered, and unlamented from one end of the earth to the other end thereof. Thus is the earth made empty and

waste, and turned upside down. Isaiah 24:1. Thus is it brought back again, partially, at least, to its original state of confusion and chaos. (See Jeremiah 4:19-26, especially verse 23.) And what better term could be used to describe the earth thus rolling on in its course of darkness and desolation for a thousand years than that of the abyss, or bottomless pit? Here Satan will be confined during this time, amid the ruins which indirectly his own hands have wrought, unable to flee from his habitation of woe, or to repair in the least degree its hideous ruin.

4. The Binding of Satan.--We well know that Satan, in order to work, must have subjects upon whom to work. Without these, he can do nothing. But during the thousand years of his confinement to this earth, all the saints are in heaven, beyond the power of his temptations; and all the wicked are in their graves, beyond his power to deceive. His sphere of action is circumscribed, he being at this time confined to this earth; and thus is he bound, being condemned throughout this period to a state of hopeless inactivity. This, to a mind that has been

so busy as his has been for the past six thousand years in deceiving the world, must be a punishment of the most intense severity.

According to this exposition, the “binding” of Satan means simply the placing beyond his reach of the subjects upon whom he works, and his being “loosed” means their being brought again, by a resurrection, to a position where he can again exercise his power upon them. Over this exposition some assume to grow merry, telling us that we have mistaken the parties, and have the wicked bound, not the Devil. Yet how often do we hear, in the daily transactions of life, such expressions as these: My way was completely hedged up; my hands were completely tied, etc. But do we understand, when persons use such expressions, that some insurmountable obstacle was literally thrown across the path they were traveling, or that their hands were literally confined with ropes or cords?--No; but simply that a combination of circumstances rendered it impossible for them to act. Just so here; and why will not people grant to the Bible the same liberty of speech that they give,

without question and without ridicule, to their fellow men in the common intercourse of life? But more than this, there is here a great limitation of Satan's power, which may well be called a "binding." He no longer has the power of traversing space, and visiting other worlds; but like man he is confined to this earth, which he nevermore leaves. The place of the ruin he has wrought now becomes his gloomy prison-house, till he is led out to execution, at the end of the thousand years.

Verse 4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such

the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

The Exaltation of the Saints.--From the Devil in his gloomy confinement, John now directs our attention to the saints in victory and glory,--the saints reigning with Christ--their employment being to assign to the wicked dead the punishment due their evil deeds. From that general assembly John then selects two classes as worthy of especial attention: first, the martyrs, those who had been beheaded for the witness of Jesus; and secondly, those who had not worshiped the beast and his image. This class, the ones who refuse the mark of the beast and his image, are of course the ones who hear and obey the third message of Revelation 14; but these are not the ones who are beheaded for the witness of Jesus, as some who claim that the last generation of saints are all to be slain, would have us believe. The word rendered which, in the expression, "and which had not worshiped the beast," etc., shows that there is another class introduced. The word is the compound relative, .st..

(hostis), not merely the simple relative .., and is defined by Liddell and Scott, “Whosoever; whichsoever; any one who; anything which;” and by Robinson, “One who; some one who; whosoever; whatsoever.” As one class, John saw the martyrs, and as another, he saw those who had not worshiped the beast and his image.

It is true that .st.. is sometimes used as a simple relative, as in 2 Corinthians 3:14; Ephesians 1:23, but never in such constructions as this, preceded by the conjunction .a..

Lest any one should say that if we render the passage “and whosoever had not worshiped the beast,” we thereby include millions of heathen and sinners who have not worshiped the beast, and promise them a reign with Christ of a thousand years, we would call attention to the fact that the preceding chapter states that the wicked had all been slain, and the seal of death has been set upon them for a thousand years; and John is viewing only the righteous company who have part in the first resurrection.

To avoid the doctrine of two resurrections, some claim that the passage, “But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished,” is an interpolation, not found in the original, and hence not genuine. Even if this were so, it would not disprove the main proposition that the righteous dead are raised by themselves, in a “first resurrection,” and that there is a second resurrection a thousand years later, in which all the wicked are brought from their graves. But the criticism is not true. All scholarship is against it. The Revised Version retains the passage.

Two Resurrections.--“The rest of the dead lived not again till the thousand years were finished.” Whatever may be said to the contrary, no language could more plainly prove two resurrections; the first, a resurrection of the righteous at the commencement of the thousand years; and the second, that of the wicked at the end of that period. On such as have part in the first resurrection, the second death will have no power. They can pass unharmed through the elements which destroy the

wicked like chaff. They will be able to dwell with devouring fire and everlasting burnings (Isaiah 33:14, 15); they will be able to go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men who have transgressed against the Lord, as the quenchless fire and undying worm are preying upon them. Isaiah 66:24. The difference between the righteous and the wicked in this respect is seen again in the fact that while God is to the latter a consuming fire, he is to his people both a sun and a shield.

The Wicked Raised to Life.--The wicked who are raised at the end of the thousand years as really live again as they have once lived on the earth. To deny this is to do violence to this scripture. In what physical condition they will be raised, we are not informed. It is usual to say on this point that what we have lost unconditionally in Adam, is restored unconditionally in Christ. With respect to physical condition, this should not perhaps be taken in an unlimited sense; for we have lost greatly in stature and vital force, which need not be restored to the wicked. If they are brought back to the average mental and physical condition which they enjoyed

during life, or the period of their probation, that would certainly be sufficient to enable them to receive at last understandingly the reward due them for all their deeds.

Verse 7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Perdition of Ungodly Men.--At the end of the one thousand years, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, in which the saints have dwelt in heaven during that period, comes down, and is located

upon the earth, and becomes the camp of the saints, around which the resurrected wicked come up, numberless as the sand of the sea. The Devil deceives them, and thus brings them up to this battle. They are induced to commence an impious warfare upon the holy city, in prospect of some advantage to be gained by fighting against the saints. Satan doubtless persuades them that they can overcome the saints, dispossess them of their city, and still hold possession of the earth. But fire comes down from God out of heaven, and devours them. The word here rendered devoured, Professor Stuart admits is “intensive,” and signifies, “to eat up, devour, so that it denotes utter excision.”[2] This is the time of the perdition of ungodly men,-- the time when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and when the works that are in the earth shall be burned up. (2 Peter 3:7, 10) In the light of these scriptures, we can see how the wicked are to receive their recompense in the earth (Proverbs 11:31); we can see also that this recompense is not eternal life in misery, but an “utter excision,” entire and complete destruction.

The Wicked Never Tread the New Earth.--Two views deserve a passing notice at this point. The first is that the earth is renewed at the second coming of Christ, and is the habitation of the saints during the thousand years; the other is that when Christ appears the second time, he sets up his kingdom in Palestine, and performs, in connection with his saints, a work of conquest over the nations left on the earth during the thousand years, and subdues them to himself.

One among many objections to the first view is that it makes the wicked, in their resurrection, come up, with the Devil at their head, and tread with their unhallowed feet upon the purified and holy earth, and the saints, who have held possession for a thousand years, are obliged to yield the ground, and flee into the city. But we cannot believe that the saints' inheritance will ever be thus marred, or that the fair plains of the earth made new will ever be soiled with the polluting tread of the resuscitated wicked; for besides outraging all ideas of propriety, there is no scripture from which even an inference can be

drawn to support it.

And as to the second view, one among many of its absurdities is that notwithstanding Christ and his saints have conquered the earth during the thousand years, at the end of this period the wicked get the upper hands of them, they lose their territory, the work of a thousand years is undone, and they are compelled to beat an ignominious retreat into the city for shelter, leaving the earth to the undisputed sway of their foes. Those who wish, may rack their brains in trying to harmonize the inconsistencies and absurdities of such theories, or may endeavor to draw consolation from the dubious prospect. For ourselves, we prefer better employment and a brighter hope.

A Thousand Years in Heaven.--In contrast with these theories, there is a beautiful harmony in the view herein presented; namely, that the saints are with Christ in heaven during the thousand years while the earth lies desolate; that the saints and the city come down, and the wicked dead are raised and come up against it; that the latter there receive

their judgment; and that from the purifying fires which destroy them come forth the new heavens and the new earth, to be the abode of the righteous throughout endless ages.

The Subjects of Torment.--From verse 10, some have argued that the Devil alone was to be tormented day and night; but the testimony of this verse is more extensive than that. The verb "shall be tormented" is in the plural, and agrees with the beast and false prophet; whereas it would be in the singular number if it referred to the Devil alone. It will be noticed that in the expression, "where the beast and false prophet are," are is a supplied word. It would be more proper to supply the words were cast, answering to what was spoken of the Devil just before. The sentence would then read, "The Devil was cast into the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet were cast." The beast and false prophet were cast in there, and destroyed, at the commencement of the thousand years. Revelation 19:20. The individuals of whom those organizations were then composed, now come up in the second resurrection, and a similar and final

destruction is visited upon them, under the names, Gog and Magog.

The Lake of Fire.--Some reader may be inclined to ask for a definition of the lake of fire. As a comprehensive definition, may it not be called a symbol of the agencies which God employs to close up his controversy with the living wicked at the beginning of the thousand years, and with all the hosts of the ungodly at the end of that period? Literal fire will of course be largely employed in this work. We can better describe its effects than the thing itself. At the second coming of Christ, it is the flaming fire in which the Lord Jesus is revealed; it is the spirit of his mouth and brightness of his coming by which the man of sin is to be consumed; it is the fire in which great Babylon shall be utterly burned. Revelation 18:8. At the end of the thousand years, it is the day that shall burn as an oven (Malachi 4:1); it is the fervent heat that shall melt the elements and the earth, and burn up the works that are therein; it is the fire of Tophet "prepared for the king" (the Devil and his angels, Matthew 25:41), the pile whereof is deep and large,

and which “the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle.” (Isaiah 30:33) It is the fire that comes down from God out of heaven.[3]

Verse 11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

With verse 11, John introduces another scene to take place in connection with the final doom of the ungodly. It is the great white throne of judgment,

before which they are assembled to receive their awful sentence of condemnation and death. Before this throne the heavens and the earth flee away, so that no place is found for them. A moment's reflection on the changes which must then take place in the earth will bring out the great force of this language. The scene is that of Peter's burning day, which is the "perdition of ungodly men," and in which even the "elements" melt with fervent heat. (2 Peter 3:7-13) The city is then located upon the earth, the foundations of course extending under its whole area, so that it will not be affected by any changes that may take place, or any conditions which may exist, in the earth beneath it. Fire comes down from God out of heaven.

First, the works that are in the world are burned up; and by the poisonous gases evolved, and the flames, the wicked are destroyed; this is the fire of Gehenna, which contains all the elements necessary to consume utterly every mortal being that comes under its power (Mark 9:43-48); and then will be fulfilled Isaiah 66:24: "And they [the righteous] shall go forth, and look upon the

carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

Secondly, the heat is raised till all the material of which this globe is composed, is fused like the ores in a smelter’s furnace, and the whole earth becomes a fluid, fiery, molten mass. Upon this the city floats, as the ark of Noah floated upon the waters of the flood. Then will be fulfilled Isaiah 33:14: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” The answer, in the following verses, shows it to be the righteous, and this must be the time when it will be fulfilled.

Thirdly, there is one stage more to be reached. It is well known that with a sufficient degree of heat, any substance on this earth can be reduced to the condition of gas, and thus become invisible. So will it be then with this whole earth. The heat being raised to a sufficient degree of intensity, would not the whole earth be converted into gas, and become

invisible, and thus appear most literally to flee away, so that no place is found for it? The city would then seem to be, as virtually it would be, suspended in mid-heaven.

But the elements are not destroyed. They are only, by that process, purged from the last and minutest taint of sin, and every token of the curse. The almighty fiat again goes forth, “Behold I make all things new. ... It is done” (Revelation 21:5, 6), and the particles combine again to compose a new world; and there beneath the wondering and admiring gaze of all the redeemed and the angelic host, the work of creation is gone through with again. At the first creation, the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy. Job 38:7. At this new creation, that song and shout will be augmented by the glad voices of the redeemed. So will this earth, wrenched for a time, by sin, from its intended orbit of joy and peace, be brought back, renewed, into harmony with a loyal universe, to be the everlasting home of the saved.

The Books of Record.--They are judged out of

the things written in the books, from which we learn the solemn fact that a record of all our deeds is kept on high. A faithful and unerring record is made by the angelic secretaries. The wicked cannot conceal from them any of their deeds of darkness. They cannot bribe them to pass over in their record any of their unlawful acts. They must meet them all again, and be judged accordingly.

The Execution of the Sentence.--They are to be punished according to their works. The Scriptures declare that they shall be rewarded according to their deeds. There are, then, to be degrees in the punishment of the wicked; and it may be asked how this can be harmonized with the view that death is the punishment for sin, and comes upon all alike. Let us ask believers in eternal misery how they will maintain degrees in their system. They tell us the intensity of the pain endured will be in each case proportioned to the guilt of the sufferer. But how can this be? Are not the flames of hell equally severe in all parts? and will they not equally affect all the immaterial souls cast therein? But God can interpose, it is answered, to produce

the effect desired. Very well, then, we reply, cannot he also interpose, if necessary, and graduate the pain which will attend the infliction of death upon the sinner as the climax of his penalty? So, then, our view is equal with the common one in this respect, while it possesses great advantages over it in another; for while that has to find its degrees of punishment in intensity of pain alone, the duration in all cases being the same, this may not only have degrees in pain but in duration also; inasmuch as some may perish in a short space of time, and the weary sufferings of others be long drawn out. But yet we apprehend that the bodily suffering will be but an unnoticed trifle compared with the mental agony, that keen anguish which will rack their souls as they get a view of their incomparable loss, each according to his capacity of appreciation. The youth who had but little more than reached the years of accountability, being less able to comprehend his situation and his loss, will of course feel it less; to him of older years, more capacity, and consequently a deeper experience in sin, the burden of his fate will be proportionately greater; while the man of giant intellect and almost

boundless comprehension,--who hence possessed greater influence for evil, and so was the more guilty for devoting his powers to the service of that evil,--being able to understand his situation fully, comprehend his fate, and realize his loss, will feel it most keenly of all. Into his soul the iron will indeed enter most intolerably deep. And thus, by an established law of mind, the sufferings of each may be most accurately adjusted to the magnitude of his guilt.

That the degree of suffering which each one is to endure is taken into the account as a part of the punishment of his crimes, is evident from Rom. 2:6-10. Paul, here speaking of the future “judgment of God,” says:--

“Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality [he will render], eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness [he will render], indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of

man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.”

The Book of Life.--Why, it may be asked, is the book of life brought forth on this occasion, when all who have part in the second resurrection, beyond which this scene is located, are already forejudged to the second death? One apparent reason, at least, is, That it may be seen that none of the names of all the multitude who die the second death are in the book of life, and why they are not there; and if the names have ever been there, why they were not retained; that all the intelligences of the universe may see that God acts with strict justice and impartiality.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” This is the final epitaph of all the forces that have risen up from first to last, to oppose the will and work of the Lord Almighty. Satan originated and led out in this nefarious work. A portion of heaven’s angels joined him in his false position and murderous work; and for him and them the everlasting fire

was prepared. Matthew 25:41. Men become involved therein only because they join him in his rebellion. But here the controversy closes. The fire is to them everlasting because it allows of no escape. The second death is their punishment, and it is. “everlasting punishment” (Matthew 25:46) because they never find release from its dread embrace. “The wages of sin is death.”

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Reader, is your name written in the book of life? Are you striving to avert in your own case the fearful doom that awaits the ungodly? Rest not till you have reason to believe that your name is registered in the list of those who are to share at last in the blessings of eternal life.

Notes:

1. Charles Beecher, in *Redeemer and Redeemed*, pp. 67, 68.
2. Hudson’s *Christ our Life*, p. 146.
3. On the expression, “tormented day and night

forever and ever,” see on chapter 14:12.

Chapter 21

The New Jerusalem

The burden of this chapter, commencing with verse 2, is the New Jerusalem; but before that is introduced, John tells us of how the present heaven and earth and sea, are to be disposed of, as follows:--

Verse 1. And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

New Heaven and New Earth.--By the first heaven and first earth, John unquestionably means the present heaven and earth, "the heavens and the earth which are now." 2 Peter 3:7. Some have supposed that when the Bible speaks of the third heaven, in which are paradise and the tree of life (2 Corinthians 12:2; Revelation 2:7), it refers to the heaven which is yet future, and does not prove that there is a paradise and tree of life literally in existence in heaven at the present time. They base

their view on the fact that Peter speaks of three heavens and earths,--(1) those before the flood, (2) the ones which now are, and (3) the ones which are to come. But that theory is completely overturned by the first verse of Revelation 21; for John here reckons but two heavens and earths. The ones which now are he calls the first, so that the future new heavens would, according to this count, be the second, and not the third, as Peter reckons. Hence it is certain that Peter did not design to establish a numerical order, in accordance with which we should speak of the one as the first, the other as the second, and the last as the third. The object of his reasoning was simply to show that as a literal heaven and earth succeeded to the destruction of the earth by the flood, so a literal heaven and earth would result from the renovation of the present system by fire. There is no proof, therefore, that the Bible, when it speaks of the third heaven, refers simply to the third state of the present heavens and earth, for then all the Bible writers would uniformly have so reckoned it. Thus the arguments of those who would endeavor to disprove the idea of a literal paradise and tree of life in existence at

the present time, fall to the ground. The Bible certainly recognizes three heavens in the present constitution of things; namely, the first, or atmospheric heaven, which the fowls of the air inhabit; the second, the planetary heaven, the region of the sun, moon, and stars; and the third, high above the others, where paradise and the tree of life are found (Revelation 2:7); where God has his residence and his throne (Revelation 22:1, 2); to which Paul was caught up in heavenly vision (2 Corinthians 12:2); to which Christ ascended when he left the earth (Revelation 12:5); where he now, as priest-king, sits upon the throne with his Father (Zechariah 6:13); and where the glorious city stands, awaiting the saints when they enter into life. (Revelation 21:2) Blessed be God that from that bright land intelligence has been brought to this far-off world of ours! and thanks be to his holy name that a way has been opened from the dark places of earth, which leads like a straight and shining path of light up to those blest abodes!

The Sea No More.--Because John says, "And there was no more sea," the question is sometimes

asked, “Is there, then, to be no sea in the new earth?” It does not certainly follow from this text that there will be none; for John is speaking only of the present heaven and earth and sea. It might be translated thus: “For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and the sea was no more;” that is, the old sea no longer appeared, any more than the old heaven and old earth; and yet there may be a new sea as there is a new earth.

Dr. Clarke says on this passage: “The sea no more appeared than did the first heaven and earth. All was made new; and probably the new sea occupied a different position, and was differently distributed, from that of the old sea.”

The river of life, of which we read in the following chapter, proceeding from the throne of God, and flowing through the broad street of the city, must find some place into which to discharge its waters; and what can that be but the new-earth sea? That there will be a sea, or seas, in the new earth, may be inferred from the prophecy which speaks of Christ’s future reign as follows: “And his

dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” (Zechariah 9:10) But that three quarters of the globe will then, as now, be abandoned to a waste of waters, cannot be expected. The new world will have everything which will contribute to its utility and beauty.

Verse 2. And I John saw the holy city. New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The Father's House.--In connection with the view which John has of the holy city coming down from God out of heaven, a voice is heard, saying, "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will

dwell with them.” The conclusion naturally follows that the tabernacle here mentioned is the city. This same city is called in John 14 the Father’s house in which are many mansions. If an objection should arise in any mind that this is too permanent a place to be called a tabernacle, we reply that the word “tabernacle” sometimes has the signification of a permanent dwelling-place. The great God takes up his abode on this earth; but we do not suppose that God is confined to this, or any other one of the worlds of his creation. He here has a throne, and the earth enjoys so much of his presence that it may be said that he dwells among men. And why should this be thought a strange thing? God’s only begotten Son is here as ruler of his special kingdom; the holy city, which is called the Father’s house, and which it is natural to suppose will be the most beautiful and glorious object in the universe, will be here; and the heavenly hosts take an interest in this world probably above what they feel in any other; yea, reasoning from one of the Saviour’s parables, there will be more joy in heaven over one world redeemed than over ninety and nine which have needed no redemption.

No Cause for Tears.--And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. He does not literally wipe away tears from the eyes of his people; for there will be no tears in that kingdom to be thus wiped away; but he wipes away tears by removing all causes of tears.

Verse 5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

The New Creation.--He that sits upon the throne is the same being that is mentioned in verses 11, 12 of the preceding chapter. He says, "I make all things new;" not, I make all new things. The earth is not destroyed, annihilated, and a new one created, but all things are made over new. Let us rejoice that these words are true and faithful. And when this is accomplished, all will be ready for the

utterance of that sublime sentence, "It is done." The dark shadow of sin has then forever passed off from the universe. The wicked, root and branch (Malachi 4:1), are wiped out of the land of the living, and the universal anthem of praise and thanksgiving (Revelation 5:13) goes up from a redeemed world and a clean universe to a covenant-keeping God.

Verse 7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. 8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The Great Inheritance.--The overcomers are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29) The promise embraces the world (Romans 4:13); and the saints will go forth upon the new earth, not as servants or aliens, but as lawful heirs to the heavenly estate and

proprietors of the soil.

The Fear that Hath Torment.--But the fearful and unbelieving have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. The word “fearful” has been a trouble to some conscientious ones, who have had fears more or less in all their Christian experience. It may be well, therefore, to inquire what kind of fear is here meant. It is not fear of our own weakness, or of the power of the tempter; it is not fear of sinning, or of falling out by the way, or of coming short at last. Such fear will be very apt to drive us to the Lord. But it is a fear connected with unbelief; a fear of the ridicule and opposition of the world; a fear to trust God, and venture out upon his promises; a fear that he will not fulfill what he has declared, and that consequently we shall be left to shame and loss for believing on him. Cherishing such fear one can be only half-hearted in his service. This is most dishonoring to God. This is the fear which we are commanded not to have. Isaiah 51:7. This is the fear which brings into condemnation here, and will finally bring all who are controlled by it into the

lake of fire, which is the second death.

Verse 9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The Bride, the Lamb's Wife.--This testimony is

positive that the New Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. The angel told John distinctly that he would show him the bride, the Lamb's wife; and we may be sure that he did not practice upon him a piece of deception, but fulfilled his promise to the very letter; but all that he did show him was the New Jerusalem. It would be unnecessary to offer a word of proof that this city is not the church, were it not that popular theology has so mystified the Scriptures as to give it this application. This city, then, cannot be the church, because it would be absurd to talk of the church as lying foursquare, and having a north side, a south side, an east side, and a west side. It would be absurd to speak of the church as having a wall great and high, and having twelve gates, three on each side toward the four points of the compass. Indeed, the whole description of the city which is given in this chapter would be more or less an absurdity if applied to the church.

Again: Paul, to the Galatians, speaks of the same city, and says that it is the mother of us all, referring to the church. The church, then, is not the

city itself, but the children of the city. And verse 24 of the chapter under comment, speaks of the nations of the saved, who walk in the light of this city. These nations, who are the saved, and on earth constitute the church, are distinct from the city, in the light of which they walk. It follows that the city is a literal city, built of all the precious materials here described.

But how can it then be the bride, the Lamb's wife? Answer: Inspiration has seen fit to speak of it under this figure, and with every believer in the Bible, that should be sufficient. The figure is first introduced in Isaiah 54. The new-covenant city is there brought to view. It is represented as being desolate while the old covenant was in force, and the Lord's care was confined to the Jews and old Jerusalem; but it is said to her that "the children of the desolate" shall be many more than "the children of the married wife." It is further said to her, "Thy Maker is thy husband;" and the closing promise of the Lord to this city, contains a very similar description to the one which we have here in Revelation; namely, "I will lay thy stones with

fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord.” It is this very promise to which Paul refers, and upon which he comments in his Epistle to the Galatians, when he says, “But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all” (Galatians 4:26); for he quotes, in the next verse, this very prophecy from the book of Isaiah to sustain this declaration. Here, then, Paul makes an inspired application of Isaiah’s prophecy which cannot be mistaken; and in this he shows that under the figure of a “woman,” a “wife” whose “children” were to be multiplied, the Lord by the prophet speaks of the New Jerusalem, the city above, as contrasted with the earthly Jerusalem in the land of Palestine; and of this city the Lord calls himself the “husband.” In addition to this, we have the positive testimony of the twenty-first chapter of Revelation to the same facts.

With this view, all is harmony. Christ is called the Father of his people (Isaiah 9:6); the Jerusalem

above is called our mother, and we are called the children; and, carrying out the figure of a marriage, Christ is represented as the Bridegroom, the city as the bride, and we, the church, as the guests. There is no confusion of parties here. But the popular view, which makes the city the church, and the church the bride, exhibits the inexcusable confusion of making the church at the same time both mother and children, both bride and guests.

The view that the marriage of the Lamb is the inauguration of Christ as King upon the throne of David, and that the parables of Matthew 22:1-14; 25:1-13; Luke 12:35-37; 19:12, 13, etc., apply to that event, is further confirmed by a well-known ancient custom. It is said that when a person took his position as ruler over the people, and was invested with that power, it was called a marriage, and the usually accompanying feast was called a marriage supper. Dr. Clarke, in his note on Matthew 22:2, thus speaks of it:--

“A marriage for his son.] A marriage feast, so the word ..μ... properly means. Or a feast of

inauguration, when his son was put in possession of the government, and thus he and his new subjects became married together. Many eminent critics so understand this parable as indicating the Father's induction of his Son into his Messianic kingdom. (See 1 Kings 1:5-9, 19, 25, etc., where such a feast is mentioned.)”

A Christian City.--The names of the twelve apostles in the foundations of the city, show it to be a Christian and not a Jewish city; while the names of the twelve tribes on the gates, show that all the saved, from this dispensation as well as from the former, are reckoned as belonging to some one of the twelve tribes; for all must enter the city through some one of these twelve gates. It is this fact which explains those instances in which Christians are called Israel, and are addressed as the twelve tribes, as in Romans 2:28, 29; 9:6-8; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 2:12, 13; James 1:1; Revelation 7:4.

Verse 15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16. And the city

lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the hight of it are equal. 17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

The City's Dimensions.--According to this testimony the city is laid out in a perfect square, measuring equally on all sides. The measure of the city, John declares, was twelve thousand furlongs. Twelve thousand furlongs, eight furlongs to the mile, equal fifteen hundred English miles. It may be understood that this measure is the measure of the whole circumference of the city, and not merely of one side. This appears, from Kitto, to have been the ancient method of measuring cities. The whole circumference was taken, and that was said to be the measure of the city. According to this rule, the New Jerusalem will be three hundred and seventy-five miles on each side. The length, breadth, and

height of it are equal. From this language, the question has arisen whether the city was as high as it was long and broad. The word rendered equal is .s.. (isos); and from the definitions given by Liddell and Scott, we learn that it may be used to convey the idea of proportion: the height was proportionate to the length and breadth. And this idea is strengthened by the fact that the wall was only a hundred and forty-four cubits high. Taking the cubit at about twenty-two inches, the length which is most commonly assigned to the ancient cubit, it would give only two hundred and sixty-four feet as the height of the wall. Now, if the city is just as high as it is long and broad, that is, three hundred and seventy-five miles, this wall of less than three hundred feet would be, in comparison, a most insignificant affair. Probably, therefore, the height of the buildings of the city is to be judged of by the height of the wall, which is distinctly given.

The following criticisms on verse 16, the verse which gives the dimensions of the heavenly city, are undoubtedly correct:--

“It has been inferred from the above text that the New Jerusalem City is to be as high as it is long, and that its length will be twelve thousand furlongs, or fifteen hundred miles. It seems to us entirely unnecessary to place such a construction upon the language. The word equal does not always mean the same as to dimensions or position; it is frequently used in the sense of proportion. If we were to say that the length and the breadth and the height of the city were in proportion, we should not violate the language.” This view is taken by Jas. Du Pui, A. M., in his Exposition of the Apocalypse. The following from Thomas Wicks, author of Lectures on the Apocalypse, presents the same idea: “The language, however, will bear another meaning, which is far more natural. It is not that the length and breadth and height were severally equal to each other, but equal with themselves; that is, the length was everywhere the same, and the breadth everywhere the same, and the height the same. It was perfect and symmetrical in all its proportions. This is confirmed by the fact distinctly stated, that the wall was one hundred and forty-four cubits

high, or two hundred and sixteen feet, a proper height for a wall; while it is said that ‘the length is as large as the breadth.’” This writer allows but eighteen inches to the cubit.

The Greek word *isos*, which is translated equal, will, according to Pickering, bear the meaning of proportion. Greenfield, in defining one of its cognate words (*isotes*), gives to it the sense of “equal proportion,” and refers to 2 Corinthians 8:13, 14 as an example where this definition is quite admissible.

It would appear, therefore, that the height of the city was proportionate to its length and breadth, and not that it was as high as it was long. The text certainly admits of this interpretation; and this frees the language from all ambiguity, and the city from all disproportion, and shows perfect harmony in the general description.

The building of the wall was of jasper. Jasper is a precious stone usually described as of “a beautiful bright green color, sometimes clouded

with white or spotted with yellow.” This we understand to be the material of the main body of the wall built upon the twelve foundations hereafter described. And let it be remembered that this jasper wall was “clear as crystal” (verse 11), revealing all the glories within.

Verse 19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; 20. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

A Literal City.--If we consider this description exclusively metaphorical, as is done by the great mass of those who profess to be Bible teachers, and spiritualize away this city into aerial nothingness, how unmeaning, yea, even bordering upon folly, do these minute descriptions appear; but if we take it, as it is evidently designed to be understood, in

its natural and obvious signification, and look upon the city as the Revelator evidently designed we should look upon it, as a literal and tangible abode, our glorious inheritance, the beauties of which we are to look upon with our own eyes, how is the glory of the scene enhanced!

It is in this light, though it is not for mortal man, of himself, to conceive of the grandeur of those things which God has prepared for those that love him, that men may delight to contemplate the glories of their future abode. We love to dwell upon those descriptions which convey to our minds, as well as language can do it, an idea of the loveliness and beauty which shall characterize our eternal home. And as we become absorbed in the contemplation of an inheritance tangible and sure, courage springs up anew, hope revives, faith plumes her wings; and with feelings of thanksgiving to God that he has placed it within our power to gain an entrance to the mansions of the redeemed, we resolve anew, despite the world and all its obstacles, that we will be among the sharers in the proffered joy. Let us, then, look at

the precious foundation stones of that great city through whose gates of pearl God's people may hope soon to enter.

The Glorious Foundation.--“The word adorned” (garnished), says Stuart, “may raise a doubt here whether the writer means to say that into the various courses of the foundation ornamental precious stones were only here and there inserted; but taking the whole description together, I do not apprehend this to have been his meaning.

“Jasper, as we have seen above, is usually a stone of green, transparent color, with red veins; but there are many varieties.

“Sapphire is a beautiful azure, or sky-blue, color, almost as transparent and glittering as a diamond.

“Chalcedony seems to be a species of agate, or more properly the onyx. The onyx of the ancients was probably of a bluish white, and semipellucid.

“The emerald was of a vivid green, and next to the ruby in hardness.

“Sardonyx is a mixture of chalcedony and carnelian, which last is of a flesh-color.

“Sardius is probably the carnelian. Sometimes, however, the red is quite vivid.

“Chrysolite, as its name imports, is of a yellow or gold color, and is pellucid. From this was probably taken the conception of the pellucid gold which constitutes the material of the city.

“Beryl is of a sea-green color.

“The topaz of the present day seems to be reckoned as yellow; but that of the ancients appears to have been pale green. Plin., 38, 8, Bellermand. Urim et Thummim, p. 37.

“Chrysoprasus, of a pale yellow and greenish color, like a scallion; sometimes it is classed at the

present day under topaz.

“Hyacinth [jacinth], of a deep red or violet color.

“Amethyst, a gem of great hardness and brilliancy, of a violet color, and usually found in India.

“In looking over these various classes, we find the first four to be of a green or bluish cast, the fifth and sixth, of a red or scarlet; the seventh, yellow; the eighth, ninth, and tenth, of different shades of the lighter green; the eleventh and twelfth of a scarlet or splendid red. There is classification, therefore, in this arrangement; a mixture not dissimilar to the arrangement in the rainbow, with the exception that it is more complex.”

Verse 21. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

The Gates of Pearl.--Whether we understand that these gates were of solid pearl, or whether composed of pearls thickly set in a framework of some other precious material, does not materially affect the testimony. If it should be objected that it would be contrary to the nature of things to have a pearl large enough for a gate, we reply that God is able to produce it; the objection simply limits the power of God. But in either case the gates would outwardly have the appearance of pearl, and in ordinary language would be described as gates of pearl.

The Streets of Burnished Gold.--In this verse, as also in verse 18, the city is spoken of as built of gold, pure, like unto clear glass, or, as it were, transparent glass. It is not necessary to conclude from this language that the gold is of itself transparent. Take that, for instance, which composes the street. If it were really transparent, it would simply permit us to look through and behold whatever was beneath the city,--the substratum upon which it rested,--a view which cannot be

anticipated as specially pleasing. But let us suppose the golden pavement of the street to be so highly polished as to possess perfect powers of reflection, like the truest mirror, and we can see at once that the effect would be grand and striking in the extreme. Think for a moment what the appearance of a street so paved would be. The gorgeous palaces on either side would be reflected beneath, and the boundless expanse of the heavens above would also appear below; so that to the person walking those golden streets it would appear that both himself and the city were suspended between the infinite heights above and the unfathomable depths below, while the mansions on either side of the street, having equal powers of reflection, would marvelously multiply both palaces and people, and conspire to render the whole scene novel, pleasing, beautiful, and grand beyond conception.

Verse 22. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

The Living Temple.--With the temple is

connected the idea of sacrifices and a mediatorial work; but when the city is located upon the earth, there will be no such work to be performed. Sacrifices and offerings, and all mediatorial work based thereon, will be forever past; hence there will be no need of the outward symbol of such work. But the temple in old Jerusalem, besides being a place for sacrificial worship, was the beauty and glory of the place; and as if to anticipate the question that might arise as to what would constitute the ornament and glory of the new city if there was to be no temple therein, the prophet answers, “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” It appears that there is now a temple in the city. Chapter 16:17. What becomes of that temple when the city comes down, revelation does not inform us. Possibly it is removed from the city, or it may be put to such a different use as to cease to be the temple of God.

Verse 23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. 24. And the nations of them which

are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. 25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. 26. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. 27. And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

No Night There.--It is in the city alone, probably, that there is no night. There will of course be days and nights in the new earth, but they will be days and nights of surpassing glory. The prophet, speaking of this time, says, "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Isaiah 30:26. But if the light of the moon in that state is as the light of the sun, how can there be said to be night there? Answer: The light of the sun shall be sevenfold, so

that although the night is as our day, the day will be sevenfold brighter, making the contrast between day and night there as marked, perhaps, as at the present time; but both will be surpassingly glorious.

Verse 24 speaks of nations and kings. The nations are the nations of the saved; and we are all kings, in a certain sense, in the new-earth state. We possess a “kingdom,” and are to “reign” forever and ever.

But it appears from some of our Saviour’s parables, as in Matthew 25:21, 23, that some will occupy in a special sense the position of rulers, and may thus be spoken of as kings of the earth, in connection with the nations of the saved. These bring their glory and honor into the city, when on the Sabbaths and new moons they there come up to worship before God. Isaiah 66:23.

Reader, do you want a part in the unspeakable and eternal glories of this heavenly city? See to it, then, that your name is written in the Lamb’s book

of life; for those only whose names are on that heavenly “roll of honor” can enter there.

Chapter 22

The Tree and the River of Life

Verse 1. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The angel continues to show John the wonderful things of the city of God. In the midst of the street of the city was the tree of life.

The Broad Street.--Although the word street is here used in the singular number, with the definite article the before it, it is not to be supposed that there is but one street in the city; for there are twelve gates, and there must of course be a street leading to each gate. But the street here spoken of is the street by way of distinction; it is the main

street, or, as the original word signifies, the broad way, the great avenue.

The River of Life.--The tree of life is in the midst of this street; but the tree of life is on either side of the river of life; hence the river of life is also in the midst of the street of the city. This river proceeds from the throne of God. The picture thus presented before the mind is this: The glorious throne of God at the head of this broad way, or avenue; out of that throne the river of life, flowing lengthwise through the center of the street; and the tree of life growing on either side, forming a high and magnificent arch over that majestic stream, and spreading its life-bearing branches far away on either hand. How broad this broad street is, we have no means of determining; but it will be at once perceived that a city three hundred and seventy-five miles from side to side in either direction, would be able to devote quite an ample space to its great avenue.

A very natural conception of the arrangement of the streets of the city would be that shown in the

accompanying diagram; namely, the throne in the center, and a grand avenue in which is the river of life and the tree of life extending out in four directions to the wall of the city on all of its four sides. This would give all corresponding parts of the city equal access to the grand avenue. It would also furnish opportunity for one magnificent gate in the center of each side of the city, opening upon the grand avenue. The length of each of these four branches of the avenue (depending of course on how much space is allotted to the throne) would be at least some one hundred and eighty miles. It may be said that this is carrying speculation a degree too far. Perhaps it is. But it is assumed that those who hope soon to enter into that city, will not be averse to a little innocent speculation in that direction.

The Tree of Life.--But how can the tree of life be but one tree, and still be on either side of the river? 1. It is evident that there is but one tree of life. From Genesis to Revelation it is spoken of as but one--the tree of life. 2. To be at once on both sides of the river, it must have more than one trunk, in which case it must be united at the top or in its

upper branches, in order to form but one tree. John, caught away in the Spirit, and presented with a minute view of this wonderful object, says that it was on either side of the river. Another who has been privileged to behold in vision the marvelous glories of the heavenly land, has borne similar testimony: “We all marched in, and felt that we had a perfect right in the city. Here we saw the tree of life and the throne of God. Out of the throne came a pure river of water, and on either side of the river was the tree of life. At first I thought I saw two trees. I looked again, and saw that they were united at the top in one tree. So it was the tree of life on either side of the river of life; its branches bowed to the place where we stood; and the fruit was glorious, which looked like gold mixed with silver.”--*Experience and Views*, pp. 12, 13. And why should such a tree be looked upon as unnatural or impossible, since we have an illustration of it here upon earth? The banyan tree of India is of precisely the same nature in this respect. Of this tree the *Encyclopedia Americana* thus speaks: “The *ficus Indica* (Indian fig, or banyan tree) has been celebrated from antiquity from its letting its

branches drop and take root in the earth, which in their turn become trunks, and give out other branches, a single tree thus forming a little forest.” In just this way the tree of life could extend and support itself.

The tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit, and yields its fruit every month. This fact throws light upon the declaration in Isaiah 66:23, that all flesh shall come up “from one new moon to another” to worship before the Lord of hosts. The words new moon should be rendered month.

The Hebrew has (hhodesh), the second definition of which Gesenius gives as “a month.” The Septuagint has (mena ek menos), “from month to month.” The redeemed come up to the holy city from month to month to partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Its leaves are for the healing of the nations; literally, the service of the nations. This cannot be understood as implying that any will enter the city in a diseased or deformed condition to need healing; for then the conclusion would follow that there will always be persons there in

that condition, as we have no reason to understand that the service of the leaves, whatever it is, will not be perpetual, like the use of the fruit; but the idea of disease and deformity in the immortal state is contrary to the express declarations of other scriptures.

Verse 3. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

This language proves that the great God, the Father, is referred to, as well as the Son. The marks of the curse, the deadly miasma, and the ghastly scenes of desolation and decay, will no more be seen on the earth. Every breeze will be balmy and life-giving; every scene, beauty; and every sound, music.

Verse 4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

The word his, in the sentence, “And they shall see his face,” refers to the Father; for he is the one

whose name is in their foreheads; and that it is the Father, we learn from chapter 14:1. This will be a fulfillment of the promise in Matthew 5:8, “Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God.”

Verse 5. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever. 6. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. 7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Here, again, we have the declaration that there shall be no night in the city; for the Lord God will be the light of the place. Verse 7 proves that Christ is the speaker, a fact which it is of especial importance to bear in mind in connection with verse 14. To keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book is to obey the duties brought to view in

connection with the prophecy, as, for instance, in chapter 14:9-12.

Verse 8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. 9. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. 12. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

(For remarks on verse 9, see on chapter 19:10.) In verse 10 John is told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of this book. The popular theology of our day says that the book is sealed. One of two

things follows from this: either John disobeyed his instructions, or the theology above referred to is fulfilling Isaiah 29:10-14. Verse 11 proves that probation closes, and the cases of all are unalterably fixed, before the coming of Christ; for in the very next verse Christ says, “Behold, I come quickly.” What dangerous and insane presumption, then, to claim, as Age-to-come believers do, that there will be probation even after that event! Christ’s reward is with him, to give every man as his work shall be, which is another conclusive proof that there can be no probation after that event; for all the living wicked, those “who know not God,” the heathen, and those “who obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ,” the sinners of Christian lands (2 Thessalonians 1:8), will be visited with swift destruction from Him who then comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on his foes.

The declaration of verse 11 marks the close of probation, which is the close of Christ’s work as mediator. But we are taught by the subject of the sanctuary that this work closes with the

examination of the cases of the living in the investigative Judgment. When this is accomplished, the irrevocable fiat can be pronounced. But when the cases of the living are reached in the work of judgment, we apprehend that what remains to be done will be so speedily accomplished that all these cases may almost be said to be decided simultaneously. We have therefore no occasion to speculate as to the order of work among the living; that is, whose cases will be decided first, and whose last, nor whether or not it will be known that any are decided before all is finished.

Verse 13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

Christ here applies to himself the appellation of Alpha and Omega. As applied to him, the expression must be taken in a more limited sense than when applied to the Father, as in chapter 1:8.

Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, of the great plan of salvation. Verse 14, as before noticed, is the language of Christ. The commandments of which he speaks are his Father's. Reference can be had only to the ten commandments as delivered on Mount Sinai. He pronounces a blessing upon those who keep them. Thus in the closing chapter of the word of God, and near the very close of the last testimony which the faithful and true Witness there left for his people, he solemnly pronounces a blessing upon those who keep the commandments of God. Let those who believe in the abolition of the law, candidly consider the decisive bearing of this important fact.

Instead of the reading, "Blessed are they that do his commandments," some translations, including the Revised Version, have, "Blessed are they that wash their robes." On this point Alford's Testament for English Readers has this note: "The difference in the readings is curious, being in the original that between *poiountes tas entolas autou*, and *plunontes tas stolas auton*, either of which might easily be mistaken for the other." In view of

this statement, it is not surprising, perhaps, that this difference of reading is found. But there seems to be good evidence that the first is the original, from which the latter is a variation by the errors of transcribers. Thus the Syriac New Testament, one of the very earliest translations from the original Greek, reads according to the common English version. And Cyprian, whose writings antedate any extant Greek manuscript (Ante-Nicene Library, Vol. XIII, p. 122), quotes the text as reading, "Blessed are they that do his commandments." We may therefore safely consider this as the genuine reading.

Verse 15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Dog is the Bible symbol of a shameless and impudent man. Who would wish to be left in the company of those whose lot is outside of the city of God? yet how many will stand condemned as idolaters, how many as those who make lies, and

how many more as those who love them, and love to circulate them after they are made!

Verse 16. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

Jesus testifies these things in the churches, showing that the whole book of Revelation is given to the seven churches, which is another incidental proof that the seven churches are representatives of the church through the entire gospel dispensation. Christ is the offspring of David, in that he appeared on earth in the line of David's descendants. He is the root of David, inasmuch as he is the great prototype of David, and the maker and upholder of all things.

Verse 17. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Thus are all invited to come. The Lord's love for mankind would not be satisfied in merely preparing the blessings of eternal life, opening the way to them, and announcing that all might come who would; but he sends out an earnest invitation to come. He sets it forth as a favor done to himself if persons will come and partake of the infinite blessings provided by his infinite love. His invitation, how gracious! how full! how free! None of those who are finally lost will ever have occasion to complain that the provisions made for their salvation were not sufficiently ample. They can never reasonably object that the light given to show them the way of life was not sufficiently clear. They can never excuse themselves on the ground that the invitations and entreaties that Mercy has given them to turn and live, were not sufficiently full and free. From the very beginning, there has been a power exerted as strong as could be exerted and still leave man his own free agent,-- a power to draw him heavenward, and raise him from the abyss into which he has fallen. Come! has been the entreaty of the Spirit from the lips of God himself, from the lips of his prophets, from the lips

of his apostles, and from the lips of his Son, even while, in his infinite compassion and humility, he was paying the debt of our transgression.

The last message of mercy as it is now going forth, is another and final utterance of divine long-suffering and compassion. Come, is the invitation it gives. Come, for all things are ready. And the last sound that will fall from Mercy's lips on the ear of the sinner ere the thunders of vengeance burst upon him, will be the heavenly invitation, Come. So great is the loving-kindness of a merciful God to rebellious man. Yet they will not come. Acting independently and deliberately, they refuse to come. So when they shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out, they will have no one to accuse, no one to blame, but their own selves. They will be brought to feel this in all its bitterness; for the time will come when Pollok's thrilling description of the condemnation of the lost will be true to the letter:--

“And evermore the thunders murmuring spoke
From out the darkness, uttering loud these

words,

Which every guilty conscience echoed back:

‘Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.’

Dread words! that barred excuse, and threw the weight

Of every man’s perdition on himself

Directly home--

‘Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.’”

The bride also says, Come. But the bride is the city, and how does that say Come? If we could be strengthened to behold the living glories of that city and live, and should be permitted to gaze upon its dazzling beauty, and be assured that we had a perfect right to enter therein and bathe in that ocean of bliss and blessedness and revel in its glory forever and ever, would it not then say to us, Come, with a persuasion which no power could resist? Who of us, in view of this, could turn away, and say, I have no desire for an inheritance there?

But though we cannot now look upon that city, the unfailing word of God has promised it, and that is sufficient to inspire us with implicit and living

faith; and through the channel of that faith it says to us, Come. Come, if you would inherit mansions where sickness, sorrow, pain, and death can never enter; if you would have a right to the tree of life, and pluck its immortal fruit, and eat and live; if you would drink of the water of the river of life, that flows from the throne of God, clear as crystal. Come, if you would obtain through those glittering gates of pearl an abundant entrance into the eternal city; if you would walk its streets of transparent gold; if you would behold its glowing foundation stones; if you would see the King in his beauty on his azure throne. Come, if you would sing the jubilee song of millions, and share their joy. Come, if you would join the anthems of the redeemed with their melodious harps, and know that your exile is forever over, and this is your eternal home. Come, if you would receive a palm of victory and know that you are forever free. Come, if you would exchange the furrows of your care-worn brow for a jeweled crown. Come, if you would see the salvation of the ransomed myriads, the glorified throng which no man can number. Come, if you would drink from the pure fountain of celestial

bliss, if you would shine as the stars forever in the firmament of glory, if you would share in the unutterable rapture that fills the triumphant hosts as they behold before them unending ages of glory ever brightening and joys ever new.

The bride does say, Come. Who of us can resist the invitation? The word of truth is pledged to us that if we keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we shall have right to the tree of life, we shall enter in through the gates into the city. And we shall feel that we are at home in our Father's house, the very mansions prepared for us, and realize the full truth of the cheering words, "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Revelation 19:9.

"Let him that heareth say, Come." We have heard of the glory, of the beauty, of the blessings, of that goodly land, and we say, Come. We have heard of the river with its verdant banks, of the tree with its healing leaves, of the ambrosial bowers that bloom in the Paradise of God, and we say, Come. Whosoever will, let him come, and take of

the water of life freely.

Verse 18. For I testify unto every man that heareth 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: 19. 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 that are written in this book.

What is it to add to, or take from, the book of this prophecy? Let it be borne in mind that it is the book of this prophecy, or the Revelation, which is the subject of remark; hence the words concerning adding to or taking from have exclusive reference to this book. Nothing can be called an addition to this book except something added to it with the intention of having it considered as a genuine part of the book of Revelation. To take from the book would be to suppress some portion of it. As the book of Revelation could not be called an addition to the book of Daniel, so if God should see fit to

make further revelations to us by his Spirit, it would be no addition to the book of Revelation, unless it should claim to be a part of that book.

Verse 20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

The word of God is given to instruct us in reference to the plan of salvation. The second coming of Christ is to be the climax and completion of that great scheme. It is most appropriate, therefore, that the book should close with the solemn announcement, "Surely I come quickly." Be it ours to join with fervent hearts in the response of the apostle, "Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Thus closes the volume of inspiration,--closes with that which constitutes the best of all promises, and the substance of the Christian's hope--the return of Christ. Then shall the elect be gathered, and bid a long farewell to all the ills of this mortal

life. How rich in all that is precious to the Christian is this promise! Wandering an exile in this evil world, separated from the few of like precious faith, he longs for the companionship of the righteous, the communion of saints. Here he shall obtain it; for all the good shall be gathered, not from one land only, but from all lands; not from one age only, but from ages,--the great harvest of all the good, coming up in long and glorious procession, while angels shout the harvest home, and the timbrels of heaven sound forth in joyous concert; and a song before unheard, unknown, in the universe, the song of the redeemed, shall add its marvelous notes of rapture and melody to the universal jubilee. So shall the saints be gathered, to be joyful in each other's presence forever and ever,--

“While the glory of God, like a molten sea,
Bathes the immortal company.”

This gathering has nothing in it but that which is desirable. The saints can but sigh and pray for it. Like Job, they cry out for the presence of God.

Like David, they cannot be satisfied till they awake in his likeness. In this mortal condition we groan, being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon. We can but be “upon tiptoe” for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. Our eyes are open for its visions, our ears are waiting to catch the sounds of the heavenly music, and our hearts are beating in anticipation of its infinite joy. Our appetites are growing sharp for the marriage supper. We cry out for the living God, and long to come into his presence. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. No news more welcome than the announcement that the command has gone forth from the Lord to his angels, Gather together unto me my elect from the four winds of heaven.

The place of gathering has nothing but attraction. Jesus, the fairest among ten thousand, is there. The throne of God and the Lamb, in the glory of which the sun disappears as the stars vanish in the light of day, is there. The city of jasper and gold, whose builder and maker is God, is there. The river of life, sparkling with the glory of God and flowing from his throne in infinite

purity and peace, is there. The tree of life, with its healing leaves and life-giving fruit, is there. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Noah, Job, and Daniel, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, the perfection of heavenly society, will be there. Visions of beauty are there; fields of living green, flowers that never fade, streams that never dry, products in variety that never ends, fruits that never decay, crowns that never dim, harps that know no discord, and all else of which a taste purified from sin and raised to the plane of immortality, can form any conception or think desirable, will be there.

We must be there. We must bask in the forgiving smiles of God, to whom we have become reconciled, and sin no more; we must have access to that exhaustless fount of vitality, the fruit of the tree of life, and never die; we must repose under the shadow of its leaves, which are for the service of the nations, and never again grow weary; we must drink from the life-giving fountain, and thirst nevermore; we must bathe in its silvery spray, and be refreshed; we must walk on its golden sands, and feel that we are no longer exiles; we must

exchange the cross for the crown, and feel that the days of our humiliation are ended; we must lay down the staff and take the palm branch, and feel that the journey is done; we must put off the rent garments of our warfare, for the white robes of triumph, and feel that the conflict is ended and the victory gained; we must exchange the toil-worn, dusty girdle of our pilgrimage, for the glorious vesture of immortality, and feel that sin and the curse can never more pollute us. O day of rest and triumph, and every good, delay not thy dawning! Let the angels at once be sent to gather the elect. Let the promise be fulfilled which bears in its train these matchless glories.

Even So, Come, Lord Jesus.

Appendix A

Resemblance Between Our Own Times and the French Revolution

In the books both of Daniel and the Revelation distinct reference is made to that abnormal national experience known as “The French Revolution.” (See Daniel 11:36-39; Revelation 11:7-10) The time when the principles of irreligion and infidelity were given full opportunity to bud and blossom and bear fruit, that all the world might judge of their nature; when men were left to show to what deeds of darkness the carnal heart would lead, unrestrained by any principles of righteousness and truth, was most appropriately noted in prophecy. And the descriptions given of the character of the last days by the same pen of inspiration, are such as to show that the masses will then fall, to a large extent, if not wholly, under the same principles of evil. While such is the representation of prophecy, it is a serious question in many minds whether the

preliminary stages of this condition of things are not already appearing before our eyes, and if we may not now be on the threshold of one of those eras wherein “history repeats itself ” in its worst forms.

Those who entertain the sentiments concerning the nature of our times set forth in some portions of this work, are often charged with being pessimists, alarmists, and looking too much on the dark side of the picture. To the charge of being alarmists in the bad sense of that term, we do not plead guilty. While there may be such a thing as imagining evils which do not exist, and anticipating trouble which never comes, there is, on the other hand, such a thing as crying, “Peace, peace,” when there is no peace, and shutting our eyes to real danger till it is too late to guard against it, and we find ourselves involved in irretrievable calamity and loss. The wisest of men has said, “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished.” (Proverbs 22:3) Noah was not an alarmist when he warned the world of the approaching catastrophe of the flood: nor Lot,

when he warned the Sodomites that an all-devastating storm of fire was hanging over their doomed city; nor our Lord, when he foretold the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and gave his people directions how to escape it. Let us not be diverted from the real situation by the cry of “alarmist,” nor think that there can be no danger because all do not see it; for St. Paul has warned us that “when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them.” (1 Thessalonians 5:3)

But we need offer no apology for ourselves in this particular; for the strongest utterances we put on record are simply those we find in the secular press of the day. Even so cautious a paper as the Chicago Evening Journal, in its issue of Aug. 26, 1874, under the heading “The Reign of Crime,” drew the following picture of the times, which no one can say have been growing better since that time: --

“If Mr. Beecher used to be rather soft on the doctrine of ‘total depravity,’ we suspect he may have got more light on this point by this time. But

Brooklyn does not by any means monopolize the illustrative evidence of it. Crimes of all sorts and sizes seem just now to be ‘breaking out,’ like the measles, all over the body social. The newspapers, if they give the news at all, have to be darkened with the wretched records of misdoings. We confess that the dailies at the present time are not so cheerful reading as might be. Suicides, murder, and the whole catalogue of offenses against God and man, are startlingly prevalent. Is it symptomatic of some great social disease, the seeds of which have long been growing, but long hidden? Is there some malign moral miasma in the air, some taint in the blood, some great, though subtle, popular error that has been silently conceiving sin, and is at last bringing forth iniquity? Or is it only a kind of spiritual contagion, or epidemic, like the epizootic, for instance, among animals, that has somehow got started, and is sweeping across the continent?

“Such questions are full of significance, even if not easily answered. The philosophy of epidemical influences in society is better understood than it

was a generation ago; but we suspect the subject is far from being cleared up yet. We need more light, both as to the incipient causes and the concomitant conditions which allow such alarming potency to causes that seemed to be latent, until, all at once, they break forth, as if thousands had suddenly taken to the habit of carrying loose powder and matches in the same pocket. ‘As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.’ Is it, then, that somehow communities get to thinking of the same ill things, and the bad thought becomes a tempting suggestion, and forthwith begins to work in the heart like a spark in an oldfashioned tinder-box? If so, one scarcely dares to think of the frightful consequences that may come of this Brooklyn scandal-sowing throughout the land.”

While this extract speaks of our own land, there is testimony to show that an equally alarming state of things prevails in Europe. As a representative statement upon this point, we quote from the distinguished and devoted J. H. Merle D’Aubigné, author of the History of the Reformation, who, just previous to his death, prepared a paper for the

Evangelical Alliance, which was read at a meeting of that association. All thoughtful persons will consider his words most solemn, and his statements as startling as they are true: --

“If the meeting for which you are assembled is an important one, the period at which it is held is equally so, not only on account of the great things which God is accomplishing in the world, but also by reason of the great evils which the spirit of darkness is spreading throughout Christendom. The despotic and arrogant pretensions of Rome have reached in our days their highest pitch, and we are consequently more than ever called upon to contend against that power which dares to usurp the divine attributes. But that is not all. While superstition has increased, unbelief has done so still more. Until now, the eighteenth century -- the age of Voltaire -- was regarded as the epoch of most decided infidelity; but how far does the present time surpass it in this respect! Voltaire himself protested against the philosophy which he called atheistic, and said, ‘God is necessarily the Great, the Only, the Eternal Artificer of all nature’

(Dialogues, xxv). But the pretended philosophers of our day leave such ideas far behind, and regard them as antiquated superstitions. Materialism and atheism have, in many minds, taken the place of the true God. Science, which was Christian in the brightest intellects of former days, in those to whom we owe the greatest discoveries, has become atheistic among men who now talk the loudest. They imagine that by means of general laws which govern the physical world, they can do without Him from whom these laws proceeded. Some remains of animals found in ancient strata of our globe, make them reject the creation of which the Bible inaugurates the account in these solemn words: ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.’

“Eminent literary men continually put forward in their writings what is called Positivism, rejecting everything that goes beyond the limit of the senses, and disdaining all that is supernatural. These evils, which had formerly only reached the upper ranks of society, have now spread to the working classes, and some among them may be heard to say, ‘When

man is dead, all is dead.’ But there is a still sadder feature of our times. Unbelief has reached even the ministry of the word. Pastors belonging to Protestant churches in France, Switzerland, Germany, and other continental countries, not only reject the fundamental doctrines of the faith, but also deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and see in him nothing more than a man, who, according to many of them, was even subject to errors and faults. A synod of the Reformed Church in Holland has lately decreed that when a minister baptizes, he need not do it in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. A journal, when relating this fact, adds, ‘Will they then baptize in the God abyss?’ At an important assembly held lately in German Switzerland, at which were present many men of position both in the church and the state, the basis of the new religion was laid down. ‘No doctrines,’ was the watchword on that occasion. ‘No new doctrines, whatever they may be, in place of the old; liberty alone,’ which means liberty to overthrow everything. And too truly some of those ministers believe neither in a personal God nor in the immortality of the soul. For a portion of the

European population there is no other gospel than that of Spinoza, and often much less even than that.”

Such words from such a source should cause the most thoughtless to pause and consider. Mark the expressions: The spirit of darkness spreading through Christendom, superstition and unbelief increasing, the present age far surpassing that of Voltaire in infidelity, atheism taking the place of God, science becoming atheistic, eminent literary men teaching Positivism; the masses becoming pervaded with these ideas, and even Protestant ministers denying the fundamental facts of the gospel, -- these are the prominent features of the times.

Professor J. Cairus, D. D., of Berwick, England, draws the following picture of the present generation: “The advance, so rapid and wonderful, of science and art, and the progress of education and the diffusion of literature; the self-assertion, by long-oppressed nationalities, of their rights and liberties; the approximation to a commercial and

political unity of the human race, -- all tend to foster the idea of man's inherent capacity, and to set afloat wild and chimerical schemes and hopes of moral regeneration, irrespective of Christianity. The dream of independent morality finds countenance. Theories of spiritual development, more exaggerated and fictitious by far than these of physical development, are accepted. The march of intelligence, or the revolutionary impulse, is to make all things new. Meanwhile, the sad and humbling aspects of the nineteenth century -- its hideous vices and crimes, its luxury, selfishness, and greed set over against pauperism, debasement, and discontent; its wars and international feuds, with everincreasing conscriptions and standing armies -- are overlooked."

Hon. Geo. H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, thus spoke before the Alliance: "The field is the world. It has in it 1,300,000,000 immortal souls, destined to meet us at the Judgment bar of God. Of these 1,300,000,000, there are some 800,000,000 bowing down to stocks and stones, the workmanship of their own hands. Besides these 800,000,000

heathen, there are 110,000,000 Mohammedans and 240,000,000 of other false systems of religion, leaving only 100,000,000 nominal Protestants. It is not for us to say how many of these 100,000,000 are true disciples of our risen and exalted Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Sad, indeed, is the view here presented; and is it not every year growing worse? Students of prophecy are sometimes looked upon as fanatics, because they believe that the second advent of Christ is soon to take place, when all the wicked will be destroyed and the righteous saved. But we ask the candid reader whether the man, who, in the face of all the facts above stated, believes in the speedy conversion of the whole world and the near approach of the millennium, may not more justly be regarded as a fanatic. While a few thousand pagans in heathen lands are receiving the gospel, millions in Christian lands are turning away from it, and embracing socialism, infidelity, and atheism; and among these we find the educated, the scientific, and so-called higher classes taking the lead. But this need not surprise us; for Jesus

himself said respecting the last days, “Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8)

From this general description, let us come to particulars. Every student of history understands that like causes produce like effects, and that indications which foretokened the occurrence of certain events in one age, will generally reappear when similar events are about to transpire in any other age. As in the natural world there must be the gathering of clouds and the accumulation of electricity before the storm, so in the moral and political world there must be the dissemination of principles, the formulation of ideas, and the rousing of passions, before the revolution. Causes which in the past have led to anarchy, rapine, license, and a general disintegration of society, will, if permitted to operate, produce again the same results. The French Revolution of 1789- 1800 stands fixed in history as the “Reign of Terror.” Each succeeding faction which gained power during that awful era shed in torrents the blood of its enemies, until over 2,000,000 lives were sacrificed. All social order

was destroyed. The marriage covenant was abrogated, and lust stalked abroad everywhere, licensed and unrestrained. Christ was declared an impostor, and his religion a fraud. The existence of God was denied, and the reading of his word forbidden. All this was the work of infidelity. Behold, therefore, in that terrible Revolution, the miniature of the world without the restraining influence of God's revelation. And is there danger that this frightful condition of things may be reproduced in our own day? Facts constrain us to answer in the affirmative; for the same causes are operating everywhere to-day which a hundred years ago were at work in France. The same names and principles may be heard and seen all about us. Let us first notice some of the more prominent elements which produced the French Revolution.

1. Spiritualism. -- Says Samuel Smucker in his *Memorable Scenes in French History*, p. 116: "We find in the records of that period, materials and events which prove that then it was that the impostures of modern spiritual rappers and mediums were first practiced, in precisely the same

way and for the same results as they are at the present day. ... Count Cagliostro enabled Cardinal Rohan to sup with the deceased D'Alembert, with the king of Prussia, and with Voltaire, all dead some years before. He convinced His Eminence that the worker of these wonders had himself been present with Christ at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. ... In the triumphs of Cagliostro, of Misner, and of St. Germain, which at this period were at their greatest height, we behold another instance of the uprooting of the firm and stable foundations of society in an excessive desire for novelties, and a restless itching after things new, mysterious, and wonderful.”

As a system of pretended communication with the dead, Spiritualism is as old, at least, as the Mosaic dispensation, for it was strictly forbidden in his day; and it has at favorable epochs manifested itself among men; but its wonder-working phase is peculiar to modern times, and first manifested itself in this country, according to the prophecy of Revelation 13. Its principles and 598 | Daniel and the Revelation spirit found congenial soil in France

in the Revolution. But if what then appeared contributed in any manner to produce the state of society which then existed, what must be its tendency to-day?

2. Infidelity. -- [1], says: “Never let it be forgotten that before the Revolution of 1792, the promoters of infidelity in France are stated to have raised among themselves, and spent, a sum equal to £900,000 in one year, -- nay, again and again. -- in purchasing, printing, and dispersing books to corrupt the minds of the people and prepare them for desperate measures.”

[2], says: “The way for such a revolution was prepared by the writings of Voltaire, Mirabeau, Diderot, Helvetius, D’Alembert, Condorcet, Rousseau, and others of the same stamp, in which they endeavored to disseminate principles subversive both of natural and revealed religion. Revelation was not only impugned, but entirely set aside. The Deity was banished from the universe, and an imaginary phantom, under the name of the Goddess of Reason, substituted in his place. The

carved work of all religious belief and moral practice was boldly cut down by Carnot and Robespierre and their atheistical associates. Nature was investigated by pretended philosophers, only with the view to darken the mind, and prevent mankind from considering anything as real but what the hand could grasp or the corporeal eye perceive.”

The infidelity of to-day, in many respects, according to the quotation from D’Aubigné, leaves that of France at the time of the Revolution, far behind.

3. Socialism. -- Webster makes this word synonymous with “communism,” which he defines as follows: “The reorganizing of society, or the doctrine that it should be reorganized, by regulating property, industry, and the sources of livelihood, and also the domestic relations and social morals of mankind; socialism, especially the doctrine of a community of property, or the negation of individual rights in property.”

These principles were carried into practice in France, and as the result the Revolution blossomed into all its horrid reality. The relations of the different classes of society were completely changed. The monarchy was overthrown, and an infidel republic established on its ruins. The king and queen were beheaded.

[3], says: “The confiscation of two thirds of the landed property in the kingdom, which arose from the decrees of the convention against the emigrants, clergy, and persons convicted at the revolutionary tribunals, ... placed funds worth above £700,000,000 sterling at the disposal of the government.”

Titles of nobility were abolished. It was a conflict between the rich and the poor, between capital and labor. The motto of the Revolution was, “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity” -- blessed words, but, with the strangest inconsistency, wholly outraged and misapplied. The same principles are treated in the same way to-day, and are shouted as the watchword among the discontented masses and

the labor organizations the world over. The principles of socialism, or communism, were probably never so widely diffused as at the present time.

4. Free Love. -- When the existence of the true God was denied, as it was during the French Revolution, and in his place men set up a lewd woman as the Goddess of Reason, and the object of their highest adoration, it was a natural consequence that the sacredness of the marriage relation should be wholly discarded. Marriage was therefore declared a civil contract, binding only during the pleasure of the contracting parties. Divorce became general, and the corruption of manners reached a height never before known in France. One half of the whole number of births in Paris was illegitimate.[4] Free-loveism is an integral part of the spiritualistic movement of our day, not so openly advocated as formerly, but none the less cherished and practiced as a part of the boasted "freedom" to which the human race is attaining.

5. The Commune. -- This word is derived from a small territorial district in France governed by an officer called a mayor. It has come to have a much more extensive application at the present time; but the origin of the word is not so important as the principles which it is taken to represent. Of these we have already had a definition from Webster, and seen a practical illustration in the French Revolution. [5] gives the whole number of persons guillotined during the reign of terror as 1,022,351, besides massacres of other kinds in other places, in some of which the population of whole towns perished. [6], says: "Such was the rapidity with which the work of destruction was carried on, that within the short space of ten years not less than three million human beings... are supposed to have perished in that country alone, chiefly through the influence of immoral principles, and the seductions of a false philosophy."

In connection with this, as showing the tendency of the times, may be mentioned the "International," an association which, not long since, was prominent and created a good deal of

apprehension. The object of its members was to overthrow those whom they esteemed their enemies, namely, kings and capitalists. Its platform was, briefly, the abolition of all class rule and privileges; political and social equality of both sexes; nationalization of land and instruments of production; reduction of hours of labor; education to be controlled by the state, and to be obligatory, gratuitous, and secular; religion to be ignored; a direct system of taxation based upon property, not upon industry; the abolition of all standing armies; and associative production instead of capitalist production.

It will be seen at once that to put these principles into practice would be completely to change the present political and social relations of society. The different branches of this revolutionary body may now go by different names, as Nihilists in Russia, Communists in Germany, Anarchists and Monarchists in France, Fenians and Land-Leaguers in Ireland, the different secret labor organizations in this country, and Socialists everywhere. The principles involved are

similar in all their divisions; the end sought, the same; and in the natural order of things, a great crisis in respect to these movements is inevitable.

The impress of the satanic hand is clearly seen in that the state of society sought for is exactly the opposite of that established by God in the garden of Eden. There God was supreme; Christ, by whom God made all things, was recognized and honored; God's law was the governing rule; a spirit of true worship, prompted by love, controlled man's mind; the marriage relation was sacred; and the Sabbath was honored as God's great memorial. In the French Revolution, God was dethroned, Christ crucified afresh, Christianity denounced, all restraint broken off from the carnal heart, worship discarded, the rest-day abolished, the marriage relation annulled, and society rent into mournful fragments. Let Communism prevail, and such is the state of society we shall have again.

The fruit of this agitation is appearing more and more in the strained relation between labor and capital, all the time growing greater, the

multiplication of “orders” among the working men, and the combination of capital for self-protection, the great strikes and mobs of 1893-95, necessitating even armed intervention on the part of the government. Suspicion and mistrust everywhere prevail; and “What are we coming to?” is the question that trembles on many a lip. Truly, as our Lord said it would be just before his coming, “men’s hearts” are “failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” (Luke 21:26)

Notes:

1. Mr. Anderson, in *The Annals of the English Bible*, p. 494.
2. Dr. Dick, in his work on *The Improvement of Society*, p. 154.
3. *Alison*, Vol. IV, p. 151.
4. See Thiers’s *French Revolution*, Vol. II, p. 380.
5. Thiers’s *French Revolution*, Vol. III, p. 106.
6. Dr. Dick, in his *Improvement of Society*, p. 154.

Appendix B

The “Seven Times” of Leviticus 26

Almost every scheme of the “Plan of the Ages,” “Age-to-come,” etc., makes use of a supposed prophetic period called the “Seven Times;” and the attempt is made to figure out a remarkable fulfillment by events in Jewish and Gentile history. All such speculators might as well spare their pains; for there is no such prophetic period in the Bible.

The term is taken from Leviticus 26, where the Lord denounces judgments against the Jews, if they shall forsake him. After mentioning a long list of calamities down to verse 17, the Lord says: “And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.” (Verse 18) Verses 19 and 20 enumerate the additional judgments, then it is added in verse 21: “And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not

hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.” More judgments are enumerated, and then in verses 23 and 24 the threatening is repeated: “And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.” In verse 28 it is repeated again.

Thus the expression occurs four times, and each succeeding mention brings to view severer punishments, because the preceding ones were not heeded. Now, if “seven times” denotes a prophetic period (2520 years), then we would have four of them, amounting in all to 10,080 years, which would be rather a long time to keep a nation under chastisement.

But we need borrow no trouble on this score; for the expression “seven times” does not denote a period of duration, but is simply an adverb expressing degree, and setting forth the severity of the judgments to be brought upon Israel.

If it denoted a period of time, a noun and its adjective would be used, as in Daniel 4:16: “Let seven times pass over him.” Here we have the noun (times) and adjective (seven); thus, (shibah iddan); but in the passages quoted above from Leviticus 26, the words seven times are simply the adverb (sheba), which means, “sevenfold.” The Septuagint makes the same distinction, using in Daniel 4:16, etc., but in Leviticus simply the adverb.

The expression in Daniel 4:16 is not prophetic, for it is used in plain, literal narration. (See verse 25)

Appendix C

The Ten Divisions of Rome

The ten kingdoms which arose out of the old Roman empire, are symbolized by the ten horns on the fourth beast of Daniel 7. All agree on this point; but there has not been entire unanimity among expositors as to the names of the kingdoms which constituted these divisions. Some name the Huns as one of these divisions, others put the Alemanni in place of the Huns. That the reader may see the general trend of what has been written on this subject, the following facts are presented: --

Machiavelli, the historian of Florence, writing simply as a historian, names the Huns as one of the nations principally concerned in the breaking up of the Roman empire. Among those who have written on this point with reference to the prophecy, may be mentioned, Berengaud, in the ninth century; Mede, 1586-1638; Bossuet, 1627-1704; Lloyd, 1627-1717; Sir Isaac Newton, 1642-1727; Bishop Newton, 1704-1782; Hales, -----1821; Faber,

1773-1854.

Of these nine authorities, eight take the position that the Huns were one of the ten kingdoms; of these eight, two, Bossuet and Bishop Newton, followed by Dr. Clarke, have both the Huns and the Alemanni; only one, Mede, omits the Huns and takes the Alemanni. Thus eight favor the view that the Huns were represented by one of the horns; two, while not rejecting the Huns, consider the Alemanni one of the horns; one rejects the Huns and takes the Alemanni. Scott and Barnes, in their commentaries, and Oswald, in his Kingdom that Shall not be Moved, name the Huns.

Appendix D

Biographical Sketches

Prominent Martyrs

John de Wycliffe, born about 1324, styled the “Morning Star of the Reformation,” was an English divine, whose piety and talents procured him one of the highest ecclesiastical positions of honor. Having openly preached against the corruptions of the Roman Church, he was displaced, the pope issuing several bulls against him for heresy. Accordingly, he was examined by an assembly, but made so able a defense that it ended without determination. Continuing to denounce papal corruptions, ordinances, and power, he was again summoned before a synod, but was released by order of the king’s mother. It is remarkable that although he continued his vehement attacks upon vital points of Romish doctrine, he escaped the fate of others similarly accused; but over forty years after his death, which occurred in 1384, his bones were exhumed, burned, and cast into the River

Swift, which bore them through the Severn to the sea, his very dust thus becoming emblematic of his doctrine, now diffused the world over. His most important work was the first English version of the Bible.

John Huss, the celebrated reformer, was a native of Bohemia, born in 1370, and educated at the university at Prague, where he received the degree of master of arts, and became rector of the University and confessor to the Queen. Obtaining some of the writings of Wycliffe, he saw the errors and corruption of the Romish Church, which he freely exposed, though persecuted by several popes. By his teaching, a reformation began in the University, to check which the archbishop issued two decrees; but the new doctrine spreading still more, he was finally brought before a council, thrown into prison, and after some months' confinement, sentenced to be burned. Though urged at the stake to recant, he firmly refused, and until stifled with smoke, continued to pray and to sing with a clear voice. He was burned in 1415, and his ashes, and even the soil on which they lay,

were carefully removed, and thrown into the Rhine.

Jerome of Prague, who derived his surname from the town where he was born somewhere between 1360 and 1370, completed his studies at the university of the same name, after which he traveled over the greater part of Europe. At Paris he received the degree of master of arts, and at Oxford he became acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe, translating many of them into his own language. On his return to Prague, he openly professed Wycliffe's doctrines, and assisted Huss in the work of the Reformation. Upon the arrest of the latter, he also expressed his willingness to appear before the council in defense of his faith, and desired a safe-conduct of the emperor. This was not granted, but on his way home he was seized, carried to Constance, and after the martyrdom of Huss, threatened with like torments. In a moment of weakness, he abjured the faith; but on being released, bemoaned his sin, and publicly renounced his recantation, for which he was consigned to the flames, 1416.

William Tyndale, an eminent English divine, was born about 1484. He received an ample education at Cambridge and Oxford, and took holy orders. Embracing the doctrines of the Reformation, he excited so much enmity among Romanists by his zeal and ability in expounding them, that he was compelled to seek refuge in Germany. Believing that the Scriptures should be read by the masses in the vernacular, he produced a complete version of the New Testament in English, which, though ordered to be suppressed, was in such demand that six editions were published. This version was also the model and basis of that of King James, and is but little more obsolete. He also translated the Pentateuch. For these and other reformatory writings, he was arrested at Antwerp at the instigation of the English government, and after eighteen months' imprisonment, was burned, first being strangled by the hangman, 1536.

Thomas Cranmer, the first Protestant archbishop of Canterbury, was born in 1489. Although saintly in his professions as a divine, he was somewhat politic as a statesman, and thus was

well suited to unite the religious and worldly enemies of popery. He was also a servile adherent of Henry VIII. After the death of the latter, he joined the upholders of Lady Jane Grey, who was also a Protestant, and was accordingly sent to the Tower on the accession of Mary; and being accused of heresy by the papal party, was burned at Oxford, 1556. As a reformer, he introduced the Bible into the churches, and so used his influence as a regent of Edward VI that the Reformation greatly prospered during the young monarch's reign. Shortly before his martyrdom, he signed a recantation contrary to his convictions, in hope of life; but at the stake he was more -courageous, first thrusting into the flames the hand which signed the document, exclaiming many times, "O my unworthy right hand!"

Hugh Latimer, born about 1490, one of the chief promoters of the Reformation in England, was educated at Cambridge, receiving the degree - of master of arts. At the beginning of the Reformation, he was a zealous papist; but after conversing with the martyr Bilney, he renounced

the Catholic faith, and labored earnestly in preaching the gospel. Henry VIII, being pleased with his discourses, made him bishop of Worcester; but being opposed to some of the king's measures, Latimer finally resigned. After the death of his patron, Cromwell, the latter's enemies sought him out, and he was sent to the Tower. He was released by Edward VI, but refused to be restored to his diocese, and remained with Cranmer, assisting in the Reformation. When Mary came to the throne, he was again sent to the Tower, thence with Cranmer and Ridley to dispute with popish bishops at Oxford. Here he argued with unusual clearness and simplicity, but was condemned and burned at the same stake with Ridley, 1555.

John Bradford was born in the first part of the reign of Henry VIII. He early evinced a taste for learning, and began the study of law; but finding theology more congenial, removed to Cambridge University, where his ability and piety won for him, in less than a year, the degree of master of arts. Soon after, he was made chaplain to Edward

VI, and became one of the most popular preachers of Protestantism in the kingdom. But after the accession of that rigid Catholic, Mary, he was arrested on the charge of heresy, and confined in the Tower a year and a half, during which time he aided with his pen the cause for which he suffered. When finally brought to trial, he defended his principles to the last, withstanding all attempts to effect his conversion to Romanism. He was condemned, and committed to the flames in 1555. He died, rejoicing thus to be able to suffer for the truth.

Nicholas Ridley, a learned English bishop and martyr, educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, was born about 1500. His great abilities and piety recommended him to the notice of Archbishop Cranmer, through whom he was made chaplain to the king. In the reign of Edward VI, he was nominated to the see of Rochester, and finally to the bishopric of London. By his influence with the young king, the priories and revenues devoted to the maintenance of corrupt friars and monks were used for charitable purposes. On the decease of

Edward, he embraced the cause of Lady Jane Grey, and in a sermon warned the people of the evil that would befall Protestantism if Mary should come to the throne. For this, and for his zeal in aiding the Reformation, he was seized by Queen Mary, sent to Oxford to dispute with some of the popish bishops, and on his refusing to recant, was burned with Latimer, 1555.

John Hooper was born about 1495, and was educated at Oxford. After taking his degree of bachelor of arts, he joined the Cistercian monks, but his attention being directed to the writings of Zwingli, after a diligent study of the Scriptures, he became a zealous advocate of the Reformation. Knowing the danger to which his opinions exposed him, he went to France. On his return to England, he found that plots were again being laid against his life, and escaped to Ireland, thence to France, and finally to Germany, where he remained some years. Again returning to England, he applied himself to instruct the masses, laboring so successfully that the king, Edward VI, requested him to remain in London to further the

Reformation, and created him bishop of Worcester. On the accession of Mary, however, he was immediately arrested, sent to the Fleetprison, and, after eighteen months' confinement, was tried for heresy, and condemned to the flames in 1555. He endured the agonies of the stake with great fortitude, though they were unusually protracted on account of the use of green wood.

John Rogers, the first of the many who were martyred during Queen Mary's reign, was born about 1500. He was educated at Cambridge, receiving holy orders, and was afterward chaplain to the English factory at Antwerp, where he became acquainted with Tyndale and Coverdale, and by their aid published a complete English version of the Bible. Removing to Wittenberg, he became pastor of a Dutch congregation; but when Edward VI came to the throne, he was invited home, and made prebendary and divinity reader of St. Paul's. On the Sunday after Queen Mary's accession, in a sermon at St. Paul's, he exhorted the people to adhere to the doctrines taught in King Edward's days, and to resist all Catholic forms and

dogmas. For this he was summoned before the council, but vindicated himself so well that he was dismissed. This not pleasing Mary, he was again summoned, and ordered to remain a prisoner in his own house; but he was soon after seized, and sent to Newgate, He was then tried and condemned, and refusing to recant, was burned, 1555.

Eminent Reformers

Martin Luther, the greatest of reformers, was born in Saxony, in 1483. When a poor boy, a benevolent lady took him in charge to educate. At first he studied law, but a narrow escape from death so affected him with the uncertainty of life that he retired to a monastery. Here he came in possession of a Bible, and was struck with the difference between the teachings of the gospel and the practices of the Romish Church. Being sent on an errand to Rome, the impression was deepened, and when the pope issued his famous bull granting the sale of indulgences, Luther, who was then professor of divinity in the University of Wittenberg, was prepared to oppose it, which he

did so ably that multitudes, including many nobles, upheld him. He was ordered to appear at Rome, but refused. The pope issued a condemnation, which Luther burned. At the Diet of Worms he refused to retract, and soon spread his views throughout the kingdom by his writings. He also translated the Bible into German. A decree being passed that the mass should be universally observed, a protest was issued by the reformed party, from which they received the name of Protestants. The confession of Augsburg, the standard of their faith, was then drawn up. He still kept on writing and laboring until he died, worn out by excessive toil, in 1546.

Philip Melanchthon, the famous reformer and friend of Luther, was born in the grand duchy of Baden in 1497. At the age of seventeen he graduated as master of arts from the university at Heidelberg, and soon after obtained the Greek professorship at Wittenberg. Here he formed a friendship with Luther, whose opinions he accepted, and defended in his lectures and writings. His prudence aided the promulgation of Protestant doctrines greatly, as it guarded them from the

abuses of intemperate zeal. His greatest work was the drawing up of the Augsburg Confession, although he was a fluent writer, and was the author of the first system of Protestant theology, which passed through more than fifty editions, and was used as a text-book in the universities. His learning and moderation became famous throughout all Europe, and the kings of England and France invited him to their kingdoms; but he preferred to remain at Wittenberg, where he died in 1560.

Ulric Zwingli, whose name in the annals of Protestant reformers ranks second only to that of Luther, was born in 1484. As he early evinced a taste for study, he was sent first to Bâle and Berne, and finally to the university at Vienna, to receive an education. On his return he was pastor of a large parish near his birthplace, and afterward preacher to the cathedral church at Zurich. Here he made a special study of the Scriptures, committing to memory the whole of the New and part of the Old Testament. His theological researches led him to see the corruptions of the Romish Church, and he commenced declaiming against them, especially

against papal indulgences, until he effected the same separation for Switzerland from the Catholic dominion, that Luther did for Saxony. These religious dissensions brought on a civil war in Switzerland, and Zwingli, who accompanied his army as chaplain, was slain on the field of battle, 1531.

John Calvin, an eminent reformer, and founder of the religious sect known as Calvinists, was born in 1509. He was early destined for the church, being presented with a benefice when only twelve years old. He was educated at Paris for the ministry; but becoming dissatisfied with the tenets of the Romish Church, he turned his attention to the law. He soon received the seeds of the reformed doctrine, and so strongly defended them that he was obliged to leave France. He retired to Bale, Switzerland, where he composed his famous Institutes of Christianity, which was translated into several languages. He then settled at Geneva as minister and professor of divinity, but was compelled to leave for refusing to obey some papal forms. Going to Strasburg, he raised up a French

church, where he officiated. By the divines of this town he was sent as deputy to the Diet of Worms. He returned to Geneva after repeated solicitation, and was actively engaged as speaker and writer in the interests of the Reformation, until his death in 1564.

John Knox, the celebrated Scotch reformer, was born in 1505, and was educated at St. Andrew's University. He received a priest's orders, but renounced popery after reading the writings of St. Augustine and Jerome. He was accused of heresy, and his public confession of faith condemned; but he began to preach it openly from the pulpit, and the reformed doctrines spread rapidly. St. Andrew's being taken by a French fleet, he was carried to Rouen, and condemned to the galleys, where he remained nineteen months. After his liberation, he went to England, and was made chaplain to Edward VI, having refused a bishopric. On Mary's accession, he went to Frankfort and preached to the English exiles. Thence he went to Geneva, where he was much esteemed by Calvin, to whose doctrines he was

much attached. He returned to Scotland, where he died in 1572, after rendering the Reformation triumphant in his native land.

John Bunyan, the most popular religious writer in the English language, was born in 1628. He was a tinker by trade, and therefore received but a meager education. His mind was little drawn toward religious matters until his enlistment as a soldier, during which one of his comrades, who had taken his post, was killed. This he looked upon as a direct interposition of Providence, and after his return home, became deeply concerned in his spiritual welfare. He soon joined the Baptist Church, and from an exhorter, became a successful preacher among them. At this time all dissenters from the Church of England were punished, and Bunyan was thrown into jail, where he remained twelve years. Here he wrote the world-renowned *Pilgrim's Progress*, which has since been translated into every tongue of Christendom. He was also the author of other religious writings, such as the *Holy War*. At the close of the persecution he was released. He soon resumed his former labors, and

was popularly known as Bishop Bunyan. His death, in 1688, resulted from exposure.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was born in 1703, and was educated at Oxford, becoming an eminent tutor in Lincoln College. With his brother and a few others, he formed a society for mutual edification in theological exercises, and they rigidly occupied themselves in religious duties, in fasting and prayer, and visiting prisons and relieving the suffering. At the solicitation of General Oglethorpe, Wesley accompanied him to Georgia with a view of converting the Indians. He finally returned to England to engage in missionary labors, but his design was not to withdraw from the established Church of England, but to create a revival among the neglected classes by preaching salvation through simple faith in Christ. However, the churches being shut against him, he held open-air services, obtaining so many converts that organization became necessary, and spacious churches were built. Until his death in 1791, he was indefatigable in his self-imposed work, which

he carried through England, Scotland, and Ireland, traveling nearly 300,000 miles, and preaching over 40,000 sermons, besides being a voluminous writer.

George Whitefield, an English clergyman, born in 1714, was educated at Oxford, where he received the degree of B. A., and where he became acquainted with Charles Wesley, and was an enthusiastic member of the club which gave rise to Methodism. He was soon ordained, and commenced his remarkable missionary career. Upon the urgent invitation of John Wesley, who was in Georgia, he embarked for America, but soon returned to solicit funds for a proposed orphan asylum. He made five subsequent visits to America, preaching in all the large cities, also in those of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and made a journey to Holland. He met with great opposition from the clergy, and being shut out of the churches, was the first to introduce open-air services. Having differed from the Wesleys in some belief, they finally separated, which gave rise to the two classes, Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodists. He

still continued his laborious efforts, sometimes speaking three and four times a day for weeks, until his death, in 1770, at Newburyport, Mass., while preparing for a seventh missionary tour in America.

John Fletcher was born in Switzerland, in 1729. He was of noble birth, and was educated at the university of Geneva. Not conforming conscientiously to all the Calvinistic doctrines, he forsook the clerical profession, and entered military service. Peace being proclaimed, he went to England as a tutor. He joined the Methodist society, and received orders from the Church of England. Though presented with a good living, he declined, saying “that it afforded too much money for too little work.” The poor and suffering were his charge, and in a region of mines and mountains, midst opposition and persecution, he labored with charity and devotion. He visited France, Switzerland, and Italy, and on his return was president of a theological school, but his advocacy of Wesleyanism sundered the connection. He afterward devoted his life to parished duties,

making long missionary journeys with Wesley and Whitefield, and to the preparation in writing of their peculiar doctrines. His death occurred in 1785.

William Miller, the greatest reformer of modern times, born in Massachusetts in 1782, was of poor but honorable parentage. Having a thirst for knowledge, he acquired considerable education by his own exertions. He served in the war of 1812, and was promoted to the rank of captain. Until 1810 he favored infidelity; but a careful study of the Bible for the purpose of refuting Christianity convinced him of his error, and opened to the world the then almost unexplored fields of prophecy. After much solicitation, he began his life work, — the promulgation of the prophetic interpretations, especially in regard to the second advent, thus inseparably connecting himself with the great religious movement of 1844. The message soon became so wide-spread that invitations came from all the principal cities of the United States, as many as possible of which he answered; and a revival such as had never been

known sprang up in every denomination, extending even to Europe. Though disappointed in the time of the second advent, by a misapplication of prophecy, the majority of his views proved themselves to be correct, and introduced a new era in the never-ending work of reformation. He devoted himself to the work which he had begun, both lecturing and writing, until his peaceful death in 1849.