

THE
REVELATION
OF ST. JOHN

SIMPLY ANALYZED AND BRIEFLY
EXPOUNDED BY "DELTA" (HENRY DUNN)

"Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand." -- Rev. 22:20.

LONDON
JAMES NISBET AND CO., BERNERS STREET.

1850

PRINTED BY WALTON AND SSITCELL, WARDOVR.ST. OXFORD--ST.

Electronic Edition Converted to .PDF Format Courtesy of Historicism.com, 2004

PREFACE

SEVENTEEN years ago the writer of the following pages ventured to publish a brief exposition of the Book of Revelation.* The sale was limited; yet the object of publication was fully attained. In course of time, the book obtained a circulation, was read, and found favor in quarters where such a reception was least expected.

The present volume, based upon the publication referred to and intended to supersede it, differs in many respects from its predecessor. The exposition, as a whole, is more minute; in some instances the interpretation is varied; the analysis is simpler; and the notes are greatly extended. In the latter department it will be seen that Mr. Stuart and Mr. Elliott have been freely laid under contribution.

Many things essential to a full and critical consideration of the prophecy are, however, of necessity still omitted. It is assumed (although not without an anxious and careful perusal of conflicting authorities) that the Apocalypse is an inspired book; that it was composed by the apostle John in Patmos, during the reign of Domitian, probably about A.D. 95 or 96; and that it is a symbolic and chronological prophecy of the outward condition and inner life, the course and corruptions of the Christian Church in all ages.

The general principles of interpretation adopted, are fully stated in the Appendix.

Two grounds of objection are commonly taken to the study of the Apocalypse. The first is, that prophecy is not intended to be of service to us prior to its fulfillment; the second, that the symbols of this book do not admit of a determinate application, and that therefore interpretation can never be more than conjectural.

To each of these objections Mr. Davison, in his able 'Discourses on the structure, use, and inspiration' of the prophetic books of Scripture, has furnished a brief but pertinent reply.

He observes (and the observation is fully borne out by the general character of the inspired writings), that "on general grounds of presumption there is no reason to think that the Apocalypse, from the nature of its style, is incapable of a rational and satisfactory, that is, a determinate interpretation. As all language abounds in metaphor and other materials of imagery, imagery itself may form the ground of a descriptive language. The forms of it may become intelligible terms; and the combination of them may be equivalent to a narrative of description." Moreover, in this book interpretation is greatly facilitated by the fact, that "the entire subject is strongly marked by a system of chronological order. Subsequent and coincident periods of time are noted, and the course and succession of events is made a part of the prophecy as well as the events themselves."

--

* The Book of the Unveiling; an Exposition with Notes.' Dr. Candlish of Edinburgh, to whom the author was unknown, in a sermon to students (3rd Edit. Edinburgh; Johnstone, 1843), refers to it as "a somewhat singular work with a quaint title, but containing many valuable hints." It has also been regarded as worthy of special notice in the Pocket Paragraph Bible, recently published by the Religious Tract Society, here, in a note on 'the Prophetic Visions of the Revelation,' clear but condensed summary of its contents is given.

As to the objection, that "prophecy is of no use to us until after the event predicted has come to pass," such an opinion surely proceeds on a singular forgetfulness of the fact that "there is no known event of any magnitude, affecting the Jews as a people, which had not its place in the antecedent warnings of prophecy; nothing befell them which was not foretold; the apparent case of prophecy fully supporting the declaration of one of its messengers, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.' (Amos 3:7.) Through so full a probation did prophecy pass in maintaining its cause with a people little disposed to a gratuitous conviction; and so great an insight did it afford into the providential government of God to those among them who, with a more susceptible mind, sought that kind of instruction and found it, as they well might do, in the explanation of their prophetic oracles. In a certain sense history has been justly called the interpreter of prophecy; but to the Israelite prophecy was more the interpreter of history, for it gave him intelligible notice of approaching events, and it supplied him with the reasons of God's providence in bringing those events to pass."

Mr. Trench, in his Hulsean Lectures, justly claims a like position for the Apocalypse. "As it was," he says, "at the Reformation with the Pauline Epistles; as it is now with the Gospels, so, I cannot doubt, a day will come when all the significance of the Apocalypse for the Church of God will be apparent, which hitherto it can scarcely be said to have been; that a time will arrive when it will be plainly shown how costly a gift, yea, rather how necessary an armor was this for the church of the redeemed. Then, when the last things are about to be, and the trumpet of the last angel to sound; when the great drama is hastening with even briefer pauses to its catastrophe; then, in one unlooked for way or another, the veil will be lifted from this wondrous book, and it will be to the church collectively, what, even partially understood, it has been already to thousands and thousands of her children, strength in the fires, giving her songs in the night, songs of joy and deliverance in the darkest night of her trial, which shall precede the breaking of her everlasting day, and enable her, even when the triumph of Antichrist is at the highest, to look serenely on to his near doom, and her own perfect victory."

One word only, and these prefatory observations are concluded.

All prophecy, but especially that which is unfulfilled, tests the moral condition of those to whom it is presented. To the flippant, the skeptical, or the prejudiced, the divine oracle is dumb. To the froward it shows itself froward. "In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, that saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive." (Matt. 13:14.)

Blackheath, May 1, 1850.

THE
REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

1. Introduction and Blessing. (Rev. 1:1--3.)

Revelation 1:1 - The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

'The Revelation of Jesus Christ.' So entitled, because it is his gracious donation to the Church; because it unveils and reveals the unseen Savior, exhibiting him as the living head of the Church through all time; and because it speaks so distinctly of his return to take unto himself the kingdom, and of the manner of his coming.

Which 'God gave unto him.' Perhaps teaching us that the ascended and glorified Christ is still officially and as mediator, subordinate to the Father. He still receives from God for the Church what he should say and what he should speak. (See John 12:49--50; 1 Cor. 15:24--28.)

'To shew unto his servants' (his spiritual children). To all others the revelation will be folly; for of this book it may be emphatically said, 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. 2:14).

'Things which must shortly come to pass.' i.e. Which must shortly begin to be fulfilled; for all admit that the closing portion of the revelation relates, beyond doubt, to a distant futurity. The whole is communicated to John.

Revelation 1:2 - Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

The same John, 'who (in his Gospel and Epistles) bare record' of the Divine Word (the Logos); of 'the testimony (the witness and teaching) of Jesus Christ;' and 'of all things that he saw' both on the mount of transfiguration, and in daily intercourse with the Redeemer (see 1 John 1:1--3).

Revelation 1:3 - 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 blessing attached to the perusal of the book is significant. It is on those that read and those that 'hear,' referring doubtless to the early custom of publicly reading the apostolic writings in the congregations of believers, -- manuscripts being too scarce and expensive to be in many hands. Both are to 'keep' those things which are written, to 'ponder' them, like the blessed Mary, because the time of their beginning to be fulfilled is near.

The experience of the Church has verified the promise. Few have devoted much time to the calm and prayerful study of the book, without experiencing this blessing. Read in a meek and chastened spirit it brings Christ very near; a present, living, personal Savior; withdrawn from sight, but only for a time; soon to return, -- even now 'standing at the door.'

The Epistles which immediately follow this general introduction, are addressed 'to the seven churches which are in Asia.' Why these should be called 'the seven,' when other important churches existed in their neighborhood, it is difficult to conceive, except on the supposition that the number is symbolical. (See notes to v. 4, 12, 13, and 20, from which reasons may be gathered for regarding it in this light.)

THE SEVEN EPISTLES.

§ 2. Salutation to the Church, and Doxology to Christ. (Rev. 1:4--8)

Revelation 1:4 - 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;

'The seven churches which are in Asia.' Here obviously put for the entire Church; the number 'seven' being continually used in Scripture to signify completeness, or the whole of anything. This symbolical use of the number seven, may probably have arisen from the seven days or periods which completed the creation of the world.

'The seven Spirits which are before his throne,' in like manner indicate entireness or completeness, and stand, as Mr. Stuart has conclusively shown, for the angelic Host; the ministers of God that do his pleasure -- the dispensers both of divine blessings and judgments. The great objection to this view is, that it seems to class angels with God and Christ; but this is removed when it is recollected that angels are spoken of in Scripture "as constituting, together with God and Christ (so to speak), the supreme court of Heaven; that awful judicatory which will take cognizance of all the actions of men." Hence Paul says to Timothy, 'I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels' (1 Tim. 5:21). Our Lord himself uses similar language when he speaks of coming in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels (Luke 9:26). It will be observed that, in both these passages, the Holy Spirit is omitted and angels are introduced, probably because the person and work of the Holy Spirit are implied in the term God. The prominence given to angels may further be noticed in such passages as Rev. 3:5, and Mark 8:38.

The seven Spirits cannot here mean 'THE HOLY SPIRIT,' because they are represented as subordinate, standing and waiting for commands; they are before the throne, not on it. In Rev. 4:5, the seven Spirits of God appear under the symbol of 'seven lamps of fire burning before the throne,' at once recalling Ezekiel's magnificent description of the angels of God, -- 'living creatures,' 'before the throne,' 'like lamps' (see Eze. 1:13).

Revelation 1:5 - 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.

The titles here given to the Lord Jesus Christ are worthy of notice. He is 'the faithful witness,' who 'testified' what he had 'seen and heard' (John 3:32), and who witnessed before Pilate 'a good confession' (comp. 1 Tim. 6:13, with John 18:37). He is 'the first begotten of the dead,' -- the first partaker of the resurrection life, -- the 'first--fruits of them that slept,' -- 'the first born from the dead' (see Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 15:23.) He is 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,' the King of kings, earth's destined ruler, under whose feet all things are put (see Rev. 17:14; Phil. 2:10; and Eph. 1:22). To him the doxology is addressed, and on him honors are poured which it would be blasphemous to claim for any other.

Revelation 1:6 - And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

'Hath made us kings and priests.' Some read this, 'a kingdom of priests,' and consider it to correspond with Exodus 19:6, which is rendered in the Septuagint a royal priesthood (see also 1 Pet. 2:9). But if, as we believe, Jesus, the Christ, is the true and rightful monarch of the earth, a king and a priest -- a priest upon a throne -- why should we seek to get rid of the kingship of believers? Whatever difficulties may embarrass us in the admission of a personal reign, however anxiously we may shrink from carnal conceptions of spiritual truth, nothing can justify the attempt to explain away the many passages of Scripture which speak of the redeemed as being in the kingdom of God, clothed with authority and entrusted with rule. Let the thoughtful reader seriously ponder the following texts, -- Psalm 49:14; Dan. 7:22--27; Matt. 19:28; Luke 22:29; 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 2:26, and Rev 3:21. Surely it is safer and wiser to regard such passages as among the things 'hard to be understood' (2 Pet. 3:16), than dogmatically to insist either upon a very literal or a very figurative interpretation.

Revelation 1:7 - Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

'He cometh with clouds.' Clouds are his chariot (Psalm 104:3). 'The Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' (Matt. 24:30).

'Every eye shall see him: they also which pierced him.' John is the only evangelist who gives us an account of the side of Jesus being pierced. He evidently regards the occurrence as a fulfillment of Zech. 12:10.

'All kindreds of the earth shall wail,' i.e. because of, their terror of the judgments that precede and accompany his second coming. 'Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn' (Matt. 24:30).

Revelation 1:8 -- 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.

'Alpha and Omega' (see Rev. 1:17; Rev. 22:13). Higher titles than those given to Christ in this verse cannot be bestowed on any being.

§ 3. *The Introductory Vision. (Rev. 1:9--20.)*

Revelation 1:9 - 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.

'Patmos.' This is a small island in the Egean Sea, belonging to the cluster called the Sporades, six or eight miles in length, and but little more than a mile in breadth. It has neither trees nor rivers, nor any land for cultivation except some little nooks among the ledges of rocks. There is now a small village of fishermen's huts upon it.

Here John, 'in tribulation,' a sharer in the persecution then raging under Domitian; a 'companion' of all saints, in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, i.e. in patient waiting for the kingdom of Christ, hears the voice of the Savior, and beholds the symbols of his presence.

Revelation 1:10 - I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

'In the Spirit.' i.e. Wrapt in prophetic ecstasy (see 2 Cor. 12:1--4). From the phrase in the 17th verse (Rev. 1:17), 'I fell at his feet as dead,' as well as from various scriptures, it would appear that great bodily exhaustion was occasioned by visions or ecstasies. (See Eze. 1:28; Eze. 3:14, 15, 23; Dan. 8:17, 18; Dan. 10:9, 16, 17; Dan. 7:15, 28; Dan. 8:27; Zech. 4:1.)

'On the Lord's day.' This phrase occurs nowhere else. It marks the change from the Jewish Sabbath to the first or Lord's day.

Revelation 1:11 - 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.

'What thou seest.' i.e. All that thou seest. Not the vision relating to the seven churches only, but the entire visions of the book. All this is to be committed to the parchment, and transmitted to the churches.

Revelation 1:12 - And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.

'Seven golden candlesticks.' Rather a seven--branched candelabra of gold (see Zech. 4:2), similar to the one used in the service of the tabernacle (see Exod. 25:31, and Heb. 9:2). This symbolizes the Christian Church (see Matt. 5:14, 'Ye are the light of the world').

Revelation 1:13 - 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.

'In the midst of the seven candlesticks.' i.e. Standing in the position of the priest in the ancient service, when behind the candelabra he trimmed the lamps and supplied them with oil. As the lamps branched out widely he would, in this position, seem to be 'in the midst' of them. He is clothed in a priestly and princely robe, and girded with the symbol of power and authority. (See Isa. 5:27, and Isa. 45:1.)

'One like unto the Son of Man.' "There can be no good ground to doubt that the appellation Son of Man, so often applied by the Savior to himself (never applied to him but once by any of his disciples, Acts 7:56), was grounded upon Dan. 7:13, where it is plainly given to the expected Messiah, and has reference to the human nature which he would assume; comp. John 1:14; Rom. 5:5; Rom. 1:3; and 1 Tim. 3:16." (Stuart.)

Revelation 1:14 - His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire:

It is the God--man; the ancient of days (Dan. 7:13) in human form; the omniscient eye piercing like flaming fire; the head radiant with silvery light.

Revelation 1:15 - And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

'Like unto fine brass.' His feet like unto fine brass glowing in the furnace, mark the firm and majestic step of one 'glorious in holiness.'

'As the sound of many waters,' i.e. as the sounding of the deep sea. Daniel 10:6 says, 'as the voice of a multitude.' David in the Psalms seems to recognize the similarity between 'the noise of the seas' and 'the tumult of the people.'

Revelation 1:16 - And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

On 'his right hand' rest 'seven stars;' the breath of his lips is as a flaming 'sword' -- 'two--edged' (searching, Heb. 4:12; destroying, Isa. 11:4); his aspect dazzles with excess of light (see Matt. 17:2, 'His face did shine as the sun').

Revelation 1:17 - 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

John, overwhelmed, (see note to Rev. 1:10,) falls at his feet as dead; but is raised and comforted with the well known, 'Fear not' (see Dan. 10:12, and Luke 12:32).

Revelation 1:18 - 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.

'I am He,' your departed friend, once subject to death, now the 'ever living' one (Rom. 6:9), having 'the keys' of 'Hades,' or the invisible world, and absolute dominion over death.

Revelation 1:19 - Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

'The things which are.' Great stress has been laid by many expositors on this phrase, as if, standing in opposition to 'the things which shall be,' it decided the chronology of the seven Epistles. It is, however, impossible from this verse either to maintain that the epistles were only addressed to the seven particular churches named, or to deny their symbolic character. Mr. Stuart (following Vitringa, Eichhorn, Heinrichs, and Ewald) translates the verse thus -- 'Write now what things thou hast seen, and what they signify, and also those things which will take place hereafter.' This, from one who rejects the symbolic hypothesis, disposes altogether of the contrast between the 'things which are' and the 'things which shall be.'

Revelation 1:20 - 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.

'The mystery.' -- The hidden or mystical meaning. (See Mark 4:11.)

'The angels.' As the seven candlesticks, or rather the seven branched candelabra (see note to Revelation 1:13) represents the universal Church, so the seven stars must represent the entire body of 'angels' belonging to the Church in all ages; the term angel being best explained by its corresponding Hebrew word, which designates 'a prophet,' (see Hag. 1:13, 'the Lord's messenger.')

The angels of the churches are, therefore, the divinely called teachers and guides of the Church, and none other. The term does not appear to mark rank, but rather appointment, -- one 'called of God.'

§ 4. The Epistle to Ephesus -- the Faithful Church. (Revelation 2:1-7.)

Revelation 2:1 - 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;

Revelation 2:2 - I know thy works, and thy labour, 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:

'Apostles.' Men pretending to be directly commissioned by Christ (see 2 Cor. 11:13).

Revelation 2:3 - And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored, and hast not fainted.

Revelation 2:4 - Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Revelation 2:5 - 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.

'Remove thy candlestick.' i.e. Thou shalt cease to be distinguished as a light in the world; coldness and formality shall retributively introduce darkness and decay. Mr. Scott observes on Exod. 25:32, that the seven candlesticks might any one be taken off the chandelier. The observation illustrates the phrase under notice.

Revelation 2:6 - But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

'The Nicolaitanes.' Nothing definite can be gathered from ecclesiastical history respecting the existence and character of a sect in reality bearing the name of Nicolaitanes during the primitive ages of Christianity. Most commentators, therefore, since the days of Vitranga, have preferred to consider the name Nicolaitanes as symbolical, like that of Balaam in Rev. 2:14, 15, and Jezebel in Rev. 2:20. Irenaeus is the first of the Christian fathers who mentions such a sect, and he traces its origin to Nicolas, stating that the characteristic tenets of the party were, the lawfulness of promiscuous intercourse with women, and of eating things offered to idols. These being the sins into which the Israelites fell through the devices of Balaam (Num. 25:1-3, and 1 Cor. 10:7, 8), those who practiced them were probably called Balaamites = Νίκολαίται. (See Stuart.)

This explanation is not altogether satisfactory. Individuals there doubtless were in the early Church, as in all subsequent ages, who, turning the grace of God into licentiousness, lived in sin. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians (v. 1), refers to such a case, but there is no reason to suppose that

practices of this kind were ever embodied in a party. On the contrary, the tendency, at a very early period, was to exalt celibacy at the expense of God's own appointment, the institute of marriage. "Within considerably less than a hundred years from the death of John, the Church at large had yielded itself on this subject to capital and widely--extended error of sentiment, practice and theory." The immediate effect of this "religious celibacy, or, as it was called, dedication or espousals to Christ," was, as might have been expected, frightful licentiousness. The first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the seventh chapter in particular (1 Cor 7:3-5), was evidently written with especial reference to some such growing evil. The probability is that 'the deeds of the Nicolaitanes' were the results of this early error. This view is confirmed by the fact that many of the primitive writers express their belief that Nicolas was the occasion, rather than the author of the infamous practices alluded to in the Apocalypse. In the 14th verse the doctrine of Balaam, which is evidently idolatrous impurity, is distinguished from, if not contrasted with, that of Nicolas.

Revelation 2:7 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what y 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.

'To him that overcometh.' i.e. To him that, confiding in the divine promise, perseveres to the end; as opposed to the fearful and unbelieving (Rev. 21:8). The phrase is usually applied to the endurance of martyrdom. See a similar sentiment in Heb. 12:4. 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.'

'Eat of the tree of life.' i.e. In paradise restored. Compare Gen. 3:22 with Rev. 22:2. See also Matt. 26:29.

The general characteristics of the Ephesian Church are patience under toil, attachment to the truth, discrimination between true and false teachers, and opposition to impurity. But it is not without fault. Its first affection is departing, forms are taking the place of life, and it is threatened with the loss of moral power -- it will be no longer a light unto the world.

Without anticipating the question whether these Epistles are or are not to be regarded as symbolic of the seven ages of the Church, it may not be amiss to remark as a fact, that while the Apostolic Church is ever to be honored for its adherence to doctrinal truth, for "its faith, its constancy, its charity, and its heavenly mindedness," it had, even at an early period of its history, "admitted errors and yielded to impressions," the evident tendency of which would be to weaken its moral power over the world.

§ 5. *The Epistle to Smyrna -- the Persecuted Church. (Rev. 2:8-11.)*

Revelation 2:8 - And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

Revelation 2:9 - 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.

'Say they are Jews.' i.e. Of the true Israel (Rom. 2:17, and Rom. 9:6-8; comp. also Gal. 3:7).

The Jews always appear to have been the bitter denouncers of Christians to the heathen. Eusebius relates that when Polycarp was burnt, the Jews ran to procure fuel, and were among the most furious in applauding his martyrdom. It is not improbable that they pursued this course partly in the hope of propitiating the authorities, and partly from a desire to separate themselves, in the eyes of the heathen, from Christians with whom they were frequently confounded.

The synagogue of Satan.' i.e. Children of the devil. (See John 8:44, 'He was a murderer from the beginning.')

Revelation 2:10 - 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.

'The devil shall cast some of you into prison.' i.e. Through his instruments; or perhaps taken personally, Satan being embodied in the pagan power of Rome, and in its magnificent system of devil worship.

'That ye may be tried.' In the silence of the prison, and in anticipation of torture and death, they would be tempted to recant, and to deny Christ.

'Ten days.' Symbolically put for a short space of time. (See Dan. 1:12-14; Jer. 42:7.)

Revelation 2:11 - 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 second death.' That which follows the general resurrection and final judgment (Rev. 20:14, and Rev. 21:8); the opposite to the 'crown of life.'

This church is represented as outwardly in tribulation and poverty; inwardly, rich and blest. It is distressed by false brethren, and is to suffer persecution unto death for a limited period. No word of blame is uttered.

Nor need we wonder at this. Whatever might be the faults of the martyr Church, "theirs was the fervor of a steady faith in things unseen and eternal; theirs a meek patience and humility, under the most grievous wrongs; theirs the courage to maintain a good profession before the frowning face of philosophy, of secular tyranny, and of splendid superstition; theirs was abstractedness from the world and a painful self-denial; theirs the most arduous and costly labors of love; theirs a munificence in charity, altogether without example; theirs was a reverent and scrupulous care of the sacred writings; and this merit, if they had no other, is of a superlative degree. How little do many readers of the Bible now-a-days think of what it cost the Christians of the second and third centuries, merely to rescue and hide the sacred treasure from the rage of the heathen!"

"While as yet everything in the Church and in the world was precisely what the Lord had given them reason to look for; while Christians were still a rescued band -- sheep among wolves -- and were many of them literally pilgrims and strangers upon earth, cast out of the bosom of the state, and driven from the social circle; while as yet those unlooked for and inexplicable events had not taken place which have so much staggered the faith of later Christians; while the near coming of their Lord was firmly expected, and while nothing had happened of which he had not given his people an intimation; then, and during that fresh morning hour of the Church, there belonged to the followers of Christ generally a fullness of faith in the realities of the unseen world, such as in later ages has been reached only by a very few eminent and meditative individuals; the thousand then felt a persuasion which now is felt only by the two or three." *Ancient Christianity*, vol. i., p. 39.)

§ 6. *The Epistle to Peryamos -- the Metropolitan Church. (Rev. 2:12-17.)*

Revelation 2:12 - And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges.

'The sharp sword with two edges.' The sword of the Spirit;' piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit' (Heb. 4:12); all-powerful to destroy (Isa. 11:4).

Revelation 2:13 - 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.

'Where Satan's seat is.' Satan's seat -- the center of all the forms of Antichrist -- is Rome: Pergamos would therefore seem to be used symbolically, to signify that period of the Church's history in which it assumes the power of the empire, and has its seat in Rome. (See dissertation at the end of the Seven Epistles.)

'Antipas.' Who Antipas was, does not appear; probably an early martyr for the truth at Rome.

Revelation 2:14 - But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

The doctrine of Balaam.' Parties clinging to the licentiousness of idolatry; attempting to retain, in connection with a Christian profession, some of the unclean orgies of dethroned paganism. (See extract from Stuart in note on Rev. 2:6. See also Acts 15:29; and 1 Cor. 6:9-21.)

Revelation 2:15 - So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.

'The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.' Here the deeds of the 6th verse (Rev. 2:6) have grown into a doctrine. This is strongly confirmatory of the view taken of Nicolas in the note to the 6th verse. If this Epistle is to be regarded as applying to the third era of the Church, the coincidence is striking, for by that time the error in practice of the early Church had grown into a doctrine, widely held and highly honored. By this time some of the noblest minds had come to believe, that the only genuine holiness possible on earth was that of the celibate, and that it was a right thing to attach obloquy to marriage as an impure estate. And all this in spite of consequences too frightful to mention.

Revelation 2:16 - Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

'The sword of my mouth.' See Isa. 11:4: 'He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth.'

Revelation 2:17 - 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 hidden manna.' The bread which cometh down from heaven (John 6:31-35).

'A white stone.' Symbol of pardon and victory; referring probably to Christians being 'kings and priests unto God and to Christ,' and as such wearing a diadem with a white stone, resplendent in glory, on which shall be inscribed, not the incommunicable name written on the mitre of the high priest which he alone could pronounce, but the new name of Christ, known only to the blest. (See Rev. 3:12. 'I will write upon him my new name.')

This Church is described as situated 'where Satan's seat is,' and there testifying to truth for which in former days it had suffered. Yet it is sanctioning impurity, attempting to unite Christ and Belial, and it is threatened with the sword of vengeance.

The character of the Church during the third era -- the dominant Church -- could scarcely be more accurately portrayed than it is in the few verses addressed to Pergamos. It is, in fact, a history in miniature.

§ 7. *The Epistle to Thyatira -- the Idolatrous Church. (Rev. 2:18-28.)*

Revelation 2:18 - 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.

'The Son of God.' The only place in the Apocalypse in which this phrase is used. It was an early name of the Messiah (Psa. 2:7).

Revelation 2:19 - 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.

'The last to be more than the first.' i.e. Their charity, self-sacrifice, and endurance were growing.

Revelation 2:20 - 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.

Revelation 2:21 - And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

Revelation 2:22 - Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Revelation 2:23 - 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.

Revelation 2:24 - 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.

'Jezebel.' The name of Ahab's idolatrous wife (1 Kings 16:31) is probably here put symbolically for a corrupt influence -- a bad and mischievous teaching. The phrase 'depths of Satan,' as applied to her followers in the 24th verse, reminds us of the description of Antichrist given by Paul (2 Thess. 2:9), 'fornication' symbolizing all spiritual wickedness. 'None other burden' was imposed upon those who had not partaken of these evils than that which was involved in a faithful protest against, and firm opposition to them.

Revelation 2:25 - But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

Revelation 2:26 - And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.

'Hold fast till I come.' The fact of the coming again of the Savior, is the great motive held out continually as the most powerful stimulant to perseverance. At that coming the faithful are promised 'power over the nations' (see Dan. 7:22, 27; Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:2; 2 Tim. 2:12); that which is predicated of Christ (Psa. 2:9), is applied to the saints as if, in some sense, he would one day rule by and through them.

Revelation 2:27 - 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.

'Rule them with a rod of iron.' The general idea is the complete destruction of opposers, as a vessel of pottery would be shattered by a blow from an iron scepter.

Revelation 2:28 - And I will give him the morning star.

'I will give him the morning star.' Christ, who is the bright and morning star (Rev. 22:16), will, at his coming, clothe his saints with his own radiance.

Thyatira is represented as having elements of good in it, and of these the Savior is not unmindful. Still evil greatly preponderates. A false prophetess is seducing the Church into error. This Jezebel, persevering in her sin, will be slain with her children; but, though the devastation be great, wrath will not be indiscriminate, every one will receive according to his works, and the righteous, however borne down now, shall eventually rule over the nations.

If the supposition is to be admitted that this Epistle is intended to portray the fourth period of the Church's history, and it must do so if symbolical, a difficulty may arise in some minds as to the commendation awarded. How, it may be said, could the Papal Church -- the Church from the fifth to the eleventh century justly receive credit for 'charity, service, faith, patience, and works?' Our reply is, -- her history. We have been so long accustomed to regard the Church of the third and fourth centuries as pure, and that of later and papal days as impure, that it is not without a severe shock that we are brought to believe the reverse to be the truth. Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his Ancient Christianity, has however demonstrated the fact, that Romanism, in its early stages, was in fact a reform of ancient Christianity; that so far as the notions and usages of the later differ from those of the earlier age, "the advantage, in respect of morality and piety, is quite as often on the side of the later as of the earlier ages; that, in fact, Popery was but a practicable form, and a corrected expression, of ancient Christianity."

Still she nursed a Jezebel in her bosom. Her teaching was polytheistic and idolatrous. She seduced the servants of God to commit spiritual fornication by her image worship, and she taught them to

reverence offerings to the saints in the same spirit as the heathen revered their idol meats. "At the time of the Saracen invasions, the Christian frontiers were at every accessible point bristled with images of the Virgin and the saints; the people having been exhorted to put their sole trust in these invincible guardians, nothing fearing, -- 'Look to the saints, and no Saracens can touch your borders; their honor in heaven as well as on earth is pledged for your safety.' Was not this polytheism? Was not this idolatry? Were not Mohammedans orthodox men compared with these baptized heathens." (Taylor)

§ 8. *The Epistle to Sardis -- the Dead Church. (Rev. 3:1-6.)*

Revelation 3:1 - 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.

Revelation 3:2 - Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

'Seven Spirits of God.' (See note on Rev. 1:4.)

'The seven stars.' The Churches; the idea is, He who governs angels and men.

Revelation 3:3 - 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.

'Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard.' Indicating general declension in doctrine.

Revelation 3:4 - 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

'Defiled garments.' Emblem of pollution (Zech. 3:3, 4).

Revelation 3:5 - 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.

Revelation 3:6 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. .

'He that overcometh.' i.e. Resisteth unto blood. (See note on Rev. 2:7.)

White raiment.' Emblem of innocence; the robe of martyrs (see Rev. 6:11, and Rev. 7:9); emblem also of the righteousness of the saints (Rev. 19:8).

'The book of life.' fig. "Heaven is first conceived of as a city; then those admitted to dwell there are citizens; their names, of course, are conceived of as inscribed in the city register. Names thus inscribed in cities on earth, are blotted out when life ceases, or when crime is committed and forfeiture of privilege ensues. Not to be blotted out, of course, implies therefore continued life and privilege. (See and compare Exod. 32:32; Isa. 4:3; Psa. 56:8; Dan. 12:1; compare also Rev. 13:8; Rev. 17:8; Rev. 20:12; and Rev. 21:27.) Further developments respecting a book in the heavenly

archives, in which the names and all actions of men are recorded, will be found in Rev. 20:12; and Dan. 7:10." (Stuart.)

'Before his angels.' (See Luke 9:26, and parallel passages.)

Of this Church it is affirmed, that having a name to live, it is nevertheless dead; that the few elements of life that remain are on the point of dying out; and that there are but few who have not defiled themselves. These, from the implication in the fifth and sixth verses, would seem to be mainly confessors and martyrs. Sudden judgment is therefore threatened.

It will scarcely be disputed that the visible Church of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, is here accurately delineated.

§ 9. *The Epistle to Philadelphia -- the Liberated Church. (Rev. 3:7-13.)*

Revelation 3:7 - 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.

'He that is holy.' A title of God -- the Holy One (Hab. 3:3).

'He that is true.' The faithful witness (Rev. 1:5).

'The key of David.' (See Isa. 22:22.) Regal dominion. Christ is the supreme governor of the Church, and the great steward of the household of God.

Revelation 3:8 - 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.

'An open door.' Emblem,

1. Of liberty from a state of bondage and danger;
2. Of ready and easy access to places hitherto forbidden;
3. Of a multiplication of converts. (Ewald.) (See Acts 14:27; 1 Cor. 16:9; Col. 4:3.) " I will give thee free access to preachers and all the means of grace." So Vitranga. (Stuart.)

'A little strength.' A phrase used in commendation, indicating some spiritual energy, though not in abundance.

Revelation 3:9 - 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.

'Synagogue of Satan.' Children of Satan (John 8:33-44).

'Jews, and are not.' i.e. Who call themselves the spiritual Israel, and yet are ignorant of Christ and his righteousness. ' If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham' (John 8:39).

Worship before thy feet: i.e. Do homage. The false shall bow down before them, and acknowledge that God is with them of a truth (Isa. 60:14).

Revelation 3:10 - 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.

'The hour of temptation.' The last trial of the faith of the Church yet in futurity.

Revelation 3:11 - Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

'That no man take thy crown.' That no man, either by subtlety or violence, induce thee so to act as to forfeit the crown of life. (See James 1:12.)

Revelation 3:12 - 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.

Revelation 3:13 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

'A pillar.' i.e. A permanent trophy of grace; perhaps it implies set apart for distinction -- to be relied upon for services. John and James are spoken of as pillars in the Church (Gal. 2:9).

'The name of my God.' See Rev. xiv. 1, where the redeemed have the Father's name written on their foreheads, as restored to him and by him, in and through Christ.

'New Jerusalem.' (See Heb. 12:22; Gal. 4:26; and Rev. 21:22.)

'My new name.' (See note to Rev. 2:17.)

The characteristic of Philadelphia is, that it has an open door set before it; for it has testified to truth. Its internal enemies (false professors), who have been its persecutors, shall bow before it, and know that God is blessing it. It shall be kept from falling in an hour of especial trial, and the nearness of Christ's coming is urged as the motive to endurance. If this Epistle be symbolical, it must refer to the sixth era of the Church; the 'open door' in that case points to a period subsequent to the Reformation.

§ 10. The Epistle to Laodicea -- the Loathsome Church. (Rev. 3:14-22.)

Revelation 3:14 - 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.

'The Amen.' The truth itself (John 14:6).

'The beginning of the creation of God.' The Head or Lord of the whole creation (Phil. 2:9-11). (See Stuart.)

Revelation 3:15 - I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Revelation 3:16 - So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

'Neither cold nor hot.' i.e. Sickly and loathsome.

Revelation 3:17 - 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.

'Wretched and miserable,' as to eternal interests; 'poor,' in spiritual graces; 'blind,' as to truth; 'naked,' as to a justifying righteousness.

Revelation 3:18 - I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

'Buy of me.' Without money and without price (Isa. 55:1.) 'Eye-salve.' True humility; the opener of the eyes of the understanding.

Revelation 3:19 - As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent.

This verse implies that there are still some, who are the children of his love, to be chastened, not destroyed. (Heb. 12:6-8; Rev. 18:4.)

Revelation 3:20 - 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.

Revelation 3:21 - 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.

Revelation 3:22 - He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

'I stand at the door and knock.' lit. I have taken my station (Stuart). The indications of my immediate approach will soon be manifest to the world; they ought already to be seen by the spiritual eye, and heard by the purged ear. 'I stand at the door and knock.'

'Will sup with him.' Supper was the principal social meal of the ancients. The imagery implies close and intimate communion with Christ; repose, joy, safety. This is to be distinguished from ' the marriage supper of the Lamb,' which is a scene of vengeance (Rev. 19:17).

Laodicea is hateful in God's sight, and shall be cast off with abhorrence. Its character is pride and self-complacency. Christ is at the door.

The question now arises (for as yet nothing on this point has been asserted), are these seven Epistles to be regarded literally or symbolically? that is to say, are they to be viewed in the same light as the apostolic Epistles to the churches at Corinth, Philippi, and Rome? Or are they, on the contrary, as many have supposed, * to be considered as mystical in their character; the seven churches representing the entire Church of the future, from the time of the apostle to the end of the dispensation, and each successively depicting the phase, so to speak, which the Church catholic would present to the all-seeing eye in its progress through coming ages?

The following considerations support the mystical view.

1. The symbolical character of other parts of the book, and their relation to a distant future, being admitted, it certainly seems unlikely that this portion alone should be literal, and refer to a time then present.
2. The fact that many other churches, some more important than those addressed, existed in Asia Minor at the time the apostle wrote, seems to render it improbable that those named should be selected for other than symbolic purposes.

* Vitranga, Grotius, and others. Of recent authors, Dr. James Bennett and Mr. Girdlestone may be mentioned.

3. The absence of any evidence that the seven churches named were at the time in the condition described, makes against the literal hypothesis. Ecclesiastical history furnishes no intimation that the church at Ephesus, though declining as to fervency, was especially pure and discriminating as to doctrine; that Smyrna was suffering bloody persecution; that Pergamos was 'Satan's seat;' that Thyatira had in her bosom a false prophetess, whose influence was seducing the Christians of that place to turn the grace of God into licentiousness; that Sardis was in a state of spiritual death; that Philadelphia, in distinction from other churches, had 'an open door;' or that the condition of Laodicea was such as to be absolutely loathsome to the Divine eye. Probability, at least, is against the supposition that these seven churches, all, be it observed, in Asia Minor, were either then, or shortly after, in circumstances so remarkably distinct.

4. The number of these churches, seven; the idea of unity and entireness attaching to this mystic number, as well as to the candelabra of the temple by which they are symbolized; the representation of Christ in the midst; the office he is fulfilling, that of the High Priest; all indicate universality, and seem incompatible with the idea of any exclusive reference to particular congregations or communities.

5. The structure of the Epistles indicates their symbolical character. " The manner in which they commence and close; the triplicity of their contents; the intimate connection which they have with the vision that precedes them and with the visions that follow -- thus demonstrating the unity of the whole book; the fact that they are all so nearly of the same length, which indicates a plan, and a regard to the nature of the book in which they were to appear; all these things," says Mr. Stuart, a are obvious to the attentive reader;" and, it may be added, all point to symbolism.

6. The singular correspondence that obtains between the promises made to conquerors in the respective churches, and the blessings described in the latter portions of the book as the privileges of saints in Christ's kingdom, should not be unnoticed in forming an opinion of the character of the Epistles. e.g. " Thus to the faithful that overcome, in the Ephesian Church, it is promised, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God' (Rev. 1:7); while in the description of the New Jerusalem it is said, on either side of the river was the tree of life. 'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life' (Rev. 22:2-14). Compare, for similar correspondences, Rev. 2:11 with Rev. 20:6, 12, 14, 15; and Rev. 3:21 with Rev. 20:4, Rev. 22:5." (See Elliott.)

The main objections urged against this view are, first, that the language of the 19th verse of the first chapter, 'Write the things which are, and the things which shall be,' separates these Epistles from the rest of the book, as referring to 'things which are;' but Mr. Stuart, who holds to the literal view, abandons this argument as altogether untenable. (See. note to Rev. 1:19.)

A second objection is raised, on the ground that, according to the mystical interpretation, the last state of the Church is the worst, which, it is said, can surely never be. But this argument will have no weight with those who think that other portions of the sacred writings distinctly teach the same thing.

The third and grand objection, urged by Mr. Elliott, is a the impossibility of making these severally depicted ecclesiastical sketches answer to any seven chronologically successive phases of

Christendom, that human wit or research can ever frame out of its actual history." But this certainly remains to be proved.

In order to test the assertion, as well as to provide for future chronological references, it may be as well at once to state what, irrespective of any scheme of prophetic interpretation, ought, in the opinion of the present writer, to be regarded as the seven great eras of the Church's progress. How far prophecy and history harmonize in relation to these periods, will appear in due time.

THE SEVEN GREAT ERAS OF THE CHURCH.

1. THE ERA OF THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS, dating from the latter part of the reign of Domitian to the death of Irenaeus; the period styled, by Mr. Isaac Taylor, the obscure period of Church history. A.D. 96 to 180.
2. THE ERA OF THE STRUGGLE, between the Church and Paganism, terminating with the establishment of Christianity by law in the Roman Empire. A.D. 180 to 310.
3. THE ERA OF THE PEACEFUL POLITICAL ASCENDANCY of the Church; or from Constantine to the invasion of the Goths. A.D. 310 to 396.
4. THE ERA OF MORTALITY, or from the first invasion of Alaric to the defeat of the Emperor Romanus Diogenes, by the Saracens under Alp Arslan. A.D. 396 to 1071.
5. THE ERA OF MARTYRS for the Word and for the Testimony; or from about the time of the first Crusade to the Reformation. A.D. 1071 to 1517.
6. THE ERA OF CHANGE, or from the Reformation to the final overthrow of old Despotisms, and the destruction of the Papal Antichrist. A.D. 1517 to --
7. THE ERA OF JUDGMENTS, terminating the period of the BABYLONIAN ANTICHRIST; or from the destruction of the Papacy to the second coming of the Lord.

THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK.

REVELATION CHAPTERS IV. TO XI.

§ 11. *The unseen World. (Rev. 4:1-11.)*

VISION. -- THE INTERIOR OF A TEMPLE; IN THE INMOST SANCTUARY,
THE THRONE OF GOD AND THE BLESSED COMPANY AROUND IT.

THE message of Christ to his Church being now delivered, the 'one like unto the Son of Man' departs, the insignia of his glory passes away, and John, looking up, beholds a door (as if) opened in heaven, and hears a voice as of a trumpet inviting him to come up, and see the things which must be hereafter. He is immediately entranced, and at once finds himself before the throne of God. He can only describe Him who sat upon it by comparing his aspect to the glistening of precious stones; a rainbow (emblem of covenanted peace and mercy) surrounds the throne; and round about it are the four and twenty elders (representing the family of the redeemed) sitting clothed in white raiment, and crowned with crowns of gold. Out of the throne proceed lightnings, and thunderings, and voices, and before it burn seven lamps of fire. A sea of glass, like unto crystal, spreads its placid bosom before the Divine eye (fit emblem of that cleansing blood which alone purifies the redeemed); and in the midst of the throne and round about it are four mysterious but symbolic creatures, full of eyes within, and incessantly chanting, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;' and again and again, as the heavenly song reaches the ears of the elders, do they fall down before the throne, and cast their crowns at the feet of Him who sitteth thereon, crying, '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.' Such is John's simple but splendid account of the new scene to which he was thus unexpectedly introduced.

There is a remarkable analogy between the description of heaven given in this chapter, as well as in Ezekiel, and the tabernacle service, which was arranged according to the pattern showed to Moses in the mount; and it would certainly seem to imply (as has been suggested by an eminent writer) that the employment of separate spirits is that of continual worship, and that this holy and blessed service is very closely adumbrated by that of the Jewish Tabernacle. (See Newton's Diss. on Chap. IV., and Isaac Taylor's Saturday Evening

Revelation 4:1 - After this I looked, and, behold, a door opened in heaven: and the first voice which heard was as it were of a trumpet talking th me; which said, Come up hither, and I 'will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

'A door opened in heaven.' For similar expressions, see 'Matt. 3:16; Acts 7:56; and Acts 10:11 our Lord, Stephen, and Cornelius.

'The first voice.' The same voice mentioned in Rev. 1:10; the voice of the Redeemer.

'Come up hither.' Compare Paul's experience (2 Cor. 12:1, 2), and Ezekiel's elevations (Eze. 3:12, and Eze. 8:3).

Revelation 4:2 - And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

'In the spirit.' Rapt -- entranced. (Compare 2 Cor. 12:1, 2.)

'One sat on the throne.' (Compare Rev. 20:11.) An incommunicable name.

Revelation 4:3 - 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.

'There was a rainbow.' See Ezekiel's description,--' As the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain' (Ezek. 1:28). In each case the bow surrounds the throne of God, the emblem of covenanted peace and mercy.

'In sight like unto an emerald.' Green, but glorious to behold.

Revelation 4:4 - 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.

'Upon seats (or rather thrones) four and twenty elders.' These elders, who probably represent the family of the redeemed, are seen afterwards laying at Christ's feet the prayers and praises of the saints (see Rev. 5:8); this they cannot do as mediators; it must therefore be as representatives. The number, twenty-four, may refer to the completeness of the whole Church, both Jewish and Christian; the one represented by the twelve tribes, the other by the twelve apostles. (See Rev. 21:12-14.) They are on thrones -- magnificent or regal seats -- because they are kings and priests to God, and will reign for ever and ever. (See Rev. 1:6, and Rev. 3:21.) Mr. Stuart observes, "The emphatic meaning of the whole verse should be noted. Angels stand in the attitude of ministering servants (see Rev. 8:2); the redeemed sit on thrones in the presence of God. For a like sentiment compare 1 Cor. 6:2, 3, where the saints are said to 'judge the world,' to 'judge angels.'"

Revelation 4:5 - 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.

'Thunderings and voices.' Compare Ezek. 1:24, where 'the voices are described as 'the voice of speech, the noise of an host.' Also Exod. 19:16-20.

'Seven lamps of fire.' Compare Eze. 1:13; and see generally note on Rev. 1:4.

Revelation 4:6 - 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.

'A sea of glass.' So called in allusion to the large vessel in the temple, out of which the priests drew water to wash themselves, as well as the sacrifices and the instruments of which they made use. (See 1 Kings 7:23.) This vessel, which held about 16,000 gallons of water, was called the 'sea.' See also Exod. 30:18-21; and 2 Chron. 4:6. The 'molten sea' stood in front of the sanctuary, and so before the throne or mercy-seat.

Revelation 4:7 - 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.

Revelation 4:8 - 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.

Revelation 4:9 - And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

Revelation 4:10 - 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,

Revelation 4:11 - Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

'The four beasts.' This translation is peculiarly unfortunate: it should be, 'four living creatures.' A careful perusal of the first chapter of Ezekiel and the sixth chapter of Isaiah, will assist the reader in forming just conceptions of these living creatures. Mr. Stuart regards them as symbolic representations of the Divine attributes, -- of his all-pervading power, providence, and government. The throne he considers represented as resting upon them; they are its living bearers, its animated basis. At the same time he is anxious to impress his conviction, that neither these nor the similar living creatures in Ezekiel called cherubim, are in any sense emblematic of veritable existences, like men or angels, but mere symbols. " This admitted," he says, " we can account for the fact that cherubim were carved in the most holy place (Exod. 37:6-9; Exod. 25:17-20; 1 Kings 6:23-29; 2 Chron. 5:7, 8); also on the walls of the temple (1 Kings 6:29; 2 Chron. 3:10-13). These were not surely images of actual beings; for among a people always inclined to idolatry, they might thus have easily become objects of worship; but they were symbolical representations designed to teach the ubiquity, omniscience, omnipotence, and ever watchful providence of the Godhead.

As supporters of the throne on which the Majesty of heaven is seated, they appear in Psalm 18:10, where in the expression, 'He rode upon a cherub,' the word cherub is used generically; a method of employing language too frequent to need any vindication. Mark the congruity of imagery here. John gives them six wings for flight; Ezekiel represents them as moving like a flash of lightning; the Psalmist says, 'He rode upon a cherub and did fly, yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind,' i.e. with great velocity. All is in perfect congruity when viewed in this light."

§ 12. *The Worship of the Lamb. (Rev. 5:1-14.)*

Recovered from the overwhelming impression which glory so transcendent was calculated to produce, John observes, in the right hand of Him who sat upon the throne, a roll written within and without, and sealed with seven seals.

A strong angel now makes proclamation with a loud voice, enquiring, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof?' but no man either in earth or heaven, or throughout all worlds, is found worthy. As the prophet weeps because no man is found worthy even to look upon it, an elder approaches and bids him weep not, for 'behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.'

Again the prophet turns his eye towards the throne, and behold, in the midst of the throne (in the bosom of the Father), and in the midst of those who surround it, a Lamb, as if newly slain, having seven horns (emblem of universal power), and seven eyes (emblem of infinite knowledge). It is the atoning Lamb of God, invested with the omniscience and omnipotence of Jehovah; the Holy Spirit without measure being his rightful inheritance. He alone, by virtue of his sacrifice, is worthy.

Jesus takes the book out of the right hand of the Father, and as he takes it, the living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, fall down before him, having every one of them harps, and golden bowls full of odors, which are the prayers of saints; and as they sing the 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; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth;' ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels join in the song, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.' And every creature, whether in heaven or on the earth, all creation swells the chorus with 'Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.' And the four living creatures cry, 'Amen. And the four and twenty elders fall down and worship him that liveth for ever and ever.'

Revelation 5:1 - 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.

This 'book' is a manuscript pictorial roll. (See Luke 4:17.) In Ezekiel 2:9, 10, a similar volume is called 'a roll of a book;' that was written 'within and without,' this 'within and on the backside;' both phrases denoting the copiousness of the matter. Its being 'sealed' denotes that it contains that which is unrevealed. Its being held 'in the right hand' of God, indicates its supreme importance. The 'seven seals' intimate a sevenfold division of the contents, as the breaking of each seal sets at liberty a sheet which is then displayed,

Revelation 5:2 - And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

'A strong angel.' "May not this epithet (otherwise unnecessary) suggest that it was the individual who in other times talked with Daniel, and bade him seal up the book of his prophecy; him whose name was Gabriel, or 'my strength' is God." (Dan. 9:21, &c.)--Elliott.

'Who is worthy?' i.e. Who is of sufficient rank or dignity to open and proclaim the Divine counsels!

Revelation 5:3 - And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

'Neither under the earth.' "Heaven, earth, and the underworld, by the common usus loquendi of the Hebrews, denote the universe; no being in the universe could be found who was able to open the book, and 'look upon' (survey or inspect) its contents, i.e. no created being." (Stuart.)

Revelation 5:4 - And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

'I wept much.' A touching representation of the orphanhood of the Church apart from Christ. It has neither friend nor helper.

Revelation 5:5 - And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

'One of the elders.' One of the twenty--four, probably speaking as a representative of the rest. (See note to Rev. 4:4.)

'The Lion of the tribe of Judah.' See Gen. 49:9, 10, 'the Root of David,' i.e. the root-shoot from the trunk of Jesse (Isa. 11:1), yet also the root of David as before him.

'Hath prevailed.' Signifying that Messiah had acquired the power by a victorious struggle. (Compare a similar sentiment in Phil. 2:6-10.)

Revelation 5:6 - 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.

'In the midst.' Stuart considers the idea to be, in the middle space, between the throne of God, represented as borne up by cherubim (the living creatures), and surrounded by the redeemed Church (the twenty-four elders), who sit in a semi-circular form around it.

'A Lamb.' (See John 1:29.) One who was at once 'perfect innocence and a propitiatory sacrifice.' The term is applied to the Savior about thirty times in the Apocalypse.

'Seven horns.' Emblem of universal power. And 'seven eyes,' emblem of universal knowledge. It is the atoning Lamb of God invested with all power, and all insight; prepared to build up or cast down; holding the angels at his disposal, and the churches in his right hand. He alone, by virtue of his sacrifice, is worthy to declare the counsels of God. We have no reason to suppose that John saw before him the figure of a lamb. He merely uses the phrase as descriptive of the Savior, who was known, even while on earth, as 'the Lamb of God.' Hence probably the change of phraseology, in the 7th verse, (Rev. 5:7), by our translators: 'He (not it, as in Rev. 5:6) came and took the book.' So in Rev. 14: 'The Lamb stood, and with him (not it) an hundred and forty-four thousand.'

Mr. Bonar* seems to think that as Christ is presented to us here as the Lamb, he is not to be regarded so much in the character of Revealer as in that of Redeemer. This view he considers to be "confirmed by the language of the 9th and 10th verses, where the Church in heaven is represented as rejoicing in the prospect of the Lamb's taking the book and opening it, as an action preparatory to, and an earnest of, the redemption of the inheritance of the earth." Then again he says: "We find that the 'sealed book' was, among the Jews, the sign of an inheritance, mortgaged by its owner, but not alienated. Christ appearing here, therefore, with the seven--sealed book, must be regarded in the character of Redeemer of the inheritance, according to the ordinance of the goel or redeemer, as described in Leviticus (Lev. 25), and exemplified in the Book of Ruth and in Jeremiah (Jer. 31.) The action of the seals is the action of Christ as Redeemer, appearing with the title deeds of the inheritance to dispossess the usurper, and reclaim the inheritance for those to whom he stands in the relation of Redeemer. The seals are, as it were, the bonds upon the estate." The breaking of these, one by one, by Christ, reveals the various forms of opposition which are to intervene before he "takes to himself his great power and reigns." Mr. Burgh, in his Exposition of the Book of Revelation, had previously taken the same view.

* Prophetical Landmarks, p. 216.

Revelation 5:7 - And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

Revelation 5:8 - 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 odours, which are the prayers of saints.

'The four beasts.' The four symbolic figures. (See note to Rev. 4:6-11.) The act of adoration and praise addressed to Christ is commenced by the cherubim, the symbolic representatives of the Divine perfections. The worship of Christ originates in the Divine Will; it issues first from the throne of God, is caught up by the redeemed, and spreads through the universe. Nor let it be thought strange that the praise of God, should spring first of all from the throne of God. God is the only being in whom self--complacency is virtue. Loving excellence supremely, he can love nothing but his own image.

'The prayers of saints.' i.e. Of the Church on earth. The elders not being mediators but representatives, there is no impropriety in supposing them to hold 'golden vials' (properly incense bowls), rich in the sweet odors of devout supplication. (See Psa. 141:2. 'Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.')

Revelation 5:9 - 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;

Revelation 5:10 - And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

'A new song.' One called for by some new occasion of thanksgiving. (See Psa. 40:3; Isa. 42:10; and many other passages.) This new song is, the worthiness of Christ to reveal to the Church the Divine counsels, because ' he was slain' (the true paschal Lamb; comp. Exod. 12 and 1 Cor. 5:7; and because he had 'redeemed' his people (see 1 Pet. 1:18, 19, and other Scriptures) by his ' blood' and for God. " Not then simply because he had instructed them, or been the light of the world; not merely because he had set them a perfect example, and urged them to walk in his steps; not merely because he had sealed the truths which he had taught by a martyr's death; all these might indeed belong to the circle of action in which, as the Redeemer of our race, the Lord Jesus would move. They did belong to it; and they are delightful truths and of deep interest. But there is a truth which ranks still higher; and this is, that Christ was our Passover sacrifice, our propitiatory offering, and thus 'the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.' It is not merely the light which he diffused, nor his example, nor his martyrdom as a faithful witness; but **ors BLOOD**, which redeems our lost race from their bondage and their perishing state, and makes them free and 'alive to God.' Let the reader carefully compare with this sentiment here, Matt. 26:28; Matt. 20:28; John 10:11; Eph. 1:7; Acts 20:28; Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:11-14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Gal. 3:13; 1 John 1:7; Isa. 53:5-10; which, however, are only a few of the numerous texts of the like import. If there be any such thing as a central point to Christianity, considered as a religion distinct from all others, it seems to be the doctrine here brought to view." (Stuart.)

'We shall reign on the earth.' (See Rev. 20:4-6; also Rev. 2:26, 27; 1 Cor. 6:2, 3; Matt. 19:28.) i.e. With Christ, partakers in his triumph, sharers in his glory, happy agents of his will. A difficulty arises as to how the four mysterious creatures (cherubim) could join in this song, and say, 'thou hast redeemed us out of every tribe.' Mr. Stuart suggests a very satisfactory solution of this difficulty, by supposing the song to be responsive; the voices of the cherubim from the throne commencing with, 'Thou art worthy,' and the elders responding, 'for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us.'

Revelation 5:11 - 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;

Revelation 5:12 - 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.

Revelation 5:13 - 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 honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

Revelation 5:14 - And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

Let us try for a moment to realize the sublime and awful scene thus depicted.

A magnificent throne appears in heaven. Cherubim, symbolically representing the all pervading power, providence, and rule of God, are its living bearers -- its animated basis. A rainbow, in sight like unto an emerald (emblem of covenanted peace and mercy) encompasses it round about. He who sits thereon is veiled by radiance too dazzling for human eye. Before him are the angels of his immediate presence -- pure intelligences -- lamps of fire. Immediately encircling the throne, and seated as kings, are the representatives of the redeemed. All around, in countless numbers, stand the angelic host.

In middle space, and communing with the Father, is the Lamb of God. As he takes the book, all fall down and worship. The bearers of the throne commence the anthem, 'Thou art worthy.' The elders respond in praises to redeeming love. Music blends with divinest rapture. The sweet incense of prayer and supplication fills the place. Innumerable hosts, in wider and wider circles, echo the song. Angels, in earth, and sea, and under-world, on their missions of love and duty, re-echo it back to the throne of God. The whole universe is moved; and heaven, and earth, and sea, and sky, all join in chorus, worshipping God and singing, 'Worthy is the, Lamb that was slain. Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever.'

After such an ascription to the Redeemer, the highest adoration which language can express, who can believe that John regarded Christ as a creature like himself?

§ 13. The First Seal broken. (Rev. 6:1, 2.)

Revelation 6:1 - 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.

'Come and see.' The permission given to all heaven to draw near and see the things that should be hereafter, issues from the throne. Secret things belong unto God. It is only by permission that creatures may look into them.

Revelation 6:2 - 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.

'I saw.' i.e. Depicted on that portion of the scroll which was set at liberty by the breaking of the first seal.

'A white horse.' The horse is the emblem of military power (Exod. 15:21; Jer. 51:21; Eze. 23:6; Hag. 2:22; Zech. 9:10); here it is obviously the Roman power that is signified. 'White' was from early times the chosen color for horses when used by victors in triumphal processions.

'He that sat on him.' No person is intended; the rider here, as elsewhere, is simply a personification of the prevailing influence affecting the period represented.

'A bow.' The bow and crown are scriptural emblems corresponding most minutely with an almost identical passage in the Psalms, where Christ is personified in his kingly character, with arrows, mounted on horseback, and going forth to conquest (Psa. 45:3-6). The inference seems inevitable, that as the white horse is the emblem of the Roman power in a state of peaceful prosperity, so the crowned and armed rider going forth to peaceful conquest is the emblem of the Gospel -- the Christian religion winning its triumphant way over the Roman world.

'A crown was given unto him.' The crown is given (from above) to indicate the ultimate triumph of Christianity through Divine power.

INFERENCE. -- The first era in the history of Christianity, immediately following the period of the apostolic vision, will be peaceful and prosperous; it will gain victory after victory.

The characteristic condition of the Roman Empire -- the field over which it has to travel -- will, during the same period, be singularly felicitous; a golden age, in the main unstained by blood.

HARMONY OF HISTORY. -- The victories of the Christian Faith during the period we regard as the first Apocalyptic era, viz., from about A.D. 96 to A.D. 180, or from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus -- the era of the Apostolic Fathers -- are unquestionable, and need not be

recited. " By the promulgation of Christianity, during the first hundred years from the death of the Apostles," says Mr. Isaac Taylor, "a visible and hopeful impression was made upon the sentiments and practices of perhaps a half of the community in all countries around the Mediterranean." (Ancient Christianity, vol. ii., p. 34.)

The state of the Roman empire during the same period is thus described by Gibbon. He says, "If a man were called upon to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman empire was governed by absolute power under the guidance of virtue and wisdom." (vi. ciii.) He represents it elsewhere as a "golden age" of prosperity, scarcely to be paralleled in history, a period " unstained with civil blood and undisturbed by revolution." *

* The value of Gibbon's history, as illustrative of Apocalyptic predictions, will not be questioned by any intelligent student. But it may be as well to observe that far too much importance has been attached by many commentators to the fact, that this 'infidel historian' frequently adopts forms of expression which are singularly in accordance with those of Scripture. A very simple and natural explanation of this peculiarity may be found in the extent to which the historian was indebted to the fathers. "Were it possible," says Mr. Taylor, "to draw off from that seductive work the entire materials derived by the indefatigable author from the ecclesiastical compartment of his library, it is no small proportion of the splendor, the accuracy, the correct drawing, the vivid coloring which are its charm and praise, that would be found wanting. Well would it have been if some of the professed champions and historians of Christianity had been as thoroughly conversant with the remains of Christian antiquity as was its most dangerous assailant."

§ 14. *The Second Seal broken. (Rev. 6:3, 4.)*

Revelation 6:3 - And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

'Come and see.' The fact that at the breaking of each seal special permission issues from the throne to contemplate that which is revealed, seems to indicate that each seal represents a new era or order of things; the old has passed away -- the new is commencing.

Revelation 6:4 - 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.

'Another horse.' The Roman empire, under a new aspect; for it is a rule never to be departed from, that in interpreting prophecy, the same symbol must have the same significancy.

'Red.' Symbol of war and bloodshed (Psa. 68:23; Psa. 75:8; Nahum 2:3).

'Him that sat thereon.' The rider is here again merely a personification, but now of pagan cruelty and passion.

'Power was given unto him.' i.e. Permissive power 'to take peace from the earth.'

'A great sword.' Literally, a large slaughter knife. (Stuart.)

INFERENCE INTERPRETATION. -- The second era in the history of Christianity will be one of persecution and bloodshed. The course of the Gospel will be in accordance with Christ's word, -- 'I came not to send peace (on the earth), but a sword.' (Matt. 10:34.)

The characteristic condition of the Roman Empire during the same period will be one of civil war and carnage. It will be the period of the power of the sword.

HARMONY OF HISTORY. -- The condition of the Christian Church during the period we regard as the second Apocalyptic era, viz., from about A.D. 180 to A.D. 310, or from Commodus to Constantine -- the era of the struggle between Christianity and Paganism -- is familiar to every reader of ecclesiastical history. During this period the Christian places of worship were demolished, the Scriptures burnt, and Christians generally put out of the protection of the law. Then followed, under Diocletian, edicts imposing penalties, of imprisonment, tortures, and death. The fury of the populace seconded the intentions of the government. Throughout the extent of the Roman world, Christian blood flowed in torrents. "Diocletian, Maximian, and Galerius united to raise pillars commemorative of their success; on which inscriptions are still extant, recording their vain boast of having exterminated Christianity. For Church service, the Christians now met in caves and

'catacombs. Their only visible public witnessing for Christ was by martyrdom." (Elliott, vol. i., 186.)

The state of the Roman empire during the same period is thus described by an eminent historian "With the death of Commodus commenced the most calamitous of periods. It lasted ninety-two years, viz., from A.D. 192 to A.D. 294. During that time thirty-two emperors, and twenty-seven pretenders to the empire, alternately hurled each other from the throne by incessant civil warfare. Ninety-two years of nearly incessant civil warfare, taught the world on what a frail foundation the virtue of the Antonines had reared the felicity of the empire." (Sismondi, i. 36.) Referring to a portion of this period, Mr. Elliott (although adopting a very different scheme of interpretation) observes: "Can the history of any empire on record present, in any similarly extended period, such an exemplification of the Apocalyptic prophecy; peace being taken from the empire, and men killing one another?" (vol. i., 143.)

§ 15. *The Third Seal broken. (Rev. 6:5, 6.)*

Revelation 6:5 - 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.

'A black horse.' The horse is the Roman empire, as before. It is now presented as black, the symbol of mourning, affliction, and famine. (Job 30:30; Jer. 8:21; Lam. 5:10.)

'He that sat on him.' Again a personification; and now it is of Christianity politically in the ascendant, or Christian emperors generally.

'A pair of balances in his hand.' Emblem of equity (Prov. 11:1; and Job 31:6). Mr. Elliott has clearly shewn that Ζυγόν is rightly translated 'balances,' and consequently all conclusions built on the supposition that the word should have been translated 'yoke' fall to the ground.

Revelation 6:6 - 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.

'A voice in the midst of the four beasts.' i.e. A voice from Him who sat upon the throne sustained by cherubim. It is not a voice from the mysterious creatures, but in their 'midst,' signifying that it is from the throne itself, and is therefore authoritative. It is a command addressed to the Christian emperors as to parties professing allegiance to the true God.

'A measure of wheat.' i.e. A choenix, but whether Attic or otherwise is uncertain. The Attic choenix was three, or, as some think, four half-pints. Other choenices held double the quantity.

'For a penny.' i.e. A denarius. "The intrinsic value of the denarius varied at different periods. From the commencement of the third century it began to be adulterated." (Elliott, vol. i. 136.)

'See thou hurt not.' i.e. See thou wrong not, art not unjust in relation to the oil and the wine.

INFERENCE INTERPRETATION. -- During the third era, Christianity will be politically in the ascendant, and as such is bound to govern equitably, to alleviate distress, to be just and merciful in its exaction of taxes.

The state of the Church (notwithstanding its exaltation) will be one of gloom and decay, while the characteristic condition of the empire, with which it is now united, will be that of affliction and famine.

HARMONY OF HISTORY. -- The condition of the Church during the period we regard as the third Apocalyptic era, viz., from about A.D. 310 to A.D. 396, or from the accession of Constantine to the invasion of Alaric -- the era of the political ascendancy of the Church -- was one of rapid decay and growing impurity. It was chiefly distinguished by priestly frauds, and by the intestine quarrels of ambitious prelates. Darkness was now rapidly gathering upon it; yet "the public measures of Constantine, and of the more enlightened and upright of his successors, are liable to little blame, and may even challenge much praise."

Mr. Isaac Taylor designates the religion of this period, as "a religion of sacraments." Neander speaks of it as the time when "the idea of a magical effect and charm attaching to the rite (of baptism) was generally entertained." Open permission was given in some instances to the ignorant multitude, to indulge in all the sensualities of paganism in celebrating the memory of the martyrs; to do everything, in short, at those festivals which the pagans were accustomed to do in their temples. (Mosheim) It was during this period, in fact, that heathenism under Christian names revived in the empire; for, to use the words of Coleridge, "The pastors of the Church had gradually changed the light and life of the Gospel into the very superstitions they were commissioned to disperse; and thus paganized Christianity in order to christen paganism." Who can wonder at the terrific judgments that followed!

The state of the empire, during the same period, is marked by features strictly corresponding with the language issuing from the throne. To understand that language thoroughly, it will, however, be necessary to bear in mind that, from an early period, laws existed at Rome by which the provinces were bound to supply the government with corn, oil, and wine, at prices fixed by authority. The heaviest contributions were in this way continually exacted from the provinces for the use of the court, the army, and the capital. The injunction given to the ascendant power is, to be just in collecting this 'corn,' by paying a fair price for it; and to avoid all oppression in relation to the contributions of 'oil and wine.' So great was the tendency to abuse in this department, that, from an early period, laws (subsequently extended by the emperors) were enacted to prevent extortion. They were styled laws de repetundis, or against injustice on the part of provincial governors; and in their general character, especially where a price is named, at which the governor was to rate and purchase, they strikingly correspond with the monition in the text. Mr. Elliott (the first commentator who has thrown light on the interpretation of this seal) quotes from the Cassian frumentarian law the phrase, 'a modius of wheat for a denarius,' as being remarkably similar to the words in the Apocalypse.

Now let us connect this simple and obvious interpretation of the language with the time of the third seal, viz., the reign of Constantine and his successors, and we shall see at once how strikingly they apply, and how truly the color of the horse, black (the symbol of mourning, distress, and impoverishment in the body politic) depicts the actual state of the empire at that period. Gibbon, after describing the ruinous effects of extortion and oppression in collecting corn, oil, and wine from the provinces, -- a distress which had become so great, as not only to occasion the desolation of provinces once the most fertile in the empire, but absolutely to drive parents to infanticide, -- speaks of a humane law of Constantine, made early in his reign with a view to remedy the evil. He observes, "The horrid practice of exposing and murdering their new-born infants was become every day more frequent in the provinces, and especially in Italy. It was the effect of distress; and the distress was principally occasioned by the intolerable burthen of taxes, and by the vexatious as well as cruel persecutions of the officers of the revenue against their insolvent debtors. The less opulent,

or less industrious, instead of rejoicing in an increase of family, deemed it an act of paternal tenderness to release their children from the miseries of a life which they were themselves unable to support. The humanity of Constantine, moved perhaps by some recent and extraordinary instances of despair, engaged him to address an edict to all the cities of Italy, and afterwards of Africa, directing instant relief to those parents who should produce before the magistrates the children whom their own poverty would not allow them to educate." (v. ii., 250.)

As regards the territorial desolation resulting, he states (v. iii., 87) that, in sixty years after the death of Constantine, and before a barbarian had been seen in Italy, an exemption from taxes was granted for 330,000 acres in the fertile province of Campania, that is, for an eighth part of the whole province, as being, by actual survey, ascertained to be desert; and he ascribes it to the long impoverishing effect of fiscal oppressions. (Elliott, vol. i., 173.)

§ 16. *The Fourth Seal broken. (Rev. 6:7, 8.)*

Revelation 6:7 - And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

Revelation 6:8 - 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 into 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.

A pale horse.' Again the Roman empire is presented, but now 'pale,' or rather livid, i.e. ghastly, the emblem of dissolution and corruption.

'His name that sat on him ' -- was Death. Here the rider is plainly stated to be a personification, thus confirming the interpretation adopted in reference to the preceding horsemen.

'And Hell followed.' i.e. Hades, or the invisible world (see Isa. 5:14), where the term hell is used by the translators to signify Hades.

'The fourth part of the earth.' Probably put for a fourth part of the inhabitants of the earth who were to die by the sword, by hunger, and by wild beasts, i.e. by war, famine, and pestilence, wild beasts following in the train of desolation, devouring the helpless sick and wounded, and feeding on dead carcasses.

INFERENCE INTERPRETATION -- The fourth era will be one of corruption, of mortal sickness both in Church and State.

The condition of the empire will, during this period, be one of utter ruin and dissolution. Destruction will waste at noon-day.' The grave will 'enlarge herself, and open her mouth without measure.'

HARMONY OF HISTORY -- The actual state of the Church during the period we regard as the fourth Apocalyptic era, viz., from about A.D. 396 to A.D. 1071, or from the first invasion of Alaric to the defeat of the Emperor Romanus Diogenes -- the era of mortality -- was literally one of darkness, decay, and death. "The Christian Church, both in the east and in the west, now seemed abandoned to spiritual slavery and moral debasement." During a long dream of superstition, says Gibbon, the Virgin and the saints, their visions and miracles, their relics and images, were preached by the monks, and worshipped by the people. Towards the close of this period, the vices and atrocities of the Pontiffs defy description. "The throne, which affected to exalt itself above the majesty of kings, was sunk in the filth of vice," and "Rome was one vast scene of debauchery."

The state of the empire during this time was literally that of dissolution. Towards the end of the fourth century the Goths poured in like a flood. Robertson says, " If a man were called upon to fix a period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was the most calamitous and afflicted, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Theodosius the Great, to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy, a period of 176 years, viz., from A.D. 395 to A.D. 571. The cotemporary authors who beheld that scene of desolation, labor, and are at a loss for expressions, to describe the horror of it. 'The scourge of God,' the 'destroyer of nations,' are the dreadful epithets by which they distinguish the most noted of the barbarous leaders; and they compare the ruin which they brought on the world to the havoc occasioned by earthquakes, conflagrations, or deluges; the most formidable and fatal calamities which the imagination of man can conceive." (Hist. Charles V.)

From A.D. 542 to A.D. 594, a period of fifty--two years, plague and pestilence infected the greater part of the empire. Many cities were depopulated and laid waste -- made desert. In various country districts the harvest and vintage withered on the ground. At Constantinople 5,000, and at length 10,000, died daily. At Rome, in a solemn procession for imploring the mercy of heaven, eighty persons dropped down dead within an hour from the infection of the pestilence. Procopius relates that by the triple scourge of war, pestilence, and famine, a hundred millions of the human race were exterminated in the reign of Justinian. (Elliott.) In A.D. 610, Syria was desolated by Chosroes. In 614, ninety thousand Christians were massacred by him in Jerusalem. Add to these calamities the ravages of the Saracens, and we cease to wonder that by the tenth century the impression had become all but universal that the end of the world was at hand; that when an eclipse of the sun or moon happened to be visible, the cities were deserted, and their miserable inhabitants fled for refuge to caverns and rocks; that temples, palaces, and noble edifices, both public and private, were suffered to decay or literally pulled down, because the final dissolution of all things was deemed to be so close at hand.

§ 17. *The Fifth Seal broken. (Rev. 6:9-11.)*

Revelation 6:9 - 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.

'Under the altar.' i.e. At the foot, or lower part of the altar, where victims were laid whose blood had been shed. Here are the souls (separate spirits, Psa. 16:10) of martyrs slain for the word of God, i.e. on account of God's holy word, for the doctrines which it contains, and 'for the testimony' which they maintained to its supreme authority.

Revelation 6:10 - 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?

'These souls' cried, like the blood of Abel (Gen. 4:10), to God to vindicate their cause, to 'judge and avenge' their blood 'on them that dwell on the earth;' implying that their persecutors reign triumphantly. The prayer may be thus paraphrased -- 'Now that the mystery of iniquity is fully ripe, how long dost thou delay?'

Revelation 6:11 - 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.

'White robes.' Denoting honor and acceptance (compare Gen. 41:42; Gen. 45:22; Esther 6:8, 9; Isa. 3:7; Zech. 3:5) are given to 'every one of them;' emphatically, to each individually, and they are told to 'rest' until others, in like circumstances with themselves--their fellow--servants and brethren in Christ--should be killed, and thus the cup of iniquity be quite full. (See Matt. 23:32.) The implication is, that before the promised vengeance is inflicted, a fresh accession of martyrs will come in.

INFERENCE INTERPRETATION. -- The grand characteristic of the fifth era will be the persecution unto death of faithful brethren. They are to die for the word of God, and for a 'testimony' to truth.

This period of relentless persecution will take place after the Roman Empire, as symbolized by the horse, has passed away.

HARMONY OF HISTORY. -- The condition of the Church of Christ during the period we regard as the fifth Apocalyptic period, viz., from about A.D. 1071 to A.D. 1517, or from about the time of the first crusade to the Reformation, was that of continual persecution from the Papal Antichrist. It was literally the era of martyrs. At this period the Church suffered almost annihilating persecution

at the hands of Popery. In the thirteenth century, above a million of the Albigenses perished in France alone. The number destroyed by the Inquisition, which was first established in the twelfth century, and which continued to persecute with little, if any, intermission, is beyond calculation. About A.D. 1450, the order of the Jesuits was established. The number that perished through their demoniacal zeal is incalculable.

§ 18. *The Sixth Seal broken. (Rev. 6:12-17.)*

Revelation 6:12 - And I beheld when he had opened the a sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

'A great earthquake.' Symbol of convulsions in the earth, civil and ecclesiastical (see Hag. 2:21), where the shaking of the earth is associated with the overthrow of kingdoms by civil commotion, --'every one by the sword of his brother.'

'The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.' The appearance of the firmament during a violent hurricane, emblematical of raging passion, terror, and calamity. In Isa. 13:10, the same imagery is used to indicate the approaching desolation of Babylon. In Ezek. 32:7, it is associated with the fall of Egypt. Here it is evident, from the reference to the 'mighty wind' in the 7th verse, and again to the 'winds' being repressed or held in, in the 1st verse of the following chapter, that the imagery is intended to depict a vehement tempest, -- a tornado sweeping all before it.

Revelation 6:13 - 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.

'The stars of heaven fell unto the earth.' Emblem of the fall of civil and ecclesiastical rulers. See Dan. 8:10, where 'the horn' is said to have cast down to the ground 'some of the host of heaven and the stars,' -- princes or rulers being plainly intended.

Revelation 6:14 - And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

'The heaven departed as a scroll.' 'Heaven,' as we have already seen, is the emblem of a civil and ecclesiastical firmament, ruling powers. (Isa. 61:16.) Its 'departing,' or being rolled up 'as a scroll,' signifies its disappearing from view.

Isa. 34:4, the very words of the 13th and 14th verses (Isa. 34:13-14) are applied to the downfall of Idumea.

INFERENCE INTERPRETATION. -- Believing that this seal, like all the preceding, represents a lengthened period, not a transaction -- an era, and not an event. * -- we infer that, the character of the sixth era will be that of universal change; the nations will be shaken; the fountains of the great deep will be broken up; civil and ecclesiastical powers will alike pass away. Everything will be overthrown as by a hurricane or tornado.

* Forgetfulness of this obvious fact has led some commentators to regard this seal as depicting the fall of paganism in the Roman empire, and others to consider it as symbolizing the last judgment.

HARMONY OF HISTORY. -- The state of Christendom during the period we regard as the sixth Apocalyptic era or period, viz., from the Reformation, A.D. 1517, to a time yet future, has been, so far as the past is concerned, a period of incessant and progressive change. Old things have been continually passing away. In the early portion of this period, the Reformation, the invention of Printing, and the discovery of America, may be regarded as the great precursors of further change. In later days, the French Revolution, the development of democratic power, the rapid spread of intelligence, the decrepitude of existing superstitions, the progress of socialism and of infidelity among the masses, -- all point to a storm more terrific than any the world has yet seen.

Revelation 6:15 - 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;

Revelation 6:16 - 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

Revelation 6:17 - For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

(Here we enter the land of shadows, -- the region of unfulfilled prophecy)

So far as we have already proceeded, interpretation is not difficult; for history and prophecy plainly coincide. But how is that portion of the text now under consideration to be explained, which depicts universal dismay, occasioned apparently by a spectacle, so terrible that all classes, from the monarch to the slave, hide in dens and caves of the earth to avoid the sight; a conviction so intense, that the wrath of the Lamb is about to be poured out, that the very rocks and mountains are, by a bold image, personified, and entreated by the terror stricken criminals to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne!

The general imagery is not hard to interpret. Judea' abounded in rocks and caverns, natural and artificial, which in times of danger were used as places of retreat (see Judges 6:2; 1 Sam. 13:6; 1 Sam. 24:8; Jer. 13:4); and the Israelites, in the prospect of coming judgments, are more than once represented as crying out to the rocks and to the mountains, ' Fall on us, and cover us,' (see Hosea 10:8; Isa. 2:19; Luke 23:30), extreme terror being thus depicted by the prophets. In the present instance the difficulty arises from the intimation that all the inhabitants of the earth, rich and poor, bond and free together, are partakers in the anxiety and alarm; and that all alike recognize in the object of their dread, not merely the Divine hand, but 'the wrath of the Lamb,' 'the great day of his wrath;' and that all alike seek to hide 'from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne.' The idea of human agency would appear to be here almost excluded. We seem all but shut up to the impression that some great and awful sight alarms mankind.

If, however, no visible manifestation be intended, we must of necessity rest in the supposition that there is a universal consciousness among men of having denied and despised the Savior; a conviction that rejected grace has become consuming fire. Whatever be the view taken, whether we suppose an outward object of dread, or merely an inward conviction of guilt, it seems equally

impossible to regard the language as merely emblematical of political or social change, however extensive or important. In either case it indicates that this era of the world's history will terminate with some signal manifestation from heaven. (See Appendix D, on the sign of the Son of Man in heaven.)

§ 19. *The security of God's elect. (Rev. 7:1-8.)*

Revelation 7:1 - 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.

'After these things.' i.e. After the representation of the earthquake and tornado, came other sights of wonder.

'Four angels standing on the four corners of the earth.' "The four corners of the earth is an expression which has its base in the Hebrew view of things, viz., that the earth was an extended plain." (Stuart.) This colloquial form of speech is common in Scripture.

'Holding the four winds.' Daniel 7:2 speaks of the 'four winds of the heaven striving on the great sea.' The phrase means all the winds (see Ezek. 37:9; Matt. 24:31), and stands emblematically for the destructive power which is forcibly restrained by the four angels. The intense quietude thus produced is indicated by not a wave being rippled or a leaf shaken. The general idea conveyed would seem to be, that after the frightful convulsions, ending with, or ended by, some signal manifestation from heaven, there will be a period of universal peace, -- a fearful calm.

Revelation 7:2 - 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.

'Another angel.' Probably one higher in dignity than the four angels, since he directs their movements.

'Ascending from the east.' Mr. Stuart translates it, 'from the rising of the sun,' the quarter from which the sun, moon, and stars apparently proceed, to indicate that the angel comes direct from God, in splendor like the rising sun.

'Having the seal.' Or stamp, on which is supposed to be engraved the name of Jehovah. 'I will write upon him the name of my God' (Rev. 3:12).

Revelation 7:3 - Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees.' In the prophetic language of this book, 'the earth' symbolizes Christendom, and 'the sea,' heathendom (see Rev. 13), where we have the beast out of the sea, and the beast out of the earth. See also Romans 9:28, where Paul puts the term 'earth' for Judea; and Jeremiah 51:42, where 'the sea' stands for heathen nations. In like manner 'trees' symbolize men (Isa. 10:19; Matt. 3:10), sometimes men of rank or power, as such (Isa. 2:13; Zech. 11:2); 'earth, sea, and trees,' considered as a combined emblem, may therefore be regarded as

representing the world and its inhabitants generally. The Church, on the contrary, as holding a peculiar relationship to God, its members being his servants, is distinguished from the mass of which it would otherwise form a part. The injury to be inflicted on mankind by the four angels appears to be, the letting loose again of those elements of discord and disorganization which had been for a season restrained.

'Sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.' In the vision of Ezekiel 9:4, 5, an angel is commissioned to go through the city of Jerusalem, and to 'set a mark upon the foreheads' of the men that sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in 'the midst thereof;' indicating the 'remnant' that should be saved from the all but universal destruction which came upon the city by the Chaldeans (see 2 Chron. 36:17). The same idea seems involved here. Judgment is at the door, but it shall not be with the righteous as with the wicked. Amid prevailing degeneracy there will still be 'a remnant according to the election of grace,' and they shall be preserved. In the message to Philadelphia (and the coincidence is striking, if it is to be regarded as indicating the Church of this period) a similar distinction is made between a nominal Christians, and those who, having 'kept the word,' should be kept from the hour of temptation, and upon whom our Lord promises that he will inscribe his name. To the ordinary calamities of earth, whether occasioned by the violence of the elements, or by the bad passions of men, Christians are exposed in common with others; but all Scripture teaches that they are exempt from the direct and special judgments of God on wicked cities or countries. (See Gen. 6:17, 18; Gen. 19:16; Exod. 12:27; and Matt. 24:15, 16.)

Revelation 7:4 - 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.

Revelation 7:5 - 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.

Revelation 7:6 - Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

Revelation 7:7 - 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.

Revelation 7:8 - 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.

'An hundred and forty and four thousands of all the tribes of the children of Israel.' That this number is symbolical, and put for a large but indefinite number, can scarcely be doubted. The number twelve is frequently selected in Scripture for symbolical purposes (see Ezek. 48:30-34; Rev. 21:12, 16, 17). A thousand is a frequent and familiar number for designating an indefinite many (see Psa. 90:4; 2 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 20:4).

That Christians, and not Jews, are intended, seems also evident from the connection between this passage and those which speak of the New Jerusalem, the blessed abode of these sealed ones. (See Rev. 21:12, where the city is described as having 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.) There is a

similar reference to Christians under the emblem of Jews in the Epistle to Philadelphia (see Rev. 3:9).

With reference to the enumeration of the tribes, Mr. Elliott observes that they are not named in Jewish order. "The tribes sprung from the bond-woman are mingled with those sprung from the free-woman (comp. Gen. 25:23)." Mr. Stuart's explanation both of the order and of the omission of the tribe of Dan, is simple and reasonable. He shews that the twelve tribes were differently reckoned at different periods, and according to the different objects in view, "there being, in fact, no two cases in the whole Bible where the order and number of the names are both the same." Hence he concludes that "John followed the customary mode of reckoning the tribes prevalent at the time when he wrote."

The general meaning seems to be, that the spiritual Church -- the care of God amid universal alarm, and set apart for preservation under impending judgments -- will consist of a limited number of persons gathered from every section of the Church catholic, and consequently that the declension of the Church at this period will be equally general, and not confined to any particular portion.

§ 20. *The re-appearance of the Martyrs. (Rev. 7:9-17.)*

Revelation 7:9 - 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;

Revelation 7:10 - And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

Revelation 7:11 - 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,

Revelation 7:12 - Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 7:13 - And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

Revelation 7:14 - 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.

Revelation 7:15 - 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.

Revelation 7:16 - They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

Revelation 7:17 - For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Minute criticism is here unnecessary. The martyrs again appear before the throne. When they were last seen (Rev. 6:9-11), they were told to 'rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.' That 'little season' has now passed, and they again come before the throne,, ' a great multitude which no man could number.' They are all clothed with white robes (see Rev. 6:11), and have palms in their hands (see Lev. 23:34-43), rejoicing before the Lord -- pilgrims arrived at their rest (Isa. 35:1-10). The number has been augmenting since they last appeared; the catalogue is now filled up; the glorious company complete. Beautiful is the phrase -- 'They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat;' evidently pointing to the miseries they had suffered, when, driven from home without food or shelter, and scorched by burning suns, they had endured as seeing him who is invisible.

With this re-appearance of the martyrs ends the representation presented on the breaking of the sixth seal, and it certainly seems to imply that, during the period of concussion, persecution unto death has tried the faith of the people of God, and swelled the noble army of those who have sealed their testimony with their blood.

§ 21. The Seventh Seal broken. (Rev. 8:1-6.)

Revelation 8:1 - And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

'Silence in heaven.' i.e. There was nothing done; no action taken. "This silence in the heavenly temple corresponds to the customary interval in the worship of the Jewish sanctuary, during which the priest, whose turn it was, went in to offer incense, while the worshippers remained silently waiting in the court without; a silence which was broken by sound of trumpets. (Luke 1:21.)" (Conder.) This function of the Jewish high priest was typical of our Lord's intercession in heaven; the silence therefore probably indicates that the time has arrived for the intercession of Christ on behalf of his Church. He asks that their silent prayers, the cry of their blood for the destruction of Antichrist, may now be heard.

'Half an hour.' Probably put for a brief interval. (Dan. 4:19.)

Revelation 8:2 - And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

'The seven angels.' The dispensers of Divine blessings and judgments. (See extended note on Rev. 1:4.)

'Seven trumpets.' Trumpets of alarm, such as were used in the Jewish ritual to announce that the time was up. See also Josh. 6:3-16, where the fall of Jericho is accomplished by sound of trumpets, and Israel enters the first city of the promised Canaan. Here it indicates the approaching overthrow of everything which stands in the way of the Church's entering into her rest. (See Horne on the sounding of trumpets at the Jewish feast of Tabernacles.)

Revelation 8:3 - 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.

'Another angel.' The first impression of the mind here is, that Christ must be intended; for who else can place the prayers of saints before the throne? Mr. Stuart, however, reminds us that in Rev. 5:8, the twenty-four elders are represented as each having golden bowls filled with incense, 'which are the prayers of saints.' Thus is it with the angel here. The incense is the symbol of prayers which ascend to God and find acceptance (Psa. 141:2); the altar is the 'altar of incense' (Luke 1:11); the much incense given, is the intercession of Christ which accompanies the prayers of all saints for the downfall of Antichrist; the angel is one holding the office of intercessor (see Zech. 1:12, 13, where the intercession of the guardian angel of the Jews is recorded.)

Revelation 8:4 - And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

'Out of the angel's hand.' "The angel is supposed to take his stand by the altar of incense, and to set down his censer upon it, but still to keep hold of the vessel with his hand, while the fire which is put to the contents of the censer sends up volumes of sweet vapor or smoke from the hand of the angel thus continuing his hold upon the censer." (Stuart.)

Revelation 8:5 - 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.

Revelation 8:6 - And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

'Cast it into the earth.' This scene is very striking. The prayers of saints, accompanied by the intercession of Christ, and mingled with fire from heaven, are now falling back upon the earth in vengeance. They 'who loved the world that 'hated them,' are now instrumental in its punishment. Their prayers have become ' coals of fire,' and the power of persecutors is at an end. The 'lightnings, thunderings, and voices,' are the ensigns of majesty. God is present in the fire. (See Exod. 19:16-20.)

§ 22. *The Judgments of God. (Rev. 8:7-13.)*

Revelation 8:7 - 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.

'Hail and fire mingled with blood.' This is seen by the apostle to descend from heaven in judgment upon earth. Whatever therefore may be the precise meaning, it must certainly be regarded as an outpouring of Divine wrath.

'The third part.' This is generally supposed to symbolize a considerable portion. Thus Ezekiel 5:12, in denouncing judgment upon Jerusalem, says, 'A third part of thee shall die with pestilence and famine; a third part shall fall by the sword; and I will scatter a third part.' So also in Zechariah 13:8 it is declared, that 'in all the land two parts therein shall be cut off and die; but the third part shall be left therein.'

'Trees.' We have already seen that trees are sometimes used symbolically for men (Isa. 10:19), but here it seems impossible to adopt this interpretation, because of subsequent distinctions. In the 7th to the 12th verses, earth and its products, the sea and its inhabitants, rivers and fountains, and the heavenly bodies, are distinguished from the men who are referred to in the 9th chapter. That the term 'sea' is some times used to signify heathendom is indisputable; but this is no reason why (where the context obviously requires it) the sea may not be an emblem of a maritime country or of maritime dominion. As it is used in both senses by the Old Testament prophets, why may it not also be so used by St. John?

The general meaning seems to be that destruction and slaughter shall be poured out upon the cultivated lands, the rich woods, and the fertile pastures of the earth.

Revelation 8:8 - 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;

Revelation 8:9 - 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.

'A great mountain burning with fire.' This symbol -- the volcano -- occurs nowhere else in Scripture. The nearest to it is Jer. 51:25, where the Assyrian monarchy is called a 'destroying mountain.' It should be observed, however, that the apostle does not say that a great burning mountain was cast into the sea, but as it were such. He means that an effect was produced similar to that which would be occasioned by the falling of a burning mountain into the sea.

'And a third part of the sea became blood.' The only parallel passage to this is Exod. 7:20, 21, where Aaron stretches out his rod over the river of Egypt, when the water becomes blood and the fish that was in the river die.

This, taken in connection with the accompanying destruction of ships, which may mean the destruction of maritime towns (see Eze. 27:26, where Tyre is symbolized as a ship, and Nebuchadnezzar as the east wind), leaves a distinct impression that maritime calamity and devastation is depicted.

Revelation 8:10 - 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 ;

Revelation 8:11 - 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.

'A great star from heaven burning as it were a lamp,' or torch. A meteor, as distinguished from an ordinary star. There is no symbol in Scripture corresponding to this blazing meteor. The name of the star, Wormwood, is indicative of the effect it produces. Wormwood in Scripture is figuratively put for misery. (Jer. 9:15; Jer. 23:15; Lam. 3:15-19; Deut. 29:18.)

All that we can gather is, that this third plague, on the supposition that it is to be regarded symbolically, will fall upon all the streams and sources of human power and prosperity, poisoning the fountains of worldly joy, and occasioning a bitterness unto death.

Revelation 8:12 - 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.

Revelation 8:13 - And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

'The third part of the sun was smitten.' Mr. Stuart understands by this that, to the eye of John, an eclipse of these luminaries took place, or at least of a third part of them; a gloomy and ominous light being then diffused, filling earth with consternation. The idea is not that one-third part of the day was totally dark, but that the luminaries by day and night were shorn of one-third part of their usual splendor. He translates the latter part of the 12th verse thus, -- 'And the day might not shine as to a third part thereof.'

We have already seen that the darkening of the heavenly bodies is used in Scripture as generally emblematic of calamities about to be inflicted by God, -- the fearful prelude of Divine wrath (see Joel 2:10); and perhaps it is not necessary to seek for a more minute explanation. The extinction of all political authority is of course involved in the symbol.

The 'angel flying through the midst of heaven,' translated by Mr. Stuart, 'an eagle flying in mid-air,' by which he understands an angel with eagle-wing moving through mid-air solemnly proclaiming the deeper woes about to be inflicted, must be regarded in immediate connection with the

mysterious eclipse which now ominously points to an approaching catastrophe. It symbolizes the approach of evils hitherto unknown on earth, and marks the advancing footsteps of decay and desolation.

So far it is not difficult to conceive that human agency may be employed in bringing about these predicted calamities. At the same time it is impossible to avoid being struck with the great similarity which obtains between these judicial trumpets and the plagues of Egypt, in the infliction of which the only human agency employed was that of Moses.

'Who is the Lord that I should obey him?' was the impious demand of Pharaoh. The reproof of his obduracy was in plagues and death upon him and his people. Tyrannical oppression, unbelief, pride, false religion, were arrayed on the one part; on the other, miracles which had failed to convince, were multiplied to subdue; and the issue of these miracles was in the fulfillment of an engagement of prophecy (Gen. 15:14), in the judgment of the oppressor, and the consequent rescue of the chosen people. (Davison.) Antichrist (the lawless one) is the Pharaoh of the last days. (Compare Exod. 9:22-25 with Rev. 8:7; Exod. 7:20, 21 with Rev. 8:8-11; and Exod. 10:21 with Rev. 8:12). Those judgments we know were the immediate precursors of the delivery of the Jewish Church; these, we believe, will be of the Christian. Those were the prelude to Canaan; these point to the kingdom of which Canaan was but a type. Those were unquestionably miraculous; these are not less so, as we shall soon have occasion to observe. Finally, what Moses was to Egypt, 'the witnesses' (Rev. 11:6) may be to the personal Antichrist and to the Babylon of the last days.

§ 23. *Judgments of God -- (continued). (Rev. 9:1-12.)*

Revelation 9:1 - 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.

'A star fall from heaven.' This fallen star we presume to be Satan, as he is called in the 11th verse, Apollyon. (See also Luke 10:18, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.')

'The key.' i.e. Power and authority. (See Isa. 22:22.)

'The bottomless pit.' The unknown abyss. (See Rev. 10:1.)

Revelation 9:2 - 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.

'Smoke out of the pit.' Smoke is symbolic of the Divine wrath (Psa. 18:8), and of grievous judgments (Isa. 14:31, where smoke is put for the dust raised by the march of a destroying army.)

Revelation 9:3 - 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.

'There came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth.' Locusts are, by the Old Testament prophets, compared to armies, -- multitudes of men destroying all before them (see Joel 2); but they nowhere symbolize men. Here therefore we have no clue.

Revelation 9:4 - 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.

Revelation 9:5 - 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.

Revelation 9:6 - And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

The scorpion is the symbol of merciless and atrocious men (Eze. 2:6), but here it is merely said that the bite of the locust shall inflict a torment, like unto 'the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man.' (Eze. 2:5.) Further, the phrase in the 3rd verse, 'unto them was given power as the scorpions of the earth have power,' would seem to intimate that these locust-scorpions are not of earth. The

description of these creatures (which is minute), while bearing a general resemblance to the natural locust as described by Joel 1:6; and Joel 2:4, 5, and again by Jeremiah 51:27, where the 'rough caterpillar' is 'the locust bristling with hair' (Stuart), is nevertheless in some very important points different, since the natural locust has no tail like a scorpion, nor does it sting.

The time (five months) is the period of the ravages of the natural locust; but the command not to touch 'the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree' (ver. 4), separates them altogether from the locusts of Joel. They are simply tormentors of men, not killing them, yet rendering life intolerable. (ver. 5 and 6.)

Revelation 9:7 - 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 likeness of the locusts to war horses (ver. 7), is referred by commentators to their rapid movement, galloping motion, and the noise they make in eating their food; and the 'crowns like gold,' to the horns or antlers of the locust, which are tipped with yellow, and here called 'crowns,' as emblematic of their victorious march. (See Joel 2:7-9.)

'Faces as the faces of men,' Mr. Stuart says, refers to 'the formation and prominence of the eyes and of the forehead, which have a resemblance to those of men;' the meaning probably being, that they wore the aspect in their eyes and faces of truculent and ruthless soldiers in battle.

Revelation 9:8 - And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

Revelation 9:9 - 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.

Hair like women' (ver. 8), is explained by Jeremiah (51:27), 'locusts bristling with hair.' For 'teeth like lions,' see Joel 1:6.

'Breastplates as it were of iron' (ver. 9), is referred to 'the hard and firm cuticle on the fore-part of the locust, which serves as a shield while it moves among the thorny and furry vegetation.' For their sound like war chariots, see Joel 2:4, 5.

Revelation 9:10 - And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.

Revelation 9:11 - 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.

Revelation 9:12 - One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

Here the symbolic likeness to the natural locust ends. 'Scorpion tails,' 'stings,' 'power to hurt men.' and 'a king,' 'who is the angel of the bottomless pit -- Abaddon -- Apollyon' (ver. 11), under whose direction they discriminate between the righteous and the wicked, not touching the men who have 'the seal of God in their foreheads' (ver. 4), must be explained, if at all, by other means.

The introductory portion of this judgment is intelligible enough. Few probably will dispute that (whatever may be the agency) it represents Satan, the fallen angel, acting as the executioner of Divine vengeance, having power given him to bring upon mankind grievous calamity (see the book of Job generally). The difficulty lies in the agency. 1st. It is from the bottomless pit -- the abyss. "This word means without bottom, or unfathomable. The idea of the Hebrews respecting it was that of a deep dark pit or chasm in the earth, which was, or might be, closed up, and where darkness perpetually reigned. Hence Jude 6, 'Angels kept in perpetual chains, under or beneath darkness,' i.e. in the deep or dark abyss. So also 2 Pet. 2:4, 'Casting them into Tartarus, in chains of darkness,' i.e. casting them bound into a deep or dark place. With this corresponds the word abyss, so often employed in connection with Satan; e.g. Luke 8:31, the demon beseeches Jesus not to order him away into the abyss; which would be a special punishment for his offence." (Stuart) 2nd. It is not of earth. This seems clearly stated in the 3rd verse. 3rd. It is to torment, not to kill. (ver. 5.) 4th. It is to discriminate as to character. (ver. 4.)

This trumpet, with the one immediately following, has been almost universally held by commentators to describe invasion of Mohammedan armies. The very minute description which is given of the natural locust, is supposed to apply with great exactness as a description of Arabian cavalry. It will however apply just as well to other eastern nations. Several reasons may be given why these emblems cannot apply to Mohammedan armies, (and if they do not apply to them they must be in futurity.)

1st. Mahomet can in no sense be called a star from heaven. He was not an apostate.

2nd. Mahomet did not bring darkness over the East, which the locusts do; on the contrary it was there long before his time.

3rd. This smoke and darkness are said to be over all the earth (or Roman world), but Mahomet and his followers only covered a portion of it.

4th. The period assigned for the ravages of the locusts is five months, or 150 years, but the Mohammedan delusion has now prevailed above 1,200 years. Thus far Dr. Woodhouse, who tries but in vain to make Gnostic heretics of them; to which may be added,

5th. The locusts were to hurt only those men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads, but Mahomet made no such distinction.

6th. In no sense can it be said of Mahomet and his followers, that they tormented, but did not kill. On the contrary, they killed idolaters, (who are evidently described in the 20th verse,) and the tribute they imposed on Jews and Christians can never be the fulfillment of a prediction which speaks of torment like the sting of a scorpion, and of a wretchedness so great, that men shall seek

death and shall not find it, and shall have such an utter weariness of life, that they shall desire to die, but death shall flee from them. Hallam observes, in his History of the Middle Ages, " The limits which Mohammedan intolerance prescribed to itself were seldom transgressed, the word pledged to unbelievers was seldom forfeited; and with all their insolence and oppression, the Moslem conquerors were mild and liberal in comparison with those who obeyed the pontiffs of Rome or Constantinople."

"Let the Arabian prophet be called (says Mr. Isaac Taylor) heresiarch and impostor; yes, but a reformer too. He kindled from side to side of the Eastern world an extraordinary abhorrence of idol worship, and actually cleansed the plains of Asia from the long-settled impurities of polytheism. Did he overthrow Christianity in Syria, in Africa, in Spain? No: superstition only; for Christianity had died away from those countries long before. A respect for man, for nature, for God -- a respect not characteristic of the frenzied zealot -- was shewn in the injunction not to destroy the fruits of the earth; not to disturb the labors of the husbandman; not to cut down the grateful palm or the olive; not to poison or to stop the wells; to spare the old and the young; the mother and her babes; and, in a word, to abridge war, as far as might be done, of its horrors. In reading these military orders, and in following the march of the caliphs who received them, it is impossible to exclude from the mind the recollection of wars waged by Christian (most Christian) kings, not against distant and equal foes, but upon their own unoffending and helpless subjects; wars which left nothing behind them but smoking ruins, and a blood-sodden wilderness." (Fanaticism, p. 229, 230.)

Finally, the object of these judgments, as apparently connected with the introduction of the millennial period, demands that they should be considered in futurity.

Since then it seems impossible to interpret the symbols in any satisfactory way, by applying them to invading armies or to any human devastation, is it not a more plausible, and may it not probably be a juster interpretation, to consider the entire plague as intended to symbolize some peculiar disease,--mysterious pains, judicially inflicted upon men by God, through the agency of Satan. That an insect should be employed to accomplish this, is nothing marvelous. The locust (Exod 10:14), the louse (Exod 8:16), the serpent (Num. 21:6, on which see Niehbuhr and Burckhardt), and 'the fly' or zimb (see Josh. 24:12; and Isa. 7:18), have all been employed by God as executioners of his wrath. On the passage in Josh. 24:12, where 'the hornet' is mentioned, the able editor of the Pictorial Bible -- observes: "We take this text, literally. Most likely it means the zimb or dog-fly of Abyssinia, the dreadful puncture of whose proboscis produces the most dire effects, and whose very appearance causes the alarmed beasts to ran about wildly till they die of fatigue and hunger. The probability is that the zimb was not then, any more than now, a native of Palestine, but that swarms were drawn from Ethiopia to execute the Divine will." (See Isa. 7:18, 'The Lord shall hiss for the fly, that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt.')

That Satanic agency may be thus employed--that demons from the abyss may be on earth, and be engaged in inflicting judgment on the wicked--is evident from the whole tenor of Scripture. "In the gospels, numerous cases of demoniacal influence in producing disease and occasioning many evils, everywhere present themselves to our notice. e.g. (Luke 8:31.) These demons are declared by the Savior to be under the guidance of Satan, and his co-operation with them is explicitly developed." (Matt. 12:24-28.) -- Stuart. See also 1 Cor. 5:5 and 1 Tim. 1:20. That in executing Divine wrath, a distinction can be made between the righteous and the wicked, is equally evident from Exod 9:6, 7,

and other passages. In the 78th Psalm (Psa. 79:49), the plagues of Egypt are attributed to evil angels.

But, it may be said, are not all those passages of Scripture which speak of demons and demoniacal influence, to be regarded as mere costume? Is anything more meant than that the evil passions of men, and the destructive powers of the natural world, are personified? Mr. Stuart answers (and no one will suspect him of having any very unreasonable horror of rationalism): "In the reality of evil spirits I am, and must be, a full believer. Costume, some of the modes of representation may be, and probably are. Is it not costume when God is spoken of as having hands, arms, feet, and heart; as being the subject of anger, jealousy, or hatred; as using bow, arrows, and quiver; as having wings or feathers, and the like? Undoubtedly it is; but at the basis of all this there is reality. God is a living and active agent, possessed of all the affections belonging to a perfect, intelligent, rational, and moral being, and ready and able to punish the wicked, and protect and reward the righteous. Such are the substantial facts that lie beneath the biblical costume. And why not reason in the same way respecting evil spirits? They exist; they are active in doing evil to men; they are permitted to assail and tempt them." Why should we doubt their reality or personal agency and character?

§ 24. Judgments of God -- (continued). (Rev. 9:13-21.)

Revelation 9:13 - And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God.

'A voice from the four horns of the golden altar.' (See Exod 27:2.) The voice issues from the golden altar of incense. (See Rev. 8:3.) Judgment is proclaimed from hence.

Revelation 9:14 - Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

'Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.' i.e. Ministers of Divine wrath that have hitherto been restrained. Mr. Elliott translates, 'that have been bound.'

That angels are employed as special ministers for executing Divine justice, is evident from the whole tenor of Scripture. (Examine Gen. 19:1-23; compare with Gen. 18:1, 2; Exod. 12:23; the angel destroyer, Josh. 5:13, 14; 2 Sam. 24:16, 17; 2 Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23.) -- Stuart. "That four angels are here mentioned must be referred to the same reason as that which led to indicate four angels as holding in the winds (Rev. 7:1), viz., because the four quarters of the earth are usually spoken of as comprehending every quarter. So here, the army to be raised is conceived of as consisting of four parts, and these will have four commanders (so to speak) coming from every quarter of the region whence the troops are to proceed." (Stuart.)

Revelation 9:15 - 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.

'An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year.' Stuart considers this verse to mean, that the executioners of Divine justice in this case were confined in a place where they were kept ready and at hand for the particular year, month, day, and hour destined by God on which they were to lead forth their army of destruction.

Revelation 9:16 - And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

'Two hundred thousand thousand.' Two myriads of myriads; probably put for an overwhelming multitude.

Revelation 9:17 - 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.

Breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone.' i.e. Fiery, dark red, and of a sulphureous hue; glaring and terrific. Men thus clad, seated on horses, with 'heads like lions,' and breathing out 'fire, smoke, and brimstone,' were the objects now seen by the apostle 'in the vision.'

Revelation 9:18 - 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.

'By these three was the third part of men killed.' i.e. By the fire, smoke, and brimstone which issued out of the mouths of the horses. " Here the horses are represented as performing the principal work of destruction. It would seem as if the riders only guided them, and were armed only to inspire terror." (Stuart.)

Revelation 9:19 - 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.

'Their power is in their mouth and in their tails.' "These extraordinary horses (symbolic of course) unlike to all others, inflict deadly wounds by their mouths. Another trait is added. Not only do they breathe out igneous sulphur, but they have, like the amphisbaena or two-headed serpent, a head on either extremity; and with both of the heads do they inflict injury.

It is said of the amphisbaena that its tail resembles a head, and with this it throws out poison." (Plin. Hist. Nat., vol. viii., 35,) -- Stuart.

Revelation 9:20 - 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

Revelation 9:21 - Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

'The rest of the men.' i.e. Those who were left after the destruction of the third part. These remain impenitent, and are described as devil-worshippers -- idolaters, given up to all the abominations of heathenism.

This plague is subsequently termed 'the second woe.' (Rev. 11:14.) We have seen that it falls on men who are idolaters; worshippers of deified vice, embodied, like the ancient paganism, in all that is costly, and probably in all that is beautiful. Hippolytus, supposed to be a disciple of Irenaeus, and who suffered martyrdom probably about A.D. 240 or 250, supposes that Antichrist in the last days

will "revive it were the image or ghost of the old empire, just Augustus once did by his new laws and constitution." Should this be the case -- and it would only be the realization of the hopes and expectations of multitudes of living men -- what more probable than that the cultivated Paganism of the empire, the mere worship of the beautiful would revive also. * And if so, the idolatry of the men 'not killed by these plagues, yet repenting not of the works of their hands,' is easily explained.

The question then arises, What is the agency by which these idolatrous and corrupt apostates are slain? The symbols, in some points, may certainly be made to apply to eastern cavalry. The probability or otherwise of such a deluge ever rolling over Europe is far beyond human sagacity to decide upon. The sword of the Saracen has more than once devastated, by Divine permission, a guilty people. Who can venture to affirm that millions of barbarous warriors may not again gather together to slay those whom God has appointed to destruction.

"Those tides of the northern nations, which at length swept away the Roman greatness, might be spoken of as mere evolutions of the physical energies of the great social system; or as acts in the natural history of man, and acts too, the recurrence of which at intervals longer or shorter, may be looked for, unless prevented by opposing causes of another order. Shall it be deemed utterly incredible, that the very same regions which heretofore have poured their ruinous torrents over southern Europe and Asia, may again do so? Must it not be admitted as more than barely possible, that the decay of the commercial and military greatness of England and France -- the only European nations that now efficiently sustain the civilization of the world -- would, were it to take place, quickly be followed by a Scythian inundation, such as would leave (in this hemisphere at least) hardly a vestige of intelligence, and none of liberty." (Fanaticism, p. 220.)

But supposing -- which is by no means improbable -- that a more spiritual agency is intended; that the 'four angels' and their armed myriads -- the fiery and sulphureous breastplates -- the lion-headed and serpent-tailed horses -- the poisonous bite and breathing death -- can find no adequate interpretation in any destruction effected by human arms; what other conclusion can be arrived at than that they shadow forth some special interposition of God at this period to punish the wickedness of the age? The Divine hand may be concealed, and yet felt; and angelic agency, whether for good or evil, may be employed without being recognized. The horses and chariots and about Samaria fulfilled their mission perfectly, though unseen save by the prophetic eye; and these Euphratean horsemen may perform their task as thoroughly, under Divine direction, as did the angel of death when he passed at midnight through the households of Egypt, or when he breathed on the slumbers of the army of Sennacherib. Such judgments are often unrecognized by man in any other character than that of inexplicable calamity.

The following remarks of Neander, in his life of Christ, (written without the slightest reference to Apocalyptic imagery or interpretation,) are interesting in themselves, and may perhaps cast additional light on the subject in hand. He is referring to the demoniacal possessions which prevailed during our Lord's ministry on earth.

* See Appendix C., on the last Antichrist.

"We may find a reason (he says) for the remarkable prevalence of such phenomena at that time, not only among the Jews, but also throughout the Roman empire, in the character of the age itself. It was an age of spiritual and physical distress, of manifold and violent disruptions; such as characterize those critical epochs in the history of the world, at which, from the dissolution of all existing things, a new creation is about to unfold itself. The sway of demonism was a sign of the approaching dissolution of the old world. Its phenomena, symptoms of the universally felt discord, were among the signs of the times which pointed to the coming of the Redeemer, who was to change that discord into harmony."

Schelling's remark, in his *Philosophical Enquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, is worthy of note: "The time is coming, when all this splendor will be dissolved; when the existing body of this fair world will fall to pieces, and chaos come again. But before the final wreck, the all pervading powers assume the nature of evil spirits; the very powers which in the sounder time were the protecting spirits of life, become, as dissolution draws on, agents of mischief and destruction."

§ 25. *The mighty Angel. (Rev. 10:1-11.)*

Six successive judgments, each more terrible than its predecessor, have now in vision passed before the eye of the apostle, and the world still remains idolatrous and impenitent. The last and crowning stroke is about to be inflicted. 'The second woe is past, and behold the third woe cometh quickly.' (Rev. 11:14.)

Before however this arrives, John is to be more fully instructed as to the accordance of events at this period with ancient prophecy; as to their consistency with the security of the elect; and as to the nature of that last and final struggle between Antichrist and the Church, which, referred to in the seventh chapter, has probably continued during the whole time supposed to elapse in the eighth and ninth chapters while the judgments of God have been poured out.

The apostle is therefore 'in the spirit' carried back to earth, and replaced in the position he occupied before he was told to 'come up.' (Rev. 4:1.)

There he marks the descent of a 'mighty angel' (most probably our Lord himself), who announces with infinite sublimity the near approach of the later times of Daniel (compare ver. 2 and 3 with 6 and 7); directs John 'inwardly to digest' that hitherto 'sealed' communication (compare ver. 9 and 10 with Dan. 12:9); commands him in figure to separate 'the wheat from the chaff,' the false from the true (xi. 1, 2); and instructs him as to the malignity and end of that great enemy to truth and righteousness, who, in accordance with the predictions of Daniel, should appear at the close of the dispensation, as the persecutor of the saints. (Comp. Dan. 10:5, 6 with Rev. 10:1; Dan. 12:4, 7 with Rev. 10:5, 6; Dan. 7:21-25 with Rev. 11:7.) For further evidence as to the chronology of this part of the book, compare Rev. 11:7 with Rev. 13:15, 16, and Rev. 11:8 with Rev. 14:8; and the whole with Dan. 12:9.

Revelation 10:1 - 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.

'Another mighty angel.' From the description which follows this can scarcely be any other than Christ. He is 'clothed with a cloud'--emblem of majesty (Psa. 18:12; Ezek. 1:4); 'a rainbow upon his head' -- emblem of covenanted mercy (Gen. 9:13, 14); 'his face as it were the sun,' dazzles with excess of light (Rev. 1:16); and 'his feet as pillars of fire,' are like brass glowing in the furnace (Ezek. 1:7, and Eze. 8:2). Comparing this description with the one given of the first appearance of Christ (Rev. 1:13-16), it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Savior again appears to John.

Revelation 10:2 - 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.

'A little book.' i.e. A small scroll. The most probable supposition is, that this is intended to represent that part of the prophecy of Daniel which was in his time 'sealed,' for a very distant period. Perhaps it may be supposed to include the volume of Old Testament prophecy generally with regard to the Church in the latter days; and its being presented 'open,' may be emblematic of the complete opening up to the Church at this period of those portions of Scripture which are to us at present inexplicable. How much is there of Isaiah, of Daniel, of Ezekiel emphatically, and of the minor prophets generally, which is as yet veiled, 'closed up and sealed till the time of the end.' (Dan. 12:9.)

'His right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.' To symbolize his control over both.

Revelation 10:3 - And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

'As a lion roareth.' (See Rev. 5:5, 'the lion of the tribe of Judah,')

'Seven thunders.' Or, as it rather stands, 'the seven thunders' (which, viewed as the 'seven angels' and the 'seven spirits' have been, implies completeness) 'utter their voices,' probably in response to the cry.

Revelation 10:4 - 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.

'Seal up those things.' (See Dan. 12:4.) i.e. Publish them not. In no other instance is John forbidden to write. In three subsequent instances he is expressly commanded to do it, viz. Rev. 14:13; Rev. 19:9; and Rev. 21:5. In all these cases, as in Rev. 1:11, proclamation seems emphatically intended. The phrase 'write,' seems to stand frequently in the Old Testament for 'publish.' (See Hab. 2:2; Isa. 30:8.) The kind of thunder referred to was called by the Jews Bathkol, i.e. as Mede translates it, a voice from heaven--an oracle. In John 12:29, an instance occurs where, in like manner, thunder is represented as falling intelligibly upon the ear of some of the disciples, probably of John himself. The action here may symbolize, that the portion of Old Testament prophecy referred to, though made known to John, was not yet to be explained to the Church.

Revelation 10:5 - And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

Revelation 10:6 - 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

Revelation 10:7 - 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 propets.

'Lifted up his hand to heaven and swore.' The similarity of this scene to that described by Daniel 12:7, is striking. And it is worth notice that both relate to the same events, 'the finishing' of the mystery of God ' as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.' The phrase, 'there should be time no longer,' is translated by Mr. Stuart, 'delay shall be no longer.' When the seventh angel should sound all would be completed. The 'mystery of God' is probably the permissive power of Satan to thwart the progress of Christ's kingdom.

This is now to be put an end to.

Revelation 10:8 - 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.

Revelation 10:9 - 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.

Revelation 10:10 - 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.

'Take it, and eat it up: i.e. Devour its contents; a phrase still in use. It is found also in Ezekiel 3:1-3, where the book or roll eaten is also said to be 'in the mouth as honey for sweetness.' Here the contents of the book will be sweet at first, but bitter afterwards. It is sweet to hear of the deliverance and glory of the spiritual Church; bitter to learn the painful path by which this happiness is to be reached. (For a similar use of the figure see Jer. 15:16; and John 4:34.)

Revelation 10:11 - And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

'Thou must prophesy again.' The utterances of the seven thunders he was not to record; now he is again to attend, in order that he may teach many nations. The term 'prophesy' is parallel to 'write.' Thou must again write what thou seest for the benefit of the Church.

This symbolic re-appearance of Christ to John is alike full both of beauty and of instruction. Judgments, successive and severe, have been poured out upon a rebellious world. All appears dark and disastrous. What more appropriate than that, at such a juncture, Christ should again in vision manifest himself to the Apostle; proclaim his power; honor his own 'testimony,' which is 'the spirit of prophecy' (Rev. 19:10); impress upon his servant John, both by word and symbol, the reality and importance of the distinction which obtains between the visible or professing Church, and that which is true and spiritual; and finally indicate both the fiery trial and final triumph of the latter in its contest with Antichrist.

§ 26. *The Spiritual Church. (Rev. 11:1-14.)*

Revelation 11:1 - 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.

'A reed like unto a rod.' A light measuring rod (see Eze. 40:3), where it is called a 'measuring reed.' (See also Rev. 21:15.)

'Rise and measure the temple of God.' In Ezek. 40:3, seq., the angel who has the measuring reed uses it in the way of meting out the proportions of a new temple to be erected; here it would seem to be the measurement of a symbolical temple, intended to represent the Christian Church at the period referred to. From Eze. 41 and Zech. 2:1, it is probable that measuring Jerusalem and the temple were understood to mean, ascertaining the degree of religious prosperity. The temple is frequently used as a symbol for the Church (see 2 Cor. 6:16; Rev. 3:12); the measuring of worshippers, 'them that worship therein,' seems to imply, their being marked off as a distinct class. It is a sort of recension and preparation of the true Church for the time of the end.

Revelation 11:2 - 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.

'The court which is without the temple,' and which is not to be regarded, probably symbolizes that which is merely external and ritual -- hollow and nominal. " That the temple was divided in the manner here indicated, is plain from Eze. 40:17-19, where we have the inner court, and the outer court. The worshippers in the inner court are of course priests; and Christians, it should be remembered, here are kings and priests to God, and to them the inmost recesses of the temple of God are opened. (Comp. Rev. 11:19; also Heb. 9:8; and Heb. 10:19, 20; Matt. 27:51.)"--Stuart.

'It is given unto the Gentiles.' i.e. It is abandoned to those that reject Christ and his gospel.

'And the holy city.' Jerusalem is the 'holy city.' (Neh. 11:1; Isa. 48:2; Matt. 4:5; and Matt. 27:53.) Here the phrase probably symbolizes the visible Church of this period, as distinguished from the spiritual worshippers in the inner court of the temple.

'Shall they tread under foot.' i.e. Trample upon; treat with the greatest indignity. (See Luke 21:24, where it is predicted that the literal Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.)--(Stuart.) Here the profanation is, the treading down of visible Christianity by idolatrous apostates, just as the literal 'holy city' is trodden down by the Moslem. *

'Forty and two months.' Three and a half years. It is true that forty--two months, of thirty days each, equal 1,260 days, which, regarded as years, equal 1,260 years. It might certainly be so read. The authority for this mode of calculation is found in fulfilled prophecy, viz., in Dan. 9:24, where 70 weeks, or 490 days, proved to be 490 years; the period there referred to being from the edict of Artaxerxes, published in his twentieth year (see Neh. 2:1-10), to the suffering of Christ, which was 490 prophetic years, i.e. years of 360 days each. In Eze. 4:5, 6, a day stands for a year. In Luke 13:32, we have an instance of our Lord speaking of a day as a year; and in Numbers 14:34, forty days are put for forty years.

So far the year-day principle of calculation is fully justified. But it is necessary also to bear in mind that 'days,' months, and years, in the prophetic Scriptures also, and not unfrequently, stand for the ordinary measurement of time. The following instances may be quoted. 'I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights.' (Gen. 7:4.) Again, 'Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years.' (Num. 14:33.) Again, 'At the end of forty years will I gather the Egyptians,' (Eze. 29:13), a captivity supposed to have ended in the time of Cyrus, who permitted the Egyptian captives to return; and finally, the captivity in Babylon, which was predicted to endure seventy years. (Jer. 25:11; Jer. 29:10.) In all these cases time is to be understood in its ordinary sense.

In order to ascertain which course should be pursued here, we must endeavor to ascertain whether or no the forty and two months are to be regarded as contemporaneous with the 1,260 days mentioned in the next verse. This would seem to be evident, and hence we are obliged to adopt the more literal interpretation; the chronology of the prophecy compelling us to consider the testimony of the witnesses as relating to one era only, that of the last days.

* Perhaps there is a kind of double prophecy; in which case it may mean, that as the literal Jerusalem shall be trodden under foot forty and two months of years, so visible Christianity shall in the last days be trodden down forty and two literal months. If it be so, the passage may afford a slight clue to the period spoken of as the fulfilling of the times of the Gentiles. (Luke 21:24.) The treading down or profanation of the literal Jerusalem cannot certainly be reckoned from its destruction by Titus, for he would willingly have saved it. Subsequently Adrian, and after him Helena, attempted to restore it. Nor could it be said to be trodden under foot treated with purposed contempt and scorn -- until the Caliph Omar took possession of it about the year A.D. 640. When Jerusalem fell before him, the patriarch had to attend the victor caliph through it. He muttered as he passed on, 'The abomination of desolation is in the holy place.' And soon, as if to remind the Christian remnant of the fact, there resounded that voice of the muezzin from a mosque erected on the site of Solomon's temple, which, except with brief intermission during the reign of the crusaders, has since then never ceased. From that time to the present Jerusalem has been avowedly trodden down. If, therefore, we consider the 1,260 years to commence with A.D. 640, the period of its deliverance will not be till about the year A.D. 1,900, when the times of the Gentiles (if that calculation be correct) will be about fulfilled, and this dispensation be drawing to a close.

Revelation 11:3 - And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sack cloth.

Revelation 11:4 - These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

'My two witnesses.' What witnesses? -- is the question naturally asked on reading these words, as no such persons have been hitherto mentioned in the sacred prophecy. The only reply we get is the somewhat mystical one furnished in the 4th verse, -- 'These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks (mentioned in Zech. 4.), standing before the God of the earth.'

The question now returns in another form, viz., What was intended to be represented by the two olive-trees? And the further answer is, ' These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.' (Zech. 4:14.)

Again we ask, But what is meant by the two anointed ones? A better answer probably cannot be found than that given by Matthew Henry, when commenting on Zechariah without any reference to Apocalyptic interpretation. "By the candlestick," he says, "we understand the visible Church, [at this time that of the Jews]: these anointed ones, or 'sons of oil,' that stand before the Lord of the whole earth, represent the two great ordinances and offices of the magistracy and ministry."

As a representation intended to strengthen Joshua and Zerubbabel * in the great work to which they were called (that of renewing the Jewish commonwealth), nothing could be more appropriate. It reminded them that in all they had to do, they were the representatives of God, in whose strength, and by the help of whose spirit they were sure to succeed. (See Zech. 4:6.)

Now although this explanation does not aid us much in answering the question, Who are these witnesses? it does assist us materially in ascertaining the nature of their office and work. They are evidently reformers or renewers of society. They testify against lawlessness, and to the fact that God -- a personal God -- rules in the affairs of men, and that all things, civil and ecclesiastical -- all things relating to man's welfare, either for time or for eternity, are under his control, and subject to his supreme dominion. This again leads us to infer first that they are persons, and next that they will appear upon earth at the general period of disorganization, to which the prophecy has brought us.

'Twelve hundred and sixty days.' i.e. Three years and a half.

'Clothed in sackcloth.' The prophetic costume (see Isa. 20:2); sackcloth was also the emblem of threatened calamity (see Isa. 3:24; Isa. 22:12). Probably the two ideas are combined here.

* That Christ is the main object of Zechariah's prophecy, can scarcely admit of doubt. Zerubbabel, in the predictions of Haggai, seems to be addressed as the representative of Christ. (See Haggai 2:6-7, 21, 23.) The shaking of 'the heavens and the earth;' the 'overthrow of the thrones and kingdoms of the world;' the discomfiture wrought 'by a brother's sword;' all point to the latter days. Hence the introduction of the two olive-trees as representing Christ's witnesses.

Revelation 11:5 - 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.

'Fire proceedeth out of their mouth.' "They are furnished with a power of resisting and destroying their enemies, like to that which Elijah possessed. (Comp. 2 Kings 1:10-14; Luke 9:54.) In Rev. 1:16, a sword is said to issue from the mouth of the Savior as a symbol of destruction to enemies. Comp. Psa. 18:8, 9." (Stuart.)

Revelation 11:6 - 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.

'Power to shut heaven.' "To shut or close up the heaven is of course to stop or restrain the rain from descending, and thus to bring on drouth or famine. (Comp. James 5:17; 1 Kings 17:1.) In other words, the two witnesses were to be furnished with miraculous powers like those of Elijah. Nor do the miraculous powers of Elijah alone afford full scope for comparison. The two witnesses are even to be endowed as Moses himself was, the great head of the ancient dispensation; i.e. they can smite the streams and turn them into blood, as Moses did the Nile of old. (Exod 7:17, seq; comp. Rev. 8:8, above.) These two references to Moses and Elias shew plainly, that if a literal sense must be given to the passage, they are the persons whom the inspired writer has in mind." (Stuart.) Perhaps the most probable interpretation is, that two or more eminent witnesses for truth will at this time be raised up, who will come 'in the spirit and power' of Moses and Elias, and, like them, be invested with superhuman gifts.

Revelation 11:7 - 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.

'The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit.' The only power as yet referred to in the prophecy is the fallen star, who has the key of the bottomless pit (Rev. 9:1, 2), and who, we are distinctly told in the 11th verse, is Apollyon. It is plain, therefore, that Satan is intended as the agent of evil, who stirs up the enmity of those who hate and fear the witnesses. (See Rev. 13:15, and Rev. 19:19-20.)

"What is done by Satan's agency is frequently in Scripture attributed to him personally. But how comes it that these witnesses, furnished as they are with miraculous powers to defend themselves, are overcome by the beast in this case, and finally perish? This question might be partly answered by asking another: How came Paul and Peter, and other apostles, who were protected and kept in perfect safety for a time, at last to fall before the power of persecution? How came Jesus, who could pray to his Father, and he would send him twelve legions of angels, (Matt. 26:53), still to suffer himself to be apprehended and crucified? Because, I answer, it was known and believed by them, when the time for their death respectively came, that such was the will of God; and therefore they did not and would not seek for deliverance from death. Or we may even suppose that the miraculous power which the witnesses once possessed, ceased when the work appointed for them

by heaven was done, and they were then called to seal their testimony by their own blood. Such must have been the case in regard to the apostles and others." (Stuart.)

Revelation 11:8 - 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.

'The great city.' The literal name is not given, but such an one as describes its condition and character. Sodom for vice. (See Gen. 18:20; comp. 2 Peter 2:6. Egypt for tyranny and oppression to God's people (Exod 1:14). Jerusalem -- compared by the prophet to both Sodom and Egypt (Isaiah 1:9, 10; Jer. 23:14; Eze. 23:8) -- for its rejection of Christ and hatred to his people. This 'great city' is the Babylon of the last days, the antagonist of 'the holy city,' the visible church. The literal Jerusalem cannot be intended here, as it is never called 'the great city' by any of the prophets.

Revelation 11:9 - 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.

'Their dead bodies.' Literally, their corpses. (Stuart.) These lying unburied in the street is very significant of the contempt and hatred with which the witnesses would be treated.

The reference to 'kindreds, tongues, and nations' would seem to imply that the 'great city' where they are slain is the center of the world's civilization; the capital not merely of a country, but of a gigantic federation.

'Three days and a half.' Here there can be no doubt that the time is literal, because dead bodies could not remain longer without putrefaction. The Savior remained in the grave but three days, i.e., one whole day and a portion of two others. Lazarus was probably raised on the fourth day

Revelation 11:10 - 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.

Revelation 11:11 - 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.

'They who dwell upon the earth.' Lit. 'They who dwell in the land.'

'Make merry and send gifts.' A usual custom on occasions of great joy and festivity. (See Neh. 8:10-12; Esther 9:19-23.

'Tormented.' i.e. By their rebukes, and by the exercise of the miraculous power with which they were invested. Perhaps they have been the apparent authors of the calamities described in the 8th and 9th chapters, as Moses was of the Egyptian plagues. These judgments have no doubt been connected with their testimony.'

Revelation 11:12 - 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

'In a cloud.' (See Acts 1:9.) These witnesses having, like their Lord and Master, been slain, are, like him, raised from the dead, and ascend to heaven.

Revelation 11:13 - 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.

'A great earthquake.' See a like earthquake after the death of Christ, accompanied by the resurrection of many saints (Matt. 27:50-54); and again when Jesus rose from the dead. (Matt. 28:2.)

'The tenth part.' A considerable portion. This, like the 'seven thousand' persons killed, is probably put for an indefinite calamity, the whole being regarded rather in the light of a pledge for the full accomplishment of the threatenings that had been uttered, than as the accomplishment itself.

'Gave glory to the God of heaven.' i.e. Acknowledged the Divine hand and power. (Comp. Rev. 14:7 with Rev. 16:9.) This does not of necessity imply more than a temporary impression made by Divine judgments. Probably an exact parallel may be found in Luke 5:26, where the whole multitude of Jews, beholding the miracles of our Lord, are said to have been 'filled with fear,' and to have 'glorified God.'

Revelation 11:14 - The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

'The second woe is past.' (That described in Rev. 9:13-21.) This again fixes the chronology, clearly showing that the period of the witnesses' death is subsequent to the second woe, or sixth trumpet; a conclusion which is further confirmed by the statement, that it is occasioned by the leader of the host ascending from the bottomless pit (Rev. 11:7).

'The third woe' would seem to be known only by its effects; it is the immediate precursor of final victory. We shall probably find that it is that series of judgments which in the 16th chapter is described as poured out specially upon Antichrist and the seat of his dominion, and which is called (Rev. 15:1) 'the seven last plagues,' in which 'is filled up the wrath of God.'

The meaning of the angelic message appears to be, that in the fullness of time, towards the close of this dispensation, when judgments are pouring out upon an ungodly world, and an apostate church, two eminent witnesses for God and truth shall come forth, vindicate their authority by the exercise of miraculous power, and finally seal their testimony with their blood; that after a brief period of exultation among the wicked, accompanied by indignities to the dead, these witnesses, like their

Lord and Master, shall be raised again and ascend to heaven, some of their enemies perishing in their sin, and others, struck with fear and amazement, giving glory to God. *

Whether these witnesses will be Moses and Elijah, or Enoch and Elijah, or other eminent servants of God then to be raised up, it is not possible to say, and perhaps not wise to enquire. The Christian Fathers, almost without exception, believed that Enoch ** and Elijah, or Moses and Elijah, were the persons intended. Recent commentators, skeptical as to John's inspiration, but of distinguished note as scholars in Germany, have lately revived the same exegesis, chiefly on the ground that the Jews of ancient times, and also the early Christians, expected that Christ would, in the latter days, make his appearance to vindicate the rights of his kingdom, preceded by two, at least, of the prophets above named. Mr. Stuart, who, in consistency with his general view of the apocalypse, rejects this hypothesis, is compelled to admit that if the miraculous powers attributed to the witnesses in the 6th verse are to be taken literally, the references to Moses and Elijah show plainly that they are the persons whom John had in mind.

The Reformers, in the 16th century, excited by all that was taking place around them, and supposing the end of the world to be near, were the first to put aside the personal character of the witnesses, by regarding them as a long succession of faithful men testifying for Christ against Popish error. This interpretation, adopted by most of the Reformers, has since been generally held by Protestant divines.

The great objection to this view is, that it turns this portion of the prophecy into an allegory -- a course which would scarcely be justifiable were this account of the witnesses, like some other portions of the book given in symbolic picture. But since it is in fact a simple narrative, the whole process is inadmissible. It must be distinctly borne in mind that John does not here, as elsewhere, say, "saw," but "the angel stood, saying." *** (Rev. 11:1.) This fact, taken in connection with the chronology of the prophecy, seems to necessitate the simpler and more literal interpretation.

* It is admitted that the mind rebels against accepting the notion that this account of the miraculous powers, death, and resurrection of the witnesses is to be regarded as a statement of what will one day become actual and literal fact. What bearing, it may be said, can the appearance of any two men (ancient prophets though they be) working miracles, afterwards lying dead in the streets of Rome, and then raised to life again and transported to heaven, have upon the moral condition of the world? How few can hear or know of the existence of these persons! How carnal is such a conception under the dispensation of the Spirit! The only reply that can be given is (and it ought to be sufficient), God's ways are not as man's ways, nor God's thoughts as man's thoughts, otherwise the Son of God, the Savior of the world, would not have appeared as an obscure peasant, the son of a carpenter, and lived, died, and risen in an insignificant country, and among a people little known but largely despised. What effect (arguing beforehand), it might well have been said, could such a transaction have upon the intellect or heart of the civilized world? So much easier is it to accept any marvelous thing as a past fact, than as a future possibility.

** Enoch. "From an allusion made in the Epistle of St. Jude, to 'the prophecy of Enoch,' which has not been preserved in its place in the Old Scriptures, it is clear that some predictions were originally given beyond those which we possess; and it is also probable that, of those others, some might be of a nature to keep alive the expectation of the future deliverance of mankind. This idea is favored by the tenor of that prophecy of Enoch's, of which we owe the notice we have got to St. Jude. 'Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, " Behold the Lord cometh, with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgments upon all.'" (Jude 14, 15.) It is plain, therefore, that Enoch foretold the judicial advent of Christ." (Davison on Prophecy.)

*** This clause, it is true, is rejected by many as wanting sufficient support from MSS. Be it so; still there must be a speaker; and if it be, as would appear from the 3rd verse, God or Christ who speaks, the argument is the same; it is still narrative and not allegory.

§ 27. *The Consummation. (Rev. 11:15-19.)*

Revelation 11:15 - 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.

'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' No attentive reader can fail to be struck with the abruptness of the change thus briefly announced. War, famine, torture, death, calamity upon calamity, woe upon woe, all pass away silently, swiftly, and for ever. Satan, 'the god of this world' (2 Cor. 4:4), is dethroned. 'Principalities, powers,' the 'rulers of darkness,' 'wicked spirits in high places,' (see John 14:30; Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13), all have fled. Every knee bends to Christ, and earth at length owns her rightful Lord.

Revelation 11:16 - And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

Revelation 11:17 - 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.

'The four and twenty elders.' The representatives of the redeemed (see note to Rev. 5:8) fall adoring at the foot of the one and worship God, saying, 'We give thanks to thee, Lord God Almighty, who art and wast, that thou hast resumed thy great power, and shewn thyself as king.' So Stuart translates it.

Revelation 11:18 - And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

'The nations were angry.' Indicating a previous struggle.

'And thy wrath is come.' The time of thine indignation has arrived, -- that for which the martyrs prayed and were heard. (See Rev. 6:9-11.)

'And the time of the dead, that they should be judged.' More properly, the time of the martyrs, that they should be vindicated (see Stuart and others) as associated with the reward of the saints.

'And shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.' Satan and his agents, whether evil spirits or wicked men. (See Rev. 20:10; Jude 15; and compare Daniel 12.)

Revelation 11:19 - 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 of God was opened in heaven.' The pattern of the earthly temple. (See Heb. 8:1-5.)

'And there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.' The 'holy of holies' is thrown open, a symbol that the last dispensation has passed away. (See Matt. 27:51, where the vail of the temple was rent in twain, to indicate that the ancient dispensation had closed.

'Lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquake, and great hail,' are the ensigns of majesty; the awful insignia of Omnipotence triumphing over all adversaries.

There can be little doubt (on the supposition that the general view taken of the book is correct) that these last verses describe the second advent of the Redeemer. Calamities, such as the world never before saw, now terminate in the sudden and signal triumph of the Lamb, who resumes his great power, shews himself as king, vindicates his saints and martyrs, destroys his and their enemies, and announces the end of the dispensation amid ensigns of majesty, and the insignia of undisputed dominion.

THE MYSTIC BEAST.

REVELATION CHAPTERS XII. TO XVI.

VISION.--THE FIRMAMENT; VARIOUS SIGNS BEHELD;
THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE SEEN IN THE DISTANCE.

§ 28. Rudiment of the Apostasy. (Rev. 12:1, 2.)

Revelation 12:1 - 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.

'A great wonder.' Something extraordinary or perplexing.

'In heaven.' i.e. In the air or firmament. John, in the vision, is now on earth, and observing from thence.

'A woman.' Emblem of the Church. (See Isaiah 54:5, 6.)

'The daughter of Zion' (Micah 4:10), is a common personification of the Church in the Old Testament; and, in the writings of Paul, the same image is exhibited by the phrase, 'Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all,' i.e. of all Christians. (Gal. 4:26.) The apostolic Church is therefore here plainly presented under the image of a woman.

'Clothed with the sun.' i.e. Bathed in light -- the light of the Sun of Righteousness. (See Matt. 4:2.)

'The moon under her feet.' By 'the moon' would seem to be intended Jewish types and ordinances -- the reflected rays of the Sun of Righteousness, -- here viewed underfoot, as the basis of the Christian dispensation. This emblem arises out of the preceding one.

'A crown of twelve stars.' The crown is the emblem of royal dignity; it is 'the glory of Lebanon' and 'the glory of the gentiles' unitedly adorning the Church of the Messiah. (See Isaiah 35:2; and Isa. 66:12.) Perhaps there is a reference to the twelve tribes, and to the twelve apostles.

Revelation 12:2 - And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

'With child.' Emblem of expectation, whether well or ill founded. (See Isaiah 26:18.)

'Cried, travailing.' i.e. Cried unto God, longing to have this hope and expectation realized.

The expectation referred to is probably that which unquestionably prevailed in the primitive Church, and which was in fact the rudiment of subsequent apostasy, viz.: a belief that the reign of Christ would immediately begin; that Christians would be kings on earth, -- the Church the seat of universal empire; a carnal and mistaken application of Scripture, not unlike that which had deluded the Jews. Christ warned his disciples against it (Matt. 24:24-26); and Paul the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2.)

§ 29. *The Wilderness State. (Rev. 12:3-6.)*

Revelation 12:3 - 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.

'A great red dragon.' Satan (Rev. 12:9) Red is the emblem of cruelty and blood (see note to Rev. 6:4; also John 8:44.) Here Satan is regarded as a personification of the pagan Roman empire. As the existing authority, it is the antagonist of the woman, and prepared to hinder the development of any new power.

'Seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns (or diadems) upon his heads.' Mr. Elliott thinks that this marks the date, " as it was not until the time of Diocletian, towards the close of the 3rd century, that the diadem was adopted as one of the imperial insignia." The seven crowned heads probably signify the universal empire of Rome. The 'ten horns' or powers (Psa. 75:10; Jer. 48:25) are supposed, both here and in Daniel 7:23, 24, to refer to the ten kingdoms comprised in the Roman empire, and into which it afterwards broke.*

An objection to this interpretation has been raised (among others, by Mr. Todd), from "the great diversity in the lists of kingdoms that have been proposed by different writers; each refuting satisfactorily the theory of his predecessors, and each proposing a new arrangement, which is refuted with equal triumph by those who follow him." But this objection is not valid. It is easy, for a minute criticism to find difficulty in determining, amid the chaos of barbarous tribes, the precise number of kingdoms which may be said to have been formed. It is sufficient that they were many. "The few variations," as Bishop Newton observes, in these accounts must be ascribed to the great disorder and confusion of the times, one kingdom falling and another rising, and scarcely any subsisting for a long while together." "The definite number," says Mr. Davison, "may or may not be a strict postulate of the prophecy, for it is well known that the number ten is not unfrequently used in Scripture to represent a large indefinite number. (e.g. Lev. 26:26; Eccl. 7:19; Amos 6:9.) A multifarious division is unquestionably denoted." It may be well to bear in mind that the nations of Canaan, whose land Israel was to possess, are somewhat variously enumerated in different places. (See Gen. 15:18-21; Exod 23:23.) Archdeacon Harrison.

* Various lists of these are given.

The following is Dr. Hales's: --

1. The Huns;
2. The Ostrogoths;
3. The Visigoths;
4. The Franks;
5. The Vandals;
- 6 The Sueves;
7. The Burgundians;
8. The Herules;
9. The Saxons;
10. The Longobarde.

Revelation 12:4 - 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.

'His tail,' or train -- emblem of seductive influences -- 'drew,' as by a magnetic power, 'the third part,' a large but indefinite number, 'of the stars of heaven,' influential persons, men of rank, power, or influence, 'and did cast them to the earth' (Dan. 8:10) -- caused them to fall into apostasy. The obvious reference is to the seductions of paganism, acting upon rank or wealth, and leading to a practical denial of Christ. (See Jude 13, where such persons -- viz., those who, loving the vices of paganism, abandoned the purity of the faith -- are called 'wandering stars, fallen ones, 'to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.')

'The dragon' standing 'before the woman,' watching the development of this new power, strikingly portrays the relative position of the Church and the Roman empire at the period referred to.

Revelation 12:5 - 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.

'She brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations.' i.e. She made known her pretensions to empire. The reference to the second Psalm indicates plainly who is meant by the 'man child.' The idea is, that the Church now openly claims the kingdoms of the earth, as the kingdoms of Christ, and founds on that claim her own right to rule as his vicegerent.

'Her child was caught up unto God.' A symbolic indication that the claim to empire, as Christ's prerogative, was a rightful one, but that its realization was not yet, the exercise of the power exclusively belonging to him who was with God, and on his throne. (John 18:36.) There it was to remain until the times of the restitution of all things. (Acts 3:21.)

Revelation 12:6 - 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.

'The woman.' The Church; i.e. the true and spiritual Church. (See note to Rev. 12:1.)

'The wilderness' is the emblem of a barren and unspiritual dwelling-place (see Jer. 2:23), where Judah is described as impatient of the Holy City, and bent on regaining the wilderness of its preference -- the phrase evidently representing a state of spiritual dryness. The idea here is not that Christ's true and holy Church became a wilderness, barren and lifeless, but that she became an invisible Church; she could no longer be distinguished amid the multitudes who now called themselves Christian, but who were so only in name. The Church was now no longer a light to the world; 'its candlestick was removed out of its place;' it was hidden from the eye, amid prevailing formality; it was invisible, except to faith.

'Where she hath a place prepared of God.' A secret place.

See Song of Solomon 2:14, as compared with Song of Solomon 8:5; Psa. 91:1; Eze. 20:35, and other Scriptures).

If it be said, 'How could a spiritually dry and barren state of society be a protection to the true church; and in what sense could 'a place' in such a state of things be said to be 'prepared of God for her?' -- the reply seems to be this: God permitted corruption to overspread the visible Church, that the true or spiritual Church might thus be preserved from annihilation. Had Christianity been kept pure, (so far as man can see,) the Church must either have been extinguished, and the dispensation of mercy ended, or some intervention of Divine Providence must have taken place, inconsistent with that order of things which accumulates glory to God out of the continued permission of evil.

'That they should feed her.' i.e. Sustain her life. Who is not said; the implication is, the worldly, feeding her unconsciously. Certainly God is her keeper. (See 1 Kings 17:3-6, where Elijah is fed by the ravens.

'A thousand two hundred and three score days', i.e. 1,260 years. (See note on Rev. 11:2, where the authority for the year-day principle is stated.) This principle of calculation is adopted here, because the chronology obviously demands it.

The principal point to be noticed in this section is, that the flight of the woman into the wilderness, the disappearance of light and truth amid clouds and shadows, takes place in connection with, and immediately after the full development and birth (i.e. proclamation to the world) of the claim to empire; indicating first that this claim and expectation was in itself a darkening of truth; and next, that the corruption consequent upon it was driving the true Church into obscurity before the downfall of paganism and consequent establishment of Christianity. After that event (see Rev. 12:14), the flight is continued with fresh speed, shewing that corruption had rapidly increased. Supposing the period of 'the wilderness flight' to have commenced about the middle of the third century, by which time corruption was general, then it may be considered as having ended with the Reformation, when a true and scriptural Church, as distinguished from a corrupt one, again became visible to the world. "Then," in the language of our immortal bard, "was the sacred Bible brought out of the dusky corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it; the schools opened; divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues; princes and cities trooping apace to the new-erected banner of salvation; the martyrs, by the irresistible might of weakness, shaking the powers of darkness, and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon."

In reference to the early corruption of Christianity, Mr. Hallam, in his History of the Middle Ages, justly remarks, "Such is the complex reciprocation of good and evil in the dispensations of Providence, that we may assert it with only an apparent paradox, that had religion been more pure it would have been less permanent, and that Christianity has been preserved by means of its corruptions." The papal supremacy, monastic institutions, and the use of a Latin liturgy, are all justly disapproved; yet all these, under Divine guidance, conspired to preserve the Church from extinction in that long night which succeeded the irruptions of the northern nations. The supremacy of the Pope kept up that intercourse between the nations of Europe, which, under existing circumstances, was essential to their mutual profession of the Christian faith; the monastery was the only place in which the treasures of Divine truth were stored, and the Latin language was the closed casket in which they were preserved. Had the Scriptures been translated out of Latin when that

language ceased to be intelligible, its sacred truths would, humanly speaking, have been lost for ever, amid the barbarous dialects which then prevailed. -- See Hallam's History of the Middle Ages.

Christendom was then a moral wilderness, yet within it God always had a Church, concealed and preserved.

§ 30. *The Struggle for Empire. (Rev. 12:7-12.)*

Revelation 12:7 - And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

Revelation 12:8 - And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

'War in heaven.' i.e. In the air or firmament. "In Eph. 2:2, Satan is named the prince of the host which inhabits the air. So in Eph. 6:12, 'Our struggle is with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of this benighted world, with evil spirits in the aerial regions.'" (Stuart.)

'Michael and his angels.' Michael is the guardian angel of God's people, or the church. In Dan. 10:13, Michael is designated the prince of the Jews; and in Dan. 12:1, he is represented as "the great prince who standeth for the people of God." So in Jude 9, Michael is represented as "contending with Satan about the body of Moses," and of course as being the defender of God's chosen people. (On the guardian angels of nations, see Exod 14:19; Exod 23:20; Exod 33:2; Num. 20:16; Josh. 5:13; Isa. 63:9; Dan. 10:5-13, 20, 21.) (Stuart.)

Revelation 12:9 - 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.

'Cast out into the earth.' i.e. He was dethroned, and his power limited.

Revelation 12:10 - 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.

'Now is come salvation and strength.' i.e. Deliverance is at length come from the power of Satanic priests and pagan authorities.

'The kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ.' This too is come, the supremacy of the cross. The song is commemorative of the victory.

'The accuser of our brethren.' In the light of such an accuser is Satan frequently presented in Scripture (see Job chapters 1 and 2; Zech. 3:1, 2; 1 Chron. 21:1). The phrase, 'our brethren,' indicates that this song (which proceeds from heaven) comes from the elders, representing the redeemed church of an earlier period.

'Is cast down.' Probably in more senses than one. Christ, when on earth, exclaims in the spirit of prophecy, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' (Luke 10:18); thus signifying that a time was approaching when Satan should be strikingly abased, and his power greatly abridged. This took

place in connection with the triumphs of the faith and the fall of paganism, when Satan appears to have been deprived of that spiritual or direct power which he had exercised over men by possession, and through heathen oracles, and was disabled from persecuting the Church, except through the agency of apostates.

Revelation 12:11 - 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.

'By the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.' The first, cleansing from sin; the last guiding to duty. It is by the atoning blood of Christ, and by the power of truth applied to the heart, that Christians overcome Satan.

'They loved not their lives unto the death.' i.e. They preferred death to apostasy, believing the Savior's word, 'He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' (See Matt. 10:39; Luke 17:33; and John 12:25.)

Revelation 12:12 - Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

'Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea.' The rejoicings of heaven mingle with predictions of woe. The term, 'Inhabiters of the earth and of the sea,' implies the masses of mankind generally. To these this exaltation of Christianity to the throne of the Caesars--the consequence, not the cause, of corruption, carnal policy, and worldly ambition, all aggravated by success--would be calamitous. Satan (here viewed as the author of the calamities of mankind) is represented as in a state of exasperation, 'because he knoweth' (or is persuaded) 'that he hath but a short time.' Perhaps it may indicate that, like the early Christians, he now imagined the final and complete triumph of Christ to be at hand, for there is no reason to suppose that anything in relation to the future is positively known by the fallen spirit.

The general meaning of this symbolic fight in the air which John witnessed, is obvious enough. It is a mystic and prophetic representation of the struggle which should take place for empire between Christian and pagan priests, and which should end in the overthrow of Paganism, the casting out of idolatry or devil-worship from the Roman empire. The 7th, 8th, and 9th verses may be thus paraphrased: --

"There was a war (or struggle) in (the) high places (of imperial authority), for the life or death of paganism as the religion of the empire. Michael and his angels (representing Christian priests and officers) fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels (pagan priests and authorities) fought, but prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in (the) high places (of the empire)."

"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, (i.e. he took refuge in villages and obscure places; hence pagan -- inhabitants of villages -- came to be used as synonymous with idolaters, all idolaters being now called pagans,) and his angels (pagan priests and powers) were cast out with him."

The anthems of heaven celebrate this victory--the character of the song indicating the cause of the joy. Christ's authority has superseded the authority of Satan. The change has been accomplished by the blood of martyrs. It is an earnest of the final victory of the Redeemer.

This chapter has been applied to the triumph of Christianity over heathenism, almost by general consent, from the time of Eusebius. Constantine himself, and the Christians of his time, describe the overthrow of paganism under the image of a Satanic fall from heaven; they certainly understood that this prophecy then received its accomplishment. Over the palace gate of the now Christian emperor was painted a dragon transfixed with a dart, falling headlong into the depths of the sea.

§ 31. *The Flood of Barbarians. (Rev. 12:13-17.)*

Revelation 12:13 - And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

Pagan persecutions having now ceased within the Roman empire, the enmity of Satan is manifested in other ways. Christians still suffer. The orthodox are persecuted by the Arians, both by the Persians, and both again by Julian, in his attempt to restore the idolatries of the ancient faith. In all these cases the sufferers are the spiritual; they alone who really love and serve Christ will submit to imprisonment and death for his sake. Others tamper with truth and thus avoid danger. Hence it again becomes needful that the true Church, if it is to be permanent, should be hidden from the outward eye.

Revelation 12:14 - 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.

'Two wings of a great eagle.' i.e. Strong, expansive, and adapted to rapid flight. "As to the image itself, the prototype is in Exod 19:4, where God says of Israel, whom he had brought out of Egypt into the wilderness 'I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself,' i.e. to a place where they might be devoted to his service. So David fled to the wilderness for safety. (1 Sam. 23:14, 15.) So Elijah fled to the wilderness for a refuge from the persecution of Jezebel. (1 Kings 19:4.)" -- Stuart.

'Into her place.' (See note on Rev. 12:6.)

'A time and times and half a time. i.e. three and a half years of days, or 1,260 years. (See Dan. 7:25; and its equivalent in Dan. 12:7; see also note on Rev. 11:2.)

'From the face of the serpent.' i.e. From utter destruction, for the idea seems to be, that her safety could only be secured by flight into obscurity; i.e. by ceasing to be a visible Church.

Revelation 12:15 - 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.

'Cast out of his mouth,' i.e. Vomited forth. As the Church is the body of Christ, so the pagan world is the body of Satan; and the phrase here implies, that from the body of paganism Satan ejected and cast upon the newly christianized empire a flood, with the intention of overwhelming the people of Christ.

'Water as a flood.' A flood of waters is the common symbol for an invading enemy. (See Isa. 8:7; and Rev. 17:15.) By the irruption of the barbarous nations, evidently referred to here, Satan

doubtless intended to have swept away Christianity, and to have re-established pagan idolatry. Gorres speaks of these invasions thus: " When Providence let loose the flood from the forests of Northern Europe, it would seem as if a second time the windows of heaven had been opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up."(Elliott.)

Revelation 12:16 - 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.

'The earth helped the woman.' The general idea is, that in this extremity, 'the earth,' i.e. the worldly empire, assisted and saved the Church by 'swallowing tip'--incorporating into its own bosom 'the flood' of pagan enemies vomited forth by Satan. The incorporation of the pagan nations, through their nominal conversion to Christianity, was, without doubt, under God, the means of preserving the Church from extinction. Schlegel says, "When at last the tempest had disburthened itself of its fury, and the clouds broken . . . when the wild waters of that mighty inundation had begun gradually to flow off, then the Germanic tribes, being incorporated with the Romanic nations laid the deep, firm soil on which modern European society was to spring up and flourish." (See Elliott, vol. iii., p. 53, notes.)

Revelation 12:17 - 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 remnant of her seed which keep the commandments.'" i.e. Spiritual Christians, who, with the firmness and steadfastness of martyrs hold fast 'the testimony of Jesus Christ.' The pure 'remnant' is here distinguished by an infallible mark. It consists of men who are determined to contend unto death for the supremacy of Christ, as the lawgiver and sole teacher of the Church.

The whole passage under consideration might be thus paraphrased:

"When Satan saw that he was dethroned, he still more bitterly hated spiritual Christianity and persecuted it. So there was given unto the true Church the power of rapid flight into obscurity, where for 1,260 years she is to be concealed from the face of the enemy. Irritated by disappointment, Satan now pours upon the empire a flood of enemies. Goths and Vandals, like water out of the mouth of a dragon, overflow every portion of the Roman empire, and threaten to sweep before them every vestige of Christianity. But, to! the very ground opens to receive the flood; the now nominally Christian power incorporates into itself these very enemies, and thus saves itself from being carried away by the overwhelming torrent. Enraged at this fresh thwarting of his purposes, Satan now turns to persecute the pure remnant of the seed of the Church, which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Sad implication! there is but a remnant; the rest have fallen from the faith."

The object of Satan is unaccomplished so long as one Christian remains on earth. His unceasing endeavors have from the first been directed to the utter extinction of godliness. The papal church

itself, corrupt and abominable as it is, can only be viewed by Satan with comparative complacency, so long as the divinity of Christ and the necessity of atonement are recognized in it. They prove too much who would make popery the master piece of Satan. It is heathenism which is his own peculiar worship, and in this he specially delights. He is not content to corrupt, where it is possible to destroy. By the irruption of the barbarous nations, always symbolized in the Apocalypse by waters, he doubtless intended to have swept away the Church, and to have re-established pagan idolatry.

§ 32. *The Mystery of Iniquity. (Rev. 13:1-8.)*

VISION. -- THE SEA. JOHN, STANDING ON THE SHORE, SEES
A BEAST (OR MONSTER) ARISE OUT OF THE WAVES.

Revelation 13:1 - 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.

'I stood upon the sand of the sea.' i.e. I was in vision stationed there. The position of John is changed according to circumstances. (See Eze. 8:3, where the prophet is thus transferred from place to place.)

'A beast rise up out of the sea.' The 'beast,' or monster, is the emblem of a fierce and cruel state or government. (Dan. 7:3.) 'The sea' is the emblem of heathen nations (Isaiah 60:5); here it is the flood of barbarians now covering the Roman empire, 'as the waters cover the sea.' The particular state or government intended by the beast is obviously the papal empire, which literally rose out of the barbarous nations, and which, humanly speaking, could never have existed but for those incursions. Corruption there was previously, but not papal power.

'Seven heads,' or seven mountains. The hills on which Rome stands (Rev. xvii. 9), emblematic of universal empire.

'Ten horns crowned.' The ten barbarous kingdoms of which the papal empire was composed. (Rev. 17:12.) Irenaeus "directs his readers to look out for the division of the Roman empire into ten kingdoms, as that which was immediately to precede and to be followed by antichrist's manifestation."

The number ten is probably symbolical. There is an evident allusion to Dan. 7:24, where ten kings are mentioned, who were to oppress the Jews. So here this persecuting power consists of united kingdoms, whether more or less than ten is not important; hence the variety of lists given need not perplex the reader, or lead to doubt.

'Upon his heads the name of blasphemy.' Rome, both pagan and papal, has always been blasphemous, emperors and popes alike claiming the homage due to God alone. It will be observed that 'the beast' is distinguishable from 'the dragon' (the pagan empire) by this mark -- the dragon had seven crowns on his heads, the beast has ten crowns on his horns. This seems to signify that there had been a revolution of power from Rome itself to, the ten kingdoms, which was not the case till after it became Christian.

Revelation 13:2 - 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.

'A leopard'--' a bear'--' a lion.' " All the ferocious and powerful beasts which Daniel (chap. vii. 3, seq.) has successively brought upon the scene of action, as the representative of different empires, John has here combined in one monster.

'There is much of significancy in this. The (papal) empire combined in itself all the elements of the terrible and oppressive which had existed in the aggregate in the other great empires that preceded it. Its extension, too, was equal to them all united. The three animals here combined, symbolized swiftness and ferocity in springing upon the prey, tenacity in holding it and dragging it away, and a ravenous appetite for devouring. (Stuart.) To this new empire 'the dragon' (Satan) gives the 'power or seat, and great authority,' with which he had before invested paganism. This is the power through which he is to 'make war' against 'the remnant' of the true seed.

Revelation 13:3 - 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.

'One of his heads.' A large portion of his dominion or influence. It is not one of his horns (or kingdoms), but a portion of his universal empire.

'As it were wounded to death.' Here history must interpret; and it points distinctly to Mohammedan enemies tearing kingdom after kingdom from the papacy, and at length endangering its very existence. " For the first ninety years after the publication of this religion in the world, the Christians of Europe could do little more than wonder at its amazing and, as it seemed, fatal progress in Asia and Africa. Before the end of the century, it had obtained a settlement in a corner of their own continent, and threatened every part of it."

'His deadly wound was healed.' i.e. The, danger was averted. Hallam, speaking of the conquests of Mahomet, says, " these conquests, which astonish the careless and superficial, are less perplexing to a calm inquirer than their cessation; the loss of half the Roman empire than the preservation of the rest." -- Middle Ages, ii. 169.

At a crisis, when, as Gibbon declares, "it appeared impossible for France to avoid subjugation" -- and, in which case, all Europe would probably have fallen, and, as regards our own island, " the interpretation of the Koran be now taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits demonstrate to a circumcised people the truth and sanctity of the revelations of Mahomet"-- at that crisis a bulwark was raised up most unexpectedly by the Franks, under Charles Martel. The Saracens recoiled, broken and discomfited, from the blows of him that was called the hammer of Western Christendom; and "Europe owes its existence, its religion, and its liberty to his victory."

'All the world wondered after the beast.' i.e. Surveyed with admiration -- followed in his train.

Revelation 13:4 - And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?

'They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast.' i.e. The world again turned with admiration towards the old Roman empire, delighting in its revival in the person of Charlemagne; "an event which forms the link between ancient and modern history, and between the civil and the ecclesiastical annals, inasmuch as the revival of the empire was the consolidation of the temporal power of the Popes, to whom the mutual compact secured the rich donation of their triple principality, viz., the Roman territory, the Exarchate, and the Lombard kingdom." (Conder.) Hence the worship 'of the dragon,' as giving power, is connected with the worship 'of the beast' as a Divine power. For the challenge, 'who can make war with him V is a claim to omnipotence. (See Isaiah 40:25, where similar language is applied to God.)

Revelation 13:5 - 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.

'A mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.' (See Dan. 7:8, 20.) "What can be greater things and blasphemies than the claims of universal bishop, infallible judge of all controversies, sovereign of kings and disposer of kingdoms, vicegerent of Christ, and God upon Earth?" (Bishop Newton.) To which add the notable declaration in the bull of Pope Boniface VIII." Finally, it is indispensable to salvation that every human creature be subject to the Pope of Rome." (Hoare.)

'Power to continue forty and two months.' i.e. 1,260 years. (See note to Rev. 11:2, where the authority for this mode of calculation is given.) In this case, as in that, we must be guided, in determining the literal or symbolic character of the time mentioned, by the context, as involving the chronology of the prophecy.

The question then arises when did this period of forty-two months, or 1,260 years commence? Mr. Elliott observes on this head (and his observations are worthy of note), that the year A.D. 606 is almost without question the right date. He says, "That 606 is the right period from which to date the rise of the papal antichrist, seems indisputable. In letters written from about 580 to the end of the century, and addressed to the Greek Emperor, the Empress, the patriarchs of Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria, the Bishop of Thessalonica, and many others, Gregory the Great, the man of the age, the most sagacious, the most observed, the most influential, declared before all Christendom, that whosoever, in his elation of spirit, called himself, or sought to be called, universal bishop or universal priest, that man was the likeness, the precursor, and the preparer for antichrist; that the tendency of such assumption, if consented to, was that which was the grand object of antichrist, viz., to withdraw all members of the Church from its only true head, CHRIST JESUS, and to attach and connect them in the stead with himself." Ten or fifteen years after this, "in spite of the declaration thus pressed as it had been on the attention of Christendom, thus dispersed, thus repeated, and even enregistered in the canon law of the Romish Church, this very title was officially conferred on, and assumed by, Gregory's own successor in the Roman episcopate -- a title never to be abandoned." (See Elliott, vol. i., 377.) Mr. Fleming suggests that prophetic years should be reduced to Julian and Gregorian years; that is to say, that the year of 360 days should be reduced to years of 365 days. Hence (leaving out the hours), 1,260 prophetic years are equal to 1,242 of our years. By this mode of reckoning, Mr. Fleming was led to state his expectation that the final period of papal usurpations would conclude with the year 1848. Possibly both dates

have a meaning. 1848 has seen the Pope driven from his throne by his own subjects, scoffing alike at his temporal and spiritual power, and 1866 may see the ruin of the papal system.

Revelation 13:6 - And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

'Blasphemy against God, his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.' This was done by the assumption of the attributes of God, by perverting the worship of God, and by making the saints and martyrs instruments of corruption.

Revelation 13:7 - 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.

'It was given unto him.' i.e. It was allowed or permitted to him 'to overcome them,' i.e. to crush them by power and by inquisitorial courts, and this 'over all nations.' The illustration of these words is ecclesiastical history. The establishment of the order of Jesuits, and of the Inquisition, gave a kind of ubiquity to the papacy, which rendered it irresistible

Revelation 13:8 - 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.

'All . . . whose names are not written in the book of life. Teaching us that nothing but the Spirit of God can sustain the soul under temptation and suffering. The truehearted, the elect, those who are in vital union with Christ, can alone stand in the hour of extremity. (See Matt. 24:24; Eph. 1:4-13.)

Here we again cross the boundary which separates the past and the present from the future -- fulfilled, from unfulfilled prophecy. Yet we proceed, for "surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (Amos 3:7.)

§ 33. *Its doom by the Sword. (Rev. 13:9, 10.)*

Revelation 13:9 - If any man have an ear, let him hear.

'If any man have an ear.' A solemn warning to listen (see Matt. 11:15; Luke 8:8), and to consider well what is said. It is here applied to something about to be uttered.

Revelation 13:10 - 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.

'He that leadeth into captivity.' Literally, 'he that driveth away into exile.' (Stuart.) The corrupt power by which the Church has been persecuted, is obviously meant.

'Shall go into captivity,' or exile. i.e. This power, hitherto driving others from house and home, shall itself be exiled, driven away in wrath. A similar form of expression is used in Psalms 68:18 and Ephesians 4:8: 'Thou hast led captivity captive.'

'He that killeth with the sword.' The bloody persecutor of the saints.

'Must be killed with the sword.' i.e. Must in like manner be persecuted and slain. This seems to indicate very clearly that the papal antichrist will fall by the sword.

'Here is the patience and faith of the saints.' i.e. Here is the reward of the faith and patience of the saints, indicating that their weapons were spiritual. The persecuting power is itself persecuted and slain, but not by the saints, for 'they that take the sword shall perish with the sword' (Matt. 26:52); but by agents raised up by God to inflict his judgments, for he is the avenger of his saints.

With a pope in exile, and democracy everywhere longing to 'let slip the dogs of war' on the papacy, and to repeat on her priests the horrors of the first French Revolution, who can fail to be struck with the minuteness of prophecy. But the day is not yet.

§ 34. *The last Antichrist. (Rev. 13:11-18.)*

Revelation 13:11 - 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.

'Another beast out of the earth.' i.e. Another tyrannical power, afterwards called 'the false prophet.' (See Rev. 16:13; Rev. 19:20.) He is observed in the first instance only as 'coming up,' and he rises, not as the former one, 'out of the sea' -- out of the flood of nations, but 'out of the earth' or land, i.e. out of Christendom; out of a state of things already planted and developed among men.

'Two horns' -- not ten, like the former beast -- and 'like the horns of a lamb,' indicating that the power is as yet only partially developed, exciting no fear; it probably at present professes love and brotherhood, and denounces tyranny.

'He spake as a dragon,' or serpent. i.e. Subtly and maliciously. He gathers power and wins his way by guile and flattery. (Dan. 11:21, 24.)

Revelation 13:12 - 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.

'And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him.' i.e. Of the beast that went before him, for the first beast is now 'slain by the sword.' He rises to this power by fraud and flattery.

'Causeth the earth to worship the first beast,' viz., the beast referred to in the third verse, whose marvelous resources and vitality had been so signally manifested in his recovery from 'the deadly wound.' It is a kind of legal identification. The object of this new and lamb -- like Antichrist is now to revive the religious respect and homage formerly paid to the papacy, i.e. to re-constitute a religious unity of which Rome shall be the head. He succeeds in the first instance at least, not by authoritative commands, but by ensnaring and deluding influences.

Revelation 13:13 - And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.

'And he doeth great wonders.' It would appear that these wonders or miracles, whatever they may be, are intended to give authority to religious pretensions, and to inspire confidence in some claim to dignity. These wonders must be ranked with those performed by the magicians of Egypt (Exod 7:8-13); by Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-11); and by Elymas (Acts 13:6); and it is to such our Lord refers in the solemn warning he addressed to his disciples in Matt. 24:24.

Revelation 13:14 - 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.

'And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth.' This seems to indicate something far beyond mere legerdemain, showing that the 'miracles which he had power to do' were Satanic, for they are effectual, and serve to attest the power and authority of this antichrist; men are deceived by them, and 'caused to err.' The signs and wonders are so great, that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. (See Matt. 24:24.) Men now 'make an image to the beast;' that is, they do honor to the slain beast, regret its exile and death, and create a thing like unto it, the very image of it, i.e. a new center of unity, wanting only 'the breath of life.'

Revelation 13:15 - 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.

'He had power to give life unto the image.' To this image or ghost of the papacy -- this new center of unity -- life is now given by the antichrist; so that it now becomes an active controlling power, speaking with authority, like the first beast, and, like it, persecuting unto death.

Revelation 13:16 - And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.

Revelation 13:17 - 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.

'A mark in their right hands or in their foreheads.' This would seem to indicate that, under the all-grasping rule of this last form of antichrist, every man shall bear about with him some sign or token of his allegiance to the great deceiver, in the absence of which he shall neither buy nor sell. The mark refers, without doubt, to the token or sign formerly borne by persons who were devoted to any particular deity. Forbidding to buy or sell has frequently been resorted to as a means of persecution. "Diocletian published an edict against the Christians, that they should not have the power of buying or selling anything, nor be allowed the liberty of drawing water itself, before they had offered incense to idols. Pope Martin, in his bull after the Council of Constance, commands that they permit not heretics to have houses in their districts, or enter into contracts or carry on commerce, or enjoy the comforts of humanity." (Bishop Newton.)

Revelation 13:18 - 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 the beast.' What this 'number' may be is as yet hidden in obscurity. It may still be said, 'Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast.' When the time comes, it will doubtless be plain enough, and probably confirm, in a very striking manner, the truth of the

prophecy. The statement, 'it is the number of a man,' seems clearly to point out the personal character of this antichrist.

These verses, like some already noticed, would lead to the supposition that in the last days there will be a more signal manifestation of spiritual power on earth, both good and evil, than we have now any conception of. If Satan is to have permissive power to work wonders in attestation of falsehood, the advent of the witnesses, armed with like power, to be used judicially and in vindication of truth, ceases to be surprising.

Who and what this future form of Antichrist may be, is as yet among the secret things that belong to God. This much, however, seems to be revealed for our instruction and warning. It will arise out of the ruins of the papacy; it will gather power by guile, and strengthen itself by flattering the tendencies of the age, whatever they may be; it will revive the worst features of popery; it will finally attain to power, and it will persecute unto the death. Nor is there anything extravagant in the idea, however unwilling we may be to receive it, that out of universal concussion (the world panting for repose, wearied by the restlessness of an ever tossing sea of passion) may arise some new form of delusion which shall unite the worship of the beautiful with the pomp of Romanism, and combine the sensuality of idolatry with the speculations of a heartless infidelity. (See Appendix C, on the second Antichrist.)

§ 35. *God's Elect. (Rev. 14:1-5.)*

VISION. -- CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD) IS SEEN ON MOUNT ZION, SURROUNDED BY THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOUR THOUSAND, AND VOICES FROM HEAVEN ARE HEARD SINGING A NEW SONG.

Revelation 14:1 - 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.

'An hundred and forty and four thousand.' The Lamb of God -- 'on Mount Zion', i.e. the earthly Zion (seen in vision) -- is surrounded by the 144,000 before mentioned (see Rev. 7:4, and note), emblem of the security of the spiritual Israel--safe in Christ. There they are spoken of as 'sealed,' here they have the 'Father's name written in their foreheads.'

Revelation 14:2 - 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.

'A voice from heaven.' Indicating that the station of John was still on earth. The general idea is, that the song was that of a great multitude of the redeemed, now sounding like the sea, now rolling like thunder, now soft as the human voice, mingling with the music of the harp.

Revelation 14:3 - 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.

'A new song.' A song adapted to the occasion, one of triumph at the approaching vindication of the saints. (See Rev. 5:9.)

'Before the throne.' i.e. In the presence of God, whose throne was supported by the 'four living creatures,' and encircled by 'the elders.' (See note on Rev.. 4:7-11.)

'No man could learn that song.' i.e. Could sympathize with it save the redeemed.

Revelation 14:4 - These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

'Not defiled with women.' Probably referring to their freedom from some prevailing form of impurity associated with, and characteristic of, the idolatry of their times. (See Rev. 28:2; and Rev. 22:11.) Paul has a similar idea in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians: 'For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. (2 Cor. 11:2.)

Which follow the Lamb.' i.e. Unreservedly, through all dangers, to torture and to death.

'First fruits.' i.e. An offering peculiarly acceptable to God. (See James 1:18.)

Revelation 14:5 - And in their mouth was found no guile for they are without fault before the throne of God.

'No guile.' i.e. No dissimulation. They had not tampered with truth and conscience in order to save themselves.

The object of this emblematic vision, like that of the measuring of the temple (Rev. 11:1), seems to be consolatory. Antichrist is causing all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive his mark, and persecuting to death all who refuse. The question naturally arises, Where then is the Church? The vision supplies the answer. It is safe with Christ. The implication is that it is now a martyr Church.

§ 36. *The Voice of Warning. (Rev. 14:6-12.)*

Revelation 14:6 - 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,

Revelation 14:7 - 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.

'Another angel.' i.e. One different from the 'mighty angel' last seen. (Rev. 10:1.) His flight in mid air, preaching the gospel to every nation, warning of approaching judgment, and claiming worship for God as the creator of all things, seems to imply, that at this period, in spite of resistance and persecution, the gospel will be proclaimed everywhere, and men be faithfully warned against the prevailing form of error, probably a polytheistic pantheism.

Perhaps it is difficult to say to what extent the diffusion of the gospel in primitive times was advanced by persecution.

It was when Saul was making 'havock of the Church, entering into every house and haling men and women to prison,' that 'they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the word.' Would it be 'a strange thing' if the preaching of the gospel, 'as a witness to all nations,' should be accomplished by similar means?

Revelation 14:8 - 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.

'Babylon is fallen.' (See Isaiah 21:9; and Jer. 51:8.) In both these places the same language is used prophetically in relation to the ancient Babylon when the event was yet to come. As this is the first time the term 'Babylon' occurs in the book, the question arises, 'what is meant by it?' The text plainly informs us that it is a 'great city;' and indirectly intimates that it is the center of a tyrannical and persecuting power; like ancient Babylon, idolatrous, luxurious, alluring to sin, a monument of human pride, for she makes 'all nations drink of the wine of the wrath '--or rather, of the heated and inflamed wine--' of her fornication.' The general idea is, that she employs her arts and excitements to bring all nations into her idolatrous and impure worship. The 18th chapter of this book is a description of her greatness, her pomp, and her ruin. The present verse is a prophecy of the approaching destruction of this city, the phrase 'is fallen' being understood, as in the Old Testament prophets, to imply the certainty of this destruction, rather than its actual accomplishment. The city is most probably Rome; but not papal Rome. It is Rome after the destruction of the papacy, viewed as the seat or center of an antichristian empire, probably pantheistic.

Revelation 14:9 - 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,

Revelation 14:10 - 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.

'The wine of the wrath of God.' A frequent mode of expression in the Old Testament. (See Isaiah 51:17; Jer. 25:15, 16.)

Tormented with fire and brimstone.' (See Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 30:33.) The imagery is taken from Genesis 19:24, and implies the utmost severity of punishment.

In the presence of the holy angels.' i.e. Before the august assemblage who shall accompany the Lamb. (See Rev. 19:20.)

Revelation 14:11 - 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.

'The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.' (See Jude 7, where the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is called the vengeance of eternal fire. The punishment is hopeless and irremediable.)

Revelation 14:12 - Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Here is the patience of the saints.' i.e. Herein or under the circumstances just referred to, viz., the strong inducements and the fierce persecutions to which the saints are now subject, will be found the proof of their patience and the great trial of their faith.

The flight of the heavenly messengers confirms the interpretation given of the preceding section.

The angelic heralds probably symbolize faithful witnesses, who will at this period be raised up to preach the gospel, to proclaim the coming doom of Antichrist, and to warn against apostasy.

The solemn warning and final denunciation of the third angel, uttered as he wings his way, indicates the greatness of the peril to which believers are now exposed, and the fierceness of the persecution which besets them.

§ 37. *The Harvest gathered in. (Rev. 14:13-16.)*

Revelation 14:13 - 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 labours; and their works do follow them.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' The reward of the faithful is here contrasted with the punishment of apostates. The dead in Christ enter into rest; their works follow them into the eternal world, their memory is fragrant. 'God is not unrighteous to forget their work and labor of love.' (Heb. 6:10.)

Revelation 14:14 - 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.

'A white cloud.' The white (or resplendent) cloud is an ensign of majesty (Rev. 1:7); the 'golden crown' is the emblem of royal dignity; and the 'one like unto the Son of Man' sitting upon the cloud (Dan. 7:13), plainly points out who is meant. The 'sharp sickle' indicates the character in which he goes forth -- that of a reaper.

Revelation 14:15 - 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.

Revelation 14:16 - And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

'Out of the temple.' i.e. From the presence of God. It is direction from the Father to the Son. (John 12:49.)

'Reap' -- 'the harvest of the earth is ripe.' The same imagery is found in Joel 3:13. There the meaning is, that wickedness has reached its height, and is ripe for destruction. Here the reaping would rather seem to be symbolic of the gathering in of the elect, prior to the pouring out of judgment. (See Matt. 13:30, 'Gather the wheat into my barn.')

Bishop Horsley understands this symbolic harvest to mean, that the faithful will be placed in a state of peace and security on earth, while the judgments of God are poured out upon the wicked. The analogy of Scripture is certainly in favor of the removal or preservation of the saints prior to the execution of Divine wrath. The immediate idea, however, is, the gathering in of the martyrs to Christ. What will be the condition of the saints on earth during the judgments on Antichrist, is not revealed. In all probability it will be one of safety. (See note on Rev. 7:3.)

§ 38. *The Vintage of Wrath. (Rev. 14:17-20.)*

Revelation 14:17 - And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

'Out of the temple.' Angels are now again employed. This one comes from the temple, implying an immediate commission from God.

Revelation 14:18 - 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.

'Out from the altar.' At the foot of which the souls of the martyrs cry for vengeance (Rev. 6:9); thus associating the Divine wrath with the blood of the saints.

'Which had power over fire.' Fire is the emblem of destruction. The angel commissioned to give instructions for the cutting down is said to have 'power over fire.' The different elements are represented as being watched over and governed by angels assigned to the execution of such an office. See Rev. 7:1, 2, where the angels hold the winds; Rev. 16:5, the angel of the waters; and, Rev. 19:17, the angel standing in the sun. (Stuart.) See also Rev. 8:5 -- fire from the altar.

The vine of the earth.' The corrupt and apostate Church on earth -- the vine of Sodom. (See Deut. 32:32.)

Revelation 14:19 - 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.

'The great winepress of the wrath of God.' A common scriptural allusion. (See Isaiah 63:3; and Lam. 1:15.)

Revelation 14:20 - 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.

'Trodden without the city.' i.e. Without the walls of the city seen in vision by the apostle, which is Jerusalem. The scene commences with a sight of Mount Zion, and the angels fly in mid-air above it. The treading of the 'winepress' 'without the city' refers, probably, to the custom of executing criminals without the gates of the city. (See 1 Kings 21:13; also Acts 7:58; and Heb. 13:12.)

'Blood.' The imagery is here dropped, and the thing signified by the juice of the grape is expressed, viz. blood.

'Unto the horse bridles.' i.e. Up to the bridles of the horses employed in the work of destruction. (See Rev. 16:14; and Rev. 19:14, 15, where the agents employed are an army of horsemen.)

'A thousand and six hundred furlongs.' i.e. "150 miles, the extent of Palestine." (Ewald.) Mr. Elliott says, " a circuit of this length would exactly form a superficial square of fifty miles. The hill country of Judea between the two seas is about of that extent." " This coincidence was long since noticed by Jerome." (Faber.) " The circumstance confirms the expectation that Palestine may be the destined scene for the final destruction of the antichristian powers. (See Eze. 39:17; Dan. 11:45; Joel 3:12-14.)" -- Hoare. (See also note on 'Armageddon,' Rev. 16:12-16.)

§ 39. *Re-appearance of the Martyrs. (Rev. 15:1-8.)*

Revelation 15:1 - And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

'Great and marvelous.' Something unusual and extraordinary; 'a great wonder.' (See Rev. 12:1.)

'Seven angels.' Special ministers of Divine justice. That angels are thus employed, is evident from various Scriptures. (See 2 Sam. 24:16, 17; 2 Kings 19:35; Acts 12:23.)

Having the seven last plagues.' i.e. Commissioned to inflict the final judgments of heaven, to pour out the full cup of Divine indignation.

Revelation 15:2 - 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.

'A sea of glass.' (See note to Rev. 4:6, where the same image occurs.)

'Mingled with fire.' To indicate that those who stand on the 'sea of glass' (which is the emblem of atoning blood, and here indicates the basis of the security of the redeemed,) have been 'baptized with fire,' as well as with the Holy Ghost, purified by trial, as gold in the furnace. (See Matt.3:11; Matt. 20:21, 22; 1 Peter 1:7; 1 Peter 4:12, 13.)

Revelation 15:3 - And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

'Song of Moses.' The reference is to the triumphant song of the Israelites after their deliverance. (See Exod 15.) This, mingling with the anthem to the Lamb, unites the praises of the Church in all ages, whether on earth or in heaven.

Revelation 15:4 - 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.

'All nations shall come and worship before thee.' The antecedent, if not the cause of this universal homage to Christ, is to be judgments; 'for thy judgments are made manifest.' May not this indicate, that until then the world will refuse to bow? Not till the apostasy is removed will the world acknowledge Christ.

Revelation 15:5 - And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened

'The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony' was opened. i.e. The holy of holies, where the covenant and commandments of God are kept, was opened, that from thence might come forth the angels commissioned to destroy.

Revelation 15:6 - 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.

'Clothed in pure and white linen,' as commissioned priests of God. (See Exod 28:39, 40; Lev. 16:4.) For 'golden girdles,' see Exod 28:27-29. Here they are the emblem of authority. (See Dan. 10:5; Rev. 1:13.)

Revelation 15:7 - 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.

One of the four beasts.' One of the cherubim supporting the throne. (See note to Rev. 4:7, 8.)

'Seven golden vials.' Incense bowls filled with the wrath of the unchangeable God. (See Rev. 14:10.)

Revelation 15:8 - And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

'Filled with smoke' -- 'no man was able to enter.' A representation of the Divine glory similar to that manifested on Sinai. (See Psalm 18:8; Heb. 12:29.) "Two purposes seem to be answered by this imagery. The first is, that the smoke excludes all intercessors from the temple--(compare 2 Chron. 5:13, 14) -- no remission is to be shewn in the execution of the Divine judgments. The second is, that inasmuch as the veiling of himself in clouds and darkness is often predicted of God (see Exod 19:18, seq.; Psalm 18:8, seq.; Isaiah 6:4), so we may regard the mysterious majesty of the Godhead as symbolized by imagery such as that before us." (Stuart.)

The appearance of the martyrs is here, as elsewhere, the immediate precursor of judgments. (See Rev. 7:9-17.) Once more the sea of glass appears before the throne, not as before 'clear as crystal,' but now mingled with fire, perhaps pointing to the coming vengeance as 'the wrath of the Lamb,' rejected blood becoming consuming fire. On this sea of glass -- the basis of their security--stand the men who have gotten the victory, having harps of God in their hands; and they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. As the heavenly anthem dies away, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven -- the Holy of Holies -- opens, revealing a despised law and a rejected gospel, and the seven angels come out of the temple having the seven plagues. They

are clothed in priestly garments -- white linen, emblematic of their purity -- and golden girdles, emblematic of their power. As they advance, they receive at the hands of one of the four living creatures seven golden incense bowls, full of the wrath of that God who liveth for ever and ever. The glory of Jehovah now fills the place, and no man is able to enter into the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels are fulfilled.

This entire vision (that of the 14th and 15th chapters), like that of the 7th chapter (which precedes the judgments of the trumpets), is preparatory in its character. The severity of the trial to which the elect are exposed, their duty in this emergency, their final security, and the certainty of the judgments about to fall upon the wicked, are all indicated; but no actual destruction is as yet supposed to have taken place. The signs witnessed by the apostle are but the pledges and tokens of coming retribution.

§ 40. *The Seven last Plagues. (Chap. 16:1-16.)*

Revelation 16:1 - 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.

'Out of the temple.' i.e. From God who dwells there. (Compare Rev. 9:13, 'a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God;' Rev. 18:4, 'a voice from heaven;' and Rev. 19:5, 'a voice out of the throne.')

Revelation 16:2 - 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 worshipped his image.

'A noisome and grievous sore.' "For the nature of the ulcer here mentioned, compare Deut. 28:35. The whole of this first plague corresponds with that described in Exod 9:8-11, as inflicted upon the Egyptians. Thus, the punishment commences with loathsome disease." (Stuart.) It falls 'upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.' (See Rev. 13:15, 16.)

Revelation 16:3 - 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.

'As the blood of a dead man.' (See Exod 7:20-25; and Rev. 18:4. The variation in the imagery being that here the blood is as the blood of a dead man, -- dark and almost black.

'Every living soul died in the sea.' In the 8th chapter (Rev. 8:8, 9) the judgment is limited to 'a third part;' here it is universal.

Revelation 16:4 - And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

Revelation 16:5 - 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.

Revelation 16:6 - For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

Revelation 16:7 - And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Upon the rivers and fountains of waters.' In Rev. 8:10, 11, a portion only of the fountains become bitter and poisonous; here all become blood. The appropriateness of the punishment is recognized by 'the angel of the waters.' (See note to Rev. 14:18.)

Revelation 16:8 - And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

Revelation 16:9 - 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.

'Upon the sun.' In Rev. 8:12, the imagery presented is partial darkness, ominous gloom; here it is scorching heat, occasioning blasphemous rage. Impenitence continues.

Revelation 16:10 - 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,

Revelation 16:11 - And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

'The seat of the beast.' i.e. The throne or seat of empire, the metropolis of antichrist.

'Darkness' inspires gloom and terror. (See Exod 10:21-23.) Men 'gnaw their tongues,' because of 'pains and sores.' There seems to be a similarity between this plague and the judgments before recorded (Rev. 9:2, 5); 'the air darkened,' and 'torment as the torment of a scorpion.'

Revelation 16:12 - 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.

'The great river Euphrates.' See note to Rev. 9:14, where the angels are loosed which had been 'bound in the great river Euphrates.' Here the 'water' is 'dried up,' 'that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.' The drying up of the river would seem to be a figure taken from the fall of ancient Babylon, where the turning aside of the Euphrates, by which the river was left dry, enabled the Medes and Persians to enter the city. This drying up would seem, therefore, to indicate the removal of some impediment to the ruin of the spiritual Babylon. The object is stated to be, 'that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.' But who are these 'kings of the East?' or kings from the rising of the sun? They are evidently agents of the Most High, as was Cyrus; they are enemies of the beast, for it is against these 'kings' that the 'kings of the earth,' and of the whole world (Rev. 16:14-16), are gathered together to battle -- the battle of Armageddon. "As the Nile is often employed in Scripture as the emblem of Egypt, so the Euphrates is repeatedly referred to as a symbol of the power of Assyria." (See Isa. 8:7; Isa. 44:27; Jer. 51:36.) Here it can only be regarded as symbolically representing some political barrier which has hitherto been an effectual check to eastern incursions. The drying up of the Euphrates would therefore seem to imply the removal of some restraint hitherto imposed on eastern power, in consequence of which, under spiritual guidance, it is brought into action as an executioner of Divine judgment.

What that hindrance may be, it is impossible to say -- time must reveal it; as also who are the kings or powers of the East. There, too, as well as in the North, remain millions of men -- warlike, unyielding, fanatical, untouched by missionary efforts, papal or Protestant, ready at any moment, like rolling water, to deluge the West, should the command ever be given to them to scourge a corrupt and idolatrous community. It is, however, very difficult to distinguish the superhuman, from agency which is of the earth. In the 19th chapter, where the battle of Armageddon is more fully described, actual and literal slaughter is obviously intended; but the agency is Divine -- the sword that slays is the sword of Christ 'proceeding out of his mouth.' (In reference to the possibility of spiritual rather than human agency being employed, see the general observations which follow the notes on Revelation 9.)

Revelation 16:13 - 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.

'Three unclean spirits, like frogs.' The frog was regarded as an unclean animal. (See Exod 8:6.) Here we are distinctly told that these three unclean spirits are 'the spirits of devils,' i.e. the spirits of the devils which have been embodied in 'the dragon' (paganism), in 'the beast' (papal tyranny), and in the 'false prophet' (the last and, as yet, undeveloped form of antichrist). These three are under the direction of Satan (the fourth), who gathers them and their followers together at Armageddon (Rev. 16:16). They work miracles (2 Thess. 2:9), the effect of which is to induce the 'kings of the earth' to 'set themselves against the Lord and against his anointed.' (See Psalm 2; Exod. 5; Zech. 14; Joel 3:2.)

The antichrist is here for the first time styled 'the false prophet.' The phrase 'a false prophet' is applied in the Acts 13:6 to 'a sorcerer' 'a Jew' -- Barjesus. In the Old Testament the false prophets appear to have been men who (often gifted with great powers) flattered the pride, and pandered to the vices and prejudices of the people. They were men eminently popular; persons of whom all men spake well. (See Luke 6:26.) What they did and said appears to have been said and done in the name of God, and professedly by his authority; while the spirit and tendency of their whole procedure was worldly, selfish, and Satanic. The application of this term to antichrist, and his designation (as if to mark eminence in evil) of 'the false prophet,' would seem to indicate, first, personality -- he is a man, not a system; secondly, pretension, partaking of falsehood -- he affects to be what he is not; and, thirdly, prophetic claims -- he is a prophet, i.e., he professes to be a God -- sent person, probably he claims to be one predicted of -- the world's Messiah -- the distinguished deliverer of humanity -- the one to whom the Jewish mind, rightly rejecting the crucified one, has ever pointed--the theme of myth and fable in all ages; miracles attest his claims, and all but the elect fall down and worship. (Comp. Rev. 13:13, 14; and Matt. 24:24.)

Revelation 16:14 - 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.

That great day of God Almighty.' " The day of Jehovah is everywhere in the Old Testament a name for a day of evil, and mostly one of sore punishment. (See 'the great day of the Lord,' in Zeph. 1:14-

18; and compare Eze. 13:5; Joel 1:15; Joel 2:11; Isaiah 13:6, et al. See also Matt. 7:22; Matt. 26:29; Acts 2:18; 2 Thess. 1:10, where it refers to the day of Christ's coming.)"--Stuart.

Revelation 16:15 - Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

'Behold I come as a thief.' This well-known reference to our Lord's own words clearly indicates that the battle referred to is connected with the coming of the Lord.

Revelation 16:16 - And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

'Armageddon.' The mount of Megiddo. 'Megiddo was a village in the hilly country, near to mount Tabor. There Deborah and Barak destroyed Sisera and his host (Judges 5:19); there king Josiah was slain by the invader from Egypt. (2 Kings 23:29, 30; 2 Chron. 35:22.) But what John particularly had his eye upon was probably the passage in Zechariah 12:11) which speaks of a future and a great mourning over the slain in the valley of Megiddo. Into a valley ominous of overthrow and slaughter, then, the unclean spirits, under the especial guidance of a superintending Providence (comp. Rev. 17:17) conduct the assembled forces of the beast and his allies; and there, in due time, they come to a final end (see Rev. 19:19, seq.) by the interposition of an almighty conqueror." (Stuart.)

"This plain, called by way of eminence 'the great plain' in Scripture, and elsewhere 'the great plain or field of Esdraelon' -- the 'field of Megiddo' -- 'the Galilean plain' -- we found one vast meadow, covered with the richest pasture. It has been a chosen place for encampment in every contest carried on in this country from the days of Nebuchadonosor, king of Assyria, unto the disastrous march of Napoleon Buonaparte from Egypt into Syria. Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian Crusaders and antichristian Frenchmen, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs, warriors of every nation that is under heaven, have pitched their tents on the plains of Esdraelon, and have beheld the banners of their nations wet with the dew of Tabor and Hermon," (Clarke's Travels.)

"Whatever be the last antichrist, it is obvious from Scripture that its fall is to be in Palestine. The 11th of Daniel (Dan. 11), in a passage perfectly parallel to the prophecy of the man of sin in the Thessalonians, thus describes the end of his career: 'And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.' There, in the temple of God, upon mount Sion, he will presumptuously assert the impious pretensions of Ante--Messiah, aim at being 'like the Most High,' and 'shew himself that he is God,' and in that same spot he shall meet his end. At Armageddon the confederate hosts shall be gathered together, and there shall they be discomfited, like Sennacherib of old, when invading and threatening the destruction of the holy city." (Burgh.)

It will be observed that the gathering together is all that is recorded here. The battle or slaughter is subsequently described in the 19th chapter.

The interjectional passage forming the 15th verse (Rev. 16:15) is very striking as introduced. It is the great time of trial referred to by our Lord. The beast is now exercising all the powers attributed to him in Rev. 13:13, 14.) The very elect are in danger; and now it is that the voice of warning and of consolation rises alike above seductions and threats, and to the listening ear brings warning, hope, and comfort.

Mr. Stuart, speaking of this chapter generally, says: " A literal fulfillment is not to be sought after. It is enough to suppose that the enemies of the Church shall be annoyed on the land and on the sea, i.e. everywhere." But surely much more is implied than this I Why Mr. Stuart and others should regard the judgments denounced against the Egyptians by Moses as literally inflicted, and yet deem it extravagant to imagine that any such miraculous interposition of Divine power can ever again occur, it seems difficult to say. Everything in this wondrous book indicates that the last days will be marked by that more direct interposition of God which was usual under the Jewish dispensation, and frequent in the planting of the Christian Church. The laws of nature are not immutable, nor is it any answer to prophetic intimations of coming wrath to say, that " since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." (2 Pet. 3:4.) It may indeed be urged that the book as a whole is symbolic; that the, context is symbolic; that the sealed multitude, the angels flying in mid-air, the harvest, the vintage, the temple in heaven, all are symbolic; and that therefore it is unreasonable to regard the judgments in any other light. The reply is obvious. No reasonable person would desire that the symbolic character of the book should be forgotten, or that the language in which these judgments are prefigured should be subjected to a strictly literal interpretation. No one supposes that material vials are to be poured out, or that when the trumpet of the second angel shall sound, a material mountain will be cast into the sea. All that is contended for (and this should be borne in mind) is, that these images are intended to teach, that direct and extraordinary vengeance from heaven will in the last days be poured out upon antichrist; that the imagery selected is the most appropriate that could have been chosen for conveying to our minds the precise nature and character of these calamities; and that whenever they shall be accomplished, their fulfillment will be found in events harmonizing so exactly with the prophecy, and of a character so grand and impressive, that their accordance with the prediction will be manifest to every one possessed of ordinary spiritual discernment. The reality will prove the exactitude of the statement both with regard to the circumstances and to the degree of suffering. No prediction of blessing or of judgment is in Scripture ever expressed hyperbolically. In Luke 19:40, we read -- 'The stones would cry out.' This is hyperbolic. In the 44th verse of the same chapter (Luke 19:44) it is said, 'They shall not leave in thee one stone upon another.' This is not hyperbolic, being a declaration or prediction of judgment. The event has proved that it was not an exaggerated statement, but calculated to leave a just and exact impression of the utter desolation which it predicted. It is necessary, in reading the Apocalypse, thus to distinguish between highly figurative descriptions, and simple denunciations of wrath.

Probability is in favor of the hypothesis that these judgments, 'the seven last plagues, in which is filled up the wrath of God,' are 'the third woe,' referred to, but not delineated in the 11th chapter and 14th verse (Rev. 11:14), -- the immediate precursors of final victory.

§ 41. *The Consummation. (Rev. 16:17-21.)*

Revelation 16:17 - 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.

'Into the air.' Probably intimating that in this element the last dreadful storm is engendered.

'From the throne.' i.e. From him who sitteth thereon.

'It is done.' i.e. The last stroke is given, the contest is ended, the kingdoms of this world are about to become the 'kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' (See Rev. 11:15.)

Revelation 16:18 - 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.

'A great earthquake.' The greatest commotion that earth has witnessed since the creation. The language of the verse seems intended to intensify to the utmost. (See Rev. 11:19.)

Revelation 16:19 - 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.

'The great city.' Great Babylon--put for Rome. (See Rev. 17:18.) In the 18th chapter of this book this scene of ruin is minutely described.

'Divided into three parts.' Probably referring to the chasms in the earth occasioned by the earthquake which swallowed up the city. (See Rev. 18:18, where volcanic action appears to be intended.)

'The cities of the nations.' Probably the capitals of the various kings confederated with the beast sharing a similar fate.

'The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.' (See note on Rev. 14:9, 10.)

Revelation 16:20 - And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

'Every island fled away.' (For similar imagery see Psalm 18:7-15; and Isaiah 34:4, as indicating an entire and total change of things.)

Revelation 16:21 - 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.

'A great hail'--' the weight of a talent.' " The Attic talent was about 5 lbs. troy weight; the Jewish talent about 114 lbs. troy. Understood either way, the horrors of such a storm are inconceivably great. This would seem to be part of the agency by which Babylon is utterly destroyed. (See Rev. 18:21 -- thrown down, as with a great millstone.) The blasphemy occasioned by the plague appears to be parallel to the anger of the nations (Rev. 11:18), connected as it also is with an earthquake and 'great hail.' (Rev. 11:19.)

This consummation is the destruction of antichrist; the termination of that mystery of iniquity which, commencing as an element of evil in the primitive Church (xii. 1), is traced through the subsequent stages of the Church's history, until it disappears in the ruins of that mighty city which is now overwhelmed by Divine indignation.

It is possible, however, that this interpretation is too literal; that the 'great earthquake' symbolizes some frightful convulsion in society; and that 'the great city,' 'the cities of the nations,' 'great Babylon,' may mean the empire of antichrist rather than its metropolis. In this case the 18th chapter must be interpreted in the same way, and the whole must be regarded as representing the ruin of that great reigning system of spiritual wickedness of which antichrist is the head, rather than the destruction of Rome. Each scheme has its difficulties. "That the city of the Caesars and the Popes is destined to perish literally in some such manner, is a notion that has prevailed from very early times; and even Gregory the Great (A.D. 590) avows his belief in the tradition." Those who hold to the mystical view, suppose 'the great earthquake' (Rev. 16:18) to prefigure a European revolution of prodigious force, by which the empire of antichrist shall be divided into three parts, and cognate ecclesiastical systems be overthrown. " Whensoever," to adopt the language of Mr. Elliott, "after fearful wars and convulsions, a tripartition like this shall take place in the European commonwealth, it must be regarded as the alarum bell of Christendom." (Conder.)

SUPPLEMENTARY.
REVELATION CHAPTERS XVII. TO XXI.

§ 42. *The Judgment of the Papacy. (Rev. 17:1-18.)*

Revelation 17:1 - And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will chew unto thee the judgment of the' great whore that sitteth upon many waters.

(The supplementary character of this communication is indicated by its being imparted by 'one of the seven angels which had the seven vials.' He has performed his duty, and now brings in review before John, in picture, a more minute and exact description of the great apostasy.)

'The great whore.' Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre are all represented as harlots by the Old Testament prophets. (See Nahum 3:4; Isaiah 23:17.) Here it is Rome regarded as the head of the papal apostasy.

'Sitteth upon many waters.' i.e. Ruleth over many nations. This is distinctly stated in the 15th verse.

Revelation 17:2 - 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.

'The kings of the earth.' (See Rev. 16:14.) The ruling powers of earth.

'Drunk with the wine of her fornication.' i.e. With her allurements to idolatry and sin. (Compare Jer. 51:7.)

Revelation 17:3 - 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.

'Into the wilderness.' The emblematic wilderness to which the woman fled from the dragon. (See note on Rev. 12:6.)

'A woman' -- the harlot of the 1st verse. The city of Rome, viewed as the ecclesiastical head of the papacy.

'A scarlet-colored beast.' Blood-red power. The old Roman empire here viewed as the instrument of Rome ecclesiastical.

'Full of names of blasphemy' -- 'seven heads and ten horns.' (See notes on Rev. 13:1.)

Revelation 17:4 - And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.

In purple and scarlet.' Ensigns of empire, and denoting magnificence. 'Precious stones.' (See Eze. 38:13.) 'Golden cup full of abominations.' i.e. Holding her intoxicating draught. (See note to Rev. 14:10.)

Revelation 17:5 - And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Mystery.' Mr. Stuart translates this 'mysteriously;' in which case the first part of the verse reads thus: 'And upon her forehead was a name mysteriously written, Babylon the great.' The meaning probably is, that the entire inscription was written in some enigmatical or mysterious manner.

Revelation 17:6 - 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.

Drunken with the blood of the saints.' A figure drawn from the pagan practice of drinking the blood of enemies, said to intoxicate with fury.

'With great admiration.' i.e. With intense wonder that Christian Rome should become another Babylon for idolatry and persecution.

Revelation 17:7 - 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.

'I will tell thee the mystery.' i.e. I will explain the meaning.

Revelation 17:8 - 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.

'The beast that thou sawest.' i.e. The scarlet or blood red beast. (Rev. 17:3.)

'Was and is not.' i.e. Was as the pagan empire; 'is not,' has no duration in that form; 'shall ascend out of the bottomless pit,' shall by Satan be revived again in some new form; 'and go into perdition,' i.e., be finally and for ever overthrown. At this revival, or resurrection from the dead, of the old Roman empire the whole world shall wonder, and even the elect be in danger of being led astray.

Revelation 17:9 - And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

'Here is the mind which hath wisdom.' i.e. "Here is a meaning which compriseth wisdom." (Stuart's Translation.)

'The seven heads are seven mountains.' Rome was built on seven hills. The woman personifying the city (Rev. 17:18) sits on these. No room is left for doubt as to what is intended.

Revelation 17:10 - 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.

'Seven kings,' or successive forms of government; 'five' (mentioned both by Tacitus and Livy as successive) 'are fallen,' viz., kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes of the soldiers; 'one is' (i.e. at the time the apostle saw the vision), emperors; 'the other is not yet come,' the papal power; 'when he cometh he must continue a short space,' i.e. he must remain longer in the possession of power -- the emphasis being on the word continue.

Dr. Maitland objects to kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and tribunes being regarded as successive, on account of the continually "shifting forms of the Roman government;" and Archdeacon Harrison suggests that the reference is rather to seven great monarchies, five of which -- viz., Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Macedon -- had fallen before the time of St. John. The pagan empire of the Roman Caesars, then existing, would be the sixth; the papal power might be the seventh; and the last form of antichrist the eighth.

Revelation 17:11 - And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

'The beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth.' i.e. The embodiment of the last and yet undeveloped form of antichrist--supposed to be a revival of the empire, its worship the beautiful, -- its seat Rome. (See Appendix.)

Revelation 17:12 - 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.

'Ten horns.' (See note to Rev. 13:1.)

'No kingdom as yet.' The ten kingdoms which broke out of the empire were as yet absorbed in Rome.

'One hour with the beast.' Signifying that these governments will be tributary to, or in alliance with, the beast, during his reign.

Receive power 'as kings' one hour with the beast. The probability is, that the ten royalties ultimately appear as kingless democracies.

Revelation 17:13 - These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

Revelation 17:14 - 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.

'These shall make war.' Here again is a distinct reference to the kings or powers of the earth setting themselves against Christ.

Revelation 17:15 - And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

'The waters are,' i.e. Symbolize. (See Rev. 17:1.)

Revelation 17:16 - 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.

Hate the whore.' The whore, as we have already seen, is Rome, viewed as the ecclesiastical head of the papacy. The 'ten horns' -- the European powers are to 'hate' her, to make her desolate, to devour and to destroy her. The meaning seems to be, that Rome at this period will cease to be the ecclesiastical head of Christendom. Torn by the democracies referred to in the 12th verse (Rev. 17:13), she is to be utterly ruined and trampled upon by her own subjects -- the very nations which have been so long subject to her.

Revelation 17:17 - For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

Revelation 17:18 - And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

'For God hath put in their hearts.' The hand of Providence in this coming ruin of Rome papal is here distinctly asserted.

The sword by which the papacy will perish will not be that of righteousness, but of lawlessness; the hands that strike her to the heart will not be Protestant, but papal. The nations are like Pharaoh, judicially hardened, and permitted, while fulfilling unconsciously the Divine will, to proceed onward in wickedness. They break loose from the corrupt and apostate church of Rome, only to

give their kingdoms to an antichrist, no longer papal, but practically pagan; the head and embodiment of a pantheistic polytheism; the Babel erection of the last times; the center of wealth, of beauty, of luxury, of sensuality, of civilization, and of commerce; the great and last antagonist of spiritual Christianity. But not for ever; only 'until the words of God shall be fulfilled,' i.e. until the time shall come for Christ to reign.

This last antichrist, the 'son of perdition' (2 Thess. 2:3), cannot be assumed to be in all respects identical with the harlot mother; and yet there are many points of resemblance, signifying that the one is the image of the other.

§ 43. *The Fall of Babylon. (Rev. 18:1-5.)*

Revelation 18:1 - And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

'Another angel.' One different from the interpreter of the preceding chapter -- a gloriously resplendent angel.

Revelation 18:2 - 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.

Babylon the great is fallen.' (See note to Rev. 14:8.)

'The habitation of devils.' See Isaiah 13:21, 22, where 'forest devils' (so Mr. Stewart translates) are said to dance among the ruins of ancient Babylon. Also Isaiah 34:14, 15, where similar language occurs in relation to Idumea. The general idea is, utter desolation. See also Matt. 12:43, where the unclean spirit is represented as wandering through dry or desert places.

Revelation 18:3 - 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.

'Wrath of her fornication.' (See note Rev. 14:8.)

'Merchants of the earth waxed rich.' Implying a rich and luxurious city, the center of the commerce and wealth of the world.

Revelation 18:4 - 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.

'Come out of her, my people.' This warning is modeled after the ancient prophets. (See Isaiah 48:20; Jer. 1:8; Jer. 51:6, 9, 45; so also is Lot warned in Gen. 19.) -- Stuart. The parties warned to flee from the city are probably like Lot, obliged to leave all, in order to save their lives.

Revelation 18:5 - For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

'Her sins have reached unto heaven.' (See Jer. 51:9. The idea is, that, like Abel's blood, her sins cry to God for vengeance.)

§ 44. The Fall of Babylon -- (continued). (Rev. 18:6-24).

Revelation 18:6 - 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.

Revelation 18:7 - 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.

Revelation 18:8 - 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.

Revelation 18:9 - 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,

Revelation 18:10 - 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.

Revelation 18:11 - And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more

Revelation 18:12 - 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,

Revelation 18:13 - And cinnamon, and odours, 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.

Revelation 18:14 - 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.

Revelation 18:15 - The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

Revelation 18:16 - 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!

Revelation 18:17 - For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many ac trade by sea, stood afar off,

Revelation 18:18 - And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!

Revelation 18:19 - 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.

Revelation 18:20 - Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

Revelation 18:21 - 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.

Revelation 18:22 - 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;

Revelation 18:23 - 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.

Revelation 18:24 - And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

This scene, instead of being minutely analyzed, must be viewed in its grand and magnificent outline. The sudden destruction of so great a city, sitting in queenly pride; the lament over her of kings, merchants, and traders, -- of all who participated in, and of all who profited by, her luxury; the song of joy in heaven followed by the silence and darkness of utter ruin; is a sublime picture of what will one day be realized.

"It strikes one at first," says Mr. Stuart, "as somewhat strange, inasmuch as neither ancient Babylon nor Rome was ever remarkable in any considerable degree for maritime trade, that so much prominence should here be given to the class of men who 'ply the sea,' as mourners over the fall of the great city. Babylon and Rome were both at some distance from the sea, and could neither of them be called sea-port towns in any tolerable sense of the word. But it should be remembered, however, that both of them were at no great distance from seaports; both were on rivers navigable by small craft and lighters; and both carried on the importation of foreign luxuries to such an extent as rendered necessary the employment of much shipping."

This graphic picture of the fall of Babylon cannot be intended to represent the ruin of the papacy, for that is described as having already taken place through the agency of the kings of the earth. (See Rev. 17:16.) The Babylon spoken of in this chapter is not destroyed by, but lamented over by princes and merchants. Her ruin is effected at a time when she is the center of the world's commerce, and the destruction is as sudden and complete as if a thunderbolt from heaven struck

her. Her plagues come 'in one day.' This must, therefore, be a description of the utter ruin of Rome, as the seat of the last great apostasy; and effected by direct judgments from heaven. How can man be the instrument, consistently with the language of verses 8 to 11, and 15 to 23 (Rev. 18:8-11; 15-23)? Volcanic agency would seem to be employed.

Apart from all preconceived theories, the language would seem to describe the overthrow of a great city, that city the emporium of the commerce of the world; its destruction effected by fire and earthquake, as sudden and as complete as that of Sodom and Gomorrah. The city is generally supposed to be Rome. As yet no such desolation has taken place, nor has Rome ever attained to the height of prosperity which the language of this chapter implies. It may be conjectured, therefore, that there is a period yet to come in which Rome will once again be the capital of the world, -- a period of unparalleled commercial enterprise; that at this period she will be the seat of antichrist, under a new and revived form, and as such will receive the plagues by which she is to be finally and utterly destroyed. (For the mystical view, see observations at the end of Rev. 16.)

§ 45. *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb. (Rev. 19:1-10.)*

Revelation 19:1 - And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.

Revelation 19:2 - 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.

'The great whore.' The city of Rome personified by the woman.

'Which did corrupt the earth.' i.e. By her idolatry and corrupt worship tending to impurity. (2 Chron. 21:11.) In Rev. 11:18, a similar phrase occurs -- 'destroy them which destroy the earth.'

Revelation 19:3 - And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

'Her smoke rose up for ever and ever.' The smoke of her burning. (Rev. 18:9.) See note to Rev. 14:11.

Revelation 19:4 - And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

'Four and twenty elders.' (See note to Rev. 4:4.)

'Four beasts.' (See note to Rev. 4:7-11; and to Rev. 5:8.)

Revelation 19:5 - 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.

'A voice out of the throne.' "That this is the voice of Messiah sitting upon the throne, is clear from the phrase, 'Praise our God.' There is nothing singular in this. (Comp. John 20:17, 'I ascend to my Father and to your Father, to my God and your God.' See also Heb. 2 seq.; and Rev. 18:4.) Thus does the great Captain of Salvation assent to, and confirm the rejoicing of his followers." (Stuart.)

Revelation 19:6 - 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.

Revelation 19:7 - Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

'His wife hath made herself ready.' "Everywhere in the prophets of the Old Testament God is represented as the husband of Israel or Judah; an image derived from two sources -- first, from the fact that a nation is usually personified under the image of a female; and, secondly, that the connection between husband and wife is the dearest and most sacred of all. (Gen. 2:24.) The wife is, by her very relation to her husband, bound to faithfulness, purity, obedience, and affection; the husband is to protect, provide for, and cherish the wife. Hence the frequency of this imagery in the Old Testament. e.g. Isaiah 1:1; Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; Isaiah 62:5; Hosea 2:19, 20. The whole of Canticles exhibits this idea greatly enlarged, and, as it were, individualized, if it is to be understood in a spiritual sense. It is frequent also in the New Testament. e.g. 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-32; Rev. 21:2; et al." (Stuart.)

Revelation 19:8 - 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.

'The righteousness of saints.' i.e. The fine linen is a symbol of the righteousness of the saints. (See Phil. 3:9.) According to Doddridge, it is "righteous acts of saints, acceptable in Christ, by whose grace they have been performed." In this case the symbol represents their sanctification, rather than their justification, the latter being exclusively the work of Christ.

Revelation 19:9 - 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.

'Called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' i.e. Destined for this honor. "The idea of a feast, as an image of the happiness of heaven, was a familiar one with the Jews. (See and comp. Luke 14:15; Luke 16:23, Lazarus reclining with Abraham at the table; Luke 22:16; Mark 14:25; Rev. 22:1, 2.)" -- Stuart. But here the imagery implies slaughter -- the 'supper of the Great God' (Rev. 19:17), is the destruction of the enemies of the Church.

'The true sayings of God.' Signifying intense earnestness, and an anxious desire on the part of the angel to impress these great things upon John. The same words are in substance repeated in Rev. 21:5; and Rev. 22:6, where the same events are predicted; as if they were too great and too good for human belief, without a treble assurance of their certainty.

Revelation 19:10 - 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.

'I am thy fellow-servant.' i.e. I, like thee, am a creature and subordinate. God alone is to be worshipped. (Comp. Phil. 2:10.)

'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.' As if he had said, "we both partake of the prophetic spirit; we are both alike witnesses of that same Christ who is the spirit, the sum and substance of all prophecy; therefore, as 'brethren' holding the same testimony, we equally worship God alone."

Revelation 19:11 - 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.

Revelation 19:12 - 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.

Revelation 19:13 - And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

'A white horse.' White is the emblem of purity and triumph (see Rev. 6:2); the rider is one 'faithful' to his promises (Heb. 3:2); 'true' in the execution of his threatenings (Rev. 19:2); 'his eyes' are 'as aflame of fire' (see Rev. 1:14); he wears 'many crowns,' or diadems, emblem of universal rule; bears on his brow 'an uncommunicable name' (comp. Rev. 2:17); is 'clothed with a vesture dipped in blood,' emblem of slaughtered foes (see Isaiah 43:1-3); and 'his name is called the Word of God' (John 1:1). This description is conclusive. It is none other than the Son of God -- the Lamb.

Revelation 19:14 - And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Revelation 19:15 - 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.

Revelation 19:16 - And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

'Armies in heaven.' Angels and redeemed saints and martyrs; 'white horses'-- 'white linen' (comp. Rev. 3:5, and note to Rev. 19:11); 'a sharp sword,' to destroy (see Isaiah 11:4; also notes to Rev. 1:16, and Rev. 2:12); 'rule them with a rod of iron' (see Psalm 2:9); 'treadeth the winepress' (see Isaiah 53:1-3); 'on his thigh a name written' (see Jer. 23:6). The inscription is on that part of the trappings of the horse which covered the thigh of the rider.

Revelation 19:17 - 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;

Revelation 19:18 - 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.

'An angel standing in the sun.' Probably the same which have 'power over fire.' (See note to Rev. 14:18.)

'To all the fowls of heaven.' Indicating great slaughter, with none to bury. (See Isaiah 18:6; Jer. 7:33; and Ezek. 39:17, where almost the same words are used.)

The supper of the great God.' The feast ordained and prepared for them by God.

'Free and bond, small and great.' Indicating universality. (See note to Rev. 6:15; and Rev. 13:16.)

Revelation 19:19 - 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.

Revelation 19:20 - 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 worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

Revelation 19:21 - 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.

'The beast and the kings of the earth and their armies.' (See note to Rev. 16:13, 14, where this army is described as being gathered together by evil spirits.)

'These both' (the beast and the false prophet) 'were cast alive into a lake of fire.'

The 'beast,' we have already seen, is the Roman empire, appearing first as 'a great red dragon' in paganism (Rev. 12:3); then as the 'beast out of the sea' -- the papal empire (Rev. 13:1); and, finally, in some form yet to be developed (probably pantheistic), arising out of the ruin of the papal power (Rev. 13:11-17). As the dragon, this power had a personality in the persecuting pagan emperors; as the beast out of the sea, in the popes; in the third and last form, it would seem that its reign is to be very brief, not extending beyond the life of one man, in whom it is to find a center and embodiment. Headed by this individual, who is called the false prophet--the pretended Messiah of the earth (see note to Rev. 16:13), who also works miracles (see Rev. 13:13; comp. with Rev. 19:20), Satan combines all the powers of earth against Christ and true Christianity. Both these (the pantheistic power and the personal antichrist--for a distinction seems to be drawn between the new pantheistic empire and the man who is at the head of it) are here said to be taken and cast alive into a lake of fire. The personification may perhaps be referred to the evil spirits incarnated in these forms of iniquity; for, in Rev. 16:14, we are told that the miracles are worked by 'the spirits of devils.' The distinction drawn between the beast and false prophet, who are cast alive into the lake of fire, and their followers, who are 'slain' with the sword seems to confirm this view. That the parties slain are those who are described in the 16th chapter (Rev. 16:13-16) as gathered together for battle, can scarcely be doubted.

The question now arises, " What is to be understood by this entire symbolic scene entitled, 'the marriage of the Lamb' (Rev. 19:7), and 'the supper of the great God?' (Rev. 19:17.) Obviously a scene of unparalleled destruction. By what agency?" The text replies, by 'the sword' of Christ proceeding 'out of his mouth' (Rev. 19:15). No sword of man then is employed; no struggle ensues; yet direct and actual slaughter is clearly implied.

"In Rev. 14:20, and Rev. 16:16, a geographical site is indicated: 'A thousand and six hundred furlongs' (Rev. 14:20). A circuit of this length would exactly form a superficial square of fifty miles. Now, the hill country of Judea, between the two seas, is about of that extent." (Elliott.) " This coincidence was long since noticed by Jerome." (Faber "The circumstance confirms the expectation that Palestine may be the destined scene for the final destruction of the anti-christian powers. Armageddon (see Rev. 16:16) lies between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. There are not wanting other prophecies which seem to mark out Palestine as the future scene of the fatal battle by which antichrist will be finally overthrown." (See Eze. 39:17; Dan. 11:45; Joel 3:12-14.) -- (Hoare's Harmony

Further, the armies of heaven (the saints and martyrs) are witnesses of the overthrow; and the whole scene is described under the figure of a marriage, and a feast, as consummating the union betwixt Christ and his Church. Long have they been one in heart--long betrothed, as it were; now they are one, personally united, no more to part, and this slaughter of his enemies and theirs is the festal supper which ushers in the eternal union.

What other conclusion can be arrived at than that 'at the end of the days' -- at a time when the last and worst form of antichrist is fully developed -- when persecution to the death has all but extinguished vital Christianity--when faith has fled from earth (Luke 18:8) -- when the pretended Messiah is claiming for himself the crown of Christ -- when in Palestine itself he is asserting his claim to be 'the prophet of the Highest' -- that then, Jesus of Nazareth, the once crucified but now glorified Redeemer will again personally appear, accompanied by his saints, to vindicate his rights, to destroy his enemies, and, finally, to take unto himself the kingdom.

The fact that Palestine is the scene of this last victory, would seem to indicate that the Jews, as a people, have by this time returned to their own land, perhaps laden with the riches of the gentiles, still adhering to their carnal anticipations of a coming Messiah, and but too ready to sanction any pretensions (however idolatrous) which involve the rejection of Jesus, and which are sustained by miraculous powers.

§ 46. *The binding of Satan. (Rev. 20:1-3.)*

Revelation 20:1 - And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

Revelation 20:2 - And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

Revelation 20:3 - 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 imagery here, as everywhere else, is scriptural. David speaks of the 'gates' of death (Psalm 9:13); our Lord tells Peter he will give unto him the 'keys' of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19); in the 9th chapter of this book 'the key of the bottomless pit' is given to the fallen angel; and in the 1st chapter 'the keys of hell and of death' are spoken of as Christ's possession. The 'sealing' of the door reminds us at once of Daniel and of the holy sepulcher. (Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66.)

Whether the 'thousand years' is to be regarded as signifying that precise period, or whether it is simply intended to indicate a very lengthened duration of joy and triumph, is uncertain.

That this entire scene is symbolic, can scarcely be doubted by any one. The descent of the angel from heaven to earth -- the key -- the chain -- the seizure -- the binding -- the shutting up of the criminal -- the seal upon the door -- all imply that Satan will now be withdrawn from the world of which he has been so long the prince, and that he will no more be able to deceive mankind by the revival of idolatry, by corrupting imitations of Christianity, or by vain attempts to deprive the Redeemer of his rightful inheritance; but there is nothing to justify the expectation that moral evil will depart, that human dispositions will be no longer depraved, or that there will be no more need for repentance, faith, or prayer. The most reasonable, because most strictly scriptural, idea in relation to this time appears to be that which was expressed by Samuel Petto, about the middle of the 17th century. He says, "The thousand years will be a glorious time; not absolutely sinless, but comparatively, or compared with any former state of the Church. Possibly it may be ushered in by a personal appearance of Christ in the clouds; but I cannot say that it will be by the personal presence and continuance or reigning of Christ on earth. Now will Ezekiel's city and temple be erected, the glory of which will be, that the name of it from that day shall be Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there. Here will begin the state of the New Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven, and is not by our going up to heaven. Then shall be given to Christ (as Dan 7:14) dominion and glory, and kingdom." (See Bonar's Prophetical Landmarks.)

"That some more glorious and flourishing condition is in reserve for the Church of God than has ever yet been witnessed, may be safely pronounced the prevailing persuasion of those who have studied the Scriptures with the greatest care. When we read (Hab. 2:14; Isa. 11:9) that 'the earth

shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea,' this condition seems prominently pointed out. And thus again, commenting on Isaiah 40, Bishop Lowth observes, that 'the subject of it is the great increase and flourishing state of the Church of God, by the conversion and accession of the heathen nations to it; that the full completion of the prophecy is reserved for future times; that the ample and exalted terms of it, and the great variety of images employed, are designed to give a general idea of the glories of that perfect state of the Church which we are taught to expect in the latter times, when 'the fullness of the gentiles shall come in,' and the Jews shall be converted, and gathered from their dispersion; and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.' (See also Isaiah 2; 11; 24; 25; 59; 60; 66; and see Bishop Butler's Analogy of Religion, Part I. Chap. iii.) (Hoare's Harmony).

"That there should be such a happy period as the millennium; that the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High' (Dan. 7:27); that Christ shall have 'the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession' (Psalm 2:8); that 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea' (Isaiah 11:9); 'that the fullness of the gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved' (Rom. 11:25, 26); in a word, that 'the kingdom of heaven shall be established upon earth,' is the plain and express 'doctrine of Daniel and all the prophets, as well as of St. John; and we daily pray for the accomplishment of it, in praying, 'thy kingdom come.' But of all the prophets, John is the only one who hath declared particularly that it should continue upon earth a thousand years; and the Jewish Church before him, and the Christian Church after him, have further believed and taught that these thousand years will be the seventh millenary of the world." (Bishop Newton.)

§ 47. *The First Resurrection. (Rev. 20:4-6.)*

Revelation 20:4 - 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.

'They lived.' Not surely in their souls, for these were alive already, and are so represented in this very book (Rev. 6:9, 10). Not metaphorically, as implying that they were now first made happy, for this too they already were, for 'blessed from henceforth are the dead who die in the Lord.' (Rev. 14:13.) There is but one meaning left, and that is, the literal return to that living union of body and soul which constitutes our present life, and will again constitute our resurrection state. The word is used precisely in the same sense, Rev. 1:18; Rev. 13:14. (Hoare.)

Revelation 20:5 - But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

'The rest of the dead.' If the martyrs rise only in a spiritual sense, then 'the rest of the dead' rise only in a spiritual sense; but if 'the rest of the dead' really rise, the martyrs rise in the same manner. There is no difference between them; and we should be cautious and tender of making the first resurrection an allegory, lest others should reduce the second into an allegory too, like those whom St. Paul mentions (2 Tim. 2:17, 18); 'Hymeneus and Philetus, who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some.' It is to this first resurrection that St. Paul alludes when he affirms (1 Thess. 4:16) that 'the dead in Christ shall rise first; and (1 Cor. 15:23) that 'every man shall be made alive in his own order, Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming;' and 'then cometh the end, after the general resurrection.' (Bishop Newton.)

Revelation 20:6 - Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

'The first resurrection.' "More than one resurrection seems frequently alluded to in Scripture; as, Luke 14:14, 'at the resurrection of the just;' Luke 20:36, 'they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.' It must have been to this that St. Paul was desirous to attain, because in the general resurrection all will have a part: 'If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.' (Phil. 3:11; comp. also 1 Cor. 15:23; 1 Thess. 4:16.) An earlier admittance to glory reserved for the more eminent servants of God, was certainly the expectation of the primitive Church. We might even point to an instance of it in those 'many bodies of the saints which slept,' and which 'arose' after our Savior's resurrection, 'and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Hoare.)

The symbolic vision continues. The great criminal being removed out of the way, thrones appear, and persons are seen sitting thereon to whom judgment is committed. Whether the thrones are seen by the apostle on earth or in heaven, is not clear; but that the persons permitted or deputed to act as judges are men, and not angels, can scarcely be doubted, after the declaration of Christ, and the teaching of Paul. (See Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:3.)

As this judgment proceeds, an entire class are seen living and reigning with Christ, but whether on earth or in heaven, cannot, from this verse, be fairly asserted. Whether these first fruits unto God and unto Christ are martyrs only, or whether they comprise professors of all ages -- those who in the spirit of martyrs have been consecrated to the service of the Redeemer--is uncertain. The latter is the most probable supposition.

Such is the vision. What does it imply? What teach? Clearly this: that immediately after that signal manifestation of Christ's person, power, and vengeance, so clearly predicted in 2 Thess. 2:8, by which antichrist will be destroyed, and an opposing world awed into submission, that period which is usually termed the reign of Christ and of his saints will commence. What the nature of this reign will be? in what precise manner Christ will manifest himself? whether the partakers of the first resurrection will or will not be visible upon earth? if so, in what bodies they will come? what their duties? and wherein their joy? -- are questions which it is not possible to answer, and in relation to which it may not be wise to hazard conjectures. It is enough to know that in a special manner they will, for a limited though lengthened period, stand in some peculiar relationship to Christ on the one hand, and to the world on the other; that during this period they are emphatically kings and priests, Satan being bound, and they only of the dead raised and re-united to the body. Now emphatically Christ reigns as 'king,' and the seed of the woman bruises the head of the serpent.

Instead of indulging wild imaginations, foolish and dangerous, let the serious reader prayerfully study the following Scriptures, which seem more or less to bear upon this period; some by shewing that dead saints have already risen and appeared on earth in glorified bodies; others that priority in the resurrection is associated with privilege and with suffering. (Matt. 17:3; Matt. 27:53; Mark 16:9, 12, and 14; Phil. 3:10; 1 Cor. 15:23; Heb. 11: 35; and Romans 6:5.)

To argue that it degrades Christ to bring him again from heaven to earth, or to say that the happiness of saints would be lessened by being again inhabitants of this world, is altogether out of place. Christ and his redeemed Church have but one wish, viz., to glorify God; and if that will be promoted by any exhibition of a triumphant reign on earth, the Redeemer will not disdain a second time to plant his foot on Olivet. (See Zech. 14; Joel 3:11, 12; Acts 1:10, 11; Acts 3:20, 21.)

See Appendix E, on the second coming of the Lord.

§ 48. *The final Judgment of Satan. (Rev. 20:7-10.)*

Revelation 20:7 - And when the thousand years are expired Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.

'Satan shall be loosed out of prison.' As at the coming of Christ there appears to have been permitted an unusual development of infernal agency, and an unusual frequency of demoniacal possessions, so, before the final consummation, it appears to be designed that the whole power of Satan shall be let loose, in order the more signally to manifest his defeat.

Revelation 20:8 - 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.

'Gog and Magog.' "We read (Ezek. 39:1) of Gog as a chief prince of Meshech and Tubal; and (Gen. 10:2) of Magog as among the sons of Japheth; 'Gomer, and Magog, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech ;' and it is added (Gen. 10:5), 'By these were the isles of the gentiles divided in their lands.' So that the original European stock might partly have come from Magog." (Elliott.)

"In the vision of Ezekiel, Gog, of the land of Magog, and his confederates, come up against the holy land and people; but they are slaughtered with immense destruction, and Israel is troubled no more (Eze. 38 and Eze. 39.) John, under imagery borrowed from Ezekiel, describes the third and last great effort of the enemies of the Church to destroy her. Ezekiel uses these names to designate distant and savage nations; and in the same way John employs them. Just in the same manner we now employ the word barbarians." (Stuart.)

Revelation 20:9 - 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.

'Breadth of the earth' (or land). i.e. The extent of it (Hab. 1:6).

The camp of the saints, and the beloved city.' " Some capital city in the center of the then extent of the Church; not improbably Jerusalem itself, as the Jews before this period may well be supposed to be restored from their dispersions. (See Psa. 78:68, 'Mount Zion, which he loved.') In this case, and in absence of any more particular mention of the restoration of that people by St. John, the undesigned allusion to it in this verse would be very remarkable. That event is so prominently asserted by the older prophets, that few can hesitate to give it a place among the future prospects of the Church. (See Jer. 32:37; Eze. 20:40-45; Eze. 34:23; Eze. 36:28; Eze. 37:25; Hos. 1:10, 11; Hos. 2:15-19; Joel 3:16-21; Amos 9:11-15; Mic. 5:7-15; Isaiah 11; Isa. 12; Isa. 26; Isa. 40; Isa. 59:20; Isa. 62; Isa. 66.) The omission of any direct mention of it by John might be alleged in confirmation

of the idea that he wrote principally with a view to the gentile portion of the Church." (See Birk's Elements of Prophecy, quoted by Hoare.)

'Fire came down from God out of heaven.' (See Gen. 19; Psalm 11:6; Isaiah 29:6; Eze. 39:6; Eze. 38:22.)

Revelation 20:10 - 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.

'The devil' -- 'cast into the lake of fire.' Here the master spirit -- the great deceiver -- the 'liar from the beginning' -- is cast into that lake of fire where the two inferior 'spirits of devils' embodied in 'the beast' and in 'the false prophet' are tormented for ever.

Questions might be multiplied here were questioning of any avail. Nothing is taught beyond the fact that after the great triumph of truth, after the millennial reign of Christ and his saints, the prince of darkness will again deceive, and nations innumerable (barbarous hordes apparently) be led on by him to destruction. What particular nations Gog and Magog are intended to represent,--what the condition of the peoples thus deceived, -- how this outer world has been separated from the empire so long under the peaceful reign of Christ, -- in what sense they are to be understood as encompassing the righteous, as surrounding a beloved city, as devoured by fire from heaven, -- it is vain to enquire, for none can reply. Secret things belong unto God. The only portion of Scripture that appears to refer to this period is Ezekiel 38 and Eze. 39, and this too must be classed among the things 'hard to be understood.' Perhaps there may be a reference to the reign of Christ being marked by the continued existence of opponents in Psalm 110, 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.'

§ 49. *The final Judgment of Men. (Rev. 20:11-15.)*

Revelation 20:11 - 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.

'A great white throne.' White is the emblem of perfect purity and truth, and in the symbolic language of this book is the peculiar color of things belonging to Christ. Hence in Rev. 6:2, and again in Rev. 19:11, he comes on a white horse; in Rev. 14:14, on a white cloud. (See also Rev. 1:14; and Rev. 7:14.)

'The earth and the heaven fled away.' i.e. They were lost in the excessive brightness of the Divine glory, as the moon and stars flee away before the rising sun. (Compare Psa. 18:7-15; Psa. 77:16-19; and Psa. 114:3-5.)

Revelation 20:12 - 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.

'The book of life.' In this book heaven is symbolically regarded as a city; those admitted to dwell there are citizens and their names are conceived of as inscribed in a register. In Rev. 3:5, the possibility of having the name blotted out of this register is spoken of; the parties here intended are those therefore who have 'endured unto the end.' (See Exo. 32:32; Psa. 56:8; and Dan. 12:1; compare also Rev. 13:8; Rev. 17:8; and Rev. 21:27.) -- (See Stuart.)

'The dead were judged.' All the dead 'small and great;' those only excepted who were partakers of the first resurrection. The books seem to refer to the records of human courts, and the symbol probably implies that every accusation will be clear, defined, and capable of proof. It is obvious that the judgment by works involves universal condemnation, since none are saved whose names are 'not found written in the book of life.' (Rev. 20:15.) At the same time, the phrase 'according to their works,' seems to imply that different degrees of punishment will be awarded. Other scriptures appear to teach this doctrine. (See Luke 12:47, 48.)

Revelation 20:13 - 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.

'Death and hell delivered up the dead.' Properly death and Hades, who are here personified as keepers of the grave and the invisible world. These are represented as giving up their subjects at His bidding who has 'the keys of hell and of death.'

Revelation 20:14 - And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

Revelation 20:15 - And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the fire.

'Death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.' The meaning seems to be that death and Hades are now to cease. There shall be no more death; no more world of spirits waiting for judgment; mortality is swallowed up of life. It is evident from this passage, that being cast into the 'lake of fire' does not necessarily imply eternal torment. That doctrine must stand on other ground. 'The second death' here implies destruction; for death and Hades, as personifications of the grave and the world of separate spirits, cannot suffer pain. The last enemy is now destroyed. (See 1 Cor. 15:26, 54.)

That this final resurrection and last judgment embraces many of the redeemed, is evident from the production of the book of life. The first resurrection is therefore clearly distinct from this, being confined either to martyrs or to eminent saints and sufferers. Further, on the first resurrection there is no reference made to the works, good or bad, of those who partake of it. They seem rather to anticipate the final reward, and to come with Christ to judgment as witnesses rather than participators in the solemnities of that day. Perhaps this will be the day of their final--vindication, God will declare their righteousness. final--vindication, have long rested from their labors; their works may now follow them.

§ 50. *The New Jerusalem. (Rev. 21:1-8.)*

Revelation 21:1 - 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.

'A new heaven and a new earth.' i.e. A renovated world -- the 'former' having 'passed away'--been 'dissolved' or burnt up.' (See Isaiah 65:17; Isa. 66:22; and 2 Peter 3:13.) 'No more sea.' Regarded as an agency of destruction: it had 'given up its dead.'

Revelation 21:2 - And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven.' (See Gal. 4:26; Heb. 11:16; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 3:12.) This would appear to be the re-union of the souls and bodies of the saints; the spirits of the just--the redeemed Church -- the Jerusalem of God now come down from heaven, and are reunited to risen and spiritual bodies.

Revelation 21:3 - 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.

'The tabernacle of God is with men.' i.e. God now dwells on earth, his tent or tabernacle being in the midst of his saints. (Exodus 40:38; Eze. 37:28; Eze. 43:7-9.)

Revelation 21:4 - 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.

'God shall wipe away all tears.' i.e. By removing everything that can occasion pain or sorrow. (See Isaiah 25:8.)

Revelation 21:5 - 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.

'I make all things new.' (See Isaiah 43:19; Jer. 31:22.)

Revelation 21:6 - 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.

Revelation 21:7 - He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

I am Alpha and Omega.' (See Rev. 1:8; Rev. 2:8, and notes.)

Revelation 21:8 - 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.

'Fearful.' Those who apostatized from fear of persecution.

'Whoremongers and sorcerers.' Partakers of the impure and Satanic idol worship.

'Liars.' Deceivers, inventors and propagators of false doctrine intended to deceive and lead astray; persons who exchanged the true God for a false one. (Rom. 1:25.)

The differences between this new or renovated world, and the state of the earth during the millennial reign of Christ (whatever is to be understood by that phrase), are many and important. During the millennium the inhabitants of the earth are not possessed of spiritual bodies; the wicked sin and die; men maintain national distinctions (see Isa. 2:2-4; and Isa. 65:20; also Zech. 8:22); the sea is in existence (Rev. 20:13); the righteous die (Isa. 65:20); the 'last enemy' is not destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26). But after the millennium--at the period now under review--the earth is renovated; the former earth and heaven flee away (Rev. 21:1); there is no more sea (Rev. 21:1); no more sorrow, pain, or death (Rev. 21:4); no more sin, for none enter the New Jerusalem but those whose names are inscribed in the Lamb's book of life. (Rev. 21:27.) These differences confirm the view taken by Petto, that the "thousand years (if that time is to be taken literally) will be glorious not absolutely, but comparatively;" that " it maybe ushered in by a personal appearance of Christ," but perhaps not distinguished " by the continuance or reigning of Christ."

§ 51. The New Jerusalem -- (continued). (Rev. 21:9-21.)

Revelation 21:9 - 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 chew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

'The bride -- the Lamb's wife.' The redeemed Church presented under the figure of a city. In the 11th chapter (Rev. 11:1) the spiritual Church is small -- the inner court of the temple contains all the visible church, as opposed to the spiritual, is 'the holy city.' Now the spiritual Church is the holy city, indicating that the distinction between nominal and real Christians is known no more. All are spiritual -- the visible is the real.

Revelation 21:10 - And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

Revelation 21:11 - Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

'The holy Jerusalem.' (See note on Rev. 21:2.)

Revelation 21:12 - 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

Revelation 21:13 - On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

Revelation 21:14 - And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Revelation 21:15 - And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

Revelation 21:16 - 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.

Revelation 21:17 - 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.

Revelation 21:18 - And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

Revelation 21:19 - 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 ;

Revelation 21:20 - The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the. eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

Revelation 21:21 - 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.

'Twelve gates' -- 'twelve angels' -- 'names of the twelve tribes' -- 'twelve foundations' -- 'names of the twelve apostles' -- 'twelve thousand furlongs' -- 'twelve times twelve (144) cubits' -- 'twelve pearls.' (See Eze. 40; Eze. 48.)

The constant symbolical use of this number has an obvious reference to the twelve tribes and twelve apostles. '1 As the Christian Church was primarily Jewish, so perhaps, connecting the predictions of Ezekiel with those of the Apocalypse, we may consider these Jewish emblems as importing the reingrafting of the natural branches upon the original stock, or the restoration of Israel. (Rev. 11:15-19; Eph. 2:19, 20.)" -- Conder.

§ 52. *The New Jerusalem (continued). (Rev. 21:22-27; and Rev. 22:1-5.)*

Revelation 21:22 - And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

'No temple therein.' No one spot more sacred or holy than another; no 'veil,' no sanctuary, no sacrifice, 'they see his face' (Rev. 22:4), they are in his immediate presence.

Revelation 21:23 - 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.

'The Lamb is the light thereof.' As Christ is 'the temple,' so he is the luminary of the new city; ever 'dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto' (1 Tim. 6;16).

Revelation 21:24 - 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.

Revelation 21:25 - And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

Revelation 21:26 - And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.

Revelation 21:27 - And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

'The kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto it.' "This part of the description is an application of the prophetic language of Isaiah, in which Jerusalem is apostrophized as a city, but under the same personification, intending unquestionably by 'the city of the Lord,' the true Israel (see Isaiah 60:3-14, 19, 20; Isa. 62:5, 12). The real purport of the figurative language seems to be, that the celestial Jerusalem will gather into itself all that is truly precious, glorious, or excellent upon earth, all the elements of intellectual or moral grandeur, all the accumulated wealth of true knowledge and wisdom, as well as all that can conduce to immortal felicity and perpetual advancement." (Conder.)

Revelation 22:1 - And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

'A pure river of water of life.' Emblem of joy and felicity ever fresh and flowing -- deep, calm, living (Psalm 46:4; Psalm 36:8; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 47:1-12; see also Rev. 7:16,17.)

Revelation 22:2 - 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.

'Tree of life.' (See Gen. 3:22.) It yields its fruit full of immortal life and renewed youth for the healing of the nations. (See Ezek. 47:12.) Perhaps intended to teach us that through all eternity there must be something to remind us that we exist only by permission; that none but God can be essentially immortal, 'who only hath immortality' (1 Tim. 6:16).

Revelation 22:3 - 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

Revelation 22:4 - And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

Revelation 22:5 - 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.

'There shall be no more curse.' (See Zech. 14:11.) i.e. No blight, nothing to destroy or injure. (Comp. Gen. 3:17.)

Such will be the happy condition, the blessed estate of 'the sons of God,' when sanctified and cleansed. Christ presents them to himself 'a glorious Church, nor having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish,' 'faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.' (Eph. 5:27; Jude 24.) From this new world -- the final abode of the righteous -- will be excluded everything that is unclean and false; everything that is unlike the ever-blessed God, the holy and the true.

§ 53. *Concluding Exhortations and Warnings. (Rev. 22:6-21.)*

Revelation 22:6 - And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done,

Sent his angel to shew unto his servants.' (See Rev. 1:1, and note.)

Revelation 22:7 - Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

Behold, I come quickly.' The message is Christ's, speaking by the angel. (See Rev. 3:11; and Rev. 22:7, 12, and 20.) The declaration is six times repeated in this book, implying deep earnestness, and indicating the importance of our keeping this coming of the Lord continually in mind.

'Blessed is he that keepeth.' (See Rev. 1:3, and note.) Vitranga on this place offers the following appropriate prayer " May the Lord bestow this grace and favor on us who have employed some time and pains in the study and explication of this book, that some part of this blessing also may descend to us." Bishop Newton adds, in the words of Nehemiah: "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to thy mercy." If by the Divine blessing any reader should derive spiritual benefit from the present attempt to elucidate this holy book, let him put up the same petition for the writer (1 Thess. 5:25.)

Revelation 22:8 - 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 shewed me these things.

Revelation 22:9 - 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.

'I fell down to worship.' (See Rev. 19:10.) John, in this instance, seems to have entertained the idea that Christ himself was speaking in the form of an angel.

Revelation 22:10 - And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

'Seal not the sayings.' i.e. Close not up this revelation, as if intended for a distant day (see Dan. 8:26; Dan. 12:4, 9; also Hab. 2:2, 3). It is the immediate property of the Church.

'The time is at hand.' The time of its beginning to be fulfilled is near.

Revelation 22:11 - 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.

Revelation 22:12 - And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

'He that is unjust let him be unjust still.' "The sentiment seems plainly to be this: -- Be it that persecutors and vile men shall continue without remission for a while longer their oppressive and debasing practices; yet let not the righteous be shaken in his constancy, nor the holy man cease in any measure from the pursuit of sanctification, for I 'come quickly' to recompense every man according to the nature of his work." (Stuart.)

Revelation 22:13 - I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Revelation 22:14 - 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.

Revelation 22:15 - For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

'Enter in through the gates.' The gates are pearls, the emblem of truth and purity. These virtues characterize the redeemed.

'Without are dogs.' This animal was unclean, and therefore odious to the Jews (comp. Deut. 23:18). Hence persons of a vile and injurious character were called 'dogs: (Phil. 3:2; for the other appellations see note to Rev. 21:8.)

Revelation 22:16 - 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.

(See Rev. 5:5; and Rev. 2:28, and notes.)

Revelation 22:17 - 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 Spirit and the bride say come.' The invitation to come to Christ, and to escape the ruin which hangs alike over antichrist and antichristian practices, is the united voice of the Spirit (speaking by the prophets) and of the Church testifying to the world. The first duty of those who 'hear,' i.e. accept this invitation, is to re-echo it to others; 'thirst,' the desire of Christ, is itself an invitation --nothing is wanted but the will to come, and 'whosoever will' may 'take the water of life freely.'

Revelation 22:18 - 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

Revelation 22:19 - 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.

'If any man shall add' -- 'if any man shall take away.' This solemn warning and dreadful penalty indicate the importance which attaches to the prophecies of this book. It prohibits in the most solemn manner all tampering with them, and, by implication, enforces the duty of humbly and prayerfully studying them.

Revelation 22:20 - He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Revelation 22:21 - The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

APPENDIX A

The Apocalypse practical and profitable.

"ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work." (2 Tim. 3:16.)

The Apocalypse of John, "the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies, celebrating in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his Church," * is surely no exception. It is profitable --

I. FOR THE CONFIRMATION OF FAITH, by the evidence its prophecies afford of the Divine prescience being engaged in its composition. The history of the rise and fall of the papal antichrist is in itself an invaluable addition to the volume of evidence by which the sacred writings are sustained.

II. IT ILLUSTRATES THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD in the disposal of all things relating to his Church.

Here the eternal purposes of God are seen moving on undisturbed, without any interference with the free agency of the creature. The pride and passion, the ambitious schemes and execrable atrocities of ten thousand times ten thousand rational but guilty creatures, independent of each other, and freed from compulsory influence, are beheld wonderfully harmonizing with the prayers and efforts of the multitude of the redeemed, in bringing about the exact fulfillment of prophecy; all tending, as if by some law more subtle and mysterious than that of gravitation, at the exact hour, to the exact point at which from all eternity JEHOVAH has resolved they should arrive.

III. IT EXALTS CHRIST. To the divinity of the Savior it bears unceasing testimony. The man Christ Jesus is again and again seen invested with the glory of the Godhead: at one time he appears as the high priest of his people; at another he is identified with the Alpha and Omega, King of kings, and Lord of lords, receiving the prayers and praises of all the intelligent universe.

IV. IT ASSERTS THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT. The slain Lamb -- the 'sea of glass' spread before the throne -- the robes washed white in blood, all indicate the unfailing value of that sacrifice which was once offered for sin, and cry in language which cannot be mistaken, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission."

* Milton's account of his own studies.

V. IT IS A TESTIMONY TO THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL. It is a vision of the unseen world. As it lifts the veil which hides the state of separate spirits from our view, and shews us the noble army of martyrs praising God in the prospect of the Redeemer's triumph, it rebukes that materialism which so often cripples our spiritual energies, and forbids us to cherish the gloomy dogma that the soul sleeps in the grave till the day of the resurrection.

VI. IT IS A WORD OF WARNING. It opens with solemn messages from Christ; it indicates throughout, all. vengeance as proceeding from a rejected Savior; and in the concluding intimation which it affords of an antichrist yet to come, and a falling away greater than any that has yet desolated the Church, it teaches us to mingle with our joy at the nearer approach of the Savior, a holy fear and jealousy lest there should be in us or in our schemes anything which, in future, may develop itself as the deadly enemy of Christ and of his truth. We know not how soon the mystery of iniquity may begin to work.

With these great practical results before us, as reasonably to be expected from a careful and prayerful study of the book of Revelation, let us fly the region of political excitement before we venture to meditate on this splendid prophecy. The newspaper and the annual register, with their imperfect detail of the transactions of a day or a year, are ill fitted to expound the progress of His purposes, with whom 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.'

Finally, let us be content to labor in this field from a simple desire to know and to promote the truth.

Even inspired men, so far as we can gather from their writings, seem to have been satisfied with this aim. The absence of all pretension in apostles and evangelists is very striking. Luke, with beautiful simplicity, expresses the motive which induced him to write. 'Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed amongst us,' 'it seemed good to me also to write' (Luke 1:1-4). The apostolic epistles (inspired expositions of Christian doctrine) appear to have been composed, so far as the writers were concerned, simply with a view to meet the exigencies of the time. Paul, on one occasion, 'being absent,' writes, lest he should be obliged when present to 'use sharpness' (2 Cor. 13:10); at another, only in order that 'henceforth' no man might trouble him about Judaism (Gal. 6:17); at a third, to warn or to exhort, to comfort or to stimulate his own immediate friends or converts. James and Peter, and Jude and John in like manner communicate with individuals or churches, according to the urgencies of the hour, or the impulses of Christian love; not one of them, probably, being in the least degree conscious that he was writing for all time, * foreseeing the wants of all generations, and supplying the Church with spiritual nourishment for two thousand years. They, in common, as St. Luke tells us, with many others, simply performed the duty of narrating the fact, or expounding the doctrine, as it presented itself to their own minds; while the same God who, in his infinite wisdom, suffered the writings of the many to die and be forgotten, preserved these, the few (because inspired by his Holy Spirit), for the instruction and guidance of the Church in all coming generations.

* Not that they were unconscious of speaking by the Spirit of God -- although, from an expression or two in the Corinthians (1 Cor. 7:40), it would seem that they were not always clear on this point, -- but simply that they were unconscious of the ultimate purpose of their communications.

Far, therefore, from supposing that a warrant to study or to expound the Apocalypse is to be sought in a persuasion that some great thing has been revealed to us, that some new and extraordinary light has been vouchsafed, it is highly probable that the absence of any such notion is essential to success, because essential to a calm and humble consideration of its mysterious contents.

Enough for any man is it, that an especial blessing is pronounced on those who 'keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book.' And since the same presiding Spirit who inspired, develops from age to age, by various agencies, those portions of his truth which are intended for the special benefit of the generation to which they are made plain, there is warrant enough for any man, either to ponder or to publish, in the fact that 'no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation;' in the blessed assurance that 'he who doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine;' and in the conviction that, in accordance with the Divine procedure everywhere, "great must be the company of workmen, and limited the task which each must occupy" ere the veil ascends that now partially hides from view the destinies of the Church and the doom of antichrist.

APPENDIX B.

Principles of Interpretation.

I. The Apocalypse is, for the most part, written in the language of symbols. As such, it must be studied in order to be understood. A reader indisposed to take this trouble had better close the book; he will never reap the benefit pronounced on those who keep or ponder in their hearts its sayings.

II. The true sense of the symbols can only be ascertained by intimate acquaintance with the figures of Scripture, especially those used by the prophets, and those which relate to the service of the Jewish temple. Bishop Hurd remarks, "The symbolical language of the prophets is almost a science in itself. None can fully comprehend the depth, sublimity, and force of their writings, who are not thoroughly acquainted with the peculiar and appropriate imagery they were accustomed to use. This is the main key to many of the prophecies; and without knowing how to apply it, the interpreter will often in vain essay to discover their hidden treasures." One of the chief dangers "which besets the interpretation of prophecy," is that of "following our own imagination in expounding its symbolic language, instead of deriving from the deep and accurate study of Scripture itself the clue which it supplies to its own meaning. For it will be found, upon an attentive examination, that there is a wonderful uniformity in the symbols and figures employed in sacred prophecy. The concluding volume of Divine revelation in a very remarkable manner adopts and embodies the language of the Old Testament prophets, particularly Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah." (Archdeacon Harrison.) Hence no rule can be safer or better than that adopted by Dean Woodhouse, viz., "to compare the language, the symbols, the predictions of the Apocalypse with those of former revelations; and to admit only such interpretation as should appear to have the sanction of the Divine authority."

III. "It should be remembered that none of the symbols are exact descriptions of what will be; they are what the apostle saw in vision, and can only have a general likeness to the future events which they are intended to symbolize. In the Apocalypse it is hardly possible to speak of a literal sense; if by that is meant a sense which we are to rest in, because it is the exact grammatical sense of the words used." (Hoare.) At the same time, with the judicious Hooker we must "hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that, where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst."

IV. "Prophetic symbols can only describe the predominating color or complexion of any given period." (Faber)

V. "The entire subject of the book is strongly marked by a system of chronological order. Subsequent and coincident periods of time are noted; and the course and succession of events is made a part of the prophecy, as well as the events themselves. The effect of this chronological structure is a guard upon the reference of the several prophecies, whereby one of them checks the appropriation of another, and reduces it within a certain position, both as to series of time and dependence of history." (See Davison's Discourses on Prophecy.)

VI. Interpreters of almost every school are agreed first, that the Revelation is a prophecy extending over a very considerable range of time; secondly, that as such, it is conducted on a principle of

progressive development, and comprehends a series or continued succession of events in the Church's history; and thirdly, that while interruptions occasionally occur, they are not of a nature to prevent the general principle from being on the whole maintained throughout. When to this view of the arrangement or general economy of the book, we add the consideration of its general theme or object, and find on this point also the same kind of agreement among the different interpreters, -- all considering it to be the development and final consummation of the kingdom of Christ till his coming again to judge the world and to crown his Church with eternal glory, -- it seems mere perverseness, with so much that all are agreed upon, to speak only of the minor differences among them, and on this account to decry the study of the Revelation altogether as a sealed book. (Abridged from Hoare.)

VII. The great difficulty in interpreting the Apocalypse undoubtedly arises from the fact, that "the imagery and the symbols of this book are mostly of such a generic nature that there is no difficulty in making them apply, if one is determined so to do, to almost any leading events that have affected the Church either in more remote ages or in more recent times." Hence it is that it has so often been treated as if it were a grand enigma intended to stimulate "an inbred and restless curiosity," instead of being regarded as it really is, "holy ground," on which whoever enters should "take his shoes from off his feet," and advance with humility and awe.

VIII. The great encouragement to struggle on amid all difficulties, is the conviction that it was written "for our learning," and consequently that a time will come when its contents will be understood, and its teachings be felt to be both pressing and practical.

"If there is any book in the New Testament," says Mr. Stuart, "that has the aspect of sincerity, of earnestness, and of deep feeling; of high spiritual sympathy for the welfare of the Church; of glowing zeal for the interests of the kingdom of God; of unceasing and all-pervading gratitude to Christ, for what he has done and suffered to save our sinful race; of heartfelt solicitude for the constancy and spiritual fidelity of Christians; of trembling concern for such as are tempted to apostatize; of confident hope as to the final triumph of truth and righteousness; and of unshaken faith in the glories of the upper world which are consequent upon obtaining a mansion in the paradise of God; -- if there is any book that belongs to the new dispensation, on whose very face all these things are enstamped in characters of light, the Apocalypse is that book."

APPENDIX C.

On the last form of Antichrist.

"THERE are strong reasons for concluding," says Mr. Bonar, "that popery, in its present form, is not, in strict prophetic speech, the last antichrist. It has many of the features of the man of sin, but it has not all; it is lacking in some; and it is this partial unlikeness that leads us to anticipate something worse, something more terrible, something which will manifest more vividly what the combined energy of human and satanic wickedness can effect, when fully expanded and matured. The last apostasy will, in all likelihood, manifest more of the infidel or the atheist than popery has done; but still it is an 'apostasy,' a 'falling away.' It originates in, springs out of, and is in some way connected with the professed Church of Christ, just as the fruit is connected with the branch, though but by a slender stalk. Its name, ANTICHRIST, shews that it professes to be Christ, which it could not do were it openly and utterly infidel."

A careful perusal of those passages of Scripture which depict the last times, will shew that the age in which antichrist is to arise will be distinguished by the following marked characteristics: -- 1, lawlessness (2 Tim. 3:1-5); 2, skepticism, especially taking the form of a scoffing denial of the probability of any interference with the ordinary laws of nature (2 Pet. 3:1-13); and, 3, practical licentiousness, arising out of this spirit of mockery (Jude 18). St. Paul, in the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:8), speaking of 'that wicked one,' says emphatically (for such is the true interpretation), 'that lawless one;' and 'the mystery' is not merely a mystery of iniquity, but of lawlessness.

Further, as the second antichrist is to spring out of the ruins of the first, to revive its worst features, and to give life to its image, it is obviously in Romanism -- or rather in the countries that have been longest and most completely under the influence of the papacy -- that we must look for the earliest development of those principles which are ultimately to find an embodiment in a tyrannical priesthood, a center of unity in Rome, and a personal head in some eminent apostate.

Now, whatever view may be taken of prophecy, it will scarcely be denied that for many years past, and eminently at the present time, infidelity and lawlessness are the great, glaring, all but universal characteristics of Roman Catholic Europe. Their union, in a form which has already given to them vast political strength, which even now threatens to convulse society, and before which the most profound and sagacious politicians tremble, is, without question, the great and distinguishing sign of the times.

The following remarks on the progress and character of modern socialism, as it is now manifesting itself on the continent of Europe, are taken from a very able article in the North British Review of August, 1849, and written as they were without any reference to Apocalyptic interpretations, they may be regarded as fairly illustrating the operation of this new element in society.

"The statistics of socialism," observes the writer, "deserve little reliance, in consequence of the party feeling of those who have professed to examine them; but there can be little doubt that, in the departments of France which have returned the minority of the present Assembly, in Switzerland, Swabia, the Palatinate, Silesia, and Poland, and, to a smaller extent, in many other parts of the

continent, the ancient belief in the sacredness of property has given way to hopes of a new system of rights, under which the problem of social and economic equality may be wholly or approximately solved."

". . . . At first sight, it might seem that theories concerning law and property might be independent of opinions on religion and philosophy, amounting to the negation of both. But when we find so acute a reasoner as Grun invariably asserting the identity of his theoretical belief with his practical conclusions, and rejecting every form of French socialism in succession, on the ground that they all fall short of the scientific completeness of humanism; and when we know that, in common with other German writers of his school, he looks up to Feurbach as the great socialist teacher, we cannot but feel desirous to know his real meaning, whatever may be the reasons by which he supports it."

"Now, Feurbach, in an oracular aphorism, makes a socialist confession of faith. 'What are my principles?' he asks, and replies, 'Ego, et alter Ego' -- egoism and communism; for the two are as inseparable as the head and the heart. Without egoism you have no head, without communism no heart.' The general purpose of his writings is correctly indicated by another still more concise apothegm 'No religion is my religion; no philosophy is my philosophy.' Atheism, in the language of his school, is only an incomplete transition from theism, admitting, as it does, the subjective possibility of the being to whom it denies objective reality.

"The humanist derives his name from the doctrine, that in human nature is to be found the whole content of religion, as well as the impulses and feelings to which religion appeals. His creed, commencing with the extreme of anthropomorphism, proceeds to declare the Deity formed after the image of man, to be the man himself, who had been projected beyond himself by a kind of optical delusion of the imagination. To him heaven is a mere idealized reflection of earth, and the Divine attributes are generalizations of the qualities of the human mind."

"The transition from theoretical to practical or socialistic humanism seems to consist in the inference, that if human nature is the sole and absolute reality, it must also be self-sufficing, and subject only to its own spontaneous control. If religion and philosophy can be resolved into mere human qualities and forms of thought, the same analysis will scarcely fail to re--absorb the external sanctions of law and authority into the sovereign individuality from which they must be supposed to have proceeded. If Feurbach is rightly interpreted by his disciple Grun, he would add to his confession of faith, 'No morality is my morality; no law is my law.'

"England, with its natural and occasional growth of institutions, and with its habitual disregard of verbal logic, may long succeed in opposing indifference to the propaganda of socialism. The ready made constitutions of the continent are more obviously open to its inroads. Professedly founded on abstract truth and justice, they will be required to follow out their own principles to the last. We know not how far a compliance with such a demand may lead. It is enough to say, that the revolutionary masses throughout Europe are rapidly approaching to the conviction that the extreme anarchy of humanism is implicitly admitted in the declaration of the rights of man."

Let us now see how these principles embody themselves in the declarations of party, and in their influence on society. One extract must suffice. It is from the Manifesto of the German Democrats in Foreign Countries, published at Geneva, May, 1849, and circulated throughout Europe."

". . . Religion, which we wish to drive away from education, should also disappear from the soul of man. Art and poetry shall realize that ideal of truth, goodness, and beauty which religion transports to the unknown borders of another country. * In general, the revolution annihilates religion, inasmuch as by universal liberty and well--being in this world, it renders the hope of heaven useless."

". . . Thus we do not trouble ourselves with religious struggles and tendencies, except so far as by religious liberty one means the liberty of having no religion. We do not wish for the liberty of belief, but for the liberty of unbelief."

". . . Incontestably the most important result of the struggle of June has been the teaching us that we shall never gain an inch of ground for the realization of our plans by the peaceful way of successive reforms; that we have to deal with enemies to whom all means of oppressing us seem good, and towards whom, consequently, we may throw aside all ceremony in our turn, and use every measure in our power; that it is a matter either of our extermination or of that of our adversaries, and that it is only after having completely upturned and destroyed the existing social order, that we can realize the principles of our party."

Private letters from individuals engaged in promoting the circulation of the Scriptures and otherwise advancing the cause of protestant and evangelical truth on the continent, contain statements every whit as fearful. The following extract from a letter, published a few months ago, harmonizes so exactly with other communications, that it may serve as a specimen of the opinions formed by men who have of late mingled among the masses of Europe, in the hope of availing themselves of opportunities afforded by revolution for spreading the gospel. The writer, an impartial witness, says:

"In my former communication, on my return from Bavaria, I alluded to disclosures made touching the present fearful state of infidelity, which is almost too mild a term; it ought to be said, a blasphemous denial and rejection of God, which now prevails and is upon the increase on the continent. The details are really too painfully abhorrent to be repeated; they exceed all credibility. Such opinions are believed to pervade the mass, the bulk of the population in Germany, Switzerland, France, and Italy; and especially is the rising generation tainted and corrupted with these notions. Atheistical and blasphemous views predominate in the laboring classes, manufacturing as well as agricultural, the bourgeoisie, the military, and above all among the youthful part of the community, now growing to maturity; and what may we expect in about ten years when these youths attain to manhood."

* Idol worship can as easily adapt itself to a high state of civilization as to a low. It is only needful that the idol should embody the character and taste of the age to which it is offered; that it should be " clothed with qualities admirable in their kind, but unconnected with moral rectitude; that it should divorce piety from morals, and make devotion practicable without pureness or righteousness of life. The question which some skeptics have mooted, -- whether atheism or idolatry be the worse, is one of little meaning, inasmuch as they are not opposed or incompatible, but identical." (See Sheppard's Three Essays.)

Now, making all possible deductions from these statements, so far as they may be supposed to represent only the opinions of an individual or a party, and allowing in like manner very largely for the irritation under which the manifesto of the German democrats might be published, enough

remains to prove to every candid mind, first, that pantheistic socialism prevails to a very great extent throughout Europe; and secondly, that it is steadily spreading among the youth of the various countries of the continent. That it involves, as its direct and natural result, persecution unto death of all Christians who set themselves in direct opposition to its infamous and blasphemous pretensions will soon enough be made manifest. Romanism will probably be its first victim, because Romanism is at present, with few exceptions, the only aggressive form of Christianity on the continent; but recent events in Switzerland have shewn that an active evangelical Protestantism is scarcely viewed with less dislike. Ten or fifteen years hence, when those who now constitute the youth of France, Italy, and Germany, have attained to manhood, scenes may be enacted in Europe at the thought of which "humanity turns pale."

In the meantime the world may be tolerably quiet. "Great revolutions," it has been well said, "are wont to advance upon us in noiseless slippers," and, "taking their rise from some quarter which was the last to be watched or suspected, amaze the heedless community with their terrible suddenness as much as with their destructive force."

England, as has already been observed, will probably be the last to yield to the revolutionary torrent; yet there are not wanting, even in her, elements of mischief, civil and ecclesiastical -- the worst least suspected, -- which betoken, at no very distant day, struggles the result of which no human sagacity can foresee. Nor is our religious position by any means a satisfactory one. Even here we are in a condition of peculiar danger. "There is coming up against the Church a deep and dark current of doubt -- a current strong in learning, fraught with genius, strenuous yet calm in progress. It seems the last grand trial of the historical truth of our faith. Worse than even this, there is another still and strong under current, which is carrying away a great proportion of the mind of the country, of those who make our laws, who distribute our justice, whose eloquence fills our courts, whose talent informs our press, whose energy inspirits our business, whose genius animates our higher literature, whose benevolence supports our charities, and whose beauty, taste, and accomplishments decorate and refine our society -- all drifting more or less rapidly, more or less silently, from creeds and churches; and this principally because the charm and power, the marks of truth and vitality which were wont to detain them there have departed." Such is the "deep moral and religious uncertainty which has come down over the age," out of which is rising a class "whose creed seems to be that 'elevation is evidence,' that 'beauty is truth,' that 'esthetics are morality,' and that 'the repose of a mind which has reached its highest degree of culture is religion.'"*

* British Quarterly Review, February, 1849. To prevent misconception, it should be distinctly understood that neither the above extract, nor those which have preceded it, are intended as Portraits of the age. As such they would be fairly open to the charge of one-sidedness. They are simply presented as the discerned indications of coming evils, -- evils discerned by those who retain their faith in the progress of society, and who would probably smile at the dreams of millenarianism; indications which by no means contradict the expectations recently expressed by Mr. Baptiste Noel, that amid all there may be dawning upon Europe, for a time at least, "an era of constitutional governments and free institutions, an era of schools and libraries, -- of unfettered discussion and unrestricted liberty of conscience, -- an era of union among Christians and of their separation from the world, -- an era of evangelical energy and of renovated fervor." It is no new thing for the wheat and the tares to grow together.

But to return to the aspect of Europe. Granting that the view taken of the state of society, dark as it is, is in the main true, and that in course of time it will fully develop itself in the all but universal disorganization of society, no thoughtful person can of course suppose that anarchy could be of long continuance. "To the emancipated socialist, the will of a majority will be no more binding than the commands of a usurping despot, nor will a law, to which he has consented, bind him otherwise

than if it had been imposed by force. To him the desires and opinions of others are merely external forces; his own former determinations are dead abstractions, the cast--off slough of his present and living self."

What remains, then, for the world but a Conqueror? In a state of society like that which has been supposed, there is no escape from the rule of one man governing by a force in harmony with the opinions and delusions of the age. Hence Hero worship will be the necessity of these times.

Further, as pantheism, like Buddhism, involves the worship of the human intellect, regarding it as a Divine thing, though diffused among many persons, it must have, in one form or other, its grand Lama -- its central manifestation. And safely may it be asserted, that whenever men, forsaking God, the living and the true, for self-worship, so far impoverish themselves as to need such a center and governor, Satan will take care that he shall appear upon the scene. Such, in all probability, will be the Antichrist of the last days. Again we shall have, as if in mockery of truth, a priest upon a throne.

Rejecting the Christian doctrine, that "He in whom the priesthood of the universe rests is the Eternal Son of God, that he took human nature, united it to God, endued it with that spirit which dwelt without measure in himself, and made it the head of many members, through each of which, so long as it abides in him, the same life blood is transmitted," the pantheist (having a true and deep feeling that there must be a center, or that there can be no fellowship) is obliged first to assume the center, and then to demand for it implicit faith. What can he do, but endow a human being like himself with Divine attributes, call him a God, and bow down before his false and fraudulent priesthood. *

The following passage, from Mr. Maurice's Boyle Lectures for 1846, seems almost prophetic: -- "What if men should say boldly, 'It is this power in me which is really the great power of all; it is this eye in me which creates the object it seems to behold. I will acknowledge nothing else, worship nothing else?' What if this should be the language which men lisped a few years ago and now begin to speak distinctly? Then surely there will gradually appear most of the other signs which we have traced in Buddhism, and many which could not appear in it, or in any other heathen system. First, the formation of an intellectual priesthood, more utterly without the sense of a vocation, more

* "Whenever the religious feeling or instinct in man works freely without an historical revelation, it must beget a system of priestcraft. It must be satisfied by God, or overlaid by man, or stifled altogether." (Maurice.) Hence antichrist will revive the image of the papacy -- its priestly system. Of this he will be the head.

simply glorying in its own powers, therefore more intolerant, * exclusive, oppressive, than any other with which the earth has ever been cursed. Next, the consciousness in that exclusive priesthood of an utter want of sympathy with actual men, notwithstanding their boast of humanity in the abstract, therefore an attempt to supply this want, as it always has been supplied, by devices to meet the taste of the vulgar, by prodigies, portents, and sorceries; mysteries of science being called in as a compensation for the absence of the Divine mysteries, and science being degraded into an instrument of all imposture. Finally, intellectual worship, after giving birth to all forms of empiricism, ending at last in the elevation of some merely brute power to the throne of the universe; a power which will prove by his triumph, that if intellect, freedom, and humanity, have no better protectors than themselves, they must be trampled down; will prove, as we are well assured by his ultimate discomfiture, that they have another protector, Him from whom all good and perfect gifts have come."

It has already been observed that the dominion of antichrist will be marked by a revival, not indeed of the papacy, but of its image (Rev. 13:15), by which we understand its priestly system centering as heretofore in a personal head at Rome; and it is equally clear that his end will be in Palestine. (Rev. 16:16.)

In looking for the probable agency by which these things may be accomplished in an age of anarchy and infidelity, the mind involuntarily turns toward the Jew, and the Jesuit. And here the first thing that strikes us is the singular fact that modern revolutionary movements are directed by Jews to a much greater extent than is commonly supposed. Probably few are aware of the extent of influence exercised by this singular people during the late commotions, especially in Germany. "It would not be difficult to prove (says the foreign correspondent of the Times), that most of the intellectual activity of Germany at this moment is Jewish; and to a great extent it is used to the destruction of the institutions and the political systems of the several states. Why the Hebrew element is so active in Germany, and why the Saxon spirit has become so sluggish, is a problem not easy to solve. It may be predicted, almost with certainty, that a democratic journal in Germany will be edited by a Jew."

"Cruelly treated," says another writer, "by the Christian state, they have directed all their talents and means to overthrow the state and Christianity, believing that both are alike inimical to their political liberty. As editors and correspondents of almost all the influential newspapers, and as public speakers in the great assemblies they have excited the middle and lower classes. The Jews early became the heroes of the day, and led public opinion wherever they pleased."

* "Atheistic fanaticism, when it affects a community, is impelled to assault every mode of worship with intent to exterminate religious profession. Atheism, when it spreads among a people in the form of an active and positive opinion, will be found to display each well-known characteristic of a virulent religious creed. If in any instance the ordinary or common and sensual impiety of the mass of mankind comes to be quickened by a stirring spirit of unbelief; if the irreligion which hitherto has been sluggish or frivolous, kindles into a petulant bigotry, and utters itself in acrid blasphemies; and especially if the same atheistic zeal lurks in the bosoms of the upper classes, and ferments at the center of government; then, little will be wanted to put these forces in movement, or to direct them against the institutions and the parties that uphold the worship of God. A slight and accidental political excitement would be enough to bring on the crisis." (Isaac Taylor.)

The Jesuit, on the contrary, has been everywhere denounced as the enemy of progress, the great foe to liberty, and yet he too, although in different manner, is always seen riding on the coming wave. What precise part " the society of Jesus " may take in the commotions of the future, it would be folly to predict, but this at least is certain, the Jesuits will not die for Rome papal! Mr. Isaac Taylor, in his recent Life of Loyola, puts this very forcibly:

"Jesuitism," he says, "may outlive Romanism; or it may be wholly severed from it, and yet may live and grow. Often as the Society has been seen prostrate at the foot of the sovereign Pontiff, venting itself in vehement professions of loyalty, it has in fact always hung loose upon ecclesiastical Catholicism, and has shewn itself to be organically independent, living by its own sap, drawn from the soil by its own root and fibers. Jesuitism has its own purposes to secure, and its own law of self-preservation; and should the day come when it could not save both itself and the Church, or could save itself only by conspiring against her, its past history would warrant the belief that the Papacy might, at such a conjuncture, fall -- set upon by its own friends, and with Caesar's last words on its lips, while it looks to 'the Society.'"

The following remarks from the same able pen will shew how wonderfully adapted the spiritual mechanism of Jesuitism is to the accomplishment of a grand, universal, all-grasping absolutism, like that which it is predicted will be realized by the antichrist of the last days.

"Jesuitism intends nothing that is partial or circumscribed; its very purport is universality; it is absolutism carried out until it has embraced the human family, and has brought every human spirit under its toils. Personal ambition, in the ordinary sense of the word, was far from being Loyola's ruling passion, His idol was a vast abstract idea -- a beautiful conception of spiritual domination, which should at length supplant all other dominations, and ensure peace and order upon earth.

"Jesuitism is a scheme devised for taking a position upon the very ground of the world's busiest movements. The ' Society' has built for itself a fortress in the center of a field whereon a boundless secular ambition might seek and find for itself the choicest opportunities. It was a consequence, therefore, sure to follow, that it should draw to itself, not the feeble, but the strong; not those who are sick of the world, but those who are eager to play their parts in it. While the monastery was, for the most part, the asylum of men whose withdrawal from the duties and service of active life seldom involved any very serious loss to the world, the Jesuit Institute is framed for no purpose more evidently than that of sifting the mass of society, so that it may take to itself the choicest samples of energy, intelligence, and devotedness.

"Jesuitism may, and probably will, make good its continued existence, and may renew its lease, not merely in spite of the prevailing anti--mysterious tendency of the times, but by the very aid of this tendency operating upon it in the way of re-action. If the age we live in be the age of publicity, there will therefore be exhibited in some quarters, and in a decisive form, that appetite of human nature which seeks for a deep and awe--inspiring gloom as a refuge from the glare. Spiritual domination is not to be thought of (so to think of it would be the dictate of a shallow philosophy) as a plot, hatched by the few against the rights and liberties of the many. The chiefs of such a domination are not contrivers of an unasked--for scheme whose machinations all men would gladly circumvent and crush. They are not such; but they are those who engage to provide and to furnish that which minds of a certain class -- and they are not few -- yearn to be supplied with, and which they must somewhere find ready to their use.

"A question may present itself (and it is more easily proposed than answered), whether spiritual power -- we mean usurping power -- shall in time to come fall back upon some one of its superannuated forms, seeking to avail itself of the still remaining recommendations of antiquity; or whether it shall not rather construct itself anew, and build for itself another house, and call into its service agents of another school, and profess a creed -- spliced on, as it were, to the ancient creed, but essentially differing from it.

"It would be by no means difficult to sketch the outlines of a new faith, well adapted to the prevailing notions and habits of continental communities. Such a faith would retain everything belonging to Romanism that is sensuous and imaginative; everything of costume and ceremonial that does not offend good taste or draw upon itself sarcasm; it would retain, moreover, a shadowy, though not a dogmatic orthodoxy; it might perhaps permit a Nicene profession to be 'sung,' but would never allow it to be 'said.' In a rude age the Church, always wise in her day, became flagrantly polytheistic; in a philosophic, or rather a scientific age, the same Church, equally wise, will become pantheistic."

It is only needful to add, that the views now taken, whether of the present or the future, are not adopted for the first time, in order to support the interpretation of the prophecy. Seventeen years ago, when neither pantheism nor socialism had been developed in Europe, the author thus expressed his views of the coming time.

"The sixth period (the period of the sixth seal) is to be a time of shaking among the nations, of universal change, of great dismay. The fountains of the great deep of civil and ecclesiastical rule are to be broken up; society is to be resolved into its original elements. This state of solution is to be a period of great terror."

"If it be lawful to speculate on such a subject (the precise time and nature of the changes referred to), we should expect its fulfillment in an approaching period of revolution and change, in connection with which all establishments of religion, protestant or papal, will be overthrown; all governments become extremely democratical; a fearful independence of civil law prevail; all existing monopolies and exclusive rights be set aside without regard to principle; and rank and property may become odious in the eyes of all who do not possess them."

"Popery is to go into captivity (that is, to get into disrepute); it is to be eventually slain by the same sword (the civil power), by means of which it had persecuted the saints. It is remarkable that the greatest enemy of Rome has always been the civil power. It was through a capricious monarch that she was stripped of England. It is democracy in civil constitutions that is threatening to tear down the power of Rome everywhere. At the French Revolution how was she slain by the sword! By Napoleon how was she scorned and trampled on, and led captive! And he must be very blind to the signs of the times who does not perceive that there is at work in all the countries of Europe at the present moment, a principle which will before long banish this apostate from power, disarm and disable her, and lay her in the dust. It is her own horns already hating her, and preparing to make her desolate and naked, to eat her flesh, and to burn her with fire."

"The second beast is yet in futurity; it will be a revival of popery (after it has been slain), but probably modified so as to suit the times, There is nothing extravagant in the idea (however

unwilling we may be to receive it) that out of concussion and wreck may arise some new form of delusion, which shall unite the pomp and plausibility of Romanism with the theism of Mahomet, and combine the sensuality of idolatry with the speculations of a heartless infidelity. Let such a system, under the pretext of unity in religion (the favorite idea of formalists in all ages), once claim the right of ecclesiastical domination, and there would be little difficulty in attaching any extent of intolerance to it. * Ungodliness, in any shape, is intolerant of spiritual Christianity. Lying miracles for the vulgar, commercial deprivations for the wavering, and death for the obstinate, might soon bring the world under its influence. But speculation is idle. The only point to be ascertained is, whether this second beast is or is not distinct from popery and yet in the future. The balance of evidence appears greatly to preponderate in favor of the affirmative." (Book of the Unveiling, published 1833.)

The bearing which future prospects like these have upon present duty is a subject of deep interest; but it is one far too wide and too important to be disposed of in a few lines. It must therefore, for the present at least, remain unnoticed.

* "Commit to an atheist the erection of a commonwealth, and he will assume without scruple the control of religion, because he thinks God a dream, and conscience a prejudice. Such a man, owning no rights of conscience, yet unable to cure his subjects of their religious propensities, will make provision for giving them indulgence according to his own ideas of what is pleasing and politic. He will therefore erect and set in motion a kind of religious pageant. Hence two great authorities, Hall and Mackintosh, have pronounced a Hobbist to be the only consistent persecutor." (Dick on Reel. Polity.)

APPENDIX D.

On the "Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven."

THE events of the sixth seal -- the era of change and concussion -- terminate, as we have seen, with a period of intense terror; a terror universal in extent, embracing all classes and all lands, and marked by the predominance of one thought, -- a deep and intense conviction that 'the great day of the wrath of the Lamb' has at length arrived. It is however singular, and worthy of observation, that nothing but terror is depicted.

This great alarm closes indeed that period of change and of overthrow which is symbolized by the hurricane; but no strife, no bloodshed, no class calamity, is implied, at least in the later imagery. The low as well as the high, the slave as well as the freedman, are involved in one common feeling of awful dread, but nothing more. No judgment from heaven is indicated, for these are all reserved until the seventh seal is broken. Finally, it is not the advent of the Lamb, for 'the end is not yet.' The alarm passes away, and is succeeded, first, by a period of peace (Rev. 7:1) and a time on' sealing, probably of enlarged conversion (Rev. 7:3-8); then by a period of persecution unto death (Rev. 7:9-17); and finally, under the seventh seal, a period of judgment (Rev. 8, Rev. 9); the whole apparently harmonizing with the later times of Daniel, and distinguished by the presence upon earth of two or more eminent witnesses who are invested with miraculous power, who exercise that power by judicial inflictions upon the wicked,--who die, rise again, and finally return as victors with the conquering Savior. (Rev. 11:3-12.)

The question is, and it is the hardest question to solve in the whole book, -- a question, on the solution of which whole schemes of interpretation have turned, and whose very difficulty might well lead to the supposition that it refers to something yet future --What occasions the dread? Why is it that now especially 'the tribes of the earth mourn,' and 'men's minds fail them for fear of the things that are coming upon the earth?' Why do they pray to be concealed 'from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne?'

It seems impossible to obtain any satisfactory reply to enquiries like these, (for the notion that the sixth seal merely depicts the fall of paganism in the Roman empire, however ingeniously supported, is anything but satisfactory,) except on the supposition either that some awful sight alarms the world, or that, by some means or other, a universal consciousness of coming wrath has filled every mind with the most fearful forebodings. In either case it seems necessary to suppose (however strange the supposition may appear) that some signal manifestation in heaven sensibly affects mankind, and for a time at least lulls commotion and silences opposition.

The chronology of the prophecy indicates that the end of the sixth seal brings us to the last days; that the terror follows a period of anarchy; and that it immediately precedes a singular struggle between antichrist and the witnesses, and the working of mighty miracles, both true and false, which, as if by virtue of some mysterious law of antagonism, have generally appeared and departed together; and it therefore not unnaturally leads to the impression that it may in some way or other be connected with the advent of the witnesses, and thus be 'the sign' or indication of the more direct interference and nearer approach of the Son of Man in heaven.

If it were permitted us to suppose that Moses and Elias, or Enoch and Elias, would literally come down as they went up, in chariots of fire or in the clouds of heaven, the whole would be easily explained. Such a sight might well lead to the supposition that the day of judgment had arrived, and would fully account for the terror depicted. But on the supposition that the witnesses are merely eminent men appearing in 'the spirit and power' of Moses and Elias, the connection is not so obvious.

Waiving, however, all reference to 'the witnesses,' let us enquire whether, in Scripture, the 'sign of the Son of Man in heaven,' (whatever the phrase may mean,) and 'the coming' -- the symbols of his approach, -- which are the subject of prophecy (Matt. 24:29, 30), are or are not distinguished from that actual advent which, arrive when it may, will be instantaneous as lightning, and at an hour known only to God himself.

That such a distinction really obtains, must be admitted by all who allow that the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish people, was, at least in a certain and limited sense, a coming of Christ. The distinction appears to be made by our Lord himself (Matt. 24:30), where both 'the sign' and 'the coming,' are alike separated from 'that day and hour' known 'to no man' (Matt. 24:36), which seems to be the judicial advent described in the following chapter (Matt. 25:31-46). It is again observable in the assurance given to the disciples, that some of them should not 'taste of death' until they saw the Son of Man' coming in his kingdom' (Matt. 16:28); or, as it is given by Luke, until they saw 'the kingdom of God' (Luke 9:27); or by Mark, till they saw 'the kingdom of God come with power' (Mark 9:1); a promise which was literally fulfilled, without at all interfering with that 'coming' which is yet future, or that 'kingdom' for the arrival of which we daily pray. Why then should it be thought a thing incredible that prior to the pouring out of judgments far more fearful than the destruction of Jerusalem, a visible sign should be permitted, terrifying the wicked, preparing the world for that final proclamation of the gospel which is to be 'a witness to all nations,' (Matt. 24:14), and afresh demonstrating by its transient influence, that they who hear not the voice of Jesus would not believe 'though one rose from the dead.' (Luke 16:31.)

A thoughtful person perusing the entire discourse of our Lord as given by Matthew in the 24th chapter, will perceive that it is in the main a reply to the enquiry, 'What shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?' (Matt. 24:3.) They who put it, very naturally, though erroneously, concluding, that the destruction of the temple (predicted in Matt. 24:2) could only take place at the final consummation of all things.

Our Lord, by implication, warns them against the notion that the end of the world was at hand, telling them that before that time should come, many things must be fulfilled; and then he indicates, though but dimly, an order of events very similar to that prefigured in the Apocalyptic visions, viz., a period of slaughter, when Christians shall be hated and killed for his name's sake (Matt. 24:8, 10); then a period of corruption and decay, false teaching, iniquity, and loss of spiritual affection (Matt. 24:11, 12); then a time of martyrdom implied in the promise to those who 'endure unto the end' (Matt. 24:13); then the period of the open door, when the gospel is to be preached 'for a witness unto all nations;' and then the end. (Matt. 24:14.)

Having disposed of the misconception, he now refers to the circumstance which originated the enquiry -- the predicted destruction of the temple; and from the 15th verse to the 28th (Matt. 24:15-28) indicates the danger and duty of the disciples in relation to the coming ruin of their nation. The

following verses (Matt. 24:29, 31), although capable of a highly figurative reference to the passing away of the Jewish state, are, almost by common consent, regarded as ultimately pointing to the latter days. In the 36th verse, 'that day and hour' which no man knoweth, 'no, not the angels of heaven,' seems to be distinguished from predictions which were to be fulfilled before the passing away of the existing generation. (Matt. 24:34.)

Another question then arises, viz., as to whether that striking passage in Malachi, with which the Old Testament closes, has ever yet received its full and entire accomplishment. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." (Mal.4:5, 6.)

That in a certain and limited sense this prophecy was fulfilled, that it received what Lord Bacon would call its "springing and germinant" accomplishment in John the Baptist, cannot be doubted by those who remember our Lord's own words, "This is Elias, which was for to come." (Matt. 11:14.) But that there was a sense in which that prophecy was not fulfilled in John, is equally evident from the answer given by the Baptist to the enquiring priests and Levites, -- "Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not! Art thou that prophet," (i.e. art thou the prophet that we know will precede 'the great and dreadful day of the Lord,' -- the dawn of the triumphant and glorious Messiah?) to which, with equal distinctness, he answers, "No!" (John 1:21.)

The question, as put by them, implied the error of their hearts. It was equivalent to the enquiry, Art thou he that shall precede our expected Messiah, by whom the heathen shall be destroyed, and the worshippers of the true God be exalted to glory and honor? To this John answers, No! -- at the same time significantly directing their attention to the prophecies of Isaiah (Isa. 40:3), by declaring himself to be "the voice" there spoken of; himself nothing, "a mere sound," as Fenelon beautifully puts it, "that, as soon as it has expressed the thought of which it is the sign, dies into air, and is known no more."

When our Lord told his disciples that John was Elias, he was evidently referring to the declaration of the angel (Luke 1:17), that John should go before the Messiah, "in the spirit and power of Elias;" his object being to shew them that the prophecy of Malachi, which the priests and Levites insisted had not been accomplished, and the non-accomplishment of which they regarded as fatal to his pretensions, had been spiritually fulfilled in John.

The great difficulty to be encountered in defending the idea of any visible sign, is that which arises from the very natural unwillingness of men to accept of any explanation of passages of Scripture relating to the future which does not seem to be in accordance with the present dealings of God with his Church. Hence while every Christian untinged by rationalism is willing to accept as simple fact the wondrous story of the translation of Elijah, -- he not having seen death, few are disposed to regard either his supposed return to earth in the latter days, or the advent of a prophet alike miraculously endowed, in any other light than that of a wild fancy -- a piece of boundless extravagance. We reject with indignation any attempt to turn the wonders of the past into myth; the marvels of the future we abandon without a pang.

APPENDIX E.

On the Second Coming of Christ.

"ALTHOUGH minor interpositions of Providence are occasionally spoken of in Scripture as the coming of the Lord, it will scarcely be denied that this is not the principal, nor indeed the ordinary sense of the words. The judgments of God on individuals or on nations may be, and often are, figuratively called the visitations of his hand; and, in this way, they may be described in language more properly suited to his actual coming into the world, as we believe in the person of the divine Savior he will hereafter do, in power and great glory. But the adoption of such language should not make us forget that the coming of Christ, in its proper sense, is a fact that will, in due time be fully and literally accomplished, as fully and as literally as we know his first coming was.

"An event so frequently and variously designated in Scripture as this is, was intended doubtless to be a frequent and special subject of meditation to the Church. In confirmation of which, we might observe the mention of it, once at least, in every chapter of St. Paul's two epistles to the Thessalonians. The more we examine the Scriptures on this point, the more clearly we shall see this. Was Christ to suffer? and was the fact of his sufferings to be first intimated to his reluctant apostles? His future coming in glory was equally insisted on, as the event -- if possible -- of still greater interest beyond. And Christ had no sooner declared it to them, than it was represented, as it were, in a visible token to their bodily eyes by his glorious transfiguration on the mount. Or, again, after his death and resurrection, was he to be taken away from the sight and companionship of the disciples? The assurance was given them, not only of a present comforter to supply his place, but of his own future return in glory. 'This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' (Acts 1:11.) St. Paul to the Thessalonians expressly mentions the same subject in every chapter of both epistles; and it will be for the attentive reader of the Revelation to observe that here also, from beginning to end, it forms the one great hope and consolation of the Church in all her appointed pilgrimage: like an heavenly beacon it cheers her on through the impending storm; like a glimpse to the laboring mariner of the peaceful haven in the distance, it is continually presented to the eye of the mind, 'to lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees.' (Heb. 12:12.)

"It appears, too, that from this great event the Church was to take her very measure of time itself. For the period intervening between the first and second advents of our Lord, appears to be that intended by St. Peter, when he speaks of the last time, (Acts 2:17,) and by St. Paul, when he calls it the age to come, i.e., the last and terminating dispensation." (Heb. 2:5; Heb. 6:5.)

"It might be imagined, and by some it may be contended, that meditation of death and judgment, on the glories of heaven, or the pains of hell, would alone be sufficient to keep the mind in a proper tone, as it regards the future; and they may object to insisting on a doctrine such as this, which they regard as entirely of a theoretical character. This may be the case; but if Scripture itself, if the God of Scripture has seen fit to choose another method of influencing the mind, by giving greater

prominence to some other subject, would it not be wiser to adapt ourselves to his methods, than to prescribe methods to him? *

"The following are the principal passages which speak of the coming: -- Dan. 7:13; Zech. 14:5; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 24:3, 27, 30; Matt. 25:13, 19, 31; Matt. 26:29; Mark 8:38; Mark 13:26, 35; Luke 9:26; Luke 21:27; Rom. 11:26; Heb. 10:37; Jude 14; 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 1:8; 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Cor. 15:23; 2 Thess. passim; Col. 3:4; Phil. 2:16; Phil. 3:11, 20; 1 Pet. 1:5, 7; 1 Pet. 4:13; 1 Pet. 5:4; 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 John 3:2; James 5:7, 8; Acts 3:19-21; Joel 2:1, 31. (Abridged from Hoare's Harmony of the Apocalypse)

* "For my own part," says good Richard Baxter, "I must confess that death as death appeareth to me as an enemy; and my nature doth abhor and fear it; but the thoughts of the coming of the Lord are most sweet and joyful to me; so that if I were but sure that I should live to see it, and that the trumpet should sound, and the dead should rise, and the Lord appear before the period of my age, it would be the joyfulest tidings to me in the world."

APPENDIX F.

Concluding observations.

SUPPOSING the analysis presented to be in the main correct, and the interpretation given to be on the whole in accordance with truth, however defective it may be in detail, it becomes possible that some now alive may witness scenes strangely contrasting with that supposed era of tranquility and peace which so many consider to be dawning on the world.

In gazing into the future, so far as prophecy lifts the veil, the following pictures float before the mind, -- not indeed clearly and sharply defined, but sometimes brightening, sometimes fading, sometimes melting into each other like dissolving views, yet returning again and again with sufficient distinctness to justify attention, to demand thought, to teach, and to warn.

I. A revolutionary whirlwind raging throughout Europe, until all the kingdoms of the earth bow down, and civilized humanity becomes one great equal democratic brotherhood, (Rev. 6:12, 14.) During this period Romanism is overthrown by lawless skepticism, its ministers despised and persecuted, its spiritual pretensions ridiculed. (Rev. 13:10.)

Towards its close, growing anarchy, having engendered a universal and Anti-Christian despotism, (Rev. 13:11,) some striking manifestation of Divine Power fills the earth with terror, and for a time compels the acknowledgment of divine authority. (Rev. 6:15-17.)

II. Temporary peace. (Rev. 7:1.) Persecution scattering the flock of Christ; this leading to the preaching of the gospel as a witness to all nations. (Rev. 14:1-6.)

III. Intense hatred to the Gospel as aggressive and as rebuking all lawlessness. The earth falls under the dominion of antichrist. Christians persecuted to the death. (Rev. 13:15-18.)

IV. Terrific judgments inflicted through the agency of the witnesses, (Rev. 11:6,) only exasperating the wickedness of the age. (Rev. 11:20, 21.) The witnesses slain and truth silenced. (Rev. 11:8-10.)

V. The resurrection of the witnesses and the renewal of divine judgments. (Rev. 11:11-13.)

VI. The millennium--following the destruction of all opposers, and the coming of Christ, as conqueror, in the clouds of heaven. (Rev. 11:15-19; Rev. 16:17-21; Rev. 19:11-21.)

(For the harmony of these passages and their chronological order, see tabular view on next page.)

A TABULAR VIEW OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE APOCALYPSE

Exhibiting its parallelisms and triplicity of Plan.

I. THE SEVEN CHURCHES CHAP. I TO III	II. THE SEVEN-SEALED BOOK CHAP. VI TO XI.	III. THE MYSTIC BEAST CHAP. XII TO XVI
The Faithful Church. EPHESUS (Rev. 2:1-7).	The First Seal broken. TRIUMPH (Rev. 5:1, 2).	Rudiment of Apostasy (Rev. 12:1, 2).
The Persecuted Church. SMYRNA (Rev. 2:8-11).	The Second Seal broken. SLAUGHTER (Rev. 6:3, 4).	Corruption & Struggle (Rev. 12:3-9)
The Metropolitan Church. PERGAMOS (Rev. 2:12-17).	The Third Seal broken. ASCENDANCY (Rev. 6:5, 6).	The Wilderness flight (Rev. 12:14). Flood of Barbarians (Rev. 12:15-16)
The Idolatrous Church. THYATIRA (Rev. 2:18-29)	The Fourth Seal broken. DISSOLUTION (Rev. 6:7, 8).	The Mystery of Iniquity (Rev. 13:1-2) The Beast wounded (Rev. 13:3)
The Dead Church. SARDIS (Rev. 3:1-6).	The Fifth Seal broken. MARTYRS (Rev. 6:9-11).	The Beast triumphant (Rev. 13:4-8).
The Liberated Church. PHILADELPHIA (Rev. 3:7-13).	The Sixth Seal broken. CONCUSSIONS (Rev. 6:12-14). Terror (Rev. 6:15-17). Martyrs (Rev. 7:9-17).	The Beast in captivity (Rev. 13:9-10) The second Beast (Rev. 13:11-18). Martyrs (Rev. 14, Rev. 15.)
The Loathsome Church. LAODICEA (Rev. 3:14-22).	The Seventh Seal broken. JUDGMENTS (Rev. 8, Rev. 9) Agency of the Witnesses (Rev. 11:6). The Consummation (Rev. 11:15-19).	The seven last Plagues (Rev. 16:1-16) The Consummation (Rev. 16:17-21)
Rev. 17-The Judgment of the Papacy Rev. 18 - The Fall of Babylon.	SUPPLEMENTARY. Rev. 19 - The Marriage Supper. Rev. 20 - The Millennium.	Rev. 21 - The New Jerusalem. Rev. 22 - Exhortations and Warnings

Such are the visions of the future, near or remote, as they dimly emerge from the inspired volume. Prophecies of the writer, in any sense whatever, they are not. To ridicule them as such would be thoughtlessness or idle folly. Right or wrong, they are deductions from the sacred page, deductions for which reasons are given, the value or the worthlessness of which every intelligent reader is capable of estimating for himself.

It may indeed be said, and probably will by many, that the entire process by which they have been obtained is faulty and delusive, if not presumptuous; that it was never intended that the future, however dimly or faintly, should be thus shadowed out to mortals; that the endeavor to discern the character of coming events -- the very wish to know them is wrong; that it is our duty humbly to wait the accomplishment of the divine will, content to see in the fulfillment of prophecy the proof of the divine foreknowledge, and the evidence of providential care.

To these reasonings a better reply cannot be given than that which has been furnished by Archdeacon Harrison in his valuable lectures. With this somewhat lengthened extract the volume shall close.

"True it is that 'the over-venturous presumption' which would seek to determine 'the times and the seasons' which we are expressly told by the great prophet of the church, it 'is not for us to know,' seeing that the Father hath put them in his own power," is sinful. The discredit which such attempts have too frequently brought, not only upon the skill of the individual interpreter, but, which is far more serious, upon the study of prophecy itself, "is sad and most mischievous." But, let it not be forgotten that it is equally, "perhaps more important, to guard from undue application the maxim to which the failure of such speculations has given rise, -- the maxim that it was never the design of prophecy to give us the knowledge of coming events. This principle broadly stated, would tend to discourage altogether the study of unfulfilled prophecy; and could not be reconciled with the blessing which is placed at the opening of the mysterious visions of the Apocalypse upon him 'that readeth,' and upon them 'that hear.'"

"And indeed it is only by diligent study that we can ever hope to ascertain how much of the revelations of prophecy has been already fulfilled, and how much as, being still unfulfilled, is, according to this view, to be regarded as forbidden ground. Especially is this the case in regard to the Apocalypse, concerning which, opinions so opposite have been in our own days maintained by learned men, as on the one side, that the whole has long ago been accomplished, and on the other that the whole refers to one great conflict, still future, between the hosts of Christ and antichrist."

"And if there were any, though it were even a doubtful probability, that times of more than ordinary trial were in store for the church, and which might possibly come in our own days; and if moreover the warnings conveyed in the prophecy itself implied that men's spirits would, individually, be exposed therein to a searching probation; it would surely become us well, -- as a matter not of speculative enquiry, but of deep practical concern, so to have studied the prophetic marks and characteristics of that which was thus approaching, that we might not, when it came, be taken by surprise, and find ourselves unawares in the midst of our greatest peril."

"We may safely say that unless there be an attentive study of unfulfilled prophecy, its fulfillment, when the prediction does really come to pass, will be very apt to escape our observation. When we have our eye steadily fixed on a certain point or region of the heavens, we easily discover the star which otherwise we should never have observed; and even so it is with the day-star of prophecy. It was to them who, like the holy Simeon and the aged Anna, 'were I waiting for the consolation of Israel,' and I looking for redemption in Jerusalem,' that 'the day-spring from on high' appeared, while others were yet sitting in darkness.

"We find our Lord expressly rebuking the men of that generation, because, skilful as they were to 'discern the face of the sky,' yet could they 'not discern the signs of the times.' And though to the anxious enquiries of his disciples, he denied all knowledge as to the precise time at which the things should come to pass which he had foretold, he gave them nevertheless such clear tokens of his coming, that his followers were effectually guarded against the delusions of 'false Christs and false prophets;' escaped securely out of the midst of the devoted city; and beheld in the signs that preceded, and the circumstances that attended its destruction, the coming of their Lord in his kingdom."

"It is doubtless no easy matter thus to give ourselves to the study of prophecy; with such attention as to discern clearly 'the signs of the times,' and yet keeping ourselves free from any presumptuous determining of the times themselves. Undoubtedly it were easier far to close the volume at once, and escape the danger of the abuse' by practically denying the use. But this on other subjects of thought and action, would be accounted no rational proceeding; much less then assuredly on this; independently even of its tendency to deprive us altogether of the blessing which, as we have seen, is expressly promised to such enquiry."

"And looking back to different periods of the Church's history, we find in fact, that however men may have been misled, or have had their hopes too highly raised, or their imaginations unduly excited by the approach of eras which it was supposed had been marked out in prophecy for Christ's coming and the end of the world; still, it may be asserted generally, that the minds of men have rarely been thus stirred and awakened, save at times when God's judgments were indeed, in a more than ordinary manner abroad in the earth, and great events were unfolding for good or for evil."

"And if in modern times speculation on prophetic dates has been, in many cases, too precise and positive; and if this or that conjuncture, which has been fixed upon for the fulfillment of such and such predictions, has passed by and nothing has appeared, it were our wisdom not to allow the spirit of indifference or unbelief to cast, on that account, anything like contempt upon the study of God's most holy word because of man's weakness or folly; not at least till it be seen and proved that the hand of God has not meanwhile been signally, though in silence, moving on events towards their consummation, and by the very spirit of enquiry concerning them which He has awakened in the midst of his servants, been preparing them to recognize the accomplishment when at length in his appointed time it shall really come." (Archdeacon Harrison's Warburtonian Lectures on the Prophecies.)

FINIS.

London: Walton and Mitchell, Printers, Wardour--st., Oxford--st.