THE PROPHECIES OF REVELATION

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Introduction

The Revelation, usually termed "The Apocalypse," from its Greek name, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, Apokalypsis, 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 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.

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 world. 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 Divine Method of Prophetic Revelation

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

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 the King James Version of the Bible have given this book the title,

"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. John is the disciple of Jesus who was beloved and highly favored among the twelve. He was evangelist and apostle, and the writer of the Gospel and the epistles which bear his name. To his previous titles must now be added that of prophet; for the Revelation is a prophecy, and John so denominates it. It is not only the Revelation of Jesus Christ, but it is the Revelation which God gave unto Him. It comes 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 or made known, not something hidden and concealed. Moses tells that

"the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever." Deuteronomy 29: 29. The very title of the book, then, is a sufficient refutation of the opinion sometimes expressed that this book is among the 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 "The Revelation."

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

God says that this prophecy was given to reveal coming events to His servants, yet many of the expositors of His word tell us that no man can

understand it! This is as if God would undertake to make known to mankind important truths, yet fall into the worse than earthly folly of clothing them in language or in figures which human minds could not comprehend! It is as if He would command a person to behold some distant object, and then erect an impenetrable barrier between him and the object! Or as if He would give His servants a light to guide them through the gloom of night, yet throw over that light a pall so thick and heavy that not a ray of its brightness could penetrate the obscuring folds! How men 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 from it 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 to be brought to view here. What angel could appropriately be called Christ's angel? We found an answer to this question in our study, as will be seen in the comments on Daniel 10: 21.

From that study we concluded that the truths to be revealed to Daniel were committed exclusively to Christ, 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 book of the Revelation—transmitting important truth to the "beloved disciple." Who in this work can be His angel but the one who was engaged with Daniel in the former work of prophecy, that is, the angel Gabriel? It would also seem most appropriate that the same angel who was employed to carry messages to the "beloved" prophet of ancient times, should perform the same office for the prophet John in the gospel age. (See comments on Revelation 19: 10.)

Blessing on the Reader—"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 part of the word of God? What encouragement we have for its study? 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?

God has pronounced His blessing upon the reader of this prophecy, and has set the seal of His approbation to an earnest study of its marvelous pages. With such encouragement from a divine source, the child of God will be unmoved by a thousand feeble counterblasts from men.

Every fulfillment of prophecy brings its duties. There are things in the Revelation to be observed, or performed. Practical duties are to fulfilled as the result of an understanding and accomplishment of the prophecy. A notable instance of this kind may be seen in Revelation 14: 12, where it is said, "Here are they that keep the commands of God, and the faith of Jesus."

"The time is at hand," writes John, and in so doing he gives another motive 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. The first in the connected series was on the eve of accomplishment. If proximity then constituted a motive for heeding these 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 the 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.' "

The Dedication—Following the blessing, 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 for ever 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. Even in that small part of Asia Minor where the seven churches were located, 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 short distance from Laodicea. Miletus was nearer than any of the seven to Patmos, where John had his vision. Furthermore, it was an important center of Christianity, as we may judge from the fact that during one of his stays there Paul 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, his disciple Trophimus, sick. (2 Timothy 4: 20.) Troas, where Paul spent a season with the disciples, and whence after waiting until the Sabbath was past he started 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 the salutation to the seven churches in Revelation 1, and the admonitions to them in Revelation 2 and 3, have reference solely to the seven literal churches names? Are things described only as they then existed, and portrayed as they were to come to them alone? We cannot so conclude, for good and

substantial reasons:

The entire book of Revelation was dedicated to the seven churches. (See Revelation 1: 3, 11, 19; 22: 18, 19.) 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, who were addressed in Peter's epistle (1 Peter 1: 1); or the Christians of Colosse, Troas, and Miletus, in the very midst of the churches named.

Only a small part of the book could have individually concerned the seven churches, or any of the Christians of John's day, for most of the events it brings to view were so far in the future as to lie far beyond the lifetime of the generation then living, or even the time during which those churches would continue. Consequently those churches could have not direct connect with them.

The seven stars which the Son of man held in His right hand are declared to be the angels of the seven churches. (Verse 20.) 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 sustaining power, guidance, and protection vouchsafed to them. But there were only seven of them in His right hand. Are there only seven thus cared for by the great Master of assemblies? May not all true ministers of the entire 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 to be reached.

Again, John, looking into the Christian Era, saw only seven candlesticks, representing seven churches, in the midst of which stood the Son of man. The position of the Son of man among them 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? 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 fullness and completeness. Therefore the seven candlesticks denote the entire gospel church in seven periods, and the seven churches may be applied in the same manner.

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.

"The seven churches," therefore, are easily 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 comments on Revelation 2: 1.)

The Source of Blessing—"From Him which is, and which was, and which is to come," or is to be—an expression which in this connection refers

to God the Father, since the Holy Spirit and Christ are mentioned separately in the immediate context.

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 scared and perfect number; not thus named . . . as denoting interior plurality, but the fullness and perfect of His gifts and operations." Albert Barnes says, "The number seven, therefore, may have been given to the Holy Spirit with reference to the diversity or the fullness of His operations on the souls of men, and to His manifold agency on the affairs of the world, as further developed in this book."

His Throne—This refers to 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 face that the Divine Spirit was, as it were, prepared to go forth,

or to be sent forth, in accordance with a common representation in the Scriptures, to accomplish important purposes in human affairs."

"And From Jesus Christ"—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 fulfill.

"The first begotten of the dead" is an expression 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 firstborn among many brethren," "the firstborn of every creature," and "the firstborn from the dead." But these expressions do not denote that He was the first in point of time to raised from the dead; for others were raised before Him. Moreover, that is 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 until after the purpose of Christ's triumph over the grave was formed in the mind of God, who "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Romans 4: 17), that any were released from the power of death by virtue of that great purpose which was in due time to be accomplished.

Christ is "the Prince of the kings of the earth." In a certain sense He is that 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 in this world are those of 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, and ranks equally with Him in the overruling and the controlling of affairs of all nations of earth. (Revelation 3: 21.)

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 "Kings of kings and Lord of lords," to dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. (Revelation 19: 16; 2: 27; Psalm 2: 8, 9.)

Christ is spoken of further as "Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." 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. 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." John 15: 13. But Christ has commended His love for us in that He died for us "while we were yet sinners." But more than this, He "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. What matchless love! What matchless provision God has made that we might be cleansed from sin! Consider for a moment the sanctuary service and its beautiful significance. When a sinner confesses his sins, and receives forgiveness, he lays them on Christ, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In the books of heaven where they are recorded, the blood of Christ covers them, and if the follower of God is faithful to his profession, those sins will never be revealed, but will be destroyed by the fires that purify the earth when sin and sinners were consumed. Says the prophet Isaiah, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back." Isaiah 38: 17. Then will apply the statement of the Lord through Jeremiah, "I will remember their sin no more." Jeremiah 31: 34.

No wonder the loving and beloved disciple John ascribed to this Being who has done so much for us, glory and dominion, forever and ever!

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.

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 with clouds, in like manner as He ascended. (Acts 1: 9, 11.)

His Coming Visible—"Every eye shall see Him." All who are alive at the time of His coming shall see Jesus. We know of no personal coming of Christ that will 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 secretly and quietly upon the world. But He comes to take to Himself His dearest treasure, His sleeping and His 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. It will be with the brilliancy and splendor of the lightning as it shines from east to the west. (Matthew 24: 27.) It will be with the sound of a trumpet that will 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 from the Scriptures.

"They Also Which Pierced Him"—They also (in addition to the "every eye" before mentioned) who were chiefly concerned in tragedy of His death 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? There will be a resurrection from

the dead. 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, since the general resurrection of the wicked does not take place until a thousand years after the second advent? (Revelation 20: 1-6.) On this point Daniel says further:

"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." Daniel 12: 1, 2.

Here a partial resurrection is brought to view, a resurrection of a certain group of both righteous and wicked. This takes place before the general resurrection of either group. 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. This resurrection takes place in connection with the great time of trouble such as never was, which 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 than that those who took part in our Lord's greatest humiliation, and other special leaders in crime against Him, should be raised to behold His terrible majesty as He comes triumphantly in flaming fire to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not His gospel?

The response of the church is, "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. This coming, which is with flaming fire, and for the purpose of taking vengeance on the wicked, is to recompense all those who 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 than John is introduced. In declaring who He is, He uses two of the same characterizations, "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," as are found in Revelation 22: 13, where according to verses 12 and 16 of that chapter, it is plainly Christ who is speaking. We conclude, then, that it is Christ who is speaking in verse 8.

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, for John introduces the place and the circumstances under which the

Revelation was given. He first sets himself forth as a brother of the universal church, their companion in the tribulations of the Christian.

In this passage John evidently has reference to the future kingdom of glory. He introduces the thought of tribulation as part of the necessary preparation for entry into the kingdom of God. This idea is emphasized in such scriptures as: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." Acts 14: 22. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." 2 Timothy 2: 12. It is true that while here in the flesh, believers in Christ have access to the throne of grace. This is the throne of the kingdom of grace into which we are inducted at conversion, for He "hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." Colossians 1: 13. But at the second advent of the Saviour, when the kingdom of glory will be inaugurated, then the saints, members of the kingdom of grace here, redeemed from this present evil world, will have access to the throne of His glory. Then tribulation will be over, and the children of God will bask in the sunlight of the presence of the King of kings

throughout eternity.

The Place of the Writing—Patmos is 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 ten miles long, six miles wide at its greatest breadth. Its present name is Patmo. 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. About halfway up the mountain on which this town is built there is shown a natural grotto in the rock where tradition says 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. This accounts for the exile of John there. The banishment of the apostle took place under the emperor Domitian about the year A.D. 94; and

from this supposition 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 the gospel within the bounds of his kingdom. He exiled John to lonely Patmos, where, if anywhere this side of death, he might be said to be out of the world. After confining 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 of him no more.

Probably the persecutors of John Bunyan thought the same when they had shut him up in Beford 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, through the Pilgrim's Progress, which for almost three hundred years has built up the interests of the gospel. 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 until the end of time. How many will revere the name of the beloved disciple, and thrill with delight at his enraptured visions of heavenly glory, who will never learn the name caused his banishment! Verily those words of the Scriptures are sometimes applicable to the present life, which declare that "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance," but "the name of the wicked shall rot." (Psalms 112: 6; Proverbs 10: 7.)

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

Though John was exiled 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. 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 beginning of his vision.

"On the Lord's Day"—What day is intended by this designation? On this question four different positions are taken by various classes. On class holds that the expression "the Lord's day" covers the whole gospel age, and does not mean any particular twenty-four-hour day. Another class holds that the Lord's day is the day of judgment, the future "day of the Lord" so often brought to view in the Scriptures. A third view is that the expression refers to the first day of the week. Still another class holds that it means the seventh day, the Sabbath of the Lord.

To the first of these positions it is sufficient to reply that the book of Revelation is dated by John on 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, no merely a symbolical or mystical one. But if we say that the day means the gospel age, we give it a symbolical or mystical meaning, which is not admissible. Why would it be necessary for John to explain that he was writing in the "Lord's day" if it meant the gospel age? It is well known that the book of Revelation was written some sixty-five years after the death of Christ.

The second position, that it is the day of judgment, cannot be correct. Though 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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, en, and is defined by Thayer when relating to time: "Periods and portions of time in which anything occurs, in, on, at, during." It never means "about" or "concerning." Hence those 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.

The third view, that by "Lord's day" is meant the first day of the week, is the one 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 "the 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. 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 the first day of the week, and two of them mention it some thirty years after that event.

If it is said that "the 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. In truth, we have proof of the contrary. If this were the universal designation of the first day of the week at the time the Revelation was written, the same writer would most assuredly call it so in all his subsequent writings. But John wrote his Gospel after he wrote the Revelation, and yet in that Gospel he calls the first day of the week, not "the Lord's day," but simply "the first day of the week." For proof that John's Gospel was written at a period subsequent to the Revelation, the reader is referred to standard authorities.

The claim here set up in behalf of the first day, is still further disproved by 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 or the other laboring days. Neither of them has ever placed any blessing upon it, or attached any sanctity to it. If it were 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, such as 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?

Since the three positions already examined have been disproved, the fourth— that by Lord's day is meant the Sabbath of the Lord—now demands attention. This of itself is susceptible of the clearest proof. 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. (Genesis 2: 1-3.) Moses told Israel in the wilderness of Sin on the sixth day of the week, "Tomorrow is the rest of the Sabbath unto the Lord." Exodus 16: 23.

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," Isaiah 58: 13.

We come to New Testament times, and He who is one with the Father declares expressly, "The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath." Mark 2: 28. 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.

There is in the Christian Era one day distinguished above the other days of the week as "the Lord's day." How completely this great fact

disproves the claim put forth by some that there is no Sabbath in the gospel age but that all days are alike! 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.

When Christ was on earth, He clearly designated which day was His day by saying, "The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day." Matthew 12: 8. If He had said instead, 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.

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. 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 twoedged 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 for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The expression, "I turned to see the voice," refers to 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. They bear no resemblance to the candlestick of the ancient tabernacle. On the contrary the stands are so distinct, and so far separated one from 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 the Son of man, Jesus 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 not to fear. It is equally the privilege of Christians today 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 to 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 grave. I have, He says, "the keys of hell [{GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, hades, the grave] and of death."

Death is a conquered tyrant. He may gather to the grave the precious of 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 safekeeping. An enemy takes them away for a while, 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 taking place were referred to; but these references were simply for the purpose of introducing events to be fulfilled after that time, 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 not with a specified number of churches only, but with all His people; not in the days of John merely, but through all time. "Lo, I am with you alway," said He to His disciples, "even unto the end of the world." (See remarks on verse 4.)

Chapter 2

The Letters of Jesus to the Churches

In the first chapter, the prophet outlined the subject of the seven churches, represented by the seven candlesticks, and the ministry of the churches, represented by the seven stars. He now takes up each church particularly, and writes the message designed for it, addressing the epistle in every case to the angel, or the ministry, 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 laboured, 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 messages to the seven churches should be regarded as prophetic, having their application to seven distinct periods covering the Christian age, have been given in the remarks on Revelation 1: 4. It may be added here that this view is not new. Thomas Newton says, "Many contend, and among them such learned men as More and Vitringa, that the seven epistles are prophetical of so many successive periods and states of the church from the beginning to the conclusion of all."

Thomas 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. Two of them say:

"The earliest commentator on the Apocalypse, whose work has come down to us, was Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau, or Petavium, who died a martyr in the year 303. He was the contemporary of Irenaeus, and a man of piety, diligence in setting forth the teachings of the Scriptures, and vigorous in his perceptions of the meaning of the sacred writers. Most of his writings have been lost, except some fragments. His comments on the Apocalypse survive, in a text less pure than we could wish, but sufficiently giving the substance of his views. In his Scholia in Apocalypsin, he says that what John

addresses to one Church he addresses to all; that Paul was the first to teach that there are seven Churches in whole world, and that the seven Churches named mean the Church Catholic; and that John, to observe the same method, has not exceeded the number seven.

"What Victorinus means, is that Paul, in writing to seven Churches, and to seven only, intended to have it understood that all the Churches of all time are comprehended in seven; and that, in the same way, the seven Churches in the Apocalypse are meant to comprise all the Churches in the world: that is, the Church Catholic of all ages. This was also the view of Tichaenius, of the fourth century; Arethas of Cappadocia, and Primasius of Adrumetum, in the sixth; and Vitringa, Mede, More, Girdlestone, and a large body of divines, of later periods."

"Mede expounded the Seven Epistles as prophetic of the Seven Ages of the Church, so that all good should there be prophesied of themselves and all evil of Rome (see Trench, l.c., p. 228).

Later will Vitringa expounded the Epistles on the same principle; and he writes (pp. 32-36): 'Existimo Spiritum S. sub typo et emblemate Septem Ecclesiarum Asiae nobis . . . voluisse depingere septem variantes status Ecclesiae Christianae . . . usque ad Adventum Domini'; adding—'demonstratur illas Prophetice non Dogmatice esse exponendas.'

"Mede ('Works,' Advert., ch. x, p. 905) states his opinion more fully as follows: 'If we consider their number being Seven, which is a number of revolution of times, or if we consider the choice of the Holy Ghost in that he taketh neither all, no nor the most famous Churches in the world, as Antioch, Alexandria, Rome. . . . If these things be well considered, may it not seem that these Seven churches, besides their literal respect, were intended to be as patterns and types of the several Ages of the Catholic Church a principio ad finem? that so these Seven Churches should prophetically sample unto us a Sevenfold successive temper and condition of the whole visible Church according to the several Ages thereof. . . . And if this were

granted . . . then surely the First Church (viz., the Ephesian state) must be the first, and the Last be the last. . . . The mention of false Jews and the synagogue of Satan, &c. (Apoc. ii) in the Five middle ones, will argue that they belong to the times of the Beast and Babylon. And for the Sixth in special was have a good character where to place it, viz., partly about the time the Beast is falling, and partly after his destruction, when the New Jerusalem cometh.' "

It appears from the authors above cited, that what has led commentators of more modern times to discard the view of the prophetical nature of the messages to the seven churches, is the comparatively recent and unscriptural doctrine of the temporal millennium. The last stage of the church, as described in Revelation 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

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 their works, labor, and patience. In faithfulness to the pure principles taught by Christ, they could not bear those that were evil, and they tested false apostles, searched out their true characters, and found them liars. That this work was done by the literal and particular church at Ephesus more than by other churches of that time, we have no evidence. But this work was carried on 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. As each church covers 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 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." 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 he should remember whence he has fallen, meditate upon it, carefully call up the state of former acceptance with God, and 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 forth corresponding works.

The Admonition—"I will come unto thee quickly, and will 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 removal of the candlestick would denote the taking away from the church of light and privileges of the gospel, and the committing of these advantages to other hands, unless the church should better fulfill the responsibilities of the trust committed to it. It would be the rejection of them by Christ as His representatives, to bear the light of His truth and gospel before the world. This threatening would be just as applicable to individuals as to the church as a body. How many

who professed Christianity during that period came short and were rejected, we do now know, but doubtless many. 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 reached 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 first. In this message to the church of Ephesus, after first mentioning their commendable traits and then their failures, as if unwilling to pass by any of their good qualities, He says that they hated the deed 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 people whose deeds and doctrines were both abominable in the sight of Heaven. Their origin is involved in some doubt.

Some say that they sprang from Nicholas 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 Nicholas of later date. The latter theory is probably more nearly 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 matters of indifference, and permitted the eating of things offered to idols. (See Clarke, Kitto, and other commentators.)

The Summons to Attention—"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This is 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 (Matthew 13: 43). It is also used in relation to an important prophetic fulfillment in Revelation 13: 9.

The Promise to the Overcomer—To the victor it is promised that he shall eat of the tree of life that grows in the midst of Paradise, or in the garden, of God. Where is this Paradise? It is 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 says that he was caught up into "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" (the term used for "garden" in the Greek translation of Genesis) in Eden at the beginning, and the tree of life in the Paradise of

which John now speaks, in heaven above. 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. The answer would be that it must have been taken up to the Paradise above. There is no possible way that the identical body which is situated in one place can be located in another but by being transported there bodily. That the tree of life and Paradise have been removed from earth to heaven there is a very good reason to believe. One commentator remarks on this point:

"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 (ideal) Paradise is now translated to the invisible world. At least a symbolical copy of it, established in the holy of holies in the tabernacle, is already 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 that will include more than Adam lost. Not to the overcomers of that state of the church merely, but to all overcomers of every age is the promise made, 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 of the Church—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.

The Church of Smyrna—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 Smyrna 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 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." One writer has well said, "There is many a rich poor man, and many a poor rich man."

"Say They Are Jews, and Are No"—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: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Romans 2: 28, 29. Again he says: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel; neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children." Romans 9: 6, 7. 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 Jews is never applied to Christians, is to contradict all these inspired declarations of Paul, and the testimony of the faithful and true Witness to the Smyrna church. Some were hypocritically pretending to be Jews in this Christian sense, when they possessed none of the necessary characteristics. 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. Since a prophetic day stands for a literal years, the ten days would denote ten years. It is a noticeable fact that the last and most bloody of the ten great persecutions of the Christian church continued just ten years, from A.D. 303 to 313, beginning under Diocletian.

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. It would not seem improbable that a persecution of only ten days, or 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 ones of that period, and how could it be spoken of as the fate of one church alone? All the churches suffered in them. Where, then, would be the propriety of singling out one particular group, to the exclusion of the others, as being the only one involved in such a calamity?

The Admonition—"Be thou 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, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, achri, here rendered "unto," signifies primarily "until." No argument, however, can be drawn from this for consciousness in death. The vital point for that 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 inform us fully. 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 Peter 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 received a crown of life.

The Promise to the Overcomer—"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, "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 Smyrna church members 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, fear none of the things which they should suffer, for their eternal existence was assured.

The Meaning and the Time of the Church— 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 different name and another message applicable to her history.

According to the foregoing application, the date of the Smyrna 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 stumblingblock 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.

The Church of Pergamos—Against the preceding church 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 the period of the Pergamos church, when influences began to work which brought errors and evils unto the church.

The word "Pergamos" signifies "height, elevation." 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." 2 Thessalonians 2: 3.

The Commendation—"Where Satan's seat is."

Christ takes cognizance of the unfavorable situation of his people during this period. The language is probably not designed to denote location. 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 foundation of a stupendous system of apostasy, the papacy. Here was the falling away foretold by Paul in 2 Thessalonians 2: 3, cited already.

It is interesting to note that the city of Pergamos became the seat of ancient Babylonian sun worship. "The Chaldean Magi enjoyed a long period of prosperity at Babylon. A pontiff appointed by the sovereign ruled over a college of seventy-two hierophants. . . . [After the Medo-Persian occupation], the defeated Chaldeans fled to Asia Minor, and fixed their central college at Pergamos, and took the Palladium of Babylon, the cubic stone, with them. Here, independent of state

control, they carried on the rites of their religion, and plotted against the peace of the Persian Empire, caballing with the Greeks for that purpose."

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 many of them suffered martyrdom at that time 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 the word 'Antipas' in this text, as the history of those times are [is] perfectly silent respecting such an

individual as is here named."

Watson's Biblical Dictionary says, "Ancient ecclesiastical history furnishes no account of this Antipas." Adam 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 Complaint—Disadvantages in situation are no excuse for wrongs in the church. Although this church existed at a time when Satan was making strong delusions, it was the duty of its members to keep themselves free from his evil doctrines. Hence they were censured for harboring among them those who held the doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes. (See comments on the Nicolaitanes, verse 6.) The doctrine of Balaam is here partly 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 22: 25; 31: 13-16.) It appears that Balaam desired to curse Israel for the sake of the rich reward which Balak offered him. But not being permitted by the Lord to curse them, he resolved to

accomplish essentially the same thing in another way. He therefore counseled Balak to seduce them, by means of the women of Moab, to participate in the celebration of the rites 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 twenty-four thousand persons died.

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 civil and ecclesiastical powers which culminated in the formation of the papacy.

The Admonition—Christ declared that if they did not repent, 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.

Promise to the Overcomer—The overcomer 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 on it. Most commentators apply the manna, white stone, and the new name, to spiritual blessings to be enjoyed in this life; but like all the other promises to the overcomer, this doubtless refers to the future, and is to be given when the time comes for the saints to be rewarded. Perhaps the following comment is as satisfactory as anything that has ever been written upon these several particulars:

"It is generally supposed 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 was acquitted. But this is an act so distinct from that described in the scripture before us, 'I will give him a white stone,' that we we are disposed to agree with those who think it refers 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 well-established custom both among the Greeks and Romans, to provide their guests with some particular mark, which was handed down from father to son, and ensured 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 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 their 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, is the allusion to this custom in the words of the text, 'I will give him to eat of the hidden manna;' and having done so, having made him partaker of my hospitality, having recognized him as my guest, my 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."

In the new name, John 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 they inquires are vain. Thou wilt then read it on the white stone."

The Time of the Church—The period covered by this church extends from the days of Constantine, or perhaps, rather, from his professed conversion to Christianity in A.D. 323, to the establishment of the papacy in A.D. 538.

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

The Church of Thyatira—Thyatira signifies "sweet savor of labor," or "sacrifice of contrition."

This well describes the state of the church of Jesus Christ during the long period of papal triumph and persecution. This age of dreadful tribulation for the church such as never was (Matthew 24: 21), improved the religious condition of believers. Hence for their works—charity, service, faith, and patience—they receive the commendation of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire. Works are again mentioned, as if worthy of double commendation, and the last were more than the first. There had been an improvement in their condition, a growth of grace, an increase in all these elements of Christianity. This progress, under such conditions, was commended by the Lord.

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 an agent of Satan to remain in their midst.

The Cause of Complaint—"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 Biblical Dictionary says, "The name of Jezebel is used proverbially. Revelation 2: 20." William Miller speaks as follows:

"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 describe the papal abominations. (See 1 Kings 18, 19, and 21. . . .) It is very evident from history, as well as from this verse in Revelation, that the church of Christ did suffer some of the papal monks to preach and teach among them."

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 Roman Catholic Church under the symbol of a corrupt woman, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. (See Revelation 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. 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.

"All the Churches Shall Know"—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 judgements 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. 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 of men.

"I will put upon you none other burden." We believe this refers to a respite promised the church 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 the 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. "The earth helped the woman," says John. Revelation 12: 16.

The Admonition—"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," implying visitations of judgment. But here a coming of a different nature is brought to view. It is not a threatening of punishment. It is suspended upon no conditions. Is is set before the believer as a matter of hope, and can refer to no event other than 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 comments on Revelation 6: 12.) In reference to these signs the Saviour said: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for you redemption draweth nigh." Luke 21: 28. 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. Christ has ever said to His followers, "Occupy till I come." Luke 19: 13. Now He says: "Hold fast till I come."

The Promise to the Overcomer—"Unto the end." This must denote the end of the Christian age. "He that shall endure unto the end," says Christ, "the same shall be saved." Matthew 24: 13. Is there not here a like promise to those who keep the works of Christ, do the things He has enjoined, and keep the faith of Jesus? (Revelation 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: 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. (Psalm 2: 8, 9.) Associated with Christ, when He thus enters upon His own work of power and judgment, are to be His saints. (Revelation 3: 21.) They are to reign with Him in this capacity for one thousand years. (Revelation 20: 4.) During this period, the degree of judgment upon wicked men and evil angels is determined. (1 Corinthians 6: 2, 3.) At the end of the one thousand years, they have the honor of sharing with Christ in the execution of the sentence written. (Psalm 149: 9.)

The Morning Star—Christ says in Revelation 22: 16 that He is Himself the morning star, the immediate forerunner of the day. What is here called the "morning star," is called the "daystar" in 2 Peter 1: 19, where it is associated with the dawn of the day: "Until the day dawn, and the daystar 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 daystar 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 faithful, and beams of glory from the eternal world shall gild their banners!

Chapter 3

"Behold, I stand at the Door and Knock"

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.

Church in Sardis—If the dates of the preceding churches have been correctly fixed, the period covered by the church of Sardis must begin about 1798. "Sardis" signifies "prince or song of joy," or "that which remains." We then have the reformed churches before us as constituting this church, from the date above named to the great movement which marked another era in the history of the people of God.

The Cause of Complaint—The great fault found with Sardis is that is has a name to live, but is dead. 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 pride and popularity have grown apace, until spirituality is destroyed, the line of distinction between the church and the world is obliterated, and the different popular bodies are churches of Christ only in name!

This church was to hear the proclamation of the doctrine of the second advent. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." Verse 3. This implies that the doctrine of the advent would be proclaimed, and the duty of watching would 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," 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 the contaminating influence of sin. 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.

The Promise to the Overcomer—"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 if the hosts of 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. If you keep yourself unspotted from surrounding evil, the promise is sure. You shall be clothed in white, the white raiment of the overcomer. You shall walk with you Lord in glory. "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." Revelation 7: 17.

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—Here is introduced an object of thrilling interest. Ponderous volume, in which are enrolled the names of all the candidates for everlasting life! 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. (1 Corinthians 9: 27.) It is only by being overcomers to the end that our names can be retained in that book. But not all will gain the victory. Their names, of course, will be blotted out. Reference is here made to some definite point of time in the future for this work. "I will not," says Christ, 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? "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that you sins may be blotted out

when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Acts 3: 19.

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.) It means that either his name or his sins will be blotted out from the heavenly records. What a precious thought it is that now we are forgiven if we confess our transgressions! Then if we remain faithful to God these sins will be blotted out at the coming of Jesus.

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 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 before the holy angels. (Matthew 10: 32, 33; Mark 8: 38; Luke 12: 8, 9.) Who can fathom the honor of being approved before the heavenly hosts! Who can conceive of 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, overcome, and whose names are worthy through His merits to stand 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 also will 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 Church of Philadelphia—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. The great religious awakening in the early part of the nineteenth century which resulted from a study of the prophecies, culminated in this advent movement. Men from all denominations were

convinced that the coming of Christ was near. As they came out of the various churches, they left sectarian names and feelings behind, and every heart beat in unison as all joined to give 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 cannot fully realize how great was the searching of heart, the consecration to God, the peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, and the pure, fervent love for one another which true believers enjoyed.

"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"—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 shewbread, and the altar of incense. In the second were the ark, which contained the tables of the covenant, or the ten commandments, and the cherubim. (Hebrews 9: 1-5.) In like manner the sanctuary in which Christ ministers in heaven has two apartments, for it is clearly stated in Hebrews 9: 21-24 that "both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry" were "patterns of things in the heavens." As all things were made after the pattern, the heavenly sanctuary has also furniture

similar to that of the earthly. 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 earthly sanctuary the priests ministered. (Exodus 28: 41, 43; Hebrews 9: 6, 7; 13: 11.) 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 appropriately called the cleansing of the sanctuary. (Leviticus 16: 20, 30, 33; Ezekiel 45: 18.) When the ministry in the most holy place began, 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. The time for this service to begin did come 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 that of Christ's ministration in the most holy place, and the shutting, its cessation in the first apartment, or holy place. (See exposition of the subject of the sanctuary and its cleansing, under Daniel 8: 14.)

Verse 9—probably applies to those who do not keep pace with the advancing light of truth, and who oppose Christians who do. Such shall yet be made to feel and confess that God loves those who obey His word, and follow in the knowledge of his truth.

"The Word of My Patience"—John says 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. (See the comments on Revelation 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 this great event is impending. In this we have 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 in which that event could Scripturally expected. But with the Thyatira church, the time had come when this great hope was just beginning to dawn upon the church. The mind is carried forward to this hope by a single allusion: "Hold fast till I come."

The next state of the church, the Sardis period, finds the church occupying a position still nearer that event, and the great proclamation is brought to view which was to herald Christ's coming, and the duty of watching is enjoined upon the church: "If thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief." We reach the Philadelphia church still later, 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."

It is evident from 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 indeed they see the day approaching. (Hebrews 10: 25.)

The Admonition—"Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." By our faithfulness we are not depriving anyone else of a crown. The verb rendered "to take" has a number

of definitions, one of which is "to take away, snatch from, deprive of." Let no one, and no thing, induce you to yield the truth, or pervert you from the right ways of the Lord, for by so doing it will cause you to lose the reward.

The Promise to the Overcomer—The overcomer is to be a pillar in the temple of God, and go out no more. The temple here must denote the church, and the promise of being made a pillar in it is the promise of a place of honor, permanence, and safety in the church, under the figure of a heavenly building. When the time comes for this part of the promise to be fulfilled, probation is past, and overcomer is fully established in the truth, and sealed. "He shall go no more out," that is, there is no danger of his falling away, he is the Lord's forever, and his salvation is sure.

From the moment the Christians 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. They also 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, the glorious haven of rest, the New 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 eyesalve, 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.

The Church of Laodicea—"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. Consequently it applies to believers under the third angel's message, the last message of mercy before the coming of Christ. (Revelation 14: 9-14.) While the work of the great Day of Atonement is in progress, and the

investigative judgment is going forward upon the house of God, there is 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 before the close of probation. The description given of 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 attempt by this language to uphold the error that Christ is a 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 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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, arche, 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.

The Cause of Complaint—The charge He brings against the Laodiceans is that they are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. They lack that religious fervor and devotion which is demanded by their position in the world's closing history with the light of prophecy beaming upon their pathway. 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 spiritual conditions 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 spiritual conditions 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 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 the armor bright. 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 several reasons:

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."

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

The threat of rejection in verse 16 is because they are neither cold nor hot, they would not be rejected. But if by cold is meant a state of open worldly wickedness, they would be rejected very speedily. Hence such cannot be its meaning.

We are brought 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 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. As "hot" denotes joyous fervor, and a lively exercise of all the affections, with a heart buoyant with the sensible presence and love of God, so "cold" would seem to denote a spiritual condition characterized by a destitution of these

traits, yet one in which the individual feels such destitution. This state is well expressed by the language of Job, "Oh 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 for 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. A person will not long remain cold. His efforts will soon lead him to the fervid state. But if 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. This denotes a final rejection, an utter separation from His church.

"Rich and Increased With Good"—Such the Laodiceans think is their condition. They are not hypocrites, because they know not that they are poor, miserable, blind, and naked.

The Admonition—"Buy of Me," says the true Witness, "gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothes; . . . and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." This shows at once to the deceived Laodiceans the things they lack, and the extent of their destitution. It shows, too, where they can obtain those things in which they are so fearfully poor, and 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 this point. 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. 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 fades not away. Strange transaction, this! Yet the Lord condescends to deal thus 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 special notice.

"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? 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. That 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 the world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?" James 2: 5. "Faith," says Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11: 1. To be "rich toward God," rich in the spiritual sense, is to have a clear title to the promises, to be heir of that "inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that

fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Peter 1: 4. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3: 29. 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 the entire eleventh chapter of Hebrews should be devoted to this important subject, setting forth the mighty achievements that have been accomplished, and the precious promises that have been obtained, through faith. In Hebrews 12: 1, the grand conclusion of the argument is given when Christians are exhorted 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. Faith must enter into every action that is pleasing in His sight. In coming to Him, the first thing is to believe that He is. 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." Hence hope is an inseparable accompaniment of faith. (Hebrews 11: 1; Romans 8: 24, 25.) 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 things associated together by Paul 1 Corinthians 13—faith, hope, and charity, or love; and the greatest of these is charity, which is "rich in good works." Such is the gold tried by fire which we are counseled to buy.

"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, "All our

righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64: 6. 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. John, in Revelation 19: 8, says plainly that "the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

The Eyesalve—On the eyesalve 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, for reference is being made to spiritual things. The eyesalve 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." The same writer through whom came this Revelation from Jesus Christ which we are studying, wrote to the church in his first epistle, as follows: "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. . . . 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." 1 John 2: 20, 27. By referring to his Gospel, it is found that the work which John here sets forth as accomplished by the anointing is exactly the same that he there attributes to the Holy Spirit. "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." John 14: 26 (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 eyesalve, to seek from Him 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 a Jezebel in their midst, or countenancing the doctrines of Balaam, or the Nicolaitanes. So far as we can learn, their belief is correct, and their doctrine sound.

The inference therefore is that having a correct doctrine, they are content. They are satisfied with a correct form of religion without its power. Having received light concerning the closing events of the gospel era, 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 spiritual power which changes the life and builds strong character. It is by their actions, doubtless, not by their words, that they say they are rich and increased with good. Having so much light and so much truth, what can they want besides? If they defend the theory, and as 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? Are they not rich, and increased with

goods, and in need of 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.

The Token of Love—As strange as it may seem, the token of love is chastisement. "As many as I love, I rebuke, and chasten." If we are without chastisement, we are not sons. (Hebrews 12: 8.) "A general law of His gracious economy," says Augustus C. Thompson, "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, whilst 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 condition 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—"Here is the heart of hearts," says Augustus C. Thompson. "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 hath 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 do 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 you send word 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, or Jesus Christ's forbearance! Even the heathen Publius received Paul and lodged him three days courteously. Shall nominal Christians tell the Lord of apostles they have no room for Him?"

"If Any Man Hear My Voice"—The Lord entreats, then, as well as knocks. The word "if" implies that some will not hear. Though He stands and knocks, yet some will close their ears to His tender entreaties. But it is not enough simply to hear. We must open the door. Many who at first hear the voice, and for a time feel inclined to heed, will, alas! fail in the end to do that which is necessary to secure to themselves the communion of the heavenly Guest.

Reader, are you ears open to the entreaties which the Saviour directs to you? Is His voice a welcome sound to you? 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 gust. heavenly Guest.

Then the promise! "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." How forcible and touching is the figure! Friend with friend, partaking of the cheerful and social meal! Mind with mind, holding free and intimate converse! 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 can remain indifferent under such tender entreaty and so gracious a promise? 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 an earnest of our future inheritance, which is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Verily, when we comply with the conditions and receive this promise, we shall experience the rising of the daystar in our hearts, and behold the dawn of a glorious morning for the church of God.

The Promise to the Overcomer—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 blessing included in that promise are to be enjoyed in this probationary state. Now, added 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 back into

reconciliation with God through the work of the Redeemer. He is cleansed from his pollutions, redeemed from the fall, made immortal, and finally raised to a seat upon the throne of his Saviour. Honor and exaltation can go no farther. Human minds cannot conceive that state, human language cannot describe it. We can only labor on until, if overcomers, we shall know what it is.

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.) 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: "Speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts [God], 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 bear the glory, and 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. 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 was overcome, and is now seated with the Father upon His throne. This change in the position of Christ is set forth by Paul:

"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." 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28.

The truths taught in this scripture may perhaps be most briefly expressed by a 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 age), 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. [Psalm

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 begins 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."

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 His priestly meditation, 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." "They lived," says John, dating from the first resurrection, "and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Revelation

20: 4. 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 attraction divert our gaze from this enduring and heavenly prospect?

Thus close the messages to the seven churches. How pointed and searching is their testimony! What lessons they contain for all Christian 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. While His threatenings to the hypocrites and evil workers are awful, as in justice they may be, how ample, how comforting, how gracious, how glorious are His promises to those who love and follow Him with singleness of heart!

Chapter 4

Before the Throne of God

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 presented the vision he had of the Son of man. He described His majestic person, and recorded the words which He uttered with a voice as the sound of many waters. A new scene and a new vision now open before us. The expression "after this" does not denote that what is recorded in Revelation 4 and onward was to take place after the fulfillment of everything recorded in the three preceding chapters. It means only that after the prophet 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. This expression reads literally in the Greek, "Behold, a door open in heaven." It was not an opening of heaven itself before the mind of John, as in the case of Stephen (Acts 7: 56), but some place in heaven was open before him, and he was permitted to behold what was taking place within. That what John saw open was the heavenly sanctuary, will plainly appear from other parts of the book.

"Things Which Must Be Hereafter"— Compare this with Revelation 1: 1. The great object of the Revelation seems to be the presentation of future events which will inform, edify, and comfort 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 the expression, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Revelation 1: 10), where it was taken to express the fact that John had a vision upon the Sabbath, or true Lord's day. If it there expressed the state of being in vision, it would denote the same thing here. Consequently the first vision ended with Revelation 3, and a new one is here introduced. Nor is it any objection to this view that previous to this, as is learned from the first verse of this chapter, John was in such a spiritual state as to be able to look up and see a door open in heaven, and to hear a voice like the mighty sound of a trumpet calling him up to a nearer prospect of heavenly things. Stephen, also, full of the Holy Ghost, looked up and saw the heavens open, and the Son of man on the right hand of God. To be in

the Spirit denotes a high state of spiritual elevation. On what day this vision was given, we are not informed.

Being again in heavenly vision, John first beheld a throne set in heaven, and the Divine Being seated upon it. The description of the appearance of this personage, clothed in garments of mingled colors, is such as at once to suggest to the mind a monarch vested with his royal robes. About the throne there was a rainbow, which added grandeur to the scene, and reminds 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—Who are these beings who surround the throne of glory? It will be observed that they are clothed in white raiment and have on their heads crowns of gold, which are tokens of both a conflict completed and a victory gained. From this we conclude that they were once participants in the Christian warfare, they once trod the earthly way with all saints; but they have been

overcomers, and in advance of the great multitude of the redeemed, are wearing their victor crowns in the heavenly world. Indeed, they plainly tell us this in the song of praise which they ascribe to the Lamb: "They sung a new song, saying, Thou are 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." Revelation 5: 9. This song is sung before any of the events in the prophecy of the seven seals take place; 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—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 sang 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 the resurrection of Christ, we read: "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 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 Jesus 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. John Wesley spoke 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."

Particular attention must be given to the fact that the four and twenty elders are said to be seated on thrones. Our translation reads "seats;" but the Greek is {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, thronoi, thrones, the same word as is used three times in verses 2 and 3 and once in verse 4 immediately preceding. Thus the Revised Version reads "Round about the throne were four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting." Consequently this passage throws light on the expressions 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 set. The figure is taken from the

Eastern custom of placing mats or divans for distinguished guests to sit upon. These four and twenty elders (see comments on Revelation 5) are evidently assistants of Christ in His mediatorial work in the sanctuary on high. When the judgment scene described in Daniel 7: 9 began in the most holy place, their thrones were placed there, according to the testimony of that passage.

The Seven Lamps of Fire—In these lamps of fire we have the 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.) Now when John tells us that a door was open in heaven, and in the apartment thus disclosed to view he sees the antitype of the candlestick 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 for ever and ever, 10 the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever 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—"glassy, i.e., transparent," as James Strong says in his Greek Dictionary. This idea is further carried out by the likening of the sea 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 of the city itself. It is again brought to view in Revelation 15: 2, as the place where the overcomers, in the ecstatic joy of final victory, will soon stand. There we shall praise Him who has given us the victory.

The Four Living Creatures—It is an unhappy translation which has given us the word "beasts" in this verse. The Greek word {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, zoon, denotes properly "a living creature." Bloomfield says in his comment, " ' 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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT} [therion, wild beast], used to designate the prophetic beasts in the 13th and following chapters. (Scholefield.) It may be added, that Bulkeley adduces several examples of {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, 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 Revelation 5: 8.

They Rest Not—"O happy unrest!" beautifully

exclaims John Wesley. 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. 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. (Revelation 21: 23, 25.)

We mortals are likely to tire of the repetition of the simple testimony we bear here to the goodness and mercy of God. 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 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 words are often repeated concerning 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. We should all our lives be rising to new conceptions of the blessings embraced in these glorious themes.

"Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power." How worthy, we never shall be able to realize until, 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. "For Thy

pleasure [or through Thy will, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT} dia to thelema sou], 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 Challenge of the Sealed Book

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

As a new chapter opens, 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 later introduced as "a Lamb as it had been slain." The book which John here saw, contained a revelation of scenes that were to be enacted in the history of the church to the end of time. That the volume is 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 Sealed 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, rolled up. On this point, John 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 on within another, each of which was sealed: so that upon opening and and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up till that was opened, and so on to the seventh."

This book was not written within and on the backside, 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.' " How these seals were placed, is sufficiently explained.

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—In the vision God, as it were, held forth this book to the view of the universe, and a strong angel, one doubtless of great eminence and power, came forth as a crier, and with a mighty voice challenged all creatures in the universe to try the strength of their wisdom in opening the counsels of God. Who could be found worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? A pause ensued. In silence the universe owned its inability and unworthiness to enter into the counsels of the Creator. "No man in heaven, " {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, oudeis, no one, signifies not merely no man, but no one, no being, in heaven. Is not this proof that the

faculties of angels are limited, like those of man, in respect to penetrating the future and disclosing what is to come? 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. In the natural tenderness of his feelings, and his concern for the church, he wept much. "How far are they," says John Wesley, "from the temper of St. John, who inquire after anything rather than the contents of this books!"

Upon the words, "I wept much," Joseph 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 Judah, 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.

John is not permitted to weep for long. God is not willing that any knowledge which can benefit His people shall be withheld from them. Provision is made for the opening of the book. Hence one of the elders counsels John, "Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." Why one of the elder in preference to some other being, should impart this information to John, does not appear, unless it is that having been redeemed, they had an acquaintance with Christ,

and 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 Judah." Why called a lion? And why of the tribe of Judah?—As to the first question, 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. As to being "of the tribe of Judah," He doubtless receives this appellation from the prophecy in Genesis 49: 9, 10.

"The Root of David"—Christ was the source and sustainer of David in 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 was 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 rod 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 entrusting 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. We find the account of this triumph set forth later in this chapter. The 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 temptation, 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 sign, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou was slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood."

John looks for 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"—Phillip Doddridge translates thus: "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." 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 angles (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"—John C. Wood house, 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, Adam 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."

"Seven Horns and Seven Eyes"—Horns are symbols of power and eyes typify wisdom. Seven is a number denoting completeness, or perfection. We are thus taught that perfect power and perfect wisdom inhere in the Lamb.

"He Came and Took the Book"—Commentators have found an incongruity in the idea that the book was taken by the Lamb, and have had recourse to several expedients to avoid the difficulty. But is it not a well-established principle that any action which could be performed by the person or being represented by a symbol, may be attributed to the symbol? 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 a 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 one 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.

The reader will remember that in the ancient typical service the high priest had many assistants. when we consider that we are now looking into 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. What could be more appropriate than that our Lord should be assisted in His priestly work for the human race by noble members of that race whose holiness of life, and purity of character, had fitted them to raised up for that purpose? (See remarks on Revelation 4: 4.)

We are aware that many entertain in a great aversion to the idea of there being anything real and tangible in heaven. But 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. 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 assist 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 its relation to this world.

The Anticipation—"We shall reign on the earth." Thus, notwithstanding they are redeemed and surround the throne of God and of the Lamb, 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, shall reign on the earth, the promised inheritance and the eternal residence of the saints. (Romans 4: 13, Galatians 3: 29; Psalm 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 we have of the magnitude and glory of

the heavenly temple! Into that temple John was introduced at the opening of Revelation 4, by the door which was open in heaven. Into the same temple, he is still looking in Revelation 5: 11, 12. Now he beholds the heavenly hosts. About the throne are those represented by the four living creatures. Next come the four and twenty elders. Then John views a multitude of the heavenly angels surrounding the whole. 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! Then, as if no numerical expression is adequate to embrace the countless throng, he further adds, "And thousands of thousands!" Well might the writer of Hebrews call this "an innumerable company of angels." Hebrews 12: 22. 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.

The central figure 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. 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 in the sanctuary above still pleads the merits of His sacrifice in our behalf. Here, before such an august assemblage, must our life record 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 for ever and ever. 14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.

A Clean Universe—In verse 13 we have a declaration thrown in out of its chronological order for the purpose of following out to its completion the previous statement or allusion. This occurs frequently in the Bible. In this instance the time is anticipated when the work of 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 event. He looks forward to the time when the number of the redeemed shall 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, 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. So it will ever be while sin reigns.

We find, then, no place for this sense which John describes, unless we go forward to the time when the plan of redemption is completed, and the saints enter upon their promised reign on the earth.

To the Lamb, equally with the Father who sits upon the throne, praise is ascribed in this song of adoration. "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne,

and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Revelation 5: 13.

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

Chapter 6

Breaking the Seals on the Book of Prophecy

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.

The Lamb takes the book, and proceeds at once to open the seals. The attention of the apostle is called to the scenes that occur under each seal. The number seven has already been noticed as denoting completeness and perfection in the Scriptures. The seven seals represent events of a religious character, and contain the history of the church from the opening of the Christian Era to the second coming of Christ. When the seals are 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 view in living characters, and in the place where the reality was to occur, namely, the earth.

The First Seal—The first symbol is a white horse, bearing a rider who carries a bow. A crown is given to him, and he goes forth conquering and to conquer, a fit emblem of the triumphs of the gospel in the first century of the Christian Era. The whiteness of the horse denotes the purity of faith in that age. The crown which was given to the rider, and his going forth as a conqueror to make still further conquests, signify the zeal and success with which the truth was promulgated by its earliest ministers. 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.

The Second Seal—Perhaps the first feature noticed in these symbols is the contrast in the color of the horses. This doubtless has special significance. It 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 was so far corrupted by this time 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.

Speaking of the period of the Christian church

from A.D. 100 to 311, the historian remarks:

"We now descend from the primitive apostolic church to the Graeco-Roman; from the scene of creation to the work of preservation; from the fountain of divine revelation to the stream of human development; from the inspirations of the apostles and prophets to the productions of enlightened but fallible teachers. The hand of God has drawn a bold line of demarcation between the century of miracles and the succeeding ages, to show, by the abrupt transition and the striking contrast, the difference between the work of God and the work of man." "The second period, from the death of the apostle John to the end of the persecutions, or to the accession of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, is the classic age . . . of heathen persecution, and of Christian martyrdom and heroism. . . . It furnishes a continuous commentary on the Saviour's words, 'Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.' " "The ante-Nicene age . . . is . . . the common root out of which both [Catholicism and Protestantism] have sprung, Catholicism (Greek and Roman) first,

and Protestantism afterwards. It is the natural transition from the apostolic age to the Nicene age, yet leaving behind many important truths of the former (especially the Pauline doctrines) which were to be derived and explored in future ages. We can trace in it the elementary forms of the Catholic creed, organization, and worship, and also the germs of nearly all the corruptions of Greek and Roman Christianity."

The spirit of this period perhaps reached its climax as we come to the days of Constantine, the first so-called Christian emperor, whose conversion to Christianity in A.D. 323 brought about a compromise between the church and the Roman Empire. The Edict of Milan in A.D. 313, is said to have granted toleration to Christians and allowed conversions to Christianity. Kenneth S. Latourette declares that the acts immediately preceding and culminating in the Edict of Milan in 313 "still remain the most significant of the many milestones in the road by which the church and the state moved toward co-operation."

This modern scholar of church history further declares:

"Christianity, by bringing the church into existence, developed an institution which in part was a rival of the state. It created a society within the empire which, so many believed, threatened the very existence of the latter. The conflict was very marked in the century or more before Constantine. . . . When Constantine made his peace with the faith, however, it long looked as though the conflict had been resolved by the control of the church by the state. Yet, even in the days of the seeming subordination of the church to the government, ecclesiastics sought to influence the policies of the latter."

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."

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.

The Third Seal—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 the grossest superstitions sprang 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. From 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 different superstitions were gradually substituted in the place of true religion and genuine piety. This odious revolution was owing to a variety of causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the pagan rites, and of blending them with 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."

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 almost entirely superseded by horrid superstition."

These quotations from Mosheim contain 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 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."

The Wheat and the 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."

The Oil and the 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 setting up the antichristian abominations."

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 anyone on

earth, but comes from the midst of the four living creatures, signifying that although the undershepherds, the professed ministers of Christ, 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—graces of genuine piety—should 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 Fourth Seal—The color of this horse is remarkable. 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 of this horse is named Death, and Hell ({GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, hades, "the grave") followed with him. The mortality is so great during this period it would seem as if "the pale nations of the dead" had come upon the 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, beginning about A.D. 538, and extending to the time when the Reformers began their work of exposing the corruptions of the papal system.

"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; and the words "sword," "hunger," "death" (that is, some infliction which causes death, as exposure or torture), and beasts of the earth, are figures denoting the means by which it has put to death

millions of martyrs.

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 Fifth Seal—Under the fifth seal the martyrs cry out for vengeance, and white robes are given to them. 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 satisfactory answers can be returned.

It seems consistent that this seal, like all the others, should cover a period of time, and that the date of its application cannot be mistaken if the preceding seals have rightly located. Following the period of papal persecution, the time covered by this seal would begin when the Reformation began to undermine the papal fabrication, and restrain the persecuting power of the Roman Catholic Church.

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, Adam Clarke says: "A symbolical vision was exhibited, in which he saw an altar; and under it the souls of these 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.

The Souls Under the Altar—This representation is popularly regarded as a strong proof of the doctrine of disembodied spirits and the conscious state of the dead. Here, it is claimed, are souls seen by John in a disembodied state, and yet they were conscious and had knowledge of passing events, for they cried for vengeance on their persecutors. This view of the passages is inadmissible, for several reasons.

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.

It would be repugnant to all our ideas of the

heavenly state to represent souls in heaven shut up under an altar.

Can we suppose that the idea of vengeance would so dominate the minds of souls in heaven as to make them, despite the joy and glory of that ineffable state, dissatisfied and uneasy until vengeance was inflicted upon their enemies? Would they not rather rejoice that persecution raised its hand of their Redeemer, at whose right hand there is fullness 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. 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 are mutually exclusive.

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 apparent, for 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 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."

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 the mortal body. No instance of the occurrence of the word in the original Hebrew or Greek will sustain such a definition. It most often means "life", and is not infrequently 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.

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?" 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 abhorrence to all people.

But the Protestant Reformation began its work. It began to be seen that the church was corrupt and disreputable, 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. Then 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 persecuting 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 to every one of them.

The Little Season—The cruel work of Roman Catholicism did not altogether cease, even after the work of the Protestant Reformation had become widespread and well established. Not a few terrible

outbursts of hate and persecution were yet to be felt by the true 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. During this time Rome added hundreds of thousands to the vast throng whose blood she had already become guilty.

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 bondman, 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?

The Sixth Seal—Such are the solemn and sublime scenes which occur under the sixth seal. 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 complete change from highly figurative to strictly literal language. Whatever may be the cause, the change 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 figurative. We must therefore accept the change, even though we may be unable to explain

it. There is a significant fact, however, to which we would here call attention. It was in the period covered by this seal that the prophetic parts of God's word to be unsealed, and many run to and fro, or give their attention to the understanding of these things, and thereby knowledge on this part of God's word was to be greatly increased. We suggest that it may be for this reason that the change in the language here occurs, and that the events of this seal, taking place at a time when these things were to be fully understood, are not couched in figures, but are laid before us in plain and unmistakable language.

The Great Earthquake—The first event under this seal, and perhaps the one which marks its opening, is a great earthquake. As the most striking fulfillment of this prediction, we refer to the great earthquake of November 1, 1755, known as the earthquake of Lisbon. Of this earthquake, Robert Sears says:

"The great earthquake of 1755 extended over a tract of at least four millions of square miles. Its

effects were even extended to the waters, in many places where the shocks were not perceptible. It pervaded the greater portions of the continents 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 the city of Algiers was destroyed. Many houses were thrown down at Fez and Mequinez, and multitudes were buried beneath their ruins. Similar effects were realized in 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 by this tremendous convulsion. 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 and terrible commotion of the elements." "The city of Lisbon . . . previous to that calamity . . . contained about . . . 150,000 inhabitants. . . . Mr. Barretti says, 'that 90,000 persons are supposed to have been lost on that fatal day.' "

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 afterwards 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, Maravan, 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 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 [was] 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. Lucar [s], the captain of the ship 'Nancy' felt his vessel shaken so violently 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 degrees 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 were 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 in 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."

If the reader will look in his atlas at the countries mentioned, he will see how large a part of the earth's surface was agitated by this awful convulsion. Other earthquakes may have been as severe in particular localities, but no other 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, as announced by prophecy, "the sun became black as sackcloth of hair." This part of the prediction has also been fulfilled. We need not here enter into a detailed account of the wonderful darkening of the sun, May 19, 1780. 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:

"Dark Day, The. May 19, 1780—so called on account of a remarkable darkness on that day extending over all New England. . . . 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. . . . The true cause of this remarkable phenomenon is not known."

"In the month of May, 1780, there was a very 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."

"The time of this extraordinary darkness was May 19, 1780," says Professor Williams. "It came on between the hours of ten and eleven A.M., and

continued until the middle of the next night, but with different appearances at different places. . . .

"The degree to which the darkness arose was different in different places. In most parts of the country it was so great that people were unable to read common print, determine the time of day by their clocks or watches, dine, or manage their domestic business, without the light of candles. In some places the darkness was so great that persons could not see to read common print in the open air, for several hours together; but I believe this was not generally the case.

"The extent of this darkness was very remarkable. Our intelligence in this respect is not so particular as I could wish; but from the accounts that have been received, it seems to have extended all over the New England States. It was observed as far east as Falmouth [Portland, Maine]. To the westward we hear of its reaching to the furthest parts of Connecticut, and Albany. To the southward it was observed all along the seacoasts, and to the north as far as our settlements extend. It

is probable it extended much beyond these limits in some directtions, but the exact boundaries cannot be ascertained by any observations that I have been able to collect.

"With regard to its duration, it continued in this place at least fourteen hours; but is probable this was not exactly the same in different parts of the country.

"The appearance and effects were such as tended to make the prospect extremely dull and gloomy. Candles were lighted up in the houses; the birds, having sung their evening songs, disappeared, and became silent; the fowls retired to roost; the cocks were crowing all around, as at break of day; objects could not be distinguished but at very little distance; and everything bore the appearance and gloom of night."

"The 19th of May, 1780, was a remarkable dark day. Candles were lighted in many houses; the birds were silent and disappeared, and the fowls retired to roost. . . . A very general opinion

prevailed that the day of judgment was at hand."

Whittier, in a well-known poem, pictures it thus:

" 'Twas 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 sagas 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 at Bethany, but stern
As Justice and inexorable Law."

"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 ever has been observed since the Almighty fiat gave birth to light. . . . I could not help conceiving at the times, that if every luminous body in the universe had been shrouded in impenetrable shades, 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."

"In the evening . . . perhaps it never was darker since the children of Israel left the house of

bondage. This gross darkness help till about one o'clock, although the moon had fulled but the day before."

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

"The Stars of Heaven Fell"—The voice of history still cries, Fulfilled! We refer to the great meteoric shower of November 13, 1833. On this point a few testimonies 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 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. . . .

"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. 'It rained fire!' says one. Another, 'It was like a shower of fire.' Another, 'It was like the large flakes of falling snow, before a coming storm, or large drops of rain before a shower.' I admit the fitness of these for common accuracy; but they come far short of the accuracy of the figure used by the prophet. 'The stars of heaven fell upon the earth;' they were not sheets, or flakes, or drops of fire; but they were what the world understands by the name '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 pause 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 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 fruit, which at first refuses to leave the branch; and, when it does break its hold, 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."

"The most sublime phenomenon of shooting stars, of which the world has furnished any record, was witnessed throughout the United States on the morning of the 13th of November, 1833. The entire extent of this astonishing exhibition has not been precisely ascertained, but it covered no inconsiderable portion of the earth's surface. . . . The first appearance was that of fireworks of the most imposing grandeur, covering the entire vault

of heaven with myriads of fireballs, resembling skyrockets. Their coruscations were bright, gleaming, and incessant, and they fell thick as the flakes in the early snows of December. To the splendors of this celestial exhibition the most brilliant skyrockets and fireworks of art bear less relation than the twinkling of the most tiny star to the broad glare of the sun. The whole heavens seemed in motion, and suggested to some the awful grandeur of the image employed in the Apocalypse, upon the opening of the sixth seal, when '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.' "

"After collecting and collating the accounts given in all the periodicals of the country, and also in numerous letters addressed either to my scientific friends or to myself, the following appeared to be the leading facts attending the phenomenon. The shower pervaded nearly the whole of North America, having appeared in nearly equal splendor from the British possessions on the north, to the West India Islands and Mexico on the

south, and from sixty-one degrees of longitude east of the American coast, quite to the Pacific Ocean on the west. Throughout this immense region, the duration was nearly the same. The meteors began to attract attention by their unusual frequency and brilliancy, from nine to twelve o'clock in the evening; were most striking in their appearance from two to five; arrived at their maximum, in many places, about four o'clock; and continued until rendered invisible by the light of day."

"The spectacle must have been of the sublimest order. The apostle John might have had it before him when he indited the passage referring to the opening of the sixth seal: '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.' "

"The Heavens Departed as a Scroll"—In this event out 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. Our position

is 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. These are times of unparalleled solemnity and importance, for we do not know how near we may be to the fulfillment of these things.

The departing of the heavens is included in what the writers of the Gospels call, in the same series of events, the shaking of the powers of 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 with an audible voice, when He gave His eternal law from Sinai. At that time 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 locations 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. 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 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." Isaiah 24: 19, 20.

Jeremiah 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." Jeremiah 4: 23-27.

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 as King of kings. The great men behold the vanity of all earthly pomp, for there is a greatness above that of earth. The rich men throw their silver and gold to the moles and bats, for it cannot save them in that day. The chief captains forget their brief authority, and the mighty men forget their strength. Every bondman who is in the still worse bondage of sin, and every freeman—all classes of the wicked, from the highest down 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 and their catalogue of crimes in everlasting darkness. So they flee 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 or escape the long-delayed vengeance.

"It will be in vain to call,
'Ye 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 that day comes with its fearful scenes, we pray you, reader, give your most serious and candid attention to your salvation.

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 pray to the rocks and mountains in despair; and this will be the largest prayer meeting ever held.

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 erelong 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 a friend omnipotent,
And safely rest beneath His sheltering wings,

Amid the ruin of all earthly things.

Chapter 7

The Seal of the Living God

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 time 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 beginning of Revelation 8. The whole of Revelation 7 is therefore thrown in here parenthetically. Why is it thus introduced at this point? Evidently it is given fro 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 prophets had been carried in vision to the close of the sixth seal, that the consecutive order of events as given in Revelation 6 might not be broken, his mind is called to what is mentioned in Revelation 7, as further particulars in regard to the seal. We inquire, Between what events in that seal is this work done? It must be accomplished before the departing of the heavens as a scroll, for after that event there is no place for such a work as this. It must take place after the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, for these signs have already been fulfilled, and such a sealing work has not yet been accomplished. It comes in therefore between the 13th and 14th verses of Revelation 6. 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 now.

Four Angels—Angels are ever-present agents in the affairs of the earth. Why may not these be

four of those heavenly beings into whose hands God has committed the work of holding the winds while it is God's purpose that they should not blow, and loosing them when the time comes for the hurting of the earth?

Four Corners of the Earth—This expression denotes the four quarters, or the four points of the compass, and signifies that these angels in their particular sphere have charge of the whole earth.

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. When they are all loosed and all blow together, it will constitute the great whirlwind just referred to in the prophecy of Jeremiah.

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 sunrising," which is a more literal translation. The expression evidently refers to manner rather than locality, for as the sun rises with rays at first oblique and comparatively powerless, then increases in strength until it shine in all its meridian power and splendor, so the work of this angel begins in moderation, moves onward with ever-accumulating influence, and closes in strength and power.

Seal of the Living God—It is the distinguishing characteristic of the ascending angel that 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 suggested by his having the seal of the living God. To ascertain what his work is, we must determine what the seal of the living God is.

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 text is defined, "A seal, i.e., a signet ring; a mark, stamp, badge; a token, a pledge." The verb signifies: "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." With these definitions as a basis, we compare Genesis 17: 11 with Romans 4: 11, and Revelation 7: 3 with Ezekiel 9: 4, and find that the words "token," "sign," "seal," and "mark" are used in the Bible as synonymous terms. The seal of God brought to view in our text is to applied to the servants of God. In this case it is not some literal mark to be made in the flesh, but 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 His servants, though they may profess to follow Him.

A seal is used to render valid or authentic any enactments or laws that 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 Esther 8: 8: "The writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse."

A seal is used 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.

We are not suppose that to the enactments and laws of God binding upon men, there must be attached a literal seal, made with literal instruments. From the definition of the term, and the purpose for which a seal is used, as shown before, we must understand a seal to be strictly that which gives validity and authenticity to enactments and laws. This is found in the name of signature of

the lawmaking power, expressed in such terms as to show what power is, and its right to make laws and demand obedience. Even with a literal seal, the name must always be used as indicated in the references given above. 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." In other words, affix the signature of royalty, which shows who it is that demands obedience, and what his right is to demand it.

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

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.

What Is the Seal of God?—From the foregoing reasoning, facts, and declarations of Scripture, two conclusions inevitably follow:

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

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 lawmaking 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.) We pass 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. With that part 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, and I worship him according to this law. Thus without the fourth commandment the decalogue is null and void, as far as it pertains to the definition of 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," 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. 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 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, the law is incomplete and unauthoritative.

From the foregoing logic it is evident that the fourth commandment constitutes the seal of the law

of God, or the seal of God. The Scriptures give direct testimony on this conclusion.

We have seen already that in Scripture usage, "sign," "seal," "token," and "mark" are synonymous terms. 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 in Ezekiel 20: 12, 20. Here the Lord told His people that the very object of their keeping the Sabbath was that they might know that He is 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 you part it is a token that you accept 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

"Jews" and "Israel" in a true Scriptural sense are not confined to the literal seed of Abraham. This patriarch was chosen at first because he was the friend of God while his fathers were idolaters. His posterity 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. 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 are now described by such expressions as "a Jew which is one inwardly," and "an Israelite indeed." Romans 2: 29; John 1: 47. These declarations apply to all such, for they have as much occasion to know the Lord as had His people of old.

Thus the Sabbath of the fourth commandment is taken by the Lord as a sign between Him and His people, or the seal of His law for all time. By

keeping that commandment people signify that they are the worshipers of the true God. In the same commandment God make 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; Psalm 96: 5; 115: 4-7, 15; 121: 2; 124: 8; 134: 3; 146: 6; Isaiah 37: 16; 42: 5; 44: 24; 45: 12; 51: 13; Job 9: 8; Jeremiah 10: 10-12; 32: 17; 51: 15; Acts 4: 24; 14: 15; 17: 23, 24.)

Notice again 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 made 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 in Deuteronomy 16: 6: "But at the place which the Lord thy God shall chose to place His name in, there shalt thou sacrifice the Passover." What was in the place where they sacrificed the Passover? There was the sanctuary, having in its holiest apartment the ark with the ten commandments, the fourth of which identified the true God, and contained His name. Wherever this fourth commandment was, there God's name was placed, and this was the only thing to which the language could be applied. (See Deuteronomy 12: 5, 11, 21; 14: 23, 24.)

The Sealing Work—Since we have now ascertained that the seal of God is His holy Sabbath, with which His name is identified, we are prepared to proceed with the application.

By the scenes introduced in the verses before us—the four winds apparently about to blow,

bringing war and trouble upon the land, and this work restrained until the servants of God should be sealed—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 firstborn of the Egyptians. (Exodus 12.) We are also reminded of the mark made by the man with a writer's inkhorn on all those who were to be spared by the men with the slaughtering weapons who followed after. (Ezekiel 9.) We conclude that the seal of God 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 widespread, one of the most striking peculiarities in practice which a person can adopt, and one of the greatest crosses he can take up, is the simple observance of the fourth commandment of God's law. This precept requires the observance of the seventh day of each week as the Sabbath of the Lord; while almost all Christendom, through the combined influences of paganism and the papacy, has been beguiled into the keeping of the first day. A person has only to begin the observance of the day enjoined in the commandment, when a mark of peculiarity is upon him at once. He is distinct from both the professedly religious and the secular world.

We conclude 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 involving 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 reform.

We have already noticed that the chronology of this work locates it in our own time. This is further evident from the fact that in the next scene after the sealing of these servants of God, they appear 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 deliverance from the destruction brought upon the world in connection with the second advent.

Identity of the Sealing Angel—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 terrible warning that ever fell upon the ears of men. While we shall speak of this more fully when we reach that chapter, we refer to it now because 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 is therefore the same as the third angel of Revelation 14.

This view strengthens the foregoing exposition of the seal. As the result of the sealing work in Revelation 7, a certain company are sealed with the seal of the living God, while as the result of the third angel's message of Revelation 14 a company of people obey all the "commandments of God." Revelation 14: 12. It is the fourth commandment of the decalogue and that alone which the Christian world is openly violating and teaching men to violate. That this is the vital question in this message is evident from the fact that the keeping of the commandments, including the Lord's Sabbath, is what distinguishes the servants of God from those who worship the beast and receive his mark. As will be hereafter shown, this mark is the observance of a counterfeit sabbath.

After thus briefly noticing the main points of the subject, we now come to the most striking feature of all. In 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 begun; and it is surely, though yet in comparative silence, working its way through the land. It is destined to agitate every country that receives 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. The sealing of the servants of God by the angel mentioned in verse 3, is therefore in recognition of their faithfulness in keeping the law of God, who is identified in the fourth commandment as the Creator of heaven and earth, and who established the seventh-day Sabbath in commemoration of that great work.

Holding the Winds—With one more question we leave these verses, upon which we have dwelt so long. Have we seen among the nations any movements which would indicate that the cry of the ascending angel, "Hurt not" 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 occasional outbursts of strife, like fitful gusts breaking away from the imprisoned and struggling tempest. These outbursts must be unexpectedly checked. Then, but not otherwise, would it be evident to him who looked at events in the light of prophecy, that for some good purpose the restraining hand of Omnipotence was laid upon the surging elements of strife and war. Such has been the aspect of our times. New and unlooked-for complications have suddenly arisen, throwing the world into apparently inextricable confusion, and threatening immediate and direful war, when suddenly and unaccountably all subsided into quiet again. In the last half of the nineteenth century outstanding examples of such coincidences are found in the sudden conclusion of the Franco-German War in 1871, the Russo-Turkish War in 1878, and the Spanish-American

War in 1898.

Then there came in the early part of the present century the devastating World War I when the four winds were permitted to blow over much of the world. It was declared by many writers to be the Armageddon of the Apocalypse. As the years went by, it seemed that this great conflagration would consume the entire world, leaving neither root nor branch. But suddenly the angel cried, "Hold," for the sealing work was not yet fully accomplished. On November 11, 1918, the four angels stopped the winds of strife, and a war-sick world, distraught by the terror of four years of blood and carnage, rejoiced once more in apparent peace and safety.

The Armistice was acclaimed as marking the beginning of a golden age of peace and prosperity and good will among men, for had not this been "a war to end war"? Millions believed that another war would never come, that the human race had learned its lesson. But may it not be that the hand of God was moving in the affairs of nations to make possible the completion of the great work

depicted in verse 3 of this chapter in the words of the angel, "Until we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads"?

The period extending from the Armistice in 1918 until the breaking out of the second world war was far from peaceful, for the World Almanac listed no less than seventeen conflicts during this time, which touched four continents. Many of these outbreaks possessed potentialities of expanding into serious proportions. But every time the troubled world began to fear the spread of these conflicts, the troubles unexpectedly subsided. Did this angel interpose in behalf of peace?

Then suddenly the four angels again loosed their hold, and the four winds took on whirlwind velocity in a devastating global conflict we call World War II, and almost the entire world was engulfed. In its magnitude and fearful depredations on all that mankind holds dear and precious, this struggle entirely overshadowed World War I.

We are unable to understand or explain the ebb

and flow of these currents of war and peace on any other basis than the revelation of Jesus Christ given through the prophet John and recorded in the verses before us. When it suits the plans and purposes of God to permit the winds of strife to blow, then human nature untouched by the grace of God is seen in unbridled display. But when He says, "It is enough," the angel cries, "Hold, Hold, Hold, Hold," and the strife ceases that the work of God may proceed. Thus it will be until the great consummation of the plan of salvation.

Are you troubled, dear reader, over the turmoil and confusion among the nations? Do you desire to know what it all means? You will find the answer in the picture presented in these verses. "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Daniel 4: 32. In His own chosen time He will make "wars to cease unto the end of the earth." Psalm 46: 9.

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 Nepthalim 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 to Be Sealed—The number sealed is here stated to be one hundred forty-four thousand. 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 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." Those whom James here addresses are Christians, for they are his brethren. Some were converts from paganism and others were Jews, yet they are all included in the twelve tribes. How can this be? Paul explains in Romans 11: 17-24. In the striking figure of grafting which the apostle 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. 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, 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. (Revelation 21: 12-14.)

If the twelve tribes belonged exclusively to the Jewish era, 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. As through these gates, so inscribed, all the redeemed hosts will go in and out, so all the redeemed will be reckoned as belonging to these twelve tribes, whether on earth they were Jews or Gentiles.

It will be observed that the enumeration of the tribes here differs from that given in other places. In the text 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.) The tribe of Levi here takes its place with the rest, as in the heavenly Canaan the reasons for their not having inheritance will not exist as in the earthly. Joseph is probably substituted for Ephraim, it being a name which appears to have been applied to the tribe of either 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 began, 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 worshipped God, 12 saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

After the sealing is accomplished, John beholds a countless multitude worshiping God in rapture before His throne. This vast throng is 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.

A Special Company—The questions put by one of the elders to John, "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And when came they?" taken in connection with John's answer, "Sir, thou knowest," implying that John did not know, would seem to be devoid of point if they had reference to all the great multitude now before him. For John did know who they were and whence they came, inasmuch as he had just said that they were people—redeemed of course—out of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues. John could have answered, These are the redeemed ones from all the nations of the earth. No company is brought to view to which special allusion would more naturally be made than the company spoken of in

the first part of the chapter, 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. To this company, the following specifications seem to be specially applicable.

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" (Acts 14: 22), it is true of the 144,000 in a very special sense. 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 are to stand without a mediator through the terrible scenes of the seven last plagues, those exhibitions of God's unmingled wrath in the earth as we shall see in Revelation 15,

16. They pass through the most severe time of trouble the world has ever known, although they shall finally triumph and be delivered.

Wear White Robes—They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. To the last generation the counsel is very emphatic on the subject of obtaining the white raiment. (Revelation 3: 5, 18.) The 144,000 refuse to violate the commandments of God. (Revelation 14: 1, 12.) 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.

Called 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.

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 seven last plagues? In this time the righteous will be reduced to bread and water, and 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: 4-7), to reduce their connection with the earth and earthly things to the lowest limit, the saints who pass through that time will be brought occasionally to extreme degrees of hunger and thirst? But the kingdom once gained, "they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

The prophet continues: "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." The 144,000 live through the time when power is given unto the sun "to scorch men with fire." Revelation 16: 8, 9. 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 injure them.

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 the following beautiful passage the psalmist 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." Psalm 36: 8. The phraseology of this promise to the 144,000 is also partly found in a 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 He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it." Isaiah 25: 8.

Chapter 8

The Collapse of the Roman Empire

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

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. The series of seven seals is here resumed and concluded. The sixth chapter of Revelation closed with the events of the sixth seal, and the eighth chapter begins with the opening of the seventh seal. Hence the seventh chapter stands parenthetically between the sixth and seventh seals, and it appears that the sealing work of Revelation of 7 belongs to the sixth seal.

Silence in Heaven—The sixth seal does not bring us to the second advent of Christ, although it

embraces events closely connected with that coming. It introduces the fearful commotions of the elements, described as the heavens rolling together as a scroll, the breaking up of the surface of the earth, and the confession by the wicked that the great day of God's wrath is come. They are doubtless in momentary expectation of seeing the King appear in glory. But the seal stops just short of that event. The personal appearing of Christ must therefore be allotted to the next seal.

When the Lord appears, He comes with all the holy angels with Him. (Matthew 25: 31.) When all the heavenly harpers leave the courts above to come to this earth 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 Christian Era. In the seven trumpets now introduced we have the principal political and warlike events that occur 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.

After introducing the seven angels upon the stage of action in verse 2, John for a moment directs attention to an entirely different scene. The angel who 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 earth 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 era is here presented. This is apparent from the fact that the angel offers his incense with the prayers of all saints. That we are here carried forward to the end of time, is evident from the act of the angel in filling the censer with fire and casting it unto the earth; by this act he shows that his work is done. No more prayers are to be offered up mingled with incense. 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. Following the angel's act there are voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake— exactly such occurrences as we are elsewhere informed take place at the close of human probation. (See Revelation 11: 19; 16: 17,

18.)

But why are these verses inserted here? They are a message of hope and comfort for the church. The seven angels with their warlike trumpets had been introduced; terrible scenes were to take place when they should sound; but before they begin to blow, the people of God are directed to behold the work of mediation in their behalf in heaven, and to look to their source of help and strength during this time. Though they should be tossed 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. To that sacred place they could direct their prayers with the assurance that they would be offered with incense to their Father in heaven. Thus could they gain strength and support in all their tribulation.

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

The Seven Trumpets—The subject of the seven trumpets is resumed. These trumpets occupy

the rest of this chapter and all of Revelation 9. The blowing of the trumpets by the seven angels comes as a complement to the prophecy of Daniel 2 and 7, beginning with the breaking up of the old Roman Empire into its ten divisions. In the first four trumpets, we have a description of the special events which marked Rome's fall.

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.

Alexander Keith has 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 accomplished 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 the Revelation of Jesus Christ." "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. The death of Theodosius the Roman emperor, occurred in January, A.D. 395, and before the end of the winter the Goths under Alaric were in arms against the empire.

The first invasion under Alaric ravaged the Eastern Empire. He captured the famous cities and enslaved many of the inhabitants. Thrace, Macedonia, Attica, and the Peloponnesus, were conquered, but he did not reach the city of Rome. Later, the Gothic chieftain crossed the Alps and Apennines and appeared before the walls of the Eternal City, which fell a prey to the fury of the barbarians in A.D. 410.

"Hail and fire mingled with blood!" were cast upon the earth. The terrible effects of this Gothic invasion are represented as "hail," from 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 First Trumpet—The blast of the first trumpet has it location about the close of the fourth century and onward, and refers to these desolating invasions of the Roman Empire under the Goths.

After quoting at some length from Edward Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Chapters XXX-XXXIII, concerning the conquests of the Goths, Alexander Keith has presented an admirable summary of the historian's words emphasizing the fulfillment of prophecy:

"Large extracts clearly 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 crowned [sic] 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 the 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 be smoking ruins. Many cities were cruelly oppressed, or destroyed. Many thousands were inhumanly massacred. The consuming flames of war spread over the greatest 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."

After making this summary, Keith completes the picture by saying:

"The concluding sentence of the thirty-third chapter of Gibbon's History is of itself a clear ad 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, issued 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 Second Trumpet—The Roman Empire, after Constantine the Great, was divided into three parts. Hence the frequent remark, "a third part of men," is an 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, among his three sons, Constantius, Constantine II, and Constans. Constantius possessed the East, and fixed his residence at Constantinople, the metropolis of the empire. Constantine II held Britain, Gaul, and Spain.

Constans held Illyricum, Africa, and Italy.

The sounding of the second trumpet evidently relates to the invasion and conquest of Africa, and afterward of Italy, by Gaiseric (Genseric), king of the Vandals. 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 conduced to its fall. The next great invasion was that of Genseric, at the head of the

Vandals. His career reached its height between 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 towards 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, 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.

"The woods of the Apennines were felled; the arsenals and manufacturers of Ravenna and Misenum were restored; Italy and Gaul vied with each other in liberal contributions to the public service; and the imperial navy of three hundred large galleys, with an adequate proportion of transports and smaller vessels, was collected in the secure and capacious harbor of Carthagena 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 Carthagena: many of the ships were sunk, or taken, or burnt; and the preparations of three years were destroyed in a single day. . . .

"The kingdom of Italy, a name to which the Western Empire was gradually reduced, was afflicted, under the reign of Ricimer, 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 in 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 motions 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 calvary."

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

"The whole expense of the African campaign, by whatsoever means it was defrayed, amounted to the sum of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds of gold, about five million and 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 design 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 the 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. Whilst 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 fullness of years and of glory, he beheld the final extinction of the empire of the West."

Concerning the important part which this bold corsair acted in the downfall of Rome, 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.

The Third Trumpet—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. In revealing the historical fulfillment of this third trumpet, we shall be indebted to the notes of Albert Barnes for a few extracts. in explaining this scripture, it is necessary, as this commentator says, "that there would be some chieftain or warrior who might be compared with 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 that meteor would be mainly on those portions of the world that 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 the lands adjacent to them, and watered by them."

It is here premised that this trumpet has allusion to the desolating wars and furious invasions of Attila, king of the Huns, against the

Roman power. Speaking of this warrior, particularly of his personal appearance, Barnes says:

"In the manner of his appearance, he strongly resembled a brilliant meteor 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, 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 in 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 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.' "

The Name of the Star Is Called Wormwood—The word "wormwood" denotes 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. . . .

"It was the boast of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot which his horse had trod. 'The scourge of God' was a name that he appropriated to himself, and inserted among his royal titles. He was 'the scourge of his enemies, and the terror of the world.' The Western emperor with the senate and people of Rome, humbly and fearfully deprecated 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."

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.

The Fourth Trumpet—We understand that this trumpet symbolizes the career of Odoacer, the first barbarian ruler of Italy, 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. The last emperor of Western Rome was Romulus, who in derision was called Augustulus, or the "diminutive Augustus." Western Rome fell in 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 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.

The extinction of the Western Empire is recorded by Gibbon as follows:

"The unfortunate Augustulus was made the instrument of his own disgrace: 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 that yet remained of the authority which had given laws to the world.' "

Keith comments on the downfall of Rome:

"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 the 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 hemisphere [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 height 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 its 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 emperorship, 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 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. 522), achieved 'the conquest of Rome,' and the fate of the senate was sealed."

E. B. Elliott speaks of the fulfillment of this part 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 should 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 Roman 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 shown 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 is, 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;' or as the modern power has expressed it, still under the same Apocalyptic imagery—

> 'She saw her glories star by star expire.'
> till not even one 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 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 light as compared 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 inhabiters 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 another heavenly messenger, who announces that the three remaining trumpets are woe trumpets, because of the more terrible events to take place 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.

Chapter 9

The Moslem World in Prophecy

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.

The Fifth Trumpet—For an exposition of this trumpet, we shall again draw from the writings of Alexander Keith. This writer 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 the 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, 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 marked by that name alone, they are called woes. . . .

"Constantinople was besieged for the first time after the extinction of the Western Empire by Chosroes [II], the king of Persia."

The prophet said, "I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit."

The historian writes of this time:

"While the Persian monarch [Chosroes II] contemplated the wonders of his art and power, he received an epistle from an obscure citizen of Mecca, inviting him to acknowledge Mahomet as the apostle of God. He rejected the invitation, and tore the epsitle. 'It is thus,' exclaimed the Arabian

prophet, 'that God will tear the kingdom, and reject the supplications of Chosroes.' Placed on the verge of the two great empires of the East, Mahomet observed with secret joy the progress of their mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs, he ventured to foretell, that before many years should elapse, victory should 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 on a single spot that this star fell, as did the one that designated Attila, but upon the earth.

The provinces of the empire in Asia and Africa were subdued by Chosroes II, and "the Roman Empire 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 or 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 these ignominious terms; but the time and space which he obtained to collect such treasures from the poverty of the East, was 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 Mahometanism, 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 kingdoms 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, twenty-eight 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 multitudes of Saracens from Arabia, like locusts from the same region, who, propagating in their course the dark and delusive Mahometan creed, speedily overspread both the Persian and the Roman empires. 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 appears 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 Mahomet; 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 Mahomet; 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 Mahometans 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 upon 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 Mahomet, and their fanatic valor emerged from the desert.' "

The Bottomless Pit—The meaning of this term may be learned from the Greek {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, abyssos, 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. The fall of Chosroes II 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 until 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 vapors which the winds, particularly from the southwest, diffuse in Arabia, Mahometanism spread from hence 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 Mahomet, 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 Abu-bekr in A.D. 632, who as soon as he had fairly established his authority and government gathered the Arabian tribes for conquest. When the army was assembled, he instructed his chiefs on methods of conquest:

"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 Mahometans 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 so commanded them. And the preceding are the only instructions recorded by Gibbon, and 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 Mahometanism in its stead, he repeated the words which it was foretold in the Revelation of Jesus Christ that he would say."

Seal of God in Their Foreheads—In remarks upon Revelation 7: 1-3, we have shown that the seal of God is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. History is not silent upon the fact that there have been observers of the true seventh-

day Sabbath all through the gospel age. 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 the Christian Era who have had the seal of God in their foreheads, that is, have been intelligent observers of the true Sabbath. 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. One class of person is directly brought to view in the text, namely, those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. 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. The destruction to come upon this class 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. In fulfillment, we have the strange spectacle of an army of invaders sparing those things which such armies usually destroy, the face and productions of nature. In pursuance of their permission to hurt those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, they cleaved the skulls of a class of religionists with shaven crowns, who belonged to the synagogue of Satan. It would seem that these were monks, or some other order of the Roman Catholic Church.

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, which yet they were not able effectually to subdue, 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 comments 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 they held dear constantly endangered; and when 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 Mahomet 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 to 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 cuirass (or breastplate) was in use among the Arabs in the days of Mahomet. In the battle of Ohud (the second which Mahomet fought) with the Koreish of Mecca (A.D. 624), 'seven hundred of them were armed with cuirasses.' "

" '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 dart away with the swiftness of the wind. 'The sound of their wings was as the sound 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.

"To Hurt Men Five Months"—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.

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

"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, which grew until it extended over all the principal Mohammedan tribes, consolidating them into one grand monarchy.

Their king is called "the angel of the bottomless pit." An angel signifies a messenger, a minister, either good or bad, and not always a spiritual being. "The angel of the bottomless pit" would be the chief minister of the religion which came from thence when it was opened. That religion is

Mohammedanism, and the sultan was its chief minister.

His name in the Hebrew tongue is "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 "it was on the twenty-seventh of July, in the year twelve hundred and ninety-nine of the Christian Era, that Othman first invaded the territory of Nicomaedia; and the singular accuracy of the date seems to disclose some foresight of the rapid and destructive growth of the monster."

Von Hammer, the German historian of Turkey, and other authorities have placed this event in 1301. But to what date do the historic sources of

this period testify? Pachymeres was a church and state historian, born at Nicaea, which was in the vicinity of the Ottoman invasion; and he wrote his history during this very period. He concluded his work about 1307, so he was a contemporary of Othman.

Possinus, in 1669, worked out a complete chronology of Pachymeres' history, giving the dates for the eclipses of the moon and the sun, as well as other events, recorded by Pachymeres in his work. Concerning the date 1299 Possinus says:

"Now it is our task to give the exact and fundamental epoch of the Ottoman Empire. This we shall try to effect by a thoroughgoing comparison of the dates given by Arab chronologists and the testimony of our Pachymeres. This last- mentioned author reports in the fourth book of this second part, chapter 25, that Atman [Greek name for Othman] grew strong by taking the command over a very strong band of bold and energetic warriors from Paphlagonia. When Muzalo, the Roman army commander,

attempted to block his progress, he defeated him in a battle near Nicomedia, the capital of Bithynia. This city the lord of the battlefield henceforth kept as if it were besieged. Now, Pachymeres is very explicit in stating that these events took place in the immediate vicinity of Bapheum, not far from Nicomedia, on the 27th day of July. The year, we asseverate [affirm] in our synopsis, comparing carefully the events to have been of our Lord 1299."

The synopsis to which Possinus refers gives the date of the uniting of these Paphlagonians with Othman's forces, which took place on July 27, as 1299 of the Christian Era, fifth year of Pope Boniface VIII, and the sixth year of Michael Palaeologus. The statement is as follows:

"Atman [Othman], the strap of the Persians, called also Ottomanes, the founder of the still reigning dynasty of the Turcs, grew strong by joining to himself a great number of fierce bandits from Paphlagonia."

The Paphlagonians under the sons of Amurius joined Othman in this attack of July 27, so that Possinus gives the date for this event twice as 1299.

Gregoras, also a contemporary of Othman, supports Gibbon and Pachymeres in establishing the date 1299 in his account of the division of Anatolia. This division among ten Turkish emirs took place in 1300, as supported by reliable historians. Gregoras states that in the division of Bithynia, indicating that Othman had already fought the battle of Bapheum, and had conquered certain parts of this eastern Roman-Greek territory.

"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 not only were 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 first published in a work entitled, Christ's Second Coming, by Josiah 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, one hundred and fifty days], that is, 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 war 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 Sixth Trumpet—"The first woe was to continue from the rise of Mahometanism until the end of the five months. Then the first woe was to end, and the second 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 extended to slay the third part of men. This command came from the four horns of the golden altar."

The Four Angels—These are the four principal sultanies of which the Ottoman Empire was composed, located in the country watered by the Euphrates. These sultanies were situated at

Aleppo, Iconium, Damacus, and Bagdad. Previously they had been restrained; but God commanded, and they were loosed.

Late in the year 1448, as the close of the 150-year period approached, John Palaeologus died without leaving a son to follow him on the throne of the Eastern Empire. His brother Constantine, the lawful successor, would not venture to ascend the throne without the consent of the Turkish sultan. Ambassadors therefore went to Adrianople, received the approbation of the sultan, and returned with gifts for the new sovereign. Early in the year 1449, under these ominous circumstances, Constantine, the last of the Greek emperors, was crowned.

The historian Gibbon tells the story:

"On the decease of John Palaeologus, . . . the royal family, by the death of Andronicus and the monastic profession of Isidore, was reduced to three princes, Constantine, Demetrius, and Thomas, the surviving sons of the emperor Manuel.

Of these the first and the last were far distant in the Morea. . . . The empress-mother, the senate and soldiers, the clergy and people, were unanimous in the cause of the lawful successor: and the despot Thomas, who ignorant of the change, accidentally returned to the capital, asserted with becoming zeal the interest of his absent brother. An ambassador, the historian Phranza,, was immediately dispatched to the court of Adrianople. Amurath received him with honor and dismissed him with gifts; but the gracious approbation of the Turkish sultan announced his supremacy, and the approaching downfall of the Eastern empire. By the hands of two illustrious deputies, the Imperial crown was placed at Sparta on the head of Constantine.

"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, by saying, '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, during which Ottoman supremacy was to exist, amounts to three hundred ninety-one years and fifteen days. 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 literal year 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 Deacozes was made, and by whose permission he reigned in Constantinople, soon after died, and was succeeded in the empire, in 1451, by Mahomet II, who set his heart on Constantinople, and determined to make it a prey.

"He accordingly made preparations for besieging and taking the city. The siege commenced on the 6th of April, 1453, and ended in the taking of the city, and 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 prophet.

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 describes the first invasion of the Roman territories by the Turks thus: 'The myriads of Turkish horse overspread a frontier of six hundred miles, from Tauris to Azeroum, and the blood of 130,000 Christian was a grateful sacrifice to the Arabian prophet.' Whether the

number is designed to convey the idea of any definite number, the reader must judge. Some suppose 200,000 twice told is meant, and then, following some historians, find that the number of Turkish warriors in the siege of Constantinople. Some think 200,000,000 to mean all the Turkish warriors during the 391 years fifteen days of their triumph over the Greeks." Nothing can be affirmed on the point. And it is not 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 term of expression; jacinth, or hyacinth, for blue; and brimstone, for yellow. 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.

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. 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: "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 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.

Respecting the use of firearms by the Turks in their campaign against Constantinople, Elliott 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, as before said, of the foundry of the cannon at Adrianople; then, in the progress of the siege itself, describes how 'the volleys of lances and arrows

were accompanied with smoke, the sound, and the fire of the musketry and cannon;' how 'the long order of 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 galleys 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:' and how the besiegers at length 'rushing through the breaches,' 'Constantinople was irretrievably 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 the 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 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. The meaning of the expression appears to be that horses' tails were the symbol, or emblem, of their authority. It is a remarkable fact that the horse's tail is a well- known Turkish standard, a symbol of office and 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. Anyone 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 in 1449, the period would end August 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 only reigned by permission of the Turkish sultan, we should naturally conclude that the fall or departure of the Ottoman independence would be brought about the same say; 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 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 Josiah Litch in 1838, two years before the expected event was to occur. In that year he predicted that the Turkish power would be overthrown "in A.D. 1840, sometime in the month of August;" but a few days before the fulfillment of the prophecy he concluded more definitely from his study that the period allotted to the Turks would come to an end on August 11, 1840. It was then purely a matter of calculation on the prophetic periods of Scripture. It is proper to inquire whether such events did take place according to the calculation. The matter sums itself up in the following inquiry:

When Did Mohammedan Independence in Constantinople End?—For several years previous to 1840, the sultan had been embroiled in war with

Mehemet Ali, pasha of Egypt. "In 1838 there was a threatening of war between the sultan and his Egyptian vassal had he not been restrained by the influence of the foreign ambassadors. . . . In 1839 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 hostilities 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 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, 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 agreement 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 matters into their own hands, and use such other means to bring him to terms as they should see fit.

It is obvious that as soon as this ultimatum should be placed under the jurisdiction of Mehemet Ali, pasha of Egypt, the matter would be forever beyond the control of the Sultan, and the disposal of his affairs would, from that moment, be in the hands of foreign powers. The sultan dispatched Rifat Bey on a government steamer to Alexandria, to communicate the ultimatum to Mehemet Ali.

The ultimatum was placed as his disposal on the eleventh day of August, 1840! On the same day, in Constantinople, 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.

The facts are substantiated by the following quotations:

"By the French steamer of the 24th, we have advices from Egypt to the 16th. They show no alteration in the resolution of the Pacha. Confiding in the valor of his Arab army, and in the strength of the fortifications which defend his capital, he seems determined to abide by the last alternative; and as recourse to this, therefore, is now inevitable, all hope may be considered as at an end of a termination of the affair without bloodshed. Immediately on the arrival of the Cyclops steamer

with the news of the convention of the four powers, Mehemet Ali, it is stated, had quitted Alexandria, to make a short tour through Lower Egypt. The object of his absenting himself at such a moment being partly to avoid conferences with the European consuls, but principally to endeavor, by his own presence, to arouse the fanaticism of the Bedouin tribes, and facilitate the raising of his new levies. During the interval of this absence, the Turkish government steamer, which had reached Alexandria on the 11th, with the envoy Rifat Bey on board, had been by his orders placed in quarantine, and she was not released from it till the 16th. Previous, however, to the poet's [boat's] leaving, and on the very day on which he [she] had been admitted to pratique, the above- named functionary had an audience of the Pacha, and had communicated to him the command of the Sultan, with respect to the evacuation of the Syrian provinces, appointing another audience for the next day, when, in the presence of the consuls of the European powers, he would receive from him his definite answer, and inform him of the alternative of his refusing to obey; giving him ten days which

have been allotted him by the convention to decide the course he should think fit to adopt."

The correspondent of the London Morning Chronicle, in a communication dated "Constantinople, August 12, 1840," says:

"I can add but little to my last letter on the subject of the plans of the Four Powers; and I believe that the details I then gave you compose everything that is yet decided on. The portion of the Pacha, as I then stated, is not to extend beyond the line of Acre, and does not include either Arabia or Candia. Egypt alone is to be hereditary in his family, and the province of Acre to be considered as a pachalik, to be governed by his son during his lifetime, but afterwards to depend on the will of the Porte; and even this latter is only to be granted to him on the condition of his accepting these terms and delivering up the Ottoman fleet within the period of ten days. In the event of his not doing so, this pachalik is to be cut off. Egypt alone is then to be offered, with another ten days for him to deliberate on it before actual force be employed

against him. The manner, however, of applying the force, should he refuse to comply with these terms—whether a simple blockade is to be established on the coast, or whether his capital is to be bombarded and his armies attacked in the Syrians provinces—is the point which still remains to be learned; nor does a note delivered yesterday by the four ambassadors, in answer to a question put to them by the Porte, as to the plan to be adopted in such an event, throw the least light on this subject. It simply states that provision had been made, and there was no necessity for the Divan alarming itself about any contingency that might afterward arise."

Let us analyze the foregoing quotations:

First—The ultimatum reached Alexandria on August 11, 1840.

Second—The letter of the correspondent of the London Morning Chronicle is dated August 12, 1840.

Third—The correspondent states that the question of the Sublime Porte was put to the representatives of the four great powers, and the answer received "yesterday." So in his own capital, "yesterday" the Sublime Porte applied to the ambassadors of the four Christian powers of Europe as to what measures had been taken in reference to a circumstance vitally affecting his empire; and was told that "provision had been made," but he could not know what it was; and that he need not give himself any alarm "about any contingency which might arise"! From that day, "yesterday," which was August 11, 1840—they, the four Christian powers of Europe, and not he, would manage that.

On August 11, 1840, the period of three hundred 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 was watched by thousands with intense interest. 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 they are to learn, and how blind to the indications of providence!

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

Chapter 10

The World-Wide Proclamation of the Second 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 another instance in which the consecutive line of thought is for a time interrupted. Revelation 9 closed with the events of the sixth trumpet. The sounding of the seventh trumpet is not introduced until we reach Revelation 11: 15. All of chapter 10 and a part of chapter 11, therefore come in parenthetically between the sixth and seventh trumpets. That which 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 Revelation 11: 15. 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." We may infer from this language that this book was at some time closed. We read in Daniel of a book which was closed and sealed to a certain time: "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 only until the time of the end, it follows that at the time of the end the book would be opened. As this 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 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 Revelation 10. We see,

furthermore, that in both places the contents ascribed to the book are the same. The book which Daniel had directions to close and seal had reference to time: "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" Daniel 12: 6. 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, as will be seen in verse 6. Nothing more is 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 referred to in the prophecy of Daniel.

An important point is now determined in our endeavor to settle the chronology of this angel We have seen that the prophecy, especially the prophetic periods of Daniel, were not to be opened until the time of the end. If this is the book which the angel had in his hand open, it follows that he proclaims his message after the time when the book should be opened, or somewhere this side of the beginning of the time of the end. All that now remains on this point is to ascertain when the time of the end began, and the book of Daniel itself

furnishes data from which this can be done. In Daniel 11: 30, the papal power is brought to view. In verse 35 we read, "Some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make white, even to the time of the end." Here is 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. This period ended A.D. 1798, when the 1260 years of papal supremacy expired. There the time of the end began, and the book was opened. Since that time, many have run to and fro, and knowledge on these prophetic subjects has marvelously increased. (See comments on Daniel 12: 4.)

The chronology of the events of Revelation 10 is further ascertained from the fact that this angel appears to be identical with the first angel of Revelation 14. The points of identity them are easily seen: They both have a special message to proclaim, They both utter their proclamation with a loud voice. They both use similar language,

referring to the Creator as the maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and the things that are therein. And 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 beginning 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. Martin 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 beyond his day. Moreover, Paul warns the church against preaching that the hour of God's judgment has come, until a certain time. He say: "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 a 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." 2 Thessalonians 2: 1-3. Here Paul introduces to our view the man of sin, the little horn, or 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 began, and the seal was taken from the little book. Since that time, therefore, the angel of Revelation 14 has gone forth proclaiming that the hour of God's judgment is come. 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 more. Of their identify there can now be no question. All the arguments which go to locate the one are equally effective in the case of the other.

We not enter into any extended argument here to show that the present generation is witnessing the fulfillment of these two prophecies. In the preaching of the second 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. 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. 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 will be found in comments on Revelation 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 upon the seven thunders, in hope of gaining a definite knowledge of what they uttered. Something evidently was uttered which it would not be well for the church to know. 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.

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 for ever 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. The next verse speaks of the days of the voice of the seventh angel, and Revelation 11: 15-19 gives us some of the events to take place under this

trumpet in the present state. It cannot mean probationary time, for that does not cease until Christ closes His work as priest, which is not until after the seventh angel has begun to sound. (Revelation 11: 15, 15: 5-8.) It must therefore mean prophetic time, for there is no other to which it can refer.

The word "time" in this verse is translated "delay" in the American Revised Version—a very unusual rendering of the Greek original {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, chronos, "time," and the only one in the New Testament. Evidently the translators did not have prophetic time in mind, and could discern no other proper rendering of the word than "delay." Though by extension and implication this may be an admissible translation when the context seems to justify it, there is nothing in the context of verse 6 to call for such a rendering. In fact, the bitterness of the experience that follows the symbolic eating of the little book in verse 8-10 was for the very reason the Lord's coming was to be delayed beyond the expectation of those who were looking for Him

in 1844—and this for the very reason that their work of preaching the gospel was not yet finished, as clearly indicated in verse 11. Surely in an announcement given with so much emphasis as the one recorded in verse 6, if delay were meant instead of (prophetic) time, the regular word for "delay," {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, anabole, would be used, as in Acts 25: 17, or {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, okneo, as in Acts 9: 38. It is true that a verb derived from chronos, namely, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, chronizei, is used in the sense of "delay," as in Matthew 24: 48 and Luke 12: 45. But chronizei means simply "pass time," or "letting time pass," and gains its meaning of "delay" in this way. The word chronos, however, denotes "time" in the absolute, and there is every reason to believe this is its meaning (in a prophetic sense) in verse 6; and that since it is used in a prediction connected with a very important prophecy, we are justified in understanding it to mean prophetic time. In other words, 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. It means, rather, that no prophetic period should extend beyond the time of this message. 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 Seventh Trumpet—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 in the series of the seven trumpets, and like the others of this series, occupies prophetic 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 very beginning of his sounding, but in the early years of his sounding, the mystery of God shall be finished.

Form the events to take place under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, its beginning may be located with sufficient definiteness at the close of the prophetic periods in 1844. 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 dying upon the cross, cried, "It is finished." John 19: 30. 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 like thunder 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. When we read of the finishing of the mystery of God, we ask what that mystery is, and in what its finishing consists.

"The Mystery of God"—A few direct

testimonies from God's word, which has been given as a lamp to our feet, will show what this mystery is. "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 fullness 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." Ephesians 1: 9, 10. Here God's purpose to gather together all things in Christ is called the "mystery" of His will. This accomplished through the gospel. "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." Ephesians 6: 19. Here the gospel is declared plainly to be a mystery. In Colossians 4: 3, it is called the mystery of Christ. Again, "How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words), . . . that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." Ephesians 3: 3, 6. 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: "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 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 about A.D. 54, and that to the Ephesians about A.D. 65.

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, when 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 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.

John is here 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 straight-forward proclamation is brought to view, 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, it 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. This being the case, the angel who here appeared to John may represent that divine messenger, who 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.

The Sweet and the Bitter—The angel of this chapter has in his hand "a little book open." In

comments on verse 2 we have shown this "little book" to be the book of Daniel which was "sealed till the time of the end." Daniel 12: 9. It would be opened when the prophecies of the book were to be understood.

In comments on Daniel 8: 14 it has been shown that the work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary began in 1844. Students of prophecy who made this discovery understood the sanctuary to mean the earth, and mistakenly regarded this prediction to mean that the Lord would come to cleanse the earth of its pollution and sin at that time.

This message of the coming of the Lord in the autumn of 1844 spread rapidly throughout America and other parts of the world. It greatly moved the hearts of men and stirred the Protestant churches of that time. Tens of thousands looked for the coming of the Lord at the close of the great prophetic period of 2300 days in 1844. (See Daniel 8: 14; 9: 25-27.) Every preparation was made to greet Him with great joy and gladness, and then came the bitterness of disappointment, for the Lord did not

come. Their mistake was in their misunderstanding of the event to take place at the end of this prophetic period, and not in their reckoning of the time.

Accordingly, we read in verse 10, "The little book . . . was . . . in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

More Work to Be Done—The disappointment, however, was no evidence that the Lord was not in the movement, for in this tenth chapter of Revelation He anticipates this very experience, and in the last verse points His people to a task of world-wide extent He had yet for them to perform prior to His glorious appearing, for their work had not yet been finished. This work is brought to view quite fully in the three angels' messages of the fourteenth chapter. (See similar experiences in Jeremiah 15: 16-18; Ezekiel 3: 1-3, 10.)

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 joining the first and second angels' messages, it to go forth to the world. In other words, we have here a prophecy of the third angel's message, now, as we believe, in process of fulfillment. Neither will this work be done in a corner, for it is to go before "many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," as will be clearly seen in our study of Revelation 14: 6-12.

Chapter 11

The Battle Between the Bible and Atheism

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 began 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 Revelation 10, the angel gave a new commission to John as a representative of the church. In other words, as already shown, we have in that verse a prophecy of the third angel's message. The message is connected with the temple of God in

heaven, and is designed to fit a class of people as worshipers.

The Measuring Rod—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 are not to be measured in the sense of ascertaining the height and girth of each one in feet and inches. They are to be measured as worshipers, and character can be measured only be some standard of right, a law or principle or 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 a part of the measuring rod put by the angel into the hands of John. In the fulfillment of this prophecy under the third angel's message, this very law has been put in a special way into the hands of the church. This is the standard by which the worshipers of the true God are now to be tested.

Seeing now what it is to measure those who

worship in the temple, we inquire, What is meant by measuring the temple? To measure any object requires that special attention be given to that object. 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 we take the entire message, however, we find ourselves let by it to an examination of the sanctuary on high, with the commandments of God and the ministration of Christ. 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 part of the rod which relates to character, the ten commandments.

"The court which is without the temple leave out." This must be interpreted to mean that 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. The Gentiles being thus introduced, the attention of the prophet is directed to the great feature of Gentile apostasy, the treading down of the holy city forty and two months during that time. Thus we are carried back into the past by an easy and natural transition, 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.

The period of "a thousand two hundred and three score days" is variously referred to in the Scriptures. It appears in three forms:

As 1260 days in this verse and Revelation 12: 6.

As 42 months in Revelation 11: 2 and 13: 5.

As 3 1/2 times in Daniel 7: 25 and 12: 7, and Revelation 12: 14.

These all refer to the same period and can be easily be calculated. A time is a year, as is evident from Daniel 11: 13, marginal reading. A year has twelve months, and a Biblical month contains thirty days. Thus we have the following:

1 year of 12 months at 30 days - - - - 360 days

3 1/2 years, or times, of 360 days - - - - 1260 days

42 months of 30 days - - - - - - - - 1260 days

A year made up of 12 months will be readily conceded, but that the month has 30 days needs perhaps to be demonstrated. This can readily be seen by referring to the record of the flood in Genesis 7 and 8. There we learn the following:

1. That the flood came on the seventeenth day of the second month. (Genesis 7: 11.)

2. That the waters subsided on the seventeenth day of the seventh month. (Genesis 8: 4.)

3. That the flood continued for five months—form the second to the seventh month.

Reference to Genesis 7: 24 reveals the fact that "the waters prevailed upon the earth a hundred and fifty days." Our calculation showed five months. This text mentions 150 days; hence we have five months equaling 150 days, or 30 days to a month.

Thus we have a definite measure for calculating

the prophetic periods, bearing in mind that in prophecy a day is equal to a year of ordinary time.

The Two Witnesses—During this time of 1260 years 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: 11-14, where it is implied that the two olive trees are taken to represent the word of God. David testifies, "The entrance of Thy words giveth light;" and, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119: 130, 105. Written testimony is stronger than oral. Jesus declared of the Old Testament Scriptures, "They are they which testify of Me." John 5: 39.

Says George Croly: "The 'Two Witnesses' are the Old and New Testaments. . . . The essential purpose of the Scriptures is to give witness to the mercy and verity of God. Our Lord commands, 'Search the Scriptures, . . . they are they which testify [bear witness] of Me.' This was addressed to the Jews, and described the character and office of the Old Testament. The New Testament is similarly pronounced the giver of testimony. 'This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.' (Matthew 24: 14.)"

These declarations and considerations are sufficient to sustain the conclusion that the Old and New Testaments 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 pronounced in that word against such. It declares that they will have their punishment in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. (Malachi 4: 1; Revelation 20: 15; 22: 18, 19.)

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 so that it did not rain for three years and a half, but he did by the word of the Lord. Moses by the word of the Lord turned the waters of Egypt to blood. Just as these judgments, recorded in their testimony, have been fulfilled, so will every threatening and judgment pronounced by them against any people surely be accomplished.

"As often as they will" means that 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 have 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 sackcloth state 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 sackcloth state, forty-two months being the 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—no foundation—an atheistical power—'spiritually Egypt.' (See Exodus 5: 2: '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; she denied the being of God in her national capacity, and made war on the 'Monarchy of heaven.' "

"In the year 1793, . . . the gospel was, by a solemn act of the Legislature and the people abolished in France. The indignities offered to the actual copies of the Bible were unimportant after this; their life in their doctrines, and the extinction of the doctrines is the extinction of the Bible. By the decree of the French Government, declaring

that the nation acknowledged no God, the Old and New Testaments were slain throughout the limits of Republican France. But contumelies to the Sacred Books could not have been wanting, in the general plunder of every place of worship. In Lyons they were dragged at the tail of an ass in a procession through the streets. . . .

"On the 1st of November, 1793, Gobet, with the Republican priests of Paris, had thrown off the gown, and abjured Religion. On the 11th, a 'Grand Festival,' dedicated to 'Reason and Truth,' was celebrated in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which had been desecrated, and been named 'the Temple of Reason;' a pyramid was erected in the center of the Church, surmounted by a temple, inscribed 'To philosophy.' The torch of 'Truth' was on the altar of 'Reason' spreading light, etc. The National Convention and all the authorities attended at this burlesque and insulting ceremony."

Spiritual Sodom—" '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. First, in 1572 a plot was laid in France to destroy all the pious Huguenots; and in one night, 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 watch-word 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, and every possible mark of contempt heaped upon them, and all institutions of the Bible abolished; the Sabbath 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 to be an eternal sleep. The Goddess of Reason was set up, in the person of a vile woman, and publicly worshiped. Surely here is a power that exactly answers the prophecy." This point will be further developed in the comments on the next verse.

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 denotes the feelings of other nations than 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 of France served to arouse Christians everywhere to put forth a new exertion 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 had well-nigh swallowed them all up. They set out to destroy Christ's 'two witnesses,' but they filled France with blood and horror, so that they were horror-struck at the result of their wicked deeds, and were glad to remove their impious hands from the Bible."

Verse 11—And after three days and an 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..

Witnesses Restored—"In 1793, the decree passed the French Assembly suppressing the Bible.

Just three years after, a resolution was introduced into the Assembly going to supersede 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 which saw them.' Nothing but the appalling results of the rejection of the Bible could have induced France to take her hands off these witnesses."

"On the 17th of June, Camille Jourdan, in the 'Council of Five Hundred,' brought up the memorable report on the 'Revision of the laws relative to religious worship.' It consisted of a number of propositions, abolishing alike the Republican restrictions on Popish worship, and the Popish restrictions on Protestant.

"**1.** That all citizens might buy or hire edifices for the free exercise of religious worship.

"**2.** That all congregations might assemble by the sound of bells.

"**3.** That no test or promise of any sort unrequired from other citizens should be required of the ministers of those congregations.

"**4.** That any individual attempting to impede, or in any way interrupt the public worship should be fined, up to 500 livres, and not less than 50; and that if the interruption proceeded form the constituted authorities, such authorities should be fined double the sum.

"**5.** That entrance to assemblies for the purpose of religious worship should be free for all citizens.

"**6.** That all other laws concerning religious worship should be repealed.

"Those regulations, in comprehending the whole state of worship of France, were, in fact, a peculiar boon to Protestantism. Popery was already in sight of full restoration. But Protestantism, crushed under the burthen of the laws of Louis XIV, and unsupported by the popular belief,

required the direct support of the state to 'stand on its feet.' The Report of the Church; the old prohibitions to hold public worship, to possess places of worship, to have ingress, etc.

"From that period the Church has been free in France. . . .

"The Church and the Bible had been slain in France from November, 1793 till June, 1797. The three years and a half were expended, and the Bible, so long and so sternly repressed before, was placed in honor, and was openly the book of free Protestantism!"

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 expressions, 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 [1816]; and these, with their almost innumerable auxiliaries, are scattering the Bible everywhere." Before 1804 the Bible had been printed and circulated in fifty languages.

"Up to the end of December, 1942, the Bible in whole or in part has been translated into 1,058 languages and dialects."

No other book approaches the Bible in inexpensiveness and the number of copies circulated. The American bible Society reported having printed and circulated, in whole, or in part, 7,696,739 portions in 1940; 8,096,069, in 1941; and 6,254,642, in 1942. The British and Foreign Bible Society reported for the year ending in the middle of 1941 a circulation of 11,017,334 copies; and in 1942, 7,120,000 copies.

A conservative estimate places the number of

Bibles printed annually by commercial houses at six million. Hence the annual output of Bibles and portions has reached the enormous total of from twenty-five to thirty million copies a year.

From its organization up to and including 1942, the American Bible Society had issued 321,951,266 copies; and the British and Foreign Bible Society up to March, 1942, had issued 539,664,024 copies, making a total of 861,600,000 copies put out by these two societies alone. The American Bible Society said in May, 1940: "It is that nine tenths of the 2,000,000,000 people in the world might now, if they turned to the Bible, hear it read in a language they understand." The Bible 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 Revelation 17: 18: '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, Daniel's ten-horned beast [Daniel 7: 24], and John's ten-horned 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] seven thousand.' France made war, in here revolution of 1798 [1789] and onward, on all titles and nobility. . . . '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 to 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 giving 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."

Verse 14—The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

The Trumpets Resumed—The series of seven trumpets is here again resumed. The second woe ended with the sixth trumpet, August 11, 1840, and the third woe occurs under the sounding of the seventh trumpet, which began 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. Shall we now look for peace and safety, a

temporal millennium, a thousand years of righteousness and prosperity on earth? 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 for ever and ever. 16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped 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 fifteenth verse to the end of the chapter, we seem to be carried over the ground in three distinct times from the sounding of the seventh angel to the end. In the verses here 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 kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, unless 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.

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 shouldst give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

"The Nations Were Angry"—Beginning with the spontaneous outburst of revolutions in Europe in 1848, the anger of nations toward one another

has been constantly increasing. Jealousy and hatred among nations has been the rule rather than the exception. Particularly has this been manifested in the two world wars of the twentieth century, when it seemed that men would be willing to annihilate whole nations in the heat of their anger.

Here are the exact words of a Harvard professor:

"The twentieth century, so far, has been the bloodiest period and one of the most turbulent periods—and therefore one of the cruelest and lest humanitarian —in the history of Western civilization and perhaps in the chronicles of mankind in general."

"Thy Wrath Is Come"—The wrath of god for the present generation is filled up in the seven last plagues (Revelation 15: 1), which consequently must here be referred to, and which are soon to be poured out upon the earth.

"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 the gospel age. A work of judgment, of allotting to each one the punishment due because of his sins, is carried on 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 judgement takes place before the plagues are poured out.

"Thou Shouldst Give Reward Unto Thy Servants the Prophets"—These will enter upon their reward at the second coming of Christ, for He brings their reward with Him. (Matthew 16: 27; Revelation 22: 12.) The full reward of the saints, however, is not reached until they enter upon the possession of the new earth. (Matthew 25: 34.)

Punishment of the Wicked—"Shouldst

destroy them which destroy the earth," refers to the time when all the wicked, who have literally devastated vast regions and wantonly destroyed human life, will be forever devoured by those purifying fires from God out of heaven. (2 Peter 3: 7; Revelation 20: 9.) Thus the seventh trumpet reaches to the end of the one thousand years. Momentous, startling, yet joyous thought! The trumpet now sounding sees the final destruction of the wicked, and the saints clothed in a glorious immortality, safely located on the earth made new.

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.

The Temple Opened—Once more the prophet carries us back to the beginning of the trumpet. After the introduction of the seventh trumpet in verse 15, the first great event that comes to 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. We are next referred back to the state of the nations, the judgment to fall upon them, and the final destiny of both saints and sinners. (Verse 18.) After this field of vision has been scanned, our attention is called back once more in the verse now under notice, to the close of the priesthood of Christ, the last scene in the work of mercy for a guilty world.

The temple is opened, and 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. (Daniel 8: 14.) At that time the prophetic periods ended and the seventh angel began to sound. Since 1844, the people of God have seen by faith the open door in heaven, and the ark of God's testament within. They are endeavoring to keep every precept of the holy law written upon the tables deposited there. That the tables of the law

are there, just as they were 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 it did not contain the tables, it would not be the ark of 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 of tittle from the copy which for a time was committed to the care of men in the typical ark of the tabernacle during the time of Moses.

The followers of the prophetic word have also received the reed, and are measuring the temple,

the altar, and those that worship therein. (Revelation 11: 1.) They are uttering their last prophecy before nations, peoples, and tongues. (Revelation 10: 11.) 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 comments on Revelation 16: 17-21.)

Chapter 12

The Background of Religious Intolerance

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 part of the chapter will involve little more than a mere definition of the symbols introduced. This may be given in few words.

"A woman," signifies a true church. (2 Corinthians 11: 2.) 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" here signifies the light and glory of the gospel era. "The moon" is the symbol of the Mosaic period. As the moon shines with a borrowed light derived from the sun, so the former era shone with a light borrowed from the present. There they had the type and shadow; here we have the antitype and the substance. "A crown of twelve stars" appropriately symbolizes the twelve apostles. "A great red dragon" represents pagan Rome. (See comments under verses 4 and 5.) "Heaven" is the space in which this representation was seen by the apostle. We are not to suppose that the scenes here presented to John took place in heaven where God resides, for they are events which occurred upon this earth. This vision 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 beginning just previous to the opening of the Christian Era, when the church was earnestly longing for and expecting the advent of the

Messiah, and extending to 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 period shone with a light borrowed from the Christian Era, even 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 period had just ended, and the woman was clothed with the light of the gospel sun, which had just risen. By anticipation the church is represented as fully organized, with its twelve apostles, before the man child, Christ, appeared upon the scene. It was to be thus constituted immediately after Christ should begin His ministry; and He is more especially connected with this church than with that of the former period. There is no ground for misunderstanding 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 hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

"Third Part of the Stars of Heaven"—The dragon drew the third part of the stars of 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 part 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 Revelation 8: 12. 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 Sanhedrin. A third of these, the kings were taken away by the Roman power. Philip Smith, after describing the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans and Herod, and its capitulation in the spring of 37 B.C., 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."

This allusion to the stars undoubtedly has also a wider meaning, and is related to the truths emphasized in verses 7-9 of this chapter. As a result of the conflict there brought to view, it is evident that a third part of the angelic host, who joined with Satan in his rebellion against the Ruler of the universe, were cast out of the courts of glory.

"The Dragon Stood Before the Woman"—It now becomes necessary to identify the power symbolized by the dragon, and this can be done very easily. 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 as received from God the commission to rule all nations with a rod of iron, but He has been appointed to this work. (Psalm 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.

It will now be easy to find the power symbolized by the dragon, for the dragon represents some power which attempted to destroy Christ at His birth. Was any such attempt made? Who made it? No formal answer to this question need be given to anyone 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? He was 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 actor in this event. Moreover, Rome was the only earthly government which at that time could be symbolized in prophecy, for the very reason that its dominion was universal. It is not, therefore, without the most conclusive reason that the Roman Empire is regarded by Protestant commentators generally to be the power indicated by the great red dragon.

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 principle standard of the Roman legions. That dragon was painted red, as if 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.

Rome, as we have seen, attempted to destroy Jesus Christ through the fiendish plot of Herod.

The child who was born to the 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. 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. He ascended to heaven in the sight of His disciples, leaving to them and us the promise that He would come again.

The church fled into the wilderness at the time of the papacy was firmly 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 for 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 inhabiters 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.

War in Heaven—The first six verses of this chapter, as has been seen, take us down to the close of the 1260 years in 1798, which marked the end of the papal supremacy. 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, when with fiendish ingenuity Satan working through the power of pagan Rome sought to destroy the

Saviour of men; and also back beyond that time to the very beginning of the great controversy between truth and righteousness, when in heaven itself Michael (Christ) and His angels fought against the dragon (Satan) and his angels. To prove that Michael is Christ, see Jude 9; 1 Thessalonians 4: 16; John 5: 28, 29.

"Prevailed Not"—Thank God that in that early conflict the archdeceiver was defeated. As "Lucifer, son of the morning," with envy and hatred in his heart, he had presumptuously led a host of disaffected angels in rebellion against the government of God. But the Scripture says he "prevailed not," and "was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Centuries later at the time of Christ's first advent, "the great dragon," "that old serpent called the devil, and Satan," put forth a supreme effort in the guise of the great red dragon, representing pagan Rome, to destroy the world's Redeemer. 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 Christ during His ministry. 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 His gracious promise to His faithful followers: "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." Revelation 3: 21. 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. 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. 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."

Their Place Found No More in Heaven— Satan and the fallen angels had suffered a terrible defeat, which Christ describes by saying, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10: 18), and Peter tells us that these fallen angels have been delivered "into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2: 4).

The hope which he had long cherished of overcoming the Son of man when He took Himself our nature, had forever perished. His power was limited. He could no more aspire to a personal encounter with the Son of God, for Christ had vanquished him. 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 his rage.

But hereupon a song is sung in heaven, "Now is come salvation." 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. Those things were made sure. The

great victory had been won by Christ which forever settled the question of their establishment.

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.

It was Satan that moved upon Herod to put the Saviour to death. But the chief agent of the archrebel in making war upon Christ and His people during the early centuries of the Christian Era was the Roman Empire, in which paganism was the dominant religion. Thus, while the dragon primarily represents Satan, it is in a secondary sense representative of pagan Rome.

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.

The Church in the Wilderness—Here we are once more carried back to the time when Satan became fully aware that he had failed in all his attempts against the Lord of glory in His earthly mission. Seeing this, he turned with tenfold fury, as already noticed, upon the church which Christ had established. Then we have another view of the church going into that condition here spoken of as 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 produced by the union of paganism 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 seek her own safety when the man of sin was installed in power. The assistance of God was 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," similar phraseology to that used in Daniel 7: 25, furnishes a key for the explanation of the latter passage. The same period is called in Revelation 12: 6, "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. These days, being symbolic, signify 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 absolute control of the civil power for long centuries. Through it Satan could hurl a mighty flood of persecutions 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.) Millions of true believers were carried away by the flood, but the church was not entirely swallowed up, for 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 Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century began its work. God raised up Martin 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 Wittenburg; 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.

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 exercised their God-given right to regulate their consciences by His word alone. Defenders of the true faith multiplied. Soon there was enough Protestant soil found in Europe and the New World 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 her to the present day, as the spirit of the Reformation and religious liberty has been fostered by the leading nations of Christendom.

War on the Remnant—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, 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 its 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.

Chapter 13

The Agelong Struggle for Religious Freedom

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?

The sea is a symbol of "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." Revelation

17: 15. A beast is the Bible symbol of a nation or power. It sometimes represents the civil power alone, and sometimes the ecclesiastical in connection with civil. Whenever a beast is seen to come up out of the sea, it denotes that the power arises in a thickly populated territory. 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 comments on Revelation 17: 10.)

The Leopard Beast—The seven-headed and ten-horned beast, 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 conclusive arguments which prove it.

The line of prophecy in which this symbol occurs begins with Revelation 12. The symbols of earthly governments embraced in the prophecy are the dragon of Revelation 12 and the leopard beast and the two-horned beast of Revelation 13. The same line of prophecy evidently continues into chapter 14. Beginning, therefore, with Revelation 12: 1, and ending with Revelation 14: 5, 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. 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. In verse 1 of Revelation 13 we are carried back to the time when the leopard beast, the successor of the dragon, begins his career. From this power the church suffers war and persecution for the long period of 1260 years. Following this period of oppression, the church has another conflict, brief but sharp and severe, with the two-horned beast. Then comes deliverance. 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 true Church of God. The other characters are her persecutors, and are introduced simply because they are such. 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 mere civil power of any nation persecuting the people of God on its own initiative? Governments may war against other governments to avenge some wrong, real or imaginary or to acquire territory and extend their power. 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.

Leopard Beast a Persecuting Power—The powers introduced in this prophecy—the dragon, the leopard beast, and the two-horned beast of verses 11-17—are all persecuting powers. They are actuated by rage and enmity against the people and church of God. 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 undeniable answer is, Primarily Satan, as shown heretofore, and secondarily the Roman Empire. But this is not enough. No one would be

satisfied with this answer and no more. It must be more definite. We therefore add, The Roman Empire in its pagan form, to which all must agree. But just as soon as we say pagan, we introduce a religious element, for paganism is one of the most gigantic systems of counterfeit religion that Satan has 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. 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 Revelation 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. This beast symbolized Rome in its professedly Christian form. It is this change of

religion, and this alone, which makes a change in the symbol necessary. This beast differs from the dragon only that it presents a different religious aspect. Hence it would be wrong to affirm that it denotes simply the Roman civil power.

A Symbol of the Papacy—To this beast the dragon gives his power, his seat, and great authority. By what power was pagan Rome succeeded? We all know that is 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 power and seat 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 power and seat, is further evidence that the dragon of Revelation 12:

3 is used as symbol of pagan Rome. But back of both powers, and leading them on in their wicked work, is Satan himself.

But it may be said that it takes both the leopard beast and the two-horned beast 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 which has a head that is wounded to death, which is afterward healed; that beast after which the whole world wonders; that beast which has a mouth speaking blasphemies, and which wears out the saints for 1260 years. It does all this before the succeeding power, the two-horned beast, appears. The leopard beast alone, therefore, symbolizes the Roman Empire in its papal form, the controlling influence being ecclesiastical.

Identical With the Little Horn—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 and the leopard beast symbolize the same power. The little horn is generally acknowledged to be a symbol of the papacy. There are six points by which to establish their identity:

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.) Of this beast we read: "There was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." Revelation 13: 5.

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 of 1260 years the "saints," "times," and "laws" were to be taken out of the "hand" of the little horn. (Daniel 7: 25.) 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.

These six points prove satisfactorily the identity of the little horn and the leopard beast. 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.

Received a Deadly Wound—The head that was wounded to death was the papal head. We are held to this conclusion by the 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 leopard beast applies to Rome only in its professedly Christian form. John says that it was one of the heads of this leopard beast that was wounded to death. In other words, this wound fell upon the form of government that existed in the Roman Empire after its change from paganism to Christianity. Thus it is evident that is was the papal head that was wounded to death, and whose 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, August 29, 1799. But the deadly wound began to be healed when the papacy was re-established, though with less of its former power, by the election of a new pope, March 14, 1800.

Verse 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.

Speak Blasphemies—This beast opens his mouth "in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Mention has already been made in comments on the book of Daniel as to the significance of the expression, "He shall speak great words against the Most High." Daniel 7: 25. In verse 5 in this chapter of Revelation similar words are used, for he had "a mouth speaking great things." Here, however, the word "blasphemy" is added, and this evidently points to the fact that the great words will be blasphemous enunciations against the God of heaven.

In the Gospels we find two indications of what constitutes blasphemy. In John 10: 33 we read that the Jews falsely charged Jesus with blasphemy because, said they, "Thou, being a man, makest

Thyself God." This is in the case of the Saviour was untrue, because He was the Son of God. He was "Immanuel, God With Us." But for man to assume the prerogatives of God and to take the titles of deity—this is blasphemy.

Again, in Luke 5: 21 we see the Pharisees endeavoring to catch Jesus in His words. "Who is this which speaketh blasphemies?" said they. "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" Jesus could pardon transgressions, for He was the divine Saviour. But for man, mortal man, to claim such authority is blasphemy indeed.

We might ask if the power represented by this symbol has fulfilled this part of the prophecy. In comments on Daniel 7: 25 we saw clearly from the evidence submitted that he had spoken "great words" against the God of heaven. Now observe what is said regarding the claim of the priesthood to forgive sins:

"The priest holds the place of the Saviour Himself, when, by saying, 'Ego te absolvo' [I thee

absolve], he absolves from sin. . . . To pardon a single sin requires all the omnipotence of God. . . . But what only God can do by His omnipotence, the priest can also do by saying 'Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis.'. . . Innocent III has written: 'Indeed, it is not too much to say that in view of the sublimity of their offices the priests are so many gods.' "

Note still further the blasphemous utterances of this power:

"But our wonder should be far greater when we find that in obedience to the words of His priests—HOC EST CORPUS MEUM [This is My body]—God Himself descends on the altar, that He comes wherever they call Him, and as often as they call Him, and places Himself in their hands, even though they should be His enemies. And after having come, He remains, entirely at their disposal; they move Him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the church; they may, if they choose,

eat His flesh, and give Him for the food of others. 'Oh, how very great is their power,' says St. Laurence Justinian, speaking of priests. 'A word falls from their lips and the body of Christ is there substantially formed from the matter of bread, and the Incarnate Word descended from heaven, is found really present on the table of the altar!' "

"Thus the priest may, in a certain manner, be called the creator of his Creator. . . . 'The power of the priest,' says St. Bernardine of Sienna, 'is the power of the divine person; for the transubstantiation of the bread requires as much power as the creation of the world.' "

Thus this beast power blasphemes the temple in heaven by turning attention of his subjects to his own throne and palace instead of to the tabernacle of God; by diverting their attention from the sacrifice of the Son of God to the sacrifice of the mass.

He blasphemes them that dwell in heaven by assuming to exercise the power of forgiving sins,

and so turns 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 itself let into captivity.

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.

Two-Horned Beast—This verse brings 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 nation which is representative of still

another great system of religion. The only remaining system which is exercising a controlling influence in the world today is Protestantism. Abstractly considered, paganism embraces all the heathen lands, containing more then half the population of the globe. Catholicism, which may perhaps be considered as including the religion of the Greek Orthodox Church, so nearly identical with it, belongs to nations which compose a large part of Christendom. A clear portrayal of Mohammedanism and its influence has been given in other prophecies. (See comments on Daniel 11 and Revelation 9.) But Protestantism is the religion of nations which constitute the vanguard of the world of liberty, enlightenment, progress, and power.

A Symbol of America—If, then, Protestantism is the religion to which we are to look, to what nation 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 United States of America. The reason for such an application and the evidence by which it is supported we will carefully consider.

Are they any reasons why we should expect that the United States would be mentioned in prophecy? On what conditions have other nations found a place in the prophetic record? First, that they have acted a prominent part in the world's history; and second, and above all, that they have had jurisdiction over, or maintained important 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: A nation enters prophecy when the work and destiny of God's people are definitely linked with it. All these conditions are certainly fulfilled in the United States. The conviction has fastened itself upon many minds that the rise and progress of this nation has been of such a nature that Providence saw fit to forecast it in prophecy.

Governor Pownal, an English statesman, predicted in 1780, while the American Revolution was in progress, that this country would become independent; 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 stranger marks of divine interposition, superseding the ordinary course of human affairs, than any other event which this world has experienced.' "

George Alfred Townsend, speaking of the misfortunes that have attended the other governments in the Western Hemisphere says:

"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."

Such considerations as these are calculated to arouse in every mind a strong expectation that this nation 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.

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 set forth regarding the leopard beast. It was at the time when this beast went into captivity, or was killed with the sword (verse 10), or 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 papacy 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.

Can anyone doubt what nation was actually "coming up" in 1798? Certainly it must be admitted that the United States of America is the only power that meets the specifications of the prophecy on this point of chronology.

The struggle of the American colonies for independence began in 1775. 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 by July 26, 1788, it was ratified by eleven of the thirteen original States; and on the 1st of March, 1789 it went into effect. The United States thus began with less than one million square

miles of territory, and less than four million citizens. Thus we come to the year 1798, when this nation is introduced into prophecy.

John Wesley, in his notes on Revelation 13, 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 forty-two months of the first beast."

Age of This Power—There is good evidence in the prophecy to show that the government symbolized by the two-horned beast is introduced in the early part of its career; that is, while a youthful power. John's words are, "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 an innocent and harmless demeanor, but also that it is a youthful power; for the horns of a lamb are horns that have barely begun to grow.

Bear in mind that by the preceding argument on chronology, our gaze is fixed on the year 1798, when the power symbolized was then youthful. 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 in that direction, they rest inevitably upon the United States as the power in question. No other power west of the Atlantic Ocean fits the description.

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 therefore is 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 avoid the application of this symbol to the United States by saying that it denotes some phase of the papacy; for in such a case it would be a part of the

preceding, or leopard, beast.

Since this is "another" beast, "coming up out of the earth," it must be found in some territory not covered by any other symbols. Babylon and Medo-Persia covered all the civilized part 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 of Daniel 2, 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. In other words, all the Eastern Hemisphere known to history and civilization is covered by prophetic symbols 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. There is one symbol remaining whose application has not yet been made. All the symbols but one are applied, and all the available areas 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. Of all the countries of the earth respecting which any reason exists why they should be mentioned in prophecy, one alone, the United States of America, remains. Does the two-horned beast represent the United States? If it does, then all the symbols find an application, and all the ground is covered. If it does not, it follows that the United States is not represented in prophecy, and the symbol of the two-horned beast is left without a nation to which it can apply. But the first of these suppositions is not probable, and the second is not possible.

Another consideration pointing to the location of this power is drawn from the fact that John saw it arise 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. By exclusion from Eastern continents, and by looking to territory

not previously known to civilization, we turn of necessity to the Western Hemisphere.

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 saw the beast coming up "out of the earth." 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 rise 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 attainment of 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 do describe the manner in which this beast comes up, is very expressive. It is {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, anabainon, one of the

prominent definitions of which is, "to grow or spring up as a plant." It is a remarkable fact that this same 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 the United States has arisen. George Alfred Townsend 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 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 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."

Edward Everett, in an oration on the English exiles who founded this government, said:

"Did they look for a retired spot, inoffensive for its obscurity, and safe in its remoteness, where the little church of Leyden might enjoy the freedom of conscience? Behold the mighty regions over which, in peaceful conquest— victoria sine clade [victory without strife]—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 that would be when the two-horned beast should arise; the others are from political writers, telling what had been in the history of the United States of America. Can anyone 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, more than four hundred years ago, this Western Hemisphere was discovered. The Reformation awoke the nations that were fettered in the galling bonds of superstition and oppression, to the great truth that it is the heaven-born right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. But rulers are loath to lose their power, and religious intolerance continued to oppress 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, December 21, 1620. "There," 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 had been made at Jamestown, Virginia, 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 amounted in 1701 to 262,000; in 1749, to, 1,046,000; in 1775, to 2,803,000. Then came the struggle for independence, the establishment of a united constitutional government, and the proclamation to the world that here all could find an asylum from oppression and intolerance. From the Old World came immigrants by the thousand, adding by peaceful means to the population and prosperity of

the new nation. Large territories were purchased or acquired by treaty to make room for all who came to settle. Now, passing over more than 150 years, to the second quarter of the twentieth century, the territory of the United States has expanded to more than three and a half million square miles, and its population has increased to over 135,000,000 people.

The growth of the United States in material prosperity and enlightened development is an astonishment to the world, and furnished an ample basis for the application of the prophecy.

Character of Its Government Symbolized— Under this division of the subject we find still further evidence that the symbol represents the United States. In describing this power, John says that it had "two horns like a lamb." The horns of a lamb indicate youthfulness, 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 can be found to do this. 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 power, and what reveals its 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 would be characteristic.

It needs no argument to show that this is precisely the profession of the American government. Article IV, sec. 4, of the Constitution of the United States reads in part: "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 to the Constitution begins as follows: "Congress shall

make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." These articles profess the amplest guaranty of civil and religious liberty, the entire and perpetual separation of church and state. 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 represent so completely this feature of the symbol?

Republican in Form—The two-horned beast, with a noticeable absence of crowns upon its horns, symbolizes a nation with a republican form of government. A crown is an appropriate symbol of a kingly or dictatorial 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 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." This is emphatically the case in the United States. The Constitution on which it was founded guarantees "a republican form of government," as shown above. This constitutes another link in the chain of evidence that this symbol applies to the United States of America. There is no other government to which anyone could reasonably think of applying this symbol.

A Protestant Nation—The two-horned beast symbolizes a nation which cannot be Catholic in religion. The papacy is a religion that is fundamentally a union of church and state. The Constitution of the United States of America (Article VI) declares that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust," and thereby establishes a perpetual separation of church and state. Civil and religious liberty is a fundamental principle of Protestantism. The founders of this great land, living close to all of the events that resulted from a union of church and state, were jealous of the liberties that they

claimed as the rights of all, and were quick to denounce anything that savored of a union of church and state. From the religious standpoint, therefore, the United States is a Protestant nation, and meets the requirement of the prophecy admirably in this respect. Thus again the prophecy points directly to this nation.

Before entering upon a discussion of another aspect of this prophetic symbol, let us review the points already established:

The power symbolized by the two-horned beast must be some nation distinct from the powers of the Old World.

It must arise in the Western Hemisphere.

It must be seen assuming a position of prominence and influence about the year 1798.

It must rise in a peaceful and quiet manner, not augmenting its power and expanding its territory, as other nations have done, by aggressive wars and

successful conquests.

Its progress must be so evident as to strike the beholder with as much wonder as would be the perceptible growth of an animal before his eyes.

It must be republican in its form of government.

It must be Protestant in its religion.

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.

It must perform its work after 1798.

We have seen that of all these specifications, it can be said that they are conclusively met in the history of the United States thus far; and that they are not met in the history of any other nation. It is therefore impossible to apply the symbol of Revelation 13: 11 to any other nation than the

United States of America.

To Speak as a Dragon—Now that we have identified the United States of America as the power symbolized by the two-horned beast, we can follow through without fear or prejudice the course that that nation takes as marked out clearly in the prophecy itself. In doing so, let us observe once more that the dragon as the first of the three beasts in the chain of prophecy under consideration, was a relentless persecutor of the church of God. The leopard beast that followed was likewise a persecuting power, destroying the lives of millions of Christians during a period of 1260 years. As we come to the third beast, with two horns like a lamb, it is declared that he "spake as a dragon." This can only mean that at some time his nature changes from that of a lamb to that of a dragon, that he speaks as a dragon, and that he does the same kind of work as the dragon before him.

Permit us to say at this juncture that it is with much pain that we contemplate a nation arising so peaceably and devoted to such noble principles of

government, taking on the nature of the beasts that preceded it, and in doing so descending to the role of persecutor of God's people. We have no other choice, however, but to be guided in our study by the divinely inspired outline so plainly given us in the prophecy. Since the United States is the power denoted by the symbol that speaks as a dragon, it follows that it will enact unjust and oppressive laws against the religious belief and practice of its citizens so that it may be justly called a persecuting power.

Verse 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.

To Exercise Persecuting Power—Not only does this nation speak as a dragon, but it is declared that he also "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Looking back a little, we find that the first beast before him is the leopard, a symbol of the papacy. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that a so-called

Protestant nation will exercise the persecuting power of the papacy, and thereby become pseudo-Protestant, that is, the "false prophet" mentioned in Revelation 19: 20, and explained under the next topic.

The exercise of this power takes the form of causing the people in his jurisdiction "to worship the first beast," the papacy. The Greek word for "worship" used here is a very significant one. It is from the simple verb {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, kuneo, "I kiss," compounded with a preposition to indicate that the kiss is directed toward someone—in this case the papacy, or its titular head the pope. It is ordinarily translated "do obeisance to, bow down to," and is used by the Septuagint in Nebuchadnezzar's decree to all "people, nations, and languages" to "fall down and worship the golden image" he had set up in the plain of Dura. Daniel 3: 4, 5. Such "worship" must mean to submit to the authority and decree of the one to whom obeisance is made. This is the picture given in the prophecy of the "worship" given to the papacy by a so-called Protestant

people.

Verse 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.

"He Doeth Great Wonders"—In that part of the prediction which sets forth the work of the two-horned 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 power represented by the two-horned beast. That we are living in an age of wonders, none will deny. We would refer the reader to our remarks on Daniel 12: 4 concerning the wonderful achievements of the present age, and for some illustrations of the leading triumphs of scientific and inventive skill.

But the prophecy is not fulfilled in the great advancement in knowledge, in discoveries, and in 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: "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."

We should now ascertain by what means the miracles in question are wrought, for Revelation 16: 13, 14 refers to "the spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world."

In predicting events to occur just before His second coming, the Saviour says: "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." Matthew 24: 24. 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 wonder-working power, manifested to a startling and unprecedented degree to propagate falsehood and error. The "spirits of devils" were to go forth to "the whole world," but the nation with which this development is especially connected in Revelation 13, is that represented by the two-horned beast, or false prophet. We must therefore conclude that the prophecy calls for such a work as this in America. Do we find anything like it at the present time?

There is a widespread belief and teaching current among all classes of society, that when a man dies and his body is laid away in the grave, an immortal "spirit" or "soul" within him does not really die, but soars away to its place of reward or punishment. This belief naturally leads one to ask, "If disembodied spirits are alive, why may they not communicate with us?" There are thousands who

believe that they can and do, and who claim to have communication with departed friends.

But the Bible, in the most explicit terms, assures us that the dead are wholly inactive and unconscious until the resurrection; that the dead know not anything (Ecclesiastes 9: 5); that every operation of the mind has ceased (Psalm 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 claiming to be what from the word of God we know he is not. That our dead friends do not return to us is shown in 2 Samuel 12: 23, where David says of his dead child, "Now he is dead, . . . I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." Any such intelligence that comes to us cannot be a good angel, for angel's of God do not lie. Spirits of devils do lie, and this has been their work ever since the first lie about dying was told by their leader in Eden, "Ye shall not surely die," when the Lord had said plainly to Adam, "Thou shalt surely

die." Genesis 3: 4; 2: 17.

Birthplace of Spiritism—Modern spiritism also 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. Beginning in Hydesville, New York, in the family of John D. Fox in the latter part of March, 1848, it spread with incredible rapidity through all the world.

Much excitement was caused by these supposed revelations, and some rather prominent persons undertook to investigate the "rapping delusion," as it was commonly called. From that time onward, spiritism has remained a force in the modern world; and it is a force which has steadily grown. It is difficult to determine the number of its adherents, because so many who believe and practice its teachings regard themselves as belonging to no denomination at all; yet on the other hand many retain their membership in a non-spiritist denominational group while nevertheless attempting communication with the dead. It has been estimated that there are 16,000,000 spiritists

in North America; and in the world—including those heathen religions in which spiritism plays so prominent a part—doubtless hundreds of millions.

As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle remarked some years ago: "The lowly manifestations of Hydesville have ripened into results which have engaged the finest group of intellects in this country during the last twenty years, and which are destined, in my opinion, to bring about far the greatest development of human experience which the world has ever seen." "If such a view of Christianity were generally accepted, and if it were enforced by assurance and demonstration from the New Revelation which is, as I believe, coming to us from the other side, then I think we should have a creed which might unite the churches, which might be reconciled to science, which might defy all attacks, and which might carry the Christian faith on for an indefinite period."

Teachings of Spiritism—But the doctrines which spiritists teach are certainly not in harmony with the word of God. As to their attitude toward

the Bible, notice the following paragraph:

"We have no desire to hide the plain fact that there is much in some parts of the Bible which does not amalgamate with our teaching, being, indeed, the admixture of human error which came through the mind of the chosen medium." "In no case are the books as they now stand the work of their reputed author. They are the compilation of Ezra and his scribes, and do but embody the conceptions and legends of the period. . . . We mention this to avoid at once the necessity of replying to any texts from these book which may be quoted as an argument."

As to the relation of spiritists to Christ and His atoning work, observe the following significant remark:

"They [the spirits] also testify that Jesus Christ has nothing to do with the question of life and death, and they know nothing about the 'mediation of our Saviour Jesus Christ.' "

Believers in spiritism have no place, either, for the second advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ:

"Jesus Christ is now arranging His plans for the gathering of His people, for the further revelation of the truth, as well as for the purging away of the erroneous beliefs which have accumulated in the past. I have heard something of this from other sources. Is this then the return of Christ? It is the spiritual return. There will be no such physical return as man has dreamed of. This will be the return to His people, by the voice of His messengers speaking to those whose ears are open."

Phenomena of Spiritism—How significant are these words! Centuries ago the seer of Patmos declared that in this country would arise a power that "doeth great wonders," and, lo, spiritism appears claiming to do these very things.

Spiritism answers accurately to the prophecy in the exhibition of great signs and wonders. Among

its achievements the following may be noted: Various articles have been transported from place to place by spirits. Beautiful music has been produced independent 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 spirits in the presence of spectators. Tables have been suspended in the air with several persons upon them. Spirits also have presented themselves in bodily form and talked with audible voices.

The power represented in this prophecy is to make "fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men." But this as well as other manifestations of its power are for the purpose of deceiving "them that dwell on the earth." The miracles that are wrought are by "the spirits of devils." Revelation 16: 14. And many are the warnings in the word of God against making contact with evil spirits. In the days of the early church solemn warnings were given to the church of God: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith,

giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." 1 Timothy 4: 1. God's counsel to His people in these last days is, "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isaiah 8: 19, 20.

Verse 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.

Makes 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 constitute an image of the papal beast, 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 civil power, in other words, a union of church and

state. 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?

To be sure we would. But is such an eventuality possible in a country whose foundation stones are civil and religious liberty, and where every man's right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" has gone unchallenged throughout the years? Let us examine the evidence.

Nation Founded on Liberty—The hand of God wrought with the noble and God-fearing men who laid so well the foundations of the new nation. Said the Hon. Henry D. Estabrook, speaking before the Connecticut Bar Association: "On this great continent, which God had kept hidden in a little world—here, with a new heaven and a new earth, where former things had passed away, the people of many nations, of various needs and creeds, but

united in heart and soul and mind for the single purpose, builded an altar to Liberty, the first ever built or that ever could be built, and called it—The Constitution of the United States."

This was in the year 1787. The prophet saw the lamblike beast coming up out of the earth about 1798—surely this is no mere coincidence. George Washington, the first President of the United States, in his inaugural address said:

"No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency."

In their reply to this notable address the Senate declared: "When we contemplate the coincidence of circumstances, and wonderful combination of causes, which gradually prepared the people of this country for independence; when we contemplate

the rise, progress, and termination of the late war, which gave them a name among the nations of the earth; we are, with you, unavoidably led to acknowledge and adore the great Arbiter of the universe, by whom empires rise and fall."

Struggle Against Religious Tyranny—These were not only godly men, but they were wise and farseeing men. When certain religious groups made appeal that "explicit acknowledgment of the true God and Jesus Christ" be made in the Constitution, their request was denied. In writing of this incident, Thomas Jefferson said: "The insertion was rejected by a great majority, in proof that they meant to comprehend within the mantle of its protection the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo, and Infidel of every denomination."

The House Judiciary Committee, February 18, 1874, in reply to a similar petition, reported: "As this country, the foundation of whose government they were then laying, was to be the home of the oppressed of all nations of the earth, whether Christian or pagan, and in full realization of the

dangers which the union between church and state had imposed upon so many nations of the Old World, with great unanimity [they agreed] that it was inexpedient to put anything into the Constitution or frame of government which might be construed to be a reference to any religious creed or doctrine."

History attests the fact that these great men who laid the foundation stones upon which the United States was erected looked forward with almost prophetic vision to the dangers to personal liberty which some day would confront the country. Their fears were well expressed by Thomas Jefferson: "The spirit of the times may alter, will alter. Our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless. A single zealot may commence persecution, and better men be his victims. It can never be too often repeated, that the time for fixing every essential right on a legal basis, is while our rulers are honest and ourselves united. From the conclusion of this war we shall be going downhill. It will not then be necessary to resort every moment to the people for support. They will be

forgotten, therefore, and their rights disregarded. They will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to effect a due respect for their rights. The shackles, therefore, which shall not be knocked off at the conclusion of this war, will remain on us long, will be made heavier and heavier, till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion."

On the Fourth of July, 1788, an address was delivered by Justice James Wilson, in which he pointed out how the enemies of liberty were already working. He said: "The enemies of liberty are artful and insidious. A counterfeit steals her dress, imitates her manner, forges her signature, assumes her name. But the real name of the deceiver is licentiousness. Such is her effrontery, that she will charge liberty to her face with imposture; and she will, with shameless front, insist that herself alone is the genuine character, and that herself alone is entitled to the respect which the genuine character deserves. With the giddy and undiscerning, on whom a deeper impression is made by dauntless impudence than

by modest merit, her pretentions are often successful. She receives the honors of liberty, and liberty herself is treated as a traitor and a usurper. Generally, however, this bold impostor acts only a secondary part. Though she alone appear upon the stage, her motions are regulated by dark ambition, who sits concealed behind the curtain, and who knows that despotism, his other favorite, can always follow the success of licentiousness. Against these enemies of liberty, who act in concert, though they appear on opposite side, the patriot citizen will keep a watchful guard."

Threatened With Ecclesiastical Domination—Let it be noted that in the panorama of coming events which passed before the prophet John, he witnessed this same amazing change in the nature of the two-horned beast. It eventually began to speak "as a dragon" and to control the worship of its people, "saying to them that dwell upon the earth, that they should make an image to the beast."

The beast "which had the wound by a sword,

and did live," is the papacy. This was a church dominating the civil power. In other words, it was a union of church and state, and enforced its religious dogmas by the civil power, under pain of confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and death. An image to this beast would be another ecclesiastical organization clothed with civil power—another union of church and state—to enforce religious dogmas by law.

Evidence that such an image will be formed is seen in the fact already large and influential organizations, such as the National Reform Association, the International Reform Bureau, the Lord's Day Alliance of Christ in America, have been formed, by professed Protestants, and for years have been persistently working to the end of establishing and enforcing religious standards by law. Also Roman Catholic societies in the United States, in harmony with their tradition for centuries, are looking to a like end. Ultimately these two forces are destined to join hands in a common effort.

The avowed object of the National Reform Association is "to secure such an amendment to the Constitution of the United States as will . . . indicate that this is a Christian nation, and place all the Christian laws, institutions, and usages of our government on an undeniably legal basis in the fundamental law of the land."

Upon the question of making this a "Christian nation," Bishop Earl Cranston, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in an address delivered in Foundry Methodist Church, Washington, D.C., March 13, 1910, made the following observation:

"Suppose this were to be declared a Christian nation by a Constitutional interpretation to that effect. What would that mean? Which of the two contending definitions of Christianity would the word 'Christian' indicate?— The Protestant idea, of course, for under our system majorities rule, and the majority of Americans are Protestants. Very well, but suppose that by addition of certain contiguous territory with twelve or more million

Roman Catholics, the annexation of a few more islands with half as many more, and the same rate of immigration as now, the majority some years hence should be Roman Catholics, —who doubts for a moment that the reigning Pope would assume control of legislation and government? He would say, with all confidence and consistency, 'This is a Christian nation. It was so claimed from the beginning and so declared many years ago. A majority defined then what Christianity was, the majority will define now what Christianity now is and is to be.' That 'majority' would be the Pope."

This association, organized for so-called "National Reform," has no compunctions about uniting with the papacy to bring about its design to establish a national religion. It declares: "We cordially, gladly, recognize the fact that in the South American Republics, and in France and other European countries, the Roman Catholics are the recognized advocates of national Christianity, and stand opposed to all the proposals of secularism. . . . Whenever they are willing to co-operate in resisting the progress of political

atheism, will gladly join hands with them. In a world's conference for the promotion of national Christianity—which ought to be held at no distant day—many countries could be represented only by Roman Catholics."

Shall we notice the avowed objective of the other organizations?

In a History of the International Reform Bureau the society in a self-appraisal declares, "The Reform Bureau is the first 'Christian lobby' established at our National Capital to speak to government in behalf of all denominations."

On pages 61 and 65 of the foregoing work it is stated that the securing of compulsory Sunday legislation is one of the chief objects of this and other like organizations.

Speaking before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee against the Supreme Court bill, Professor Theodore Graebner, of Concordia College, St. Louis, made this interesting

observation:

"Some 50 years ago the national Reform Association sought . . . to make all public education Christian and thereby make Jesus Christ the King of the nation. . . . The movement persists to the present day, and is issuing an enormous amount of literature all directed to the end of adopting a Christian amendment."

The actual objective of this organization is to force religion upon the people by legal enactment—to secure a Sunday blue law, and to standardize the Christianity of the people.

From a leaflet published by the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States we learn that their objective is:

" (1) To preserve the Lord's day [Sunday] for America; (2) to secure an active Alliance in every State not yet organized: (3) to induce the general government as far as possible to set the example of Sabbath observance."

By all this is meant the securing, as far as possible, of compulsory state and national Sunday legislation—the very means by which the church gained control of the state and by which church and state were united in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian Era.

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, which is by far the most powerful and representative combination of Protestant churches in the nation, claiming at its beginning to represent eighteen organizations and 50,000,000 communicants, in stating its reasons for existence declared:

"That the great Christian bodies of our country should stand together. . . [in dealing with] questions like those of marriage and divorce, Sabbath desecration, social evils," etc.

In defining how they purpose to deal with Sabbath desecration, the Federal Council declared:

"That all encroachments upon the claims and the sanctities of the Lord's day should be stoutly resisted through the press, the Lord's day associations and alliances, and by such legislation as may be secured to protect and preserve this bulwark of our American Christianity."

Thus it will be seen that the securing of the laws for the enforcement of Sunday observance is a prominent feature in all these organizations in their efforts to "Christianize" the nation. In doing this many fail to see that they are repudiating the principles of Christianity, or Protestantism, and of the United States Government, and playing directly into the hand of that power which originated the Sunday sabbath, and gained control of the civil power through Sunday legislation—the papacy.

This danger was clearly discerned by the lawmakers of the United States more than a century ago. In 1830, certain memorials for prohibiting the transportation of the mails and the opening of post offices on Sunday, which had been referred to the Congressional Committee on Post

Offices and Post Roads, came up for consideration. The committee reported unfavorably to the petition of the memorialists. Its report was adopted, and printed by order of the Senate of the United States, and the committee was discharged from any further consideration of the subject. Of the Constitution it said:

"The committee look in vain to that instrument for a delegation of power authorizing this body to inquire and determine what part of time, or whether any, has been set apart by the Almighty for religious exercises. . .

"The Constitution regards the conscience of the Jew as sacred as that of the Christian; and gives no more authority to adopt a measure affecting the conscience of a solitary individual, than that of a whole community. That representative who would violate this principle, would lose his delegated character, and forfeit the confidence of his constituents. If Congress shall declare the first day of the week holy, it will not convince the Jew nor the Sabbatarian. It will dissatisfy both, and

consequently convert neither. . . . If a solemn act of legislation shall in one point define the law of God, or point out to the citizen one religious duty, it may with equal propriety proceed to define every part of divine revelation; and enforce every religious obligation, even to the forms and ceremonies of worship, the endowment of the church, and the support of the clergy.

"The framers of the Constitution recognized the eternal principle that man's relation with his God is above human legislation, and his rights of conscience inalienable."

Seeking to Establish Righteousness by Law.—A thousand pities that the religious leaders in these days are not equally sensitive to the dangers which lurk beneath their program to make the people good by legal enactment of religious dogmas.

We are not unmindful of the noble service the Protestant churches have rendered to humanity and to the world by introducing and defending the great principles of Protestantism, by propagating the

gospel, and by championing the cause of freedom.

Let no one think that we wish to reflect in any way upon the character of the men engaged in this enterprise. They are men of the highest moral standing, sincerely solicitous for the welfare of the nation, and honestly trying to check and remove the evils which are rampant in society. That their efforts will in many ways be productive of good, no one can doubt. We wish them all possible success in their work for the promotion of temperance, the elimination of war, the safeguarding of youth, and other like noble purposes. For these things all Christians are bound to work and pray.

Why then are these good men misled into doing something against which the Bible utters a solemn warning? The reason is that they have turned aside from the counsel of God given them in His word, and are going about to establish righteousness and the kingdom of God in the earth in their own way. They have slighted the prophetic portions of the Bible, by which one may know what stage of the

conflict between the kingdom of Christ and that of Satan has been reached in his day, and how he can co-operate with the providence of God for the times in which he is living. They have lost touch with their divine Leader and with the means He is using today to advance His kingdom in the earth. They have a mistaken conception of the kingdom which is to come, and are looking for a kingdom mixed with earthly elements, to be set up by earthly agencies, such as the ballot, legislation, and education.

Under such circumstances it is not surprising that they should be working at cross-purposes with the providence of God. The mistake of failing to heed and be guided by the instruction of God's word, is a fatal one. The more zeal a church has when it is off the track and pursing a wrong course, the greater will be the damage which it will do.

The apostle Paul points to a time when men have "a form of godliness," but would deny "the power thereof."

We greatly regret to see the Protestant church active in the fulfillment of this prophetic picture. While the power of God is lacking, the outward services of true Christian worship are maintained. With the loss of the power of God the churches are turning more and more to the state to supply what they lack. It is the testimony of all history that just in proportion as any popular and extensive ecclesiastical organization loses the spirit and power of God, it clamors for the support of the civil arm and finally religion becomes a part of the state. Thus it will be in the formation of the image of the beast, for the prophecy declares: "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." Revelation 13: 15.

Let now an ecclesiastical organization be formed, let the government legalize such an organization and give it power to enforce upon the people the dogmas which the different denominations can all adopt as the basis of union, and what do we have? Exactly what prophecy

represents—an image to the papal beast endowed with life by the two-horned beast, to speak and act with power.

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.

The papal beast is the power 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.

The two-horned beast is the power introduced in Revelation 13: 11, and is represented through the remainder of the prophecy by the pronoun "he." Wherever this pronoun occurs, down to the seventeenth verse (with possibly the exception of the sixteenth verse, which perhaps may refer to the

image), it refers invariably to the two-horned beast.

The image of the beast is usually called in the following chapters of Revelation, "the image;" so there is no danger of confusing this with any other agent. The acts ascribed to the image are speaking as a dragon and enforcing the worship of itself under the penalty of death. 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 receiving 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. Human organizations, controlled and inspired by

the spirit of the dragon, are to command men to do those acts which are in reality the worshipping of an apostate religious power and the receiving of his mark. If they refuse to do this, they lose the rights of citizenship, and become outlaws in the land. 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 this fearful crisis comes upon the people, as we shall see in remarks on Revelation 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. 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 both sides, that has ever been brought to bear upon any generation.

The worship of the beast and his image and the receiving 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. 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 He has given us the evidence whereby we may determine what it means to receive the mark of the beast, that we may avoid the fearful penalty so sure to follow its reception. God does not so trifle with human hopes and human destinies as to pronounce 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 important inquiry, What constitutes the mark of the beast? The figure of a mark is borrowed from an ancient custom. Thomas Newton 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 characters, 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.

The word used for mark in this prophecy is {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, 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. Of course, we are not 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. 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 the person whose mark he bore, acknowledged his authority, and professed allegiance to him. 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?

Characteristics of Papal Power—It would naturally be looked for in some of the special papal power. Describing that power under the symbol of a little horn, Daniel 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." Daniel 7: 25. These laws must certainly be the laws of the Most High. To apply the expression to human laws, and make the prophecy read, He shall speak great words against 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, 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. For the word "law" the Hebrew has {HEBREW CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, dath, and the Septuagint reads, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, nomos, in the singular, "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, 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. He describes it, in the person of the pope, as "that man of sin" "sitting as God in the temple of God" (that is, the church), and 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.

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, and 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 as long as God had requirements which the people felt bound to regard in preference to his, 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. The most effective way in which he could place himself in the position assigned in the prophecy would be for him to change the law of God. If he can cause this change to be adopted by the people in the place of the original enactment, then he, the law changer, puts himself above God, the lawmaker. This is the very work that Daniel said the power represented by the little horn would think to do.

Such a work as this the papacy will accomplish

according to the prophecy, and the prophecy cannot fail. 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. 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. The two laws 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 in by the papacy says the same, no one can tell by a person's observance of that precept whether he designs 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?" The answer is simply this: The mark of the beast is the change which the beast has attempted to make in the law of God.

Change 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. Defining the term "law" according to the sense in which it is almost universally used in Christendom, Webster says, "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."

In our comment on Daniel 7: 25, in regard to the prediction of the prophet that the papacy would "think to change times and laws," we produced evidence from the Roman Catechism based on the unquestioned authority of the Council of Trent, and published by order of Pope Pius V by the Vatican press in Rome, that the church changed the day of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. While that catechism records the full wording of the fourth commandment as it reads in the Bible, and while it is retained in full in the official Catholic Bible in Latin, the Vulgate, and in its official translation into English, the Douay Bible; yet the teaching catechisms provided for

Roman Catholic priests and teachers in modern times omit all that commandment but the first sentence, "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day." and add extended testimony that the change of the Sabbath day from Saturday to Sunday was made on the authority of the Catholic Church and apostolic tradition." Whatever may be said on the text of the Catechism of the Council of Trent and that of the Roman Catholic Bible about retaining the entire commandment as it reads in the Scripture, nevertheless the practice of the prelates and priests is to teach only observance of a Sabbath institution, but locate it on the first day of the week instead of the seventh, by the authority of the church.

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 no 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 professedly 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. How these later catechisms, with their ecclesiastical imprimatur, read, is illustrated herewith.

Some of the simpler catechisms make no mention of a change in religious days, but state categorically that the Sabbath commandment teaches Sunday observance:

"Q. Say the Third Commandment.

"A. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"Q. What is commanded by the Third Commandment?

"A. To sanctify the Sunday."

Others say that the Catholic Church changed the day of worship. In A New Catechism of Christian Doctrine and Practice, we find the following under the subject of the third commandment:

"What day was the Sabbath?

"The seventh day, our Saturday.

"Do you keep the Sabbath?

"No: we keep the Lord's Day.

"Which is that?

"The first day: Sunday.

"Who changed it?

"The Catholic Church."

In the well-known Baltimore catechism, we find this explanation:

"Q. What it the third Commandment?

"A. The third Commandment is: Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

"Q. What are we commanded by the third Commandment?

"A. By the third Commandment we are commanded to keep holy the Lord's day.

. . .

"Q. Are the Sabbath day and the Sunday the

same?

"A. The Sabbath day and the Sunday are not the same. The Sabbath day is the seventh day of the week, and is the day which was kept holy in the old law; the Sunday is the first day of the week, and is the day which is kept holy in the new law.

"Q. Why does the Church command us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath?

"A. The Church commands us to keep the Sunday holy instead of the Sabbath because on Sunday Christ rose from the dead, and on Sunday He sent the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles."

In The Catholic Christian Instructed we read:

"Q.—What warrant have you for keeping the Sunday preferably to the ancient Sabbath, which was the Saturday?

"A.—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 (Matt. 18: 17; Luke 10: 16), and to hold fast the traditions of the apostles (2 Thess. 2: 15), but the Scriptures do not in particular mention this change of the Sabbath."

In A Doctrinal Catechism 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 An Abridgment of the Christian Doctrine we find this testimony:

"Q.—How prove you that the church hath power to command feast and holy days?

"A.—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."

In The Catechism Simply Explained, are these questions and answers:

"What is the third commandment?

"The third commandment is, 'Remember that

thou keep holy the Sabbath day.'

"What are we commanded by the third commandment?

"By the third commandment we are commanded to keep the Sunday holy.

"The Jew's Sabbath Day was the Saturday; we Christians keep the Sunday holy. The Church, by the power our Lord gave her, changed the observance of the Saturday to the Sunday."

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. They claim as a token, or mark, or the authority of that church the "very act of changing the Sabbath into Sunday," and set it forth as proof of its power in this respect.

"But," says one, "I supposed that Christ

changed the Sabbath." A great many suppose so, for they have been so taught. We would remind such persons, however, 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 that 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 that is repulsive to any Christian.

Why should anyone 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. 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 it should do, that the prophecy has failed, and that Scriptures are unreliable. The matter would better stand as the prophecy has it, and the claim which the pope

unwittingly puts forth 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 the theology of our day has come. Would it, then, be strange if there were yet some relics of popery to be discarded before the Reformation will be complete? Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ church, 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, among them all, 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. 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 the sea, the sun and the 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 as a weekly reminder of Himself, and as a memorial of His work in creating the heavens and the earth, a great barrier against heathenism and idolatry. It is the signature and seal of the law. This the papacy in its teaching and practice has removed from its place, and has substituted another institution, which the church sets forth as the sign of its authority.

Issue Is Between Sabbath and Sunday—This

change of the fourth commandment must therefore be the change to which the prophecy points, and the Sunday sabbath 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 not the change from Sabbath to Sunday inevitably the mark of the beast? The answer must be in the affirmative. They hypotheses just set forth are all certainties.

Who Receives the Mark of the Beast?—It will be said again, Then all Sundaykeepers 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! 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 no such conclusions.

Please give close attention. The mark and the 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 angel's 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 receiving of his mark such as prophecy contemplates, until it is enforced by the two-horned beast, and knowingly accepted by the individual. We have seen that 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 by the individual, to constitute it the receiving 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, before it can be said that he has received the mark of the beast.

But how is it with those mentioned above, who have kept Sunday in the past, and the majority of those who are keeping it today? 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 intentionally 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 of Revelation 14 proclaims the commandments of God, leading men to the true Sabbath 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 by the law of God to keep the true Sabbath; they are required by the law of God to keep the true Sabbath; they are required by the law of the Catholic Church, or the pseudo-Protestant church, and of the land to keep the counterfeit sabbath. 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 unchristian, 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 worshipers—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 pronounces against so Heaven-daring a course the most terrible threatening that His word contains?

The Closing Work—We have now seen what would properly constitute an image to the beast, such as the two-horned beast is to make, and also the prospect that such an image will sometime be set up in the United States of America. 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 different sects in the land, in coalition with Roman Catholicism, by the promulgation and enforcement of a civil Sunday-sabbath law, would fulfill what the prophecy sets forth in reference to the image and the mark of the beast. These movements, or their exact equivalent, are called for by the prophecy. The line of evidence 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 America was first made, as early as the year 1850, these positions were taken respecting a union of the churches and a Sunday-law movement. At that time no sign appeared that such an issue would

ever arise. But there was prophecy. The United States 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. But here were predictions indicating a union of church and state, and the enforcement of the papal sabbath as a mark of the beast. It was no small act of faith to take the position at that time that the United States would pursue such a policy without any apparent probability it would do so.

The founders of the American Republic, in drafting its organic laws, never intended that any trouble should arise over a question of conscience. The Federal Constitution and most of the State constitutions have provisions guaranteeing the fullest religious liberty. But the development of the Sunday-law movement since 1850 amply demonstrates that the prophecy can be fulfilled in spite of the safeguards against intolerance erected by the founding fathers.

Just how the tyranny over the souls and bodies of men is to be developed is not specified in the prophecy. It may come by one man or a set of men—political, religious, or otherwise. But it controls all—small and great. It governs finances, for rich and poor feel its grip. It rules economics, for no one can buy or sell without its permission and mark. It dictates religion, for it forces all, under penalty of death, to worship according to its laws.

It is naturally repugnant to the American mind to think that religious persecution might mar the fair record of the nation founded on liberty at all. But during the entire history of the country, from its very founding, farseeing statesmen have recognized that the tendency to enforce religious dogmas by civil law is all too common with mankind, and is liable to break out in active persecution in unexpected places.

To the honor of the nation, it should be said that throughout its history noble statesmen have

largely held in check the tendency which the founders foresaw working in the body politic. But no American can shut his eyes to the fact that paralleling these noble efforts, zealous but misguided religious leaders have attempted the civil enforcement of religious usages.

The prophecy predicts that a period of persecution will come. The two-horned beast 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 it does not follow that all, and we do not think even many, will be put to death. God will interpose in behalf of His people. Those who have kept the word of Christ's patience will be kept from falling in this hour of temptation. (Revelation 3: 10.) Those who have made God their refuge will be kept from all evil. (Psalm 91: 9, 10.) All who are found written in the book will be delivered. (Daniel 12: 1.) As victors over the beast and his image, they will be redeemed from among men, and raise a song of triumph before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:

2-4.)

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." 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 or representative man. The most plausible expression we have seen suggested as containing the number of the beast, is one of the titles applied to the pope of Rome. That title is this: Vicarius Filii Dei, "Vicegerent of the Son of God." It is worthy of note that the Douay Version of the Bible has the following comment on Revelation 13: 18: "The numeral letters of his name shall make up this number." Taking the letters out of this title which are used as Roman numerals, we have V, 5; I, 1; C, 100; I, 1; U (formerly the same as V), 5; I, 1; L, 50; I, 1; I, 1; D, 500; I, 1. Adding these numbers together we

have 666.

It has been argued that the title of the popes should be reckoned according to the Greek gematria, since John wrote in Greek, but since the title appears in Latin, and Latin is the official language of the Church of Rome and the language of its adopted Bible, the Vulgate, such a procedure would destroy the numerical value of that title in its own language. It would seem reasonable that a Latin title should exhibit its Latin numerical values rather than Greek values.

As to the practice of representing names by numbers we read: "It was a method practiced among the ancients, to denote names by numbers." "Representing numbers by letters of the alphabet gave rise to a practice among the ancients of representing names also by numbers. Examples of this kind abound in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians."

"It was a method practiced among the ancients, to denote names by numbers: as the name of

Thouth or the Egyptian Mercury was signified by the number 1218. . . . It hath been the usual method in all God's dispensations, for the Holy Spirit to accommodate His expressions to the customs, fashions, and manners of the several ages. since then this art and mystery of numbers was so much used among the ancients, it is less wonderful that the beast also should have his number, and his number is 666."

This title, Vicarius Filii Dei, or some equivalent form of it, has appeared so frequently in Roman Catholic literature and rituals for centuries, that it scarcely seems necessary to add other proof of its validity and importance. Some of the variations of the title are: Vicar of Christ, Vicar of Jesus Christ, Vicar of God. A quotation from the noted Cardinal Manning illustrates these various forms of the same title:

"So in like manner they say now, "See this Catholic Church, this Church of God, feeble and weak, rejected even by the very nations called Catholics. There is Catholic France, and Catholic

Germany, and Catholic Italy, giving up this exploded figment of the temporal power of the Vicar of Jesus Christ,' And so, because the Church seems weak, and the Vicar of the Son of God is renewing the Passion of his Master upon earth, therefore we are scandalized, therefore we turn our faces from him." (Italic ours.)

Several other variations of this title are used elsewhere in the same book.

On the importance of the pope's position as indicated by the title under consideration, or its equivalents, we quote from J. A. Wylie, in his comment on the Apology of Ennodius written in defense of Pope Symmachus:

"We find the council [of Rome, A.D. 502 or 503] convoked by Theodoric demurring to investigate the charges alleged against Pope Symmachus, on the grounds set forth by his apologist Ennodius, which were, 'that the Pope, as God's Vicar, was the judge of all, and could himself be judged by no one.' 'In this apology,'

remarks Mosheim, 'the reader will perceive that the foundations of that enormous power which the popes of Rome afterwards acquired were now laid.' "

In recent years, the validity of this title has been questioned, but historical evidence remains that this arrogated title has served to support the authority of the popes in building up their vast temporal supremacy during the heyday of Romanism in medieval times, and in maintaining their spiritual authority to this day.

The particular title Vicarius Filii Dei appeared as early as 752-774 in a document historically known as the "Donation of Constantine." Though this document was later proved to have been written by someone else and signed with the name of Constantine the Great to give it the weight of his authority—a practice not uncommon in medieval times—yet this so-called Donation of Constantine was used as valid by at least nine of the popes over a period of seven centuries or more in establishing the spiritual and temporal supremacy of the bishops

of Rome.

The title itself was obviously an invention to designate the office of Peter as the first pope in harmony with the widely known claim of the Roman Catholic Church that the words of Jesus in Matthew 16: 18, 19, conferred upon Peter the first bishopric of the church—a view which Protestants have never allowed— and that this bishopric descended to his successors in the papal seat, as stated in the Donation of Constantine and maintained by the church to this day.

The document employing the title was confirmed by a church council, says Binius, a high Roman Catholic dignitary of Cologne, quoted by Labbe and Cossart. It was incorporated in Roman Catholic canon law by Gratian, and when this last-named work was revised and published, with endorsement by Pope Gregory XIII, the title was retained. When Lucius Ferraris wrote his elaborate theological work about 1755, he gave under the article "Papa" the title Vicarius Filii Dei, and cited the revised canon law as his authority. Again when

Ferraris's work was revised and enlarged, and published in Rome in 1890, the document and title were still retained.

Of Ferraris's theological work just cited, the Catholic Encylopedia says that it "will ever remain a precious mine of information."

We quote herewith from the Latin of the Donation of Constantine, confirmed by a church council, incorporated in Roman Catholic canon law, and cited by Ferraris:

"Ut sicut Beatus Petrus in terris Vicarius Filii Dei fuit constitutus, ita et Pontifices eius successores in terris principatus postestatem amplius, quam terrenae imperialis nostrae serenitatis mansuetudo habere videtur."

Christopher Coleman translates this paragraph from the Canon law of Gratian as follows:

"As the blessed Peter is seen to have been constituted Vicar of the Son of God on the earth, so

the pontiffs who are the representatives of that same chief of the apostles, should obtain from us and our empire the power of a

A freer translation by Edwin Lee Johnson, professor of Latin and Greek, Vanderbilt University, reads: "Just as the Blessed Peter was appointed on earth vicar of the Son of God, so also it seems that the Pontiffs, his successors, hold on earth the power of the chief rule rather than (that) His Excellency, His Imperial Serene Highness on earth, (should hold it)."

Thus closes Revelation 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 upon them for their adherence to the commandments of God. Spiritism 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 complete the chain of this prophecy, and reveal the glorious triumph of the champions of the truth.

Chapter 14

God's Final Warning to a Wicked World

Verse 1—And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred 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 first fruits 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.

A wonderful feature of the prophetic word is that the people of God are never brought into positions of trial and difficulty, and there abandoned. After taking them into scenes of danger, the voice of prophecy does not leave them there to guess their fate, in doubt, perhaps despair, as to the final result. Rather, it takes them through to the end, and reveals the final triumph of the faithful.

The first five verses of Revelation 14 are an example of this. The thirteenth chapter closed with a view of 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 unfolding drama, and

what do we behold?—The same company standing on Mount Zion with the Lamb, a victorious company, playing on symphonic harps 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 brought to the people of God.

The 144,000—We believe that the 144,000 here seen on Mount Zion are the saints who were in Revelation 13 brought to view as objects of the wrath of the beast and his image.

They are identical with those sealed, as described in Revelation 7, who have already been shown to be the righteous who are alive at the second coming of Christ.

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 the resurrection 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 living saints, who will be translated at the second coming of Christ. (See comment on verse 13.)

On what Mount Zion does John see this company standing?—The Mount Zion above; for the song of harpers, which no doubt is uttered by these very ones, is heard from heaven. This is 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: 25-28; Revelation 16: 17.) An acceptance of the fact that there is a Mount Zion in heaven, and a Jerusalem above, would be a powerful antidote for the false doctrine of a second probation and a millennium of peace on earth.

Only a few more particulars respecting the 144,000, in addition to those given in Revelation 7, will claim our attention:

They have the name of the Lamb's Father written in their foreheads. In Revelation 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, 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 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.) Therefore whoever truly keeps this commandment has the seal of the living God.

They sing a new song which no other company is able to learn. In Revelation 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 a song of 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.

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 the fallen churches of the land, nor do they have any connection with them. yet we are not 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 Revelation 18: 4 we find a call issued to the people of God while they are still 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 with corrupt churches, they sever that connection when it would become sin to retain it longer.

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. Of the same company and the same time, we read,

"The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." Revelation 7: 17.

They are "first fruits unto God and to the Lamb." This term appears to be applied to different ones to denote special conditions. Christ is the first fruits as the antitype of the wavesheaf. The first receivers of the gospel are called by James a kind of first fruits. (James 1: 18.) So the 144,000, being prepared for the heavenly garner here on the 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 called the first fruits unto God and the Lamb. With this description of the 144,000 triumphant, the line of prophecy which began with Revelation 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.

The First Angel's 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 beginning with the first verse of Revelation 12, and with which that chain of events closes, for no prophecy goes beyond the immortal state. Whenever we are brought in a line of prophecy to the end of the world, we know that that line ends there, and that what is introduced subsequently belongs to a new series of events. The book of Revelation in particular is composed of these independent prophetic chains, as has already been

set forth in a number of examples.

The message described in these two verses is the first of what are known as "the three angels' messages of Revelation 14." We are justified by the prophecy itself in designating them the first, second, and third. In the verses that follow, the last one is distinctly called "the third angel," from which we infer 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 entrusted to literal angels; it has been committed to men, who are responsible for this sacred trust placed in their hands. Each of these three angels, therefore, symbolizes those who are commissioned to make known to their fellow men the special truths which constitute the burden of these messages.

Literal angels are intensely interested in the

work of grace among men, being sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. 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. Wherever earthly governments are to be represented, even the best of them, the most appropriate symbol that can be found is a wild beast. But when the work of God is to be set forth, an angel clad in beauty and girt with power is used to symbolize it.

The importance of the work set forth in Revelation 14: 6-12 will be apparent to anyone who attentively studies it. Whenever these messages are to be 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 too often overlooked. But they constitute the theme to which the people will pay most earnest regard if they are awake to what 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 threat more terrible than any other that can be found in the Scriptures—no man, except at the peril of his soul, can treat these warnings as nonessential, or pass them by with neglect and disregard. Hence the necessity in every age for the most earnest endeavor to understand the work of the Lord, lest we lose the benefit of the present truth. This is especially true today, when so many evidences betoken the soon coming of earth's final crisis.

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 Revelation 8: 13, proclaiming that the last three of the series of seven trumpets were woe trumpets. (See comments on Revelation 8: 13.)

The Time of the Message—The first point to be determined is the time when this message is to be given. When may the proclamation, "The hour of His judgment is come," be expected? The possibility that it may be in our own day makes it essential for us to examine this question with serious attention. But more positive proof that this is so will appear as we proceed. It should set every pulse bounding, and every heart beating high with a sense of the sublime importance of this hour in which we live.

Only three positions are possible on this question of the time of this prophecy. These positions are that this message has been given in the past, as in the days of the apostles, or in the days of the Reformers; that it is to be given in a future age; or that it belongs to the present

generation.

We inquire first respecting the past. The very nature of the messages forbids the idea that it could have been given in the days of the apostles. 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 respecting the judgment, but they pointed to an indefinite future for its accomplishment. In Christ's own words, the final judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre, Sidon, Chorazin, and Capernaum, was located indefinitely in the future from that day. (Matthew 10: 15; 11: 21-24.) 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 concerning 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: 1 2.) 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, to which the ungodly in this world are also reserved. (2 Peter 2: 4, 9; Jude 6.) 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 when the solemn message before us is given.

From the days of the apostles nothing has taken place which anyone could construe as the fulfillment of this first message, until we come to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Some claim that Luther and his colaborers gave the first message, and that the two following message have been given since his day. This is a question to be decided by historical fact rather than by argument. Hence we inquire for the evidence that the Reformers mad any such proclamation. Their teaching has been 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.

"The above passage [Revelation 14: 6-11] is by some interpreters supposed to relate to the period of the Reformation, and to have been fulfilled in the preaching of Luther and the other eminent persons who were raised up at that time to proclaim the errors of the Romish Church. . . . But it appears to me that there are insuperable objections to these interpretations. The first angel is instrumental in preaching the gospel much more extensively than the Reformers could do. So far were they from preaching to all the inhabitants of the earth that they did not even preach through the whole of Christian Europe. The Reformation was not permitted to enter into some of the most extensive kingdoms of the Romish jurisdiction. It was entirely excluded from Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Neither could it be said, in consistence with truth, at the time of the Reformation that 'the hour of God's judgment is come.' . . . The hour of God's

judgment is a time well known and exactly defined in the chronological prophecies of Daniel and John."

"I hope," said Luther, "the last day of judgment is not far, I persuade myself verily it will not be absent full three hundred years longer; for God's word will decrease and be darkened for want of true shepherds and servants of God. The voice will sound and heard erelong: 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh.' God neither will nor can suffer this wicked world much longer, He must strike in with the dreadful day, and punish the contemning of His word."

Such records ought to be decisive, as far as the Reformers are concerned.

The foregoing considerations being sufficient to forbid the application of the judgment message to the past, we now turn to the view that locates it in a future age, beyond the second advent. The reason urged for locating the message in that time is the fact that John saw the angel flying through

heaven immediately after he had seen the Lamb standing on Mount Zion with the 144,000, which is a future event. If the books 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 sustained. To show that the message cannot have its fulfillment in an age beyond the second advent it will be sufficient to give a few reasons.

The apostolic commission extended only to the "harvest," which is the end of the world. (Matthew 13: 39.) 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.

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, says, "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 thenceforth forever with Him. (1 Thessalonians 4: 17.) 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.)

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 difficulty 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. (Daniel 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 should we involve ourselves in the inconsistency 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 Revelation 14: 13 a blessing is pronounced upon the dead which die in the Lord "from henceforth," that is, from the time the threefold 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 can die no more. We therefore dismiss this view concerning the future age as unscriptural and impossible.

The Judgment Hour a Distinctive Note—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. 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, since we are obviously in the last days just preceding Christ's second coming? Indeed, the very nature of the message itself confines it to the last generation of men. It proclaims that the hour of God's judgment has come. The judgment pertains to the closing 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 presentation in chapter 10.

The apostle Paul who before Felix the Roman governor reasoned of "judgment to come," proclaimed to his hearers on Mars' Hill that God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17: 31.

The prophecy of the 2300 days of Daniel 8 and 9 pointed unmistakably to this judgment hour. This longest time prophecy in the Scriptures reaches from 457 B.C. to A.D. 1844. Then, as we have in the study of Daniel's prophecy, the sanctuary was to be cleansed. This cleansing, according to the type in Leviticus 16, was the final work of

atonement. That the work of the last day of the year in the typical service was none other than the day of judgment in type, will be seen from the following quotations:

"The great Day of Atonement, with its services so peculiar and impressive, fell on the tenth day of the seventh month. . . . It was a day wherein every man was called to fast and afflict his soul; to mournfully and penitently reflect upon his sinful ways and transgressions. . . . He who thus failed to mourn was threatened with the penalty of death, as a direct visitation of judgment from the hand of Jehovah." "Let us note well the actual Day of Atonement. It was on the tenth day of the seventh month. The Jubilee also commenced on the same day and was ushered in by the blowing of the solemn trumpet; emblem of a God coming near in judgment."

"It was supposed that on the New Year Day (Tishri 1) the divine decrees were written down, and that on the Day of Atonement (Tishri 10) they are sealed, so that the decade is known by the name

of 'Terrible Days' and the 'Ten Penitential Days.' So awful was the Day of Atonement that we are told in a Jewish book of ritual that the very angels run to and fro in fear and trembling, saying, 'Lo, the Day of Judgment has come!' "

" 'God, seated on His throne to judge the world . . . openeth the Book of Records; it is read, every man's signature being found therein. The great trumpet is sounded; a still small voice is heard; the angels shudder, saying, "This is the day of judgment." . . . On New Year's Day the decree is written; on the Day of Atonement it is sealed who shall live and who are to die.' "

One might ask if such a message has been given to the world. Again, Is a message of this character being proclaimed to the world today? We believe that the great second advent movement of the past century answers exactly to the prophecy.

Second Advent of Christ Another Distinctive Note—As early as 1831, William Miller, of Low Hampton, New York, by an earnest and consistent

study of the prophecies, was led to the conclusion that the gospel age 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. We call his investigations a consistent study of the prophecies, because he adopted a sound rule of interpretation. This lies at the base of every religious reformation, and of every advance movement in prophetic language. This rule is 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, Charles 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. It was indeed 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 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.

"I would now say to you this night, 'Fear God and give glory to Him for the hour of His judgment is come,' in a strict and literal sense. We are now at the close of the last day concerning which the

apostle says: 'Hereby we know that it is the last time.' . . . We are just at the evening of that day—we are at the last hour of that day; and it is very nigh, very nigh, even at the door. My dear hearers, I beseech you to consider that it is near at hand, at the very door, according to all who have studied this matter and have sought the teaching of God; . . . that they are all of one mind; that . . . the reign of Christ—is just at hand."

"Revelation 14 represents the angel flying into the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. When the event takes place which is signified by this symbol, the day of the Lord's judgment is actually at hand, for the angel cries unto all men, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come.' "

"It is the duty of all to call upon those to 'fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come,' but more especially is it the duty of God's ministers."

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 the Western Hemisphere. It was world-wide. It fulfilled in this respect the proclamation of the angel "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Mourant Brock, an Anglican clergyman, and a strong leader in the advent movement in the British Isles, tells us:

"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. I was lately told by one of our German missionaries that in Wirtemburgh there is a Christian colony of several hundreds, one of the chief features of which is the looking for the Second Advent. And a Christian minister from near the shores of the Caspian Sea has told me, that there is the same daily expectation among his nation. They constantly speak of it as 'the day of consolation.' In a little publication, entitled 'The

Millennium,' the writer says that he understands in America about 300 ministers of the Word are thus preaching 'the Gospel of the kingdom,' whilst in this country, he adds, about 700 of the Church of England are raising the same cry."

Dr. Joseph Wolff traveled in Arabia, through the region inhabited by the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law. 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 children of Rechabites.

. . . They drink no wine, plant no vineyards, sow no seed, live in tents, and remember the word of Jonadab the son of Rechab. With them were children of Israel of the tribe of Dan, who reside near Yerim in Hatramawt [sic], who expected, in common with the children of Rechab, the speedy arrival of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven."

D. T. Taylor speaks as follows concerning the wide diffusion of the advent hope:

"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. . . .

"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 Read Sea, Mesopotamia, the Crimea, Persia, Georgia, throughout the Ottoman Empire, in Greece, Arabia, Turkistan, Bokhara, Afghanistan, Cashmere, Hindustan, Thibet, in 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, Hindus, Chaldeans, Yeseedes, Syrians, Sabeans, to pashas, sheiks, shahs, the king 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 this well-known missionary to the world. Wherever he goes, he proclaims the approaching advent of the Messiah in glory.' "

Another prominent writer in the great second advent movement writes:

"But that the Lord's warning was in reality heard and that the voice did at that very time go forth in the church as to the nearness of the advent, is undeniable. It may be safely affirmed that from the year 1828 to 1833 . . . a greater number of tracts and works on the subject of the advent and declaring its nearness went forth to the public and were advertised in the leading religious journals of the day than had previously appeared in any whole century, in the whole period that had elapsed from the age of the apostles; yea, probably than in the whole of the centuries from that age."

That the mistake made by Adventists in 1844 was not in the time, has been shown by the argument on the seventy weeks and the 2300 days in Daniel 9. It was in the nature of the event to occur at the end of those days, as has been shown in the argument on the sanctuary in Daniel 8. Supposing the earth to be the sanctuary, with its

cleansing 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.

Through their misapprehension on this point, they met with a crushing disappointment, predicted in the Scripture itself, 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 cleansing 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.

The foolish virgins then said to the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone ["going" margin] out." "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 comments on Revelation 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, which is the cleansing of the sanctuary and the atonement is therefore nothing else than the examination of the guests to see who have on the wedding garment. 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. 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 autumn of the latter year, bringing us to the end of the 2300 days, when the work of judgment started as Christ began the work of cleansing the sanctuary.

As has been already shown, this work did not bring us to the close of probation but rather to the beginning of the investigative judgment. In this judgment hour we are now living. Today, as in the period to which reference has been made, the judgment message is being heralded to all the earth. Today the solemn judgment proclamation is sounding "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come." Revelation 14: 6, 7.

Before passing on to the consideration of the second angel's message, let us contemplate for a moment the importance and sublime significance

of the wonderful truth here so clearly revealed. We are standing on the very threshold of the eternal world. God's last message of mercy is now going to every nation and kindred and tongue and people. The final scenes in the great plan of salvation are even now being enacted in the sanctuary above. Think of it! The hour of God's judgment is come. The investigative judgment that concerns every soul and that immediately precedes the coming of Jesus, is now going forward in heaven. A wedding garment—the spotless robe of Christ's own righteousness—has at infinite cost been provided for all who will accept it. "How will it fare with thee and me when the King comes in?" "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2: 1.

Verse 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.

The Second Angel's Message—The time of

this message is determined to a great extent by that of the first message. The first cannot precede the second; but the first is confined to the last days. Yet the second must be given before the end, for no move of the kind described is possible after that event. It is therefore a part of that religious movement which takes place in the last days with special reference to the coming of Christ.

The inquires therefore follow: What is meant by the term "Babylon"? What is her fall? How does it take place? As to the meaning 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. The place was called Babylon, meaning "confusion," because God there confounded the language of the builders of the tower. The name is here used figuratively to designate the great symbolic city of the book of Revelation, probably with special reference to the significance of the term and the circumstances from which it originated. It applies to something on which, as specifying its chief characteristics, may be written the word

"confusion."

There are but three possible things to which the word can be applied. These are the apostate religious world in general, the papal church in particular, and the city of Rome. In examining these terms, we shall first show what Babylon is not.

Babylon is not confined to the Roman Catholic Church. That this church is a very prominent component part of great Babylon, is not denied. The descriptions in Revelation 17 seem to apply 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 Roman Catholic 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. As this message is

located in the present generation, it follows, if no other church but the Roman Catholic is included Babylon, that the people of God are now found in the communion of that church, and are to be called out. But this conclusion, no Protestant at least will be willing to allow.

Babylon is not the city of Rome. The argument relied upon to show that the city of Rome is Babylon of the Apocalypse runs thus: The angel told John that the woman which he had seen was the great city which reigned over the kings of the earth, and that the seven heads of the beast are seven mountains upon which the woman sits. Then, by taking the city and the mountains to be literal, and finding Rome built upon 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 used symbolically. The readers attention is directed to the following:

We are informed in Revelation 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.

Each of the seven heads has a crown upon it. But who ever saw a literal mountain with a crown upon it?

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: 10. But the seven hills on which Rome is built are not successive, and it would be absurd to apply such language to them.

According to Daniel 7: 6, compared with Daniel 8: 8, 22, heads denote governments, and according to Daniel 2: 35, 44, and Jeremiah 51: 25, mountains denote kingdoms. According to these facts, a literal translation of Revelation 17: 9, 10 removes all obscurity: "The seven heads are seven mountains on which on which the woman sitteth, and 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. The meaning is transferred from one symbol to another, and then an explanation is 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 sits being symbolic, a literal city cannot sit upon symbolic mountains. Again, Rome was the seat of the dragon

of Revelation 12, and the dragon transferred it to the beast. (Revelation 13: 2.) Thus it became the seat of the beast; but it would be a singular mixture of figures to make the seat, which is sat upon by the beast, and a woman sitting upon the beast refer to the same thing.

Were the city of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse, what nonsense should we have in Revelation 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 "the habitation of devils, and 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? Again, after this a voice is heard, saying, "Come out of her, My people." Are God's people all in Rome?—Not to any great extent. 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.

What Does Babylon Signify?—Babylon signifies the universal worldly church. After seeing it cannot either of the other two possible things to which it could be applies, it must mean this. But we are not left to this kind of reasoning on this subject. Babylon is called "a woman." A woman, used as a symbol, signifies a church. The woman of Revelation 12 was interpreted to mean a church. The woman of Revelation 17 should undoubtedly be interpreted as also signifying 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.

Through the centuries practically every country of Europe has had its state church, and the most of these countries to the present day 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 composed of three divisions. So the great religions of the world may be arranged under three heads. The first, oldest, and most widespread is paganism, separately symbolized under the form of a dragon. The second is the great papal apostasy, symbolized by the beast. The third is the daughters, or descendants from that church symbolized by the two-horned beast, though that does not embrace them all. War, oppression, conformity to the world, religious formalism, the worship of mammon, pursuit of

pleasure, and the maintenance of very many errors of the Roman Catholic 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. When Rome had the power, she 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 the 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. 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 Revelation 13.

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 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 this state of things which the word "Babylon," as a descriptive term, appropriately designates. It is evidently used for this purpose, and not 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. If so, they should 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 2: 3; 31: 32), became a harlot (Ezekiel 16). When this church apostatized from God, it 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 immediately before her overthrow is proof that she is professedly a religious body. For these reasons, it is very evident that the Babylon of the Apocalypse is the professed church united with the world.

"Babylon Is Fallen"—The fall of Babylon will next claim attention. After learning 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. Besides, the clearest distinction is maintained by the prophecy itself between the fall and the destruction of Babylon. 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 spiritual 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." 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 in 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. 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.

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.

Babylon meets with this spiritual fall "because she made all nations drink of the wine of 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.

In the form of the papacy she has supplanted the gospel by substituting for it a false system of salvation:

Through the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception she denies that God in Christ dwelt in human flesh.

She has sought to set aside the mediation of Christ and has put another system of mediation in its place.

She has attempted to take away the priesthood

of Jesus and substitute an earthly priesthood.

She has made salvation dependent upon confession to mortal man and thus has separated the sinner from Jesus, the only one through whom his sins can be forgiven.

She condemns the way of salvation through faith as "damnable heresy," and substitutes the doctrine of salvation by works.

Her crowning blasphemy is the doctrine of transubstantiation, or the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass, which is declared to be "one and the same as that of the cross" and which, in "some senses," is said to have "the advantage over Calvary," for by it "the work of our redemption is carried out."

Among the doctrines she teaches contrary to the word of God, may be mentioned the following:

The substitution of tradition and the voice of the church as an infallible guide in the place of the Bible.

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, a memorial 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 lead 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 to commemorate His own magnificent creative work, and erect another in its state to commemorate the resurrection of Christ, for which there was no occasion, as the Lord Himself had already provided a memorial for that purpose in baptism by immersion.

The doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul. This also was derived from the pagan world, and the "Fathers of the church" became the 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 an open door to modern spiritism. From it have sprung such other evil doctrines as the conscious state of the dead, saint worship, mariology, purgatory, reward at death, prayers and baptisms for the dead, eternal torment, and universal salvation.

The doctrine that the saints, as disembodied spirits, find their eternal inheritance in faraway, 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.

Sprinkling instead of immersion, the latter being the only Scriptural mode of baptism, and a fitting memorial of the burial and resurrection of our Lord, for which purpose it was designed. By

the corruption of this ordinance and its destruction as a memorial of the resurrection of Christ, the way was prepared for the substitution of something else for this purpose—the Sunday rest day.

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, at death, or in spiritism. 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 of all His foes, and everlasting life to all His people!

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 leading to their final ruin, as any heresy which has ever been devised by the great enemy of

truth.

Application of the Fall of Babylon—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 such a change when the time came for the proclamation of this second message in connection with the first about the year 1844. Paganism was only apostasy and corruption in the beginning, and is so still. No spiritual fall is possible there. Roman Catholicism had been in a fallen condition for many centuries. But the Protestant churches had begun the great work of reformation from papal corruption and had done noble work. They were, in a word, in such a position that with them a spiritual 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

part of Babylon had been so long fallen. 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, until a change for the worse came over the Protestant world, and the truth through which alone the path of progress lay, had been compromised. When this took place, and a spiritual fall was experienced in this last branch, 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—that 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. The answer is, It would apply most pertinently. The fault with Babylon lies in her confusion of the truth and her consequent false doctrines. Because she industriously propagates these, clinging to them when light and truth which would correct them is offered, she is in a fallen state.

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 spiritual fall.

The truth which God saw fit to use as an instrument in this work was the first angel's message. The hour of God's judgment come, and with it the imminent 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 accrued 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 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.

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, those proclaiming the message added, "Come out of her, My people." Thousands severed their connection with the various denominations as the result.

A marked change then came over the churches in respect to their spiritual condition. When a person refuses the light, he necessarily puts himself in darkness; when he rejects truth, he inevitably forges the shackles of error about his own limbs. Loss of spirituality—a spiritual 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 therefore left them.

Some of them felt and deplored the change. A few testimonies from their writers describe their condition at that time.

The Christian Palladium, in 1844, spoke in the following mournful strain: "In every direction we hear the dolorous wound, wafted 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, the 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. . . . 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, November, 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."

Charles G. Finney, well-known evangelist, said in February, 1844: "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 all-pervading, and is fearfully deep; so the religious press of the whole land testifies. . . The churches generally are becoming sadly degenerate. They have gone very far from the Lord, and He has withdrawn Himself from them."

In November, 1844, the Oberlin Evangelist remarked editorially:

"Some of our religious journals deplore, and all

attest the fact that revivals have almost ceased in our churches. It is long since a period of so general dearth has been known. There is a great revival of political spirit, and of zeal in all the departments of business operations: but alas! decline and death sit like an incubus on the bosom of Christian activity and of holy love for God as for souls. The external forms of religion are sustained, the routine of Sabbath duties goes on: but those seasons of 'refreshing from the presence of the Lord,' in which fearfulness surprises the hypocrite, conviction fastens on the sinner, and humble hearts cleave to the promises and wrestle for the conversion of souls—those seasons are known only as they [are] held in sweet remembrance—days that were, but are no longer."

Not only did the churches suffer a distinct loss of spirituality in 1844, but the decline since then has been marked and continuous.

The Congregationalist said in November, 1858: "The revived 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. . . . Even a glance at the weekly journals of our own denomination will evince that the evil is no means confined to the Baptists."

The leading Methodist paper, the New York Christian Advocate, in 1883 contained an article 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 number and money it is

becoming extremely feeble and limited in its spirituality, both in the pulpit and pew. It is assuming the shape and character of the church of Laodicea.

"**2.** . . . There are thousands of ministers, local and conference, and many thousands of the laity, who are 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 editor of the Western Christ Advocate in 1893 wrote the following of his church:

"To the Church of Methodists, Write, the great trouble with us today is, that the rescue of imperiled souls is our last and least consideration. Many of our congregations are conducted on the basis of social clubs. They are made centers of

social influence. Membership is sought in order to advance one's prospects in society, business, or politics. Preachers are called who know how to

" 'Smooth down the rugged text to ears polite,
And snugly keep damnation out of sight.'

"The Sunday services are made the occasion of displaying the elegancies of apparel in the latest fashions. Even the little ones are tricked out as though they were the acolytes of pride. If the 'Rules' are read, it is to comply with the letter of a law whose spirit has long since fled. The class-books are filled with names of unconverted men and women. Official members may be found in box, dress-circle, and parquet of opera and theater. Communicants take in the races, and give and attend cardparties and dances. The distinction between inside and outside is so obscure that men smile when asked to unite with the Church, and sometimes tell us that they find the best men outside.

"When we go to the masses, it is too often with

such ostentatious condescension that self-respect drives them from us.

"And yet we have so spread out, under the inflation of the rich and ungodly, that they are a necessity to us. The enforcement of the unmistakable letter of Discipline for a single year would cut our membership in half, bankrupt our Missionary Society, close our fashionable churches, paralyze our connectional interests, and leave our pastors and bishops unpaid and in distress. But the fact remains, that one of two things must happen—the Discipline must purge the church, or God's Holy Spirit will seek other organized agencies. The ax is laid at the root of the tree. The call is to repentance. God's work must be done. If we are in the way, He will remove us."

The New York Independent of December 3, 1896, contained 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 true 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 believing 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 state of spiritual declension into which the churches generally had "fallen" as a result of their rejection of the first angel's message led to their acceptance of erroneous and corrupt doctrines. In the latter part of the nineteenth century a marked change was to be seen in the attitude of both leaders and people of the Protestant churches toward the basic doctrines of the Scriptures of truth. Having rejected the true, they accepted the false. The theory of evolution accepted by many church leaders in the words of one great religious writer "turned the Creator out of doors." A religious apologist for the theory declared that "prayer is communion with my inner racial self."

The effects of the evolution theory on the faith of the churches is so apparent that public comments upon the situation are commonplace. A professor of philosophy in a great university remarks:

"Today it seems that the great Hebrew-Christian moral tradition, the most ancient part of

our heritage, is crumbling to pieces before our very eyes. . . . The faith in science has grown so strong, so self-sufficient, so deeply rooted in the processes of our society, that many of those who feel it have lost all desire to combine it with any other. . . . The man who trusts a physical science to describe the world finds no conceivable place into which to fit a deity. . . . The philosophies that express their [men's] basic interests today are no longer concerned, as they were in the nineteenth century, with vindicating a belief in God and immortality. Those ideas have simply dropped out of any serious attempt to reach an understanding of the world. . . . The present conflict of religious faith with science is no longer with a scientific explanation of the world, but with a scientific explanation of religion. The really revolutionary effect of the scientific faith on religion today is not its new view of the universe, but its new view of religion."

What that new view of religion is, is frankly stated by a spokesman of modern liberalism:

"Liberal Protestants have abandoned belief in the verbal infallibility of the Bible." "We believe that Jesus was a human being, not a supernatural being different from all other men in quality. We believe that he was born in the normal way, and that he faced the problems and the difficulties of life with no secret reinforcements of miraculous power. . . . To us Jesus' death is, in essence, no different from the death of other heroes." "Today the ancient belief that Jesus will reappear in the sky, inaugurate a dramatic world judgment, sentence Satan and the demons to hell, and lead the angels and the Christians into paradise, has dwindled from a universally accepted and enormously influential Christian conviction to the esoteric doctrine of a minority. Once a modern man accepts what historians tell him about the age of the universe, and once he accepts what scientists tell him about the nature of evolutionary process, he cannot believe that there will ever be any such spectacular wind-up of the world's affairs as the one which the early Christians believed would presently take place." "We propose to take from the Christianity of the past the elements which seem of

abiding value, combine with them the religious convictions and the ethical insights which have emerged during the recent times, and from this composite material shape a new formulation of the Christian message. We frankly admit that our gospel is not the 'old gospel,' or even the modified version of the old gospel which is now proclaimed in conservative pulpits. Ours is, we confess, a 'new gospel.' "

The acceptance by Protestantism of the first angel's message would have enabled the church to become a light to "all nations." But betraying her trust by her rejection of the message, she left the nations without the witness of present truth that they might have had, to grope in the darkness of error and superstition resulting from the intoxicating and stupefying influences of the system of false doctrines she had built up and refused to relinquish.

Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago, in speaking of our spiritual condition, said: "We do not know where we are going, or

why, and we have almost given up the attempt to find out. We are in despair because the keys which were to open the gates of heaven have let us into a larger but more oppressive prison house. We think [thought] those keys were science and the free intelligence of man. They have failed us. We have long since cast off God. To what can we now appeal?"

In its issue of May 24, 1941, the Philadelphia Inquirer editorially attempts to analyze our condition: "We appear to have reached one of those portentous periods in history when civilization halts and stands aghast in the presence of forces too complex and too terrible in their potentialities accurately to be appraised. Confronted by problems that can be disregarded by none but lighthearted children and lightheaded fools, we have reached the crossroads where every signpost points to bafflement. For years there have been increasingly bitter assaults upon religion. We have felt it was not our concern if 'the old faiths loosen and fall.' It would seem that in this, as in past civilizations when they were nearing their inevitable end, we—

and by 'we' is meant mankind in general—have grown too cocksure of ourselves. . . .

"We have watched, many of us with scant misgivings, the growth of queer cults and the recrudescence of pagan philosophies. Unperturbed, we have witnessed the rise of modern Humanism, with its denial of a power greater than our own; its exalting of man to equality with his Maker. Now, when civilization may be dying on its feet, the barrage balloons of our self-sufficiency are in process of being blasted out of the sky. Human creatures at last are beginning to discover that they are not little gods—but only little men."

But as the popular churches depart farther and farther from God, they at length reach such a condition that true Christians can on 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 comments on Revelation 18.)

Verse 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 for ever 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 Third Angel's Message—This is a message of most fearful import. No more severe 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 pronounced 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 message. 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 culminating proclamation. Until 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. These facts sill 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. Viewing the situation immediately before the first message was introduced, we see the Protestant religious world sadly in need of reformation. Divisions and

confusion existed in 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 version verdict of God upon them for recreancy in this respect; namely, that God had departed from them, and they had met with a spiritual 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. What follows? The way is open for a still further retrograde movement, for wider 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 began with the rejection of the first message.

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 spiritual fall. If you continue to reject truth and disregard the warnings sent out, you will exhaust God's last means of grace, and finally 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, but the multitude will pass on and perish.

The proclamation of the third angel's message is the 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 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 do not know 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 angel's message.

The arguments on the two preceding messages fix the time of the third, and show that it belongs to the present day. But the best evidence that the message is now going to the world, is found in the events that demonstrate its fulfillment. We have identified the first message as a leading proclamation in the great Advent movement of

1840-1844. We have seen the fulfillment of the second message in connection with that movement in the latter year. Let us now look at what has taken place since that time.

When Christ did not come in 1844, the entire Adventist body was thrown into more or less confusion. Many gave up the movement entirely. More concluded that the argument on the time was wrong, and immediately endeavored to re-adjust the prophetic period, and set a new time for the Lord to come—a work which they have continued more or less to the present time, fixing a new date as each one passed. A few searched closely and candidly for the cause of the mistake, and were confirmed in their views of the providential character of the advent movement, and in the correctness of the argument on the time, but saw that a mistake had been made in their understanding of the sanctuary, by which error the disappointment could be explained. They learned that the sanctuary in Daniel 8: 14 was not on this earth, as had been supposed, that the cleansing was not to be fire, and that the prophecy on this point

did not involve the coming of the Lord at all. They found in the Scriptures 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." They saw further 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 understood that the time had come for the fulfillment of Revelation 11: 19: "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 typical times, existed here on earth. 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. Both these laws must read precisely alike, word for word, jot for jot, tittle for tittle. To suppose otherwise would involve only falsehood.

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 disputes 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, to attempt to change His laws and to exalt himself above God. But this is the exact work in reference to which the third angel utters his warning. Hence it began to be seen by the believers of 1844 that the period of the third angel's 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 light of the third angel's message dawned upon the church. 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 long to formulate from the truths revealed, definite statements and proofs in explanation of all these points.

A Message of Warning—The argument showing what constitutes the beast, the image, and the mark, has already been given in comments on Revelation 13; and it has been shown that the two-horned beast, which erects the image and enforces the mark, is the United States of America. It is this work, and these agents, against which the third angel's message utters its warning, which is 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.

The "beast" is the Roman Catholic power.

The "mark of the beast" is that institution which this power sets forth 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.

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.

The "two-horned beast," by which the image is given power to speak and act, represents the United States of America, which is moving toward the formation of the image of the beast.

The two-horned beast enforces the mark of the beast, that is, it establishes by law the observance of the first day of the week, or the Sunday rest day. What is being done in this direction has already been noticed. The movement is urged on by individuals and by organized groups which mix agitation for religious laws with their better aims.

But the people are not left in the dark in this matter. The third angel's 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 the way of truth to all. This naturally excites opposition, and the church is led so much the more to seek the aid of human power in behalf of its dogmas as they are shown to be sadly lacking in divine authority.

What has this message accomplished, and what showing does it make in the world today? In answer to this query, some striking facts may be presented. The first publication in its interests was issued in 1849. Today this message is proclaimed by books, tracts, and periodicals in 200 different languages, and maintains 83 publishing houses scattered throughout both hemispheres, in which are published 313 periodicals. The value of its literature sold during 1942 amounted to $5,467,664.99. Its evangelistic work is carried forward in 413 countries, and preached in more than 810 languages.

Such a movement is at least a phenomenon to be explained. We have found movements which fulfill most strikingly and accurately the first and second angel's messages. Here is another which now challenges the attention of the world as a fulfillment of the third. It claims to be a fulfillment, and asks the world to examine the credentials on which it bases its right to such a claim. Let us look at them.

"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 angel's message involves besides.

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.

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.

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 is reception. It is the more solicitous to do this, because this unchristian 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 a 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 its 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.

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. It reveals where the image is to be formed. The prophecy concerns this generation; and is evidently on the verge of fulfillment.

There is no religious enterprise extant today except that of 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 book is composed. What shall we do with these things? Is this the fulfillment? It must so stand, unless its claims can be disproved:

Unless it can be shown that the first and second angels' messages have not been heard; that the positions taken in reference to the beast, the image, the mark, and the 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. 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 being 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?—Only 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 spend its hours accordingly, resuming on the first day their ordinary labor. No plainer line of demarcation could be drawn between two classes. The time which one class regards as sacred and devotes to religious uses, the other looks upon as only secular and devotes to ordinary laboring. One class, pursing its worldly vocations, finds the other class withdrawn from all such pursuits, and the avenue of commercial intercourse between them abruptly

closed. Thus for two days in the week these two classes are kept apart by difference of doctrine and practice in regard to the fourth commandment. On no other commandment could there be so marked a difference.

The Sabbath Made Prominent in the Message.—The third angel's message brings its adherents to the observance of 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. In this we find still further evidence that Sundaykeeping 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 brings its adherents to discard that practice which constitutes the mark, and to adopt the opposite course. 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 that the observance of the seventh day is its opposite.

This is in harmony with the argument on the seal of God, as given in the remarks on Revelation 7. It was there shown that sign, seal, mark, and token are synonymous terms, and that God takes His Sabbath to be His sign, or seal, in reference to His people. Thus God has a seal, which is His Sabbath. The beast has a mark, which is a counterfeit sabbath. One is the seventh day, the other is the first day. Christendom will at last be divided into just two classes: those who are sealed with the seal of the living God—that is, have His sign, or keep His sabbath; and those who receive the mark of the beast— that is, have his sign, or keep his counterfeit sabbath. In reference to this issue, the third angel's message both enlightens and warns us.

As so much importance attaches to the seventh-day Sabbath, it will be proper to present here the leading facts connected with the Sabbath institution.

The Sabbath was instituted in the beginning, at the conclusion of the first week of time. (Genesis 2: 1-3.)

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 can never 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 is 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 one could prove it if he did so claim.

The Sabbath has nothing in it of a typical 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.

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 nature of things immutable and eternal. Ceremonial and typical laws owed their origin to the fact that man had sinned. 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.

The sanctification of the Sabbath in Eden assures its existence 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.

The Sabbath is not indefinite, any seventh day after six 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. The 6,240 Sabbath miracles in the wilderness, three each week for forty years—a double supply of manna on the sixth day, the preservation of the sixth-day manna on the seventh day, and none on the seventh day (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.

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.)

It is a part of that law which Paul declares is

not made void but established by faith in Christ. (Romans 3: 31.) On the contrary 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.)

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.)

It is the "Lord's day" of Revelation 1: 10. (See comments on that verse.)

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.

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 His day. To have to do with such an institution is a high honor. To pay heed to its claims will prove an infinite blessing.

Punishment of Beast Worshipers—These shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. When is this torment inflicted? Revelation 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 the false prophet are cast alive. This can refer only to the destruction visited upon them at the beginning, not at the end, of the thousand years.

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 of 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, and the departing of the heavens as a scroll, the prophet says: "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. 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 beginning of this period, and the final doom of all the ungodly at its close, are similar.

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 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. 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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, aion, here translated "forever" is defined thus by G. Abbot-Smith in A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament: "A space of time,

as, a lifetime, generation, period of history, an indefinitely long period." So without doing violence to the accepted meaning of the Greek word, we may here interpret it in harmony with other plain statements of Scripture.

The period of the third angel's message is a time of patience with the people of God. Paul and James both give us instructions 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, that is, 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 angel's message.

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 next link in the chain is this crowning and momentous event. Time never rolls backward. As the river does not falter 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 do the proud professor of religion and the careless sinner dream of the doom that is impending! How hard, even for those who know and profess the truth, to realize it as it is!

A Blessing Promised—John is commanded by a voice from heave 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 beginning 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? While they are thus blessed in common with all the righteous dead, they have an advantage over them in being doubtless that company who are raised to everlasting life in the special resurrection in Daniel 12: 2.

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 three special messages. The message of the fourth angel is evidently to be uttered after the Son of man finishes His priestly work, and 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 work is done, 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. This prayer will be answered; the elect will be avenged; for does not the parable read, "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.

The Wheat Garnered—"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 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, who are most fitly represented by the 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 outside the city?

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, this latter expression more naturally denoting 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 agent by which the wicked are at last to be destroyed, although, to carry out the figure, the wicked are likened to the clusters of the vine of the earth, and

are said to be cast into the great winepress which is trodden without the city. 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 all-devouring flame descending from God out of heaven, but what preceding slaughter may take place among the doomed host, we do not know. 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; Psalm 149: 9.)

The Saints Triumphant—This prophecy closes as the others do, with the triumph of God, Christ, and the redeemed.

Chapter 15

Preparing the Vials of Divine Wrath

This chapter introduces the seven last plagues, a manifestation of Heaven's unmingled wrath, in its full measure upon 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 for ever 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. By it we are carried back to a new series of events. The whole chapter is but an introduction to the most terrible judgments of the Almighty ever to be visited upon this earth—the seven last plagues. What we behold here 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 to seven angels 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 shown in comments on Revelation 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 the 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 persecution of His followers! While the seven angels are performing their fearful mission, the temple is filled with the glory of God, and no man—{GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, oudeis, "no one, no being" —can enter there. This shows that the work of mercy is closed, since 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 somewhat in verses 2-4, and behold them as victors upon the sea which had the appearance of glass mingled with fire. They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb as they stand upon that sparkling expanse of glory. The sea of glass upon which these victors stand, is the same as that brought to view in Revelation 4: 6, which was before the throne in heaven. As we have no evidence that it has yet changed location, and the saints are seen upon it, we have here indubitable proof in connection with Revelation 14: 1-5 that the saints are taken to heaven to receive a part of their reward. Thus, as if the bright sun should burst through the midnight cloud, some scene is presented or some promise given to the humble followers of the Lamb in every hour of temptation, to assure and reassure them of God's love and care for them, and of the certainty of their final reward. "Say ye to the righteous," wrote Isaiah of old, "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, is given here in epitome: "Great and marvelous are They works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints." It 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 in the present state, even though 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, twenty-five million million miles away; on to the great double polestar, from which it takes light four hundred years to reach our world; on past systems, groups, constellations, till we reach the great star Rigel, in Orion, shining with the power of fifteen thousand suns like ours! What then must be the grand center around which these myriads of shining orbs revolve! Well may the song be sung, "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

Seven Plagues Devastate the Earth

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.

This chapter is a description of the seven vials of the unmingled wrath of God, and the effects that follow as they are poured upon the earth. Our first inquiries are, What is the true position of these points? Are they symbolical and mostly fulfilled in the past? Or are they literal, and all future?

Time of the Plagues—The description of the first plague clearly reveals at one the time when it

shall fall upon the earth, for it is poured out upon those who have the mark of the beast, and who worship his image—the very work against which the third angels warns us. This is conclusive proof that these judgments are not poured out until after this angel closes his work, and that the class who hear his warning and reject it, are the ones to receive the first drops from the overflowing vials of God's indignation. 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 all 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 ages in the past, then the first and second messages which precede it were also ages in the past. Then the prophetic periods, on which the messages are based, especially the 2300 days, ended ages ago. If this is so, the seventy weeks of Daniel are thrown wholly into the Jewish period, and the great proof of the Messiahship of Christ is destroyed. But it has been shown in remarks on Revelation 7, 13, 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; and that the formation of the image and the enforcement of the worship are just in the future. 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.

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.

These plagues are the wine of God's wrath without mixture, threatened by the third angel. (Revelation 14: 10; 15: 1.) Such language cannot be applied to any judgments visited upon the earth

while Christ pleads with His Father in behalf of our fallen race. Therefore we must locate them in the future, when probation shall have closed.

Another and more definite testimony on the beginning and duration of these plagues is found in the these words: "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." Revelation 15: 8. The temple here introduced is evidently that which is mentioned in Revelation 11: 19: "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. 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, until the angels have fulfilled their work. There will therefore be no ministration in the sanctuary during this time. Consequently, these vials are not poured out until the close of the ministration in the tabernacle above, but

immediately follow that event. 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?

Since the time of these judgments places them in the very near future, treasured up against the day of wrath, we proceed to inquire, into their nature, and the result when the solemn and fearful mandate goes forth from the temple to the seven angels saying, "Go you ways, and pour our 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—"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 beat, and upon them which worshiped his image." (See also Zechariah 14: 12.)

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 reality of which is seldom, if ever, called in question. God is now about to reward 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 Authorized Version. In the original languages, 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, visited upon those who have done so, or wish to do, such deeds. 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 are 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 slain. 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.

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 comments on Revelation 12: 17; 13: 15.) In motive and purpose, they do shed the blood of saints and prophets, and are every whit as guilty as if 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 to 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. As if to crown all, power is given unto the sun, and it pours upon them a flood of fire, and they are scorched with great heat. Here, as the records runs, their woe first seeks utterance in fearful blasphemy.

Verse 10—And the fifth angel poured out 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. The plagues do not at once destroy all their victims, for some who were at first smitten with sores, are 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 thus far, and without doubt will continue to be, the city of Rome. "His kingdom" probably embraces all those who are ecclesiastical subjects of the pope 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 fulfillment? When did a noisome and grievous sore fall upon a specified and extensive part of mankind? When did the sea become as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul in it die? 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? When did the subjects of the beast gnaw their tongues for pain, and at the same time blaspheme God on account of their sores? 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 many reasons.

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. 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 River. The Euphrates is only about 1,400 miles in length, about one third the size of the Mississippi. Without difficulty, Cyrus turned the whole river from its channel at his siege of Babylon. Notwithstanding the numerous wars that have been carried on along its banks, and the mighty hosts that have crossed and recrossed its streams, it never yet had to be dried up to let them pass.

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.

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 drouth and famine so graphically described by Joel, and as one result of these it is expressly stated that "the rivers of waters are dried up." (See Joel 1: 14-20.) The Euphrates can hardly be an exception to this visitation of drouth; hence not much would remain to be literally dried up under the sixth vial.

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.

With these objections existing against considering the Euphrates a literal river, it must be understood figuratively as symbolizing the power holding possession of the territory watered by that river when it is observed as beginning to dry up. All agree that that power was Turkey. Hence we may look for the fulfillment of the specifications of this prophecy to affect definitely the Turkish nation.

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.

The drying up of the river in this sense would be the diminution of the Turkish nation, the gradual shrinking of its borders. This is what has actually happened.

At its height the Ottoman Empire extended on the east to the Tigris and the Caspian Sea; on the south to Aden, including Arabia, Palestine, Egypt, Algiers; on the north, the kingdom of Hungary, the Balkan States, the Crimea. Turkey waged war again and again with the mightiest armies of Europe, with Germany, Russia, and others. She carried her conquests deep into Asia, and received appeals of assistance from India. But this mighty scourge of Christendom did not pass her bounds. In the events leading up to 1840 she all but collapsed, and since then has rapidly declined. Let us consider some of her loses.

Turkey lost the kingdom of Hungary in 1718; the Crimea in 1774; Greece in 1832; Rumania, Montenegro, and Bulgaria, 1878; Tripoli, 1912; Egypt was lot in 1914; Mesopotamia was taken by Britain in 1917; Palestine in 1917; Syria, 1918; the Hejaz about the same time. At the close of World Ware I, the straits and Constantinople were made international, and the Turkish capital was removed to Ankara. Turkey recovered western Anatolia,

including Smyrna, from the Greeks; she regained the western portion of Armenia, the headwaters of the Euphrates; she recovered her ancient capital Constantinople in Europe, with a portion of Thrace; but little territory was left to this one-time mighty empire. Her dominion has been reduced province by province, until she retains but a shadow of her former possessions. Surely the nation symbolized by the Euphrates is drying up.

But it may be objected 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.

The Battle of Armageddon—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? Is it not that they may come up to the battle of the great day of God Almighty? Where is the battle to be fought? The answer of the prophet is that those who fight this battle will be gathered together "into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." This name is drawn from the ancient valley of Megiddo, where so many fierce and decisive battles were fought in Old Testament times. Concerning the name "Armageddon," Lyman Abbot, in A Dictionary of Religious Knowledge says:

"This name is given to the great plain of the central Palestine which extends from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, separating the mountain ranges of Carmel and Samaria from those of Galilee. . . . It is the ancient plain of Megiddo, the Armageddon of Revelation 16: 16." [1]

On the importance of this battlefield, George Cormak says:

"Megiddo was the military key of Syria. It commanded at once the highway northward to Phoenicia and Coele-Syria and the road across Galilee to Damascus and the valley of the Euphrates. . . . The vale of Kishon and the region of Megiddo were inevitable battlefields. Through all history they retained that qualification; there many of the great contests of southwestern Asia have been decided." [2]

Admitting that "Megiddo was the military key of Syria" and that it commanded the highways of the Near East, the reader may still be interested to know why, aside from direct prophetic statement that the final battle will there be fought, this region should be chosen by the nations of earth as the scene of the last great conflict. To answer this logical question we submit the conclusions of others whose year of investigation of social, economic, and political reasons which lead nations to fight, entitle them to consideration.

"With the fall of Ottoman sovereignty . . . . there will arise once more the Eternal Question of the position of Asia Minor. That land is the corridor between Europe and Asia, along which had passed most of the European conquerors —the Russians alone excepted—who have invaded Asia, and most of the Asiatic conquerors who have invaded Europe." [3]

Mark this opinion long held concerning Constantinople and its environs by H. Huntington Powers: "Constantinople with its tributary straits is the most strategic site in the world. . . . When Napoleon and the Czar Alexander sat down at Tilsit to divide the world between them, Alexander is said to have pled with Napoleon: 'Give or take what you will, but give us Constantinople. For Constantinople my people are prepared to make any sacrifice.' Napoleon bent long over the map, and then straightening up with sudden resolution replied: 'Constantinople? Never! That means the rule of the world.' . . . Merchant and strategist alike still rank Constantinople as the most valuable of

territorial possessions." [4]

Again we read concerning the shift of interest from Constantinople to Asiatic Turkey:

"The problem of Constantinople has perplexed and distressed the world during many centuries. Numerous wars have been waged and innumerable lives have been sacrificed by the nations desiring to possess or control that glorious city and the wonderful Narrows which separate Europe from Asia and which connect the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the East and the West, the Slavonic and the Latin-Germanic world. Hitherto it was generally believed that an attempt to settle the question of Constantinople would inevitably lead to a world war among the claimant States, that their agreement impossible. Hence diplomats thought with dread of the question of Constantinople, which seemed insoluble. . . . However, while we may rejoice that the ever-threatening problem of Constantinople has at last been eliminated, it seems possible that another, a far greater and a far more dangerous one, may almost immediately arise in its

place. The question of Asiatic Turkey is forcing itself to the front." [5]

Because the territory so long held by Turkey has dominated the great trade routes of three continents is has never ceased to be coveted by those who would rise to world domination. The discovery of vast reservoirs of oil in the Near East has greatly increased the desire of nations to possess Asia Minor and the region drained by the Euphrates River. Indeed the discovery that the words of Job 29: 6, "the rock poured out rivers of oil," was not hyperbole but literal truth, has led every first class nation to recognize that oil deposits said to be equal to those of the Western Hemisphere constitute an invaluable possession in the hands of those who would dominate the commercial and military world.

But why should the kings of the East be interested in this question which definitely affects the Near East? Let it not be forgotten that there have been in the past three invasions of the Near East by Oriental conquerors—which invasions

have richly rewarded the invaders. With the entire East "in the throes of rebirth" it is not unnatural that they should cover the liquid gold of the Euphrates Valley.

In an interview given by the noted British general, Sir Ian Hamilton to Kingsbury Smith, staff correspondent of the International News Service, as General Hamilton spoke of the menace to Western European civilization of Asiatic penetration, he predicted that "the spot where Europe may attempt to halt Asiatic penetration will be the last battlefield of all time and mark the end of civilization." He said further, "I have looked carefully at the map and the best spot for Europe to meet and throw back Asia is called Megiddo, or in some maps, Armageddon." [6]

From the language of these writers it would seem obvious that if such mighty armies as would be made up of "the kings of the earth and of the whole world" should gather together anywhere from the ancient valley of Megiddo through the vast stretches of the Euphrates valley and Asia

Minor, to fight the "battle of that great day of God Almighty," what is comprehended territorially by the term "Armageddon" in the prophecy would be fully met.

For centuries the territories of Palestine and the Euphrates valley have been under the control of Mohammedan rulers, who were amenable to the Turkish nation. Logically, then, the Turk will come to his end before the kings of the earth debouch their armies in that territory. The end of the Turk opens the way for the battle of Armageddon.

The Three Unclean Spirits—An event to be noticed under this plagues 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 spiritism, is in every way a fitting means to be employed in this work. But it may be asked how a work which is already going 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 preparation 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 instrument could be employed to gather them to be 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.

That great statesmen recognize the influence of

spiritism, or the spirits of devils, in influencing nations to go to war, is seen in the following statement by Sir Edward Grey, when speaking to the House of Commons. In describing the workings of these forces, the British Foreign Secretary accurately said: "It is really as if in the atmosphere of the world there were some mischievous influence at work, which troubles and excites every part of it." [7]

Ramsay MacDonald, twice Prime Minister of Britain, said:

"It would seem as if they were all bewitched, or laboring under some doom imposed upon them by devils. . . . People were beginning to feel that there was something devilish in the operations now going on to increase armies, navies, and air forces." [8]

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, Roman Catholicism, and apostate Protestantism.

But what is the force of the caution thrown out in verse 15? Probation must have been closed, and Christ have left His mediatorial position, before the plagues begin to fall. 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, and that by a use of tenses sometimes occurring in 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 how have not done this will at this time especially appear.

"He gathered them." Who are the ones here spoken of as "gathered," and what agency is to be used in gathering them? If the work "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.

Let us notice how the text really reads. The word for "spirits" is {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, pneumata, a noun in the plural number. According to an established law of Greek language, when a plural noun is in the neuter gender, as pneumata is, it requires the verb to be in the singular. Accordingly, in verse 14, the verb "go forth" with "spirits" as its subject, is in the singular number in the Greek original. Likewise, also, as the narrative is resumed following the parenthetical exhortation in verse 15, the verb "gathered" is also in the singular in the Greek to co-ordinate with "go forth" in verse 14, since these two verbs have the same subject "which," that should not be printed as a supplied word, and that stands for "spirits." There is therefore every sound reason for translating

verse 16, "They [the spirits] gathered them [the kings] together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." This interpretation is supported by other versions.

"They gathered them together into the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon," says the American Revised Version. "They did bring them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Armageddon," reads Young's Literal Translation of the Bible. Hence it is logical to conclude that the persons gathered are the minions of Satan, not the saints; that it is the work of the spirits, not of Christ; and that 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."

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 state of the earth 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 atmosphere envelops the whole earth, and 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 has taken place under the sixth vial, and the battle remains to be

fought under the seventh. 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." Jeremiah 50: 25.

The Scripture declares, "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.) The voice of God will cause the great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth.

"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 religions of the world (the great city), paganism, Roman Catholicism, and apostate 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. Thus great Babylon comes in remembrance before God. read her judgments as more fully described in Revelation 18.

"A great hail out of heaven, falling upon men," 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.) The Lord asks Job if he has seen the treasures of hail, which He as "reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war." Job 28: 22, 23.

Every hailstone is said to be "about the weight of a talent." According to various authorities, a talent 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 disaster as is here predicted, may be inferred from the following sketch of a hailstorm on the Bosphorus, by Commodore Porter:

"We had got perhaps a mile and a half on our way, when a cloud rising in the west gave indications of an approaching rain. In a few minutes we discovered something falling from the heavens with a heavy splash, and of a whitish appearance. I could not conceive what it was, but observing some fulls 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 discharged upon us and our frail machine. Our fate seemed inevitable; our umbrellas were raised to protect us, but the lumps of ice stripped them to ribbons. We fortunately had a bullock's hide in the boat, under which we crawled, and saved ourselves from further injury. One man of three oarsmen had his hand literally smashed; another was much injured in the shoulder; Mr. H. received a severe blow in the leg; my right hand was somewhat disabled, and all more or less injured. . . .

"It was the most awful and terrific scene that I ever witnessed, and God forbid that I should be ever exposed to such another! Balls of ice as large as my two fists fell into the boas, some of them came 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, maybe five minutes; but it was five minutes of the most awful felling that 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; and wind roared, and the waves have at one moment thrown me to the sky, and the next have sunk me into the 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 upon me on this occasion, and still haunts, and I fear will ever 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, however, 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." [9]

Reader, if such were the desolating effects of a hailstorm of ice, which discharged stones double 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" will be more than fifty pounds in weight? 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.

"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 psalmist:

"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 noonday. 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 has made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall plague come nigh they dwelling." Psalm 91:

2-10.

Chapter 17

A World Union of Church and State

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 are 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. In order to give a full presentation of it, he goes back to recount some of the facts of her 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. With the wine of her fornication, 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 have here 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. Purple and scarlet are the chief colors in the robes of popes and cardinals. Among the myriads of precious stones which adorn her service, according to eyewitnesses, silver is scarcely known, and gold itself is less noticeable than are costly gems. 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 only that which is in full accordance with truth—there came forth only abominations, and the wine of her fornication, fit symbol of her abominable doctrines and still more abominable practices.

The symbol of a woman with a cup in her hand is said to have been used at a papal jubilee.

"In 1825, on the occasion of the jubilee, Pope Leo XII struck a medal, bearing on the one side his

own image, and on the other, that of the Church of Rome symbolized as a 'Woman,' holding in her left hand a cross and in her right a cup, with the legend around her, Sede super universum, 'The whole world is her seat.' "

This woman is explicitly called Babylon. Is Rome, then, Babylon, to the exclusion of all other religious bodies?—No, she cannot be, 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 wonder," as it reads in the original, when he saw the woman drunken with the blood of saints? Was the persecution of the people of God any strange in his day? Had he not seen Rome launch its most fiery anathemas against the church, himself being 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 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 drunk 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-colored beast. A wild beast, like the one thus introduced, is the symbol of an oppressive and persecuting power. While the Roman power as a nation had a long, interrupted existence, it passed through certain phases during which this symbol would not be applicable to it, and during which time 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 when the empire was nominally converted to Christianity, there was

a transition from paganism to another phase of religion falsely called Christian. 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. As time passed, it developed into the papacy, and again assumed its bloodthirsty and oppressive character.

The Seven Heads—The seven heads are explained to be first, seven mountains, and then seven kings. The expression in verse 10, "and there are seven kings," reads in the original, "and are seven kings." This makes the sentence read: "The seven heads are seven mountains . . . and are seven kings," thus identifying heads, mountains, and kings.

The angel says further, "five [kings] are fallen," or passed away. Again he says, "one [king] is"—the sixth was then reigning. "The other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space." Last of all, "the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven."

From this account of the seven kings, we understand that when the one that had "not yet come" at the time of which John was writing, appears on the scene, he is here called an eighth, though he is really "of the seven," in the sense that he absorbed and exercised their power. It is this one whose career we are interested to follow. Of this one it is said that his destiny was to go "into perdition," that is, to perish utterly. This repeats the affirmation made in verse 8 concerning "the beast that thou sawest," which in turn is the "scarlet colored beast," on which the woman sat. We have shown that this beast symbolizes civil power, which according to the narrative before us, passes through seven phases represented also in the leopard beast of Revelation 13, until an eighth appears and continues to the end. Since we have already shown that papal Rome grew out of and succeeded pagan Rome, we must conclude that the eighth head, which was of the seven and ultimately exercised their power, represents the papacy, with all its mixture of so-called Christian doctrines with pagan superstitions and observances.

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: 7, where the ten horns are shown to represent the ten kingdoms that rose out of the Roman Empire. They receive power one hour ({GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, 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 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 ({GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, [mian horan]). The ten kingdoms shall be contemporaneous in contradistinction to the 'seven heads,' which were successive."

This language doubtless refers to the past, when the kingdoms of Europe were unanimous in giving their support to the papacy. The treatment which these kingdoms are finally to give 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 shall 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 bears the title King of kings and Lords of lords, a title which He assumes when He ceases His intercessory priesthood at the close of

probation. (Revelation 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 fulfil 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.

Destiny of the Harlot—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 referenda to the 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

The Doom of Modern Babylon

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 verse. (See comments on verse 4 of this chapter.) The consideration of a few facts will guide us unmistakably to the application. In Revelation 14 we had a message announcing the fall of Babylon. "Babylon" is a term which embraces not only paganism and the Roman

Catholic Church, but religious bodies which have withdrawn from that church, but bringing many of her errors and traditions with them.

A Spiritual 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. 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, which include her literal destruction. The fall is therefore a spiritual 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 the subject to the judgments of God, which can no longer be delayed.

Since the fall here introduced is a spiritual one, it must apply to some branch of Babylon 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. 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 stared out on reform. They ran well for a season, and had the approbation of God; but bringing some of her erroneous doctrines with them, and fencing themselves about with creeds of their own, they have failed to keep pace with the advancing light of prophetic truth. This has left them where they will finally develop a character as odious in the sight of God as that of the church from which they withdrew.

Alexander Campbell, founder of the Disciples of Christ Church, 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 Wesleyism. . . . 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."

Abundant 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. She might have been healed (Jeremiah 51: 9) by receiving the truth, but she rejected it.

In not accepting the truth of the second coming

of Christ and in reject the first angel's message, the churches failed to walk in the advanced light shining on their pathway from the throne of God. As a result, confusion and dissension reign within their borders. Worldliness and pride are fast choking every plant of heavenly growth.

But in this chapter we have the fall of Babylon mentioned again. In the previous reference it followed the sounding of the first angel's message, and the divine declaration then was, "There followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen." Now the latter pronouncement from heaven heaven is, "He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils." Here is a further step in the development of apostasy, and the next few pages will reveal the extent of this final phase of the fall of Babylon.

Time of This Fall—At what time do these verses have their application? When may this movement be looked for? If the position taken here is correct, that these churches, this branch of

Babylon, experienced a spiritual fall by the rejection of the first angel's message of Revelation 14, the announcement in the chapter now under consideration could not have gone forth previous to that time. It is, then, either simultaneous with the message of the fall of Babylon in Revelation 14, or it is given at a later period than than. It cannot be at the same time with that, for that merely announces the fall of Babylon, while this adds several particulars which at that time were neither fulfilled nor in the process of fulfillment. We are therefore to look this side of 1844, when the previous message went forth, for the announcement brought to view in this chapter. We therefore inquire, Has any such message been given from that time to present? The answer is, Yes. We are now hearing the third angel's message, which is the last to be given before the coming of the Son of man. As declension has increased in the religious world, that message has been augmented by the warning of Revelation 18: 1-4, which thus constitutes a feature of the third angel's message which is now being proclaimed with power and lighting the world with its glory.

The Work of Spiritism—The latter phase of the work brought to view in verse 2 is in process of accomplishment, and will soon be completed, by the work of spiritism. 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. 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.

A significant feature in the work of spiritism just now, is the religious garb is 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 as any other denomination in the land. It talks of sin, repentance, the atonement, salvation through Christ, in almost as orthodox language as do genuine Christians. Under the guise of this profession, what is to hinder it from entrenching itself in almost every denomination Christendom?

We have shown that the basis of spiritism, the immortality of the soul, is a fundamental dogma of the creeds of almost all the churches. 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 Revelation 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 in the time of the great advent awakening, is the important doctrine that the soul of man is not naturally immortal; that eternal life is the gift of Jesus Christ, and can be obtained only through Him; that the dead are unconscious; and that the rewards and punishments of the future world lie beyond the resurrection and the day of judgment.

These truths strike a deathblow to the first and vital claim of spiritism. What foot hold can that doctrine secure in any mind fortified by such 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 they thereby expose themselves to this last manifestation of satanic cunning.

Modern Liberalism—While spiritism is thus working, startling changes are manifesting themselves in high places in some of the denominations. The fidelity of the present age, under the seductive names of "science," "higher criticism," evolution," and "modern liberalism," has permeated most of the theological colleges of the land, and to a large extent has made serious incursions into the Protestant churches.

Public attention was forcibly called to this situation by a writer, Mr. Harold Bolce, in the Cosmopolitan Magazine for May, 1909. After

making an investigation into the character of the teaching that was being imparted in some of the leading universities of this country, he reported the results in Cosmopolitan, which drew forth this comment from the editor:

"What Mr. Bolce sets down here is of the most astounding character. Out of the curricula of American colleges, a dynamic movement is upheaving ancient foundations, and promising a way for revolutionary thought and life. Those who are not in close touch with the great colleges of the country will be astonished to learn the creeds being fostered by the faculties of our great universities. In hundreds of classrooms it is being taught daily that the decalogue is no more sacred than a syllabus; that the home as an institution is doomed; that there are no absolute evils; that immorality is simply an act in contravention of society's accepted standards. . . . These are some of the revolutionary and sensational teachings submitted with academic warrant to the minds of hundreds of thousands of students in the United States."

The results of modern liberalism have been all too apparent in the work of the Protestant churches. Writers in the various communions have freely pointed out the lack of interest in the preaching of the gospel and the decline of missions in particular. One writer states the situation in this way:

"Too largely I suspect our churches have become weak, uncertain as to their purpose, lifeless, characterized by a deadly respectability and lacking a sense of mission. The average congregation is primarily concerned with raising enough money to pay the pastor and to keep the property in good repair. There is little deep-seated conviction any longer that 'we have a story to tell to the nations.' The gospel of salvation and evangelism as respects the whole world has been diluted into a satisfactory and responsible ethic and the church is a society of good people who want the blessing of religion to attend them during their moments of exaltation or grief, but are quite content to absent themselves from the church and its divine mission so long as they can clothe themselves in the aura of respectability which

attaches to church membership. Is this too caustic an indictment of the church?"

Another writer states the attitude of the churches toward missions:

"Coupled with the fact that only a minority of church members give conscientiously is the change in belief about missions. Missionary boards may persuade themselves that the falling off in their receipts is due to high taxes and lowered incomes, but pastors who are in touch with donors recognize a definite increase of resistance to making donations designed for extension of the gospel beyond our borders. The number of otherwise loyal parishioners who doggedly announce that they 'don't believe in missions' is mounting. The caliber of these opponents gives pause. . . .

"The average annual per capita giving in twenty-two non-Roman communions now shows $11.28 for congregational expenses, against $2.19 for all non-local work. . . .

"The average of gifts beyond self-support coasts from 29.69 per cent of the total income with the United Presbyterian Church to 11.14, 12.30, and 10.02 per cent with the last-named trio. Small wonder we are being urged to 're- think missions.' "

Such results as these are declared to follow:

"While missionary zeal was waning, the situation was further complicated by the revelation that other than evangelical missionaries were being commissioned and sent to the foreign fields. These were the 'adventurers' of a 'new civilization,' the 'creators of a new world,' and were mainly filled with a social passion. . . .

"World evangelization was again given a cruel blow in the critical findings of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry Report. Although the object of this enterprise, which began in 1930 and continued to 1933, was 'to aid laymen to determine their attitude toward foreign missions by reconsidering the functions of such missions in the world of today,' with undoubtedly the aim not only

to remodel missions but to increase financial receipts, the results was only more controversy and decreased giving."

Results of Apostasy—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 angel's message was given, could they hear the teaching and behold the practices of the religious world, stand aghast at the fearful contrast between their time and ours, and deplore the sad degeneracy! But Heaven is not to let all this pass in silence. A mighty proclamation is being made, calling the attention of all the world to the fearful counts in the indictment against 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 delicacies. 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 personification of pride and arrogance? Are not church members in the very forefront of those who seek after the material and prideful things of life?

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 all who will answer are called from her communion. Nor will it be necessary to wait long for this consummation. 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 will be 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 is 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 Revelation 14; fourth, the angel of verse 1 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 are now united in proclaiming a threefold message. The angel of verse 1 here enters upon his mission, as conditions call for his work. The divine call from heaven to come out of Babylon takes place in connection with his work.

"Come Out of Her, My People"—Proof has already been offered to show that the message of verses 1 and 2 of this chapter is given in connection with the now current threefold message. An idea of its extent and power may be gathered from the description of the angel there given. The first angel's 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 with a message more pointed and direct. 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 such a time, the world must not be left without warning. So amply must the great facts 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 until all have had an opportunity to receive a knowledge of His will, and time to repent, must be vindicated. An angel is sent forth panoplied with heavenly 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"—would fail to realize his presence. Light flashes everywhere. The dark places are lighted up. While his presence dispels the shadows, his voice in thunderous tones utters a warning. He cries "mightily." It is no parlor announcement, but a cry, a might 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 everlasting and irretrievable destruction is heralded until 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. Soon it will burst upon the great city of confusion, and proud Babylon will go down as a millstone sinks into 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. These are stirring times for 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 until a certain time that people become guilty by being connected with Babylon.

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 part of Babylon which is subject to a spiritual 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 previously, are to attempt a sweeping persecution against the truth and the people of God. By these the "image to 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.

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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, chera, "one bereaved," or destitute of power, as I have been. She declares, Now I rule like a queen, and I shall see no sorrow. With blasphemy she boasts God is in the Constitution, the church is enthroned, and will henceforth bear sway. The expression, "Reward her even as she rewarded you," seems to show that the time for this message to reach its climax, and for the saints to be finally 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. (Psalm

35: 6.) Judgments from on high will bring upon her a twofold degree ("double unto her double"), the evil which she thought to bring upon the humble servants of the Lord.

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. The plain inference from the languages 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 first plague must result in a complete suspension of traffic in those articles of luxury for which Babylon is noted. 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. 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. 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 in a far more effectual way.

The question may arise how persons involved in the same calamity can stand afar off and lament. 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. 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. The figure the apostle uses would not be complete without a feature of this kind, and 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." In this we find a prophecy that the "delicacies of the season," upon which the gourmand 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. Revelation 16: 8.

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 nought. 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, an 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, the traders' 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 of the saints, 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 be delivered from the power of death and the grave by the first resurrection.

Like a great millstone dropped into the sea, 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 heard 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 spiritism of today. "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 comments on Revelation 16: 6.

Chapter 19

King of Kings and Lord of Lords

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 for ever and ever.

Continuing the subject of Revelation 18, the apostle here introduces the song of triumph which the redeemed saints strike up on their harps when they behold the complete destruction of the system of great Babylon, which is in opposition to God and His true worship. This destruction takes place and this song is sung in connection with the second coming of Christ at the beginning of the thousand

years.

Forever and Ever—There can but one query arise on this scripture: How can it be said that her smoke rose up forever and ever? Does not this language imply eternity of suffering? Let it be remembered that this expression is taken from the Old Testament, 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 drawn. Under the figure of Idumea, a certain destruction is brought to view. It is said of that land that its streams should become burning pitch, and not be quenched night nor day, but that its smoke should go up forever. 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 this phrase, "forever and ever," must be limited in its application. 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.

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 expression 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 in the Bible smoke is spoken of as going up forever: 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, in regard to the destruction of great Babylon. All these 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 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. 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? The Lamb's wife is the New Jerusalem which is above. This will be noticed more fully in Revelation 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. 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 nineteen hundred years? Further remarks on this point are deferred to a consideration of Revelation 21.

But if the city is the bride, it may be asked how it can be said that she made herself ready. We answer, By the figure of personification, which attributes life and action to inanimate objects. (See a notable example in Psalm 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), and 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 of the fruit of the vine 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 departed spirits of the dead. Whoever takes the position that they are, is to all intents a spiritist, 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 are all on a common footing as servants of the great God; hence he was not a proper object for John to worship. Calling the prophets "thy brethren," signifies that they all belong to the same class in the service of God. (See comment on Revelation 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 an expression 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 Revelation 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 16.)

What is to be understood by the angel standing in the sun? In Revelation 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 there 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? 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 persons furnish a great supper for the fowls of the heavens.

The beast and false prophet are taken. The false prophet is the one that works miracles before the beast and is identical with the two-horned beast of Revelation 13, to whom the same work, for the 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 other, but will 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. 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 until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. This power must be very near the close of its existence.

But it dos not perish until 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 climax of the work it has to do before it also goes alive into the lake of fire. How impressive 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 until the Lord shall appear in all His glory.

It appears from verse 21 that there is a remnant not numbered with the beast or the 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 (2 Thessalonians 2: 8; Isaiah 11: 4.)

Chapter 20

The World's Millennial Night

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 the events of the preceding chapter in chronological order. The inquires that here arise are, Who is the angel that comes down from heaven? What are the key and the chain which he has in his hand? What is the bottomless pit? What is meant by binding Satan a thousand years?

Is this angel Christ, as some suppose?

Evidently not. A direct ray of light is thrown from the old typical service directly upon this passage.

Satan is the Scapegoat—Christ is the great High Priest of the gospel age. On the Day of Atonement anciently two goats were taken by the priest, and lots were cast upon them, one for the Lord, and the other for the scapegoat. The goat 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 this 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, a place not inhabited. As Christ is the priest of the gospel age, a few arguments will show Satan to be the antitypical scapegoat.

The Hebrew word for scapegoat, as given in the margin of Leviticus 16: 8, is "Azazel." On this verse, William Jenks remarks: "Scapegoat. See diff. opin. in Bochar. Spencer, after the oldest opinions of the Hebrews and Christians, thinks Azazel is the name of the devil; and so Rosenm.,

whom see. The Syr. 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 scapegoat is a type of Satan.

Charles Beecher 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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, apopompaios, 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 Azalzel, evidently a corruption of Azazel, is given to one of the fallen angels, thus plainly showing that 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."

Here is the Jewish interpretation:

"Far from involving the recognition of Azazel as a deity, the sending of the goat was, as stated by Nahmanides, a symbolic expression of the idea that the people's sins and their evil consequences were to be sent back to the spirit of desolation and ruin, the source of all impurity."

In a striking manner these views harmonize with the events to take place in connection with the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, as revealed to us in the Scriptures of truth.

In the type we see the sin of the transgressor transferred to the victim. We see that sin borne by the ministration of the priest and the blood of the offering into the sanctuary. 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 scapegoat. And we see the goat bear them away into a land not inhabited. (Leviticus 1: 4; 4: 3-6;

16: 5-10, 15, 16, 20-22.)

Answering to these events in the type, we behold in the antitype, the great offering for the world made on Calvary. The sins of all those who avail themselves of the merits of Christ's shed blood by faith in Him, are borne by the ministration of Christ into the new-covenant sanctuary. 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 scapegoat, the devil. The devil will be sent away, bearing them into a land not inhabited.

"Let us contemplate that scene at Christ's return to earth. The Church has been judged; Israel has been judged; the Gentile nations have been also judged. . . . Now it is Satan's turn to be judged also; and our High Priest is seen 'putting' the moral blame to where it rightly belongs; judging the great corruptor and banishing him to a place of separation from the affairs of men."

"Satan is not here, as some allege against this opinion, put on an equality with God; for the two goats were both brought 'to Jehovah,' and were His; while the very casting of lots, which was in itself a solemn appeal to God, shows that Jehovah claimed the power of disposal. Neither can it be objected that this was in any sense a sacrifice to Satan, for the animal was not slain to him; it was only sent to him in disgrace. Bearing upon it sins which God had already forgiven, it was sent to Azazel in the wilderness.

"The phrase 'scape,' by which the strange term Azazel is rendered in our version, came from the 'hircus emissarius' [goat emissary], of the Vulgate. The term Azazel may mean the 'apostate one'—a name which Satan merits, and which he seems to have borne among the Jews. It was Satan that brought sin into the world; and this seduction of man adds to his guilt, and consequently to his punishment. Sin is now pardoned in God's mercy. The one goat was sacrificed as a sin offering; its blood was carried into the holy place, and the

mercyseat was sprinkled with it. Guilt was therefore canceled; by this shedding of blood there was remission. But sin, though pardoned, is yet hateful to God, and it cannot dwell in His sight: it is removed away to a 'land not inhabited'—severed from God's people, and sent away to man's first seducer. The sins of a believing world are taken off them, and rolled back on Satan, their prime author and instigator. Though the penalty is remitted to believers, it is not remitted to him who brought them into apostasy and ruin. The tempted are restored, but the whole punishment is seen to fall on the archtempter. Hell is 'prepared for the devil and his angels.' "

This we believe to be the very event described in the verses under notice. At the time here specified, the sanctuary service is 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. 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.

The Key and the 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 on this occasion for the accomplishment of his mission.

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 use which specially throws light upon the meaning of the word here is found in 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," and the text might have been translated, "Darkness was upon the face of the abyss, or bottomless pit." We all know that the word "deep" as there used is applied to the earth in its chaotic state. Precisely this it must mean in this third verse of Revelation 20. Let it be

borne in mind that at the time the angel does this work, 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 trail over the earth; the burning glory attending 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.

Thus is the earth made empty and waste, and turned upside down. (Isaiah 24: 1.) Thus is it brought back again, partly at least, to its original state of confusion and chaos. (See Jeremiah 4: 19-26, especially verse 23.) 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 abyss, or bottomless pit? Here Satan will be confined during this time, amid the ruins which indirectly his own hands have

wrought, unable toe flee from his habitation of woe, or to repair in the least degree its hideous ruin.

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, and thus is he bound, being condemned throughout this period to a state of hopeless inactivity. To a mind that has been as busy as his has been for the past six thousand years in deceiving the inhabitants of the world from generation to generation, this must be a punishment of the most intense severity.

According to this exposition, the "binding" of Satan means simply placing beyond his reach the subjects upon whom he works. His being "loosed" means their being brought again by a resurrection to a position where he can again exercise his power

upon them. On this exposition some say that we have mistaken the personnel, and have the wicked bound, instead of 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. but when persons use such expressions, do we imagine that some insurmountable obstacle was literally thrown across the path they were traveling, or that their hands were literally confined with ropes and cords?—No; we understand that a combination of circumstances rendered it impossible for them to act. Even so here. Why will not people grant to the Bible the same liberty of speech that they give without question to their fellow men?

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 a 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 until 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. 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 is 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: the martyrs who had been beheaded for the witness

of Jesus, and those who had not worshiped the beast and his image. The latter class, those who refuse the mark of the beast and his image, are of course the ones who hear and obey the third angel's 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, "which had not worshiped the beast," shows that there is another class introduced. The word is the compound relative, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, hotis, "whoever," not merely the simple relative {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, hos, "who," and is defined by Liddell and Scott, "Whosoever, whichsoever, any one who, anything which." 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 {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, hostis, is sometimes used as a simple relative as in 2 Corinthians 3: 14; Ephesians 1: 23, but never in such construction as this, where

it is preceded by the conjunction {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, kai, "and."

Lest anyone 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 of a thousand years with Christ, we could call attention to the fact that the preceding chapter states that the wicked had all been slain, and the seal of death had been set upon them for a thousand years. John is here viewing only the righteous company who have part in the first resurrection.

To avoid the doctrine of two resurrections, some claim that the passage, "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, for all scholarship is against it. The English Revised Version makes no reference to this text as being "not found" in ancient manuscripts. The American Revised Version does not give the slightest hint that a part of the text is omitted. Rotherham's translation, though noting elsewhere "doubtful" renderings, says nothing about this text being spurious. It is found in Tischendorf's eight editions of the Greek New Testament, and in the Greek text of Westcoot and Hort. The sentence occurs also in all the Greek New Testaments issued by the world-renowned critics. Griesbach, Wordsworth, Lachmann, Tregelles, and Alford. Three or four Greek manuscripts do not have this sentence; sixteen hundred and ninety-seven of them do contain it if they have the Revelation at all.

Two Resurrections—"The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Whatever may be said to the contrary, no language could more plainly prove two

resurrections. The first is a resurrection of the righteous at the beginning of the thousand years. The second is that of the wicked at the end of the millennium. 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.

Wicked Raised to Life—The wicked who are raised at the end of the thousand years actually 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 the race has 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 possessed during life or the period of their probation, that would certainly be sufficient to enable them to receive understandingly the last judgment due them for all their deeds done while living here upon this earth.

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 for ever and ever.

Perdition of Ungodly Men—At the end of the one thousand years, the holy city New Jerusalem, in which the saints have dwelt in heaven during that period, comes down and is located upon the earth. It then becomes the camp of the saints, around which the risen wicked gather, numberless as the sand of the sea. The devil deceives them, and thus brings them to this battle. They are induced to undertake 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," Moses Stuart admits is "intensive," and signifies "to eat up, devour, so that it denotes utter excision."

This is the time of the perdition of ungodly men—the time when "the elements shall melt with

a 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 received 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 come up in their resurrection, and with the devil at their head, tread with their unhallowed feet upon the purified and holy earth, while the saints, who have held

possession for a thousand years, are obliged to yield the ground, and flee into the city. 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. Besides outraging all ideas of propriety, there is no scripture from which even an inference can be drawn to support this position.

As to the second view, one among many of its absurdities is that although Christ and His saints have conquered the earth during the thousand years, at the end of this period the wicked get the upper hand, 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.

A Thousand Years in Heaven—In contrast with these theories, there is harmony in the view herein presented. The saints are with Christ in heaven during the thousand years while the earth lies desolate. The saints and the city come down,

and the wicked dead are raised and come up against it. There the latter receive their judgment. 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.

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 includes more than that. The verb phrase "shall be tormented" is in the plural, and makes affirmation concerning the beast and the false prophet, whereas it would be in the singular number if it referred to the devil alone. It will be noticed in the expression, "where the beast and the false prophet are," that "are" is a supplied word. It would be more proper to supply the words "were cast," coordinating with what was spoken of the devil just before. A more exact translation, too, supplies the word "also" after "where." The sentence would then read, "The devil was cast into the lake of fire, where also the beast and the false prophet were cast." The beast and the false prophet were cast into the lake of fire and destroyed, at the

beginning of the thousand years. (Revelation 19: 20.) The individuals of whom their 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, the spirit of His mouth, and brightness of His coming by which the man of sin is to be consumed, the fire in which great Babylon shall be utterly burned. (Revelation 18: 8.) At the end of the thousand years, it is that 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 in it; it is the fire of Tophet prepared for the king (the devil and his angel, Matthew 25: 41), the pile whereof is deep and large, and which "the breathe of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle" (Isaiah 30: 33). In short, it is the fire that comes down from God out of heaven. (On the expression, "tormented day and night forever and ever," see comments on Revelation 14: 11.)

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.

A Throne of Judgment—With verse 11, John introduces another scene 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.)

Fire comes down from God out of heaven. The works that are in the world are burned up, and 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.) Then will be fulfilled Isaiah 66: 24: "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 quenced: and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

Then also will be fulfilled in 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. This must be the time to which Isaiah's questions and answers apply.

In all this conflagration the elements are not destroyed. They are only melted and purged from the taint of sin and every token of the curse. The almighty fiat then goes forth, "Behold, I make all things new. . . . It is done." Revelation 21: 5, 6. 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 the Record—Men 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 the record their unlawful acts. They must meet them again, and be judged accordingly.

Execution of the Sentence—The wicked are to be punished according to their works. The Scriptures declare that they shall be rewarded according to their deeds. That the degree of suffering which each one is to endure is taken into the account as a part of the punishment for his sins, is evident: "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit

things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required." Luke 12: 47, 48.

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? At least one apparent reason is that all may see 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 are not retained. Thus all the intelligences of the universe may see that God acts with justice and impartiality.

It is stated also that "death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." Here is the final epitaph of all the forces from first to last that have risen up to oppose the will and work of the Lord. Satan originated and led out in this nefarious work. A part 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 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, and of no cessation until they are consumed. 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," not punishing forever. Roman 6: 23.

To sum up the argument, "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 no until you have reason to believe that your name is among those who are to share at last in eternal life.

Chapter 21

A New Heaven and a New Earth

The subject of this chapter, beginning with verse 2, is the New Jerusalem, but before that is introduced, John tells how the present heaven and earth and sea are to be disposed of:

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 and Revelation 2: 7), it refers to the heaven which is yet future, and does not prove that there is a Paradise and a 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: those before the flood, the ones which now are, and 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 called the first, so that the future new heavens would, according to this count, be the second, and not the third, as Peter is supposed to reckon. Hence it is certain that Peter did not design to establish a numerical order, in accordance with which we should speak of one as the first, another 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 when Bible speaks of the third heaven, it 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 endeavor to disprove a literal

Paradise and tree of life in existence now, 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 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! Thanks be to His holy name that a way has been opened, which leads like a straight and shining path of light up to those blest abodes!

The Sea No More—Because John says, "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, an the sea {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, ouk estin eti, is no more] also passed away; that is, the old sea no longer appeared, any more than the old heaven and the old earth. Yet there may be a new sea as there is a new earth.

Adam 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, proceeds from the throne of God, and flows through the broad street of the city. It must find some place into which to discharge its

waters, and what could 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: "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 as waste of waters, can hardly be expected. The new world, where God's faithful people are to dwell, will have everything which will contribute to proportion, 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 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 dwells there in a different sense from ever before. Why should this be thought a strange thing? God's only-begotten Son is here as ruler of His special kingdom. The holy city will be here. 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—"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 wiped away. 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. 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 vanished. The wicked, root and branch (Malachi 4: 1), are destroyed 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 earth, not as servants or aliens, but as lawful heirs to the heavenly estate and proprietors of the soil.

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 drives us to the Lord for help. But the fear mentioned here is 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 one will 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. We may be sure that he did not deceive him, but fulfilled his promise to the very letter. All that he did show him was the New Jerusalem, which must therefore be the Lamb's wife. 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 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 incongruous 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 obscure if applied to the church.

In writing to the Galatians, Paul 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. Verse 24 of the chapter under comment, speaks of the nations of the saved, who walk in the light of this city. These nations of the saved, who walk in the light of this city. These nations who are 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? Inspiration has seen fit to speak of it under this figure, and with every believer in the Bible that should be sufficient. This 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 Jews and old Jerusalem were the special objects of God's care. It is said to here 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 thine husband," and the closing promise of the Lord to this city contains a description similar 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." Isaiah 54: 11-13.

It is this very promise to which Paul refers,

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 in the next verse quotes this very prophecy from the book of Isaiah to sustain his declaration. Here then Paul makes an inspired application of Isaiah's prophecy which cannot be mistaken, and in this verse 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. Of that city the Lord calls Himself the "husband." In addition to this, we have positive testimony to the same facts in Revelation 21.

With this view, all is harmony. Christ is called Father of His people (Isaiah 9: 6), the Jerusalem above is called our mother, and we are here children. Carrying out the figure of marriage, Christ is represented as the Bridegroom, the city as the bride, and we, the church, as the guests. There is not confusion of personalities here. But the

popular view, is not confusion of personalities here. But the popular view, which makes the city the church, and the church the bride, makes the 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: 12-27, 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. Adam Clarke, in his note on Matthew 22: 2, thus speaks of it:

"A Marriage for His Son"—A marriage feast, so the word {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT} [gamous] 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. (See 1

Kings 1: 5-9, 19, 25, etc., where such a feast is mentioned.)" Many eminent critics understand this parable as indicating the Father's induction of His Son into His Messianic kingdom.

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. The names of the twelve tribes on the gates, show that all the saved from all ages, are reckoned as belonging to some one of the twelve tribes, for all must enter the city through some one of the twelve gates. This 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 height 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 miles. It may be understood that this measure is the measure of the whole circumference of the city, 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 in length on each side. The length, breadth, and height of it are equal. From this language, the question has arisen whether the city shown to John was a high as it was long and broad. The word rendered "equal" is {GREEK

CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, isos. 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. Greenfield, in defining one of its cognate words, {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, 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. 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 by the height of the wall, which is distinctly given.

The building of the wall was of jasper. This

precious stone is 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. 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, chrysotile; 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 many who profess to be Bible teachers, and spiritualize away this city into ethereal nothingness, how unmeaning to these minute descriptions appear! But if we take it in its natural and obvious signification, and look

upon the city as the prophet evidently intended, as a literal and tangible abode, our glorious inheritance, the beauties of which we are to look upon with our own eyes, how the glory of the scene is enhances!

Though it is not for mortal man of himself to conceive of the grandeur of the things which God has prepared for those who love Him, yet viewed as a literality, men may delight to contemplate the glories of their future abode. We love to dwell upon those descriptions which convey to our minds an idea of the loveliness and beauty which will characterize our eternal home. As we become absorbed in the contemplation of an inheritance tangible and sure, courage springs up anew, hope revives, faith plumes her wings. With feeling 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. While many gemmologists assert that it is difficult to identify the precious stones of the Bible, the following interesting tabulation by Moses Stuart will give some idea of the beauty and variety of colors in the foundation.

The Glorious Foundation—"The word adorned [garnished], 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 of 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 cornelian, which last is of a flesh-color.

"Sardius is probably the cornelian. Sometimes, however, the red is quite vivid.

"Chrysolithe, as its name imports, is of a yellow or gold color, and is pellucid. Form 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. . . .

"Chrysopras, 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 a 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.

Gates of Pearl—The beautiful city of God, built of materials most precious here on earth, is very appropriately described as having gates of pearl. But more than that, the scripture says that each gate is of a single pearl. Irridescent and glowing with the beautiful colors reflected from the foundations, these portals swing wide to welcome the redeemed to their eternal home.

Streets of Burnished Gold—In this verse, as also in verse 18, the city is spoken of as built of gold, pure, like clear glass, that is, transparent glass. 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 he 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 also powers of reflection, would marvelously multiply both palaces and people, and

would 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 a temple is naturally associated the idea of sacrifices and mediatorial work, but when the city is located upon the new work, there will be no such work to be performed. Sacrifices and offerings, and all mediatorial work based on them, 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. As if to anticipate the question that might arise as to what would constitute the ornament and glory of the new city if there is to be no temple therein, the prophet answers, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it."

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 any thing 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 be course be days and nights in the new earth, but they will be days and nights of surpassing glory. In speaking of this time, the prophet 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? The light of the sun will be sevenfold, so that although the night is to be 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. Both will be surpassingly glorious.

Verse 24—speaks of nations and kings. The nations are the nations of the saved, and in the new-earth state we are all kings in a certain sense. We possess a "kingdom," and are to "reign" forever and ever.

But it appears from some of our Saviours 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 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

Peace at Last

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 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, 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 is on either side of the river of life. Therefore 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 the 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 side. How wide this broad street is, we have no means of determining, but it will be at once perceived that a city three hundred seventy-five miles square, would have an ample space for its great avenue.

The Tree of Life—But how can the tree of life be but one tree, and still be on either side of the river? 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. To be at once on both sides of the river, it must have more than one trunk, in which case it would be united above 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.

The tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit, and yields it fruit every month. This fact throws light upon the declaration in Isaiah 66: 23, that all flesh shall come up "from one moon to another" to worship before the Lord of hosts. The Greek phrase in the verse before us is {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, kata mena hekaston, "each month."

The Septuagint has here {GREEK CHARACTERS IN PRINTED TEXT}, men 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 Scripture. "The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." Isaiah 33: 24.

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 to 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, "They shall see His face," refers to the Father; for He is the one whose name is in their foreheads. That it is the Father, we learn from Revelation 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 for ever 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. Christ Himself, through whom all these revelation have come, repeats the promise which has been the hope of men through

the ages, "Behold, I come quickly." To keep the sayings of the prophecy of this books is to obey the injunctions connected with the prophecy, as, for instance, in Revelation 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 verses 8 and 9, see comments on Revelation 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 viewing the matter with closed eyes, in "the spirit of deep sleep." (Read 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 next verse Christ says, "Behold, I come quickly." What presumption, then, to claim, as some 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. This is another conclusive proof that there can be no probation after that event. All the living wicked, those "that know not God," the heathen, and those "that obey not the gospel of our 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.

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 gives to Himself the appellation of Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Verse 14, as before noticed, is the language of Christ. The commandments of which He speaks are His Father's.

Keeping His Commandments—Reference here must be to the ten commandments as delivered on Mt. 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 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." [1] In view of the fact that the words and letters in these two phrases are so strikingly alike, it is not surprising 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 error of transcribers. Thus the Syriac New Testament, one of the very earliest translations from the original Greek, reads according to the Authorized Version. And Cyprian, whose writings antedate any extant Greek manuscript, quotes the text as reading, "Blessed are they that do His

commandments." [2] 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 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 the entire 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 age. 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.

The Invitation to Come—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 those invited 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 a 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 lip 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 give. Come, for all things are ready. The last sound that will fall from Mercy's lips on the ear of the sinner before 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, Issac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out, they will have no one to accuse, no one to blame, but themselves. They will be brought to feel this in all its bitterness, for the time will come when Robert 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!' " [3]

The bride also says, Come. But the bride is the city, and how does it 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 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. 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 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. 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 it verdant banks, of the tree with its healing leaves, of the 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 which 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 in regard to adding to or taking from have exclusive reference to this book. Nothing can be called an addition 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 part 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 plan. 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 all 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. A song before unheard, unknown, in the universe, the song of the redeemed, shall add its thrilling notes of rapture and melody to the universal jubilee. So shall the saints be gathered, to be joyful in one another'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 tis 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 tidings 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 of 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 leaves and life-giving fruit, is there. Abraham, Issac, 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, all these will be there.

Benediction—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 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 toilworn, dusty raiment of our pilgrimage for the glorious vesture of immortality, and feel that that sin and the curse can nevermore pollute us. O day of rest and triumph, and every good, delay not they

dawning. Let the angels be quickly sent to gather the elect. Let the promise be fulfilled which bears in its train these matchless glories

EVEN SO, COME LORD JESUS.