

The Revelation Explained eBook

The Revelation Explained

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CHAPTER XXII.

River and Tree of Life, verses 1-5
Christ's Coming and Eternity, verses 6-21

Nature of Symbolic Language.

Before proceeding with the interpretation of this wonderful book, it will be necessary for us to pause and make inquiry concerning the nature of the language employed in its prophecies and concerning the mode of its interpretation. It will be seen at a glance that it is wholly unlike the common language of life; and it will be useless for us to undertake to ascertain its signification unless we understand perfectly the principles upon which it is founded.

The question may be asked, "Is the language intelligible at all?" Considering the variety of interpretations placed upon it by expositors and the opinions generally held respecting it, we might conclude that it is not. The majority of the people look upon these prophecies as "a mass of unintelligible enigmas," and are ready to tell the student of Revelation that this book "either finds or leaves a man mad." But are we to look upon its language as being applied at a venture, without any definite rule, capable of every variety of meaning, so that we can never be quite *sure* that we have its correct interpretation?

Commentators generally unite in attaching a definite meaning to certain symbols, and they tell us that these can not be applied otherwise without violating their nature. They may not give us their reasons for thus applying them (in fact, they generally do not), yet it is evidently assumed that such reasons do exist. Now, if reasons actually exist why a definite signification must be applied to the symbol in the one case, why do they not exist in another case, and in all cases? If any law exists in the case at all, it is a uniform one, for a law that does not possess uniformity is no law; otherwise, it would be an unintelligible revelation, and the only possible thing left for us to do would be to attempt to solve it like a riddle—guess it out. It would be as if the writer were to use words with every variety of meaning peculiarly his own attached, without informing the reader what signification to give them in a given instance. No man has a right thus to abuse written or spoken language; and we may take it for granted that the God of heaven would not make such an indiscriminate use of symbolical language when making a revelation to men. There is no other book the wide world around in which language is as carefully employed as in the Bible; and we can rest assured that when God gave this Revelation to Jesus Christ "to *show* unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass," he made choice of proper symbols whose meaning can be definitely evolved, provided we can but ascertain the great underlying principles upon which their original selection was based.

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In the ordinary communication of our thoughts we employ arbitrary signs and sounds to which we have universally agreed to fix a definite meaning. Thus, our entire spoken language is made up of a great variety of sounds or words with which by long practise we have become familiar. We call a certain object a horse, not because there is any similarity between the sound and the animal designated, but because we have agreed that that sound shall represent that object. So, also, we have agreed that the characters h-o-r-s-e shall represent the same thing; and by the use of twenty-six characters, called the alphabet, placed together in various combinations, we are able to write our entire spoken language.

The incidents connected with the introduction of written language among a barbarous people are worthy of remark in this connection. That thought can be conveyed to persons at a distance by the use of certain cabalistic characters seems to them incredible, and when compelled to believe it, they look upon the person that can accomplish such wonders as embodying something supernatural. These things I mention merely to call attention to the fact that spoken and written language is a curious and wonderfully complicated affair. This is brought forcibly to our minds when we hear persons conversing in a foreign tongue, or when we pick up a book the characters of which are wholly unlike those of our own language. To us an English book is full of instinctive beauty, every letter or mark possessing a definite meaning that is instantly conveyed to our minds, because we have become familiar with them by diligent study and practise.

There are other ways of transferring thought besides the complicated system just mentioned—ways which are much more natural and simple. Thus, a simpler way to represent a certain object would be to draw a picture of it; or, better still, to represent a certain character or quality by exhibiting, not the object itself, but an analagous one whose peculiar character that property is; for examples: the quiet, peaceful, gentle disposition of a child, by a lamb; a man of cunning, artful, deceptive disposition, by a fox; or a cruel, bloodthirsty, vindictive tyrant, by a tiger, *etc.* This is hieroglyphical or symbolic language. This language takes precedence over every other for naturalness and simplicity, being common to a greater or less extent among all nations and intelligible to all.

Spoken language was undoubtedly a gift from God originally, while written language is probably a mere human invention. We are not to suppose that the first attempts to convey thought in writing would be by an alphabetical system, but by the symbolic, it being, as before stated, the most natural and within reach of the ordinary ingenuity of man. This is proved by the fact that the inscriptions on the ancient monuments of Egypt and the inscriptions of other nations of antiquity are of this character. It is also a fact worthy of notice that, four thousand years later, men of other countries and of other languages have, by much study and a careful comparison of the symbols, been able to decipher with accuracy those hieroglyphical representations.[1] This of itself is sufficient to establish the point that definiteness can be attached to the use and the interpretation

of carefully-selected symbols, when the principles that governed their original selection are discovered.



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[Footnote 1: The systems of hieroglyphical writing employed by various nations have, for the most part, remained unintelligible until a key of their interpretation was discovered. In 1799 M. Bouchard, a French captain of engineers, while digging intrenchments on the site of an old temple near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile, unearthed a black stone containing a trilingual inscription in hieroglyphics, demotic characters, and Greek. The last paragraph of the Greek inscription stated that two translations, one in the sacred and the other in the popular Egyptian language, would be found adjacent; hence this celebrated stone has afforded European scholars a key to the language and writing of the ancient Egyptians. The cuneiform writing of the Babylonians and Persians remained a mystery also until modern times, but great progress has now been made in the deciphering of thousands of inscribed clay tablets, cylinders, prisms, *etc.* The key to its interpretation is the celebrated inscription at Behistun, cut upon the face of a high rock three hundred feet above its base, and recording a portion of the history of Darius. It is written in the cuneiform characters, in three languages—Median, Persian, and Assyrian.]

I do not wish to be understood as implying that the symbolical language of Scripture is identical with the hieroglyphics of ancient monuments. There may be different kinds of symbolic representations; but they are not arbitrary, as is spoken language, and can not be arbitrarily applied; a fixed law governs them all.

Now, the book of Revelation is made up of this symbolic language. It is not, however, confined to this book alone. There are many instances of it to be found elsewhere in the sacred volume, and in many cases it is explained by inspiration itself, thus giving us a reliable key to the whole. Joseph's dream of the eleven sheaves that made obeisance to his sheaf was of this description (Gen. 37:7, 8), and his eleven brethren were angered, because its meaning was apparent—that they should be humbled before him. Also, his dream of the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars (verses 9, 10) was understood to signify the subjection of the entire family unto him, which was actually fulfilled after Joseph's exaltation in Egypt. The chief butler's dream of the vine with three branches bearing grapes, which he took and pressed into the king's cup, was interpreted by Joseph as signifying the butler's restoration in three days to his former position of cup-bearer to the king; while the chief baker's dream of the three baskets upon his head, out of which the birds ate, was interpreted as signifying his execution in the same length of time. Gen. 40. Pharaoh's dream of the seven fat kine and the seven lean kine, also of the seven full ears and the seven thin ears, signified seven years of plenty and seven years of famine. Gen. 41.

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Again, the four divisions of King Nebuchadnezzar's wonderful image was explained by Daniel as signifying four universal monarchies and the ten toes as signifying the ten minor kingdoms which grew out of the fourth; while the stone that was cut out of the mountain without human intervention he interpreted as signifying the divine kingdom of God. Dan. 2. The two-horned ram of Daniel's vision (chap. 8), according to the explanation of the angel, symbolized the Medo-Persian empire, its two horns signifying the two dynasties of allied kings that composed it. The he-goat signified the Greco-Macedonian empire; his great horn, its first mighty king; and the four horns that replaced the great one when broken represented four kings under whom the empire would eventually be divided into as many parts. In the Apocalypse itself we have a number of symbols divinely interpreted, "The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." "The seven candle-sticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings." "The waters which thou sawest ... are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." "The woman which thou sawest is that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth," etc.

It will be seen that the great underlying principle or *law* upon which symbolic language is based is *analogy*. An object is chosen to represent not itself, but something of analagous character.

Webster defines *symbol* as follows: "The sign or representation of any moral thing by the images or properties of natural things. Thus, a lion is the *symbol* of courage; the lamb is the *symbol* of meekness or patience." Home, in his Introduction to the Study of the Bible, says: "By symbols we mean certain representative marks, rather than express pictures; or, if pictures, such as were at the time *characters*, and besides presenting to the eye the resemblance of a particular object, suggested a general idea to the mind, as when a *horn* was made to denote *strength*, an *eye* and *scepter*, *majesty*, and in numberless such instances; where the picture was not drawn to express merely the thing itself, but something else, which was, or was conceived to be, analagous to it." The main idea, then, as expressed in the foregoing definitions, is the representation of an object, not by a picture of itself, but by something analagous, such as the exhibition of moral qualities by images drawn from nature. But the use of symbols is not confined to the representation of moral subjects alone. Anything may be symbolized to which a corresponding analagous object can be found.

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To establish the principle of analogy here laid down, it will be necessary to refer only to a few of the numerous examples of divinely interpreted symbols in the Scriptures. Any one can readily perceive the analogy between the seven fat kine of Pharaoh's dream and as many years of plenty; so, also, with the seven full, healthy ears that grew up on seven stalks. Likewise, the analogy between the seven thin kine and as many years of famine, and the seven thin, blasted ears that represented the same thing, is apparent. One fat kine or one full ear would symbolize one year of plenty, when crops were abundant; while seven would represent as many distinct seasons of prosperity, *etc.* Kine do not represent kine, but something analagous. The beasts of Daniel's visions do not represent animals like themselves, or a multitude of such animals, but something of analagous disposition. The analogy between a wild, ferocious beast, stamping upon or devouring everything within its reach, and a cruel, persecuting, tyrannical government is apparent. A horn does not signify a horn, but some great power, such as a dynasty of kings or rulers; and what the horn is to the animal in manifesting its desolating disposition, kings and rulers are to an empire in executing the persecuting or oppressive principles of the body politic. A pure, chaste virgin is used to symbolize the true church of God; whereas a corrupt harlot is chosen to represent an apostate church, and fornication her idolatrous worship.

Although this principle is worthy of further elucidation, yet enough has been said to firmly establish the point that symbolic language is founded upon analogy. It is also clear that, whenever we attach a literal signification to a symbolic object, we immediately destroy entirely its use as a symbol. So we may accept it as one established landmark in the interpretation of the Apocalypse, that every symbol, regardless of the department from which it is taken—whether from the material universe, the animal kingdom, human life or the heavenly realm—stands as the representative, not of itself, but of some other object of analagous character not found in the same department from which it is drawn.

This develops another important fact worthy of attention. If the great law of symbolic language is based upon analogy, it is clear to a demonstration that the symbols employed *must be* definitely applied. They can not be arbitrary, as the words composing our spoken language are. There is nothing in the nature of the thing to prevent our calling a horse an elephant, provided we had only agreed universally to adopt that designation of the animal referred to (arbitrary sounds can be arbitrarily applied); but we violate nature when we attempt to make a ferocious tiger the symbol of an innocent child, or represent a blood-thirsty tyrant by the symbol of a lamb. A disgusting, polluted harlot may be the proper symbol of an apostate church, but of the pure, holy church of God—*never*. A proper correspondence must be kept up. We must follow nature strictly.

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Symbols are drawn from every department—from animate and inanimate creation, from animal life and human life, from the visible universe below and the heavenly world above, and also from some objects of fancy to which there is no corresponding object in existence, such as Daniel's four-headed beast, or the one in the Revelator's vision with seven heads and ten horns; but in the selection of the same a proper correspondence of quality is kept up. The symbols that are chosen to set forth the great spiritual affairs of the church are such as are in themselves nobler than those selected to describe the political affairs of kings and empires, because in the divine estimation the church is of infinitely greater importance and occupies a more honorable position than worldly kingdoms. Thus, a beautiful virgin bride is chosen to represent the church of God; whereas a great red dragon with seven heads and ten horns is chosen to symbolize the Pagan Roman empire. The glorious body of God's reformers is set forth under the symbol of an angel from heaven, with his face as the sun, his feet as pillars of fire, and a rainbow upon his head; whereas the Saracen warriors of Mahomet are locusts upon the earth, with stings of scorpions. The department of human and angelic life is chosen to set forth the spiritual affairs of the church, while the department of nature and of animal life represents the political affairs of nations. To this general rule, there is at least one exception. Certain things connected with God's chosen people under the old dispensation are considered proper symbols to represent similar things or events in the New Testament dispensation, without special regard to the department from which they are drawn. Thus, the temple, altar, incense, candlesticks, holy city, *etc.*, of the former age, though not taken from the department of human or angelic life, are, nevertheless, clearly used to represent affairs of the church, the analogy in the case being apparent because of their former prominence as connected with the Lord's covenant people.

Again, when the symbol selected is that of a living, active, intelligent agent, it represents an analagous intelligent agent. Likewise, the actions of the former plainly denote analagous actions in the latter, and the effects produced by the actions of the symbolic agent signify analagous effects produced by the actions of the agent symbolized. To make it clearer: agents symbolize agents, actions symbolize actions, and effects symbolize effects. If this be not true—if agents can symbolize actions and effects as well as agents, or if actions can symbolize agents and effects—then all is an inextricable maze of confusion, and well may we repeat the words uttered by a certain minister to the writer, "The book should have been called Mystification, not Revelation."

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The same principle of analogy is carried out in another particular. Whenever the enemies of God or destructive agents are intended, objects of a corresponding desolating character are chosen as their symbols; whereas the peaceful triumphs of the cross, as exhibited by God's chosen people, are described under symbols of an equally benign and gentle character. Thus, the anti-Christian, persecuting power of Rome is described as a ferocious wild beast, stamping everything beneath its feet and spreading desolation on every side. The Vandal hordes of Northern barbarians, who, under Genseric overran the Western Roman empire early in the fifth century, are symbolized by a volcanic mountain cast into the sea and spreading its streams of molten lava in every direction. The fearful pest of Mohammedanism is a dense smoke issuing from the bottomless pit and darkening the heavens. The Saracens of Mahomet are swarms of locusts appearing upon the earth, with scorpion stings, tormenting men five months, or, prophetically, one hundred and fifty years. On the other hand, a church is a candlestick; its pastor, a beautiful star; the whole church, a virgin bride; the glorious assembly of God's reformers, a rainbow angel, *etc.*

From the foregoing it will be seen that symbols are not words, but things, chosen because of some analogous resemblance to represent other things; and by a careful study of the nature of the symbols themselves we can ascertain where to look for their fulfilment. In the present work no attempt has been made to prove the interpretations given merely by the authority of learned names (for they can be arrayed on every side of a passage), but the nature of the symbols themselves has been developed; and the reader will be able to judge how nearly the known laws of symbolic language have been followed.

It will be necessary, however, to notice another exception to the rules given, although it can scarcely be said to form an exception—it rather proves the very position taken. Undoubtedly, there are some few objects whose nature forbids their symbolization, there being no object in existence of analogous character that can be chosen as their representative. God, evidently, can not be symbolized; for where is the individual in heaven or on earth that can stand as his representative? “To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?” Isa. 40:18. Man can not represent him, angels can not; for whenever they appear on the panoramic scene, they denote distinguished agencies among men. There may be certain symbols connected with his person, setting forth his divine attributes and proclaiming the eternal majesty of his name; but he himself is described as “One sitting upon a throne,” before whom the created intelligences of earth and heaven fall down and worship unceasingly, but no symbol of Him is given. The same exception also applies to the person of Jesus, our Savior and Redeemer. While the human aspect of the Savior,

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as exhibited during the incarnation in his sacrificial death, may be properly symbolized by a lamb, as in chap. V, there is no created intelligence in God's great universe that can be chosen to represent, in his true, essential divinity, Him who does not deem it robbery to claim equality with God. There may, likewise, be certain symbols connected with his person to give us at least a faint impression of his divine character and infinite majesty; yet when he appears upon the symbolic scene, he distinctly announces, "I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore." "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." So whenever the divine Christ appears on the symbolic scene, he comes in his own person, proclaiming his own name, and we need look for no symbol of him.

Upon the opening of the fifth seal, the souls of the martyrs are represented as crying unto God from the altar for the avenging of their blood on those who dwell on the earth. Where is there an object in all creation analagous to a disembodied spirit? None can be found. It is easy to give them an arbitrary name; therefore they appear in the Revelation under their own appropriate title, as "the *souls* of them that were slain." Chap. 6:9, 10, also 20:4.

This exception applies to every case where no corresponding object can be selected as a symbol. Where the nature of the subject forbids its symbolization, there the description must of necessity be literal, and all such objects appear under their own appropriate titles. Otherwise, we are to look upon the entire book of Revelation as a vast collection of symbols whose interpretation is to be found, not in the department from which they are taken, but in another, to which they bear a certain analagous resemblance.

Although not pertaining strictly to the subject of symbolic language, yet a word respecting the plan of the prophecy will be appropriate at this time. The prophetic events are not arranged after the ordinary plan of histories, narrating all the contemporaneous events in a given period, whether civil, religious, literary, scientific, or biographical, thus finishing up the history of that period; but it consists of a number of distinct themes running over the same ground. The proof of this assertion will appear as we proceed with the development of the prophecies.

May the wisdom of heaven direct us in the perusal of this wonderful book of Revelation, and may we at last be "accounted worthy to obtain that world," and the glorious privilege of rendering eternal praise to "Him that sitteth upon the throne," "upholding all things by the word of his power," "declaring the end from the beginning," and revealing his mighty works unto the children of men.

CHAPTER I.

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

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2. Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.
3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

This book of the Revelation is frequently styled the Apocalypse, derived from the word by which it is designated in Greek. Jesus Christ having received it from God, its author, designed it for the future benefit of his church, and communicated it to his servants by the hand of the beloved apostle John. Its character is described by its title "Revelation," which signifies something revealed or made known; and its object was to "show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." This object of God's in delivering the Revelation to his church should be a sufficient refutation of the popular theory that this book is unintelligible, and its varied symbols wrapped in such deep mystery that their meaning can not be evolved; for it is not consonant with the supreme power and wisdom of the God-head to suppose that, in making a revelation to man, he would make the fatal mistake of clothing his language with a mystery that defies the intellect of mortals to unveil. It is said of the things herein revealed that they "must shortly come to pass," by which is meant not that they were all to be completely fulfilled within a short time, but that the series of special events predicted were soon to begin. Thus, we speak of a century or eternity as near at hand, by which we mean that the events of the period spoken of are about to commence, although the end of the series may be very far off.

But who are "his servants"? For whose benefit was the Revelation given? Surely it was for all those who become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, from the beginning of the gospel dispensation when it was given, until the end of time; for a benediction is pronounced upon *all* those who read and hear its prophecies and "keep those things which are written therein." It was this promised blessing unto the earnest inquirers into the truths of Revelation that enabled the writer to decide to give these prophecies the consideration that is justly their due, and to recognize their infinite importance to the present church; "for the time is at hand" that will close the series of events herein predicted and usher in eternity. Every fulfilment of prophecy brings with it new duties, and enjoins fresh responsibilities upon the people of God; yea, "every revolving century, every closing year, adds to the urgency with which attention is challenged to the concluding portion of Holy Writ." Daniel prophetically described some of the events contained also in the Apocalypse, but he was told to shut up the words and seal the book *until* the time of the end, when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."



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It has been a matter of conjecture as to who the angel or messenger was that Christ sent to deliver the prophecies to John. Some suppose it to have been Gabriel, because of his having been a chosen instrument to deliver similar prophecies to Daniel. Some think it was Elijah, he having been translated that he should not see death, and afterwards appearing on the mount of transfiguration. Others think it was one of the redeemed sons of earth; because afterward, when rejecting the worship John was about to tender him, he says, "See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." Chaps. 19:10; 22:9. But we can not identify this messenger positively, as no definite information is given. To these revelations received John bore a faithful record of all things that he saw, implying the fact that they passed in vision before him and he beheld them as in a picture.

4. JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5. And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

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

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.

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.

The Apocalypse opens with the salutation of John to the seven churches in Asia, unto whom it was particularly addressed, and for whom special messages were prepared. There were other congregations of the church of God in Asia, or Asia Minor, besides the seven to whom the Revelation was sent, such as Colosse, Miletus, Troas, *etc.* Why only seven were addressed, we do not know, unless it be that the number seven is used, as elsewhere in the Sacred Volume, to denote fulness or completeness, being, as has been said, "a kind of memorial of the great facts of the first seven days of time which have divided all ages into cycles of weeks." So when we read of Christ's walking in the midst of the seven churches, we are to understand that he is in all the congregations of his people; and the ministers of the seven churches who are upheld by the Lord himself are representative, in one important sense at least, of the entire Christian ministry; for Christ has promised to be with them alway "even unto the end of the world." Mat. 28:20.



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This salutation of John's is one of great beauty and splendor, setting forth, as it does, the divine attributes of the great Jehovah in a striking manner as he "which is, and which was, and which is to come," an expression embracing eternity and designating the eternal, unchangeable God. The seven spirits before his throne describe the third person in the Trinity, as will appear clearer hereafter, seven being used as a sacred or perfect number designating his dignity and excellence. Some have supposed that seven angelic spirits were here described; but it is not consistent with the honor due the God-head to suppose that created intelligences should be exalted to a plane of equality with the supreme Deity. Moreover, they would probably have been described as seven *angels*, and not as seven *spirits*.

Jesus Christ is mentioned next and more fully described, he being the direct author of the Revelation. He is "the first begotten of the dead, the prince of the kings of the earth," and the one "that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." The statement that Christ is the "first-begotten of the dead," is parallel to similar expressions in the Bible, where he is declared to be "the first-fruits of them that slept," "and the first-born from the dead." Though others had been restored to life before the resurrection of Christ, yet he was the first to rise with an immortal, glorified body. These expressions may also denote that Christ was the chief or central figure among all those who arose. But it was by virtue of his coming and of his victory over death that any were enabled to rise before his resurrection, as in the mind and purpose of God, who "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17), Christ was ordained to die and rise again, from the foundation of the world. He is the "prince of the kings of the earth" by virtue of his being exalted to the right hand of God, with "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." 1 Pet. 3:22. "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph. 1:21.

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," describes the great atonement work of Jesus Christ, by which we are cleansed from all sin and made a royal, kingly priesthood unto God even in this world. Every soul that has received the blessed experience John here describes will be able to appreciate the unbounded rapture the beloved apostle felt in the contemplation of this wonderful theme of redemption that caused him to ascribe to God, its author, "glory and dominion forever and ever."

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This Jesus is he who will come again, not in humiliation and suffering, but in glory and honor; not as a Lamb to shed his blood for the sins of the world, but as the Lion of the tribe of Juda, with infinite power and majesty, causing all the kindreds of earth to wail because of him. The blasphemous Jews, who clamored for his crucifixion; Pilate, who delivered him up; and the Roman soldiery, who drove the nails and pierced his side, producing a death of greatest ignominy—all will see him when he comes. But while the proud enemies of God and the cruel oppressors of his saints are overwhelmed with terror at the sight of His person, the saints of all ages will shout for joy, saying, “Even so. Amen.” “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.” In the face of this awful truth, how dare men assert that the second advent will usher in a thousand years of peace and tranquility, during which time the wicked will lie in their graves, when God’s word declares that every eye shall see him when he comes?

The present description of Christ closes with the statement that he is the Alpha and the Omega, which, being the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, mean the same as “the beginning and the ending”; while the whole concludes with the statement that he is the one “which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty”—which is the same as the description given of God in verse 4. Nothing in addition to this could be ascribed to Christ. Every attribute with which the Deity himself is invested is here ascribed to Jesus Christ. If our Savior is anything more than this description declares him to be, it is beyond the reach of our finite minds to comprehend. The sacred writers everywhere speak of him as a being worthy of worship and praise; and this fact, taken in connection with the universal proneness of men to take the honor from God and to give it to those who are no gods, is a convincing proof that Christ is God and, as such, is worthy of all honor and praise; and nowhere is there given in regard to Christ a warning caution such as John received from the angel at whose feet he fell to worship —“See thou do it not ... worship God.”

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.

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

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.

At the time the Revelation was given, John was a prisoner in the Isle of Patmos (now called Patmo or Patino),

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a small, desolate, rocky island in the Aegean sea, near the coast of Asia Minor, its greatest length from north to south being about ten miles, and its greatest breadth six. To this lonely place, according to Jerome and others, John was exiled during the reign of the tyrant Domitian, in A.D. 95. The reason of his banishment is given—"For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." Having confined him to this barren spot, the emperor no doubt thought he had effectually cleared the world of this preacher of righteousness. Doubtless the persecutors of John Bunyan^[2] thought the same when they had him shut up in Bedford jail. But when men think the truth is dead and buried out of sight, God suddenly gives it a resurrection with thirty-fold greater glory. It was so in this case. The giving of the book of Revelation—the writing on this spot of the history of the church in advance—has changed the name of this rocky island from deepest infamy to one of sacred interest and holy recollections. The death of Domitian occurred in A.D. 96, and his successor, the humane Nerva, recalled those who had been exiled because of their faithfulness to Christianity; and John returned to Ephesus, where he spent the remainder of his days, dying a natural death at the advanced age of about one hundred years.

[Footnote 2: John Bunyan (1628-1688) was a Puritan. After the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne, at the close of the English Revolution and the failure of the Commonwealth, he was imprisoned for twelve years "on account of non-conformity to the established worship." It was during this dreary confinement that he wrote his "Pilgrim's Progress," the most admirable allegory in English literature.]

The humble manner in which John speaks of himself is affectionate. He does not represent himself to the churches as some great apostle or prophet, but as "your brother and companion in tribulation," a sharer with them in the trials and the persecutions that they were all called upon to endure. He also testified that he was "in the kingdom and patience of Christ," of which we will speak more hereafter.

It was on the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, that the vision recorded in this chapter was given John, while he was "in the Spirit," or under the influence of the spirit of prophecy. He was commanded to write in a book the things that he saw and to send it unto the seven churches of Asia. It is important to bear in mind the fact that these visions are things that John saw, all the actors and events passing before him as a moving panorama—the most stupendous scene that human eyes have ever beheld, containing the future political history of various nations and kingdoms and also the history of the church in her different phases from the beginning until the final consummation. Of the seven churches we will speak more particularly hereafter.

12. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

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13. And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

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

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

17. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

The hieroglyphic, or symbolic, characters now begin. Turning in the direction from which the voice came, John saw seven beautiful candle-sticks and standing in their midst, a personage whose appearance was inexpressibly glorious. John had recognized the voice of Christ announcing "I am the first and the last," but he was not prepared for the sight that met his gaze when he turned and found himself in the immediate presence of his August Majesty, the Son of God. A human form was there, but clothed in such vestments as proclaimed God; and no wonder mortality was overwhelmed when ushered into the presence of the uncreated Deity—he whose feet glowed as brass in a furnace, whose eyes were as a flame of fire, and whose voice was as the sound of many waters. Any man would have fallen as dead before such a personage as is here described. Men may talk atheism, but it is the atheism of the lips and of a coward heart, an atheism that would flee appalled before the burning footsteps of the Deity, and the irresistible conclusion would be, "It is God himself."

John was not left in doubt regarding the identity of this personage; for, laying his hand upon the prostrate form of the apostle, he said, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." The ever-living One entered death's domains and permitted himself to be bound with chains; but at his pleasure he broke them asunder, conquered death, and rose triumphant, carrying with him the keys of hell and of death; and he has ascended on high, alive forevermore; and at his voice all the dead will arise at his appearing, for the grave can no longer hold its victims.



This vision settles an important fact—that when Christ appears upon the panoramic scene, he comes in his own person, and not in the character of a created substitute. There may be symbols connected with his person—the sword of his mouth may signify vengeance upon his enemies; his eyes as a flame of fire, superior intelligence and penetrating vision, *etc.*—but he distinctly announces himself to be the Christ of God. There is no creature in the universe that could personate “him that liveth, and was dead, but is alive forevermore.”



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

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.

Here John received a special commission to write the things of the future that were to be given, the things that were then taking place, and also certain events which had come under his personal observation during his life-time, and which were also included in the symbolic visions, thus covering the entire gospel dispensation.

The special symbols employed in this introductory vision are here explained by Christ himself, thus leaving us in no doubt whatever. A star is a fit symbol of the position of a Christian minister—set in the church to give the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world; while a candle-stick fitly represents the congregation working with him and sustaining him in his position. The special power of Christ—symbolized by his right hand—is manifested in upholding his ministers, while he walks in the midst of his churches, ready with the sword of his mouth to defend them from the attacks of their adversaries and to prove their constant Guardian and Protector.

CHAPTER II.

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2. I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

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

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

5. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

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



7. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The special messages to the seven churches of Asia Minor are not of such thrilling interest as are the symbolic visions of the remainder of the book, yet we can learn many beneficial lessons from the various experiences of these congregations.



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At the time the Revelation was given, Ephesus was the chief capital of Proconsular Asia and its pride and glory. It was also that country's chief mart of idolatry, containing, as it did, the magnificent temple of Diana, which is reckoned as one of the seven wonders of the world. This temple, according to the disclosures of modern excavations, was four hundred and eighteen feet in length, and two hundred and thirty-nine in width, with one hundred beautiful external pillars of Parian marble, each a single shaft about fifty-six feet high. The city was proud of the title it had received, "Servant of the Goddess," and even the Roman emperors vied with wealthy natives in lavishing gifts to her. One of the latter, named Vibius Salutaris, presented a large quantity of gold and silver images to be carried annually in procession.

In this proud, wealthy, idolatrous city the apostle Paul planted a Christian church, and the great inroads the gospel made into the prevalent system of idolatry is shown by one circumstance mentioned in the Book of Acts. "And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Acts 19:18-20. Fifty thousand pieces of silver would be equal to ten thousand dollars' worth, or, according to some estimates, six times that amount. But ten thousand dollars' worth of books on incantation and magic alone destroyed, considering the scarcity of books in that day, shows the wondrous extent to which the gospel had been accepted. This was made the occasion of a great tumult in the city, when one, Demetrius, seeing that the prestige of Diana was diminishing, stirred up the people of the city against Paul and his companions, and cried vehemently, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The souvenir silver shrines and images of this goddess, which had been in such demand by the multitudes of people constantly visiting the city, were no longer sought for when the knowledge of the one true God was made known; and well might Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen be alarmed as their means of wealth disappeared.

The spiritual condition of this church in Paul's time is worthy of notice; for it presents a striking contrast with its condition at the time when the special message of the Revelation was addressed to it. Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians taught them the glorious doctrine of entire sanctification (chap. 5:25-27), and they had received the experience; for he gives them the express command, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Chap. 4:30. And again, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." Chap. 1:13. Their ministers, also, had been placed in their position by authority of the Holy Ghost, and

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were commanded to feed the flock. See Acts 20:28. When this was their heavenly experience, their “first works” of patience, love, and perseverance, were acceptable unto Christ; but it was not their present condition. A sad declension had taken place; therefore the declaration, “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.” This was no mere human estimate placed upon their piety, but it was their condition as Christ himself knew it to be. He “who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks,” and knoweth the hearts of all men, declared they had fallen, and commanded them to repent and to do the first works. How sad that a congregation which had one time enjoyed the fulness of God’s favor should fall from grace and be threatened with destruction by the Lord himself! But there is one consolation to be obtained from the experience of this church, and that is, that even if persons have enjoyed an experience of pardon and of sanctification and have lost it, there is a possibility of their recovering the favor of God, provided they “repent, and do the first works.”

But Christ, who in chapter 1:5 is said to be “the faithful witness,” will not overlook anything that is good, nor censure a congregation unjustly. He finds in this church one fact worthy of commendation—their abhorrence of the deeds of the Nicolaitans. The infamous practises attributed to this party are promiscuous sexual intercourse and the eating of things sacrificed to idols. It is said to have derived its name from Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch, who was one of the seven deacons appointed by the church at Jerusalem, Acts 6:5. But there is no satisfactory evidence that Nicolas was its founder; and it is the belief of many, that the sect attributed their origin to him simply to gain the prestige of his name. However, its mention in this connection is sufficient proof that at this time those corrupt principles had been widely promulgated.

The letter closes with an admonition and a promise—an admonition to give heed to the things uttered by the Spirit, and a promise of everlasting life to the overcomer. This shows that Christ does not approve or condemn indiscriminately. If the great mass of professors continue in their backslidden condition, the individual that gives heed to God’s Word and is made an overcomer will have a right to “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

What, may we ask, has been the fate of this church against which Christ uttered the threat of removal? There is no proof that they gave heed to the exhortation to repent, and the candle-stick has long since been taken away. Not a vestige of a church remains to mark the site of this once important congregation; nay, the city itself is no more, the stork, the jackal, and a few miserable Turkish huts alone remaining on the site of this once proud metropolis where thousands congregated and cried, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians!”



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

9. I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Smyrna was situated on a bay of the Aegean Sea, its beautiful harbor rendering it from time immemorial one of the most important commercial cities of Asia Minor. History does not inform us when the gospel was first introduced in this city; but at a very early date a large congregation existed there, with the venerable Polycarp as its pastor. He suffered death by martyrdom under the reign of Marcus Aurelius about A.D. 167.

In each of the seven letters to the churches Christ introduces himself by some appellation significant of the character he assumes toward them. In this he styles himself "the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive," a fact very important for that congregation to remember during the great seasons of persecution and oppression through which they were to be called to pass.

Against this church Christ has no words of condemnation to utter; all is encouragement and promise. Their condition of poverty is mentioned. It is probable that this very poverty arose because of their accepting Christianity and taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods; for it is a well-known fact that, when individuals embrace Christianity in an idolatrous land, they are disinherited by parents, cast out by relatives, and denied public employment. Even the community refuses to associate with them or to render them assistance in any form. Their means of subsistence is thus cut off, and they are harassed in every possible manner. Perhaps this is the very trial of poverty the church of Smyrna passed through; but Christ declares that they are rich: yea, God hath "chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him." Jas. 2:5. Their enemies may think that they have reduced them to a condition of wretchedness, but in this the persecutors are mistaken. God says the righteous are rich. A certain writer has remarked, "There is many a rich poor man, and many a poor rich man."



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The blasphemy of opposing, self-styled Jews is next mentioned. In all probability the term *Jew* is applied in its spiritual sense. Paul declares that "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly ... but he is a Jew which is one inwardly" (Rom. 2:28, 29), and that "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. These persons professed to belong to the true "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), but they were without salvation; and the Smyrnaen church would not recognize them as belonging to the congregation, and therefore the only name that could be applied to them was "the synagogue of Satan." Had they been tolerated in the assembly of the righteous, Christ would have condemned or rebuked the church for not performing their duty, the same as he did the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira.

Great persecutions for the church of Smyrna are predicted; but he "which was dead, and is alive forevermore," having passed through the ordeal of suffering and death himself, stands in a position to speak words of comfort and consolation, assuring them in the strongest terms that, although wicked men and the devil may cast them into prison and persecute them unto the death, yet "he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." The overcomers are of the number of those who, having had "part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power." Chap. 20:6. The ten days doubtless are prophetic time (which will be explained later) and signify ten years, which was probably fulfilled in the terrible persecution that began under the reign of Diocletian, and continued ten years, or from A.D. 302 to 312.

The subsequent history of Smyrna has been different from that of Ephesus, in that it has retained its name and importance until the present day, being the greatest commercial city in the Levant. It has a population of more than two hundred thousand, several thousand of whom belong to the Greek and Armenian churches. The light there has become dimmed, but let us pray that God will soon remember the faith and perseverance of his ancient servants and again trim the lamps that once shone so brightly.

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

13. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

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



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

17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

Pergamos was a city of considerable importance, the ancient metropolis of the province of Mysia and the residence of the Attalian kings.

The description here given of Christ is in accordance with the character of the church addressed and the work he found necessary to perform in it. They are said to be located "where Satan's seat is." Pergamos was a city reputed to be "sacred to the gods" and was one of the headquarters of idolatry. There are numerous such cities now among the Hindoos and other idolatrous nations. These cities are regarded with peculiar veneration and sanctity, and they contain the most honored temples. In the midst of such surroundings the influences against Christianity would be very great.

The congregation is commended because of its loyalty and steadfastness during a period of persecution in which Antipas was slain. When this persecution occurred, we are not informed; and as to the identity of Antipas, we are also left in uncertainty. Some suppose him to have been the elder of the church.

Christ censures them severely, however, for tolerating persons in their midst who held the doctrine of Balaam and the pernicious sentiments of the Nicolaitans, and he threatens to fight against them with the sword of his mouth unless they repent. The doctrine of Balaam is partly explained—he "taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication." When Balak desired Balaam to pronounce a curse against Israel, God by various means miraculously prevented Balaam's doing so; but Balaam craftily instructed Balak to make use of the women of Moab to seduce the men of Israel to sacrifice to their idols and to indulge in the licentious accompaniments to such idolatry. In many places in heathen countries to-day vile women are attached to the temples of the gods, and at certain stated feasts licentiousness becomes a sanctioned part of the religious celebration. Balaam's plan was successful. God was displeased with Israel, and because of this fornication there fell in one day twenty-four thousand. For a full account see Num. 22-25; 31:13-17.

It would appear that the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans were classed as two different heresies; but the corrupt tenets of the latter were identical with those of the former, and the probable meaning is, "As the Hebrews had Balaamites among them; so, likewise, you have among you the Nicolaitans teaching the same pernicious doctrines." It is also a singular fact that the Hebrew signification of Balaam

and the Greek of Nicolas is the same—“subduer of the people.” Thus the doctrine of Balaam would stand as a representation of the principles taught by the Nicolaitans.

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The letter to this church also closes with an exhortation and a promise. Hidden manna and a white stone in which is inscribed a new name are rewarded the overcomer. The interpretations of this white stone have been various, but the difficulty seems to lie in determining which ancient custom is meant. The most satisfactory to my mind is that contained in the following account by Mr. Blunt:

“In primitive times, when traveling was rendered difficult from want of places of public entertainment, hospitality was exercised by private individuals to a very great extent, of which, indeed, we find frequent traces in all history, and in none more than in the Old Testament. Persons who partook of this hospitality, and those who practised it, frequently contracted habits of friendship and regard for each other, and it became a well-established custom among the Greeks and Romans to provide their guests with some particular mark, which was handed down from father to son, and insured hospitality and kind treatment whenever it was presented. This mark was usually a small stone or pebble, cut in halves, upon each of which the host and the guest mutually inscribed their names, and then interchanged with each other. The production of these stones was quite sufficient to insure friendship for themselves or descendants whenever they traveled again in the same direction; while it is evident that these stones required to be privately kept, and the names written upon them carefully concealed, lest others should obtain the privileges instead of the persons for whom they were intended.” So those who have obtained salvation and are overcomers through the blood have received the sure pledge of Christ’s eternal friendship (which those who know not God can not receive) and are invited to partake of all of his hospitalities, even to “eat of the hidden manna,” which is experienced by the truly sanctified.

18. And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19. I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

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

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



23. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.



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25. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come.

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

27. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28. And I will give him the morning star.

29. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

To this congregation Christ manifests himself in the character of him “who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet like fine brass,” denoting the fact that he is the great discernor of all hearts and that he is able to render unto every man according to his deeds. Whether the expression, “his feet like fine brass,” has any particular signification, I am unable to say.

This letter opens with a commendation of the works, the charity, the service, and the faith of this church. In these things they had made considerable advancement. Nevertheless, Christ had something against them, because they had suffered “that woman Jezebel” to teach false doctrines and to seduce the servants of Christ to compromise with idolatry and to commit fornication. It is improbable that Jezebel was her real name; but she was a Jezebel in character, named in this letter after King Ahab’s wicked wife, who killed the Lord’s prophets, seduced her husband into idolatry, and fed the priests of Baal at her own table. Some have supposed that this appellation designated a number or class of people teaching these doctrines; but the manner in which “her children,” or disciples, are spoken of would seem rather to point out a particular woman—one who was a leader and the chief instrument of mischief.

The long-suffering of Christ had been manifested in this case. He had given her an opportunity to repent of her evil deeds, but she would not. Now he declares that he will cause his judgments to descend upon her and her followers. By casting her into a bed is doubtless meant that he would bring her down upon a bed of sickness and pain and thus make her a most distressing object. Her partners in sin were to suffer “great tribulation,” and “her children,” or disciples, he would kill with death, or deadly pestilence. Thus would this whole corrupt party be visited with divine judgments according to their works; while their great pretensions to wisdom and discernment, “as they speak,” or as they term it, will be shown to be nothing but the “depths of Satan.”

The frequent references to these gross sins in the letters to the churches may seem a little strange to us in the altered circumstances of society in which we live; but when we



consider the tone of public sentiment and the prevalence of idolatry at that time, it will be seen that the lapse into these sins was very easy. Some compromised with the heathen by joining in their idolatrous feasts, maintaining that the meat was not affected one way or the other, and this proved but a stepping-stone to the licentious principles and the corrupt practises of those with whom they thus associated.



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The remainder of this letter is full of encouragement to the faithful. The only burden Christ placed upon them was a severe censure because they tolerated that abominable party in their midst. They were exhorted to continue faithful and were promised power over the nations. These they should rule with a rod of iron, the same as Christ, who received this power from his Father. The law, or rod, with which Christ, and his people with him, as *kings* and priests, rule the nations is the word of God, the most unyielding law, based upon the greatest authority, ever written. "Let the saints be joyful in glory ... let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the *judgments written*: this honor have *all his saints*." Psa. 149:5-9.

CHAPTER III.

And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.
3. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.
 4. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.
5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.
 6. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Sardis was one of the chief cities of western Asia Minor. It was beautifully situated on the river Pactolus, in the middle Hermus valley, at the foot of Mount Tmolus, and was once the capital of the kingdom of Lydia, the place of residence of Croesus and other Lydian kings. It was a city of great opulence and splendor, and "distinguished for the voluptuous and debauched manners of its inhabitants."

To this church Christ introduces himself as "he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars"—that is, he has control of the Holy Spirit's agency and of his ministers.



Thus, the great spiritual agencies of the church are in his keeping to bestow or to take away as he pleases. Considering the dead condition of this church of Sardis, it was very appropriate for Christ thus to address himself to them. He has no words of commendation



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to offer, no works of charity, service, faith, and patience of which to approve. They had works, but these were not “perfect before God.” They were threatened with sudden visitation, as unexpected as a thief breaking in unawares upon the slumbering inmates of a dwelling in the still hours of night. Their condition was different from that of any of the churches before mentioned. They are not charged with such vile practises as prevailed at Pergamus and Thyatira, the doctrine of the Nicolaitans had gained no foothold among them, yet their works were not perfect. “Thou hast a name that thou livest, and are *dead*.” They had maintained the external form of religion, but the vital power of godliness was lacking.

Although Christ could not commend this church as a body, on account of their lack of spirituality, yet he testified, “Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.” In the midst of all the cold formalism of professors and surrounded by worldliness and iniquity, a few preserved their Christian integrity and were approved by the Lord. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this ... to keep himself unspotted from the world.” Jas. 1:27. All such overcomers have the promise of being clothed in white raiment (“the righteousness of saints”—chap. 19:8) and of having their names preserved in the “book of life” in heaven and confessed before the Father and the holy angels. Wondrous admission into the heavenly realm! Presented to the Father and the innumerable hosts of heaven *by the Lord, himself*, there, amid sacred environments, to enjoy the transcendent felicity of eternal blessedness! “They are worthy,” saith Christ.

Although this church was threatened with sudden visitation, there is no hint given of the manner in which this should be fulfilled, for the reason, perhaps, that it might be all the more unexpected. The church has long since passed out of existence. The city itself has lain in ruins for centuries, the modern village of Sart composed of a few huts inhabited by semi-nomadic Yuruks alone remaining near the ancient site. Cattle now graze on grassy plains once traversed by streets and thronged with the inhabitants of this superb metropolis.

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

8. I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9. Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10. Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.



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

12. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my new name.

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

Philadelphia was once a large and powerful city, and it continued thus until later times. Prior to the time the Revelation was written, it had suffered severely from repeated earthquakes, which caused it to be almost deserted by its inhabitants. Subsequently, however, it recovered and became a prosperous, influential city.

The character Christ assumes toward this church is that of the Holy and True—one who will justly reward them for their patience and perseverance—and by virtue of his possessing the key of David (a symbol of power and authority), he is able to place before them an open door which no man can shut.

The character of this church is wholly unlike that of the preceding. In that, there was nothing to commend, but much to condemn; whereas to this, all is admonition, encouragement, and promise, because they had “kept the word of his patience” and had not denied his name. Christ knew their works and that they were worthy of approval. They still possessed “a little strength” and had not denied his name.

Christ, who always upholds and rewards his faithful followers, although they be few in number and constitute the despised of earth, was not unrighteous that he should overlook this humble congregation of devoted disciples that had kept his word, but he made them a number of special promises *because* of their faith and perseverance. The first was the assurance that he had set before them an open door which no man could shut. A door is a means either of entrance or of escape, and signifies that God was going to open before them a greater field of enlargement and success, or else would furnish them a sure means of escape and protection from their cruel and relentless persecutors. It will be remembered that the church of Smyrna also received nothing but commendation and encouragement; but there was no promise of an open door to them. On the contrary, they were told that they should be tried, cast into prison, and suffer tribulation ten days. They were comforted, however, with a certain assurance of future reward and a crown of everlasting life. But before the church of Philadelphia there was opened a scene of greater prosperity, deliverance from enemies, greater enlargement, and the glorious prospect of seeing multitudes of souls brought under the influence of the saving gospel of Christ.



The next promise was that of deliverance from opposing Jews, who were to be humbled before them. This refers, doubtless, to persons who had a mere profession of Christianity and who were not recognized by the congregation—the same as the blaspheming Jews of Smyrna. The faithfulness of God's elect would eventually be the means of bringing them back to an experience of salvation, so that they would worship in the midst of the church again.



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Another promise to this congregation was, "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." Some dreadful calamity is here predicted, during which the power of God would be mercifully manifested in granting this church a special preservation. Some suppose it to have reference to a great general persecution throughout the Roman empire, during which the Christians of Philadelphia would be spared. This may have been the fact; but whether it was or not, we have no means of information. When we come to consider the symbols of chapter 9, in which the delusive error of Mohammedanism is set forth, we will see what a period of sore trial this delusion was to the Eastern churches. It is also a fact that, in the midst of this abounding heresy, the church of Philadelphia was preserved as was no other church of Asia. When the followers of Mohammed were sweeping like a whirlwind over the Eastern empire, ravaging everything before them, Philadelphia remained an independent Christian city, when *all the other* cities of Asia Minor were under the power of the Saracen sword. It held out against the Ottoman power until the year 1390 A.D., when it surrendered to Sultan Bayazid's mixed army of Ottoman Turks and Byzantine Christians (?). This was six years after the death of Wickliffe, "the morning star of the reformation," who opposed the corruptions of the Papacy, gave the world the first English translation of the Bible, and sowed the seeds that soon grew and produced a Huss, a Jerome, and a Luther. So God preserved the Christians of Philadelphia in the East until he began raising up others to herald his truth in the West, whose labors soon ripened into the glorious Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.

His final promise to the overcomer is that he shall be made a pillar in the temple of God, and receive the name of God, of Christ, and of the New Jerusalem, or city of God. In some manner the Christian is labelled with the name of God, whose property he is; with the name of Christ, by whom he was purchased; and with the name of the New Jerusalem, or city of God, his inheritance and eternal abiding-place; and he is made a pillar in the temple of God. By turning to Heb. 12:22, 23, we find that the general assembly and church of God in this dispensation constitutes, in one important sense, the New Jerusalem, or city of God, in which the overcomers abide. "But ye *are come* unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ... to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven." The church is also styled the house or temple of God, composed of people out of all nations who "are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto *an holy temple* in the Lord ... for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2:20-22. See also 1 Cor. 3:17; 1 Pet. 2:5; 1 Tim. 3:15.



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To be a pillar in this temple of God means to occupy a conspicuous or useful position in supporting the truth, examples of which are to be found in such characters as “James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars” in the church in apostolic times. Gal. 2:9. In the last prayer of Christ to the Father, he says concerning his disciples, “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name” (John 17:12); and since the church promised by Christ (Mat. 16:18) has been established, we continually bear the name of the Father, its title being the church or city of God. We also bear the new name of Christ, as explained in chapter 2:17, and we meet together and worship in that name (Mat. 18:20), obeying the exhortation of the apostle Paul—“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” Col. 3:17. A better understanding of the manner in which we receive the name of God and of his city will be obtained when we come to the consideration of the followers of a false, degenerate church represented as receiving the “mark of the beast,” by which they are designated.

To inquire further into the history of this church, Philadelphia still remains with a population of about fifteen thousand. It contains a number of places of public worship, a resident (Greek) archbishop, and several inferior clergy. Mr. Keith, in his “Evidence of Prophecy,” speaks of the then presiding bishop, and says that he acknowledges “the Bible as the only foundation of all religious belief” and admits that “abuses have entered into the church, which former ages might endure, but the present must put down.” It is also a singular coincidence that the modern Turkish name of the city, Ala-Shehr, signifies “city of God.”

This description of the church of Philadelphia I will bring to a close by adding the following extract from Gibbon, recorded in his noted history entitled “The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.” It is of especial value since the writer, being an avowed infidel, can not be convicted of misconstruing historical facts in order to favor Christianity.

“The captivity or ruin of the seven churches of Asia was consummated [by the Ottomans] A.D. 1312, and the barbarous lords of Ionia and Lydia still trample on the monuments of classic and Christian antiquity. In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplore the fall of the first candle-stick of the Revelation. The desolation is complete; and the temple of Diana and the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveler. The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are now peopled with wolves and foxes. Sardis is reduced to a miserable village. The God of Mohammed without a rival is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamus; and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. *Philadelphia alone* has been saved by prophecy or courage.



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At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant sons defended their religion and freedom above fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins—a pleasing example that the path of honor and safety may sometimes be the same.” Vol. VI., p. 229.

14. And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

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

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

17. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

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

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

20. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

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

Laodicea was one of the wealthiest cities of Asia Minor. It was built upon some low hills, and occupied an important situation in the center of a very fertile district. It was famous for its money transactions and for the beautiful soft wool grown by the sheep of the country, which facts are both alluded to in the message. Verses 17, 18. During the reign of Tiberius Caesar it was entirely destroyed by an earthquake, but its wealthy

inhabitants rebuilt it immediately. A Christian church was soon planted there; for Paul makes the request that his epistle to the Colossians be read in the church of Laodicea and that his epistle to the church of Laodicea (which was not included in the New Testament canon) be read unto them. Col. 4:16.



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The condition of this church, according to the burden of the message, was worse than that of any of the others; for there is not only no commendation of former faith and piety, but it is not even said of them, as of the church at Sardis, that a few names were left who had not defiled their garments. Christ, who here represents himself in the character of the “faithful and true Witness,” testifies that they are “neither cold nor hot.” They did not have enough piety nor zeal to cause them to do anything for the honor of Christ and his cause, neither were they open enemies. They were merely lukewarm, insincere friends, and, as such, were in a position to do the greatest harm. A certain writer has said, “We always dread a professed but insincere friend; he is the least desirable of all relations.”

They are further described as being satisfied to remain in their lukewarm condition, indulging themselves in the riches and the pleasures of this life. Theirs was a rich, prosperous, influential church in their estimation, and they were proud of it; but “the faithful and true Witness” declares that they were “wretched, and poor, and blind, and naked.” What a contrast this congregation presents with the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia, whose poverty and “little strength” are expressly mentioned, but who were rich in spirituality, and who received no reproof, but words of comfort! They of Laodicea possessed no true gold from the mine of gospel truth, no white raiment of righteousness to hide their spiritual nakedness, no clear vision to enable them to discern the things of the Spirit. In fact, they lacked everything necessary to constitute a church of which the Lord could approve and which would be an honor to his cause. But notwithstanding their sad condition, Christ still pleads with them to repent of their doings and to allow him to come in and sup with them, promising the overcomer the privilege of sharing the throne of his Redeemer.

On account of their lukewarmness a severe threat was uttered—“I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Allusion is doubtless made to the former catastrophe that overthrew the city under Tiberius, thus giving them warning of the destruction that might come upon them in the future. The result has been in accordance with the prediction. God spued that church out of his mouth centuries ago, and nothing remains of that proud, wealthy city. Not even a Turk has any fixed residence on the spot. Its ruins alone remain in their desolation, “rejected of God, deserted of man, its glory a ruin, its name a reproach.” The Encyclopaedia Britannica says, “Its ruins are of wide extent.... There is no doubt, however, that much has been buried beneath the surface by the *frequent earthquakes* to which the district is exposed.”



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The prophecies concerning these individual churches have been fulfilled; so that even infidelity itself bears witness to the “strange verification of Apocalyptic promise and threatening.” Two of the churches, Ephesus and Laodicea, where no spiritual souls remained, were threatened with utter extinction. They are now in utter ruins—forsaken, desolate. Sardis, too, where only a few names were left, is reduced to a small Turkish village, without a church or a Christian. Pergamus and Thyatira, where much spirituality remained, but where wickedness also was tolerated, still survive, though but mere remnants of their former greatness. While Smyrna and Philadelphia, where Christ found nothing to condemn and to whose churches he uttered only words of comfort and promise, remain until the present day and are the brightest spots on the whole scene, standing like erect columns in the midst of the surrounding ruins.

I do not wish, however, to give too much prominence to the cities themselves in the fulfilment of these prophecies. The churches located in these seven cities of Asia were doubtless the main thing under consideration in the utterance of these promises and threatenings. Yet it is a singular fact that the subsequent history of the cities themselves has accorded in a remarkable degree with the nature of the prophecies uttered. It may be that God has preserved Smyrna and Philadelphia because of the piety of their ancient inhabitants.

He who held the seven stars in his right hand and walked in the midst of the seven golden candle-sticks, still possesses the control of his ministers and is present in the congregations of the righteous; but let us all take warning from the example of the churches of Asia, and live such a life of devotion, charity, faith, and patience as Christ, the “faithful and true Witness,” will approve of, that we may “walk with him in white” and have right to the “tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

CHAPTER IV.

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

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

3. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4. And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5. And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

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6. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7. And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9. And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10. The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

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

It is probable that the Apocalypse was communicated to John in parts, or consisted of a series of symbolic visions. This is indicated by the expression “after this I looked,” and is also confirmed by the words following, “And immediately I was in the spirit,” implying that the vision recorded in chapter 1, which was given on the Lord’s day, had been interrupted and that a new one now began when the angel with trumpet voice gave summons for him to ascend to heaven “in the spirit” (or under the influence of the spirit of prophecy) to behold the events of the future, passing before him as a vast moving picture.

This fact of John’s ascension to heaven to behold certain visions of the future (which begin properly with chapter 6) will serve to explain many allusions to things said to occur in heaven, merely signifying that John was in heaven when these things were revealed to him, although their fulfilment was intimately connected with the affairs of the church on earth, for whose benefit the Revelation was given and unto whom it was sent.

When the apostle ascended through the door that had been opened unto him, the first object that met his vision and absorbed his soul was a throne with the Almighty seated upon it, around whom all the inhabitants of heaven were assembled. No symbol of God is given, for the reason that there is no analogous object that can be chosen as his representative. True, John saw a throne, but that is a symbol, not of God himself, but of his supreme power and authority. One was seated upon the throne separate from the



throne itself. It is not said that a jasper or a sardine stone was seated thereon, for that would be to make such an object the representative of God; but he that sat on the throne "was to look upon" like a jasper or sardine stone. The jasper mentioned

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was in all probability the diamond, and is described in chapter 21:11 as a stone most precious, clear as crystal; while the sardine stone was a brilliant gem of a red hue. This description naturally suggests the vestments of a great monarch in a position of authority upon his throne. The main idea, then, as here expressed, is that the appearance of the Almighty was so inexpressibly glorious that it could be likened to nothing except the beauty of the most resplendent gems. But God himself appears in his own person, unrepresented by another, for the reason, as above stated, that no inferior intelligence of earth or heaven can analogously represent the uncreated Deity.

The throne of the omnipotent One was surrounded by a beautiful rainbow of emerald clearness, and was probably a perfect one, or a complete circle, such as ours would be could it come wholly into our sight. The rainbow on the cloud, to Noah and his descendants, constitutes the sure pledge of God's covenant promise not to destroy the earth with another deluge; so, also, the bow surrounding the throne is a symbol of God's covenant favor with his people eternally.

There were "lightnings and thunderings and voices" proceeding from the throne—the same outward manifestations as heralded the Godhead when he came down on Sinai to declare his holy law. The "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" are said to signify the seven spirits of God. These are not lamp-stands or candle-sticks, such as the ones in the midst of which the Son of God walked on earth, but seven lights or flames of fire, representing the operation of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men and women. Surrounding the throne also was "a sea of glass like unto crystal." In the Greek it stands in a little different form—"And before the throne *as it were* a sea of glass." Describing the same object in chapter 15:2, the Revelator says, "I saw *as it were* a sea of glass." It was a broad expanse spread out before the throne with a glassy or transparent appearance like crystal. Its signification will be made clear hereafter.

In addition to this description of the throne and Deity, our attention is directed to certain objects before and surrounding the throne. Four beasts and four and twenty elders are brought to view. The word *beasts* is a very unfortunate translation, being necessarily associated in our minds with the brute creation. It is not the word *therion*, which in thirty-five instances in the Apocalypse is translated beast, denoting an animal of wild disposition, but the word *zoon*, which signifies "a living creature," and is thus rendered by many of the translators of the New Testament. Their being full of eyes signifies sleepless vigilance and superior intelligence and discernment. The chief description given of the first living creature is that it was "like a lion." It is stated, not that the creature was a lion, but that it was "like a lion." It possessed some peculiar quality characteristic of the lion; namely, strength and courage. The second living creature, "like a calf," or, more properly, the ox, is symbolic of sacrifice or of patient labor. The

third, with “a face as a man,” denotes reason and intelligence. While the fourth, “like a flying eagle,” is an emblem of swiftness and far-sighted vision.

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But the peculiar qualities thus symbolized are possessed by the four living creatures themselves, and what do *they* represent? To whom are the four and twenty elders referred? They are particularly distinguished from the angelic throng. In the ninth verse of the following chapter the elders and the living creatures represent themselves as the host of people redeemed by the blood of Christ “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” The above-mentioned characteristics, then, are the peculiar possession of God’s people—power and courage to attack all enemies and to gain the victory; a spirit of perseverance in patiently laboring for Christ, with a willingness to sacrifice their lives, if necessary, for the glory of God; ability to receive a “knowledge of the truth,” that they may understand the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning them; and power and willingness to obey instantly when able to discern spiritual things, rising above the things of earth and the trials and persecutions of life—soaring away to loftier heights, there to bask continually in the blessed sunlight of God’s eternal presence.

Why was it necessary that the redeemed company of God’s people should be represented by *four* living creatures? Doubtless because it would probably have been very difficult to select any *one* creature combining all the characteristics desired to represent all God’s people of all ages. It is also a significant fact that all the people of God on earth were included in four great dispensations—ante-deluvian, post-deluvian, Mosaic, and Christian; although it is not certain that *four* living creatures were selected for the special purpose of showing the number of dispensations. However, this division of time is well established in the Bible. Peter reckons a new world beginning with Noah (2 Pet. 3:6, 7), stating that the old world had been destroyed. 2 Pet. 2:5. God came down upon Mount Sinai and delivered the old covenant, thus marking a distinct dispensation; while Jesus Christ established the new covenant and ushered in the fourth and last dispensation. See Heb. 12:18-24. Under the first dispensation, Abel by faith offered unto God an “excellent sacrifice”; men “began to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26); Enoch “walked with God” and “was translated that he should not see death”; while Noah, “a preacher of righteousness,” was “perfect in his generation” and “condemned the world” by his preaching and obedience. The second dispensation was graced with a faithful Abraham, who “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith,” from which circumstance he was called “the friend of God” and has justly received the title “father of the faithful.” In his footsteps followed Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses. The law age contains the names of many illustrious prophets of God, and the New Testament era abounds with brilliant examples of faith and devotion.



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The ministry of John the Baptist can not be said to form another dispensation, because of its short duration (he preceding Christ but six months), and being at the time unknown outside of a very limited territory. Another dispensation could not be begun and *completed* while the old covenant dispensation was yet in force; for that would make two dispensations in full force at the same time—a thing impossible. Also, John's work, according to the evangelist, marks the beginning of the gospel dispensation (Mark 1:1-4), from which time the kingdom of God was preached and men pressed into it. Luke 16:16.

It was by virtue of the future atonement-work of Christ that any were enabled to enjoy God's favor in Old Testament times. Even their sacrifices, which originated in the family of Adam and which were continued from generation to generation, pointed forward to the sacrificial offering of the Savior and by this means purchased covenant favors with Heaven. So, after all, the atonement was for their benefit as well as for ours. Paul expressly informs us that Christ died for the "redemption of the transgressions that were *under the first testament.*" Heb. 9:15. "Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and *all the prophets*" are "in the kingdom of God" (Luke 13:28), and constitute a part of this great redeemed host set forth under the symbol of the four living creatures.

The four and twenty elders, although representing themselves as a part of this redeemed company, evidently have some special signification; for they are presented to us as separate characters from the four living creatures. Who are they? Undoubtedly they represent the ministers of God, the number twenty-four also signifying perfection or completeness, being drawn from certain facts connected with the two dispensations in which God has had a clerical ministry. The natural heads of the tribes of Israel were the twelve patriarchs; while the spiritual heads of the Christian church are the twelve apostles of the Lamb, they constituting a part of the foundation upon which it is built. Eph. 2:20. In a subsequent chapter we have an account of the sealing of the twelve tribes, by which is meant the sealing, not of the literal Israel, but of the spiritual, the twelve tribes being selected from the proper department to stand as a symbol of the true Israel in this dispensation, which is expressly said to consist of people of all nations. Natural Israel and spiritual Israel are frequently used to designate God's people; so, also, in the case before us the twelve patriarchs as heads of the natural Israel and the twelve disciples as heads (in one important sense) of the spiritual Israel are taken to represent the entire ministry. In the description of the New Jerusalem we find conspicuously inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, thus making the number twenty-four. Chap. 21:12, 14.



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Although the ministers seem to be a special class among those constituting the redeemed multitude, yet their intimate connection with the remainder is set forth under another symbol—that of wings *attached to* the four living creatures. Each of the four living ones possessed six wings, which, taken numerically, make up twenty-four again. The wings of a living creature would signify its means of flight; and it is by the action of the ministry, who “go into all the world” as flying messengers to preach the everlasting gospel, that the church of God is established among all nations. Thus, under the symbol of living creatures with wings is set forth the glorious harmony and unity that exists in the body of Christ between ministry and laity.

The elders are represented as being clothed in white raiment and as possessing golden crowns. “White raiment” is a symbol of righteousness (chap. 19:8), while crowns represent special power and authority. God’s ministers possess both. They are made righteous through the blood of the everlasting covenant and are given power over all the power of the enemy and authority to heal the sick and to cast out devils.

The entire company are engaged in worshipping God unceasingly, the elders casting their crowns before the throne, thus ascribing all praise, honor, and glory to Him who has delegated to them the authority they possess. And may we, my brethren, never grow weary in well-doing and conclude that the worship of God grows monotonous; but let us, with heart and soul, join the universal chorus, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.”

CHAPTER V.

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.

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

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

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

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

6. And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

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



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

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

11. And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12. Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.

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 it saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

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

The vision of this chapter is but a continuation of the preceding one, being a sublime description of the exaltation and office-work of Christ in his two-fold character as the Lion of the tribe of Juda and as a sacrificial offering for the sins of the world. The Apocalypse opens with the words, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him," and it is fitting that his special prerogatives and characteristics, together with the true position he occupies, should first be revealed. This was especially necessary in view of the fact to be revealed, that another would soon arise usurping the rights and prerogatives belonging to Christ alone, claiming to be supreme head of the church, sitting as God in the temple of God, and "showing himself that *he* is God." 2 Thes. 2:4.

The attention of John was directed to an object "in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne"—a book sealed with seven seals—and to a mighty angel calling with a loud voice for some one to come forward and loose the seals and open the book. No created intelligence of earth or heaven dared to step forward and declare himself able to accomplish the result required, and because of this John wept much.

The form of books in use when the Revelation was given was unlike those used now. They consisted of strips of parchment or other material, longer or shorter, rolled up. The



book in the symbolic vision before us consisted of a roll containing seven pieces each one rolled and sealed separately, so that the outer seal could be broken and the contents of its strip read without disturbing the remaining ones. Had the seals all been on the outside, nothing could have been read until they were all broken; whereas the loosing of each seal was followed by some discovery of the contents of the roll.



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This book in the hand of God is symbolical of something. Most of the commentators think it represents the book of Revelation, in which case, of course, it would not include the present description of the book itself, but only of its contents as applied to subsequent chapters. But this view, of itself, is unsatisfactory for many reasons. The rules governing the use and the interpretation of symbolic language would forbid the thought of one book's symbolizing another book; for the main idea conveyed by the term *symbol* is, that the symbolic object stands as the representative, not of itself, but of something analagous. Reasoning by analogy, what would the contents of a sealed book in the hand of God symbolize? Evidently, the infinite counsels and purposes known only to Jehovah. Its being written within and on the backside would indicate that those purposes were full and complete, being all written out and understood by him who "knoweth the end from the beginning" and "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Its being sealed denotes that the contents were unrevealed, while its being in the right hand of God—the hand of his power—shows that he is able to carry into execution his divine purposes and that none shall be able to alter them or to wrest them from him.

While the events future of John's time form a part of the great plan and counsels of Jehovah, yet it is taking a very limited view of the subject to suppose that they alone constitute the sealed book of this vision; for then would that greatest of all events, the atonement of Christ and the earliest triumphs of the gospel, have no special part in the sealed, mysterious counsels of the infinite One. It is much more consistent with the characteristics and attributes of God to make this book a symbol, not merely of a part, but of all his divine plans and purposes in the entire gospel dispensation. This position gains credence from the fact that the visions of the Revelation cover many times the whole period from the incarnation to the end. When the very first seal is broken, the early success and triumphs of the gospel, as experienced in John's lifetime, are portrayed. According to the vision before us, it was by virtue of Christ's death that he was able to open the book at all; and the plan of redemption itself, which is based upon his atonement, is declared by the Scriptures to be a "mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been *hid in God*." Eph. 3:9. This redemption scheme was the great center of attraction to the prophets of the old dispensation, who "inquired and searched diligently" that they might comprehend its deep mysteries, "which things the *angels desired to look into*." 1 Pet. 1:10-12.



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Now, if the contents of the sealed book were (at the time of this vision) only the history of events to be, why was it that no man on earth or in heaven, nor even an angel before the throne, was found worthy to “look into” it or to communicate its secrets to the children of men. Gabriel was sent as a worthy messenger to communicate to Daniel a long series of future events reaching even until the end of time. But the contents of this roll were such that no created intelligence of earth or heaven was able to unfold them. All remained unfathomable mystery—until Christ stepped forward in his character as a sacrificial Lamb and declared himself able to undertake the task of loosing the seals and of opening the book. “Unto you it is given to *know the mystery* of the kingdom of God” (Mark 4:11), he said to his disciples, “even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is *made manifest* to his saints.” Col. 1:26. “Verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them. Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.” Mat. 13:17, 16.

The fact that the suffering and death of Christ was a past event at the time when the Revelation was given does not constitute a valid objection to the position taken, that the contents of the sealed book embrace the plan of redemption during the entire period of its operation; for the reason that, in order to form a complete and continuous narrative, past events are frequently referred to in the Apocalypse. Thus, John saw a beast with seven heads signifying seven kings; but he was expressly informed that “*five are fallen*, one is [exists at present], and the other is not yet come.” Chap. 17:10.

When Christ appears on the symbolic stage, he is introduced by the elder as “the Lion of the tribe of Juda,” and “the Root of David.” The lion, being the king of beasts and the monarch of the forest, is indicative of power, such as Christ possesses. Christ is elsewhere denominated “King of kings and Lord of lords,” and he himself laid claim to “all power in heaven and on earth,” it having “pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Why he is termed “the Lion of the tribe of Juda,” I am unable to say, unless the expression is borrowed from the prophecy recorded of him in Gen. 49:10—“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.” His being the “Root of David” shows that he is the source and sustainer of David as to his position and power. David was specially ordained of the Lord and sustained by him. Of this there can be no doubt. David was a type; Christ is the antitype. David’s position as ruler over natural Israel constitutes a type of Christ’s position as ruler over the spiritual Israel; and it

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is in this sense that Christ reigns upon the throne of his father David. Luke 1:32, 33. And since Christ came in the line of David's descendants, he is called the offspring of David and a rod out of the stem of Jesse. Isa. 11:1, 10. His connection with the throne of David being evident, he is entitled to the right to reign over his people. The appellation *Lamb* is one of the peculiar titles by which the Son of God is designated, having reference to that part of his mission in which he constituted a sacrificial offering for sin. His forerunner John was able to prophetically discern him in this character, and pointed to him as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. The Lamb was said to have seven horns and seven eyes. A horn is a symbol of power, and seven, being a sacred or perfect number, denotes the fulness of power possessed by Christ; while the seven eyes signify the seven spirits of God, or the Holy Spirit, which, being under the direct control of Christ, is sent forth into the world to effect the regeneration of men.

When the Lion of the tribe of Juda stepped forward and undertook the task of revealing the secret counsels and purposes of Jehovah to the world, immediately a song of praise ascended from the lips of the redeemed sons of earth. The song was new, adapted to a new theme, and sung on a new occasion. "The four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials [censers] full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. 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; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." This song beautifully expresses the honor due to Jesus Christ in his office-work as Redeemer of the world, by virtue of which people out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, are saved unto God and made kings and priests on the earth. The angel who appeared to the Judean shepherds while they were watching their flocks by night, comforted them with the welcome announcement: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to *all people*. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10, 11.

Since the preaching of the gospel began, men are instructed to "seek first the kingdom of God" (Mat. 6:33), and they "press into it" (Luke 16:16) by the saving virtue of Him "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us *into the kingdom* of his dear Son." Col. 1:13. Taking our place by the side of the writer of the Revelation, we testify with him that we are already "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (Rev. 1:9), and that we "receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness,"



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whereby “we *reign in life* by one Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5:17. In this happy condition, redeemed by the blood of Jesus, our Savior, made “a royal [kingly] priesthood” in the “holy nation” of “peculiar people” that have been gathered out of all nations of earth (1 Pet. 2:5, 9), we feel like singing anew this glad song of redemption in honor of Jesus, our only Lord and Savior, who is God over all, blessed forever! Amen.

This new and rapturous song of the redeemed was immediately caught by a greater multitude of the angelic order, an innumerable company, even “ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,” and together, with loud and united voices, did they swell the mighty anthem, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” And again the heavenly strain was raised to loftier heights, until the stupendous chorus rolled around the universe, by every creature in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, saying, “Blessing and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever.” A few gifted voices of earth may possess such power and sweetness as almost to entrance us with their melody of song; but what an oratorio will it be, my brethren, when, released from the narrow limits of mortality, that sublime strain sung by the redeemed of all ages and ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of angels, bursts in upon our ransomed souls! Did human thought ever reach the conception of music like this? Did the eyes of a mortal ever behold such rapturous scenes? You may feast your eyes upon earth’s greatest beauty—Yosemite Valley, Yellowstone Park, Niagara Falls, may pass before your vision; you may climb the lofty Alpine summit and behold the snow-streaked and snow-capped peaks towering to the heavens around you—or you may listen to the best music ever composed by a Mozart, a Handel, or a Beethoven, or the finest ever executed by a Liszt, a Rubenstein, or a Paderewski; yet I must tell you upon the authority of God’s word that “eye hath not *seen*, nor ear *heard*, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” 1 Cor. 2:9.

This vision shows very clearly the lofty position to which Christ has been exalted, possessing “a name which is above every name”; for the entire company of angels and redeemed saints unite in extolling him with songs of praise, and that, too, before the very throne of the Deity and in the presence of his infinite Majesty. Surely we can not doubt that ours is a divine Savior, and one worthy of all praise, honor, power and dominion both now and forever.



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Though John beheld this wonderful vision in heaven, yet we must remember that it was given and recorded for the benefit of God's people upon earth. The plan of redemption was not actually revealed in heaven, for "Jesus Christ came *into the world* to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15), and it was here that he was ordained to "taste death for every man." Heb. 2:9. The ransomed company thus brought to view is intended to point out the redeemed of earth; for there is no salvation to be obtained in heaven, in which place no blood was shed—the blood is one of the agents that bears witness in the earth. 1 John 5:7, 8. The central figures of this vision were God, the Holy Spirit, and Christ, around whom the living creatures and elders were gathered, and they, in turn, were surrounded by the angelic throng. This entire scene was doubtless intended to represent the exalted character of spiritual things on earth, where the plan of redemption was revealed and the redeemed host gathered out of all nations. In a very important sense the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost all dwell in the spiritual church, or new Jerusalem, and are thus "in the midst" of God's people, surrounded by the redeemed host who unceasingly worship them, and they, in turn, have the promise that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them" (Psa. 34:7); yea, "an innumerable company of angels" reside in this "heavenly Jerusalem," or "city of the living God," unto which we, as a part of the "general assembly and church of the first-born," "are come" in this dispensation. Heb. 12:22, 23.

CHAPTER VI.

And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

We have now reached the point where the thrilling interest of this book commences. With the opening of the seals of the book of God's purposes we have the prophecies of the future, the unfolding of the events to be, described under appropriate symbols. The contents of six seals are contained in this and the following chapter, while the seventh occupies the remainder of the volume.

A word relative to the plan of the prophecies will be appropriate at this time. I will again state what will be made very clear hereafter—that the events are narrated by series, and not by centuries. A particular theme is taken up and carried through to its completion, then the narrative returns and another subject is traced to its end. Thus, the entire book consists of a number of distinct parallel series covering the same ground.

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Upon the opening of the first seal, John is summoned as with a voice of thunder by one of the living creatures to draw near; and the object that meets his vision is a white horse with its rider. The symbol is that of a victorious warrior, being drawn from the civil and military life of the Romans. The symbol is one of dignity. It does not consist of some inanimate object such as a mountain, a sea, or a river, neither is it a wild ferocious beast; but it is that of a living, active, intelligent being, and he, as denoted by various insignia, a conqueror. He rides a white horse, such as victors used in triumphal procession; his bow and crown are also symbols of victory. He goes forth conquering and to conquer, or to make conquests.

This symbol is a faithful representation of the early triumphs of Christianity in its aggressive conflict with the huge systems of error with which it had to contend. Some have supposed that the rider represented Jesus Christ; but this can not be, for many reasons, two of which I will give. First. Christ always appears on the symbolic stage in his own character, unrepresented by another, for the reason, as before stated, that there is no creature that can analogously represent Him who claims equality with God. Not one name or attribute peculiar to him is mentioned in the description. Second. There are four horsemen brought to view in this chapter, and the symbols all being drawn from the same department, must have the same general application. If the first horseman symbolizes a *definite personage*, so do the remaining three; but we should have great difficulty in identifying the last three, giving them an individual application.

Others make the first horseman a symbol of the gospel itself, but the gospel is not a living, active, intelligent agent, such as the symbol evidently is, but is only a system of the revealed truth. All congruity and appropriateness in the comparison is lacking.

But let us give this symbol further consideration. It is not enough that its interpretation alone be given, but the reader is justly entitled to a knowledge of the process by which we arrive at the truth. In the first place, we have a symbol of great dignity and excellence, and we must look for an object of corresponding character. The symbol is that of a living agent, and consequently, we must look for its fulfillment in an active, intelligent agent. The purity, or whiteness, of the horse on which the rider was seated would indicate an agency of mild, beneficent character. Finally, the symbol is drawn, as before stated, from the civil and military life of the Romans. Now, according to the laws of symbolic language, a symbol never represents an object like itself, but an analogous one in another department. A wild beast does not represent a wild beast, but something of analogous character. Seven fat and seven lean kine do not represent kine like themselves, but something analogous—seven

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years of plenty and as many of famine. There are only two great series of events described in the Revelation—the history of ecclesiastical events and the political history of certain nations. The present symbol is drawn from one of these departments—the political or the civil life of the Romans; and leaving the latter department to find its signification in another department, we have no place to go except into the department of ecclesiastical affairs. Entering, therefore, the spiritual realm, and looking about us for an object that perfectly meets every requirement of the symbol, we find it in *the humble ministers of Christ*, who boldly went forth in obedience to the divine command to extend the peaceful triumphs of the cross and to carry the gospel of the kingdom of God “into all the world.” Mark 16:15-18; Mat. 28:19, 20. This succession of faithful, holy, devoted men is worthy of a place in Apocalyptic vision. They went forth “conquering and to conquer”; and the victories they gained were such as the world never witnessed before. Worthy are they to wear a victor’s crown, for they have “fought a good fight.”

Because of its connection with events following, it is necessary for us to consider the divine position of these first ministers of the church. Their *equality* is clearly taught in the New Testament. Christ gave them the express command, “Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are *brethren*.” Mat. 23:8. When two of the disciples manifested a desire to gain preeminence over their brethren and their aspirations displeased the ten, Christ said to them all, “Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it *shall not be so among you*.” Mat. 20:25, 26. Thus a perfect standard of equality in the ministry is lifted up. The beloved apostle, the writer of the Revelation, when addressing the elders of the seven churches of Asia in particular, humbly and affectionately represented himself as their “*brother* and companion in tribulation.” Rev. 1:9.

I will now adduce the testimony of several creditable historians, who are compelled to admit the humble equality of the New Testament ministry, notwithstanding the fact that some of them belonged to churches containing a very *unequal* ministry.

Mosheim says: “The rulers of the church were called their presbyters or bishops, which two titles are, in the New Testament, undoubtedly applied to the same order of men.... Let no one confound the bishops of this primitive and golden period of the church, with those of whom we read in the following ages. For, though they were both distinguished by the same name, yet they differed extremely, and that in many respects.” Vol. I, p. 99.



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This fact is now admitted by nearly all denominations, even Episcopalians. In the work entitled “Episcopacy Tested by Scripture,” published by the Protestant Episcopal Tract Society, New York, the author, one of their able advocates, makes the following admission concerning the title *bishop* in the New Testament, “that the name is there given to the middle order or presbyters; and *all* that we read in the New Testament concerning *bishops*, including of course the words *overseer* and *oversight*, which have the same derivation, is to be regarded as pertaining to that middle grade”—the presbyters or elders. Page 12.

The noted historian Waddington, also an Episcopalian, makes the same admission in the following words: “It is also true that in the earliest government of the first Christian society, that of Jerusalem, not the elders only, but the ‘whole church’ were associated with the apostles; and it is even *certain* that the terms *bishop* and *elder* or *presbyter* were, in the first instances, and for a short period, sometimes used synonymously, and indiscriminately applied to the *same order* in the ministry.” Church History, Part I, p. 41. The italicizing is mine.

The well-known historian Milman, also an Episcopalian, in his History of Christianity, says, “The earliest Christian communities appear to have been ruled and represented, in the absence of the apostle who was their first founder, by their elders, who are likewise called bishops, or overseers of the church.” Page 194.

Kurtz, in his Church History, says: “To aid them in their work, or to supply their places in their absence (Acts 14:23), the apostles ordained rulers in every church, who bore the common name of *elders* from their dignity, and of *bishops* from the nature of their office. That originally the elders were the same as the bishops, we gather with absolute certainty from the statements of the New Testament and of Clement of Rome, a disciple of the apostles. (See his first epistle to the Corinthians, Chaps. 42, 44:52.) 1. The presbyters are expressly called bishops—compare [the Greek especially] Acts 20:17 with verse 28, and Titus 1:5 with verse 7. 2. The office of presbyter is described as next to and highest after that of apostle (Acts 15:6, 22). Similarly, the elders are represented as those to whom alone the rule, the teaching and the care of the church is entrusted (1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:1, *etc.*).... In [several] passages of the New Testament and of Clement we read of many bishops in one and the same church. In the face of such indubitable evidence, it is difficult to account for the pertinacity with which Romish and Anglican theologians insist that these two offices had from the first been different in name and functions.... Even Jerome, Augustine, Urban II. (1091) and Petrus Lombardus admit that originally the two had been identical. It was reserved for the Council of Trent to convert this truth into a heresy.” Pages 67, 68. Chrysostom, Theodoret, and others also admitted the same.



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Many similar historical testimonies now lying before me to the humble equality of the New Testament ministry could be added; but lest the reader become weary, I will conclude with the following beautiful description from D'Aubigne in his noted History of the Reformation: "The church was in the beginning a community of brethren, guided by a few of the *brethren*." Again, "All Christians were priests of the living God, with *humble pastors* as their guides." Vol. I, pp. 35, 50.

With this description of the early ministers of Christ, who went forth under the symbol of the first horseman to disciple all nations, we have the events pertaining to the early history of the church, laid before us; until the opening of the second seal brings us to another important phase of its history.

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

4. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

The symbol of this seal is that of a rider going forth on a red horse armed with a great sword with which to take peace from the earth and to kill. It is drawn from the same source as that of the preceding one, but differing greatly in the character of the horseman and the object of his mission. The symbol is one of great dignity—a living, intelligent agent—drawn from civil and military life. For the same reason as given before, we must go out of the department of civil life into the history of religious affairs to find its fulfilment.

Notice, also, the peculiar characteristics of this horseman and wherein he differs from that of the first seal. The color of the horse is red, denoting something very different from the peace, purity, and benignity of the white. Instead of gaining glorious spiritual conquests and triumphs, like him of the first seal, he was to take peace from the earth. In the place of a victor's crown, he possesses "a great sword" with which to kill, denoting an agent of great destruction.

Where shall we look in the history of religious affairs to find the object that meets the requirements of this symbol? Who were the active, intelligent agents that appeared as the great opposers of the establishment of Christianity by the rider of the white horse? We find the answer undoubtedly in the propagators of the *Pagan religions*. As soon as Christianity began to gain a foothold in the Roman Empire, the priests and supporters of Paganism were exasperated to the last degree, and they determined to crush out the Christian religion. An example of Pagan opposition is found in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, where it is recorded that the preaching of the gospel so stirred the people of Ephesus that they were filled with wrath and for the space of about two hours cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" This great conflict between Christianity and

Paganism will be more fully described under other symbols in a subsequent chapter, therefore I will make this description brief.

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The destruction of life brought about by this rider of the red horse doubtless signifies the great slaughter of the Christians at the hands of the Pagans. During ten seasons of severe persecution, which occurred under the reigns of the emperors Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Septimus Severus, Maximus, Decius, Gallus, Valerian, and Diocletian, the Christians suffered every indignity that their relentless persecutors could heap upon them. They had their eyes burned out with red-hot irons; they were dragged about with ropes until life was extinct; they were beheaded, stoned to death, crucified, thrown to wild beasts, burned at the stake; yet “they overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Chap. 12:11.

It may appear at first that taking the rider of the horse as a symbolic agent but the killing which he effected as literal, is an inconsistency and a variation from the laws of symbolic language; but such is not necessarily the case. One principle laid down in the beginning was, that the description of an object or event must necessarily be literal when no symbolic object could be found to analogously represent it. The destruction of human life could not well be represented symbolically, there being no destruction analagous to it whose meaning would be obvious; hence it must appear as a literal description. This is proved by many texts in the Revelation that will admit of no other application; such as verses 9-11 of this chapter; chapter 13:10; 17:6; *etc.*

But the literal destruction of life may be chosen as a symbol to represent a destruction to which it is plainly analagous; such as the destruction of spiritual life, the overthrow of the civil or ecclesiastical institutions of society, *etc.* That it is sometimes employed thus as a symbol will be shown clearly in subsequent chapters. Hence, in every instance where killing men is the work of a symbolic agent, the context, or general series of events with which it is connected, must determine whether the literal or symbolical signification is intended. In the present prophecy under consideration it is much more consistent to give it the literal application; for the devotees of Paganism did not destroy the spiritual life of the church, which would be an analagous killing; neither did they succeed in overthrowing the structure of Christianity.

5. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.



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This symbol is also that of a horseman, differing from the preceding ones only in his characteristics. He is seated upon a black horse, denoting something dark or appalling in its nature, the very opposite of that of the first seal. He possesses no bow nor crown, but instead he has a pair of balances in his hand for weighing food. This he deals out only at exorbitant prices—"a measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny." The penny, or denarius, is equal to about fifteen cents of our money, and was the ordinary wages of a day laborer. In the parable of our Lord recorded in Mat. 20, the householder is represented as hiring laborers for a penny a day to labor in his vineyard. The measure, or *choenix*, of wheat was the usual daily allowance of food for a man. So according to the rate given, it would require a day's labor to supply food sufficient for one man, which shows an enormous price placed upon these necessities of life. In ordinary times the penny would procure about twenty measures of wheat instead of one, and fifty or sixty measures of barley instead of three. Surely this represents famine prices.

The expression "see thou hurt not the oil and the wine" seems to have some direct connection with the exorbitant schedule of food rates. The following facts of history, as recorded by Lord, will serve to make the matter clear: "The taxes required in the Roman empire, to sustain the court and civil service, the army and desolating wars, and the hungry brood of office-holders, as well as to provide largesses to the soldiers, were excessive in the extreme, so as to prove an almost insupportable burden to the people. The ordinary and economical expenses of the government were great; but when we take into view that during a period of seventy-two years previous to Diocletian, there were twenty-six individuals who held the imperial crown, besides a great number of unsuccessful aspirants, and that each of these must secure the favor of the army and the people by large donations of money, we may well conceive that the taxes and exactions laid to raise the needed amount must have proved a crushing burden. They were so great as sometimes to strip men of their wealth and reduce them to poverty. These were laid upon everything that could be brought into service. Nothing was too insignificant to escape.... The taxes might be paid in money, or in produce, grain, fruit, oil, or whatever else it might be;... The exactions were so excessive that the people were led to avoid them in every possible mode, as men always will under such circumstances." Once in fifteen years, a Roman indiction, an assessor would go round to levy upon the products of the soil, and the assessment was made according to the amount of the yield. One method adopted to secure a lower assessment at this time was that of mutilating their fruit trees and vines. We find among the Roman laws severe enactments against such as "feign poverty, or cut a vine, or stint the fruit of a tree" in order to avoid a fair valuation, and the penalty attached was the death of the offender and the confiscation of all his property. The fact that this law existed shows that the offense was committed and also that the exactions of the government must have been of the most oppressive kind.



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With these facts before us it is easy to discern the nature of the symbol, being that of a Roman magistrate prepared to enforce his severe exactions upon the people at the exorbitant rate of three measures of wheat for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny, accompanied by the solemn injunction, "See thou hurt not the oil and the wine," that is, the olive-trees and the vines.

It is evident that we must, as before, go out of the department of civil and military life into the realm of ecclesiastical history to find the true fulfilment of this symbol. The black color of the horse would denote something directly opposite to that of the first seal; and since the symbol of the first seal represented the establishment of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, this symbol must represent the great apostasy and spiritual darkness that covered the world at a later period. And if the horseman of the first seal represented the chosen ministry who went forth in a glorious mission to win trophies of grace, the horseman of this seal must represent *an apostate ministry*, possessing power and authority to enforce the severest exactions upon the bread of life, thus producing a desolating spiritual famine.

This marvelous change from the humble apostolic ministry to an apostate one did not occur suddenly, but by degrees; and as it has a great bearing upon other lines of truth to be brought out in subsequent chapters, it will be profitable to consider the most important steps by which this transformation was effected.

When the desire for precedence or superiority first manifested itself among the disciples, Christ repressed it (Mat. 20:25, 26), and it appeared no more in their midst; but before the close of the first century it is evident that a thirst for preeminence existed in the hearts of some who had been the servants of the church. An example of this is to be found in Diotrephes, who exalted himself above his ministerial associates. The Apostle John says concerning him: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." 3 John 9, 10.

In the historical extracts given in the explanation of the first horseman, it is clear that the first ministers were all equal; but a time came about the close of the first century when the most influential among the clergy grasped the power and exalted themselves to a position of authority over the rest. The manner in which this transformation was effected is explained by the learned Gieseler as follows: "After the death of the apostles, and the pupils of the apostles, to whom the general direction of the churches had always been conceded, some one amongst the presbyters of each church was suffered gradually



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to take the lead in its affairs. In the same irregular way the title of *bishop* was appropriated to the first presbyter." Eccl. Hist., Vol. I, p. 65. In the days when the apostles were active in the affairs of the church there were but two classes in the ministry—elders, or bishops, and deacons; but when one of the presbyters was exalted to a higher position than the rest and assumed to himself the exclusive use of the word bishop, there were three classes. To quote the words of Geo. P. Fisher: "After we cross the limit of the first century we find that with each board of elders there is a person to whom the name of bishop is specially applied, although, for a long time, he is likewise often called a presbyter. In other words, in the room of a two-fold, we have a three-fold ministry." Hist. of the Christian Church, p. 51.

The height to which the single bishop of authority in a church had been exalted is well illustrated in the Ignatian Epistles. Ignatius was bishop of Antioch and was condemned by the emperor Trajan to suffer death by being thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre in Rome. His execution in this manner took place Dec. 20, A.D. 107. He wrote a number of epistles, a few extracts from which I will give. "Wherefore it is fitting that ye should run together in accordance with the will of your bishop, which thing also ye do. For your justly renowned presbytery, worthy of God, is fitted as exactly to the bishop as the strings are to the harp." To the Ephesians, Chap. 4. "See that ye all follow the bishop, even as Jesus Christ does the Father... Let no man do anything connected with the church without the bishop." To the Smyrnaean's, Chap. 8. "It is not lawful without the bishop either to baptize or to celebrate a love-feast; but whatsoever he shall approve of, that is also pleasing to God." Smyrnaean's, Chap. 8. "It is well to reverence both God and the bishop. He who honors the bishop has been honored of God; but he who does anything without the knowledge of the bishop, does [in reality] serve the devil." Smyrnaean's, Chap. 9.

The power of these bishops advanced steadily during the second century. The churches of the cities where they were located extended themselves into the surrounding country and smaller towns, and the presbyters or elders of these inferior churches were presided over by the bishop of their mother church, and in this manner the great system of diocesan episcopacy was developed.[3]

[Footnote 3: The ancient signification of the term *diocese* must not be confounded with the modern usage of the term. It then designated a territory or district, usually containing a number of minor churches, presided over by one bishop.]

In the latter part of the second century when the disputes concerning Easter and Montanism arose, the custom of diocesan bishops consulting with each other on important doctrines began, and this developed in the third century into regular provincial synods, or councils. On account of the ecclesiastical or political importance of the cities in which they were located, certain bishops had a special deference given them, and

they were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity to exalt themselves to the presidency of these councils; and in a very short time they possessed immense power and constituted entirely a separate order, designated by the term metropolitan.



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The manner in which this important step in the great apostasy was taken and the effects produced thereby is well described in the words of the historian Mosheim (referring to events of the third century), from whom I quote: "In process of time, all the Christian churches of a province were formed into one large ecclesiastical body, which, like confederate states, assembled at certain times, in order to deliberate about the common interests of the whole.... These councils ... *changed the whole face of the church*, and gave it a new form; for by them the ancient privileges of the people were considerably diminished, and the power and authority of the bishops greatly augmented.... At their first appearance in these general councils, they acknowledged that they were no more than the delegates of their respective churches, and that they acted in the name, and by the appointment of their people. But they soon changed this humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion, and their councils into laws; and openly asserted, at length, that Christ had empowered them to prescribe to his people, *authoritative rules of faith and manners*.... The order and decency of these assemblies required that some one of the provincial bishops met in council, should be invested with a *superior* degree of power and authority; and hence the rights of *metropolitans* derive their origin."—Church History, Cent. II, Part 2.

When a usurping clergy grasps the power to prescribe "authoritative rules of faith and manners," to employ the words of Mosheim, we may well conceive that the true amount of pure spiritual food was exceedingly small and could be procured only at starvation rates. He who reads the ecclesiastical events of the third century will find it only too true that many of the cardinal virtues of apostolic Christianity were almost lost sight of and that a great spiritual famine existed in the earth over which this dark horseman of the third seal careered. Instead of salvation through the Spirit of God being carefully taught, baptismal regeneration was exalted, and the people were instructed in the saving virtues of the eucharist. The Platonic idea concerning sin having its seat in the flesh was adopted, and therefore perfect victory or sanctification was made to consist in the mortification of the natural appetites and desires of the body, with the result that a life of fasting, celibacy, or self-inflicted torture was looked upon as the surest means of obtaining the favor of Heaven. The writings of such eminent church Fathers as Tertullian, Origen, Cyprian and others now lying before me, contain the surest evidences of the woeful extent to which this dark cloud of superstition and error had settled down over the world during the period of which I write.

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



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8. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The usual interpretation given this horse and its rider is to apply it to the desolating wars and famines that occurred in the Roman Empire. This view is embodied in the celebrated painting "Death on the Pale Horse," in which death is represented as going forth with war, pestilence, famine, and wild beasts, to ravage the Roman empire. We are informed by historians that dreadful pestilences and famines did prevail and in some places nearly depopulated the country, and that the remaining inhabitants could not make head against the beasts that multiplied in the land. But the fact that such events occurred is not sufficient proof that this symbol has reference to such. Famines and pestilences may have occurred many times without forming a part of the Apocalyptic vision.

The greatest objection to giving this part of the vision such a literal interpretation is, that it fails to bring out its symbolic character. To what, then, does it refer? We have, as before, a horseman, indicating that the agent is one of the same general character, differing mainly in his features and mission. This horse was of a livid, cadaverous hue, denoting an agent of ghastly, terrible nature. The living rider bore the awful name of "Death," or as in the original, "The Death," by way of emphasis. Death literally was not the agent—it is not so stated—but the rider was termed The Death, or The Destroyer, because of his terrible mission; and Hell followed with him.

Applying the laws of symbolic language as heretofore, it is evident that this symbol represents a great persecuting ecclesiastical power. And with this thought before us, we can scarcely fail to recognize it as a true description of *the Papacy*. The great apostasy, described under the preceding seal, prepared the way for the final and complete establishment of the "man of sin"; but during the period there brought to view the ministers of religion, power-seeking and apostate as they were, were unable to enforce their claims by the power of persecution. Under the present seal, however, is represented a later stage of their corruption, when a great hierarchal system, sustained and upheld by the arm of civil power, was able to bear tyrannical rule over a great portion of the earth. During this period clerical ambition and usurpation reached its greatest height.

After speaking of the power possessed by the metropolitans, Mosheim says: "The universal church had now the appearance of one vast republic, formed by a combination of a great number of little states. This occasioned the creation of a new order of ecclesiastics, who were appointed in different parts of the world, as *heads* of the church, and whose office it was to preserve the consistence and union of that immense body, whose members were so widely dispersed throughout the nations. Such was the nature and office of the Patriarchs." Church History, Cent. II, part 2.



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Thus, the bishops, or metropolitans, of certain of the most important cities were exalted to a still higher position as special *heads* of the church. They were termed *Exarchs* at first, after the title of the provincial governors, but afterwards received the more ecclesiastical appellation *Patriarchs*. The term Patriarch had been in use for a long time in the church signifying merely a bishop, irrespective of the dignity he possessed, but it was finally limited to this higher class of the clergy, in which sense I now employ it. The cities that first enjoyed this chief distinction were Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch. The general council of Nice (A.D. 325) in its sixth canon recognized the superior authority already possessed by these cities. See D'Aubigne's *Hist. of Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 41. The general council of Constantinople in its third canon placed the bishop of Constantinople in the same rank with the other three Patriarchs; and the general council of Calcedon exalted the See of Jerusalem to a similar dignity, doubtless because of its ancient importance as the birthplace of Christianity. Thus, Patriarchs were established in the five political capitals of the Roman empire; and they were considered the "*heads of the church*," having spiritual authority over the whole empire. These were the only Patriarchates of importance. Certain ecclesiastics of the Church of Rome even at the present time bear the honorary title Patriarch; but, to quote the words of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "In a strictly technical sense, however, that church recognizes only five Patriarchates, those of Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome." Art. Patriarch. In the years 637 to 640 Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch fell into the hands of the Saracen followers of Mohammed, which terminated their importance, and later the Greek schism separated the Patriarch of Constantinople from Rome; and thus the Patriarch of Rome was left in undisputed possession of the field and was soon recognized as universal head of the church. So under the symbol of this dread rider on a pale horse is portrayed the great hierarchal system by which the Papacy was fully developed in the West.

It is fitting that we notice particularly the agents of destruction employed by this rider. He possesses a sword with which to kill—the same instrument wielded by the rider of the red horse—but it is evident that he uses it with more terrific energy, by reason of which he receives the name Death, or The Destroyer. It is possible, also, that in this case a sword, wielded by the hand of an ecclesiastical power, may be used as a symbol of a spiritual cutting off, or excommunication. The sword of excommunication has been the most terrible ever wielded by human hand. When this pale horseman was careering over the world in the zenith of his power, excommunication and interdiction were the terror of individuals and the scourge of nations. At his word the rights of an individual as king, ruler, husband or father, nay, even as a *man*, were forfeited, and he was shunned like one infected with the leprosy. At his command the offices of religion were suspended in a nation, and its dead lay unburied, until its proud ruler humbled himself at the feet of the ecclesiastical tyrant who bore rule over the "fourth part of the earth."^[4]



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[Footnote 4: This tyranny of the Popes is well illustrated by the quarrel that took place between Hildebrand (Pope Gregory VII.) and Henry IV. of Germany. Gregory attempted to make certain reforms, but Henry refused to recognize those innovations. Gregory excommunicated the emperor, with the result that he was “shunned as a man accursed by Heaven.” His authority lost and his kingdom on the point of going to pieces, Henry had but one thing to do—seek the pardon of the Pope. He found the Pontiff at Canossa, but Gregory refused to admit the penitent to his presence. “It was winter, and for three successive days the king, clothed in sackcloth, stood with bare feet in the snow of the court-yard of the palace, waiting for permission to kneel at the feet of the Pontiff and to receive forgiveness.” On the fourth day he was granted admittance to the presence of the Pope.

During the Pontificate of Innocent III. Philip Augustus, king of France, put away his wife. Innocent commanded him to take her back and forced submission by means of an interdict. This submission of a brave, firm, and victorious prince shows the tremendous power wielded by the Popes in that period.

The manner, also, in which Innocent III. humbled King John of England affords another illustration of the power of the Popes. John caused the vacant See of Canterbury to be filled, in accordance with the regular manner of election, by one of his favorites. Innocent declared the appointment void, as he desired that the place should be filled by one of his friends. John refused to allow the Pope’s archbishop to enter England as Primate. Innocent then excommunicated John, laid all England under an interdict, and incited Philip, king of France, to war, offering him John’s kingdom upon the very liberal condition that he go over and take it. The outcome of the matter was that John was compelled to yield to the power of the Pope. He even gave him England as a perpetual fief, and agreed to pay the Papal See the annual sum of one thousand marks.]

The loss of life by spiritual famine was extreme. The Word of God, which is spirit and life to God’s people (Jno. 6:63), was laid under interdict and the common people deprived of its benefits. At the time the black horse appeared, a little food could be obtained at famine prices; but when the fourth arrived, he was empowered to kill “with hunger.” Also, one of his agents of destruction was death, or pestilence, a fit symbol of false and blasphemous doctrines breathed forth like a deadly pestilence blasting everything within its reach. Invocation of saints, worship of images, relics, celibacy, works of supererogation, indulgences, and purgatory—these were the enforced principles of religion, and like a pest they settled down upon the people everywhere.

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This rider also brought into operation “the beasts of the earth” to aid him in his destructive work. To kill with sword or hunger shows that such work of destruction is performed solely by him who has it in his power; but to kill with beasts indicates that *they* perform the deadly work according to *their own natures*. Nothing is clearer than the fact that wild beasts stand as a symbol of persecuting tyrannical governments; hence we are to understand that this rider was to employ also the arm of civil power to aid him in the deadly work. How strikingly this represents the historical facts of the case! In all truly Roman Catholic countries the civil governments were only a cipher or tool in the hands of the church, and the ecclesiastics were the real rulers of the kingdom. But whenever any dark work of persecution was to be performed, the wild beast was let loose to accomplish the result. When charged, however, with the bloody work, the Catholics always answer, “Oh, we *never persecute*—don’t you see, it is the wild beasts that are covered with gore—our hands are clean,” yet they themselves held the chain that bound the savage monsters. We shall have occasion in a subsequent chapter to trace further the pathway of this dread rider as he reels onward in the career of ages, “drunken with the blood of the saints.”

This work of destruction performed by the dread rider on the pale horse is considered by many as a literal description of the persecutions of the Papacy. While Catholics usually charge the civil powers with this bloody work, it is an undeniable fact of history that the Popes often ordered or sanctioned crusades against the Waldenses, Albigenses, and other peoples (see remarks on verses 9-11, chap. 17:6), in which the sword, starvation, and every other means of cruelty imaginable were brought into use to exterminate the so-called heresy. And in view of the fact explained in the comments on verses 3 and 4 of this chapter, that *killing* is sometimes to be understood in a literal sense on account of there being nothing to analogously represent such destruction of life, it is not a violation of the laws of symbolic language thus to interpret it. It might be consistent in this case to give it a twofold application; the agreeing facts of history regarding the Papacy strongly suggest it. Thus, the *sword* could signify a literal destruction of life, as in verse 4, and also, in the present case, an ecclesiastical cutting off by the Papacy, or excommunication; and *hunger* could signify literal death by starvation, and also, as in verses 5 and 6, a destruction of spiritual life, *etc.*

Where, let me ask, in the whole compass of human writings can be found a series of events of such thrilling interest, so great in magnitude, as is contained in these eight verses? Who but the Omnipotent could have conceived such a wonderful development of the power of iniquity and with such master-strokes of power compressed them into so small a scene of symbolic imagery? The impress of divinity is here speaking from every line.



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9. And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11. And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Upon the opening of this seal the scene changes entirely. No more horsemen appear, but instead the souls of the martyrs are seen at the altar crying for vindication of their blood upon the cruel oppressors of earth. The question arises, Are these souls symbols of something else, or are they what they are here stated to be, "the souls of them that were slain"? Evidently, the latter, appearing under their own name and character, because they can not properly be symbolized. They were disembodied spirits, and where is there anything of analagous character to represent such? Angels can not; for whenever they are employed as symbols, it is to designate distinguished agencies among men. They therefore appear under their own appropriate title as "the *souls* of them that were slain."

These souls appeared "under the altar," that is, *at the foot of the altar*, being the same as that described in chap. 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." Thus, the heavenly world, as opened up before John, appeared symbolized after the sanctuary of the temple in which stood the golden altar, or altar of incense. Some have supposed that the brazen altar was the one referred to, signifying the living sacrifice these souls made of themselves to God. But there is no altar mentioned in the symbols except the golden altar. Besides, these were not sacrificial victims; for Christ was made a complete sacrifice for sin, while these only suffered martyrdom because of their faithfulness to the cause of Christ. It is much more reasonable to suppose that their interceding cries went up from the golden altar, where the "prayers of all saints" ascended with much incense.

Their prayers to God for the avenging of their blood shows the expectation on their part that the judgments of Heaven would descend upon the cruel and haughty persecutors and oppressors of earth, and their surprise was that the day of retribution had been so long delayed. The history of the church as developed under the preceding seals gives particular force to this cry of the martyrs. For nearly three centuries the civil power of Pagan Rome had been employed to crush the cause of God.



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During ten terrible seasons of persecution they had been crucified, slain with the sword, sawn asunder, devoured by beasts in the arena, and given to the flames. When Constantine, a nominal Christian emperor, ascended the throne and protected religion by law, it was believed that persecutions must cease; but soon the discovery was made that the sword had only changed hands, there having risen an ecclesiastical hierarchy destined to “glut itself upon the blood of which heathen Rome had only tasted.” The world was now made the arena for the terrible coursings of the pale horseman, and the “beasts of the earth” were let loose to fall with savage fury upon their helpless victims, until millions lost their lives at the instigation of the apostate Church of Rome. Is it any wonder that the souls of these martyrs should cry unto God for the vindication of their righteous blood?

It is said that “white robes were given unto every one of them.” By referring to chap. 3:4; 7:9, 13, 14, it will be seen that “white garments” and “white robes” are sometimes used as a symbol to describe a part of the heavenly inheritance. The martyr-spirits, although impatient at the delay of avenging judgment, received a righteous reward. But the period of tribulation to the church was not yet over. The cup of iniquity in the hands of her enemies was not yet full, and they were told to “rest for a little season, until their fellowservants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” The account given seems to indicate an important epoch, a period in which the martyrs had reason to expect the vindication of their righteous blood, but which, instead, was to be followed by another great period of persecution. Considering the time of the events already described in this series of prophecy, we have no difficulty in fixing the chronology of this event at the dividing-point between the era of Papal supremacy and the age of Protestantism—or at the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Did severe slaughter and persecution follow the Reformation? Witness the reign of Mary Tudor, frequently styled “Bloody Mary.” During three years of her reign, 1555 to 1558, two hundred and eighty-eight were *burnt alive* in England! Think of the inhuman massacre of the innocent Waldenses of southern France by the violent bigot Oppede (1545), who slew eight hundred men in one town, and thrust the women into a barn filled with straw and reduced the whole to ashes—only a sample of his barbarity; or of their oppression in southern Italy by Pope Pius IV. (1560), at whose command they were slain by thousands, the throats of eighty-eight men being cut on one occasion by a single executioner! Witness the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew in Paris (Aug. 21, 1572), when the Queen dowager, the infamous Catherine de Medici, lured immense numbers of the innocent Huguenots into the city under the pretext of witnessing a marriage between the Huguenot Henry,



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king of Navarre, and the sister of Charles IX., king of France—when the gates were closed and the work of wholesale slaughter began at a given signal and raged for three days, during which time from six to ten thousand were butchered in Paris alone! Think of the rivers of blood in the Netherlands, where the Duke of Alva boasted that in the short space of six weeks he had put eighteen thousand to death! Witness the dragoonading methods and other inhuman persecutions to “wear out the saints of the Most High,” that followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) by Louis XIV., king of France, during whose reign three hundred thousand were brutally butchered—while Pope Innocent XI. extolled the king by special letter as follows: “The Catholic church shall most assuredly record in her sacred annals a *work of such devotion toward her*, and CELEBRATE YOUR NAME WITH NEVER-DYING PRAISES ... for *this most excellent undertaking*”!! My heart sickens with horror in the contemplation of such events. Eternal God! can thy righteous eye behold such heart-rending scenes of earth, and thy hand of power not be extended to humble to the dust these cruel, haughty oppressors of thy people?

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

13. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

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

15. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16. And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;

17. For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Upon the opening of this seal the scene changes again. The symbols are all drawn from an entirely different source. We are taken out of the department of civil life into the scenes of nature, which is a clear evidence that the history of the church is no longer



under consideration. Had God intended to here continue her history, he would no doubt have employed symbols derived from the same source as those preceding, so as to prevent our being led astray. No more horsemen or living characters appear, but we behold the most terrific convulsions of nature—a mighty earthquake, the darkening of the sun and the moon, the falling of the stars, and finally the dissolution of the heavens, together with the mountains and the islands being removed. If the history of the church is no longer under consideration, this great change of symbols directs us with absolute certainty into the political and civil world for their fulfilment. Of course, we are not to suppose that this is a literal description.



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In this manner the dignity and the excellence in the use and the interpretation of symbols is preserved. To describe the religious history of the church, noble symbols chosen from the department of human life are selected; while symbols drawn from an inferior department—that of nature—are chosen to represent political affairs. This point will appear very clear as we proceed in the interpretation of the Apocalypse. It is just what we might naturally expect.

The question may be asked, If these symbols from nature represent political affairs, where in the events of civil history shall we look for their fulfilment? Every one will readily perceive the analogy between an earthquake and a political revolution, when all society is in a state of agitation as when the solid earth trembles. It is also evident that the sun, moon, and stars bear the same analagous relationship to the earth that kings, rulers, and princes do to the body politic; while the firmament of heaven is analagous to the entire fabric of civil government, the symbolic heaven in which the symbolic orbs are set to give light.

The symbols, then, point us to the most terrible revolutions—when society is in a state of agitation, when kingdoms are overthrown and their rulers and princes thrown from their positions or made objects of the most gloomy terror; yea, when the entire fabric of civil government is finally overthrown and all the institutions and organizations of society are swept away as with a tornado. This is the time of consternation to the great men of earth, when they shall hide “themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains,” and say 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: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?” This is the time that the martyrs looked forward to when they cried, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” A large portion of the Apocalypse is occupied with the history of these persecuting powers, civil and ecclesiastical. It is their dominacy that constitutes the long period of tribulation to the church, when the witnesses prophesy in sackcloth and the faithful are ground into the dust by the feet of these proud oppressors as they stand in the high places of the earth. But the cries of the slaughtered saints have ascended to the throne as incense; God speaks; the judgments of Heaven descend upon these lofty ones; and a voice from heaven declares, “They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and *thou hast given them blood to drink*; for they are worthy.”



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This is surely a striking combination of symbols, and the way they are arranged would indicate that their fulfilment occupied a considerable period of time. First we have a great earthquake, afterwards the darkening of the sun and the moon, with the falling of the stars, and finally the dissolution of the heavens themselves, with the sweeping away of mountains and islands. This description covers the same period as that described under the seven last plagues, beginning with certain fearful revolutions in which the nations that had slaughtered the millions of God's people were given "blood to drink," and ending finally in "the great day of his wrath" that shall sweep them from their positions eternally. The full explanation of these events can not at present be appreciated by the reader, therefore I reserve it for the future, to be more fully developed under other symbols.

In these six seals we have a vivid outline of mighty events, political and ecclesiastical, extending from the earliest stage of Christianity to the end of time. This description in advance was no mere human production. No human foresight would have detected, and no mortal mind would have conceived, events so wonderful and so farreaching in their character. Any other history would sooner have been imagined. It takes divine wisdom to understand the true position of the church in the present, and she can scarcely read her past history by natural wisdom alone, much less outline the future. First the establishment of Christianity is symbolized, then the violence of the Pagan party, the apostasy, and final establishment of the "man of sin," until the millions of earth are crushed by the spiritual tyranny or by the arm of civil power, and the cry of the martyrs goes up "How long, O Lord?" But they are told to rest "a little season," when they shall witness the hand of God laid upon these persecuting nations of earth, convulsing them in the most fearful revolutions, and ending finally in their complete overthrow in that last "great day of God Almighty."

CHAPTER VII.

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2. And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea.
3. Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.
4. And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.



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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.

7. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8. Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

A clear understanding of the two visions in the chapter before us can be obtained only by considering the plan of the prophecy already referred to. The events are narrated by series. A particular theme is taken up and followed through to its completion; then the narrative returns and another theme is introduced. But this is not all. Whenever the history of abounding error or iniquity is set forth, we have in immediate connection and in perfect contrast therewith a history of the true people of God; thus, the contemporaneous history of righteousness and iniquity, truth and error, a true church and a false one. The visions of this chapter cover the same period of time as the events described in the preceding chapter, but form the most perfect contrast. The student of Revelation who unfolds the dark history of apostasy and iniquity contained in the preceding seals might naturally be led to ask, Is this the melancholy end of God's church? Does it deteriorate rapidly and turn out so badly, after all? As an answer to these questions, God gives us next a history of his own people, showing that he preserved his own church complete, although Antichrist reigned in power.

The principal points in the vision before us are the tempestuous winds about to descend upon the earth, and the sealing of God's servants. The first of these, being drawn from nature, would lead us to look for its fulfilment in political events; while the latter, derived from human life, directs us into the affairs of the church. The "four winds of the earth" from the "four corners of the earth" signify all the winds from every direction—the cardinal points of the compass; while the four angels signify all the agencies that have control of these winds, which for the present are held in restraint in order to give opportunity for the sealing of the Lord's servants. *Angels* in the Scripture is frequently used to denote evil agencies as well as good, the context determining which is meant. See Chap. 12:7. The design of the winds was to "hurt the earth, the sea, and the trees."



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What, let me ask, in the political world is analagous to tempestuous storms sweeping over the earth? What but huge masses of men, excited by fierce passions, precipitating themselves upon the inhabitants of an empire, sweeping everything before them in the fury of their march and spreading desolation on every side? In the symbols of the next chapter we find that just such hordes of men—barbarians—under their angels, or leaders, precipitated themselves upon the Roman empire; and the fearful effects upon the earth, the sea, and the green trees produced thereby, is particularly detailed. For the present, however, they are held under restraint until the sealing of the servants of God should be accomplished, then they were to go forward in their work of destruction.

The sealing of the servants is not making them the people of God, but rather marking or designating them as such, just as later we find the devotees of a corrupt apostate church specified as having the “mark of the beast.” Considerable light can be thrown upon the subject of the sealing of God’s servants and of the mark of the beast by consulting Roman history for the origin of such expressions. The many conquests of the Roman arms furnished so many prisoners that they became a drug in the slave-markets of the world, and were so numerous that in many places they outnumbered the Roman citizens ten to one. In the first century before Christ it is said that some Sicilian estates were worked by as many as twenty thousand slaves. “That each owner might know his own, the poor creatures were *branded like cattle.*” The “mark of the beast” possessed by the followers of a false communion will be found to consist of an Antichristian spirit by which they are filled with “doctrines of devils.” So, also, “the seal of the living God” consists of the giving of the Holy Spirit, by which his people are led into all truth. See John 14:26. While Sabbatarians vainly try to prove that keeping the seventh day is the seal of God in this dispensation, yet there is not one text of Scripture that hints such a thing, but, on the contrary, the Scriptures are against them. “Grieve not the *Holy Spirit* of God whereby *ye are sealed* unto the day of redemption.” Eph. 4:30. Again, the Word of God says, “Now he which stablished us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” 2 Cor. 1:21, 22. The time this sealing of the people of God takes place is thus described: “*After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*” Eph. 1:13. The winds of heaven were restrained until the work of *full salvation* could be firmly established in the earth. When Christ appeared, the Roman empire was in a state of comparative quiet, and the immense hosts of foreign invaders did not appear until the firm establishment of Christianity, being held back by the power of God until his work should be accomplished.



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In the description of the sealing given, twelve thousand were selected from each of the twelve tribes. Some have supposed this to have reference solely to salvation work among the Jewish nation; but that would be adopting the literal mode of interpretation, thus destroying its symbolic character. The twelve tribes are chosen from the proper department to represent the church or "Israel of God" in this dispensation, irrespective of nationality. The twelve gates in the wall of the heavenly city are named after the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (chap. 21:12), showing that it is only through "Israel" that any one can enter the New Jerusalem. Since the gospel is given to all nations, this can not signify literal Israel. "The children of the promise are counted for the seed." Rom. 9:8. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3:29. Since the vision is symbolical, we are to consider the numbers given as symbolical also, the definite number of twelve thousand from each of the tribes showing that the church of God was *complete and perfect*, no part being omitted.

9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

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

11. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12. Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

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

14. And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

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

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



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In this scene the vision is carried forward to the close of the long period of tribulation and persecution to the church of God, when all her enemies are finally overthrown; and here are the glorious results, the harvest gathered: a great multitude whom no man can number, gathered out of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, the symbols of their victory. The scene is laid in heaven, and refers undoubtedly to the end of time when the heavenly world will be opened up to all the faithful who have suffered for Christ amid the trials and the oppositions through which his church is called to pass in this present world. We are expressly informed by one of the elders who these are in white robes and whence they came, so there can be no question respecting them. This is the glorious company of the redeemed of all ages who “came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are 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. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.” What a contrast with the scenes of earth, when oppressed by famine, and cold, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, they were killed all the day long! But their sufferings are over; “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.”

This redeemed company is represented as uniting in a song of praise and thanksgiving to God for bringing them through their long period of trial, “saying Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb”; while heaven resounds with universal praise as the angels and all the redeemed host take up the chorus and swell the mighty anthem “saying, Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God forever and ever. Amen.”

It is clear that, in this chapter and the one preceding, we have two grand parallel and comprehensive histories—in one, the process of corruption in the so-called church and the final judgments that overtook these cruel persecutors of the Lord’s people; in the other, the setting apart and sealing of God’s servants, their preservation from the contaminations of an apostate church, and the final glorious triumph of all who endure unto the end.

This vision has often been applied in a figurative manner to the spiritual reign of God’s people on earth before the end of time—that they are overcomers through the blood of Christ, that God dwells with them in his church, that their spiritual needs are all supplied so they hunger and thirst no more—but a careful study of the plan of the prophecy will show that its real signification



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is the heavenly state at the end. As the sixth seal describes the final overthrow of all the antichristian powers that have oppressed God's people on earth; so this vision describes the great white-robed company gathered out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, who have been preserved faithful through all these trials and tribulations, and who receive at last the crown of everlasting life. This last vision will be more fully described under certain symbols contained in the last two chapters of this book; while the earthquake, the falling of the stars, *etc.*, of the sixth seal will be more perfectly detailed in chapters 15 and 16.

CHAPTER VIII.

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

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

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

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

5. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

The remainder of the book is embraced in the contents of the seventh seal. This may appear a little singular at first, being so much larger than the preceding ones. But it is easily understood when we consider the six as being a synopsis of the whole book, containing a history of the church apostate to the final consummation, and also the contemporaneous history of the truth church of God; while the seventh gives in detail the account of these great persecuting powers, civil and ecclesiastical, and the trials and triumphs of the saints in the New Jerusalem—developing more fully the events described under the six.

Upon the opening of the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Whether this interval of silence is intended to be symbolical of any event on earth I do not know; neither have I seen any solution of the matter that is consistent or satisfactory. Some have supposed that it denoted a cessation of persecution among



the Christians of earth. But if that were the case, then its opposite, “voices in heaven,” would indicate seasons of persecution. There were several seasons of rest from persecution enjoyed by the early saints, and why should one period be singled out more than the rest and be thus described? Besides, “a half hour,” according to prophetic time would signify only about one week, a period too short certainly to take account of. Others have supposed that

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it signified the end of the world, and that heaven would then be deserted for a short time while the judgment was taking place. But the events following show that the end of the world is not here described, therefore it can not have reference to such. Moreover, it is extremely doubtful whether silence in heaven would be a proper symbol of such an event. I do not perceive the analogy. In fact, such an interpretation of *silence* would be literal and not symbolic.

Its explanation would seem to be found in connection with certain facts stated respecting the opening of the preceding seals—that voices followed them. When the first four seals were opened, John heard the voices of the four beasts, “as it were a voice of thunder”; and on the opening of the fifth, he heard the souls of the martyrs crying unto God; but when the seventh was opened, there was silence for a time. The contrast is noticeable; but whether it has any special signification, I am unable to say; perhaps not.

Before the sounding of the seven trumpets, the acceptableness of the prayers of the saints is represented by an angel offering incense “upon the golden altar which was before the throne.” This scene was doubtless introduced to lend encouragement to God’s children—that, although iniquity abounded on every side and the judgments of God were poured out upon the people, still the prayers of the faithful few were acceptable in his sight, ascending before the throne like sweet incense from off the golden altar.

After offering up the incense with the prayers of all saints, the same angel took his censer and filled it with fire from off the altar and cast it (the fire) upon the earth—a token of God’s avenging judgments—“and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.” These, of course, were on earth, and symbolized the revolutions and convulsions now about to take place in the empire.

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

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.

We here enter upon a series of prophecies developing fully the successive steps in the decline of the Western Roman empire, by which it finally tottered to its fall. It was necessary that this persecuting, tyrannical government should be subverted in order to give opportunity for the establishment of apostate Christianity in the form of the Papacy, as it constituted the “let” or hindrance to the full development of the “man of sin” mentioned by the apostle in 2 Thes. 2. That persecuting, Pagan Rome was a serious

obstacle confronting the development of apostasy was recognized even by the early Christians. Thus, Tertullian, in his notable Apology, chapter 32, says: "Christians are under a particular



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necessity of praying for the emperors, and for the continued state of the empire; because we know that dreadful power which hangs over the world, and *the conclusion of the age, which threatens the most horrible evils, is restrained by the continuance of the time appointed for the Roman empire*. This is what we would not experience; and while we pray that it may be deferred, we hereby show our good-will to the perpetuity of the Roman state.” In a subsequent chapter it will be seen that Pagan Rome, broken up into minor divisions and no longer able to maintain her position in the political world, resigns her power and authority into the hands of the rising Papacy. Therefore it is not surprising that the means by which this great change is effected should be made the subject of prophetic revelation. Besides, we have other things to guide us in the interpretation. We can readily identify the symbols under the fifth trumpet with the curse of Mohammedanism in the Eastern empire, and we would naturally suppose that the first four precede those. Again, the symbols are all drawn from the natural world, which leads us assuredly into the political affairs of the empire for their fulfilment. They are also of the most destructive nature, therefore we look for objects of a corresponding desolating character. Finally, the vision of the preceding chapter represents fierce, destructive winds as about to descend upon the earth, being temporarily held in check to give opportunity for the primitive establishment of Christianity, implying that they would afterwards be let loose to burst like a tornado upon the empire. It is said positively that power was given “to hurt the earth and the sea” (chap. 7:2), and in the vision before us the effects produced upon the earth and the trees are particularly detailed.

“The earth” signifies the Roman empire, or that portion of the earth made the subject of apocalyptic vision. That this application of the word *earth* is correct, is shown by various Scriptures. “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that *all the world* should be taxed.” Luke 2:1. “The queen of the South ... came from the *uttermost parts of the earth* [southern Arabia] to hear the wisdom of Solomon.” Mat. 12:42. “Ye shall be witnesses ... unto the *uttermost part of the earth*.” Acts 1:8. The apostles carried the gospel personally, only throughout the territory of the then-known civilized world—the Roman empire. Upon this earth there descended in the vision before us a fierce storm of hail and fire, mingled with blood. Its being mingled with blood would indicate its destructive effects. One characteristic of this symbol particularly is worthy of notice. Hail and fire cast upon the earth would become absorbed speedily or pass into new combinations with the surrounding elements, thus not remaining in any permanent form except in its effects. In this particular it is wholly unlike the symbol of the next trumpet, which is that of a burning mountain cast into the sea, for such a body would naturally remain permanently where it fell; whereas a storm of hail and fire would soon disappear. Also, the statement that this storm was cast upon the earth would indicate that it was a calamity descending from without upon the empire.

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Where, now, do we find the object that fully meets the requirements of this symbol—destructive agents descending upon the Roman empire like a furious storm of hail and fire, accomplishing the first important step toward the subverting of the empire? We find it in the irruption of the fierce Gothic tribes of the North, who, under Alaric, burst like a tornado upon the empire about the beginning of the fifth century, spreading destruction and desolation upon every side.

The following quotations and facts from the highest authority on the subject, Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Vol. III, pp. 190-294), will give the reader an idea of the awful effects produced by the invasions of these barbarous tribes. The great Theodosius, emperor of the Western Roman empire, "had supported the frail and mouldering edifice of the republic," but upon his death he was succeeded by the weak Honorius. In a few months the Gothic barbarians were in arms. "The barriers of the Danube were thrown down, the savage warriors of Scythia issued from their forests ... and the various tribes of barbarians, who glory in the Gothic name, were irregularly spread over the woody shores of Dalmatia to the walls of Constantinople." They were "directed by the bold and artful genius of Alaric," who soon concluded that the conquest of Constantinople was an impracticable enterprise. He "disdained to trample any longer on the prostrate and ruined countries of Thrace and Dacia, and he resolved to seek a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in a province which had hitherto escaped the ravages of war.... The troops which had been posted to defend the straits of Thermopylae retired ... without attempting to disturb the secure and rapid passage of Alaric; and the fertile fields of Phocis and Baeotia were instantly covered by a deluge of barbarians, who massacred the males of an age to bear arms, and drove away the beautiful females, with the spoil and cattle of the flaming villages. The travelers who visited Greece several years afterwards, could easily discover the deep and bloody traces of the march of the Goths.... The whole territory of Attica, from the promontory of Sunium to the town of Megara, was blasted by his baleful presence; and, if we may use the comparison of a contemporary philosopher, Athens itself resembled the bleeding and empty skin of a slaughtered victim.... Corinth, Argos, Sparta, yielded without resistance to the arms of the Goths; and the most fortunate of the inhabitants were saved, by death, from beholding the slavery of their families and the conflagration of their cities."



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Arcadius, the emperor of the East, wishing to dissuade Alaric from further conquests and such wholesale massacres, promoted him to the rank of Master-general of the eastern Illyricum, but it had an opposite effect. "The birth of Alaric, the glory of his past exploits, and the confidence in his future designs, insensibly united the body of the [Gothic] nation under his victorious standard; and, with the unanimous consent of the barbarian chieftains, the Master-general of Illyricum was elevated, according to the ancient custom, on a shield, and solemnly proclaimed king of the Visigoths. Armed with this double power, situated on the verge of the two empires, he alternately sold his deceitful promises to the courts of Arcadius and Honorius; until he declared and executed his resolution of *invading the dominions of the West*.... He was tempted by the fame, the beauty, the wealth of Italy, which he had twice visited; and he secretly aspired to plant the Gothic standard on the walls of Rome, and to enrich his army with the accumulated spoils of three hundred triumphs." He marched into Italy, and the emperor fled before him. A temporary respite was finally procured by the promise of a payment of four thousand pounds of gold.

Alaric soon appeared, however, before the very walls of Rome, and that splendid city, surrounded by hordes of barbarians, was soon reduced to a wretched condition by famine. Two representatives of the Romans waited upon Alaric for terms of peace, stating that if such could not be arranged the inhabitants of the city, animated by despair, would fight to the bitter end. To this the haughty conqueror made this famous reply: "The thicker the grass, the easier it is mowed." With an insulting laugh, he named the ransom required—all the gold and silver contained in the city, all the rich and precious movables, together with all the slaves. Then the ministers humbly asked, "What do you intend to leave us?" "Your lives," the haughty king replied, and retired. He finally relaxed a little and fixed other terms, which included the immediate payment of the enormous sum of five thousand pounds of gold, thirty thousand pounds of silver, besides other treasure. "The victorious leader, who united the daring spirit of a barbarian with the art and discipline of a Roman general, was at the head of a hundred thousand fighting men; and Italy pronounced, with terror and respect, the formidable name of Alaric."

A second time Rome was besieged by Alaric and taken. Honorius was deposed and Attalus made emperor; but Honorius was afterwards restored. In A.D. 410 he again marched upon the city, captured and entered it. "Eleven hundred and sixty-three years after the foundation of Rome, the imperial city, which had subdued and civilized so considerable a part of mankind, was delivered to the licentious fury of the tribes of Germania and Scythia." For six days the city was sacked by the barbarous soldiery, and the horrible scenes of robbery, murder, and rapine that ensued can not be described. It has been said that "civilized warfare is sufficiently terrible," but that would be almost a blessing compared with such scenes as these. For a space of four years Alaric ravaged Italy almost without opposition.



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The slaughter and devastation that followed this storm of “hail and fire” is thus described: “The banks of the Rhine were crowned like those of the Tiber, with houses and well-cultivated farms; and if a poet descended the river, he might express his doubts on which side was situated the territory of the Romans. This scene of peace and plenty was suddenly changed into a desert, and the prospect of the smoking ruins could alone distinguish the solitude of nature from the desolation of man. The flourishing city of Mentz was surprised and destroyed, and many thousand Christians inhumanly massacred in the church. Wurms perished after a long and obstinate siege. Strasburg, Spire, Rheims, Tournay, Arras, Amiens, experienced the cruel oppression of the German yoke, and the consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars.”

Another historian describing the same, a few years after the event, says: “The barbarians meeting with little resistance, indulged in the utmost cruelty. The cities which they captured, they so utterly destroyed that no traces of them now remain, except in Thrace and Greece, except here and there a tower or a gate. All the men who opposed them they slew, young and old, and indeed spared not women, nor even children. Whence there is still but a sparse population in Italy. The plunder which they seized in every part of Europe was immense, and especially at Rome, where they left nothing, either public or private.” In this latter description reference is also made to some later invasions, but they were all of the same desolating character.

These historical facts show how the green grass, or the feebler portion of society—the tender sex, the young, and the aged—were consumed before this fearful storm of hail and fire; and also how the trees, or the stronger portion—those better able to make resistance—suffered greatly.

It is also a fact to be observed that these fierce tribes which overran Italy, harassed or captured Rome repeatedly, and threatened the overthrow of the empire, made no permanent settlement in that territory. “Under Alaric the Goths make no lasting settlement. In the long tale of intrigue and warfare between the Goths and the two Imperial courts which fills up this whole time, cessions of territory are offered to the Goths, provinces are occupied by them, but as yet they do not take root anywhere; no Western land as yet becomes Gothia,”—Encyclopaedia Britannica, Art. Goths. After the death of Alaric (A.D. 412), however, they settled in the southern part of Spain and Gaul[5]—part of the territory of the West—but they no longer threatened the life of the empire; but, on the contrary, they became allies of the Romans in opposing the dreadful incursions of the Huns and other barbarians. Thus their invasion of the West was at first terribly destructive—like a storm of hail and fire—but their ravages soon ceased, except in their disastrous and weakening effects.

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[Footnote 5: This division of the Gothic tribes is commonly called the Visigoths (Western Goths), as distinguished from the Ostrogoths, or Eastern Goths.]

8. And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood;

9. And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

The symbol of this trumpet is that of a volcanic mountain cast into the sea, whence it sends forth its streams of lava in every direction until a third of the creatures in the sea are destroyed, thus spreading desolation on every side. It would naturally remain where it fell, a permanent instrument of destruction.

We have here a description of the next step of importance in the downfall of the Western empire. The second great invasion was that of "the terrible Genseric" with his Vandal hordes, who pushed southward through Gaul and Spain, conquered the Carthaginian territory of northern Africa, and there formed a permanent independent government in A.D. 439. From this fixed place, he continued for years to make incursions upon the bordering cities and islands, burning the cities, murdering the inhabitants, and intercepting the commerce of the Mediterranean. During his military career, 429-468, he became the terror of the inhabitants of the empire, insomuch that historians designate him "the terrible Genseric." The depredations committed by his followers were but a repetition of such scenes of barbarity as have already been described in the invasions of Alaric under the first trumpet, therefore I will not devote much space to the historical facts in the case. Their deeds, however, were such that the very term *Vandal* has come to be used as a designation of any man of ferocious character. Concerning the important part that this chieftain acted in the downfall of the Western empire, Gibbon uses this significant language: "Genseric, a name which, in the destruction of the Roman empire, has deserved an equal rank with the names of Alaric and Attila." Vol. III, p. 370.

In the year 454 the empress Eudoxia wished to be revenged on Maximus, who had murdered her husband Valentinian and had grasped the throne, and she secretly invited Genseric to attack Rome. That fierce general, who is described by the Encyclopaedia Britannica as "cruel to blood-thirstiness, cunning, unscrupulous, and grasping," was glad to undertake the task, and he soon landed an army of Vandals and African Moors at the gates of the city. It was soon taken and for fifteen days given over to be sacked by the barbarous soldiery. When they had glutted their savage instincts with the horrible deeds of murder and rapine, loaded with the spoils of the imperial city, they returned to Africa, taking with them an immense number of captives, including Eudoxia and



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her two daughters. This desolating incursion left the empire weak and tottering to its fall. Genseric “became the tyrant of the sea; the coasts of Italy, Greece, and Asia, were again exposed to his revenge and avarice. Tripoli and Sardinia returned to his obedience; he added Sicily to the number of his provinces; and before he died, in the fulness of years and glory, he beheld the FINAL EXTINCTION of the empire of the West.” Gibbon, Vol. III, pp. 497, 498.

By “the sea” into which this burning mountain was cast is meant, not the Mediterranean nor any other literal sea, but the heart of the empire, and that in a state of agitation. The empire was in a state of comparative quiet when Alaric appeared; therefore the storm of hail and fire is represented as falling upon “the earth,” as a result of which society was thrown into a state of great agitation, and moved to its depths, like an ocean in a storm. This was its condition when Genseric, from his fixed position in Africa, began his desolating incursions; therefore the next symbol is that of a mountain cast into “the sea.” By the sea becoming blood is doubtless meant the destruction of life in the empire, and “the third part” denotes the vast extent of the destruction.

I must speak with hesitation on what is signified by “the creatures which were in the sea” and the “ships.” By analogy I would be led to refer the former to the rulers and the dignitaries in the empire, they bearing an analagous position to the empire that fishes do to the waters of the sea; while the latter may refer to public monuments and structures.

10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11. And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

The description given of this star is similar to that of a large burning meteor, such as we frequently see shooting athwart the heavens. It fell rapidly to earth, as such meteors often do, and struck the fountain-heads of the rivers, imparting to them such a poisonous quality as caused the death of those who drank the waters.

This symbol is also drawn from the natural world, and hence we must look for its fulfilment in political events. The rapidity of its fall and disappearance in the waters would direct us to an agent who would appear suddenly and soon disappear, and whose career would leave bitter results. The direct effects of this meteor were experienced by the rivers and the fountains of waters, which bear an analagous relation to the sea that bordering tribes and nations do to an empire. The heart of the empire, or



“the sea,” was directly affected by the burning mountain, under the preceding trumpet; while the tributaries of the sea, or the bordering tribes, are made the subject of direct attack under this symbol and the poisonous qualities of their waters carried to far distant points.



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Under this striking symbol we have a description of the third important step in the downward course of Rome—the short but eventful career of Attila, with his terrible Scythians, or Huns. Singularly, Attila was said to “possess the iron sword of the war-god *Mars*,” and he claimed for himself the designation or title “The Scourge of God”; while his followers were even more cruel and barbarous, if possible, than the Goths and the Vandals.

Coming from the remote solitudes of Asia under the leadership of their fierce king, they poured like a tornado, first upon the inhabitants of the Eastern empire (in 442, 445) and then turned their attention westward. Attila ruled over “nearly all the tribes north of the Danube and the Black sea,” and under his banner fought Ostrogoths, Gepidae, Alani, Heruli, and many other Teutonic peoples. Says Gibbon: “The whole breadth of Europe, as it extends above five hundred miles from the Euxine to the Adriatic, was at once invaded, and occupied, and desolated by the myriads of barbarians whom Attila led into the field.” It was the boast of Attila that the grass never grew on the spot which his horse had trod. In 451 he led his forces, seven hundred thousand strong, through the center of Germany into the heart of Gaul, where he was met at Chalons by the combined forces of the Visigoths, Alans, Franks and Romans, and was defeated, with the loss of one hundred and seventy thousand of his men. This was one of the most gigantic as well as one of the most important battles of history. A rivulet flowing through the field of battle is said to have been colored and swollen by the blood of the slain. The next year, however, with a greater force at his command, he fell with headlong fury upon northern Italy; but he did not attack Rome. Suddenly and seemingly without cause, he withdrew his army; and this peculiar action of his has been the wonder of historians ever since. Says the Encyclopaedia Britannica: “Attila at once withdrew from Italy, but the motive which led him to act thus is not known.” According to the prophecy, he was to fall upon the “rivers and fountains of waters” only. A short time later, in 453, he died, and “the vast empire over which he had ruled broke up *immediately* after his death, no one chief being powerful enough to seize the supremacy.” Thus his short but wonderful career of about twelve years ended suddenly, like a meteor falling into a river.

But the effects of this invasion were farreaching. Rome in her declining strength, being unable to cope with these immense hordes of barbarians, was forced to call to her assistance the half-civilized tribes of Gothic barbarians against a more dreaded foe. The success that attended these conflicts of the combined forces were the means of giving greater political importance to these Gothic tribes and securing their independence. But while they rose, Rome fell. By the very act of employing such weapons in defense, Rome robbed herself of the little political strength remaining, and she was obliged to accept the bitter consequences.

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Under each of these first three trumpets the extent of destruction is indicated by the expression "the third part." Since the successive steps in the downfall of the empire is the subject under consideration, this expression as here applied doubtless has particular reference to the loss of political power and life, rather than referring directly to the loss of human life sustained. With this thought in view, it is evident that the political importance of the empire was entirely destroyed by these desolating incursions. Of the truth of this fact all historians agree. Nothing of Rome remained, except the semblance of a government, when the time arrived for the sounding of the next trumpet.

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

The symbol of this trumpet is that of an eclipse of sun, moon, and stars, so that they shone not for a third part of the day and night. Under the sixth seal we showed that these luminaries of heaven are taken as symbols of rulers and princes; for the latter bear an analagous relation to the empire that the former do to the earth. In the darkening, then, of the sun, moon, and stars, we are to look for some disastrous change or overthrow in the imperial government. Such an event occurred only a few years after the events described under the preceding trumpets. With her political strength and resources exhausted, Rome could no longer maintain a separate existence, and Odoacer, king of the Heruli, overthrew Momyllus Augustulus, the last of the Roman line of emperors, and caused himself to be proclaimed king of Italy in A.D. 476. This terminated the Western empire; and thus was the Roman sun eclipsed in darkness. In a subsequent chapter, however, we will find the eclipse lifted at a later period and *New Rome* enjoying all the power and authority lost in her predecessors of the old Augustin line.

Odoacer continued in possession of his kingdom seventeen years. Then he was defeated and slain by Theodoric, and by him the kingdom of the Ostrogoths was established in Italy. Sixty years later this kingdom was subverted by Belisarius, the general of Justinian, emperor of the East, to whom it became a tributary province. In each of the principal cities of Italy Justinian appointed a governor with the title of Duke, in subordination to another with the title of Exarch, whose residence was at Ravenna. "Thus, at last, was Rome, once the proud mistress of the world, reduced to a poor dukedom, made tributary to the Exarch of Ravenna, and he holding his authority at the will of the emperor of Constantinople, the seat of the Eastern empire."



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Thus, under the symbols of these four trumpets we have developed the wondrous history of the downfall of imperial Rome, in order to give opportunity for the scenes of the drama yet to follow. The “man of sin” could not be fully revealed in all his terrible features until this hindrance was removed out of the way. Imperial Rome for three centuries stood as the great opposer of God’s people and slaughtered thousands, perhaps millions, of the Lord’s innocent servants, and the hand of retributive Justice was finally extended to humble her to the dust. Singularly, the persons whom God made choice of to effect her downfall have either regarded themselves as special instruments whose mission it was to punish the world or else have received such designations by historians because of their awful work. Contemporary historians distinguish Alaric by the epithets “The Scourge of God,” “The Destroyer of Nations”; while the great Vandal leader is designated “The Terrible Genseric.” Attila claimed the title “The Scourge of God.”

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 later editions of the Greek New Testament give the word *eagle* instead of *angel*—denoting a messenger or angel flying with the swiftness of an eagle. This messenger doubtless is not intended to be symbolic; for it is not one of the seven angels, but a messenger possessing a warning, and that warning is given “to the inhabitants of the earth,” as if they were addressed directly. It simply announces that the three trumpets yet to sound will possess greater calamities to the people of earth than those that have preceded, by reason of which they are called woes. The manner, also, in which the woe trumpets are spoken of afterwards confirm the statement that the announcement is literal and not symbolical. “One woe is past, and, behold, there come two more woes hereafter.” Chap. 9:12. “The second woe is past: and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.” Chap. 11:14. These announcements are evidently literal, and serve to explain the passage before us. Accordingly, the last three trumpets are generally referred to as the woe trumpets.

CHAPTER IX.

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.

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.

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.



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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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

11. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

The symbols of this trumpet are of a very peculiar character and peculiarly combined. They are not drawn entirely from the natural world, showing that we are not to look for their fulfilment in political events alone; neither are they drawn from human life in any such way as to indicate events in the religious history of the church. The leading characters in it, however, are living, active agents of such a destructive nature as to entitle them to the designation of a woe.

The first object presented in the vision is a "star" fallen to the earth. Our translation conveys the idea that this star was in the act of falling; but in the original it is different, being there represented as having fallen, its dejection from heaven to earth being complete. The only place that it appeared in view was on the earth, and there it is described as fallen. A star is a symbol either of a civil ruler or of a religious teacher, the symbols in connection deciding whether it is set in the political or the ecclesiastical firmament. But this was not such a star as He who walketh in the midst of the golden

candle-sticks holdeth in his right hand, but it was a *fallen* star, indicating that it was the propagator of a false faith.



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To this star was given a key. In the Gospels the same figure is employed, where the ministers of Christ are represented as possessing the keys of the kingdom of heaven, showing that they acted in his name and by his authority. How appropriate, then, is this symbol as applied to a false teacher, who possesses, not the keys of the kingdom of heaven, but, instead, “the key of the bottomless pit”! Thus, under the symbol of the star and the key, we have the teacher and his authority set forth. Armed with this authority, this false teacher “opened the bottomless pit; and there rose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.” In the Scriptures Jesus is represented as the Sun of righteousness, while “the light of the *glorious gospel* of Christ” illuminates the world. But here we have something of the opposite character—a dense smoke eclipsing the sun and darkening the heavens. Have we not here a fit representation of a delusive faith proceeding from its true source, “the bottomless pit”? And is not a fallen star an appropriate symbol of its propagator?

In representing a system of religion by these objects from nature we depart from the general rule first laid down—that objects of nature symbolize political affairs, while the department of human and angelic life is chosen to represent religious affairs. But the reader should bear in mind one important exception to this rule—that things prominently connected with the history of the people of God in former ages are frequently employed (regardless of the department to which they belong) to represent spiritual things, their interpretation being easily seen; such as candle-sticks, altar, temple, incense, *etc.* When the plague of “thick darkness” covered the land of Egypt for three days, “the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.” In the exodus the Lord went before them “by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light.” After the erection of the tabernacle the holy place was constantly illuminated. This natural light in the Jewish age constitutes a beautiful type of the spiritual “light of the glorious gospel of Christ” that has “shined in our hearts” in the Christian dispensation. This spiritual light comes from Christ, the “Sun of righteousness,” the “true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world”; and proceeds, also, from his people, who “shine as lights in the world.” But it is the “light of the *gospel*.” This light proceeds in a special sense from God’s ministers, who are represented as “stars” (chap. 1:20) and who possess “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” Mat. 16:19; 18:18. How appropriate, then, that a *fallen* “star,” possessing “the key of the bottomless pit,” should be a symbol of a religious impostor, and that the smoke which darkened the heavens, eclipsing the sun, the source of light, should represent a prominent delusive faith!



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I have already mentioned the fact that the symbols of this vision lead to a series of events entirely separate in their nature from the spiritual history of the church as developed under other symbols. We find its fulfilment in Mohammed and the delusive system he promulgated. In the year 606 Mahomet retired to a cave in Hera, near Mecca, and there received his pretended revelations, although it was not until six years later that he began to teach his doctrines publicly and to gain followers outside of the circle of his own family and personal friends. Gibbon, Vol. V., p. 121.

The next object in the vision is the locusts that came out of the smoke, to which was given power like scorpions, or power to inflict a deadly sting like scorpions. To what living agents, then, did the delusion of Mohammedanism give birth—agents of a destructive nature like scorpion locust? Evidently, the Saracens,[6] those warrior followers of Mohammed who flocked to his standard. These locusts received the express command 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.” The successor of Mohammed, Abubeker, gave the Saracens a command that they should “destroy no palm-trees, nor burn any fields of grain; cut down no fruit-trees, nor do any mischief to cattle, only such as you kill to eat.” This command was singular, yet it doubtless is not the fulfilment of the command to the locusts; for that would be adopting a literal meaning instead of a symbolic one, and to complete the picture we should have had literal Saracens instead of locusts. We can not consistently make a part literal and the remainder symbolical. In the explanation of the first trumpet (chap. 8:6, 7), we showed that grass and trees symbolized the inhabitants of a kingdom, grass representing the feebler and trees the stronger portions of society. The fact, then, that these locusts were not to destroy the green grass and trees show that they were not sent as a scourge upon the political empire only, as was the storm of hail and fire under the first trumpet. Had their mission been like that of natural locusts, to destroy every green thing, we should then conclude that they were sent as a scourge upon the empire alone, having nothing whatever to do with a system of religion. These locusts, however, were commanded not to do what natural locusts always do—eat green grass and trees—and were commissioned to do what locusts never do—“hurt men,” but only those who have not the seal of God in their foreheads; that is, the worshipers of a false, idolatrous church, who are not known unto God as his true people. This is positive proof that the design of this vision is to set forth some awful religious imposture; for the “men” that they were to hurt are found in the department which by analogy represents religious events.

[Footnote 6: “In earlier times the name of Saraceni was applied by Greeks and Romans to the troublesome Nomad Arabs of the Syro-Arabian desert.”—*Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In the Middle Ages, however, Europeans began to call all their Moslem enemies Saracens. It is in the limited sense that it is here applied, designating the first followers of Mohammed before the rise of the Ottoman empire.]



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The fact that their commission was to torment those “men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads,” is a proof also of the wide-spread apostasies that had already taken place. This was the time when the pale horseman was careering over the world carrying desolation everywhere by his instruments of oppression—sword, pestilences, famine, and the wild beasts of the earth. “The churches both in the Western and Eastern empire were in the most deplorable condition, being corrupted with the grossest ignorance and idolatry; the virgin Mary, the saints, and miserable relics of every description being worshiped in the place of Jehovah, and superstition reigning with sovereign power over all minds.” The Saracen warriors of Mohammed were sent as a scourge upon apostate Christendom, overrunning the very territory where the gospel was first preached, and were commissioned to “torment” the false professors of Christianity.

In regard to the kind and the extent of the injury they were to inflict, it is said that “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. 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 Saracens, as here described under the symbol of the locusts, sustained a two-fold relation, and the careful and perfect manner in which the symbols are selected to set it forth is worthy of particular notice. In the first place, the Saracens were a political body. As such, locusts would fitly represent them. But they were also a religious body, and how could that fact be symbolically combined with the other? It is done by the locusts’ being forbidden to act out their own nature in eating grass and trees, and their being commanded instead to “hurt men,” thus changing the field of their operations into the department of human life—the department that is chosen to symbolically set forth religious events. Thus the politico-religious system of the Saracens is accurately set forth. This, also, is nearly as clear as a demonstration that the position already taken concerning the nature and the use of symbolic language is correct.

It was given that they should “not kill” men. We have already shown that killing men when used symbolically signifies the destruction of the political or ecclesiastical organizations and institutions of society. We could not consistently interpret it as literal slaughter, but as some analagous destruction. Now, the Saracen power was, as already stated, a politico-religious system, and its warriors were an infatuated set of religious fanatics, described by historians as “carrying the sword in one hand, and the Koran in the other.” Thus, they had it in their power to kill either religiously or politically—destroy either the church or the empire—but they did neither, for their mission was not to kill, but to “torment.”



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“They made extensive conquests and gained immense numbers of converts. But they did not overthrow the Eastern empire, although they repeatedly attacked and besieged Constantinople, suffering, however, uniform defeat in the attempt. Neither did they destroy the church, corrupt and apostate as it was. To idolators and infidels they put the alternative of the Koran or death; but allowed the Christians to retain their church organization, laying them, however, under severe contributions, and treating them to the ignominious appellation of Christian dogs.” Concerning the character of Mohammed, Gibbon informs us that “he seldom trampled on a prostrate enemy, and he seems to promise, that on the payment of a tribute, the least guilty of his unbelieving subjects might be indulged in their worship, or at least in their imperfect faith” (Vol. V, p. 129), and this, of course, would be the natural tendency of his followers. The Armenian and the Greek churches survived, and still exist in that portion of the world, but they have indeed been grievously tormented. “The proud Moslem, glorying in his prophet and religion, has heaped every possible insult and injury upon the Christians,” yet he suffered them to live, but live only for him to torment. Surely the oppressions thus experienced are appropriately described by the words, “as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.” Under such torments the professed Christians might court death, but such is not granted; and still they survive, but only to be “tormented.” The Moslem had “the Christian dog” completely under his foot.

We now turn our attention to the period of time during which these Saracen locusts were to continue their ravages. It is given as “five months,” or one hundred and fifty days. As this description is entirely symbolic, we must consider the time symbolic also, for time certainly can be symbolized as well as anything else. It is very appropriate for days to symbolize years, for they are analagous periods of time; the diurnal revolution of the earth being taken to represent the earth’s annual movement. Such a system of reckoning time was known centuries ago. When Jacob complained to Laban because he had been given Leah instead of Rachel, “Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the first-born. Fulfil her *week*, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve me yet *seven other years*. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week ... seven other years.” Gen. 29:26-30. In this case it will be seen that a day was used to represent a year, since seven days, or one week, represented seven years. When the law was given, Moses recognized the week of seven natural days, the last day of which was constituted a Sabbath of rest for Israel; but he also instituted a week of seven years, the last year of which was a sabbatical year of rest unto the land. This last fact will explain such expressions as “forty days, *each day for a year*” (Num. 14:34), and “I have appointed thee each day for a year.” Ezek. 4:6.



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This period, then, of “five months,” or one hundred and fifty days, would represent symbolically one hundred and fifty years. As before stated, it was in the year A.D. 612 that Mohammed began to expound his doctrines publicly and to gather adherents around his standard, from which point the locusts commenced, although the smoke had been let out of the pit a little previously. For a period of one hundred and fifty years from this date, they continued their ravages, until A.D. 762. Then they “built Bagdad, which became their settled seat of empire; and henceforth they became a settled nation, making no further conquests.” From that date their power began to decline. But during this one hundred and fifty years they spread over the country like swarms of devouring locusts. According to the well-known facts of history, “they overran Arabia, Palestine, Persia, Egypt, and the northern shores of Africa, from which they passed to the conquest of Portugal and Spain.” These were the countries that had been the most oppressed by a priest-ridden church and where especially were to be found those “men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.” Europe was trembling and filled with apprehension at what her fate might be at the hands of these fanatic warriors who fought with savage fury, under the promise of their prophet that, if slain in battle, they should be immediately transported to Paradise. At the zenith of their power, and confident of success, they passed from Spain into France four hundred thousand strong. But here they exceeded their mission. The southern provinces of France contained many Christians who had the “seal of God” upon them, and this country became the seat of the Waldenses and Albigenses, of which interesting people we shall learn more hereafter. The invading host was met at Tours by Charles, grandfather of Charlemagne, who dealt them such a crushing blow that he was ever afterward designated by the surname Martel—the Hammer. This battle was one of the fiercest recorded in history. The Saracens who had scarcely ever experienced defeat fought with the fury of despair, until, according to the accounts of that age, three hundred and seventy-five thousand of their number lay upon the field of battle with their general. This decisive victory saved Europe from her threatened subjection to the Mohammedan faith.

The next point in the vision to claim our attention is the particular description of these locusts. Some of the points mentioned might find a literal fulfilment in the personal appearance of the Saracens—such as the crowns signifying the turbans they wore, *etc.*, but we must adhere strictly to the symbolic mode of interpretation and look for their fulfilment in Saracen character. Their being like war-horses denotes their warlike disposition. The crowns on their heads signify their great success and triumphs. Their faces of men and hair like women doubtless signify their boldness on the one hand and their effeminateness



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on the other. Their teeth as the teeth of lions show their ferocity of character. Their breastplates of iron indicate their invincibility or else their insensibility to injuries inflicted upon them. The sound of their wings like horses and chariots running to battle denotes the multitude and rapidity of their conquests. Their tails like scorpions, containing stings with which to “hurt men”—operating in the religious world—symbolize their position as propagators of a false faith. Thus they are set forth in their two-fold character—as invincible warriors and as the zealous professors of a delusion, whose sting was like that of a scorpion when he strikes a man.

“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.” The following fact of history will explain this: “The Saracens had their Caliphs, the successors of Mohammed, who united in themselves the supreme civil, military and ecclesiastical powers. They were the high-priests of their religion, the commanders of their armies, and the emperors of the nation.” This king over them signifies a succession of rulers, and they are well described as “the angel of the bottomless pit,” for that is the very place where the delusion is said to have originated. Mahomet, as a fallen star, opened the pit and let out the smoke, and his successors, who grasped his power and authority, are fitly characterized as angels from the same place, bearing the name Abaddon or Apollyon, which terms both signify Destroyer.

Is not this a wonderful combination of symbols which can be carried out with surprising accuracy? What human ingenuity could have ever contrived such a marvelous series of events, and described them under such appropriate symbols? Finally, let me ask, Where in the whole compass of universal history can be found another series of events so perfectly meeting every requirement of the symbols? In this we must acknowledge the hand of God.

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

This announcement, that one woe is past, meaning that the period of one hundred and fifty years during which the Saracens were to continue their conquests has ended, serves an important purpose in enabling us to fix the chronology of the events described. It proves that they succeed each other.

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

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



15. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

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

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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.

18. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

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

21. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

At the sounding of the sixth trumpet, or the second woe trumpet, a voice is heard from the four horns (all the horns) of the golden altar. This probably denotes that the very same altar where incense was offered up to God with the prayers of all saints was now crying out to him for vengeance upon an apostate church. That church had reached the summit of apostasy and iniquity, the virgin Mary, the saints, and thousands of idols in the form of miserable relics being worshiped more than God. Because of these abominable idolatries, a voice is heard crying from the golden altar for the avenging judgments of Heaven, which were the loosing of the four angels bound in the river Euphrates. The symbols of this vision are also of peculiar character and drawn from different departments. We have four angels bound in the Euphrates, an immense army of horsemen, then a large number of horses with heads as of lions, and fire, smoke, and brimstone issuing from their mouths. The horses thus particularly described are evidently intended to have a definite symbolical signification, and being objects of nature, they would indicate a political or military power. The horsemen, being objects from human life, would point us to some religious body; while the angels signify the leaders that have control of these agencies. Their being commissioned "to slay the third part of men" show that they will overthrow some of the established institutions of society. We are to look, therefore, for some politico-religious power that should invade and overthrow the empire. We are, of course, directed to the Eastern empire; for the Western division was subverted under the symbols of the first four trumpets. With these specifications before us, we shall have no difficulty in identifying the power intended—*the Turkish, or Ottoman, empire*. Its agreement with the symbolic representations of the vision will be manifest from a statement of the facts of history.



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“The Turks were of Tartar or Scythian origin, from the northern regions of Asia, whence also the Huns hived upon Europe during the fourth and fifth centuries. The latter passed to the north of the Black sea from Russia, and swept the regions of the Danube and the Rhine. The Turks, passing to the east of the same, fell upon the empire from that quarter. They took possession of Armenia Major in the ninth century, where they increased, and in the space of two hundred years became a formidable power, being at the end of this period combined into four Sultanies, the heads of which were at Bagdad, Damascus, Aleppo, and Iconium. The first of these was erected A.D. 1055; the two next A.D. 1079, and the last A.D. 1080—all of them within twenty-five years, and the three last within two.”

These four Sultanies are doubtless signified by “the four angels” that were bound in the river Euphrates. The Euphrates here is employed as a symbol, not of the Turks themselves—for the horsemen are their symbol, as we shall see—but of the binding of the angels. The use of this word as a symbol is derived from a fact of history, being the object, according to Herodotus, that kept Cyrus back from entering the city of Babylon. While the Persian monarch surrounded the walls of that ancient metropolis of the Babylonian empire, with his army, he was held in restraint by the river Euphrates; and it was not until he had diverted its waters into an artificial channel that he gained an entrance. So, also, these Sultanies, or leaders of the Turks, were held under restraint as if bound by the river Euphrates, until the time appointed for them to go forth on their mission of conquest. Different causes held them back. For a long time they were involved in fierce and almost continuous wars with the neighboring Tartar tribes on the east and the north, and at the same time the Crusaders of Europe were carrying on a determined war with the Saracens for the possession of the Holy Land. For two centuries the armies of Christendom poured into Syria and Palestine to recover from the hands of the “infidels,” as they were called, the holy sepulchre and the country that gave birth to Christianity; but when Europe finally abandoned the project, then went forth the command to loose the four angels, “which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of man.” To kill men symbolically, I have already shown, signifies the destruction either of an empire as a political body or of the church (that is, the so-called church) as a religious body. The locusts under the fifth trumpet were to do neither; but the symbolic characters of this vision are “to slay the third part of men,” by which is set forth the fall and subjugation of the Eastern empire and church; just as, under the fifth trumpet, the fall of the Western empire was described by the darkening of a third part of the sun, moon, and stars.



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Before considering the time-prophecy in this vision, we will pass on to notice a few particulars respecting the horses and their riders. The horsemen possessed breastplates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone; while out of the mouths of the horses proceeded fire, smoke, and brimstone. There is evidently a special design in distinguishing between the horses and their riders. These symbols, being drawn from different sources—the former from the natural world and the latter from human life—point out the two characteristics of the Turks as a politico-religious power. The symbolic description of the two is almost identical. The horsemen had breastplates of fire, jacinth (purplish or reddish blue), and brimstone. This describes the character of the Turks as a religious system. Out of the horses' mouths proceeded fire, smoke, and brimstone, which represents the Moslems as a political power. The only difference is that the smoke is substituted for the jacinth, but they very nearly agree in color. We are thus brought to the conclusion that the political and the religious power of the Turks is in harmony and agreement with each other—united in the closest manner possible, like a horse and its rider, and both animated by the same spirit. That spirit is perhaps their fierce, fanatical, aggressive, intolerant character.

The tails of the horses were like serpents with heads, their power being in their mouth and in their tails—the one a lion, the other a serpent. It was by the fire, the smoke, and the brimstone that came from their lion-heads that the third part of men was killed, or their conquests were made; then with their serpent-like tails would they torment or “hurt” all those who would not adopt the Moslem faith, being in this respect like the scorpion locusts. Their lion-heads would denote their invincible strength and courage; and their serpent-tails, the tormenting sting inflicted upon those whom they subdued but who would not accept their religion. It is not said that the riders were the direct agents of destruction—not the Moslem faith as a religion—but it was the horses that accomplished the deadly work—the Ottomans as a political body. This was the power that extended conquests and established their empire, although it was accompanied by the religious system, working in perfect harmony.

It is said that the “rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues” repented not. This expression doubtless signifies the Western, or Latin, church. They saw these judgments of the Euphratean horsemen on the Eastern empire, and the triumph of the Moslem sword and faith (the woe fell as a judgment upon the Eastern church); still, they continued as before in their abominable idolatries, by which is probably meant their worship of the virgin Mary, saints, relics, and images. There was no reformation. Error, superstition, and ecclesiastical usurpation prevailed as before.



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The Turks obtained their first victory over the Christians of the Eastern, or Greek, empire in A.D. 1281. Within ten years the Latins who inhabited Palestine were entirely overthrown (see Gibbon, Vol. VI, p. 47), and the way was now clear for Turkish aggression against the Greek empire. Before the end of the century the four Sultanies mentioned were combined into one consolidated empire under Osman (corrupted by Europeans into Ottoman) and from him took the name which it still retains—the Ottoman empire. From the time they were let loose, the Turks continued their aggressions until A.D. 1453, when Constantinople fell before their victorious arms, and the Eastern empire, with the last of the Constantines, sunk to rise no more. “The Turkish sword and the religion of the Koran were enthroned in the Christian metropolis of the Roman emperors; and the proud Moslem had the Christian dog completely under his foot.” The Ottoman power, however, continued to grow and make new conquests until the year A.D. 1672, when they conducted a successful campaign against Poland, in which forty-eight towns and villages were ceded to the Sultan, with promise of an annual tribute of two hundred and twenty thousand ducats. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, Art. Turkey. This was the last victory they ever gained wherein the Ottoman empire obtained any advantage. A little later they marched against Vienna, but sustained a miserable defeat. “Venice and Russia now declared war against Turkey; misfortune followed misfortune; city after city was rent away from the empire; the Austrians were in possession of almost the whole of Hungary, the Italians of almost all the Morea.” Encyclopaedia Britannica, Art. Turkey. So the power of the Ottomans to extend their conquests and to add to their empire, ended with the victory over the Poles in A.D. 1672. This fact is even admitted by Demetrius Cantemir, prince of Moldavia, one of their historians, in the following language: “This was the *last* victory by which any advantage accrued to the Othman state, or any city or province was annexed to the ancient bounds of the empire.” In accordance with this statement, the same historian entitles the first part of his history up to the victory over the Poles in 1672 the *History of the Growth of the Othman Empire*, and the remaining portion, *The Decay of the Othman Empire*.

Calculating now the time during which these horsemen were prepared to extend their conquests—“an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year”—we find according to prophetic, or symbolic, time—thirty days in a month, three hundred and sixty in a year—that it signifies three hundred and ninety-one years and fifteen days. This is exactly the period of time that elapsed between their first victory in A.D. 1281 and their last conquest in A.D. 1672. I can not verify the fifteen days, because no history at my command states the exact days of the month on which these victories occurred.

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One more point of importance must be considered before we conclude this chapter, and that is the continuance of the Ottoman power. The first, or Saracen, woe had power to torment men “five months,” or one hundred and fifty years, during which time they continued their ravages. The second woe began when the command was given to loose the four angels, or the beginning of the Ottoman conquests. “An hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,” or three hundred and ninety-one years, marked the time during which they were “prepared” to extend their conquests. But it is not stated that the woe itself, or the Ottoman power, would then cease; for it is not represented as ending until after the death and the resurrection of the witnesses (chap. 11:14), immediately following which the coming of Christ and the general judgment, or the third woe, is described. Verses 15-18. The Turkish power has made no advance for centuries, but has been on the decline; yet it will endure for its allotted time. It furnishes us a way-mark by which we can determine our position along the pathway of time; for when it falls, we may rest assured that the coming of Christ is imminent.

For nearly two centuries it has been the wonder of civilized nations how that corrupt, tyrannical government, which has been described as a “despotism tempered by assassination,” could exist in the increased light and onward advance of modern civilization. Concerning its position in Europe, Judson, in his recent history of Europe in the Nineteenth Century, says: “The Turkish empire has been an element of unrest in Europe. It has long been plain to all that it is not permanent. It has taken no root. The Turks are merely encamped in Europe; and it is merely a question of time when the last of them must return across the Bosphorus.” Pp. 269, 270. But Turkey will continue to hold this territory of the old Greek empire until the time appointed by the Father for her overthrow. The nations of Europe have often conspired for her overthrow. This is what is known as the great Eastern Question, which has been described by one writer as “the expulsion of the Turk from Europe, and the scramble for his territory.” But it has not yet been accomplished, for the very reason doubtless, that it *could not* take place before the resurrection of the witnesses, of which we will speak later. Judson thus continues his account of the matter: “As soon as this idea was realized [that Turkish power in Europe must fall] by the Western nations, in place of the dread of the Turk which had so long been part and parcel of European thinking, the question of the disposal to be made of the Turkish possessions became matter of live interest. And this is the Eastern Question. The Greek empire vanished forever when the last Constantine fell in 1453. The only problem is one of partition. And the heart of it all is the disposal to be made of Constantinople. That imperial city is a site that, in strong hands,



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means power and wealth. What shall become of it? Russia early formed designs of conquest.... The empress Catherine ... had a grand scheme for a restoration of the Greek empire under a Russian prince. Alexander I., at Tilsit, planned a partition of the Ottoman empire with Napoleon, but the latter declined to see Constantinople in Russian hands. 'Constantinople,' said he, 'is the empire of the world.' In 1844 Nicholas visited England and made guarded suggestions to the prime-minister about the Turkish lands. The Ottoman empire, said he, was a sick man, nearly at the last extremity.... England declined to plan for a share of the inheritance, and nothing was done. In 1853 Nicholas resumed the subject with the British ambassador at St. Petersburg. The sick man, he now held, was at the point of death.... But again England declined and, indeed, the next year went to war with Russia to save the sick man from a premature end at the hands of the would-be administrator of the estate. Another power doubly interested in the future of the Turkish dominions is Austria. That empire has been the traditional enemy of the Turk, and at the end of the seventeenth century was the actual bulwark of Europe against Mohammedan conquest. When the tide of war rolled the other way, Austria was ready to share in the spoils. Twice near the end of the eighteenth century, was an alliance made between Russia and Austria for the partition of Turkey," etc. Pp. 270, 271. Thus, we find that these designs of nations for the overthrow of Turkey have so far been overruled; for God will not allow that power to come to "a *premature end*."

CHAPTER X.

And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire:

2. And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

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

4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

5. And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,



6. And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

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



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

9. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

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

In the preceding chapter we had a history of the two great woes that befell apostate Christendom. In this chapter we have in contrast a portion of the history of God's true church, to show us that all was not lost even though the Eastern church was grievously tormented by the serpent-tails of the horses and the Western church still continued as before in her sorceries, fornications, and abominable idolatries.

The symbol is that of an angel from heaven. This is not the seventh, or the third woe angel, who ushers in the general judgment (chap. 11:15-18), but it is a special messenger appearing on earth with the awful message that the end of time is near and that when the seventh angel soon begins to sound the mystery of God shall be finished and there shall be time no longer. This mighty angel is symbolical of some human agencies of distinguished character; for it stands in striking contrast with the destructive powers described under the preceding trumpets. When angels appear on the panoramic scene only in the temple above, they themselves are not symbolic characters, but only the conductors of the Revelation; but whenever they appear on earth, they represent distinguished agencies among men. In the present vision the symbol is drawn, not from the natural world, but from the heavenly, and the scene is laid upon earth; therefore we must look to the history of the church to find its fulfilment in some distinguished agencies appearing for the defence of Christ and his truth. The cloud, rainbow, face as the sun, and feet as pillars of fire, are doubtless intended to set forth their beautiful, benignant character, and to show that the angel is not such an one as those that were bound in the river Euphrates. This one has the bow of covenant promise upon his head, and his face shines as the sun.

Where, then, in the history of God's true church do we find the agencies corresponding to the symbol? We find them in the *holy ministry* that he has raised up and is now sending forth to preach the pure gospel and to declare the speedy sounding of the seventh trumpet and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth again.



“Lo, the angel now is standing on the sea and on the land;
How his voice the air is rending as to God he lifts his hand!
What an awful, awful message! Help us, Lord, this truth to see:
When the seventh trumpet thunders, then shall time no longer be.



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“One more trumpet yet to summon us before the judgment seat,
Then the time of our frail planet will be said to be complete.
How the wicked will be wailing and the righteous overjoyed
When with fire the heav’ns are burning and the earth shall be destroyed!”

This angel “set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,” that his lion-like voice might be heard over all the world. This shows that the earth (the Apocalyptic earth—the territory of the Roman empire) was not the only place where the message was to be borne; it was to be sounded upon the sea, which would indicate its promulgation among all nations.

When his mighty voice sounded, “seven thunders uttered their voices”; and when about to record what they said, John was commanded to “seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.” The fact that they were not to be recorded shows that they were to constitute no part of this Revelation. John evidently thought so at first; for they had the appearance of revelation, something clothed with divine authority, but they were not to be delivered to the church. What, then, were they? The most probable supposition is, that they were things that God for some reason did not choose to have revealed. Their sayings may have described events just prior to the end so perfectly as to leave the world in no doubt respecting the nearness of Christ’s second coming; whereas it appears in the Scriptures that God has designed that it should be a matter of considerable uncertainty, especially to the unsaved. However, we can obtain no satisfactory explanation of the things uttered by the seven thunders; for we can not identify positively what John was commanded to “seal up.”

This angel had in his hand a little book that John was required to take and eat. In advancing and taking the book, John himself becomes an actor in the symbolic scene, the same as was the book and the angel from whose hand he took it. Therefore we must now consider John a symbol of something in this vision. Some of the commentators have supposed that this book signified the remainder of the book of Revelation. But John was commanded to *write* the Revelations, not to *eat* them. And if he ate them, how, then, could they constitute the remainder of the book? Its true signification is undoubtedly the word of God. In making such an application we do not necessarily make one book merely a symbol of a larger one, as the Bible is, but of God’s *revealed will*, just the same as the sealed book of chapter V was the symbol of the divine purposes. When we come to explain the resurrection of the witnesses in chapter XI, it will be found that this is the time when the word of God is again taught in all its purity, being restored for the first time, in its perfect sense, since the morning time of this dispensation. A great spiritual famine has for centuries overspread the earth.



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Since the time the black horse of the third seal entered on his career, the people have been starving for spiritual food. The few crumbs that have been dropped during the reign of Protestantism have been eagerly gathered up by the spiritually-minded; but, thank God! the time has now arrived when the messengers appear with food from heaven, and the multitudes of earth's starving millions can "eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord God." Joel 2:26. Halleluiah!

In taking the book from the hand of the angel and eating it, John became a symbol of the church, or people of God, who receive the Word from the hand of his ministers. The sweetness of its taste signifies the eagerness with which people receive it and the gladness experienced when they first partake of the heavenly manna; while the bitterness resulting therefrom probably symbolizes the bitter persecutions and oppositions of which it is the occasion. "Yea, and *all* that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:12.

John was told to "prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings," which signifies that the people of God must again be witnesses of his saving grace throughout all the world. In the beginning of this dispensation all his people prophesied among the nations; for Christ had said unto them, "Ye shall be *witnesses* unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Acts 1:8. So, also, in this evening time we go forth again on the same mission, inspired by the soon-coming of our Savior.

"Even so come, Lord Jesus."

CHAPTER XI.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

3. And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

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



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.

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.

The two principal objects of this vision is the city of Jerusalem with its holy temple and worshipers, and two witnesses prophesying for twelve hundred and sixty days. These are not objects from the natural world; therefore we may conclude that we have not here to do with political events, while the character of the symbols point us with certainty to the history of the church.



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There is a possibility that the speaker here is not the angel of the preceding chapter; for the words in verse 1 “and the angel stood” may be an interpolation, they being found in very few manuscripts. See the Revised Version and the Emphatic Diaglott, Greek and English. If not, then he must be the angel through whom the Revelation was given. Chap. 1:1; 22:8. Whether the angel is the same as the one in the preceding chapter or not, it is evident that that series of prophecy ends with chapter 10, and that he here introduces a new line of events running over the entire gospel dispensation[7], in which John as an active agent in the panoramic vision still stands as a symbol of the people of God, who, in striking contrast with the blind devotees of an apostate church, are commanded to “measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.” The temple with its altar and court and the holy city itself, here used as symbols, are representative of something analagous, and refer to no other than the outward, visible church of God with its doctrines and worshipers. Its measurement is designed to show how far it conforms to the true church; while the rod is a symbol of the revealed will of God, by which the measurement is brought as to a true standard.

[Footnote 7: This statement may seem to conflict with the classification of events in the “Diagram of the Revelation,” where this prophecy is treated, not as an independent series, but as part of a compound series beginning with chapter 8 and ending with chapter 11. For thus classifying it my reason is, that the line of prophecy beginning with chapter 8 introduces the seven trumpets, and therefore the series is not complete until the seventh trumpet is given, which event concludes the line of truth given in the present chapter.]

By noticing briefly the arrangement of the temple and the purposes to which the different apartments were put, we shall be able to understand better the design of this vision. The temple proper consisted of two apartments. In the first stood the altar of incense and other things; in the second, the ark of the covenant, *etc.* The priests officiated in the first apartment regularly, while into the second went the high-priest alone once every year. This, Paul informs us, was a shadow of a greater and more perfect tabernacle. Heb. 9:1-11; 8:2. The altar that is mentioned and that John was to measure is a symbol of the great cardinal doctrine of the church—the atonement and mediation of Christ. He was the sacrifice made for sin, through whom we have redemption and access unto God. John was also told to measure those who worshiped therein—the officiating ministers in the sanctuary—who were thus made symbols of the ministers and the teachers in the church. To measure the temple of God, then, was to ascertain the great doctrines taught in the Scriptures and symbolized by the sanctuary, the altar, and the priests; namely, the doctrines of the New Testament concerning God as the supreme lawgiver, the atonement of Jesus Christ as the only ground for justification, and the ministers whom he appointed to officiate in his church.



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These are the great principles corrupted by the Papacy. Instead of the one supreme God, we find another in the temple of God, “showing himself that *he* is God.” Christ was not recognized as the supreme and only head of the church; but instead the Pope claimed the title of universal head and legislated supreme, while his decrees and anathemas were accepted as from Jehovah himself. Christ was not regarded as the only mediator between God and man, but the virgin Mary and the saints were exalted to share the mediatorial throne, the mother being more honored than the Son. Penance, counting of beads, works of supererogation, were believed to be more effectual in obtaining forgiveness of sin than living faith in our only Redeemer. Finally, in place of the humble ministers of Christ whom he appointed to officiate in his church, there were haughty lords and rulers, making the most extravagant claims to power and authority over the minds and consciences of men. The court of the temple was the space outside of the sanctuary occupied by the congregation while the worship within was conducted by the priests. John was told to leave this out and measure it not; for it was given to the Gentiles to tread under foot, or profane, for the space of forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days. In the estimation of a Jew, the Gentiles were all idolaters and outside of God’s covenant favor. As a symbol, then, we are to understand that the great body of worshipers thus brought to view are not the true children of God at all, but are, as it were, uncircumcised, idolatrous Gentiles, having no connection whatever with the great head of the church and no part in the covenant of his mercy. The whole city of Jerusalem was to be given over to this profane multitude and by them desecrated for forty-two months, denoting that this great company of worshipers was to constitute the visible, external church during the period specified. It is as though the city of Jerusalem were occupied by the idolatrous heathen, and the Jews driven out as aliens. These Gentiles, then, were to constitute the one great (so-called) universal church—the Church of Rome.

Forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty days, are symbolic time, signifying twelve hundred and sixty years, during which time the power of apostasy was to reign supreme over the minds of men. The same period is also referred to frequently in subsequent chapters. It is necessary, then, for us to ascertain at what period of time the church was given over to a profane multitude that was not the true people of God. Some have supposed that this must refer to the time when Popery became fully established. Such, however, could not be the case (although the time-period includes that important event); for the power of apostasy was greatly developed centuries before the final supremacy of the Popes was established, and was necessary in order to prepare the way for their exaltation. The Popes obtained their authority

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by degrees. In A.D. 606 the emperor Phocas conferred the title "Universal Bishop" upon the Pope of Rome. In A.D. 756 the Pope became a temporal sovereign. Yet the power of Papal usurpation did not reach the summit until the reign of the impious Hildebrand, who succeeded to the Popedom in A.D. 1073, under the title of Gregory VII. But according to the symbols before us, we must look for a period not so much when the Popes were enabled to definitely enforce their arrogant claims, as when the ministry became corrupted and when the inhabitants of the city, or the devotees of the visible church, became a profane multitude entirely estranged from the covenant of promise. The usurpations of the ministry that accompanied this great change in the external church have been considered already under the symbols of chapter VI. This mighty transformation to a church containing nothing but uncircumcised Gentiles was fully accomplished during the latter half of the third century, from which date we must look for the true disciples of the Lord as entirely separate from the hierarchy. A few quotations from standard and ecclesiastical histories will show this important epoch in the rise of the Papacy that plunged the world into almost universal apostasy.

"The living church retiring gradually within the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary hearts, an external church was substituted in its place, and all its forms were declared to be of divine appointment. Salvation no longer flowing from the Word, which was henceforward put out of sight, the priests affirmed that it was conveyed by means of the forms they had themselves invented, and that no one could obtain it but by these channels.... The doctrine of the church and the necessity of its visible unity, which had begun to gain ground in the *third century*, favored the pretensions of Rome." D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 1.

"At the end of the third century almost half the inhabitants of the Roman empire, and of several neighboring countries, professed the faith of Christ. About this time endeavors to preserve a unity of belief, and of church discipline, occasioned numberless disputes among those of different opinions, and led to the establishment of an ecclesiastical tyranny." Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge.

Concerning the Roman diocese, the Encyclopaedia Britannica says, "Before the termination of the third century the office was held to be of such importance that its succession was a matter of interest to ecclesiastics living in distant sees." Vol. XIX, p. 488.

"Almost proportionate with the extension of Christianity was the decrease in the church of vital piety. A philosophizing spirit among the higher, and a wild monkish superstition among the lower orders, fast took the place in the third century of the faith and humility of the first Christians. Many of the clergy became very corrupt, and excessively ambitious. In consequence of this there was an awful defection of Christianity." Marsh's Church History, p. 185.

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“We have found it almost necessary to separate, and indeed widely to distinguish the events of the two first, from those of the third century, for nearly at this point we are disposed to place the FIRST CRISIS in the internal history of the church.” Waddington’s Church History.

“This season of external prosperity was improved by the ministers of the church for the exertion of new claims, and the assumption of powers with which they had not been previously invested. At first these claims were modestly urged, and gradually allowed; but they laid a foundation for the encroachments which were afterwards made upon the rights of the whole Christian community, and for lofty pretensions to the right of supremacy and spiritual dominion.... Several alterations in the form of church government appear to have been introduced during the third century. Some degree of pomp was thought necessary.... The external dignity of the ministers of religion was accompanied by a still greater change in its discipline.... Many of the Jewish and Pagan proselytes ... languished in the absence of ceremonies which were naturally adapted to the taste of the unreflecting multitude, while the insolent infidel haughtily insisted upon the inanity of a religion which was not manifested by an external symbol or decoration. In order to accommodate Christianity to these prejudices, a number of rites were instituted; and while the dignified titles of the Jewish priesthood were through a compliance with the prejudices of that people, conferred upon the Christian teachers, many ceremonies were introduced which coincided with the genius of Paganism. The true gospels were taught by sensible images, and many of the ceremonies employed in celebrating the heathen mysteries were observed in the institutions of Christ, which soon in their turn obtained the name of mysteries, and served as a melancholy precedent for future innovations, and as a foundation for that structure of absurdity and superstition which deformed and disgraced the church.” Rutter’s History of the Church, pp. 52-56.

This “season of external prosperity” mentioned by Rutter began with the accession of Gallienus to the imperial throne in A.D. 260. Up to this time the hand of persecution had been raised against the church almost incessantly; but from 260 until the reign of Diocletian persecution almost ceased, during this space of about forty years. But this period also marked the greatest decline in spiritual things and a marvelous development of the hierarchy. Speaking of the bishop of Rome in these times, Dowling says, “He far surpassed all his brethren in the magnificence and splendor of the church over which he presided; in the riches of his revenues and possessions; in the number and variety of his ministers; in his credit with the people; and in his sumptuous and splendid manner of living.” History of Romanism, p. 34.



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Ammianus Marcellinus, a Roman historian, who lived during these times, adverting to this subject, says: "It was no wonder to see those who were ambitious of human greatness, contending with so much heat and animosity for that dignity, because when they had obtained it, they were sure to be enriched by the offerings of the matrons, and of appearing abroad in great splendor, of being admired for their costly coaches, and sumptuous feasts, outdoing sovereign princes in the expenses of their table." This led Proetextatus, a heathen, who was praefect of the city, to say, "Make me bishop of Rome, and I'll be a Christian too!"

Speaking of the period now under consideration, Eusebius, "the father of church history," "mentions one Paul, who was at this time bishop of Antioch; who lived in luxury and licentiousness, and who was a teacher of erroneous doctrines, and usurped so great authority that the people feared to venture to accuse him. In the conclusion of the same chapter in which this is found, he shows that after a general council was held at Antioch, this Paul was excommunicated and robbed of his bishopric by the bishops of Rome and Italy; from this it appears that they possessed an authority still greater than that usurped by Paul." The following are his words: "Paul, therefore, having thus fallen from the episcopate, together with the true faith as already said, Domnus succeeded in administration of the church at Antioch. But Paul being unwilling to leave the building of the church, an appeal was made to the emperor Aurelian, who decided most equitably on the business, ordering the building to be given up to those whom the Christian bishops of Italy and Rome should write." Eccl. History, Book VII, Chap. 30. The Encyclopaedia Britannica says that this council at which Paul was excommunicated was held "probably in the year 268," and that "Paul continued in his office until the year 272, when the city was taken by the emperor Aurelian, who decided in person that the church-building belonged to the bishop who was in epistolary communication with the bishops of Rome and Italy." Vol. XVIII, p. 429.

The above extracts show not only the development of error in the church, but also the great power already obtained by the hierarchy. Geo. Fisher says, "The accession of Constantine [A.D. 312] found the church so firmly organized under the hierarchy that it could not lose its identity by being absolutely merged in the state." History of the Christian Church, p. 99.

In the year A.D. 270 Anthony, an Egyptian, the founder of the monastic institution, fixed his abode in the deserts of Egypt and formed monks into organized bodies. "Influenced by these eminent examples [Anthony, Hilarion, *et al.*] immense multitudes betook themselves to the desert, and innumerable monasteries were fixed in Egypt, Ethiopia, Lybia and Syria. Some of the Egyptian abbots are spoken of as having had five, seven, or even ten thousand monks under their personal



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direction; and the Thebias, as well as certain spots in Arabia, are reported to have been literally crowded with solitaries. Nearly a hundred thousand of all classes, it is said, were at one time to be found in Egypt.... Although the enthusiasm might be at a lower ebb in one country than in another, it *actually affected the church universal*, so far as the extant materials of ecclesiastical history enables us to trace its rise and progress.... The more rigid and heroic of the Christian anchorets dispensed with all clothing except a rug, or a few palm leaves round the loins. Most of them abstained from the use of water for ablution; nor did they usually wash or change the garments they had once put on; thus *St. Anthony* [the founder of this order] bequeathed to Athanasius a skin in which his sacred person had been wrapped for half a century. They also allowed their beards and nails to grow, and sometimes became so hirsute, as to be actually mistaken for hyaenas or bears." Hist. of Romanism, pp. 88, 89. Reader, what was the condition of the so-called church in A.D. 270 that could make the introduction of such abominations possible? Although many more historical quotations on this point might be added, I will conclude with the two following extracts from Joseph Milner.

"We shall, for the present, leave Anthony propagating the monastic dispositions, and extending its influence not only into the next century, but for many ages after, and conclude this view of the state of the *third century*, with expressing our regret that the faith and love of the gospel received toward the close of it a dreadful blow from the encouragement of this unchristian practise." Cen. III, Chap. 20.

"Moral, and philosophical, and monastic instructions will not effect for men what is to be expected from evangelical doctrine. And if the faith of Christ was so much declined (and its decayed state *ought to be dated from about the year 270*), we need not wonder that such scenes as Eusebius hints at without any circumstantial details took place in the Christian world." Cent. IV, Chap. 1.

After reading the foregoing statements of historians, the reader will, I believe, agree with me that the year 270 is a consistent date to mark the time when the visible external church was wholly given over to the profane multitude of uncircumcised, idolatrous Gentiles to tread under foot. Measuring forward the allotted period of twelve hundred and sixty years brings us to the exact date of the first Protestant creed (*the Augsburg Confession*) in A.D. 1530. We must point to this date both for the end of Rome's universal spiritual supremacy and for the rise of Protestantism. D'Aubigne, in his History of the Reformation, when he comes to this period, says: "The conflicts hitherto described have been only partial; we are entering upon a new period, that of general battles. Spires (1529) and Ausburg (1530) are names that shine forth with

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more immortal glory than Marathon, Pavia, or Marengo. Forces that up to the present time were separate, are now uniting into one energetic band.” Book XVIII, Chap. 1. “The first two books of this volume contain the most important epochs of the reformation—the Protest of Spires, and the Confession of Augsburg.... I determined on bringing the reformation of Germany and German Switzerland to the *decisive epochs* of 1530 and 1531. The history of the reformation, properly so called, is then in my opinion almost complete in those countries. The work of faith has there attained its apogee: that of conferences, of interims, of diplomacy begins.... The movement of the sixteenth century has there made its effort. I said from the very first, It is the history of the reformation and not of Protestantism that I am relating.” D’Aubigne, Preface to Vol. V.

The next important object in the vision is the “two witnesses” that prophesied in sackcloth. From the description given, it would appear at first that these witnesses were active intelligent agents; and as such, belonging to the department of human life, they would symbolize the church, the number two denoting the ministry and the people of God. But the church is already symbolized in this chapter, the angel representing the ministry, as in the preceding chapter, and John, who is clearly one of the symbolic agents in this vision, representing the church; therefore the two witnesses must be representative of something else. Since the actions ascribed to them are drawn from the department of human life, it is evident that their interpretation is to be found in connection with the affairs of the church. By way of explanation, verse 4 represents them to be “the two olive-trees, and the two candle-sticks standing before the God of the earth,” although it is not stated that any olive-trees and candle-sticks were shown in this prophetic vision. In this reference is made to the fourth chapter of Zechariah, where two olive-trees are represented as standing one on each side of a golden candle-stick, distilling into it their oil for light. When asked for the signification of the two olive-trees and the candlestick, the angel answered, “This is the *Word* of the Lord ... by my *Spirit*, saith the Lord.” Ver. 6. That the Word of God and the Spirit of God are special witnesses is proved by many texts. Jesus said, “Search the Scriptures ... they are they which *testify* of me.” John 6:39. “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a *witness* unto all nations.” Mat. 24:14. “The Holy Ghost also is a *witness*.” Heb. 10:15. “The Spirit itself beareth *witness*.” Rom. 8:16. “It is the Spirit that beareth *witness*.” 1 John 5:6. It is the Spirit acting in conjunction with the Word of God that gives spiritual life, through regeneration, unto men, and which opens their understanding that they may know the things of God. 2 Cor. 2:9-15.



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God may have given us the explanation that these two witnesses were the same as the olive-trees and the candle-sticks to prevent our being led astray with the supposition that they were actually intelligent agents. (I speak humanly.) Accepting this statement, the actions of these witnesses here described can be explained only by the figure of speech known as Personification, by which it is proper, under certain conditions, to attribute life, action, and intelligence to inanimate objects. Thus, the blood of Abel is said to have cried from the ground. Gen. 4:9, 10. "The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it." Hab. 2:11. "The hire of the laborers ... which is of you kept back by fraud crieth: and the cries ... are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." Jas. 5:4. "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Isa. 55:12. I would not attempt to vary from the general order and explain these two witnesses by the figure of personification, were it not for the fact that the two olive-trees and the two candle-sticks are here given as a means of explanation; and trees and candle-sticks, we know, are not active, intelligent agents, and consequently do not necessarily symbolize such.

To "hurt" the Word and Spirit of God is to oppose, corrupt, or pervert their testimony and to turn people away from them; and the judgments of Heaven are pronounced in that Word and by that Spirit against such as turn away from the truth unto fables. They shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Rev. 20:15; 22:8. It is also said of them: "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." This indicates the fact that these were God's own special witnesses sent in his name and by his authority, as were the prophets of old. Elijah shut up heaven by prayer; Moses called down the plagues upon Egypt; and these were God's attestations that they were his divinely commissioned servants. So these two witnesses had power to shut heaven and to smite the earth with plagues, not literally, but herein is symbolically set forth the fact that they were God's appointed agents, even though despised and rejected, like Elijah in the midst of apostate Israel and Moses amid idolatrous Egypt, yet, like them, with the seal of Heaven upon their ministry.

In the beginning of this dispensation these two witnesses were the vicars of Christ in his church upon earth. The word of God and the Spirit of God were the Governors of his people. At that time they had perfect freedom of action among the children of God; but when the apostasy arose, the governing power of the Word and Spirit of God in the church was gradually usurped by the rising hierarchy, until, finally, men had entire



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authority in what was called the visible church. This was brought about when, to quote Mosheim's words, the bishops grasped the power and authority "to prescribe authoritative rules of faith and manners." D'Aubigne explains it thus: "Salvation no longer flowing from the *Word*, which was henceforward put out of sight, the priests affirmed that it was conveyed by means of the forms they had themselves invented, and that no one could attain it except by these channels.... Christ communicated to the apostles, and these to the bishops, the unction of the *Holy Spirit*; and this Spirit is to be procured only in that order of succession.... Faith in the heart no longer connected the members of the church, and they were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, canons and ceremonies." History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 1. Thus, the Word and Spirit of God as the true vicars of Christ in his church were finally expelled from what was looked upon as the one visible church, and with them the true worshipers also were driven out; and nothing remained in the public view except the great company of profane idolaters already referred to. The same is referred to in a subsequent chapter as the flight of the true church into the wilderness, where, hidden from sight, she had a place prepared of God for twelve hundred and sixty days. So after all, God had a true church during the Dark Ages—a people that stood in opposition to the abounding corruption and iniquity of the church of Rome; a people that rejected the established hierarchy and gave heed to the Word and Spirit of God. But their numbers were so few, comparatively, that the operations of the two witnesses were greatly limited; hence they are represented as being clothed in sackcloth, a symbol of melancholy and mourning.

Among those who opposed the teachings of that apostate church were the Cathari, Poor Men of Lyons, Lombards, Albigenses, Waldenses, Vaudois, *etc.* The name Waldenses and Albigenses have frequently been loosely applied to all the bands of people that passed under various titles in different countries and that opposed the doctrines and ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome. Speaking of the twelfth century, Bowling says: "There existed at that dark period, when 'all the world wondered after the beast,' a numerous body of the disciples of Christ, who took the New Testament for their guidance and direction in all the affairs of religion, rejecting the doctrines and commandments of men. Their appeal was from the decisions of councils, and the authority of popes, cardinals, and prelates, to the law and the testimony—the words of Christ and his holy apostles." History of Romanism, p. 272. Egbert, a monkish writer of that age, speaking of them, says that he had often disputed with these heretics, "a sort of people," he adds, "who are very pernicious to the Catholic faith, which, like moths, they corrupt and destroy. They are armed," says he, "*with the words of Scripture* which in any way seem to favor their sentiments, and with these they know how to defend their errors, and to oppose the Catholic truth. They are increased to great multitudes throughout all countries, to the great danger of the church [of Rome]."



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For lack of space, an extensive history of these interesting people can not be given; but a few references to them by their most inveterate enemies, the Papists themselves, are of such importance that I can not pass them by unnoticed. The testimony given by Evervinus, a zealous Catholic, in a letter he wrote to the celebrated Bernard, at the beginning of the twelfth century, relative to the doctrine and manners of these so-called *heretics*, is exceedingly valuable. Says he: "There have lately been some heretics discovered among us, near Colonge [sic: Cologne], of whom some have, with satisfaction returned again to the church. One that was a bishop among them, and his companions, openly opposed us, in the assembly of the clergy and laity, the lord-archbishop himself being present, with many of the nobility, maintaining their heresy from *the words of Christ and his apostles*. But, finding that they made no impression, they desired that a day might be fixed, upon which they might bring along with them men skilful in their faith, promising to return to the church, provided their teachers were unable to answer their opponents; but that otherwise, they would rather die than depart from their judgment.

"Upon this declaration, having been admonished to repent, and three days allowed them for that purpose, they were seized by the people, in their excess of zeal, *and committed to the flames!* and, what is most astonishing, they came to the stake and endured the torment not only with patience, but even with joy. In this case, O holy father, were I present with you, I should be glad to ask you, how these members of Satan could persist in their heresy with such constancy and courage as is rarely to be found among the most religious in the faith of Christ?"

He then proceeds: "Their heresy is this: They say that the church (of Christ) is only among themselves, because they alone follow the ways of Christ, and imitate the apostles, not seeking secular gains.... Whereas they say to us, 'Ye join house to house, and field to field, seeking the things of this world.'... They represent themselves as the poor of Christ's flock, who have no certain abode, fleeing from one city to another, like sheep in the midst of wolves, enduring persecution with the apostles and martyrs: though strict in their manner of life—*abstemious, laborious, devoted, and holy* ... living as men who are not of the world. But you, say they, lovers of the world, have peace with the world, because ye are in it. False apostles, who adulterate the word of God, seeking their own things, have misled you and your ancestors. Whereas, we and our fathers, having been born and brought up in the apostolic doctrine, have continued in the grace of Christ, and shall continue so to the end.... They affirm that the apostolic dignity is corrupted by indulging itself in secular affairs, while it sits [professedly] in St Peter's chair. They do not hold with the baptism of infants,



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alleging that passage of the gospel, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' They place no confidence in the intercession of saints and all things observed in the church, which have not been established by Christ himself, or his apostles, they pronounce to be superstitious. They do not admit of any purgatory fire after death, contending, that the souls of men, as soon as they depart out of the bodies, do enter into rest or punishment ... by which means they make void all the prayers and oblations of the faithful for the deceased.... I must inform you also, that those of them who have returned to our church, tell us that they had great numbers of their persuasion, scattered almost everywhere.... And as for those who were burnt, they, in defense they made of themselves, told us that this heresy had been *concealed from the time of the martyrs* [by which is meant the early period of Christianity] and that it had existed in Greece and other countries."

Although Bernard began a strenuous opposition to these people, still he testifies: "If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christian-like; and if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless, and what they speak they make good by their actions.... As to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, does violence to no man. He fasts much and eats not the bread of idleness; but works with his hands for his support."

Claudius, archbishop of Turin, who joined in hunting and persecuting them to the death, writes, "Their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians." Again, "In their lives they are perfect, irreproachable, and without reproach among men, addicting themselves with all their might to the service of God."

The sum and substance of their offense is mentioned by Cassini, a Franciscan friar, where he says, "That ALL THE ERRORS of these Waldenses consisted in this, that they denied the church of Rome to be the holy mother church, and *would not obey her traditions.*"

In conclusion I quote from the celebrated Roman Catholic historian Thuanus. He states their tenets as follows: "That the church of Rome, because it renounced the true faith of Christ, WAS THE WHORE OF BABYLON ... that consequently *no obedience was to be paid to the Pope*, or to the bishops who maintain her errors; that a monastic life was the sink and dungeon of the church, the vows of which [relating to celibacy] were vain ... that the orders of the priesthood were marks of the great beast mentioned in the Apocalypse; that the fire of purgatory, the solemn mass, the consecration days of churches, the worship of saints, and propitiations for the dead, were the devices of Satan." Lib. VI, Sec. 16, Lib. XXVII. The chief offense of these so-called heretics seems to have been that they denounced the Pope as "Antichrist" and the apostate church of Rome as "the Babylonish harlot."



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7. And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.
8. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.
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.
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.
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.
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.

At the expiration of the twelve hundred and sixty years the scene changes. The prophecy of the witnesses in their sackcloth state, hidden away from sight in the wilderness, ends, and they are now brought out into public view—but only to be killed. Their slaughter takes place at the hands of the beast. When we come to consider chapter XIII, we shall see that the Papacy is described as a beast reigning for forty-two months, or twelve hundred and sixty years, after which time another beast possessing great power and authority appears on the scene. This second beast is Protestantism, and through it the murder of the two witnesses at the close of the Papal supremacy in the vision before us was effected.

It would seem, by the similarity of statement that the beast “ascendeth out of the bottomless pit,” that the slaughter of the witnesses was effected by the Papal beast (chap. 17:7, 8); but the Mohammedan delusion also is said to have proceeded from “the bottomless pit.” Chap. 9:1, 2. The expression *bottomless pit* is doubtless used merely to signify the source of certain powers in contradistinction to the heavenly source from which others proceeded. Although the Papal beast is said to have originated in the bottomless pit, the second beast also doubtless proceeded from the same source, for he possessed many of the characteristics of the former, and caused the earth to worship the first beast, as explained in chapter 13. That he was not of heavenly origin is shown by the statement that he came up “out of the earth.” Chap. 13:11. But the



direct proof that it was the Protestant beast, and not the Papal beast—although the same expression as to its origin is used concerning it—that slew the two witnesses, is found in the fact that the reign of the first, or Papal, beast was limited to forty two months (chap. 13:5), corresponding to the twelve hundred and sixty years in which the witnesses prophesied in the vision before us; while it was after the *close* of this period, at the time when the second, or Protestant, beast arose (chap. 13:11), that the witnesses were slain.



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To many this may seem a hard saying; but I request that the matter be given the most careful attention in the light of prophecy and divine truth. It is true that the Sixteenth Century Reformation at first brought the witnesses out of the wilderness of seclusion where they had remained during the long night of Romanism and exhibited them to the public view; but when thus placed upon exhibition, they were soon robbed entirely of their position as the Vicars, or Governors, of God's church. Since creed and sect-making first began, the Word and Spirit have not possessed governing power and authority in Protestantism; but men have usurped that place and prescribed authoritative rules of faith and practise for the people. The principles of Higher Criticism have so far pervaded the realm of sectarian theology that a vast number of the clergy no longer regard the Bible as the inspired word of God to man, but simply as a remarkable piece of religious literature recording the natural development of the religious consciousness among a peculiarly sensitive race of people. Protestantism certainly has placed the Bible on the dissecting table and dismembered it in a manner wholly unknown before. While Protestants will not for a moment allow the blessed Book to be hidden out of sight—put “into graves”—still they will not grant it that place it should occupy as the sole discipline of faith, so it is a dead letter to them. That all-glorious doctrine of Bible *unity*, which fills the whole New Testament, strikes a deathblow to all the carnal divisions and institutions of sectarianism; and so with one accord they unite in *fighting it*. “Oh, the good old blessed Bible! we could not do without it,” say they; yet, as everybody knows, they are governed by the discipline and laws that they or their representatives have formulated. Thus, the Word and Spirit of God are brought under the public gaze, only to be treated with such indignity in God's sight, and killed; while infidels look on, and tauntingly remark, “Either the religion of to-day is no Christianity, or the Word of God is a lie.”

In the beginning of this dispensation the church of God not only consisted of all those who were spiritual, but constituted a visible, organic body as well, made up of numerous local congregations that were separate in the management of their internal affairs, yet interrelated with each other, and were directed by humble pastors, who were, in reference to each other, *equal*. The Word of God was their only discipline, and the Spirit of God, their great Teacher and Guide. Thus, the two witnesses were active in their official position, in the public view, as the Vicars or Governors of the church of God on earth. When, however, men usurped the place of these Vicars by ignoring the Spirit and rejecting the Word and making their own rules of faith, the effect was a national hierarchy—the church of Rome, which for twelve hundred and sixty years stood in the public view. Yet the two witnesses were still alive, though driven into obscurity and “clothed in sackcloth”; for they still acted in their official position in the congregations of the medieval Christians already referred to, who resisted the doctrines of men and clung tenaciously to the simple, primitive form of church government and allowed the Spirit and Word authority supreme.



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But during the Protestant era Christians the world over became identified with the various sects, hence were representing to the world the beast power instead of the true church. Thus, during the Protestant period, the church of God, *in its organic form*, was not represented anywhere on earth; for its members were scattered among those who were “worshiping the beast and his image.” Hence the two witnesses, during this era, had no place to operate in their official capacity as the Governors of God’s church and are therefore represented as slain. The government of Protestant sects is not effected by the Word and Spirit; for the institutions themselves are of human origin, and men are their law-makers and governors.

When the two witnesses are deprived of their governing power and the rules and disciplines of men substituted in their place, a decline into worldliness is the invariable result. This has been the case repeatedly in sectarianism. In fact, Protestantism, as a component part of that great city Babylon, has so given herself over to “revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries,” that a voice from heaven has declared her to be “the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” Chap. 18:2. Witness the shows, festivals, frolics, grab-bag parties, kissing bees, cake-walk lotteries, and other abominations unnumbered, that are carried on without shame, under the guise of religion, in the high places of this modern Babylon! If the Word of God with the full power and authority of his Spirit could be turned in upon them, it would be like the torment of fire; but no, it is dead to them, and they rejoice and make merry and continue in “the same excess of riot.”

In the description before us, this city of sectarianism in which the two witnesses are slain is “spiritually [or mystically] called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.” It is a mystical Sodom, Egypt and Jerusalem—a Sodom for wickedness and lewdness, an Egypt for the captivity and oppression of God’s people, and a Jerusalem for the crucifying of the Son of God afresh and putting him to an open shame. Thus, this city mystically combines the wickedness of the three most wicked places on earth—Sodom, Egypt, and Jerusalem. These facts we shall notice more particularly hereafter.

But these two witnesses were not always to remain trampled under foot in the streets of great Babylon; for a time came when “the spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.” In this is portrayed the reformation which is now taking place in the world. About the year A.D. 1880 God began to raise up holy men and women whom he commissioned to preach the everlasting gospel of the kingdom again; and they went forth in his name calling upon God’s people everywhere to come “out of all places where they had been scattered



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in the cloudy and dark day” (Ezek. 34:12) and to take up their abode in the one true church of Jesus Christ, his body, independent of all sectarianism and the creeds and disciplines of men. In this assembly of the faithful, gathered out of all nations, no man nor set of men attempts to form laws or regulations for the supervision of spiritual affairs; but with one consent they humbly bow before the only true Lawgiver (Jas. 4:12), and say, “The government shall be upon his shoulder” (Isa. 9:6); and the Word and Spirit of God have perfect control of his saints. Halleluiah! They can preach, teach, and believe every word of truth placed in the Sacred Volume, without a conference or discipline of men forbidding. Standing upon this apostolic platform of eternal truth, they hurl the thunders of divine judgment against the hidden works of darkness, causing the graceless devotees of fallen Babylon to quake with fear and to “gnaw their tongues for pain.”

After the resurrection of these witnesses, a voice from heaven is heard, saying, “Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.” This ascension to heaven in the presence of their enemies, which according to this chapter occurred before the end of time, has reference undoubtedly to their great exaltation. “Thy greatness is grown, and *reacheth unto heaven.*” Dan. 4:22. We see that in this text a similar expression signifies great exaltation. So this work is destined to assume such proportions that the people of earth may have the privilege of seeing the truth. In the preceding chapter John, as a symbol of the church at this time, under the living ministry symbolized by the rain-bow angel, was told that he “must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.” Verse 11.

The signification of the time-period of three days and a half claims our attention next. According to the foregoing explanation, it will be seen that the writer applies it as three centuries and a half, or three hundred and fifty years—from A.D. 1530 to A.D. 1880. It will be necessary to adduce strong reasons for thus applying it. In the first place, the time-prophecies of the Bible are by no means confined to the year-day manner of interpretation. Many times in the Old Testament the expression occurs, “And it shall come to pass *in that day,*” which expression is admitted by all to have reference to the gospel day, or the entire gospel dispensation. When the church of Philadelphia was promised deliverance from the *hour* of temptation which was to come upon all the world (chap. 3:10), no one supposes that a short period of only one week is specified. The rulers of the ten kingdoms were to “receive power as kings *one hour* with the beast” (chap. 17:12), which expression will be shown later to really cover many years. We might point out many such exceptions were it necessary.



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Again, it was the beast that came up at the expiration of the twelve hundred and sixty years, or Protestantism, that slaughtered the witnesses, and we could not expect their resurrection during the reign of Protestantism, which every one will admit was longer than three and one-half years, according to the year-day application. The events as they have developed prove that it was just three and one-half centuries before Protestantism was entirely ignored and the Spirit and Word recognized as the sole Governors in the church of God. Besides, the general trend of events following the formation of Protestantism naturally divide the succeeding centuries into separate periods. The first (sixteenth) was a fierce conflict for the establishment of Protestantism; the second (seventeenth) was a violent reaction, wherein the church of Rome nearly triumphed over her hated opposers; while the third (eighteenth) is specially noted in history as the period of infidelity or reason. This division of time was so noticeable that D'Aubigne, who wrote about A.D. 1835, in his famous History of the Reformation, refers to it in the following remarkable language: "It has been said that the three last centuries, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth, may be conceived as an immense battle of *three days'* duration. We willingly adopt this beautiful comparison.... The first day was the battle of God, the second the battle of the priest, the third the battle of Reason. What will be the fourth? [1830-1930] In our opinion, the confused strife, the deadly contest of all these powers together, TO END IN THE VICTORY OF HIM TO WHOM TRIUMPH BELONGS." Book XI, Chap. 9.

The writer is thankful to God that he is permitted to see the fourth day ending "in the victory of Him to whom triumph belongs." And may we, my brethren, be grateful to our dear Lord that it is our privilege to have part in this glorious reformation of divine truth that is now sweeping over the world and gathering the elect together for the soon-coming of the Savior.

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.

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

At the time the witnesses reach their greatest exaltation, a great earthquake takes place upon earth, and the tenth part of the city falls. The nature of the symbol would point us to some political upheaval. Since the great city of Babylon is composed of different divisions (as will be seen hereafter), it is a matter of doubt as to which part of the city is here referred to; but most probably that of the hierarchy as embraced in one of the ten divisions or kingdoms. Since the fulfilment of this prediction is yet future, I speak with hesitation and wait for the event to make all clear. It is probable, however, that either in this political revolution, or about that time, the Ottoman power will be overthrown; for immediately the announcement is made, "The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly."



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15. And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17. Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

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. 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 seventh angel that here sounded is the third woe-angel, and according to the description before us, ushers in the general judgment. When the temple of God was opened that this mighty event might take place on earth, there were “lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.” Wondrous commotions took place in the world, for kingdoms and empires were all overthrown, and Jesus Christ was the only king remaining, and his mission was to raise the dead that they might be judged, to give reward to the prophets and saints, and to banish with everlasting destruction those that corrupted the earth. The description itself is too plain to need further comment.

“The temple of God” that was opened in heaven is to be understood as symbolical (as explained in chap. 6:9), and not literal. In other words, the heavenly world appeared to John symbolized after the sanctuary of the temple on earth. Chap. 15:5-8; 16:1, 7, 17, *etc.* This is proved clearly by the fact that, when the real heaven, the future home of the redeemed, is described, John says, “I saw *no temple* therein.” Chap. 21:22.

Before dismissing the visions of this chapter, I wish to call attention to one more point hitherto referred to—that of parallelism and contrast. While we have the history of the church apostate described by the treading down of the holy city, we have also, in immediate contrast and running parallel therewith, a history of the true church existing during the same period of twelve hundred and sixty years, although it was in a sackcloth state. And while the reign of Protestantism is described as a period during which the two witnesses were in one sense dead, we have in immediate contrast a history of the last great reformation, in which the spirit of life from God again enters these same witnesses, and they stand upright on their feet, to the consternation of all their adversaries. Amen.



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CHAPTER XII.

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

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

3. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of Heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

6. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

The three principal objects of this vision are the woman clothed with the sun, the man-child born of her, and a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns. These, being drawn from nature and human life, would point us both to the church and to the state for their fulfilment. The symbols, also, are living agents, and we should expect the objects they represent to be such.

This woman is an appropriate symbol of the church of God, which is composed of living, intelligent beings; and that it is the true and not an apostate one, is shown by the fact that upon her flight into the wilderness she had a place prepared of God where she was nourished for twelve hundred and sixty days. In a subsequent portion of the Apocalypse a vile harlot is taken as the representative of the church apostate. In this way a proper correspondence of character and quality is kept up. This woman appeared, not in the temple above, but in the firmament of heaven, where she was clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. Thus the brightest luminaries of heaven were gathered around her. Arrayed in this splendid manner, she is easily distinguished from an apostate church, which would not be so highly favored with such attire in this exalted position. Doubtless the objects with which she is adorned have some special signification. The moon is a fit symbol of the old covenant, above which the church had just risen, only to be clothed in the superior brightness and glory



of the new covenant. And as the moon shines only with a borrowed light, obtaining its illumination from the sun; so, also, the old covenant was only a shadow of the good things to come and now stands eclipsed in the brightness and transcendent glory of that new and better dispensation. According to the explanation given of the seven stars in the right hand of Jesus (chap. 1:19), we are authorized to regard stars as a symbol of Christian ministers, and the twelve that appear most prominently in the first history of the church are the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

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The dragon, a beast from the natural world, would properly symbolize a tyrannical, persecuting government. This was a red dragon with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. In the following chapter we read that John saw a beast rising up out of the sea with the same number of heads and horns, but ten crowns on his horns. And the dragon gave him (the beast) “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Verse 2. So far as the heads and horns are concerned, the only difference between the two is that the crowns—a symbol of supreme authority and power—have been transferred from the heads to the horns. In chapter 17 John saw the same beast again and there received the following explanation of the seven heads: “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.” Verse 10. Concerning the horns he was told, “The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet.” Verse 12. With this explanation before us it will be easy to identify the dragon of chapter 12 and the beast of chapters 13 and 17 as the Roman empire, the first under the Pagan and the second under the Papal form. The seven heads signify the seven distinct forms of supreme government that ruled successively in the empire. The five that had already fallen when John received the vision were the Regal power, the Consular, the Decemvirate, the Military Tribunes and the Triumvirate. “One is”—the Imperial.[8] The identification of its seventh and last head we shall leave until later. The ten horns, or kingdoms, which had not yet arisen when the Revelation was given, were the ten minor kingdoms that grew out of the Western Roman empire during its decline and fall. The historian Machiari, in giving an account of these nations, and without any reference to the Bible or its prophecies, reckons ten kingdoms, as follows:

1. The Ostrogoths in Maesia; 2. The Visigoths in Pannonia; 3. Sueves and Alans in Gascoigne and Spain; 4. Vandals in Africa; 5. Franks in France; 6. Burgundians in Burgundy; 7. Heruli and Turings in Italy; 8. Saxons and Anglis in Britain; 9. Huns in Hungary; 10. Lombards, at first on the Danube, and afterwards in Italy.

[Footnote 8: The fact that commentators and historians differ in their enumeration of the forms of government that ruled in Rome is often a source of confusion to ordinary readers. Hence an explanation is necessary. Rome was first ruled by kings, and therefore the first form of government is designated by either the term *Kings* or the term *Regal Power*. Upon the expulsion of the kings and the formation of the republic, the royal power was entrusted to two men who held it for a year, and were called *consuls*. In times of great public danger the consuls were superseded by a special officer called a *dictator*, who had supreme power. As the early life of the republic was often threatened

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with grave dangers, Rome was often governed by a dictator; hence this form of government is sometimes called the Dictatorship. The third form was the *Decemviri*, a government by ten men, who compiled the twelve famous Tables of Laws. In 444 B.C. another change was made by the appointment of *Military Tribunes* (whose numbers varied) with consular power. These were frequently called *Consuls*. The fifth form was the *Triumvirate*, a government by three men. The sixth was the *Imperial*. Hence the different forms can be enumerated thus: 1. The Regal Power, or Kings. 2. Consula or Dictators. 3. Decemvirate. 4. Military Tribunes, Tribunes, or Consuls. 5. Triumvirate. 6. Imperial. The seventh form will be considered in another place. See remarks on chap. 17:7-11.]

Other historians agree substantially with this. These kingdoms all arose within one hundred and seventy years. The dragon is described with the horns, although they were not now in existence and did not arise until nearly the time when the dragon became the beast; likewise, he is represented with seven heads, although he really possessed only one head at a time, and five had already fallen and one being yet to come. He is described with all the heads and horns he ever had or was to have.

The tail of this dragon “drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.” Some people who have never learned the nature of symbolic language try to imagine such a literal creature as the one here described and picture in their minds what an awful thing it would be to see the third part of the stars falling to the earth. But real stars that are fixed or planetary never fall, and if they did, they would be as apt to fall in an opposite direction as toward the earth. Besides, if one should come tumbling down here, it would knock this world into oblivion. But with a knowledge of the proper use of symbols we can easily identify this dragon with the Roman empire under its Pagan form; and the casting down of the stars, which were doubtless used as symbols of ministers as in verse 1, signifies the warfare which this awful beast power waged against the church of God, in which her ministers were always a shining mark for the first persecution and suffered terribly for the cause they represented.

The man-child is the next object that claims our attention. Some have supposed that it represented Jesus Christ in his first advent to the world. But this could not be; for Christ is never represented as being the offspring of the church, but, on the other hand, is declared to be its originator. Some, also, have supposed that it represented the church bringing forth Christ to the world in a spiritual sense. This, however, would be in direct conflict with the known laws of symbolic language. A visible, living, intelligent agent, such as this man-child evidently was, could not be the symbol of an invisible spiritual presence. Besides, it has been clearly shown that Christ always appears in his own person, unrepresented by another, from the fact that he can not be symbolized. It is clear that this child can not signify a single definite personage; for after he is caught up to God, there is still a remnant of the woman’s seed left upon earth. See verse 17.



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What, then, does the man-child signify? It symbolizes the mighty host of new converts or children that the early church by her earnest travail brought forth. The seeming incongruity that the church, or mother, and her children are alike only serves to establish the point in question when rightly understood. A child is of the same substance as its mother and is designed to perpetuate the race. So, also, the new-born babes in the church are just the same spiritually as those who are older, and are intended to perpetuate the church of God on earth. But this explanation of itself is not sufficient to entirely satisfy an inquiring mind, and the question is sure to be asked, Why was it necessary that the church of God in this dispensation should be represented by two individuals—a woman and her son? I also will ask a question—Why, on the other hand, was it necessary that the great apostasy of this dispensation should be represented by the double-figure of a woman and her daughters? The answer to the latter question would readily be given—to symbolize two distinct phases of apostasy. So, also, it was necessary that a double-symbol, such as a woman and her son, should be chosen to set forth *two phases* of the church brought to view in this chapter. If but a single symbol were used, how could the church be thereby represented as continuing on earth and fleeing into the wilderness and at the same time be represented as “overcome,” persecuted to the death, and “caught up unto God and to his throne”? This double-phase of the church—the experience of the saints on earth and the reign of the martyrs in Paradise—will be made very clear to the reader hereafter. But it would be impossible to set forth these two phases under one symbol, and therefore two are chosen.

There is also direct Scripture testimony on this point. “Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a *man-child*. Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” Isa. 66:7, 8. According to Heb. 12:22, 23, this Zion, or Sion, referred to is the New Testament church, and the man-child that she is said to bring forth is interpreted by Isaiah as “a nation born at once.” Such language perfectly describes the rapid increase in the Christian church on Pentecost and shortly afterward, when thousands were added in one day. According to the apostle Paul, the host of Jews and Gentiles reconciled unto God through Jesus Christ constituted “one new man” in Christ. Eph. 2:15. See also Gal. 3:28. R.V. This man-child was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. For an explanation of this rule see remarks on chapter 2:26, 27. The twelve hundred and sixty days will be referred to later.

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



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8. And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

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

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

14. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon east out of his mouth.

17. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

In this vision we have a series of events covering exactly the same period of time as that of the preceeding one; namely, a history of the church up to and including her flight into the wilderness, and of the same opposing dragon. In this description, however, the events are more perfectly detailed.

Because this dragon was called the Devil and Satan, many have been led into the idea that it signified the Prince of darkness himself. But surely we could not suppose that



Beelzebub has any such appearance as this dragon. The foregoing explanation concerning his heads and horns shows conclusively that the Pagan Roman empire is meant, and not Beelzebub. Why, then, was it called the Devil and Satan? Among the Hebrews the term *Satan* was frequently used in a very liberal sense and applied to different objects, signifying merely an adversary or opposer. According to Young's Analytical Concordance the Hebrew word for Satan is translated *adversary* in a number of texts, a few of which I will refer to. Num. 22:22: "And the angel of the Lord stood



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in the way for an *adversary* [Satan, Heb.] against him.” Here an angel of the Lord is called a Satan to Balaam. In 1 Sam. 29:4 David is called an adversary (Heb. Satan) to the Philistines. In 2 Sam. 19:22 certain opposers are said to be adversaries (Satans, Heb.) unto David; while in 1 Kings 11:25 a certain man was said to be an adversary (Satan) to Israel all the days of Solomon. A number of other instances could be given if necessary. In the New Testament, also, the term *Satan* is sometimes used to signify merely an opposer. “But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan.” Mat. 16:23. In 1 Cor. 10:20 Paul declares “that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to *devils*.” Paganism stood as the great opposer of Christianity, hence was a Satan (adversary) unto it; while the apostle denominated its religious rites as devil-worship. I do not question the fact that the spirit of Beelzebub was manifested in the thing; but the dragon itself was the empire, as is proved by the heads and the horns. However, the Devil and the agency through which he works are often used interchangeably. Satan and the serpent in Eden stand in the same relation as do Satan, or Beelzebub, and Paganism in the New Testament; hence to bind Paganism was to bind the Devil and Satan in one important sense.

The dragon would be a beast from the natural world (if such a creature actually existed) and as such could represent nothing more than a civil empire; but in the vision under consideration he is represented as accompanied by *angels* actuated by his spirit and defending his cause. By this combination of symbols is set forth the politico-religious system of the empire—a religion that denied the doctrine of the one exclusive God and the divinity of Jesus Christ. It was the religion of *infidelity*. It was the dragon as a false religious system that Christianity attacked, and not the State itself. The following quotation from Butler’s Ecclesiastical History will show the relation of Christians to the empire:

“The Romans were accustomed to tolerate all new religions if they took their place by the side of those already existing, and if they did not cast reproach upon them.... But Christianity, by its very nature exclusive in its claims ... was offensive to the Romans and to the State. A religion which cast contempt upon the religions and rites sanctioned by the laws, and endeavored to draw men away from them, seemed to express thereby contempt and hostility for the State itself. Hence Christianity was branded as a malignant superstition, and Christians spoken of as the enemies of the human race.... From the letter of Pliny to Trajan, it was evidently recorded as an *religio illicita*, and the mere fact of being a Christian was counted of itself a crime.... The exclusiveness of Christianity seemed also to place its disciples in a position of direct disloyalty to the emperors and the State. ’The emperor



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was ex-officio *Pontifex Maximus*; the gods were national. Cicero declares as a principle of legislation, that no one should be allowed to worship foreign gods, unless they were recognized by public statute. Maecenas thus counselled Augustus: Honor the gods according to the customs of your ancestors, and compel others to worship them. Hate and punish those who bring in strange gods.' As the Roman empire was founded on the absolutism of the State, and made nothing of personal rights, Christianity, which first taught and acknowledged them, would be peculiarly offensive to the State. Moreover, the conscientious refusal of Christians to pay divine honor to the emperor and his statutes, and to take part in idolatrous ceremonies at public festivals ... and their constant assembling themselves together, brought them under the suspicion and obloquy of the emperors and the people." Pp. 49, 50.

The dragon was stationed in the same heaven where the woman appeared. This signifies his exalted position in the world. While the dragon was in the height of his power and glory, Michael (Jesus Christ—Jude 9; 1 Thes. 4:16; John 5:28) and his followers appeared on the scene, and a fierce battle for supremacy ensued, resulting in the final victory of the hosts of Michael. That it was against the dragon as a religious system that the Christians fought is proved by the kind of weapons they employed. "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." Christianity never sought to overturn the civil empire, but did with all the power of truth oppose the huge system of error sustained by it and gained such decisive victories that the cry was heard, "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." The Devil himself suffered a severe defeat when his favorite agents, the dragon and his followers, were cast down from their lofty position and Christianity was exalted instead. Says Butler: "The final victory of Christianity over heathenism and Judaism, and the mightiest empire of the ancient world, a victory gained without physical force, by the moral power of faith and perseverance, of faith and love, is one of the sublimest spectacles of history, and one of the strongest evidences of the divinity and indestructible life of our holy religion." P. 40.

But the fact that many Christians lost their lives in this conflict (verse 11), insomuch that the man-child is represented as being caught up unto God (verse 5), shows that the dragon employed also the arm of civil power in his opposition to the growing truth. The rapid increase of Christianity, despite the violent opposition and persecution of the Pagan party, can be no better represented than by a quotation from the notable Apology of Tertullian, who wrote during the persecution by Septimus Severus, about the end of the second century.



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“Rulers of the Roman Empire,” he begins, “you surely can not forbid the Truth to reach you by the secret pathway of a noiseless book. She knows that she is but a sojourner on the earth, and as a stranger finds enemies; and more, her origin, her dwelling-place, her hope, her rewards, her honors, are above. One thing, meanwhile, she anxiously desires of earthly rulers—not to be condemned unknown. What harm can it do to give her a hearing?... The outcry is that the State is filled with Christians; that they are in the fields, in the citadels, in the islands. The lament is, as for some calamity, that both sexes, every age and condition, even high rank, are passing over to the Christian faith.

“The outcry is a confession and an argument for our cause; for we are a people of yesterday, and yet we have filled every place belonging to you—cities, islands, castles, towns, assemblies, your very camp, your tribes, companies, palace, senate, forum. We leave to you your temples alone. We can count your armies: our numbers in a single province will be greater. We have it in our power, without arms and without rebellion, to fight against you with the weapon of a simple divorce. We can leave you to wage your wars alone. If such a multitude should withdraw into some remote corner of the world you would doubtless tremble at your own solitude, and ask, ‘Of whom are we the governors?’

“It is a human right that every man should worship according to his own convictions ... a forced religion is no religion at all.... Men say that the Christians are the cause of every public disaster. If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not rise over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there be an earthquake, if a famine or pestilence, straightway they cry, Away with the Christians to the lion.... But go zealously on, ye good governors, you will stand higher with the people if you kill us, torture us, condemn us, grind us to the dust; your injustice is the proof that we are innocent. God permits us to suffer. Your cruelty avails you nothing.... The oftener you mow us down the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed. What you call our obstinacy is an instructor. For who that sees it does not inquire for what we suffer? Who that inquires does not embrace our doctrines? Who that embraces them is not ready to give his blood for the fulness of God’s grace?”

Another writer has said: “The church in this period appears poor in earthly possessions and honors, but rich in heavenly grace, in world-conquering faith and love and hope; unpopular, even outlawed, hated and persecuted, yet far more vigorous and expansive than the philosophies of Greece, or the empire of Rome; composed chiefly of persons of the lower social ranks, yet attracting the noblest and deepest minds of the age, and bearing in her bosom the hope of the world; conquering by apparent defeat and growing on the blood of her martyrs; great in deeds, greater in sufferings, greatest in death for the honor of Christ and the benefit of generations to come.”



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This triumph of early Christianity over Paganism was a theme worthy of the song. “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.” Even before the death of the apostles, according to the younger Pliny, the temples of the gods in Asia Minor were almost forsaken. No wonder, then, that even the inhabitants of heaven were called upon to rejoice at so great a victory attained by the followers of the Lamb. But the same voice also says, “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.” This represents the violence of the Pagan party upon its defeat, being exasperated to the exercise of greater opposition and cruelty wherever the means and the power were still in their hands. Cast down from his exalted position in the heavens—the religious sphere—his ecclesiastical prestige lost, he had no place to abide but in the earth—the political kingdom—whence he took up arms, and “woe to the inhabitants of the earth.” But “the days of Paganism in the empire were numbered.” The Devil knew that he had but a short time, therefore he came down in great wrath. This is in accordance with the facts of history. Paganism did not die an easy death, but struggled hard and long.

When cast from his high position, however, the dragon “persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.” The true idea expressed in the original is that he *pursued* the woman, and this signification is indicated by what follows—“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.” The *time* as a definite period signifies one year; hence a time, times, and half a time would be three and one-half years, or twelve hundred and sixty days, as before explained. There is an apparent incongruity or contradiction of statement in reference to the symbols here; but it is a contradiction that when rightly understood throws light upon the whole subject. It will be noticed that the woman and Michael with his angels symbolize the same object—the people of God. Under the latter figure they were triumphant and the dragon was defeated. Yet after he was cast down, he turned upon the woman and pursued her, and thus, the church appeared to be the defeated party. According to this, then, the Pagan party is represented as *prevailing* soon after he met *defeat* and the church apparently *defeated* soon after her period of *triumph*. Here again we have two separate symbols of the same object in order to represent two of its different phases.



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This is explained satisfactorily by noticing carefully the facts. The woman, who is always the true church composed of holy people, was at first identical with the visible church, or the great body of Christians, and in this condition was successful in spreading the pure gospel and casting down the powers of iniquity symbolized by the dragon. But the dragon politically, as symbolized by his being a beast from the natural world, with heads and horns, remained in power for some time, his religious prestige only being lost. Christianity did not attempt to cast down the dragon in the sense of destroying the civil empire. As is well known, a great spiritual declension followed the period of the church's greatest triumph, which decline drove the woman, or the true church, into the wilderness; hence to all appearances the church became a defeated party. About this same time, the dying cause of Paganism revived for a season in terrible severity in the latter part of the third century; hence to all appearances the dragon was triumphant. This supreme effort of Paganism's to regain its former position will be better understood in connection with what follows regarding the flood which he cast out of his mouth. But that the dragon was not permanently triumphant is shown by the fact that he afterwards resigned his power and position unto the beast. Chap. 13:2.

As to the meaning of the "two wings of a great eagle" given the woman to aid her in her flight, I am not able to say positively. Some apply them to "the grace and providence of God which watched over the church"; others to the "spiritual gifts of faith, love," etc., which, like supporting wings, bore the church above her enemies. But I can not see how the wings of a great eagle can properly symbolize such things. They are not drawn from the right source. Perhaps nothing more is intended by the wings than to denote the fact of her successful flight. That this idea is the correct one seems quite clear when we consider the fact that the remarkable deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage is set forth under the same figure, that of eagles' wings. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how *I bare you on eagles' wings*, and brought you unto myself." Ex. 19:4. With the wings of such a powerful bird she was able to escape, so that the dragon could not overtake her.

"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. 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." Here is a peculiar combination of symbols from different departments—the serpent, a flood of water, the woman, and the earth. The last two as allies is a very unusual circumstance. Some refer the flood of waters to heresies that arose in, or was connected with, the hierarchy about this time; but in that case how could it be said that it



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was the serpent that cast it out? Others apply it to errors that the Pagan party introduced baptized with the name of Christianity, when they professed to become converts at a later period. It is certainly an appropriate *figure of speech* to say a flood of error or of false doctrine; but whether a flood of water is a proper *symbol* of the same is another question. I do not think it is. Water, being an object of nature, would point us to something political. False doctrines are usually symbolized by something different from objects in nature.

There is considerable difficulty in verifying the symbol, but I will submit what up to the present has seemed to me as the most satisfactory explanation. It appears from the description that this was about the last great public effort the dragon made to overwhelm the church and that he was exasperated to this supreme effort by the humiliating defeat he had suffered. The means he employed was *water*, an object of nature; hence we are to look for some great political event by which the dragon made his master-effort to destroy the woman shortly after her flight into the wilderness. In A.D. 284 Diocletian, a Pagan, succeeded to the imperial throne. Before the close of his reign (305), the Christians suffered the most terrible persecution ever received at the hands of Pagan Rome. It continued ten years—A.D. 302-312. It was the design of this emperor to completely extirpate the very name of Christianity, and his unfortunate victims were slain by the thousands throughout the empire. “But the master-piece of [his] heathen policy was the order to seek and burn all copies of the Word of God. Hitherto the enemy had been lopping off the branches of the tree whose leaves were for the healing of the nations; now the blow was made at the root. It had once been the policy of Antiochus Epiphanes, when he madly sought to destroy the Jewish Scriptures. It was both wise and wicked. It had but one defect, it could not be carried into complete execution. The sacred treasure was in too many hands, and too many of its guardians were brave and prudent, to make extermination possible. An African bishop said, ‘Here is my body, take it, burn it; but I will not deliver up the Word of God.’ A deacon said, ‘Never, sir, never! Had I children I would sooner deliver them to you than the divine word.’ He and his wife were burnt together.” Butler’s *Eccl. History*, p. 66.

But “*the earth* helped the woman”—another unlooked-for political event. Worn out with the cares of State, boasting that the very name of Christ was abolished, and dying with a loathsome disease, the tyrant abdicated his throne. A number of individuals claimed imperial honors; but Constantine, the ruler of Gaul, Spain, and Britain, fought his way against contending rivals and finally entered Rome, the capital, in triumph. Enthroned as emperor of the West, he immediately issued an edict of toleration favorable to the Christians (A.D. 313) and soon became



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a professed Christian himself and by law made Christianity the established religion of the empire. In 324, having crushed all rivals, he became sole emperor of the Roman world, and with a view of promoting Christianity convened what is known as the First General Council of the Church, at Nicaea in Asia Minor, A.D. 325. The prestige of Paganism as a religious power had been overthrown long before by the followers of Christ, but now its political importance received a death-blow, only a few expiring struggles appearing subsequently before the final downfall of Western Rome. Thus, the earth helped the woman and swallowed up the flood of persecution which the dragon cast out.

“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.” Finding that he could not destroy or exterminate the church of God, he determined to make war upon its individual members.

CHAPTER XIII.

And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4. And they 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?

5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

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



7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.



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In this vision John beheld a beast rise out of the sea. His appearance—like that of a leopard with the feet of a bear and a mouth like a lion—indicated that he was some terrible creature. He was also a persecutor of the saints, the same as the dragon that preceded him. As before explained, this beast, also, symbolizes the Roman empire; for he possesses the same heads and horns as the dragon, the only difference being that the supreme power and authority, as indicated by the crowns, is now vested in the ten horns, or minor kingdoms, instead of in the seven heads. The dragon as a political power represented Rome before her overthrow by the barbarians; the beast as a political power represents new Rome.

A careful study of the characteristics of this beast, however, will show that he represents more than a civil power. As a mere beast from the natural world he could symbolize nothing more than some political power; but it will be noticed that, combined with his beastly nature, there are also certain characteristics that belong exclusively to the department of human life—a mouth *speaking* great things; power to magnify himself against the God of heaven; the ability to single out the saints of God and kill them, and to set himself up as an object to be worshiped, *etc.* This combination of symbols from the two departments—those of animal and of human life—points us with absolute certainty to Rome as a politico-religious system. Ask any historian what world-wide power succeeded Rome Pagan, and he will answer at once, “Rome Papal.”

While it is not my general design to explain the many lines of prophetic truth described under similar symbols in other parts of the Bible, yet I will ask the reader here to pardon the slight digression while I call attention briefly to a few thoughts in the seventh chapter of Daniel regarding this same Papal power.

Daniel received a vision of four great beasts, which were interpreted to symbolize four universal monarchies. Verse 17. These were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greco-Macedonian, and the Roman. The fourth beast possessed ten horns, which were explained to signify ten kingdoms to arise out of the fourth empire. This is identical with the dragon of Rev. 12, except the latter possessed seven heads not mentioned by Daniel. In the midst of the ten horns (ten minor kingdoms) grew up a *little* horn, which soon assumed greater proportions than his fellows, taking the place of three of the original horns, and into his hand the saints of the Most High were given for “a time and times and the dividing of time,” or twelve hundred and sixty years. This eleventh horn differed from the ten in that it possessed a mouth speaking great things, and the eyes of a man. A horn with eyes and mouth in it is a very unusual thing, yet it is just such a combination as we might expect when we possess a correct knowledge of symbols. Being drawn from two departments—human life and animal life—this double-symbol directs us to a politico-religious system that came up among the ten horns that grew out of the old Roman empire. We instantly identify it with the growing Papacy, which arose to a position of great authority in conjunction with the new Roman empire.



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Three of the horns, or temporal kingdoms, were overthrown in order to give room for the complete development of this politico-religious power. Since great changes have frequently occurred among the nations of Europe originally embraced in the ten minor kingdoms, different powers have been referred to as the three described in Daniel's prophecy; but the most satisfactory explanation to my mind is that of the three kingdoms in Italy that were overthrown as if to give the hierarchy room for development, and that gave the Papacy its *first* temporal sovereignty, thus completing the symbol by constituting her a civil as well as an ecclesiastical horn.

Odoacer, in A.D. 476, overthrew the old empire of the West and established the kingdom of the Heruli in Italy. Seventeen years later it was subverted by Theodoric, who established the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, which continued sixty years; then it, in turn, was overthrown by Belisarius, but was soon succeeded by the Lombards. The Lombard kingdom was subverted by Pepin and Charlemagne, who, as champions of the church, gave a large part of their dominions to the See of Rome and thus favored the Papacy with her first temporal power. Thus were the kingdoms of the Heruli, Ostrogoths, and Lombards plucked up by the roots upon the very territory occupied first by the Papacy as a temporal power, and as if to give it room.

The careful student of Daniel 7 will notice immediately the striking similarity between the politico-religious system symbolized by the little horn and the leopard beast of Revelation 13 under consideration. The following parallels between them prove their identity:

"1. The little horn was a blasphemous power: 'He shall speak great words against the Most High.' Dan. 7:25. The leopard beast of Rev. 13:6 does the same: 'He opened his mouth in blasphemy against God.'

"2. The little horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them. Dan. 7:21. This beast also, Rev. 13:7, makes war with the saints, and overcomes them.

"3. The little horn had a mouth speaking great things. Dan. 7:8, 20. And of this beast we read, Rev. 13:5: 'And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.'

"4. The little horn rose on the cessation of the Pagan form of the Roman empire. This beast rises at the same time; for the dragon, Pagan Rome, gives him his power, his seat, and great authority.

"5. Power was given to the little horn to continue for a time, times, and the dividing of time, or twelve hundred and sixty years. Dan. 7:25. To this beast also power was given for forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty years. Rev. 13:5.



“6. At the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years the universal dominion of the little horn was to begin to decline, being consumed and destroyed unto the end. Dan. 7:26. This beast, also, Rev. 13:10, was to be led into captivity and ‘killed with the sword.’”



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These points prove identity. To quote the words of a certain expositor: "When we have in prophecy two symbols ... representing powers that come upon the stage of action at the *same time*, occupy the *same territory*, maintain the *same character*, do the *same work*, exist the *same length of time*, and meet the same *fate*, those symbols represent the same *identical power*." To this all must agree. Hence we have in the vision before us a description of Papal Rome in her two-fold character as a temporal and a religious power. The wounding and healing of the head of the beast will be explained in chapter XVII.

How the same heads and horns can serve both the dragon and the leopard beast will be better understood later. For the present it will be sufficient to state that it is because they are the same beast in reality, being clothed, in its later form, in a Christian garb, instead of the worn-out garments of infidelity or heathenism possessed by the former. This transfer is expressed in the following words: "And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority." Verse 2. This beast, then, succeeded to the dominion held by the dragon. It was like an old, established firm retiring and giving its standing and credit and well-earned reputation to a new partnership, to conduct a similar business.

While this beast, as before observed, represents the developed religious and political power of the Papacy combined, still the actions ascribed to it show plainly that it is in its character as an *ecclesiastical* beast that its terrible features are here delineated. No one would suppose that a mere political power would set itself up as an object to be worshiped, exalting itself above the God of heaven, and then single out and slaughter the saints for not complying therewith. As far as rendering obedience to civil governments is concerned, the Christians of all ages have been the most peaceful and obedient servants of all. So we shall hereafter refer always to the *beast* as an ecclesiastical power, unless otherwise stated.

This beast all the world admired. "And they worshiped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshiped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" The people worshiped the established hierarchy, and they also worshiped the dragon from which the beast obtained so much of his power. The expression "*worshiped* the dragon" shows plainly that it is the dragon as a religious system that is referred to, and not the old civil empire. How, then, could the old heathen worship be perpetuated in the church of Rome and form a part of her religious services? By adopting rites and ceremonies purely Pagan in their origin. Since I have already stated that the beast and the dragon as temporal powers were about the same in reality, except the change of sovereignty from the heads to the horns, it will now be necessary to show the remarkable similarity in spirit that existed between them as religious powers, the one being the successor of the other.



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1. The high-priest of the Pagan religions was called Pontifex Maximus, and he claimed spiritual and temporal authority over the affairs of men. The Pope of Rome possesses the same title and makes the same claims, and he is clad in the same attire as the Pagan Pontiff.
2. The heathen were accustomed to wear scapulars, medals, and images to shield them from the common ills and dangers of life. Romanists wear the same and for the same purpose.
3. The Pagans, by an official process called *deification*, frequently exalted men who had lived among them to a position worthy of special honor and worship. Papists, by a similar process called *canonisation*, raise their former men of prominence to the dignity of *saints* and then offer up prayers to them.

The foregoing practises are derived from Paganism; also from Judaism or Paganism came their practise of burning incense in public worship, the use of holy water, burning wax candles in the daytime, and votive gifts and offerings. Other heathen principles are:

4. Adoration of idols and images, a practise expressly forbidden by the Mosaic law and unsanctioned by primitive Christianity;
5. Road gods and saints (in Catholic countries);
6. Processions of worshipers and self-whippers (especially in Catholic countries);
7. Religious orders of monks and nuns. One who has read of the vestal virgins of old will recognize at once where monkery originated.

In the city of Rome there still stands an old heathen temple built by Marcus Agrippa and dedicated in the year B.C. 27 to *all the gods*. In the year A.D. 610 it was reconsecrated by Pope Boniface IV. to "the blessed Virgin and all the saints." From that time until the present day Romanists in the same temple have prostrated themselves before *the very same images* and have devoutly employed them by the same forms of prayer and for the very same purposes as did the heathen of old. The only difference is, that instead of calling this idol Jupiter, they call it Paul; instead of denominating that one Venus, they call it Mary, *etc.* Well has Bowling said: "The scholar, familiar as he is with the classic descriptions of ancient mythology, when he directs his attention to the ceremonies of Papal worship, can not avoid recognizing their close resemblance, if not their absolute identity. The temples of Jupiter, Diana, Venus or Apollo, their 'altars smoking with incense,' their boys in sacred habits, holding the incense box, and attending upon the priests, their holy water at the entrance of the temples, with their *aspergilla*, or sprinkling-brushes, their thuribula, or vessels of incense, their ever-burning lamps before the statues of their deities, are irresistibly brought before his mind, whenever he

visits a Roman Catholic place of worship, and witnesses precisely the same things.”
History of Romanism, pp. 109, 110.



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Having failed in his direct attacks against the Christian church, with the accession of Constantine, who established Christianity as the State religion, the dragon soon clothed his pernicious principles in a Christian garb and made war against the remnant of the woman's seed that kept the commandments of God, through the rising hierarchy, under the name of Christianity; but his heads and horns being visible, and he being unable to control his tongue, his real sentiments crop out, and he is easily identified. It is not to be supposed, however, that the beast would appear suddenly in full possession of the immense power ascribed to him in this chapter. On the contrary, Daniel represents it as a *little* horn at first, whose look finally became "more stout than his fellows." Dan. 7:8, 20. Such ecclesiastical power was attained only by the process of gradual development. According to the vision his universal power was limited to "forty and two months," or twelve hundred and sixty years. Since this has reference to the beast as an ecclesiastical power, which according to Daniel grew up by degrees, the time should be calculated the same as in chapter 11:2, 3—dated from the time when the external, visible church was wholly in the hands of the profane multitude of Gentiles and the true church crowded into the wilderness. The nationalized hierarchy, however, continued to advance to greater degrees of power over the nations, until it reached its zenith under the pontificate of Gregory VII., A.D. 1073-1080.

The great things and blasphemies spoken by this beast are doubtless fulfilled by the prerogatives and rights belonging to God alone which this apostate church, especially through her regularly constituted head, claims. In fact, the Pope is the real mouth of this beast, the one who dictates her laws with great authority. He claims to be the vicar of Christ on earth and supreme head of the church, even, as in the case of Pope Innocent, denominating himself the one before whom every knee must bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth. He claims power over the souls of all men on earth and even after their departure from earth. If this is not blasphemy against God, his tabernacle, or church, and "them that dwell in heaven," then I am wholly unable to imagine what would fulfil the prediction. Among the blasphemous titles assumed are these: Lord God the Pope, King of the World, Holy Father, King of kings, and Lord of lords, Vicegerent of the Son of God. He claims infallibility (which was backed up by the Ecumenical council of 1870) and has for ages. Further, he claims power to dispense with God's laws, to forgive sins, to release from purgatory, to damn, and to save.



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All the inhabitants of the earth were to worship him, except those whose names were in the book of life. Thank God that even during the dark age of Romanism a people existed who were owned by the Lord and who refused to render idolatrous worship to this tyrannical beast. For further information regarding these medieval Christians, see remarks on chapter 11:3. But these saints who opposed the Papal assumptions were made the object of fearful persecutions, until Rome glutted herself upon the blood of millions of God's holy saints. This will be more fully described in chapter 17, where this apostate church appears under another symbol, "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." In all their severe trials, however, they were comforted with the knowledge that Justice would not always sleep, but that a time would come when her retributive hand would be stretched forth to lead into captivity their persecuting enemies and break their world-wide reign of tyranny and usurpation. "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." To a number of people God gave special foresight of the coming reformation of the sixteenth century, in which the universal spiritual supremacy of the Papacy ended. A few of the many examples will be profitable.

Says D'Aubigne: "John Huss preached in Bohemia a century before Luther preached in Saxony. He seems to have penetrated deeper than his predecessors into the essence of Christian truth. He prayed to Christ for grace to glory only in his cross, and in the inestimable humiliation of his sufferings.... He was, if we may be allowed the expression, the John Baptist of the reformation. The flames of his pile kindled a fire in the church that cast a brilliant light into the surrounding darkness, and whose glimmerings were not to be so readily extinguished. John Huss did more: prophetic words issued from the depths of his dungeon. He foresaw that a real reformation of the church was at hand. When driven out of Prague and compelled to wander through the fields of Bohemia, where an immense crowd followed his steps and hung upon his words, he had cried out: 'The wicked have begun by preparing a treacherous snare for a goose. But if even the goose, which is only a domestic bird, a peaceful animal, and whose flight is not very far in the air, has nevertheless broken through their toils, other birds, soaring more boldly towards the sky, will break through them with still greater force. Instead of a feeble goose, the truth will send forth eagles and keen-eyed vultures.' This prediction was fulfilled by the reformers.



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“When the venerable priest had been summoned by Sigismund's order before the Council of Constance, and had been thrown into prison, the chapel of Bethlehem, in which he had proclaimed the gospel and the future triumphs of Christ, occupied his mind much more than his own defence. One night the holy martyr saw in imagination, from the depths of his dungeon, the pictures of Christ which he had painted on the walls of his oratory, effaced by the Pope and his bishops. This vision distressed him; but on the next day he saw many painters occupied in restoring these figures in greater number and in brighter colors. As soon as the task was ended, the painters, who were surrounded by an immense crowd, exclaimed, 'Now let the popes and bishops come! they shall never efface them more!' And many people rejoiced in Bethlehem, and I with them, adds John Huss. 'Busy yourself with your defence rather than with your dreams,' said his faithful friend, the Knight of Chlum, to whom he had communicated this vision. 'I am no dreamer,' replied Huss, 'but I maintain this for certain, that the image of Christ will never be effaced. They have wished to destroy it, but it shall be painted afresh in all hearts by much better preachers than myself. The nation that loves Christ will rejoice at this. And I, awaking from the dead, and rising so to speak, from my grave, shall leap with great joy.'” History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 6.

This bold witness for Christ was burned at the stake July 6, 1415, by order of the General Council of Constance. When the fagots were piled up around him ready for the torch, he said to the executioner, “You are now going to burn a goose [Huss signifying goose in the Bohemian language]; but in a century you will have a swan whom you can neither roast nor boil.” Fox's Book of Martyrs. This was fulfilled in Martin Luther.

Henry Institorus, an inquisitor, uttered these remarkable words: “All the world cries out and demands a council, but there is no human power that can reform the church by a council. The Most High will find other means, which are at present unknown to us, although they may be at our very doors, to bring back the church to its pristine condition.’ This remarkable prophecy, delivered by an inquisitor at the very period of Luther's birth, is the best apology for the reformation.”

Andrew Proles, provincial of the Augustines, used often to say: “Whence, then, proceeds so much darkness and such horrible superstitions? O my brethren! Christianity needs a bold and a great reform, and methinks I see it already approaching.... I am bent with the weight of years, and weak in body, and I have not the learning, the ability, and eloquence, that so great an undertaking requires. But God will raise up a hero, who by his age, strength, talents, learning, genius and eloquence, shall hold the foremost place. He will begin the reformation; he will oppose error, and God will give him boldness to resist the mighty ones of the earth.”



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John Hilten censured the most flagrant abuses of the monastic life, and the exasperated monks threw him into prison and treated him shamefully. "The Franciscan, forgetting his malady and groaning heavily, replied: 'I bear your insults calmly for the love of Christ; for I have said nothing that can injure the monastic state: I have only censured its most crying abuses.' 'But,' continued he (according to what Melancthon records in his Apology for the Augsburg Confession of Faith), 'another man will rise in the year of our Lord 1516: he will destroy you, and you shall not be able to resist him.'"

In 1516 Luther held a public discussion with Feld-kirchen, in which he upheld certain doctrines of truth that made a great stir among the Romanists. Says D'Aubigne: "The disputation took place in 1516. This was Luther's first attack upon the dominion of the sophists and upon the Papacy, as he himself characterizes it." And again, "This disputation made a great noise, and it has been considered as the beginning of the reformation." Book I, Chap. 9. The next year, however, he entered publicly upon the actual work of reformation.

Frederick of Saxony, surnamed the Wise, was the most powerful elector of the German empire at the period of the reformation. A dream he had and related just before the world was startled by the first great act of reformation is so striking that I feel justified in repeating it in this connection. It was as follows:

"Having gone to bed last night, tired and dispirited, I soon fell asleep after saying my prayers, and slept calmly for about two hours and a half. I then awoke, and all kinds of thoughts occupied me until midnight.... I then fell asleep again, and dreamed the Almighty sent me a monk, who was a true son of Paul the apostle. He was accompanied by all the saints, in obedience to God's command, to bear him testimony, and to assure me that he did not come with any fraudulent design, but that all he should do was conformable to the will of God. They asked my gracious permission to let him write something on the doors of the palace-chapel at Wittemberg, which I conceded through my chancellor. Upon this, the monk retired thither and began to write; so large were the characters that I could read from Schweinitz what he was writing [about 18 miles]. The pen he used was so long that its extremity reached as far as Rome, where it pierced the ears of a lion which lay there, and shook the triple crown on the Pope's head. All the cardinals and princes ran up hastily and endeavored to support it.... I stretched out my arm: that moment I awoke with my arm extended, in great alarm and very angry with this monk, who could not guide his pen better. I recovered myself a little.... It was only a dream. I was still half asleep, and once more closed my eyes. The dream came again. The lion, still disturbed by the pen, began to roar with all his might, until the whole city of Rome, and all the States of the



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holy empire, ran up to know what was the matter. The Pope called upon us to oppose this monk, and addressed himself particularly to me, because the friar was living in my dominions. I again awoke, repeated the Lord's prayer, entreated God to preserve his Holiness, and fell asleep.... I then dreamt that all the princes of the empire, and we along with them, hastened to Rome, and endeavored one after another to break this pen; but the greater our exertions the stronger it became: it crackled as if it had been made of iron: we gave it up as hopeless. I then asked the monk (for I was now at Rome, now at Wittenberg) where he had got that pen, and how it came to be so strong. [In those days they used goosequills for pens.] 'This pen,' replied he, 'belonged to a Bohemian goose [Huss] a hundred years old. I had it from one of my old schoolmasters. It is so strong because no one can take the pith out of it, and I am myself quite astonished at it.' On a sudden I heard a loud cry; from the monk's long pen had issued a host of other pens. I awoke a third time; it was day light." History of the Reformation, Book III, Chap. 4.

Frederick related the foregoing to his brother John, the Duke of York, on the morning of Oct. 31, 1517, stating that he had dreamed it during the previous night. The same day at noon Martin Luther advanced boldly to the chapel at Wittenberg and posted upon the door ninety-five theses, or propositions, against the Papal doctrine of indulgences. This was his public entrance upon the great work of reformation. The importance of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century is incalculable. It gave the deathblow to the universal spiritual supremacy of Rome. As we have already seen, the Papacy had for centuries held despotic sway over the minds and the consciences of men. One potent cause of the Reformation was the great Revival of Learning that marked the close of the medieval and the beginning of the modern period of history. This great mental awakening contrasted sharply with the blind ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages, and caused many men to doubt the Scriptural authority of many of the doctrines and ceremonies of the Church of Rome; such as invocation of saints, auricular confession, use of images, worship of the Virgin Mary, *etc.*

Scandals and abuses in the Church of Rome also hastened the Reformation. During the fifteenth century the morals of that church had sunk to the greatest depths of iniquity. The Popes themselves were, in some cases, monsters of impurity and iniquity, insomuch that historians are obliged to draw the veil over many of their dark deeds.



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But the real occasion of the revolt of the northern nations of Europe against the jurisdiction of Rome was the controversy regarding indulgences. "These in the Catholic church, are remissions, to penitents of punishment due for sin, upon the performances of some work of mercy or piety, or the payment of a sum of money." When Leo X. was elected to the Papal dignity (1513), he found the church in great need of money for the building of Saint Peter's and other undertakings, and he had recourse to a grant of indulgences to fill the coffers of the church. The power of dispensing these indulgences in Saxony in Germany was given to a Dominican friar named Tetzel. This fanatic enthusiast entertained the most exaggerated opinion of the efficacy of indulgences. In his harrangues he uttered such expressions as the following:

"Indulgences are the most precious and the most noble of God's gifts." "There is no sin so great that an indulgence can not remit; ... only let him pay well, and all will be forgiven him." "Come, and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins that you intend to commit may be pardoned." "I would not change my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven; for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons." "The Lord Omnipotent hath ceased to reign; he has resigned all power to the Pope." See D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, Book III, Chap. 1.

Martin Luther was an Augustine monk and a teacher of theology in the University of Wittemberg. Before Tetzel appeared in Germany, Luther possessed a wide reputation for learning and piety, and he had also entertained doubts respecting many of the doctrines of the church. During an official visit to Rome in 1510 he was almost overwhelmed with sorrow because of the moral corruption there; but while penitentially ascending on his knees the sacred stairs of the Lateran, he seemed to hear a voice thundering in his soul, "The just shall live by faith!" This marked an important epoch in his career.

When Tetzel appeared in Saxony with his indulgences, Luther fearlessly opposed him. He drew up ninety-five theses against the infamous traffic and nailed them to the door of the church at Wittemberg, and invited all scholars to criticise them and point out if they were opposed to the doctrine of the Word of God or of the early church Fathers. Here the invention of printing proved to be a powerful agency in advancing the cause of reformation by scattering copies of these theses everywhere; and soon the continent of Europe was in a perfect turmoil of controversy. The Pope excommunicated Luther as a heretic. In reply Luther burned the Papal bull publicly at Wittemberg. Shortly afterward Luther produced his celebrated translation of the Bible in the German language. Even a brief history of the entire Reformation would be too large for the limits of the present volume, therefore with a few words respecting the nature of the work of the Reformation we will pass on to another prophetic vision.



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The great secret of the early success of the reformers was their appeal from the decisions of councils and regulations of men to the Word of God. So long as the Word and Spirit of God were allowed their proper place as the Governors of God's people, the work was a spiritual blessing. But this happy state of affairs did not long continue. Within a few years the followers of the reformers were divided into hostile sects and began to oppose and persecute each other. Luther denounced Zwingli as a heretic, and "the Calvinists would have no dealings with the Lutherans." The first Protestant creed was the Augsburg Confession (1530). This date marks an important epoch. From this time the people began to lose sight of the Word and Spirit of God as their Governors and to turn to the disciplines of their sects, which they upheld by every means possible. Thus we find Calvin at Geneva consenting to the burning of Servetus, because of a difference of religious views; and in England the Anglican Protestants waged the most bitter, cruel, and relentless war not only against Catholics, but against all Protestants who refused to conform to the Established Church. The Protestants placed armies in the field and fought for their creeds, as during the Thirty Years' War in Germany and the long period of the Huguenot wars in France. The real work of the Reformation, the promulgation of so much of the truth of the Bible, was an inestimable blessing to the world; but the rise of Protestantism (organized sectism) in 1530 introduced another period of apostasy as distinct in many of its features as was that of Romanism before it. The historian D'Aubigne recognizes an important change at this period. He says:

"The first two books of this volume contain the most important epochs of the Reformation—the Protest of Spire, and the Confession of Augsburg.... I determined on bringing the reformation of Germany and German Switzerland to the *decisive epochs* of 1530 and 1531. The history of the Reformation, properly so-called, is then in my opinion almost complete in those countries. The work of faith has there attained its apogee: that of conferences, of interims, of diplomacy begins.... The movement of the Sixteenth Century has there made its effort. I said from the very first, It is the history of the Reformation and not of Protestantism that I am relating." Preface to Vol. V.

11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.
12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.
13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,



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14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. 15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

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

17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

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 symbolic description of this beast directs us also to a political and a religious system rising at the expiration of the twelve hundred and sixty years' reign of the first beast, but that he was no such terrible beast politically as the one before him is proved by the fact that he had but two horns and they *like a lamb*. This beast rose "out of the earth"—the Apocalyptic earth, or the territory of the Roman empire. The first beast rose out of the sea, which, as before shown, signifies the heart of the empire in an agitated state; for the ten horns came up through the greatest political convulsions that the page of history records. When John beheld the second beast "coming up," however, the empire was in a state of comparative quiet, although fierce wars followed afterward. He stands as a symbol of *Protestantism* in Europe; although his power and influence afterwards extended beyond the "earth"—the Apocalyptic earth—into "the whole world." Chap. 16:14. That this beast came up upon the same territory occupied by the Papacy is proved also by the statement that "he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." It was predicted in a subsequent chapter (17:16) that the ten horns, or kingdoms of Europe, after supporting the Papacy during the Dark Ages, would later turn against her. This has met a remarkable fulfilment under the reign of Protestantism.

The first two nations to turn violently against Popery were England and Germany. They have ever since been the chief supporters and defenders of Protestantism, and they are doubtless the two kingdoms symbolized by the two horns of the beast. While at one time the Pope was a temporal sovereign and could, by his political and ecclesiastical power, humble with ease the mightiest nations of Europe before him, his authority has been wrested from him by degrees, so that to-day not a vestige of his temporal power remains, and his anathemas fall harmlessly. The nations have asserted



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their rights as kings. When King Victor Emmanuel entered Rome on the twentieth day of September, 1870, the Pope's temporal sun set forever, and he does not control even the city in which he lives—Rome. He is often referred to as “the prisoner of the Vatican.” “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity,” said the prophecy; “he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” It was by force of arms that the Popes obtained and maintained their temporal power over the nations, and by the force of arms they have had their authority torn from them. Religion has been referred to as “the basis of government”; for the legislators of any country are to a great degree influenced in their deliberations by religious sentiments. In all Protestant countries that greatest of Protestant principles, religious liberty, is as truly recognized by statute as was that infernal principle of the Papacy, religious intolerance, when formerly enforced by law. Protestant principles have so far permeated the nations of Europe formerly controlled by the Papacy that religious toleration is generally granted. In Italy, the headquarters of Popedom, where the Catholics are greatly in the majority, religious liberty is granted by law. And even Spain, denominated by the Encyclopaedia Britannica “the most Catholic country in the world,” exhibits “a general indifferentism to religion,” meaning that the fanaticism and intolerance of former ages that caused thousands, and perhaps millions, to be slain, is rapidly dying out. In the vision before us, however, the special actions ascribed to this beast—*speaking*, working miracles, deceiving, making an image and imparting life to it, *etc.*, which all belong properly to the department of human life—show conclusively that it is the character of this beast as an *ecclesiastical power* that is the chief point under consideration. He was not to become such a terrible beast politically (for his horns were only *like a lamb*), but “he *spake* as a dragon.” As soon as we enter the department to which *speaking* by analogy refers us, we find this beast to be a great religious power; and it is in this character alone that he is delineated in the remainder of the chapter. That the description of a religious system is the main burden of this symbol, is shown also by the fact that it is in every case referred to in subsequent chapters as the “false prophet.” Chap. 16:13; 19:20; 20:10. Therefore every reference I make to this second beast hereafter should be understood as signifying the religious system of Protestantism, unless otherwise stated.

That Protestantism in its many forms can be properly represented by a single symbol—a beast or false prophet—may seem a little strange at first; but when we come to consider next the making of an image to the beast, it will be seen that the Protestant sects, from God's standpoint of viewing, are all alike in character, as were the multitudinous forms of heathen worship represented under the single symbol of the dragon. Hence only one beast, or the making of one image, was necessary to stand as representative of the entire number. It will be noticed by the reader that from verse 12 to the close of the chapter the term *beast* signifies the first beast, or the Papacy, and that the second beast, or Protestantism, is designated by the pronoun *he*.



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Image is defined to be “an imitation, representation, similitude of any person or thing; a copy, a likeness, an effigy.” The second beast, then, is to manufacture something in *imitation* of the first beast. If any doubt exists as to which phase of the first beast, political or ecclesiastical, is copied, it can be settled by considering what is said of the image made from the original. “The image of the beast should—*speak*.” This directs us by analogy, as heretofore explained, to the department of religious affairs; hence the second beast forms an *ecclesiastical organization* in imitation of the hierarchy of Rome. At this juncture the Protestant will doubtless exclaim, “Oh, our churches are nothing like the church of Rome!” But consider a little in the light of truth. God’s Word teaches that they bear the close relationship of *mother* and her *daughters* (Rev. 17:5), and by the help of the Lord we shall point out a similarity of character in this and subsequent chapters. The symbol of the church of Rome in chapter 17 is that of a corrupt *prostitute*, while the symbol of Protestantism is that of her *harlot daughters*. The Roman church is a humanly organized institution governed by a set of fallible men, their claims of infallibility to the contrary notwithstanding. Protestant sects, likewise, are all human organizations (even though they may sometimes deny it), and are governed by a man or a conference of men. The Roman Catholic church makes and prescribes the theology that her members believe. Protestant churches, also, make their own disciplines and prescribe rules of faith and practise. The Word of God, inspired by his Spirit, could not be enforced in Romanism without destroying it; for its main spirit is Antichrist. So, too, the whole Word in Protestantism would soon annihilate her God-dishonoring sects; for they are all contrary to its plain teachings, which condemn divisions and enjoin perfect unity and oneness upon the redeemed of the Lord. What is said concerning the image of the beast applies to sectarianism as a whole and the human organization of all her so-called churches, regardless of the differences that exist between them as individual institutions; for they may differ as widely as the various systems of heathen religions symbolized by the dragon, yet they can be represented by the single symbol of an image to the first beast, because they are built upon the same general principles—are but human organizations, falsely called churches of Christ, and are all contrary to the Scriptures.

Imparting life to the image of the beast simply signifies the complete organization of the ecclesiastical institutions so that they are capable of self-government and their decrees possess authority. Every living body is animated by a spirit. The sectarian spirit that animates the Methodist body will lead people into that body, *etc.*; but the one Spirit of God will, if permitted, baptize us all into the one body of Christ, where we can all “drink into one Spirit.” 1 Cor. 12:13. “And he spake as a dragon” signifies the great authority by which his laws are enacted and enforced upon the people.



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“And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, 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.” Fire from heaven upon Elijah’s sacrifice was the attestation of God to his divine mission. Bringing down fire from heaven, then, symbolically describes the claims of this beast to being a true prophet of the Lord.

At this point we must make a distinction which, being true in the facts of history, must necessarily be intended in the symbolic representation. According to the symbols of the preceding chapter the woman, or true church, “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 time-prophecy is the same and covers the same period as the reign of the Papal beast; therefore just as an important change in the Papacy occurred at the expiration of the prophetic period, so also we must expect a radical change with respect to the true church: it must no longer be completely obscured in the wilderness.

As the Reformation, and Protestantism as a religion, was the means of ending Rome’s universal spiritual supremacy, so also the same movement must be regarded as possessing sufficient light and truth to again bring into prominence the work of the Spirit and the true people of God. “Fire from heaven” may therefore be regarded as describing the divine work of reformation, the unfolding of truth accompanied by the saving power of God. Such spiritual work has accompanied the origin of various religious movements during the Protestant era.

The general description of the two-horned beast, however, brings into prominence an evil characteristic—the disposition to lead people into deception by making an image to the beast and then worshiping it. The evil does not inhere in the work of bringing down “fire from heaven,” but in image-making and image-worship, for which the Spiritual work simply furnished an occasion. The Spiritual work of reformation is therefore to be distinguished from the later work of creed- and sect-making. And since the beast takes advantage of Spirit manifestations, in order to deceive men, he becomes a sort of apostate and is denominated “the *false prophet*.” See Chap. 16:14; 19:20.

Ecclesiastically considered, the two-horned beast stands as the symbol of the religious system of Protestantism as a whole—a peculiar combination of truth and error, of good and bad, of “fire from heaven” and false, miracle-working power (chap. 16:14); while the “image to the beast” signifies the sectarian institution—the man-made, man-controlled, unscriptural sect machinery manufactured in imitation of the Papal original. To exalt such earth-born churches and lead people to adore and worship them



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is but a species of idolatry and the rankest deception. It is a sad fact that multitudes of people in Protestantism are more devoted to their particular church than they are to the Lord Jesus Christ. They can witness the open rejection of God's precious Word and the vilest profanation of his holy name, without uttering a word of protest; but let anyone say a word against *their church*, and instantly they are aroused to the highest pitch of excitement—beast-worshippers!

The Protestant era has witnessed many wonderful reformations in which the true fire of God fell upon waiting souls, but this initial work of the Spirit has in each case been employed as an excuse for taking the next step—making an image. Thousands of honest souls, lacking better light, have been induced to submit to such human organization. But the truly saved have always loved and adored their Lord more than the human church to which they were attached, therefore they should not be regarded as beast-worshippers. They are the ones whom the Lord denominates his people when the voice is heard calling them out of Babylon. Chap. 18:4.

The “mark of the beast” next claims our attention. The beast referred to is the Papacy. How did the Papacy mark its subjects? Undoubtedly, by the false spirit which animated that organization, branding them all with its delusive doctrines and errors. In a previous chapter the servants of God were represented as receiving the seal of God in their foreheads. This was shown to signify the pure Word and doctrines of the Bible being planted within them by the Holy Spirit. In making the sect image in imitation of the Papal original, then, the principle of marking subjects has also been copied. The members of every sect organization are indelibly marked. You can not become one of them without solemnly agreeing to believe the doctrines taught in their discipline and accepting the government of their man-made institutions. Subscribing to the rules of faith and practise that originated with the sect shows how its members worship the image. They are also said to worship the first beast, the original of the image. How is this fulfilled? In the same manner that the worshipers of the first beast worshiped the dragon that preceded it; namely, by accepting and believing false principles of faith that originated in the system immediately preceding. Protestant sects have transferred many of the false doctrines of Romanism to their own creeds, hence they worship the first beast just as truly as the Papists worshiped the dragon by accepting heathenish principles. The greatest principle of false doctrine that originated with Catholicism, and one that has been transferred to *every Protestant sect*, is, that a human organization is necessary to complete the church of Christ on earth. The church of Rome has an earthly head and a human government; and Protestants, also, firmly believe the unscriptural doctrine that they must bow to an organization of men and thus be under a visible headship: they receive the mark of the beast. Many sects have also copied other Popish doctrines, such as infant baptism, the destruction of all outside of the pales of the church (?), infantile damnation, sprinkling, and other things too numerous to mention. Thus, they worship the first beast as well as his image.



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They also receive the “name of the beast.” Here again “beast” refers to the Papacy. The Papal beast was represented as being full of the names of blasphemy, which blasphemy was shown to signify the usurpation of prerogatives and rights belonging to God alone. The greatest ecclesiastical usurpation reached by the Romish hierarchy was that of claiming to be the head of the church and the right to prescribe and enforce their doctrines, naming their organization the *Holy Catholic Church*. In making their sect organizations in imitation, Protestants, as above stated, have transferred the same principle and make the same blasphemous claim of a right to make disciplines to govern God’s people, and then name their sect machinery a *church* of God. The name may be Methodist, Baptist, Mennonite, Episcopalian, or what not, it is only a *beast name*, yet a name that you must accept if you desire to become one of them.

They not only receive the name of the beast, but also receive the “number of his name.” It will be necessary first to explain what is meant by the number of a name. “The modern system of notation by the nine digits and the cipher, was not introduced until the tenth century, but on account of its superior excellence, has since superseded every other. Previous to this great discovery, the letters of the alphabet were used to denote numbers, each letter having the power of a *number* as well as a *sound*. The same system is still retained among us for certain purposes. The Roman letters I. V. X. L. C. D. M., have each the power of expressing a number. This, however, was the common and the best mode of notation that the ancients possessed.” The number of a name, therefore, was merely the number denoted by the several letters of that name.

The number of the name of the beast—the first beast—is said to be the number of a *man*. When we enter the Romish hierarchy and search for a man the number of whose name will be six hundred and sixty-six, where could we go more appropriately than to the Pope himself, its authorized head? The Scriptures point him out particularly as the “*man* of sin,” “the son of perdition.” 2 Thes. 2:3, 4. Has the Pope of Rome a name the letters of which, used as numerals, make six hundred and sixty-six? Yes. He wears in jeweled letters upon his miter the following blasphemous inscription: *Vicarius Filii Dei*—Vicar of the Son of God. Taking out of this name all the letters that the Latins used as numerals, we have just six hundred and sixty-six. U and V were both formerly used to denote five.

V	.....	5	F	.....	0
I	.....	1	I	.....	1
C	...	100	L	....	50
A	.....	0	I	.....	1
R	.....	0	I	.....	1
I	.....	1	D	...	500
U	.....	5	E	.....	0
S	.....	0	I	.....	1

666

In some manner the worshipers of Protestant images also receive the number of this name—six hundred and sixty-six. The name is that of “Vicar



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of the Son of God.” In all Protestantism (see remarks on chapter 11:7, 8) the true Vicars of Christ on earth—the Word and Spirit of God—have been set aside, and conferences of men have taken their places in all the official acts relative to spiritual affairs. Hence the number of the name applies to them as well. What that number specially symbolizes I do not know, unless it is, as has been explained by others—*division*. While the policy of Romanism has been that of unity, still the false claims made by one individual can be as well made by another, and by many, which has been the case, as just explained; therefore it would not be improper at all to make the Pope’s number a symbol of the whole, since his system has been so largely copied by the rest. The whole structure of sectarianism is built on the principle of division, and it so happens that there is always enough left to divide again. So this special number is perhaps the symbol of endless division, signifying the great number of human organizations claiming to be churches of Christ. The church of God, however, is built on the principal of unity; division is destruction to its true nature and life, for it is Christ’s body.

It is further said 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.” To “buy or sell” is to engage in the ordinary pursuits of life and have intercourse with human society. Applying this as a symbol to the analagous department of the church, we have the fact set forth that those without the special mark have no more recognized standing in the so-called churches than men that are not allowed to buy or sell have in a community. But *selling*, as a symbol, would specially indicate the dealing out of truth, or the preaching of the gospel. A Holy Ghost minister in the clear light of heaven’s truth, independent of all the creeds of Babylon, will not be allowed the privilege of laboring freely among sectarians, after the truth for which he stands becomes well known. And if he holds meetings in the community, the members of the sects are often warned by their leaders against “buying”—receiving—it from the Holy Ghost minister, because of his not having the mark or name of the beast. Their ministers are specially marked, for they come out of their colleges and theological seminaries with the stamp of their respective doctrines upon them and a license from the sect to enter its ministry; and those not thus marked or designated have no place among them. This may also explain the manner in which the beast causes those who will not worship the image to be killed—an analagous killing; namely, an ecclesiastical cutting-off, or excommunication, as explained in previous chapters.[9]

[Footnote 9: The early history of Protestantism shows that at that time the principle of religious intolerance brought over from Romanism manifested itself in the actual putting to death of numerous dissenters. For example see pp. 252, 291-294 of the present work. It is possible that the persecuting principle ascribed to the two-horned beast may include both the literal and the ecclesiastical cutting-off, reference being made directly to the intolerant spirit.]



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The facts just stated are well illustrated by the following circumstances. A few years ago a brother in the ministry went into a certain town to find a place to conduct a series of holiness meetings. He was directed by a Presbyterian lady to their pastor, who, she said, was a believer in the doctrine of holiness. When he called on the minister and made known his errand, the first question asked him was this, "Are you a member of the Presbyterian church?" The brother answered in the negative. He did not have the *name of the beast*. The next question that greeted him was this, "Do you believe the Westminster Confession of Faith to be orthodox?" He answered, "No, sir." He did not have the *mark of the beast*. The last question asked was, "Do you belong to any of the various orthodox Protestant denominations?" The brother said, "No." He did not have the *number of his name*. The answer was, "You can not have our house."

While on a missionary trip in the Near East, the writer, in company with another brother, attended a Seventh-Day Adventist service in Bucharest, Roumania. After the sermon another brother requested that we be given the opportunity to speak a little, but the request was absolutely refused. It was explained that we would say nothing against them or their work but only speak about salvation; but we were not permitted even to testify in a few words. The difficulty was that we did not have either the "mark of the beast" or its "name."

CHAPTER XIV.

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3. And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.⁴ These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.

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

There is no difficulty in identifying this company on Mount Sion as the true people of God in marked contrast with the worshipers of all corrupt and false religion. As to the chronology of the event, it is evident that we have here a continuation of the same

series of prophecy beginning with the apostolic period in chapter XII, describing alternately the true church and the false church.

At the beginning of this series the true church, symbolized by the star-crowned woman, fled into the wilderness and was there lost to view; while the leopard beast and the two-horned beast of chapter XIII, symbolizing the two leading forms of organized Christianity, were brought into prominent view. It is therefore fitting that the true church should again appear and be given her proper position and work in the world before the end of all earthly things.



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That the company here brought to view represents the true church is shown by its agreement with the church of God before the apostasy began. In the seventh chapter we have seen that before the political calamities befell the Western Roman Empire the work of sealing God's servants was accomplished, twelve thousand from each of the twelve tribes of Israel being sealed, thus representing symbolically the fact that God's church, comprising the true Israel, was perfect and complete, no part being omitted. In the chapter under consideration we have this divine sealing process again after the apostasy, and once more the definite number 144,000 occurs, showing that the church before the end is to be perfect and complete.

The contrast of this company with the ecclesiastical powers in the preceding chapter proclaims in an unmistakable manner the fact that we have here described a true reformation and work of God before the end of time. In the morning-time of the dispensation the redeemed of earth were represented as singing praises to Christ; so also the company here brought to view unite in singing a song which only the redeemed can know. This company is on Mount Sion, not in the darkness of the wilderness, they are with the Lamb, not wandering after the beast; they are not even following the beast that was "like a lamb," but they are with the true Lamb, the Savior of the world; they have the "Father's name written in their foreheads," not the mark or the name of the beast. It is said of them that "these are they which were not defiled with women, for they are virgins." Fornication and adultery, as will be explained later, is a symbol of spiritual idolatry; and the chastity of this redeemed company shows that they were free from the abominations of the apostasy. They "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Their names are in the book of life, and they do not worship the beast. Chap. 13:8.

Here, then, we have a symbol of the church of God in the latter days standing distinct from the great apostasy.

6. And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,
7. Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.
8. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.
9. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,



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10. The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:

11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

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

13. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

Another phase of the last reformation is here brought to view—its communicative genius. It not only stands clear from the apostasy, but it sounds the warnings of God and proclaims his message. The first messenger had a very important message to deliver, even “the everlasting gospel.” His message was not limited to the inhabitants of “the earth”—the Apocalyptic earth—only, but included “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,” showing that it was of universal importance. It was not a new gospel, but the everlasting gospel, the same gospel preached before the long period of apostasy. There is one phase different, however, and that is that the *nearness* of the second coming of Christ is a leading feature; the messenger with loud voice warns the people to prepare for the awful judgment just at hand by turning to “worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” The apostle Paul cautioned the Thessalonian brethren not to entertain the idea that the advent of Christ was then near at hand, for it could not come until after the great period of apostasy that he predicted; but here is a messenger now claiming that the “*hour of his judgment is come*”—an event just at hand. He carries his special message to all people; for Jesus declared, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and *then shall the end come*.” Matt. 24:14. This represents the restoration of gospel truth in the reformation that was begun about the year A.D. 1880 and that is now being carried to all nations by a holy ministry.

The nature of this restoration work is clearly shown. Its leading feature is its missionary character, the proclamation of the pure gospel to “every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.” Since the days of the apostles the whole gospel has not been boldly declared and carried forward with burning missionary zeal. Romanism and Protestantism have conducted their missionary work and, according to chap. 16:14, their sphere of influence will extend throughout “the whole world”; but here is clearly set forth the fact that God has authorized another universal message and world-wide work wholly distinguished from all others. The contrast between the worshipers of the beast and his image and those composing the redeemed company on Mount Sion is so clear,

also the nature of the work done by each, that we can not possibly identify them as being one.



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This work of conducting a world-wide missionary enterprise may appear to be a gigantic task, but the seeming impossibility vanishes when we consider the fact (to be more fully developed hereafter) that God calls into this service all his people who are yet under the sectarian yoke. With this great host already dispersed over the world, the work of making known this last message can and will be accomplished.

The positive statement that the *hour* of his judgment is come shows that the end is exceedingly near; hence the second and third angels must follow the first in the closest proximity possible in order to introduce their messages before the wrath of God is poured out upon apostate Christendom. The time is so short that these three messengers can not possibly refer to three distinct reformations in the world; hence they must signify three important phases in the one last reformation that carries the gospel to all nations in the short period of an “hour,” which time also includes the final judgment.

A careful study of these three messages will show that they are inseparably connected. The second cry was against Babylon, that she had fallen. Rev. 18:1, 2 proves this fall of Babylon to be a moral one—a giving away to ungodliness, iniquity and all manner of deception. According to chapter 16:19 the great city of Babylon is composed of three parts, being a confederation of the dragon^[10] (heathenism), the beast (Catholicism), and the false prophet (Protestantism). Chap. 16:13, 14. It is evidently to this latter division of Babylon that this second message applies; for Paganism was always a false religion, and Catholicism was always a corrupt one, during whose reign the church of God, as already shown, was separate. Protestantism, then, was the only part of the great city that could fall morally or spiritually. During the space of three hundred and fifty years, from the formation of the first Protestant creed, she held reign and authority over the people of God, who were scattered among her hundreds of opposing sects.

[Footnote 10: That the dragon should be a part of great Babylon seems at first improbable; but in this statement reference is made, not to the dragon in his original, or Pagan, state, but to the form in which he is manifesting himself in these last days to deceive the nations, working in conjunction with apostate Christendom. This phase of the dragon power which brings him into harmony with, and, in reality, a part of, modern Babylon, will be more clearly understood when we come to consider the three unclean spirits that come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet (chap. 16:13, 14), and the release of the dragon in chapter 20:7-9.]

In this condition the faithful children of God, although bearing the mark and name of the beast, longed for restoration of the divine, primitive standard; but in the cloudy atmosphere of that period they could not clearly discern the whole truth. Later, when the full tidings of the everlasting gospel came, there came also a revelation that Babylon is fallen and that God is calling his people out of confusion just before the end of time.



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I call to witness every child of God who has been with the present reformation from its beginning, if there were not three special phases of the development of the truth, as follows: 1. A wonderful revival of spirituality among a few of God's chosen ones, caused by the "everlasting gospel" being revealed to them as never before. 2. The knowledge of the truth and deep experience thus obtained prepared the way for the next step, which was the discovery that the "churches" were a part of the great Babylon of Revelation and were in a fallen condition, "a hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Chap. 18:2, 3. Hence the cry went up, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen." 3. Then followed immediately the message to God's people to "flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul," warning them that no one could any longer bear the mark of the beast or worship his image without forfeiting eternal salvation and that the fearful judgments of heaven would soon descend upon every one who refused to obey the message and to walk in the light. The last two phases, which apply to Babylon, are the same and in the same order as the description given in chapter 18:1-4. First, an angel from heaven cries mightily with a strong voice, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen"; and then "*another voice*" from heaven says, "COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE." The three successive phases of the message are now all combined in one, and God is gathering his holy remnant "out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezek. 34:12) into the one body of Jesus Christ. Halleluiah! John, also, saw this glorious result of the three messages—"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. And they sung the song of Moses the servant of God [a song of deliverance], and the song of the Lamb [the song of redemption], saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints." Chap. 15:2, 3. Let all the people of God rejoice!

"Hail the day so long expected,
Hail the year of full release;
Zion's walls are now erected,
And the watchmen publish peace.

"Now on Shiloh's wide dominion,
Hear the trumpets loudly roar:
Babylon's fallen, is fallen, is fallen,
Babylon's fallen to rise no more."

Those of the Lord's people who through lack of sufficient light were yoked up with unbelievers in Protestantism, labored faithfully to upbuild the very sectarian institutions that God was against and that were destined to be destroyed, though they themselves were saved as by fire; but from the time this reformation began the redeemed die in the triumphs of a living faith, and their labors in upbuilding the true cause and kingdom of God are still blessed and fruitful, being perpetuated in the works that follow them.



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“Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.” As before mentioned, God’s people during the reign of Romanism expected her universal supremacy to come to an end, and their patience was greatly exercised in waiting for the appointed time to arrive. It came with a great spiritual reformation. Then followed another period of apostasy, during which time God’s people again looked forward to something better in the future. Many remarkable predictions of this present holiness reformation were uttered by some of the most spiritual saints during the Protestant era, and I can not refrain from mentioning a few of them in this connection.

D’Aubigne: “The nineteenth century is called to resume the work which the sixteenth century was unable to accomplish.” History of the Reformation, Book XV, Chap. 1.

Fletcher: “Only He will come with more mercy, and will increase the light that shall be at eventide, according to his promise in Zech. 14:7. I should rather think that the visions are not yet plainly disclosed; and that the day and hour in which the Lord will begin to make bare his arm openly are still concealed from us. Oh, when will the communion of saints be complete? Lord, hasten the time; and let me have a place among them that love thee, and love one another in sincerity.” This is an extract from a letter written by John Fletcher to Mr. Wesley, dated London, May 26, 1757, as given in Joseph Benson’s life of Fletcher, pp. 39, 40.

D’Aubigne again: “In every age it has been seen how great is the strength of an idea to penetrate the masses, to stir nations, and to hurry them, if required, by thousands to the battle-field and to death. But if so great be the strength of a human idea, what power must not a heaven-descended idea possess, when God opens to it the gates of the heart! The world has not often seen so much power at work; it was seen, however, in the early days of Christianity, and in the time of the Reformation; and *it will be seen in future ages.*” Book VI, Chap. 12.

“It has been said that the three last centuries, the sixteenth, the seventeenth, and the eighteenth, may be conceived as an immense battle of three days’ duration. We willingly adopt this beautiful comparison.... The first day was the battle of God, the second the battle of the priest, the third the battle of reason. What will be the fourth? In our opinion, the confused strife, the deadly contest of all these powers together, to *end in the victory of Him to whom triumph belongs.*” Book XI, Chap. 9.

Lorenzo Dow, comment on Rev. 14:6-11; 18:1-5: “The angel, or extraordinary messenger, with his assistants, proclaiming the fall of Babylon will be known in his time. Also the one warning the people of God to come out of Babylon literally, spiritually, and practically, will be known also, and such other threatening for the omission of compliance is not to be found in all the Bible.” Dow’s Works, p. 533.



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The following extracts are from an old book written about 1812 by Theophilus R. Gates and entitled "Truth Advocated." Through the kindness of a sister living in Allegan County, Michigan, the writer was enabled to secure the following from the only copy of this book known to be in existence—she having borrowed it of her neighbor, a relative of its author.

On Rev. 14:11: "I would here gladly drop the subject, lest I give offense; but duty compels me to remark, what can not be denied, that an inordinate attachment to certain systems and forms of religion, has occasioned all the strifes, animosities, and persecutions, that have so long agitated the Christian world; and if God be just, every one must drink of the cup of his indignation, according to his offense. The beast and his image, as it exists in Protestant countries, seems in this place particularly meant; and our own land is full of the number of his name. That such a testimony will one day go forth we must believe, or else St. John saw that which will never be: and the testimony will as certainly be received; for a company in the next chapter are to be seen that had gotten the victory over the beast, his image, his mark, and the number of his name. It is also equally true that as yet it has never gone forth; and that at the time, great afflictions or suffering of some kind will be undergone to exercise the patience of the saints.... It is at this very time, no doubt, that the three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet; spirits of devils working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the great battle of the great day of God Almighty. The greatest possible efforts, indeed will now be made by all the sectarians to keep up their existence ... nor is it any wonder that hireling ministers and system worshipers, Demetrius like, should be stirred up and raise no small stir about the way; for it is evident, not only their craft is in danger of being set at naught by this testimony, but also the great Diana of systems and forms of religion to be despised, and their magnificence destroyed, whom now almost the whole Christian world worshipeth." Pp. 281-283.

"And now commences an era of light and suffering, when the corrupt churches (with the kings of the earth and great men united with them) being about to be wholly brought down, make one general muster against Christ and his true worshipers. These things are clear to me as a ray of light; and whoever lives at this time will see as great opposition and spite to the true way of righteousness then set forth from sectarians and professors generally, as there was from the Jews towards Christ and his testimony: and also, like the Jews, at the very time they oppose the true way of the Lord with all their might, they will no doubt make the greatest possible show of religion, will think they are the true church, yea will have a zeal for God, carrying on religion with great success, forming societies, sending missionaries among the heathen, *etc.*, *etc.* That such an event will take place is very clear." Pp. 286-288.



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“This happy period I never expect to see: but known unto the Lord only are all things. I know that such a time will be; for we are assured by the angel, these are the true sayings of God: and I also believe that it will take place *within two centuries* from this time. But oh! how corrupt doth the world now appear to me.... Help me, O Lord, I pray thee, to do thy will.

“Whenever any body of people come into notice, establish their rules and institutions, and become a respectable sect, they are the people of God then only in name; they cease to have the nature any longer; and whoever unites himself to the same, constitutes himself one of the beast’s party, and so far as his influence extends, he helps to establish the kingdom of Antichrist in the earth. This is clear from the prophecies of the Revelation, and it will answer no purpose to take offense when the truth is spoken. These things will, moreover, sooner or later be declared with great plainness by some one; and then will the man of sin put forth all his strength; then will persecution come, and the beast muster his armies to defend himself and to destroy the assailants, but in vain; for however few their number may be at first, and however furious the battle may rage against them, they are destined to conquer. And herein the words of Christ will fitly apply, ‘Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’” P. 313.

Speaking of sectarianism, he says further: “The same round of things will continue until the evil is remedied.... When this shall take place, time only can determine with certainty. It will probably commence slowly, and not come with any great outward observation. Few will at first see or embrace the way, being strange to them, and appearing on account of their prejudices, and the way they have been taught by the false prophet, to be wrong and improper: moreover, being opposed to all others, they will have all others to oppose them. But though they are despised and hated, and few in number, the Lord is with them.” Pp. 322, 323.

On Rev. 16:13, 14: “I have already delivered my views with respect to these unclean spirits ... and it is not necessary to say much here upon the subject; only I would just observe, that this will be a time of greater trial to Christians in general, and in a time in which more will be deprived of every particle of true religion through the influence of false ministers belonging to the different societies in Christendom, than any that has ever yet been in the world. But while they are making these great exertions, they are only preparing themselves and their deluded votaries for a more awful and complete destruction. For God Almighty is against them, and they against Him; though they will know it not, but think perhaps all the while they are his peculiar favorites, and that they are employed in maintaining his cause, like the Jews before them, when it is only their own cause and men’s traditions.” P. 338.



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“I am but as the voice of one crying in the wilderness of error and of sin, of wickedness and delusion, testifying according to the best light given me; and any light that I can possibly communicate will in a little time become as the feeble shining of the sun, by reason of the greatness of the light that shall be hereafter.” P. 354.

“A true and living testimony will go forth before this last period of the awful judgments of God comes to a close, and in consequence of rejecting it, like the Jews of old, the wrath of God will come upon them to the uttermost. The testimony against the worshipers of the beast, by the third angel, Rev. 14:9, is the testimony that effectually overthrows the kingdom of darkness and establishes the truth as it is in Jesus, pure and undefiled.... The authors of this testimony will ... unlike to all who go before them, attack the evil at its root, and expose the deceit, hypocrisy and wickedness of the different sects in a way that has never before been done; for which they will suffer the greatest persecution. You may look upon these things as the reveries of my own fancy; but some day or other, people will witness to the truth of what I now write.” Pp. 421, 422.

“All the reformations which go before this last great reform will only be partial and temporary. They will only lop off the branches, or at the most, only strike at the body of the corrupt tree, while the roots remain untouched and uninjured. But when this last testimony goes forth, the very roots of the corrupt tree will be attacked.” P. 426.

“Every sect is under an idea that whenever the Lord comes to establish truth in the earth, it will be to establish their creed, raise up their sect, and bring the whole world into their way. And when the faithful witnesses whom God will raise up shall openly declare that they have all gone out of the way, that the greatest professors have so much of guile, selfishness and party spirit about them as to be nothing but hypocrites, and that a person must be better than they are or be lost forever; that sects are an abomination to the Lord; denounce eternal death upon every advocate and adherent of men-made establishments; ... I say when such a testimony as this goes forth, as it sooner or later will, no wonder that the sects, all with one accord, should set themselves against it—should call it heresy—declare it will ruin the churches if it is not suppressed.... Although, as I have before testified, I am only as the voice of one crying in the wilderness—a mere babe in the knowledge of these things which are to be revealed hereafter, yet I expect to raise a host of bigots and hypocrites against me.... Nor can it be very long before the true light, in a very especial manner, will shine.... If these things do not come to pass, then let me be called an enthusiast or a deceiver.” Pp. 444-446.

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.



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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 has come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

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

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

18. And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19. And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20. And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

The special characters of this vision and their work have been very difficult for me to identify positively. Until clearer light on the matter is received, I choose to withhold an explanation rather than to indulge in speculation. Its usual explanation is to apply the gathering of the harvest of the earth to the work of the reformation now taking place and the vintage scene to the final destruction of the wicked, their punishment being symbolized by the treading of the "winepress of the wrath of God." This may be its signification. It is certain, however, that in a subsequent chapter, the final judgment of the wicked is symbolized by the treading of "the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." Beyond this I can not now speak with certainty.

CHAPTER XV.

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2. And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.³ And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.



4. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest:

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

6. And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.



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7. And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

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

The scene presented to us in this vision is but an introduction to the solemn scenes of awful judgment immediately following. The first thing that attracted John's attention was a sign, great and marvelous, "seven angels having the seven last plagues." The reason why these are denominated the "last plagues" is because that "in them is filled up the wrath of God." These are the completion, then, the finishing up of the work of divine judgment against the persecutors of the church. When the last one is poured out the work is done, the time of judgment is over. These angels are not designed to symbolize any agencies on earth, for they do not appear on earth; they are simply the conductors of the Revelation. God never commissions his people on earth to perform such great judgments upon their persecutors as the temporal judgments of the seven last plagues will be shown to be; but, on the contrary, he has given them the express command not to avenge themselves, but to suffer wrong. He himself lays exclusive claim to this prerogative, saying, "Vengeance is *mine*; I will repay, saith the Lord." Rom. 12:19.

As soon as the subject of the plagues is introduced and before they are poured out, the narrative suddenly changes and a short history of God's redeemed saints is given. This, perhaps, thus occurs for two reasons—to assist us in fixing the chronology of the events described and to encourage us with the thought that, even while the awful judgments of God are being "made manifest" upon the haughty oppressors of earth, God has a chosen people who have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." They stand upon the "sea of glass, having the harps of God"—a symbol of melody and praise—and sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. The song of Moses was that sung by the Israelites when they had escaped to the further side of the Red Sea, thus securing perfect deliverance from their enemies. So, also, this company of worshipers sing a great song of deliverance—deliverance from the beast and his image. In chapters 4 and 5 John saw the great host redeemed before the apostasy standing on this sea of glass, singing the song of redemption—the song of the Lamb—but this company are enabled to sing another song as well—the song of deliverance—for they have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name." Halleluiah! "Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."



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As before stated (chap. 8:3), the heavenly world as opened up to John appeared symbolized after the sanctuary of the temple. By “the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony,” out of which the seven angels came fully prepared for their work, is meant the most holy place of the sanctuary, called “the tabernacle of the testimony” because there was deposited in it, beneath the wings of the cherubim, the ark of the testimony, or God’s covenant. It was therefore as from the most holy place of the sanctuary—from the very presence of the Deity—that these angels went forth commissioned to execute the seven last plagues. This shows that they went by the divine command as ministers of vengeance. The purity and beauty of their attire denoted both the spotless excellency of their characters and the justice of the work in which they were to engage. Although theirs was a work of awful avenging judgment, still the garments they wore would not be soiled thereby; and their flowing robes of white were girded up with a beautiful golden girdle. Therefore there is no inconsistency between the purity and love of God and the work of his vengeance. It would seem to human reasoning that the two are irreconcilable, but these symbols teach differently.

These angels received their vials (goblets) of wrath at the hands of one of the four living creatures, who are symbols of the redeemed sons of earth. Their deliverance by one of these doubtless denotes that these judgments were to be executed in their behalf and in answer to their prayers. For centuries the wrath of deadly persecutors had been poured out upon God’s people, until the cry ascended from the lips of the martyrs, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” Chap. 6:10. Now their prayer is answered, and by their hand, as it were, the vials of wrath are delivered with the divine sanction unto the seven angels to be poured out upon these proud oppressors of the Lord’s people. These vials, too, were “full of wrath.” What a fearful expression! *Full of wrath*, even “*the wrath of God*, who liveth forever and ever.” There was nothing in them but wrath and that to the very brim.

As soon as the vials were delivered, “the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God.” This symbol is taken from the Shekinah which filled the ancient tabernacle. We read that when the tabernacle was finished, “a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” Ex. 40:34, 35. The same thing occurred at the dedication of Solomon’s temple. “The cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord.” 1 Kings 8:10, 11. So, also, in the symbol before us the glory of God filled the temple so that no man was able to enter. This is intended to set forth the fact that these avenging judgments were for the manifestation of the divine glory and that there was no access to the throne of God nor to his mercy-seat to alter them or to stay their execution. Such is the sublime scene presented to our view preparatory to the pouring out of the seven last great plagues.



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CHAPTER XVI.

And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2. And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

A great voice out of the temple, now filled with the glory of the divine presence, commanded the seven angels to enter upon their mission. It came, therefore, from God, who alone fixed the time for these judgments to begin.

Before an intelligent explanation of these plagues can be given, however, the following points must be made clear: 1. *Where* the vials were poured out. 2. *Upon whom* they were emptied. 3. *Why* they were thus poured out. 4. *When* they were fulfilled, or, rather, at what time they began to be fulfilled. These points we will first briefly consider in the order named, after which we will discuss the *nature* of the plagues and their individual application.

1. The place where these vials of wrath were poured out was “upon the earth”; that is, the Apocalyptic earth, or that portion of the earth made the special subject of Apocalyptic vision; namely, the territory of the ten kingdoms. The last two vials, however, will be found to embrace a larger territory.

2. They were poured out upon those “which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshiped his image.” It has already been shown that the image made by the second beast of chapter 13 was the Protestant ecclesiastical organizations; hence the “beast” here referred to, to which the image was made, must signify the ecclesiastical hierarchy of Rome, the original. So the plagues fell upon the adherents of both organized Romanism and Protestantism in Europe.

3. The reason why the judgments of the first three vials especially descended upon them was because “they had shed the blood of saints and prophets.” Verse 6. That Romanism was a fierce oppressor of God’s people has already been noticed: Protestantism as their persecutor, also, must now be considered further. Protestant sects after they first became established and got power in their own hands, acted much in the same manner as the church of Rome did before them, persecuting, banishing, imprisoning, and even putting to death those who refused to receive their tenets or to conform to the system of religion they had adopted. The Lutherans, at first a pious, persecuted people, on becoming numerous and exalted by the favor of the great, established a certain system of religion and then, when it was in their power,



persecuted, imprisoned, banished, or put to death all that dissented. As early after the Reformation as 1574, in a convention at Torgaw, they established the real presence in the eucharist and instigated



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the Elector of Saxony to seize, imprison, and banish all the secret Calvinists that differed from them in sentiment, and to reduce their followers by every act of violence, to renounce their sentiments and to confess the ubiquity. Peucer, for his opinions, suffered ten years of imprisonment in the severest manner. In 1577 a form of concord was produced in which the real manducation of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist was established and heresy and excommunication laid on all that refused this as an article of faith, with pains and penalties to be enforced by the secular arm. Crellius, in 1601, was put to death.

In Switzerland, before the city of Zurich was entirely safe itself from the encroachments of Romanism, its Protestant council condemned a young man named Felix Mantz to be drowned because he insisted that the baby-sprinkling of Romanism was not baptism and that all who had received the rite ought to be immersed. This sentence was carried into effect. The severest laws were passed in different countries of Europe against the Anabaptists, and large numbers were banished or burnt at the stake. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, Art. Anabaptists. Protestants may claim this was because of their fanaticism on other lines; but it remains a fact, nevertheless, that the chief sentiment at the base of these laws was religious persecution and that Protestants sanctioned and carried them into execution.

King Henry VIII., the founder of the Established Church in England, adopted the most stringent laws to enforce its doctrines. Certain articles of religion were drawn up, known in history as the "Bloody Six Articles." Concerning these the People's Cyclopaedia says: "The doctrines were substantially those of the Roman Catholic Church. Whoever denied the first articles (that embodying the doctrine of transubstantiation) was to be declared a heretic, and burnt without opportunity of abjuration; whoso spoke against the other five articles should, for the first offense, forfeit his property; and whosoever refused to abjure his first offense, or committed a second, was to die like a felon." Art. Henry VIII. "The royal reformer persecuted alike Catholics and Protestants. Thus, on one occasion, three Catholics who denied that the king was the rightful head of the church, and three Protestants who disputed the doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament,... were dragged on the same sled to the place of execution." In speaking of that period of history and of the religious persecutions of the times, Myers says: "Punishment of heresy was then regarded, by both Catholics and Protestants alike, as a duty which could be neglected by those in authority only at the peril of Heaven's displeasure. Believing this, those of that age could consistently do nothing less than labor to exterminate heresy with axe, sword and fagot." General History, p. 553.



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That religious intolerance even at a later date was practised in England, witness the twelve years' imprisonment of John Bunyan and the hundreds confined in jails throughout that country for not conforming to the established religion. It was such severe persecution by that early Protestant sect that drove the Puritans from England's fair country to the then inhospitable shores of America, that they might have an opportunity to worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience. In Scotland the Covenanters "insisted on their right to worship God in their own way. They were therefore subjected to most cruel and unrelenting persecution. They were hunted by English troopers over their native moors and among the wild recesses of their mountains, whither they secretly retired for prayer and worship. The tales of the suffering of the Scotch Covenanters at the hands of the English Protestants form a most harrowing chapter of the records of the ages of religious persecution." This list might be considerably augmented, but it is unnecessary. However, that Protestant persecution and tyranny should never reach the enormous extent of the Romanists before them is proved by the fact that her horns were "like a lamb." Chap. 13:11.

4. It is very important for us to ascertain the *time* for the beginning of these plagues; for they can not be identified unless we understand the chronology of the events described. It is a fact no one can question that the seventh plague is the judgment of the last day, for in the seven "is filled up" the wrath of God; hence they are denominated the *last* plagues. It is also a fact, well-known to all who are spiritual and who understand the truth in the present reformation, that certain events said to occur under the period of the sixth plague are *now* taking place; namely, the confederation of all false religions to oppose the people of God, led on by the "unclean spirits" that 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." Verses 13, 14.

Therefore five of the plagues precede the time in which we are now living. It is evident that the plagues could not begin before the reformation; for the vials were poured out upon the "image of the beast"—Protestantism—also. Hence we are directed to some period between the sixteenth century and the present day for their commencement. The reason *why* the first judgments especially were poured out will assist us in determining the starting-point—"They have shed the blood of saints and prophets." This expression seems to indicate that the time for the plagues to begin was after Romanism and Protestantism ceased putting people to death because of their religious sentiments. That this is the correct idea is clearly proved by what was said to the martyrs when they cried unto God for the avenging of their blood on them that dwell on the earth. "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." Chap. 6:10, 11. For additional information concerning the terrible persecutions that followed the Sixteenth Century Reformation, see remarks on chapter 6:10, 11.



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We must now determine about what time the great persecutions referred to ceased, or nearly ceased, and that will give us the right starting-point from which to reckon the pouring out of the first vial. In A.D. 1685 the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by Louis XIV. of France, took place, and in the terrible persecutions that occurred during his reign three hundred thousand are said to have lost their lives. The time that we are endeavoring to establish, then, must be later than the seventeenth century. Louis died in 1714. Persecutions continued from time to time in France, with considerable severity, until about the middle of the century. "Soon after this ... the flowing of heretic blood ceased, though an effort was made in 1765 by the Popish clergy to resist the tendency to toleration by a remonstrance to the king." History of Romanism, p. 608. A few individual cases of persecution may have occurred later in other countries; but in the main we are safe in pointing to about the middle of the eighteenth century for the general cessation of these religious *murders*. We will now consider the nature of the first plague.

The pouring out of this vial produced the most painful malignant ulcers upon the human body. Such ulcers are evidently not political calamities; for the symbol is drawn, not from nature, but from human life. Still, it is not drawn from a human being as a whole (in which case religious events would be symbolized), but only from his body. What, then, is the analagous object of which the human body may stand as a proper representative? Evidently, the mind. We would naturally pass from the bodily to the mental; and what painful ulcers are to the one, marring its beauty and filling it with burning anguish, such are blasphemous opinions and malignant principles to the other.

Considering the time for this plague pointed out above, the student of Revelation who is acquainted with the history of the past will scarcely fail to discern at once, in the striking points of this symbol, those horrible principles of infidelity, atheism, and licentiousness, which were spread so extensively over Europe during the latter half of the eighteenth century, and which were the most efficient causes in bringing about the fearful convulsions which followed in the French Revolution. That all may understand this matter in its proper light, however, it will be necessary to state some of the facts respecting this "noisome and grievous sore" that fell at that time upon the inhabitants of Europe. In writing upon the causes that led up to the French Revolution, Mr. Wickes gathered the following facts of history mainly from the Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, under the articles headed *Philosophists* and *Illuminati*. I will quote his own language, as it is very pointed.



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“Philosophists was a name given to several persons in France, who entered into a combination to overthrow the religion of Jesus, and eradicate from the human heart every religious sentiment. The man more particularly to whom this idea first occurred, was Voltaire, who being weary (as he said himself) of hearing it repeated that twelve men were sufficient to establish Christianity, resolved to prove that one might be sufficient to overturn it. Full of this project, he swore, before the year 1730, to devote his life to its accomplishment, and for some time he flattered himself that he should enjoy alone the glory of destroying the Christian religion. He found, however, that associates would be necessary; and from the numerous tribe of his admirers and disciples, he chose D’Alembert and Diderot, as the most proper persons to co-operate with him in his designs. He contrived also to enlist Frederick II., king of Prussia, who became one of his most zealous coadjutors, until he found that Voltaire was waging war with the throne as well as the altar. This, indeed, was not originally Voltaire’s intention. He was vain; from natural disposition an aristocrat, and an admirer of royalty. But when he found that almost every sovereign but Frederick disapproved of his ambitious designs, as soon as he perceived their issue, he determined to oppose all the governments on earth rather than forfeit the glory with which he flattered himself, of vanquishing Christ and his apostles in the field of controversy.

“He now set himself, with his associates, D’Alembert and Diderot, to excite universal discontent with the established order of things. For this purpose, they formed secret societies, assumed new names, and employed an enigmatical language. In their secret meetings they professed to celebrate the mysteries of *Mythra*; and their great object, as they professed to one another, was to confound the wretch, meaning Jesus Christ. Hence their secret watchword was ‘Crush the wretch.’ The following are some of their doctrines, as found in their books expressly designed for general circulation. Sometimes standing out in their naked horror, at other times enveloped in sophistry and disguise. The Universal Cause, that God of the philosophers, of the Jews, and of the Christians, is but a chimera and a phantom—The phenomena of nature only prove the existence of God to a few prepossessed men—It is more reasonable to admit, with Manes, of a two-fold God, than of the God of Christianity—We can not know whether a God really exists, or whether there is any difference between good and evil, or vice and virtue—Nothing can be more absurd than to believe the soul a spiritual being—The immortality of the soul, so far from stimulating men to the practise of virtue, is nothing but a barbarous, desperate, fatal tenet, and contrary to all legislation—All ideas of justice and injustice, of virtue and vice, of glory and infamy, are purely arbitrary, and dependent on



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custom—Conscience and remorse are nothing but the foresight of those physical penalties to which crimes expose us—The man who is above the law, can commit, without remorse, the dishonest act that may serve his purpose—The fear of God, so far from being the beginning of wisdom, should be the beginning of folly—The command to love one's parents is more the work of education than of nature—Modesty is only an invention of refined voluptuousness—The law which condemns married people to live together, becomes barbarous and cruel on the day they cease to love one another.

“Such were the atrocious sentiments, though sometimes artfully veiled, which were disseminated in their books, and which, spreading all over Europe, imperceptibly took possession of the public mind, and prepared the way for the subversion of religion, morals, and government. As soon as the sale of the works was sufficient to pay expenses, inferior editions were printed and given away, or sold at a very low price; circulating libraries of them were formed, and reading societies instituted. While they constantly denied these productions to the world, they contrived to give them a false celebrity through their confidential agents and correspondents, who were not themselves always trusted with the entire secret.

“By degrees they got possession nearly of all the reviews and periodical publications; established a general intercourse, by means of hawkers and pedlars, with the distant provinces; and instituted an office to supply all schools with teachers; and thus did they acquire unprecedented dominion over every species of literature, over the minds of all ranks of people, and the education of the youth, without giving any alarm to the world. The lovers of wit and polite literature were caught by Voltaire; the men of science were perverted, and children corrupted in the first rudiments of learning, by D'Alembert and Diderot; stronger appetites were fed by the secret club of Baron Holbach; the imaginations of the higher orders were set dangerously afloat by Montesquieu; and the multitude of all ranks was surprised, confounded, and hurried away by Rousseau. Thus was the public mind in France completely corrupted, and the way prepared for the dreadful scenes that followed.”

But there is also another chapter to the dark history of this “noisome and grievous sore.” The same author says again:

“After Voltaire had broached his system of infidel philosophy, and brought it unto perfection, it was taken up by the celebrated Dr. Adam Weishaupt, professor of canon law in the University of Ingolstadt, and by him perfected as a system of light or illuminism. On the 1st of May, 1776, he founded, among the students of the above-named University, a secret society under the name of the *Illuminati*, whose avowed object was to diffuse the light of science, these secret societies being so many radiating centers of light. But the science taught was the most atrocious infidelity,



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and its object the overturning of all government and religion. Free masonry, being in high repute all over Europe when Weishaupt first formed the plan of his society, he availed himself of its secrecy to introduce his new order, which rapidly spread, by the efforts of its founders and disciples, through all those countries, and found its way even to the United States. It would not be possible here to give even an outline of the nature and constitution of this extraordinary society—of its secrets and mysteries—of the deep dissimulation, consummate hypocrisy, and shocking impiety of its founder and his associates—of their Jesuitical arts in concealing their real objects, and their incredible industry and astonishing exertions in making converts—of the absolute despotism and complete system of *espionage* established throughout the order—of the blind obedience exacted of the *novices*, and the absolute power of life and death assumed by the order and conceded by the novices—of the pretended morality, real blasphemies, and absolute atheism of the founder and his tried friends. Reference can only be made to these things as well-established facts.

“It is important here to bear in mind one or two facts, in order to realize what an engine of corruption this secret organization of the *Illuminati* was. One fact is, the high popularity which these secret societies at that period enjoyed. It was unbounded. There is something which commends such secret organizations most powerfully to the depraved human nature. Men love them because they are secret, and because they can wield such tremendous power. The other fact to be considered, is the absence, to a such vast extent, of the controlling elements of true religion in the European mind, and its predisposition to skepticism. The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century had broken the shackles of priestly Papal superstition over the human mind; and [true] evangelical doctrine not being introduced to supply the vacuum, the mass swung readily over from the regions of dark superstition to blank atheism. Thus were the elements ready prepared to hand for such spirits as Voltaire, D’Alembert, Diderot, Weishaupt, and others, to work upon, and by reason of their secret powerful agencies, to mould to their own liking.

“It was now this damning system of infidelity, under the specious name of philosophy, light, and science, spread with such untiring industry over the European mind, that unhinged the whole framework of society, and prepared it, like a vast magazine, for an awful explosion. All the principles that held society together in the fear of God and future retribution—regard for human law—respect for magistrates, parents, and the marriage-tie—yea, in the very distinctions of virtue and vice, had been unsettled or taken away. They had been reasoned down and laughed out of the world; and when these only restraints, which God has imposed upon human selfishness and passion were removed,



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what was then to hold back those fierce passions and that deep selfishness from the most unbounded excesses? God was no more feared—government was no more sacred—religion was a delusion—immorality was a lie—virtue was a name—the marriage-tie was a farce—modesty was refined voluptuousness: and when men were persuaded of these things, society began to roll and heave under the long swells of that portentous storm of wrath which was soon to break, in all its desolating fury, over the earth.”

In the facts here presented it may be seen how far we are justified in applying to them this first vial of wrath. The vial was poured out “upon the earth”—on the inhabitants of the ten kingdoms when in a state of tranquility. This was their condition, unsuspecting of danger, when the dread infection was spread through society. According to the testimony of Pres. Dwight, within ten years from the first establishment of the Illuminati, in 1776, “they were established in great numbers through Germany, Sweden, Prussia, Poland, Austria, Holland, France, Switzerland, Italy, England, Scotland, and America. They spread with a rapidity which nothing but fact could have induced any sober mind to believe.”

This system of infidelity is well symbolized by a noisome, greivous ulcer, which is loathsome to the sight, offensive to the smell, corrupting to the body, and productive of awful pain. That it appeared so to others besides the author of the Revelation is shown by the following epithets which Burke, the celebrated English orator, applied to the spirit of the French Revolution, which was only the discharged virus of these ulcers. He styled it “the fever of Jacobinism;” “the epidemic of atheistical fanaticism;” “an evil lying deep in the corruptions of human nature;” “such a plague, that the precaution of the most severe quarantine ought to be established against it.” The result, he says, was “the corruption of all morals,” “the decomposition of all society.” What greater plague could fall upon Romanism and Protestantism than this fearful scourge of infidelity?

I have dwelt for a considerable length of time upon this subject, because of its deep interest, and also because I desired to verify the application of the symbol as much as possible, on account of its close connection with the pouring out of the vials which follow.

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.

This vial was poured out upon the “sea.” The sea is a large body of water within the earth, subject to violent storms and agitations. As a symbol it would denote some central power or kingdom within the symbolic earth in a state of revolution. The effects produced by this vial were two-fold—the waters were changed into blood as of a dead

man, and all the living creatures in the sea died. The waters of the sea represent the inhabitants of this



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kingdom (see a similar explanation of *water* in chap. 17:15) as the earth does the inhabitants of the empire, or the ten kingdoms. The living creatures in the sea, therefore, could signify the rulers and princes of the kingdom, as they bear an analagous relation to the people that fishes do to the waters. The statement that the waters of the sea became “as the blood of a dead man” is doubtless intended to signify a much more dreadful state of things than if they had simply been changed to blood. They were converted into black and poisonous, or corrupt, blood. This denotes the vast slaughter and massacre of the inhabitants of this kingdom; while the death of the living creatures denotes the extinction of those in power.

It may appear at first that making the conversion of water into blood a symbol of bloodshed is adopting the literal method of interpretation; but not so, and for the following reason: The symbol is taken from nature, the waters of the sea representing the inhabitants of the kingdom. The waters are changed into an unnatural state or element, that of blood, and this change denotes an analagous one passing upon the inhabitants. Their continuing in life would be their remaining as waters: their massacre and destruction would be the waters changed to blood—a horrible and unnatural element. Likewise, the death of the living things in the sea is a similar destruction overtaking the kings, rulers, and princes.

With our understanding of the nature of the first vial, which prepared the way for the pouring out of this one, we shall have no difficulty whatever in identifying this symbol with the terrible convulsions of the French Revolution. It followed as a necessary consequence of the first. Voltaire and his coadjutors had insulted and trampled in the dust everything held sacred in human eyes, and this fully prepared the way for the scenes of terror that followed.

In studying these vials the reader should bear in mind constantly the reason *why* they were sent as judgments upon the nations of Europe—because of their former oppression of God’s people. From the days when the Popes received their first temporal authority at the hands of the Carolingian king, Pepin and Charlemagne, France[11] constituted the real backbone of the Papacy, the very center of her power and authority, as all history will show. In the fourteenth century the Papal seat was removed from Rome to Avignon, in France, where it remained for about seventy years. During this period all the Popes were French, and “all their policies were shaped and controlled by the French kings.” To write a history of the Papacy during the Dark Ages is to outline the history of France, so closely are their affairs interwoven. Hence it is only natural that she should be symbolized as the “sea” in this part of the Apocalypse, with the other nations as tributaries. Ver. 4-6. That the French Revolution was in its effects a terrible blow to the thrones of despotism throughout Europe is shown by the following quotation from the Encyclopaedia Britannica: “We are coming to the verge of the French Revolution, which *surpasses all other revolutions the world has seen* in its

completeness, the largeness of its theatre, the long preparation for it ... its *influence on the modern history of Europe.*" Art. France.



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[Footnote 11: Pepin and Charlemagne were, properly speaking, simply German princes reigning in Gaul. The kingdom of France is usually dated from the accession of the first of the Capetian kings, late in the tenth century, 987. However, the Frankish nation, of whom the Carolingian kings were leaders, laid the foundation of the French kingdom and gave a new name to Gaul—France.]

This revolution commenced on the fifth of May, 1789, in the Convocation of the States General, for the redress of grievances and the extrication of the government and nation from the difficulties under which they were laboring. A conflict had been going on between despotism and popular rights, the throne and nobility contending for absolute power, and the people, for freedom. But when in this encounter the popular party triumphed, there was no fear of God before the eyes of those who seized the reins of government. The infidelity of Voltaire and his associates had removed the last restraint upon human passion, and the scenes of terror that followed are without a parallel in history. The king was condemned to death and executed. The barbarous execution of the queen, Marie Antoinette, followed in about six months, and this was immediately succeeded by the decree of the National Convention, of the most infamous character, that of the violation of the tombs of St. Dennis and the profanation of the sepulchres of the kings of France. I will quote from Sir A. Alison's noted History of Europe:

“By a decree of the Convention, these venerable asylums of departed greatness were ordered to be destroyed.... A furious multitude precipitated itself out of Paris; the tombs of Henry IV., of Francis I., and of Louis XII., were ransacked, and their bones scattered in the air. Even the glorious name of Turenne could not protect his grave from spoilation. His remains were almost undecayed, as when he received the fatal wound on the banks of the Lech. The bones of Charles V., the savior of his country, were dispersed. At his feet was found the coffin of the faithful Du Gueselin, and the French hands profaned the skeleton before which English invasion had rolled back. Most of these tombs were found to be strongly secured. Much time, and no small exertion of skill and labor, were required to burst their barriers. They would have resisted forever the decay of time or the violence of enemies; they yielded to the fury of domestic dissension. This was followed immediately by a general attack upon the monuments and remains of antiquity throughout all France. The sepulchres of the great of past ages, of the barons and generals of the feudal ages, of the paladins, and of the crusaders, were involved in one undistinguished ruin. It seemed as if the glories of antiquity were forgotten, or sought to be buried in oblivion. The tomb of Du Gueselin shared the same fate as that of Louis XIV. The skulls of monarchs and heroes were tossed about like foot balls by the profane multitude; like the grave-diggers in Hamlet, they made a jest of the lips before which the nations had trembled.”



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Having begun by waging this profane warfare upon their own glorious dead, another scene of the fatal drama immediately succeeded. The same author continues: "Having massacred the great of the present and insulted the illustrious of former ages, nothing remained to the revolutionists but to direct their vengeance against heaven itself. Pache, Hebert, and Chaumette, the leaders of the municipality publicly expressed their determination 'to dethrone the God of heaven, as well as the monarchs of earth.' To accomplish this design, they prevailed on Gobet, the apostate constitutional bishop of Paris, to appear at the bar of the Assembly, accompanied by some of the clergy of his diocese, and there abjure the Christian faith. He declared 'that no other national religion was now required but that of Liberty, equality, and morality.' Many of the constitutional bishops and clergy in the Convention joined in the proposition. Crowds of drunken artisans and shameless prostitutes crowded to the bar, and trampled under their feet the sacred vases, consecrated for ages to the holiest purposes of religion. The churches were stripped of all their ornaments; their plate and valuable contents brought in heaps to the municipality and the Convention, from whence they were sent to the mint to be melted down. Trampling under foot the images of our Savior and the Virgin, they elevated, amid shouts of applause, the busts of Marat and Lepelletier, and danced around them, singing parodies on the Halleluiah, and dancing the Carmagnole.

"Shortly after a still more indecent exhibition took place before the assembly.... Hebert and Chaumette, and their associates, appeared at the bar and declared 'that God did not exist, and that the worship of Reason was to be substituted in his stead.' A veiled female, arrayed in blue drapery, was brought into the Assembly; and Chaumette, taking her by the hand, 'Mortals,' said he, 'cease to tremble before the powerless thunders of a God whom your fears have created. Henceforth acknowledge no divinity but Reason. I offer you its noblest and purest image; if you must have idols, sacrifice only to this.' When, letting fall the veil, he exclaimed, 'Fall before the august Senate of Freedom, O Veil of Reason!' At the same time, the goddess appeared personified by a celebrated beauty, the wife of Momoro, a printer, known in more than one character to most of the Convention. The goddess after being embraced by the president, was mounted on a magnificent car, and conducted, amid an immense crowd, to the cathedral of Notre Dame, to take the place of the Deity. There she was elevated on a high altar, and received the adoration of all present, while the young women, her attendants, whose alluring looks already sufficiently indicated their profession, retired into the chapels around the choir, where every species of licentiousness and obscenity was indulged in without control, with hardly any veil from the public gaze. To such a length was this carried, that Robespierre afterward declared that Chaumette deserved death for the abominations he had permitted on that occasion. Thenceforward that ancient edifice was called the *Temple of Reason*."



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Such horrible events are sickening to relate; but as I started out to describe the condition of this “sea” when it became as the blood of a dead man, I must be faithful to the task. God was now dethroned; the services of religion abandoned; every tenth day set apart for the hellish orgies of atheism and Reason; Marat was deified; the instrument of death sanctified by the name “the holy Guillotine”; on the public cemeteries was inscribed, “Death is an Eternal Sleep”; marriage was a civil contract, binding only during the pleasure of the contracting parties. Mademoiselle Arnout, a celebrated comedian, expressed the public feeling when she said, “*Marriage the sacrament of adultery.*” What an awful harvest would be expected of such seed! Alison continues:

“A Revolutionary Tribunal was formed at Nantes, under the direction of Carrier, and it soon outstripped even the rapid march of Danton and Robespierre. Their principle was that it was necessary to destroy *en masse*, all the prisoners. At their command was formed a corps, called the Legion of Marat, composed of the most determined and bloodthirsty of the revolutionists, the members of which were entitled, on their own authority, to incarcerate any person whom they chose. The number of their prisoners was soon between three and four thousand, and they divided among themselves all their property. Whenever a further supply of captives was wanted, the alarm was spread of a counter-revolution, the *generale* beat, the cannon planted; and this was followed immediately by innumerable arrests. Nor were they long in disposing of their captives. The miserable wretches were either slain with poinards in prison, or carried out in a vessel and drowned by wholesale in the Loire. On one occasion a hundred ‘fanatical priests,’ as they were termed, were taken out together, striped of their clothes, and precipitated into the waters.... Women big with child, infants eight, nine, and ten years of age, were thrown together into the stream, on the sides of which men, armed with sabres, were placed to cut off their heads if the waves should throw them undrowned on the shore.

“On one occasion, by orders of Carrier, twenty-three of the revolutionists, on another twenty-four, were guillotined without any trial. The executioner remonstrated, but in vain. Among them were many children of seven or eight years of age, and seven women; the executioner died two or three days after, with horror at what he himself had done. So great was the multitude of captives who were brought in on all sides, that the executioners, as well as the company of Marat, declared themselves exhausted with fatigue; and a new method of disposing of them was adopted, borrowed from Nero, but improved on the plan of that tyrant. A hundred or a hundred and fifty victims, for the most part women and children, were crowded together in a boat, with a concealed trap-door in the bottom, which was conducted into the middle of

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the Loire; at a signal given, the crew leaped into another boat, the bolts were withdrawn, and the shrieking victims precipitated into the waters, amid the laughter of the company of Marat, who stood on the banks to cut down any who approached the shore. This was what Carrier called his *Republican Baptisms*. The *Republican Marriages* were, if possible, a still greater refinement of cruelty. Two persons of different sexes, bereft of every species of dress, were bound together, and after being left in torture in that situation for half an hour, thrown into the river. Such was the quantity of corpses accumulated in the Loire, that the water of that river was affected, so as to render a public ordinance necessary, forbidding the use of it to the inhabitants; and the mariners, when they heaved their anchors, frequently brought up boats charged with corpses. Birds of prey flocked to the shores and fed on human flesh; while the very fish became so poisonous, as to induce an order of the municipality of Nantes, prohibiting them to be taken by the fishermen.

“The scenes in the prisons which preceded these horrible executions exceeded all that romance had figured of the terrible. Many women died of terror the moment a man entered their cells, conceiving that they were about to be led out to the noyades; the floors were covered with the bodies of their infants, numbers of whom were yet quivering in the agonies of death. On one occasion, the inspector entered the prison to seek for a child, where, the evening before, he had left above three hundred infants; they were all gone in the morning, having been drowned the preceding night. Fifteen thousand persons perished either under the hands of the executioner, or of disease in prison, in one month: the total victims of the Reign of Terror at that place exceeded thirty thousand.”

After narrating scenes of terror in Paris, Alison says again: “Such accumulated horrors annihilated all the charities and intercourse of life. Before daybreak the shops of the provision merchants were besieged by crowds of women and children, clamoring for the food which the law of the *maximum* in general prevented them from obtaining. The farmers trembled to bring their fruits to the market, the shop-keepers to expose them to sale. The richest quarters of the town were deserted; no equipages of crowds of passengers were to be seen on the streets; the sinister words, *Propriete Nationale*, imprinted in large characters on the walls, everywhere showed how far the work of confiscation had proceeded. Passengers hesitated to address their most intimate friends on meeting; the extent of calamity had rendered men suspicious even of those they loved most. Every one assumed the coarsest dress, and the most squalid appearance; an elegant exterior would have been the certain forerunner of destruction. At one hour only were any symptoms of animation seen: it was when the victims were conveyed to execution; the humane fled with horror from the sight, the infuriated rushed in crowds to satiate their eyes with the sight of human agony.



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“Night came, but with it no diminution of the anxiety of the people. Every family early assembled its members; with trembling looks they gazed around the room, fearful that the very walls might harbor traitors. The sound of a foot, the stroke of a hammer, a voice in the streets, froze all hearts with horror. If a knock was heard at the door, every one, in agonized suspense, expected his fate. Unable to endure such protracted misery, numbers committed suicide. ‘Had the reign of Robespierre,’ said Freron, ‘continued longer, multitudes would have thrown themselves under the guillotine; the first of social affections, the love of life, was already extinguished in almost every heart.’”

With one more quotation from this historian I will dismiss this horrible theme: “The combination of wicked men who thereafter governed France, is without parallel in the history of the world. Their power, based on the organized weight of the multitude, and the ardent co-operation of the municipalities, everywhere installed by them in the position of power, was irresistible. All bowed the neck before this gigantic assemblage of wickedness. The revolutionary excesses daily increased, in consequence of the union which the constant dread of retribution produced among their perpetrators. There was no medium between taking part in these atrocities, and falling a victim to them. Virtue seemed powerless; energy appeared only in the extremity of resignation; religion in the heroism of which death was endured. There was not a hope left for France, had it not been for the dissensions which, as the natural result of their wickedness, sprung up among the authors of the public calamities.

“It is impossible not to be struck, in looking back on the fate of these different parties, with the singular and providential manner in which their crimes brought about their own punishment. No foreign interposition was necessary, no avenging angel was required to vindicate the justice of divine administration. They fell the victims of their own atrocity, of the passions which they themselves had let loose, of the injustice of which they had given the first example to others. The Constitutionists overthrew the ancient monarchy, and formed a limited government; but their imprudence in raising popular ambition paved the way for the tenth of August, and speedily brought themselves to the scaffold; the Girondists established their favored dream of a republic, and were the first victims of the fury which it excited; the Dantonists roused the populace against the Gironde, and soon fell under the axe which they had prepared for their rivals; the anarchists defied the power of ‘heaven itself,’ but scarce were their blasphemies uttered, when they were swept off by the partners of their bloody triumphs. One only power remained, alone, terrible, irresistible. This was the power of Death, wielded by a faction steeled against every feeling of humanity, dead to every principle of justice. In their iron hands,



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order resumed its sway from the influence of terror; obedience became universal, from the extinction of hope. Silent and unresisted, they led their victims to the scaffold, dreaded alike by the soldiers who crouched, the people who trembled, and the victims who suffered. The history of the world *has no parallel* to that long night of suffering, because *it has none to the guilt which preceded it*; tyranny never assumed so hideous a form, because licentiousness never required so severe a punishment.”

Prom this awful description, which might be carried to almost any extent, the reader will understand the force of the prophecy which declared that the “sea became as the blood of a dead man, and every living soul died in the sea.”

4. And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.
5. And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.
6. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.
7. And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

Fountains and rivers are tributaries to the sea, and thus, they symbolize the inferior communities and nations belonging to the Apocalyptic earth. France was the great central power and the sea of revolution upon which the second vial descended. The surrounding nations were the rivers and fountains upon which the third was poured. It is not said of them that they became as the blood of a dead man, nor that every living thing in them died, but only that “they became blood.” This symbol denotes the insurrections and desolating wars in which the nations of Europe were involved for a number of years, growing out of the French Revolution. I shall not here take time nor space to enter into the historical details relating to this statement; the facts are well known. “The blood-thirsty Jacobinism of France waged war not only upon its own monarchy, but sought to overturn all the thrones and fabrics of despotism in Europe. The same system of infidelity and atheism had been spread through the kingdoms there, though not to so great an extent as in France, and prepared the elements for revolution in them likewise.” The French republic encouraged these agitations and by a unanimous decree of the Assembly, in 1792, set itself in open hostility with all the established governments of Europe. It was in these words: “The National Convention declares in the name of the French nation, that it will grant fraternity and assistance to all people who wish to recover their liberty; and it charges the executive power to send

the necessary orders to the generals, to give succor to such people, and to defend those citizens who have suffered, or may suffer in the cause of liberty.”



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“The Revolution, having accomplished its work in France, having there destroyed royal despotism, ... now set itself about fulfilling its early promise of giving liberty to all peoples. In a word, the revolutionists became propagandists. France now exhibits what her historians call her social, her communicative genius.” Napoleon was right when he said that a revolution in France was sure to be followed by a revolution throughout Europe. “France conceived the idea that she had a Divine mission, as the great apostle of liberty, to propagate republicanism through all the kingdoms of Europe. In her madness of intoxication she undertook the work, threw down the gauntlet, and the fierce tocsin of war sounded from nation to nation, until the continent was converted into one vast battle-field.”

The “angel of the waters” signifies the angel that had charge of the vial of wrath poured out upon the rivers and fountains of waters. In full view of the awful plagues sent upon the inhabitants of earth, one grand thought seemed to occupy his mind—the righteousness of these judgments. It is not such a thought as humanity would have in mind when reading the history of these fearful convulsions of society, one scene of terror only preparing the way for another more horrible, until they would feel like closing the book and asking, “When will this awful night of horror be over? When will these avenging judgments cease?” These, however, were not the thoughts of this angel clothed in spotless garments; for, draining his vial to the dregs and forcing the nations to drink it, he said: “Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them *blood to drink*; for they are worthy.” Truly, in this the Word of God is fulfilled, which says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways.” Isa. 55:8. That class of people who represent God as a kind, loving Father only, one who will not take vengeance upon the objects of his own creation—let them visit in the pages of history these nations of Europe, scathed and blasted with the hot thunderbolts of divine wrath, until their minds sicken with horror at the sight of human agony and blood. In full view of these horrifying scenes let them hear the angel of the waters saying, “Thou art righteous, O Lord ... because thou hast judged thus; for they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy”; while another voice from heaven, even from the altar, replies, “Even so, Lord God Almighty, *true and righteous* are thy judgments”—and their theology must here break down.

The thoughts just expressed confirm with certainty our interpretation of the “sea” and “rivers and fountains of waters” as signifying those nations which had been the persecutors of the saints, and show, also, the character of the divine judgments as being the shedding of their blood. They had shed the blood of saints and prophets, and now the same cup of wrath was placed to their lips, and they were forced to drink it to the dregs. God remembered the sighs and groans of his faithful followers; the cry of the

martyrs for the avenging of their blood on “them that dwell on the earth” reached his ear; and now the time of retribution began.



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

9. And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

The sun is the great central luminary of the earth, under whose genial light and warmth everything rejoices and develops in forms of beauty. When, however, a scorching power is given to his rays, the earth becomes as a furnace in which every green thing is burnt up. What the sun is to this world, such are the ruling powers to a kingdom; and power being given them to scorch as with fire denotes that the government would be administered, not for the good of the people, but for the purpose of oppression. A scorching sun, therefore, is a proper symbol of tyrant rulers.

Still keeping in view the object of God in sending these first plagues—the punishment of the nations embraced within the territory of the ten former kingdoms of Europe—we are directed with certainty to the next great scourge that followed as a result of those already developed—the almost universal military empire of Napoleon. The success of three of the four greatest military leaders the world has ever seen—Alexander, Caesar, and Charlemagne—has been so clearly predicted by inspiration that no believer in the truth of Revelation attempts to deny it; therefore it is not surprising that the fourth—Napoleon—should also be assigned a place in Apocalyptic vision: not so much because of his all-powerful military genius merely, but because of his mighty influence and effects upon the very nations that were especially made the subject of prophecy, as they stand connected with the history of God's people for centuries. At the close of the Revolution the French nation had not virtue nor religion necessary to remedy the evils under which they had long been suffering from the oppression of their monarchs; for when they undertook the work and demolished the throne, they let loose all the wildest elements of wrath to rage without restraint. The nation rejected God, and God rejected the nation. He gave them up to their own madness, to the fury of the most atrocious wickedness that was ever developed under heaven. "From the wild excesses and intolerable calamities of blood-red republicanism, the people were rejoiced at length to find a refuge in a gigantic military despotism, which became the terror and scourge of Europe." But the hand of God was in this thing, also. When the sun scorches the earth with burning heat, it is God that gives it its power. So Napoleon with his iron will and towering genius was only an instrument in God's hand for scourging the guilty nations. In the ordinary sense of the term Napoleon was not a tyrant to his own nation. Still, his government was a despotism to France; while to the Apocalyptic earth, or the ten kingdoms, he was a scorching



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sun, for his empire extended over the whole. It finally became a saying that “if Napoleon’s cocked hat and gray coat should be raised on the cliffs of Boulogne, all Europe would run to arms.” This agrees with the statement of the historian Judson, concerning the monarchs of Europe, that “the mere name of Napoleon was a dread to them.” None of them could stand before his terrible onset. “Europe was shaken from end to end by such armies as the world had not seen since the days of Xerxes. Napoleon, whose hands were upheld by a score of distinguished marshals, performed the miracles of genius. His brilliant achievements still dazzle, while they amaze, the world.” The crowns and scepters of Europe he held as play-things in his hand, to dispose of at pleasure. Says Wickes: “Never in the history of Christendom were ancient dynasties overthrown, and new ones created, kings made and unmade, within so short a period, as during the unparalleled career of this great conqueror. He had the crowns and kingdoms of all Europe in his gift, to settle as he pleased, or bestow as presents upon his relatives and friends. To his brother Jerome he gave the crown of Westphalia; to his brother Louis, the crown of Holland; to his brother Joseph, the kingdom of Spain; to his brother-in-law and general Murat, the kingdom of Naples; and others he conferred upon his favorite marshals.”

When he invaded Russia, a territory outside of the Apocalyptic earth, he exceeded his mission, and there met with the most terrible overthrow. Although he entered that kingdom with the most magnificent army that he had ever gathered together, yet for suffering and disaster that famous retreat from burning Moscow stands without a parallel in history. It was not the Russian armies that prevailed against him; it was God that fought against him with the blasts of his north wind. These speedily silenced those tremendous parks of artillery that had thundered upon the fields of Jena, Friedland, Wagram, Marengo and Austerlitz, and scattered those invincible battalions that had marched triumphant over Europe. Ney, at the head of the National Guards, ever before victorious, was compelled to beat a hasty retreat, glad to escape with the smallest remnant of his host. Napoleon failed here because God had given him no mission to perform in that territory.

Concerning his ambition, the Encyclopaedia Britannica says: “With a frame of iron, Napoleon could endure any hardships; and in war, in artillery especially and engineering, he stands unrivalled in the world’s history.... He could not rest, and knew not when he had achieved success.... He succeeded in alienating the peoples of Europe, in whose behalf he pretended to be acting. And when they learned by bitter experience that he had absolutely no love for liberty, and encouraged equality only so long as it was an equality of subjects under his rule, they soon began to war against what was in fact a world-destroying military despotism.” He was inspired with



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the most unbounded ambition, which was nothing short of despotism over all Europe, if not the world. Universal empire was his grand object, or, as it has been expressed by historians, a desire to concentrate “the world in Europe—Europe in France—France in Paris—Paris in *himself*.” Says Wickes: “The empire which he actually reared in Europe was a vast, oppressive, centralized despotism.... To build it up, he desolated France through his terrible conscriptions, requiring the whole strength and flower of the nation to supply his armies. It is stated that after the wars of Napoleon there were three times the number of women in France that there were of men. The fathers, the husbands, the sons, the brothers, had fallen upon the battle-field, and thus desolated almost every household in the kingdom. Similar desolation also he carried by his wars into the other kingdoms.”

The dread of Napoleon settled down upon all the nations of Europe. They could not cope with his mighty genius, and therefore his presence was a terror to them. When the allied powers secured his first abdication, in 1814, and sent him to the island of Elba, the desolating results of his long career were shown in the work that the Congress of Vienna was called upon to perform when it assembled in the fall of 1814. While the representatives of the powers were laboring to repair the damage that had been wrought and to adjust the territorial limitations of the various nations that had been altered or entirely demolished, the assemblage was suddenly surprised the following spring by the news that Napoleon had escaped from Elba and was enroute to Paris. The terror and consternation in Europe then experienced is shown by the following quotation from Sir James Mackintosh, a man of high reputation as a jurist, as a historian, and as a far-sighted and candid statesman:

“Was it in the power of language to describe the evil! Wars which had raged for more than twenty years throughout Europe, which had spread blood and desolation from Cadiz to Moscow, and from Naples to Copenhagen; which had wasted the means of human enjoyment, and destroyed the instruments of social improvement; which threatened to diffuse among the European nations the dissolute and ferocious habits of a predatory soldiery ... had been brought to a close.... Europe seemed to breathe after her sufferings. In the midst of this fair prospect and of these consolatory hopes, Napoleon Bonaparte escaped from Elba; three small vessels reached the coast of Provence; their hopes are instantly dispelled; the work of our toil and fortitude is undone: the blood of Europe is spilled in vain.”

The bitterest ingredients in the cup of these nations was the humiliating overthrow of their own government and their subjection to the hated *republican* despotism of France. It was a scorching sun that they could not endure. Still, they repented not to give God glory; they continued as before. After Napoleon had accomplished the purpose for which he was intended, God permitted this stupendous genius to be subdued; but it required the combined powers of Europe to secure his downfall.

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Creasy, in his *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*, says concerning the battle of Waterloo, “The great battle which ended the twenty-three years’ war of the first French revolution, and which quelled the man whose genius and ambition had so long *disturbed and desolated the world*, deserves to be regarded by us ... with peculiar gratitude for the repose which it secured for us and for the greater part of the human race.”

10. And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,

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

Under this vial the symbols differ somewhat. The “beast” is evidently the one of whom the image was made, referred to in verse 2—the Papacy. The seat that the Papacy occupied from the time the dragon resigned in favor of the beast (chap. 13:2) was his position of temporal power and authority. In the following chapter the Papacy is described as *seated* upon a ten-horned beast, the ten horns of which symbolized the kingdoms of Europe. In this position it was able to exercise a guiding influence over the European nations. We have already seen what great power the Popes exercised in this direction during the Dark Ages. But the “beast” of chapter 17 himself, as distinguished from his horns, symbolizes the Holy Roman Empire, which was a revival of the old empire of the Caesars. This revived “world-empire” was closely allied to the Papacy. When Charlemagne, the Carlovingian king, restored the empire of the West, he was crowned “Emperor of the Romans” by Pope Leo III., A.D. 800. “The Popes made the descendants of Charles Martel kings and emperors; the grateful Frankish princes defended the Popes against all their enemies, imperial and barbarian, and dowering them with cities and provinces, laid the basis of their temporal sovereignty, which continued for more than a thousand years.” After the decline of the Carlovingian power the imperial authority was again revived by Otto the Great (962), who was crowned Emperor of the Romans by the Pope. Henceforth the empire of the West was termed the *Holy Roman Empire*. “From this time on it was the rule that the German king who was crowned at Aachen had a right to be crowned ... emperor at Rome.” So the general rule was that the Popes upheld the emperors, and the emperors sustained the Popes in their position as the spiritual heads of the church and as temporal rulers over the Papal states, which were granted them originally by the donations of Pepin and Charlemagne.

In chapter 13 the civil powers of Europe and the ecclesiastical power of Rome are not shown by a double symbol—a woman and a beast—as in chapter 17, but are there represented by a combination of symbols drawn from the departments of human life and animal life, which shows that a politico-religious system is intended, as heretofore explained; hence the term *beast*, as there used, signifies either the Papacy or the civil power. Thus the term is used in the present chapter under consideration, and has

reference here to the beast as an ecclesiastical power—the Papacy—and his “seat” refers to his temporal authority.



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This vial, then, being poured out upon his seat, with the result that his kingdom was filled with darkness—a symbol drawn from nature—points to the downfall of the Pope as a temporal ruler. Thus he would be deprived of his “seat.”

We have already seen that each plague prepares the way for a succeeding one. Under the reign of Napoleon the Holy Roman Empire was dissolved (1806). This was the beginning of the end of the Pope’s temporal authority; for the two had in a great measure been for ages interdependent upon each other. Pius VII. was made a prisoner and the temporal sovereignty of the Roman See declared to be at an end; while the Pope himself was forced to disown all claim to rank as a temporal ruler. Of course, this was but a temporary overthrow; for when the period of Reaction came, the Pope recovered also temporal authority. But the vast territories of Avignon, Venaissin, Bologna, Ferrara, and the Romagna—representing fully *a third* of all the Papal dominions—which had been forcibly ceded to France under Napoleon, was never restored to the Roman See. From that time the sun of the Pope’s temporal kingdom rapidly approached the horizon; while the inhabitants of his dominions continued to blaspheme God through the atheistical Jacobinism that infested to so great an extent the whole mass of society—symbolized by their “sores”—and the firm supporters of Popery were filled with excessive chagrin and mortification of mind—symbolized by their “pains”—because the power of their leader, who professed temporal sovereignty over the whole earth, was being suddenly destroyed and his kingdom left in darkness. Concerning this matter the People’s Cyclopaedia, after speaking of the blow the Pope’s spiritual supremacy received at the Reformation, says: “But in her relations to the State the Roman church has since passed through *a long and critical struggle*. The new theories *to which the French Revolution gave currency* have still further modified these relations.” In the second revolution of 1848 the Pope’s temporal authority was about to be entirely destroyed by the attempted establishment of the republic of Italy; but at this juncture France, who, notwithstanding her plagues, had not repented of her former deeds, not willing to desert entirely the Papal cause after upholding it faithfully for centuries, interfered, and the Pope was sustained in his position by a French garrison until 1870 (except a short time in 1867), at which time the success of King Victor Emmanuel and his capture of the Eternal City established the free government of United Italy. The temporal sun of the Pope set forever; his kingdom was left in darkness.

12. And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

13. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.



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14. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

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

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

The symbols under this vial are so different that at first they scarcely look like anything constituting a plague. By recalling a few circumstances of history we shall understand why the river Euphrates was selected as a symbol, and also, its true signification in this connection. This river was connected with ancient Babylon, and while running in its own channel was the protection of the city and an obstacle to its capture. By turning the water of this river from its course, King Cyrus (according to the account given by Herodotus) succeeded in overthrowing the city, with the result that God's people who were at that time in captivity there received permission to return to their own land and to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. Ezra 1:1-3. Under the sixth trumpet this symbol was applied to the four angels as a symbol of the restraint placed upon their operations, they being bound in that river. As there are no agents in this vision who are represented as bound, we must apply it to the city itself, the name of which is given in verse 19—Babylon—being a symbol of one of its defenses. According to verse 19 this mystical Babylon is composed of three parts, being made up of the dragon (in his modern form), the beast, and the false prophet mentioned in verse 13. And its location is not confined to the territory of the ten kingdoms; for its field of operations is not only that of the "earth"—the Apocalyptic earth—but "*of the whole world.*" Ver. 14. In one division of this great city, that of the false prophet, God's people were long held in captivity; but its spiritual overthrow was to be accomplished by the drying up of the Euphrates of its defenses, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.[12]

[Footnote 12: Applying the Euphrates (an object from nature) as a symbol of ecclesiastical affairs in this manner appears to be in violation of the laws of symbolic language laid down; but we should bear in mind the fact that events of whatever nature connected with the history of God's chosen people in the old dispensation are of themselves proper symbols of similar events in the New Testament dispensation. Thus the temple, altar, candle-sticks, incense, holy city, *etc.*, of the former dispensation, although of themselves objects from nature, are nevertheless clearly used to represent affairs of the church, because of their former significance as connected with the people of God. The fact that the great city of this chapter is spiritual Babylon (see verse 19) is positive proof that the river Euphrates is here applied in the proper manner.]



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To the Hebrews the term *east* had a much more extensive signification than with us, to whom its only distinction is that it is the point of the sun's rising. But beyond this, it was to the Jews the cardinal point of the compass to which they naturally looked first. Their temple was built toward the east, its principal entrance being in that direction. The most powerful and enlightened kingdoms of the world lay to the east of Judea, and they included them all under the general term, sons or children of the East (Orientals) and kings of the East, comprehending not only Arabia and the lands of Moab and Ammon, but also Armenia, Assyria, Mesopotamia, Babylonia and Chaldea. Travelers from these countries would all enter Judea from the east, and they were considered Orientals. These nations were also distinguished for their proficiency in science and learning. The Magi, or wise men of the East, came to worship the infant Jesus at Jerusalem. They were eminent in the science of astrology, which was considered the greatest science of that day. The East, therefore, was looked to for wise men; and it is a noticeable fact that the pathway of science, of literature, and of empire has ever been from that direction, so as to have passed into a proverb, "westward the star of empire holds its way." "The kings of the East," then, employed as a symbol of this sixth vial, is not intended to signify any persons literally from that quarter of the earth, but represents the bringing in of knowledge and understanding. Thank God that we live in the time when the defenses of spiritual Babylon have been broken through and when light and knowledge on the Word of God has reached the hearts of many redeemed souls held in bondage there! And like the Israelites of old, when Cyrus, entered the ancient Babylon through the dry river-bed of the Euphrates, they have come out with rejoicing and made their way to Zion again. Halleluiah! That the spiritual downfall of Babylon is a real plague to sectarians there can be no doubt, and it is plainly declared to be such in chap. 18:8, where the same event is described.

At the very time when the defenses of Babylon are thrown down, the three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon (Paganism), and out of the mouth of the beast (Romanism), and out of the mouth of the false prophet (Protestantism), to gather together all the wicked powers throughout "the whole world" for that last great day of God Almighty.[13] There is no analagous object to which a *spirit* can be made a symbol; therefore we must regard them as being literally spirits of devils, here appearing under their own appropriate title. Their mission is to form a confederation of all the gigantic powers of wickedness, slimy and loathsome as the animal to which they are likened, and to array themselves against the cause of Christ.

[Footnote 13: I do not suppose that these three unclean spirits should be limited in their operations to Paganism, Romanism, and Protestantism; for that leaves out Mohammedanism, which is neither Pagan, Roman, nor Protestant, yet is certainly "false prophecy"; and the three spirits were to gather the "whole world."]



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Armageddon, where the spirits gathered all the enemies of truth and righteousness together, means the mountain of Megiddo, the memorable field of the overthrow of Sisera's mighty host by Barak. It was also the place of great defeat to the Israelites in the time of Josiah and the scene of his death. The name, therefore, stands as a symbol for a field of slaughter or defeat and denotes that when the confederation of wickedness is complete, the united host of God's enemies will be utterly defeated, as by the overthrow of Megiddo. This great conflict with powers of wickedness and spirits infernal will be further explained in chapter XX.

Simultaneous with the notable events of this vial, the announcement is made of the near-coming of Christ to the world—"Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." The children of God that have been gathered out of old Babylon rejoice in the glad announcement and say, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

17. And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18. And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20. And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21. And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

The application of this vial to the judgments of the last great day is so plain that but little comment is here necessary. It was poured "into the air," a region of vast extent, not confined to a given locality, but embracing the whole earth. Hence this plague is universal. When the seventh angel emptied his vial, "There came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done." All is now fulfilled. The work of wrath is finished. The description of the plague follows, but it follows only as a *description*. As actually accomplished, it preceded that great voice, which was uttered in view of the thing already brought to pass.



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The dissolution of the earth itself upon which we live is not here described, although according to the teaching of other scriptures it occurs at this time; but the symbols, being drawn from the department of the operations both of humanity and of nature, show the complete and final overthrow of all the great powers civil and ecclesiastical. The dominancy of these great powers has been the chief burden of Apocalyptic vision, and here their utter destruction at last is set forth under various symbols. The weight of the Jewish talent is said to have been one hundred and fourteen pounds. Such a mass of ice descending from heaven would beat down everything in its resistless, desolating fury. There is no intimation, however, of men being killed under this or the accompanying symbols; therefore as individuals they survive, while the storm of wrath falls upon the civil and ecclesiastical institutions of society, resulting in their utter annihilation. This is the "great day of his wrath" described under the sixth seal, to the symbols of which this description bears a striking resemblance, as any one can see at a glance. Well may the oppressors of earth say to the mountains and hills, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" Chap. 6:16, 17.

CHAPTER XVII.

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

2. With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.
3. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.
4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:
 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
 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.



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Here again the narrative returns to take up another series of the history. A number of times we have been taken over the same ground. It is this feature of the Apocalypse more than any other that has misled and perplexed commentators. Attempting to explain it as one continuous narrative from beginning to end, they have been compelled to consider numerous passages as “digressions,” “parentheses,” or “episodes,” *etc.* As already observed, however, the prophecy is not arranged after the ordinary plan of histories, narrating all the contemporaneous events in a given period, whether civil, religious, literary, scientific, or biographical, thus finishing up the history of that period; but it consists of a number of distinct themes running over the same ground.

In this chapter a more particular description of the church of Rome, “that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth” (verse 18), is given under the symbol of a drunken harlot. With this vile prostitute “the kings of the earth have committed fornication”—they have encouraged her in her corruption and idolatries—“and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.” This latter symbol is doubtless taken from the cup of drugged wine with which lewd women were accustomed to inflame their lovers. So had this apostate church made “the inhabitants of the earth”—of the ten kingdoms—drunken with her wine-cup and thus rendered them willing partakers in her abominable idolatries. She is described in two positions—first, as “sitting upon many waters,” which the angel informs us “are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (verse 15); and second, “upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” The first position denotes her wide supremacy in the world over distant peoples and nations; the second, the close relationship that she sustained to the civil power. That beast carried her in royal state. The civil powers of Europe have usually lent themselves as a caparisoned hack for this great whore to ride upon and have considered themselves highly honored thereby. This beast was full of the names of blasphemy, which were the same as the blasphemous assumptions of the Papacy, as explained in chapter XIII, showing that he agreed perfectly with this apostate church in her impious claims and supported her in them, making himself equally guilty and deserving of the same name. What is intended exactly by his scarlet color I do not know. The same power under its Pagan form was represented as a red dragon.

The appearance of this woman was that of the most splendid character, nor are we to suppose the contrary because she was such an infamous prostitute. She may have been, and according to the description was, all that, but still her appearance was such as to bewitch her admirers and votaries. Robes of purple and scarlet, with the most costly profusion of gold and diamonds, were superb adorning, even regal splendor. All that skill and wealth could do in magnificence of attire was bestowed upon her to set forth her charms. The “golden cup in her hand” was as to richness in harmony with her dress, while as to contents it set forth her character, for it was “full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication.” This cup was an appropriate symbol of her atrocious wickedness and idolatries.



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This woman had also a name written on her forehead. It was not, indeed, placed there by herself nor by her admirers; but He who drew this symbolic picture placed it there that all might know her true character. "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." Although this apostate church was only in embryo in the apostles' day, yet the apostle who gave us a careful delineation of its terrible characteristics declared that it was then developing and denominated it a *mystery*. "The mystery of iniquity doth already work." 2 Thes. 2:7. The same apostle regarded as an unquestionable fact that *godliness* was a mystery (1 Tim. 3:16); but he who peruses the history of the Papacy will be forced to declare with emphasis, "Without controversy great is the mystery of Romanism." She is also styled Babylon the Great. This name is derived from ancient Babylon. This city was the center of the earth's idolatry and stood first of all as the direct enemy of God's people. So, likewise, this church is the center of earth's spiritual idolatry. There are other harlots, or corrupt churches, in the world beside her; but she is the *mother* of them all. They are all children by her side. Some of them greatly honor her and in deep veneration call her "*our holy mother church*;" but God brands her as the "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

But the statement that she was a harlot merely, does not entirely describe her character. She was a *drunken* harlot. Drunken with what—wine? No indeed; that were a very small sin for her. She was "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." Romanists positively declare that their church never persecutes; but with the picture of this drunken prostitute before our eyes, we shall be hard to convince. To illustrate this point fully would be to write a book of martyrs much larger than the present work; so, for lack of space only, we shall have to content ourselves with merely bringing forward a few of many historical proofs showing *that they themselves* claim the right to exterminate heretics.

Innumerable provincial and national councils have issued the most cruel and bloody laws for the extermination of the Waldenses and other so-called heretics; such as the Councils of Oxford, Toledo, Avignon, Tours, Lavour, Albi, Narbonne, Beziers, Tolosa, etc. Since Papists will assert that these had no authority to establish a doctrine of the church (although they clearly reflect its spirit), I remind the reader that some of their *General Councils* have by their decrees pronounced the punishment of death for heresy. At least six of these highest judicial assemblies of the Romish church, with the Pope at their head, have authoritatively enjoined the persecution and extermination of heretics. Extracts from the Acts of these Councils could be given if space permitted. 1. The second General Council of Lateran (1139),



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in its twenty-third canon. 2. The third General Council of Lateran (1179), under Pope Alexander III. 3. The fourth General Council of Lateran (1215), under the inhuman Pope Innocent III., which exceeded in ferocity all similar decrees that had preceded it. 4. The sixteenth General Council, held at Constance in 1414. This Council, with Pope Martin present in person, condemned the reformers Huss and Jerome to be burned at the stake and then prevailed on the emperor Sigismund to violate the safe-conduct that he had given Huss, signed by his own hand, in which he guaranteed the reformer a safe return to Bohemia; and the inhuman sentence was carried out, with the haughty prelates standing by to satiate their eyes on the sight of human agony. This council also condemned the writings of Wickliffe and *ordered his bones to be dug up and burnt*, which savage sentence was afterwards carried into effect; and after lying in their grave for forty years, the remains of this first translator of the English Bible were reduced to ashes and thrown into the brook Swift. Well has the historian Fuller said, in reference to this subject, "The brook Swift did convey his ashes into Avon, the Avon into Severn, the Severn into the narrow seas, and they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wickliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all over the world." 5. The Council of Sienna (1423), which was afterwards continued at Basil. 6. The fifth General Council of the Lateran (1514). The laws enacted in each succeeding Council were generally marked, if possible, with augmented barbarity.

Says the learned Edgar, in his *Variations of Popery*: "The principle of persecution, being sanctioned not only by theologians, Popes and provincial synods but also by General Councils, *is a necessary and integral part of Romanism*. The Romish communion has, by its representatives, declared its right to compel men to renounce heterodoxy and embrace Catholicism, and to consign the obstinate to the civil power to be banished, tortured, or killed." St. Aquinas, whom Romanists call the "angelic Doctor," says, "Heretics are to be compelled by corporeal punishments, that they may adhere to the faith." Again, "Heretics may not only be excommunicated, but *justly killed*." He says that "the church consigns such to the secular judges *to be exterminated from the world by death*."

Cardinal Bellarmine is the great champion of Romanism and expounder of its doctrines. He was the nephew of Pope Marcellus, and he is acknowledged to be a standard writer with Romanists. In the twenty-first and twenty-second chapters of the third book of his work entitled *De Laicis*, he enters into a regular argument to prove that the church has the right, and should exercise it, of punishing heretics with death. The heading is his, together with what follows.



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“Chapter XXI. *That heretics, condemned by the church, may be punished with temporal penalties and even death.* We will briefly show that the church has the *power and ought* to cast off incorrigible heretics, especially those who have elapsed, and that the secular power ought to inflict on such temporal punishments and even death itself. 1. This may be proved from the Scripture. 2. It is proved from the opinions and laws of the emperors, *which the church has always approved.* 3. *It is proved by the laws of the church ... experience proves that there is no other remedy;* for the church has tried step by step all remedies—first excommunication alone; then pecuniary penalties; afterward banishment; *and lastly has been forced to put them to death; to send them to their own place....* There are three grounds on which reason shows that heretics should be put to death: the first is, Lest the wicked should injure the righteous; second, That by the punishment of a few many may be reformed. For many who were made torpid by impunity, are *roused by the fear of punishment;* AND THIS WE DAILY SEE IS THE RESULT WHERE THE INQUISITION FLOURISHES,” *etc.*

“Chapter XXII. *Objections answered.* It remains to answer the objections of Luther and other heretics. Argument 1. From the history of the church at large. ‘The church,’ says Luther, ‘from the beginning even to this time, *has never burned a heretic.* Therefore it does not seem to be the mind of the Holy Spirit that they should be burnt!’ [He surely misunderstood Luther.] I reply that this argument proves not the sentiment, but the ignorance, or impudence of Luther; FOR AS ALMOST AN INFINITE NUMBER WERE EITHER BURNED OR OTHERWISE PUT TO DEATH, Luther either did not know it, and was therefore ignorant; or if he knew it, he is convicted of impudence and falsehood,—for *that heretics were often burnt* BY THE CHURCH may be proved by adducing a few from many examples. Argument 2. ‘Experience shows that terror is not useful.’ I reply EXPERIENCE PROVES THE CONTRARY—for the Donatists, Manicheans, and Albigenses WERE ROUTED AND ANNIHILATED BY ARMS,” *etc.*

So this high dignitary of the Catholic church, a cardinal, a nephew of one Pope and the special favorite of others, freely admits the charge so often laid to Popery by creditable historians—the butchering of an “infinite number” of people that differed from them—and here labors hard to uphold it as a principle of righteousness. Their bloody crusades against the innocent, unoffending Waldenses, Albigenses, and other peoples, in which thousands, and in the aggregate *millions*, were slaughtered like venomous reptiles, stand out on the page of history with a prominence that can not be mistaken; and they themselves can not deny it. Dowling has well said that their “history is written in lines of blood. Compared with the butcheries of holy men and women by the Papal Antichrist, the persecutions of the Pagan emperors of the first three centuries sink into comparative insignificance. For not a tithe of the blood of martyrs was shed by Paganism, that has been poured forth by Popery; and the persecutors of Pagan Rome never dreamed of the thousand ingenious contrivances of torture which the malignity of Popish inquisitors succeeded in inventing.” P. 541.



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If any of my readers suppose that the character of Popery has changed with the lapse of ages, I must tell you that such is not the case. Popery is unchangeable and this her ablest advocates declare. Chas. Butler, in the work he wrote in reply to Southey's book of the church, says, "It is most true that the Roman Catholics believe the doctrines of their church to be unchangeable; and that it is a tenet of their creed, that what their faith ever has been, such it was from the beginning, *such it is now*, and SUCH IT EVER WILL BE." A copy of the eleventh edition of *The Faith of Our Fathers*, published in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1883, lies before me. It was written by Archbishop (now Cardinal) James Gibbons, the highest authority of the Roman Catholic church in this country. In page 95 he says: "It is a marvelous fact, worthy of record, that in the whole history of the church, from the nineteenth century to the first, no solitary example can be adduced to show that any Pope or General Council ever revoked a decree of faith or morals enacted by any preceding pontiff or council. Her record in the past ought to be a sufficient warrant that she will *tolerate no doctrinal variations in the future*." So the doctrine of her inherent right to persecute and slay every one who disagrees with her, which has been enacted by Pontiffs and General Councils and so carried out in the past, is still in vogue and would now be enforced were it in her power to do so.

While this statement of Gibbons' shows the unchangeable spirit of Popery, still it is the basest presumption upon the historical knowledge of the reader. The facts are that the *official* acts of some of their Popes and General Councils have been so far wrong that Romanists themselves have been compelled to admit it. Thus the *sixth* General Council, which was held at Constantinople in 680, and which every Catholic accepts as Ecumenical, condemned, in the strongest terms, Pope Honorius as a Monothelite *heretic*. Let them attempt to deny it, and we will bring forward our proof. Romish authors themselves admit it, the well-known Dupin with the rest, as appears by the following extract from his writings: "The Council had as much reason to censure him as Sergius, Paulus, Peter, and the other Patriarchs of Constantinople." He adds in language yet more emphatic, "This will stand for certain, then, that Honorius was *condemned*, AND JUSTLY TOO, AS A HERETIC, by the sixth General Council." Dupin's *Eccl. History*, Vol. II, p. 16.

The Decretals of Isidore furnish another example of Papal infallibility (?). For ages these documents were the chief instrument of the Popes in extending their power and the proof of the righteousness of their assumptions to excessive temporal authority. Wickliffe declared them false and apocryphal. For this he was condemned by the sixteenth *General Council*, held at Constance in 1414, and his bones ordered dug up and burnt because of his daring impudence. The spurious character of these false decretals have since been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt; and since it is impossible to deny it longer, it is admitted even by Romanists. So, after all, this *infallible* Council was wrong, the Papists themselves being the judges.



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Pope Benedict IX. was guilty of such flagitious crimes that he became an object of public abhorrence, and he finally *sold* the Popedom. One of his infallible (?) successors in the Papal chair, Pope Victor III., pronounced this infallible (?) profligate a person “abandoned to all manner of vice. A *successor of SIMON THE SORCERER*, and NOT OF SIMON THE APOSTLE.” I do not question the truth of this assertion, but what becomes of their boasted uninterrupted apostolical succession? Baronius, the Popish annalist, confesses that Pope Sergius III. was “the slave of every vice, and the most wicked of men.” Among other horrid acts Platina relates that he *rescinded the acts* of Pope Formosus, compelled those whom he had ordained to be re-ordained, dragged his dead body from the sepulchre, beheaded him as though he were alive, and then threw him into the Tiber! This Pope cohabited with an infamous prostitute named Marozia and by her had a son named John, who afterwards ascended the Papal throne, through the influence of his licentious mother, under the name of John XI. So the unlawful amours of Sergius produced this infallible, necessary link in the *holy* chain of uninterrupted apostolical succession! It must be remembered, also, that the Popes have for ages laid claim themselves to infallibility; and in the last General Council of that body, held at the Vatican in 1870, it was declared a dogma of the church. Romanists will tell us that this decree refers only to his official acts, and not to his personal character; but official acts have been the main thing under consideration in the case of Sergius, Honorius, and Benedict. But if such monsters of vice can produce good, holy, infallible acts, as Papists declare, then Jesus Christ is mistaken; for he declared positively that “a corrupt tree *bringeth forth evil fruit* ... neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.” Mat. 7:17, 18. “God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.” Rom. 3:4. During these dark ages thousands of priests, who were by the laws of the church denied their Scriptural right of possessing a wife (1 Cor. 7:9, *etc.*), lived openly with concubines; and the Council of Toledo decreed that they should not be condemned therefor, provided they were content with one.

But the devil produced his master-piece of iniquity in the person of Roderic Borgia, who ascended the Papal throne in 1492 under the name of Alexander VI. The utmost limits assigned to Papal depravity were realized in him, so that the very name Borgia has come to be used as a designation of any person unusually wicked. Says Waddington: “The ecclesiastical records of fifteen centuries ... contain no name so loathsome, no crimes so foul as his.... Not one among the many zealous annalists of the Roman church has breathed a whisper in his praise.... He publicly cohabited with a Roman matron named Vanozia, by whom he had five acknowledged children. Neither in



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his manners nor in his language did he affect any regard for morality or decency; and one of the earliest acts of his pontificate was, to celebrate, with scandalous magnificence, in his own palace, the marriage of his daughter Lucretia. On one occasion this prodigy of vice gave a splendid entertainment, within the walls of the Vatican, to no less than fifty public prostitutes at once, and that in the presence of his daughter Lucretia, at which entertainment deeds of darkness were done, over which decency must throw a veil; and yet this monster of vice was, according to Papist ... the vicar of God upon earth, and was addressed by the title of HIS HOLINESS!!" But why stir this cesspool of filth any longer? Is not that church of which Alexander VI. was for eleven years the crowned and anointed head—a necessary link in the boasted chain of *holy* apostolical succession, the pretended vicar of Christ upon earth—is it not, I ask, fitly described by the pen of inspiration "MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH," as she reeled onward in the career of ages, "drunken with the blood of the saints"?

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.

8. The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

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

10. And there are seven kings; five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

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

12. And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

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



14. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

The angel promises to explain “the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carried her.” The beast is the same as the secular beast with seven heads and ten horns, described in chapter 13. An explanation of its heads and horns has already been given. The expression “the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth, and there are seven kings,” requires further explanation.



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Many have understood the mountains to signify the seven mountains on which the city of Rome is said to be built; but that is adopting the literal mode of interpretation, and is contrary to the laws of symbolic language. The more obvious meaning is that the seven heads represent seven mountains and also seven kings; but this probably is not the idea intended. The heads of a beast are not the proper symbol of mountains. The fact, too, that the woman is represented as sitting upon these mountains, shows that they are to be taken as a symbol, as well as the woman, and not the object symbolized. They are, then, the same as the heads and denote the seven kings or seven forms of government under which the Roman empire subsisted.

The seventh and last head has not yet been identified. Before considering it, however, I wish to call attention to another point that has already been referred to. The beast that John here saw, with the seven heads and ten horns, was Rome under the Papal power. Did new Rome in reality have the seven heads? No. The dragon John saw in chapter 12 is represented as having seven heads and ten horns, and signified Rome under the Pagan power. Did old Rome really possess the ten horns? No. According to verse 12 in this chapter, they were to arise future of John's time. But notice carefully that the seven heads, which according to this description, belonged to the beast sustaining the Papal power in after years, are here explained by the angel as signifying the very forms of government by which *Pagan* Rome subsisted. "Five are *fallen* [a past event], one *is* [exists at this present time], and the other *is not yet come*." So according to divine interpretation, the same heads and horns serve for both the dragon and the beast. This could not possibly be a true representation unless they were both in reality the *same beast*, they being represented as two only for the purpose of describing the two phases of Roman history—Pagan and Papal.

With this point established, that these two forms of Roman history are the same beast, we are now prepared to understand the statement that the beast "was and is not, and yet is." This is equivalent to saying that the beast existed, it ceased to exist, and then it came into existence again. This was exactly the history of Rome. Its downfall under the Pagan form was described under the fourth trumpet as an eclipse of the sun, moon and stars, so that they shone not for a third part of the day and night. For a time it seemed not to exist. A little later the eclipse is lifted; the beast exists again under the Papal form. In this is set forth clearly the wounding and the healing of the beast. The wound was inflicted on its sixth, or Imperial, head (for the first five had already fallen, according to the historical facts just related), being accomplished by the hordes of Northern barbarians overturning the empire of the West. It appeared for a time that



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the beast was indeed wounded unto death; but not so: to the surprise of all, he survived under the form of the seventh head. At this point the question is sure to be asked, How could the beast continue to live if its seventh head was to continue but “a short space”? This is accounted for by the fact that there was what might be appropriately called an eighth head, but which was in reality of the seven. “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven.” Verse 11.

The identification of the seventh head will now make the matter complete. The facts all meet in the Carolingian empire, or the empire of Charlemagne. In the year 774 Charlemagne completed the work begun by Pepin twenty years before and overthrew the kingdom of the Lombards in Italy, which was the last of the three horns plucked up before the little horn of Daniel. By this victory he became complete master of Italy, and he received the title Patrician of Rome. This was not merely an honorary title, such as had for ages been conferred upon certain individuals; but it was a distinct form of civil government and supreme, taking the same rank with that of the Consular, the Decemvirate, the Triumvirate, *etc.*, in the earlier history of the nation. It lasted, however, only “a short space,” or twenty-six years, when Charlemagne, having extended his conquests over all the western part of Europe, assumed the Imperial title and thus revived the empire of Rome in the West under its Gothic form. In his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Gibbon says: “In the twenty-six years that elapsed between the conquest of Lombardy and his Imperial coronation, Rome, which had been delivered by the sword, was subject, as his own, to the scepter, of Charlemagne. The people swore allegiance to his person and family; in his name, money was coined, and justice was administered, and the election of Popes was examined and confirmed by his authority—except an original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining which the title of emperor could add to the Patrician of Rome.” This decisive testimony by the highest authority on the subject shows conclusively that all the power of sovereignty resided in Charlemagne as the Patrician of Rome, and that this, therefore, is a proper head to be ranked with the other six that preceded it.[14]

[Footnote 14: Commentators frequently identify the seventh head with the Exarchate of Ravenna. After the overthrow of the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy by Belisarius, the general of Justinian, about the middle of the sixth century, the territory became subject to the emperor of the Eastern empire and was ruled by him through an Exarch whose place of residence was Ravenna. This Exarchate (sometimes called *Patriciate*) continued until about the middle of the eighth century, when it was terminated by Astolphus, king of the Lombards, who made Ravenna the capital of the Lombardic kingdom in 752. Three years later



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the Lombards were defeated by Pepin, who made the Holy See a present of the lands he conquered from them—the origin of the temporal power of the Popes. Pepin was succeeded by his son Charlemagne, who was appointed *Patrician* of Rome, by the Pope, in 774. During the last half century that the Exarchate of Ravenna remained its existence was but little more than a name, the real power of government being usurped by the Papacy. It could hardly be considered an inconsistency were we to interpret the seventh head as signifying both the Patriciate of Ravenna and the Patriciate of Charlemagne that closely followed it; but in the present work I have restricted its application to the latter form because of its distinctive characteristic as constituting a supreme civil power entirely independent of the empire of the East, and because of its importance in the revival of the empire of the West.]

This head, however, continued only “a short space”; and an eighth arose on Christmas, the first day of the year 800 (as time was then reckoned), when Charlemagne was crowned emperor of Rome, and thus revived the empire of the West. This eighth head, however, was “of the seven”; for it was the same as the sixth, both being Imperial—the first being in the Augustan line, and the other in the Carlovingian, and separated from each other by the seventh, or Patriciate. Considered one way, there were eight heads, but two of them were alike, hence only seven; for the eighth was of the seven. According to verse 11 it was under the eighth head that the beast subsisted at the time he was carrying the woman of this chapter, which exactly accords with the historical facts in the case; and the same was continued in a line of emperors reaching down to the time of the French Revolution.

The ten horns had “received no kingdom as yet.” This signifies that at the time when the Revelation was given they had not yet arisen. When they did come into existence they were to receive power as kings with the beast and were to give to it their power and strength. It is a singular fact that a distinct head should continue to exist after these horns had arisen and developed into powerful kingdoms; but herein the remarkable accuracy of prophecy is clearly shown. It is said that they should make war with the Lamb and that the Lamb should overcome them. Some think that this has reference to the persecution of the saints during the Dark Ages; but it seems to me that it would have been stated differently if such were its meaning. It may be a prophetic reference to the battle of Armageddon, which will be terminated by the coming of the Son of God himself to overthrow completely all the powers of wickedness.

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



16. And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.



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

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

The special thoughts contained in these verses have been so far explained already that it is unnecessary to go over the same ground again. Already the civil powers of Europe are beginning to cast this woman aside as an old, wrinkled, haggard prostitute is cast off by her lovers. Already they have deprived her of all temporal authority such as she possessed in guiding this beast of chapter 17, as explained under the fifth plague in the preceding chapter. Whether they are destined to become a still greater enemy to her, the future will determine.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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

2. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

A movement of mighty power is symbolized in these verses. The chronology of the events described in the preceding chapter brings us down to the time when the ten horns turn against the Papacy by depriving her of her temporal authority. This, as we have already seen, was completely fulfilled in 1870 and constituted the fifth plague. In the description of the sixth plague which followed, it was shown that the great city which was invaded was composed of three parts—Paganism (the modern form of the dragon power), Catholicism, and Protestantism. The same great city is here brought to view, and the angel from heaven, with a mighty voice, cries, “Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen.” This fall of Babylon can not signify a literal destruction; for there are certain events to take place in Babylon after her fall which entirely precludes that idea; for instance, the calling of God’s people out of her, in order that they may not receive of her plagues. In these plagues is embraced her literal destruction, or complete overthrow. The fall is therefore a moral one; for the result of it is that Babylon becomes “the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”



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Protestants who make any attempt to interpret these prophecies usually limit the designation “Babylon the Great” in these verses to the church of Rome, because the woman symbolizing the apostate church in the preceding chapter is denominated “Babylon the Great.” Ver. 5. But the same verse also declares her to be the “*Mother of harlots*,” and if she as a degraded woman stands as the representative of a corrupt church, her unchaste daughters, also, must symbolize churches that are her descendants; and if the real name of the *mother* is Babylon, as stated, the proper name of her harlot daughters must be Babylon also. Whether, therefore, the mother or the daughters are referred to, it is all “Babylon the Great,” because it is all the same family and is a part of that “GREAT CITY which reigneth over the kings of the earth.” Chap. 17:18. We must, therefore, have something besides the mere title “Babylon the Great” to determine which division of the great city is referred to in a given instance—whether Pagan, Papal, or Protestant.

A careful study of the prophecy now under consideration will show that it has particular reference to the Protestant division of Babylon. It contained many of God’s children; whereas Paganism was always a false religion and never held any of God’s saints. Under the reign of Catholicism, the people of God are represented in all the symbols of this book relating thereto as existing entirely separate from that communion. The description of this apostate church given in the preceding chapter shows clearly that instead of being partly composed of God’s saints, she was their most bitter and relentless persecutor, yea, was “*drunken with the blood of the saints*, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” This is definite proof that the present phase of Babylon under consideration is the Protestant division; and her moral fall is the grand signal for the escape of God’s people who have partly composed her number, as the fall of ancient Babylon was for the escape of the Israelites. In their younger days the Protestant organizations (symbolized by the daughters) were of much better character than the mother church from whom they descended. Many of them started out on reform. While a spiritual people, God worked with them; but when they made their image to the beast, they suddenly declined, and this voice from heaven finally declares them to be in a fallen condition—entirely void of salvation, except a very few chosen saints that have not defiled their garments, contained therein.

That this application of the term *Babylon* is correct, and also, the fallen condition ascribed to her in accordance with the facts, I will prove by the following testimonies of Protestants themselves. The first is from Vision of the Ages; or, Lectures on the Apocalypse, by B.W. Johnson, member of the Christian sect.



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“It is needful to inquire what the term *Babylon* means. It occurs several times in the New Testament. Here (in the Apocalypse) it is spoken of as ‘that great city,’ and her fall is doomed ‘because she hath made all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication.’ In Rev. 17:5, a scarlet harlot is seen sitting upon the seven-headed and ten-horned monster, and upon her forehead is written, ‘Mystery, Babylon the Great.’ With this woman the kings of the earth are said to have committed fornication. In chapter 18 the fall of the great city, Babylon is detailed at length, and it is again said that all the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her. The harlot with Babylon stamped on her brow, and the great city of fornication styled Babylon, in chapters 14 and 18, are one and the same existence.

“There is an ancient city of Babylon often mentioned in the Old Testament, but ages before John wrote, it had ceased to be inhabited, the only dwellers among its lonely ruins were howling beasts and hissing serpents. It has never been rebuilt to this day and has passed away forever. John refers therefore not to old Babylon, but to some power yet unseen (when he was upon the earth), that should be revealed in due time, and of which old Babylon was a symbol. Let us notice some of the features of ancient Babylon.

“1. On that site took place the confusion of tongues which divided those who before had been of one speech and one family, into various tribes and schisms at variance with each other and of various tongues. The word Babylon, a memorial of this event, means confusion, and is derived from Babel.

“2. Old Babylon persecuted the people of God and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem.

“3. It carried the people of God into captivity.

“4. It was a mighty, resistless universal empire. The antitype, the spiritual Babylon, must correspond. There is a power that exhibits all these characteristics. By apostasy from the truth it originated the schism which has divided the family of God into different sects and parties which speak a different spiritual language. It has carried the church into a long captivity by binding upon it the thralldom of superstition. It has been a constant persecutor of the saints, and has enjoyed an almost universal dominion. That power is the woman that sits upon the seven-headed beast ... the false woman, symbolical of a false church, the great apostate spiritual dominion of Rome. And we may add, out of which have come—directly or indirectly—*all the religious sects of the present day.*”

Dr. Barnes says: “The word *Babylon* became the emblem of all that was haughty and oppressive, and especially of all that persecuted the church of God. The word here (Rev. 18:4) must be used to denote some power that resembled the ancient and literal Babylon in these characteristics. The literal Babylon was no more; but the name might be used properly to denote a similar power.”



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Wm. Kinkade, in Bible Doctrine, page 249, says, "I think Christ has a true church on earth, but its members are scattered among the various denominations, and are more or less under the influence of mystery Babylon and her daughters."

Alexander Campbell says: "A reformation of Popery was attempted in Europe full three centuries ago. It ended in a Protestant hierarchy, and swarms of dissenters. Protestantism has been reformed into Presbyterianism, that into Congregationalism, and that into Baptistism, *etc.*, *etc.* Methodism has attempted to reform all, but has reformed itself into many forms of Wesleyanism. All of them retain in their bosom—in their ecclesiastical organizations, worship, doctrines, and observances—various relics of Popery. They are at best a reformation of Popery, and only reformations in part. The doctrines and traditions of men yet impair the power and progress of the gospel in their hands." On Baptism, p.15.

Again, he says: "The worshiping establishments now in operation throughout Christendom, increased and cemented by their respective voluminous confessions of faith, and their ecclesiastical constitutions, are not churches of Jesus Christ, but the legitimate daughters of that mother of harlots, the church of Rome." How any man could possess as much light on this subject as did Mr. Campbell, and then build a sect himself, is more than I can understand.

Lorenzo Dow says of the Romish Church: "If she be the mother, who are the daughters? It must be the corrupt, national, established churches that came out of her." Dow's Life, p. 542.

In the Religious Encyclopaedia, Article Antichrist, we read: "The writer of the book of Revelation tells us he heard a voice from heaven saying, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.' If such persons are to be found in the 'mother of harlots,' with much less hesitation may it be inferred that they are connected with her unchaste daughters, those national churches which are founded upon what are called Protestant principles."

In the Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge we read: "An important question, however, says Mr. Jones, still remains for inquiry: Is Antichrist confined to the church of Rome? The answer is readily returned in the affirmative by Protestants in general; and happy had it been for the world had that been the case. But although we are fully warranted to consider that church as 'the mother of harlots,' the truth is that by whatsoever arguments we succeed in fixing that odious charge upon her, we shall, by parity of reasoning, be obliged to allow other national churches to be her unchaste daughters, and for this plain reason, among others, because in their very constitution and tendency they are hostile to the nature of the kingdom of Christ."

One of Martin Luther's guests remarked that the world might continue fifty years, and he replied: "Pray God that it may not exist so long; matters would be even worse than they

have been. There would rise up infinite sects and schisms, which are at present hidden in men's hearts and nature. No; may the Lord come at once, for there is no amendment to be expected."



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Mr. Hartly, a learned churchman, has remarked as follows: "There are many prophecies which declare the fall of the ecclesiastical powers of the Christian world, and though each church seems to flatter itself with the hope of being exempted, yet it is very plain that the prophetic characters belong to all. They all have left the true, pure, simple religion, and teach for doctrines the commandments of men."

Says Mr. Simpson, in *Plea for Religion*: "We Protestants, too, read the declaration of the third angel against the worshipers of the beast and his image, and make ourselves easy under the awful denunciation by applying it exclusively to the church of Rome; never dreaming that they are equally applicable not only to the English, but to every church establishment in Christendom, which retains any of the marks of the beast. For though the Pope and the church of Rome is at the head of the grand twelve hundred and sixty years' delusion, yet all other churches, of whatever denomination, whether established or tolerated, which partake of the same spirit, or have instituted doctrines and ceremonies inimical to the pure and unadulterated gospel of Christ, shall sooner or later share in the fate of that immense fabric of human ordinances."

Says Mr. Hopkins: "There is no reason to consider the antichristian spirit and practices confined to that which is now called the church of Rome. The Protestant churches have much of Antichrist in them, and are far from being wholly reformed from the corruptions and wickedness, in doctrine and practice, in it. Some churches may be more pure and may have proceeded farther in a reformation than others; but where can the church be found which is thoroughly purged from her abominations? None are wholly clear from an antichristian spirit and the fruits of it.... And as the church of Rome will have a large share in the cup of indignation and wrath which will be poured out, so all the Christian world will have a distinguished portion of it: as the inhabitants of it are much more guilty than others. There is great reason to conclude that the world, particularly that part of it called Christian and Protestant, will yet make greater and more rapid advances in all kinds of moral corruption and open wickedness, till it will come to that state in which it will be fully ripe and prepared to be cut down by the sickle of divine justice and wrath."

Mr. O. Scott (Wesleyan Methodist) says: "The church is as deeply infected with a desire for worldly gain as the world. Most of the denominations of the present day might be called *churches of the world*, with more propriety than churches of Christ. The churches have so far gone from primitive Christianity that they need a fresh regeneration—a new kind of religion."



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Said T. DeWitt Talmage: "I simply state a fact when I say that in many places the church is surrendering, and the world is conquering.... There is a mighty host in the Christian church, positively professing Christianity, who do not believe the Bible, out and out and in and in.... Oh! we have magnificent church machinery in this country; we have sixty thousand American ministers; we have costly music; we have great Sunday-schools; and yet I give you the appalling statistics that in the last twenty-five years, laying aside last year, the statistics of which I have not yet seen,—within the last twenty-five years the churches of God in this country have averaged *less than two conversions a year* each! There has been an average of four or five deaths in the churches. How soon, at that rate, will this world be brought to God? We gain two; we lose four. Eternal God! what will this come to?"

Bishop Roberts said: "The popular religion of this country is not the religion of the New Testament. It has some of its features but not all. It is lacking in grand fundamental elements. It answers many good purposes—restrains, refines, elevates, and gives to society a high grade of civilization; but fails to secure the great end which Christianity is designed to accomplish—the salvation of the soul. It dazzles but to blind, it promises but to deceive; it allures by worldly considerations to a heaven of purity, which no worldling can enter; it gives to its votaries, who long to eat of forbidden fruit, the assurance of impunity from the threatened evils, and leads them on by siren strains from the Paradise of purity into the broad road which ends at last in the blackness of the darkness of an eternal night of despair!"

Says the Golden Rule: "The Protestants are outdoing the Popes in splendid, extravagant folly in church building. Thousands on thousands are expended in gay and costly ornaments to gratify pride and a wicked ambition, that might and should go to redeem the perishing millions! Does the evil, the folly, and the madness of these proud, formal, fashionable worshiper, stop here? These splendid monuments of Popish pride, upon which millions are squandered in our cities, virtually exclude the poor for whom Christ died, and for whom he came especially to preach."

The report of the Michigan Yearly Conference, even as long ago as 1851, published in the True Wesleyan of Nov. 15, says: "The world, commercial, political, and ecclesiastical are alike, and are together going in the broad way that leads to death. Politics, commerce, and nominal religion, all connive at sin, reciprocally aid each other, and unite to crush the poor. Falsehood is unblushingly uttered in the forum and in the pulpit; and *sins that would shock the moral sensibilities of the heathen, go unrebuked in all the great denominations of our land*. These churches are like the Jewish church when the Savior exclaimed, 'Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.'"



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Robert Atkins, in a sermon preached in London, says: "The truly righteous are diminished from the earth, and no man layeth it to heart. The professors of religion of the present day, in every church, are lovers of the world, conformers to the world. Lovers of creature-comfort, and aspirers after respectability. They are called to *suffer* with Christ, but they shrink even from reproach. Apostasy, *apostasy*, APOSTASY, is engraven on the very front of every church; and did they know it, and did they feel it, there might be hope; but alas! they cry 'We are rich, and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing.'"

I have by no means exhausted the supply of similar testimonies of Protestants now before me, but for lack of space I must conclude. In the face of these amazing facts can any one deny that Protestantism is a part of great Babylon and is in a fallen condition?

"The merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies." A certain writer on this text has said: "Who take the lead in all the extravagancies of the age? Church-members. Who load their tables with the richest and choicest viands? Church-members. Who are foremost in extravagance in dress, and all costly attire? Church-members. Who are the very personification of pride and arrogance? Church-members. Where shall we look for the very highest exhibition of the luxury, even show, and pride of life, resulting from the vanity and sin of the race? Answer, To a modern church-assembly on a pleasant Sunday." Though this writer interpreted the text literally, yet he spoke a vast amount of truth, as every one knows.

Consider, too, the wickedness carried on everywhere in sect Babylon unrebuked, with the preachers oftentimes in the lead. Shows, festivals, frolics, grab-bag parties, cake-walk lotteries, kissing-bees, *etc.*, *etc.* If the apostle were here to-day and we should inform him of a modern church entertainment where a bared female foot, projecting from beneath a curtain, was sold to the highest gentleman bidder, who had the privilege of kissing its owner and taking her to supper, he would probably answer, "Have I not told you, 'Babylon is fallen'?" If his attention was called to the fact that the members of a prominent church, in a novel entertainment, displayed the likeness of a donkey, minus the tail, while the members one by one were blindfolded, and, amid the uproarious laughter of the crowd assembled, were given the detached part to see who could place it the nearest where it belonged, he would say with double emphasis, "*Have I not told you, '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'?*" The "abominations" are by no means confined to the *mother* in the Revelation, but are also to be found in abundance in connection with her harlot daughters.

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.



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5. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.
6. Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.
7. How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.
8. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

Here we have a number of important truths brought before us—first, that God had a people in Babylon who up to this time were free from her contaminations; second, that they received a positive call from heaven to “come out”; third, that all who refused to obey the heavenly command would become partakers of her sins and receive of her plagues; fourth, that those who came out were to pour the strongest judgments upon Babylon—“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.” It is evident that the “torment and sorrow” which God’s people give Babylon after their departure is not a temporal retaliation—for they never indulge in such, and the Word of God forbids it—but is altogether of a spiritual nature; hence the fierce judgment they inflict is executing the Word of truth, which brings to light all the wickedness and abominations contained therein. “Death, and mourning, and famine” only remain. This symbolizes that all spiritual life has departed, while famine and mourning are left. That such is the actual fact is shown by the following lamentation of the late Bishop R.S. Foster concerning his own sect, the Methodist Episcopal:

“The ball, the theatre, nude and lewd art, social luxuries, with all their loose moralities, are making inroads into the sacred enclosure of the church; and as a satisfaction for all this worldliness, Christians are making a great deal of Lent and Easter and Good Friday, and church ornamentations. It is the old trick of Satan. The Jewish church struck on that rock; the Romish church was wrecked on the same; and the Protestant church is fast reaching the same doom.

“Our great dangers as we see them, are assimilation to the world, neglect of the poor, substitution of the form for the fact of godliness, abandonment of discipline, a hireling ministry, an impure gospel, which summed up is a fashionable church. That Methodists should be liable to such an outcome, and that there should be signs of it in a hundred years from the ‘sail-loft,’ seems almost the miracle of history; but who that looks about him to-day can fail to see the fact?”



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“Do not Methodists, in violation of God's Word and their own discipline, dress as extravagantly and as fashionably as any other class? Do not the ladies, and even the wives and daughters of the ministry, put on 'gold and pearls and costly array'? Would not the plain dress insisted upon by John Wesley and Bishop Asbury, and worn by Hester Ann Rodgers, Lady Huntington, and many others equally distinguished, be now regarded in Methodist circles as fanaticism? Can any one going into the Methodist church in any of our chief cities distinguish the attire of the communicants from that of the theater and ball-goers? Is not worldliness seen in the music? Elaborately dressed and ornamented choirs, who in many cases make no profession of religion and are often sneering skeptics, go through a cold artistic or operatic performance, which is as much in harmony with spiritual worship as an opera or theater. Under such worldly performances spirituality is frozen to death.

“Formerly every Methodist attended class and gave testimony of experimental religion. Now the class-meeting is attended by very few, and in many churches abandoned. Seldom the stewards, trustees and elders of the church attend class. Formerly nearly every Methodist prayed, testified or exhorted in prayer-meeting. Now but very few are heard. Formerly shouts and praises were heard; now such demonstrations of holy enthusiasm and joy are regarded as fanaticism.

“Worldly socials, and fairs, festivals, concerts and such like have taken the place of religious gatherings, revival meetings, class and prayer meetings of earlier days. How true that the Methodist discipline is a dead letter! Its rules forbid the wearing of gold or pearls or costly array; yet no one ever thinks of disciplining its members for violating them. They forbid the reading of such books and the taking of such diversions as do not minister to godliness, yet the church itself goes to frolics and festivals and fairs, which destroy the spiritual life of the young, as well as the old. The extent to which this is now carried on is appalling. The *spiritual death it carries in its train* will only be known when *the millions it has swept into hell* shall stand before the judgment.

“The early Methodist ministers went forth to sacrifice and to suffer for Christ. They sought not places of ease and affluence, but of privation and suffering. They gloried not in their big salaries, fine parsonages, and refined congregations, but in the souls that had been won for Jesus. Oh, *how changed!* A hireling ministry will be a feeble, a timid, a truckling, a timeserving ministry, without faith, endurance, and holy power. Methodism formerly dealt in the great central truth. Now the pulpits deal largely in the generalities and in popular lectures. The glorious doctrine of entire sanctification is rarely heard and seldom witnessed in the pulpits.”

This lengthy quotation shows clearly the spiritual condition of Methodism, and certainly she is no worse than the rest. God is calling his people out of “all the places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.” Ezek. 34:12. Those who refuse to walk in the light will go into darkness. God help people to “flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul.”



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9. And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10. Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

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

12. The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13. And cinnamon, and odors, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

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.

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

16. And saying, Alas, alas that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17. For in one hour so great riches is come to nought. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

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

19. And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

In this description we have a continuation of the judgments of Babylon already introduced. It must be borne in mind, however, that this is the spiritual judgments



following her moral fall, and not her final and everlasting literal destruction. The latter is described under another symbol a little further on in this series of prophecy.

The symbol here is that of a great city, the grand metropolis of the world, the mart of earth's commerce; a superb city, their [*sic*] being no end to its luxuries and magnificence. In it everything that can minister to the appetite, gratify the taste, and feed the pride of the human soul is to be found in profusion, being described at length. This great city is suddenly afire, and her merchants and the great men of the world who sustain her are



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overwhelmed with sorrow at the sight of all their wealth disappearing. Thus is great sect Babylon represented. She is a mighty city extending not only over the Apocalyptic earth, but, as symbolized by the ship-masters, sailors, and foreign traders, over the whole world. Suddenly she is set on fire by heaven's truth and her spiritual magnificence destroyed. The apostle Paul describes the great apostasy as a system that the "Lord shall *consume* with the spirit of his mouth, and shall *destroy* with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thes. 2:8. That spiritual consumption is now taking place in accordance with the symbols of this chapter, but the entire literal destruction of old Babylon will take place coincident "with the brightness of his coming," as described in the following chapter.

That sectarians are greatly alarmed over the sad condition of their fallen churches is clearly shown by the many quotations already given from Protestant writers. They may not be aware that it is a judgment from heaven upon man-made organizations; but such we know it to be in the light of eternal truth. Not only are they bewailing the loss of spiritual life and the desolating famine in sectdom, as was Bishop Foster and others, but they are beginning to tremble for their own safety and to wonder what the final outcome of it all will be. Wherever the gospel truth has been preached in all its purity, the sectarian denominations have been left destitute of spiritual life; for the children of God have heard his call, "Come out of her, my people," and have made their escape to Zion. Hence the ministers of Babylon cry out continually, "Stop! you are tearing our churches down," "You are taking our best members away from us," *etc.* But we can not withhold the truth; for the time has come when God is gathering his people together out of all the "places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day" (Ezek. 34:12) into the one church that Jesus built. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

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

This verse is so clear that it requires no special explanation. God's people are delivered from sect Babylon; and while the judgments of eternal truth are being poured out upon her, all heaven and earth is called upon to rejoice and to give glory to God.

"We stand in the glory that Jesus has given,
The moon as the day-spring doth shine;
The light of the sun is now equal to seven,
So bright is the glory divine.

"Now filled with the Spirit and clad in the armor
Of light and omnipotent truth,
We'll testify ever and Jesus we'll honor,
And stand from sin Babel aloof.



“The prophet’s keen vision transpiercing the ages,
Beheld us to Zion return;
We’ll sing of our freedom, though Babylon rages,
We’ll shout as her city doth burn.”



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21. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 22. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 23. And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

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

Following the moral fall of Babylon and the call of God's people out of her, a mighty angel predicts her eternal doom. "With violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and *shall be found no more at all.*" This doubtless has reference to the entire city of Babylon in all her divisions brought to view in this series of prophecy and shows her final destruction at the coming of Christ, when she shall suddenly be thrown with terrific force, like a great millstone descending into the sea, and "shall be found no more at all." According to the symbols here given she will be like a city completely destroyed, not one inhabitant or living creature remaining. Thus her eternal doom is pictured and remains to be yet fulfilled.

"And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." We have already shown that Protestantism, as well as her mother Romanism, has been guilty of shedding innocent blood; and as the term Babylon includes both these divisions, when the great city is thrown down with violence, Romanism and Protestantism will sink together, and then this awful treasure—the blood of prophets and of saints—shall be brought to light in that last great day of God Almighty.

CHAPTER XIX.

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

2. For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.



3. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4. And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.



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6. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

7. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

10. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

The scene of this vision is laid in heaven. John heard a great voice of much people saying, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God." This great song of praise doubtless came from the lips of the angelic throng; for immediately the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders reechoed the same shout of praise, saying, "Amen; Alleluia." Then came a voice from the throne calling upon the servants of God, both small and great, to unite on this occasion in one grand and sacred song of praise; and this sublime chorus fell upon the ear of the enraptured apostle "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. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife [or bride] hath made herself ready." Was not here a hearty response to that call, "Rejoice over her thou heaven"? While this scene shows the interest all heaven takes in these wondrous scenes of earth, it is doubtless intended especially to represent the joy and thanksgiving of God's people who have "gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name."

The marriage of the Lamb which was about to take place was a special theme of joy on this occasion. In the Scripture the term *marriage* is frequently used to represent a special union between Christ and his people. Thus, the early church was represented as being free because of the death of the law, that they "should be *married* to another, even to him who is raised from the dead." Rom. 7:4. So, also, the eternal union of Christ with his people is here described under the figure of marriage. In one sense they have been married to Christ all through this dispensation; in another sense they have

not. The church has had the promise of this eternal union, hence she has been betrothed to Christ; but left in



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the world, she has been driven into the wilderness, while a corrupt and drunken prostitute and her harlot daughters have been in the public view. Now, however, the judgments of God have descended upon Babylon, and the bride of Christ appears in all her beauty again, “arrayed in fine linen, clean and white”; and the next great event is her public marriage to Christ when he comes to claim her as his own.

The marriage scene is one of the most joyful that we witness on earth, and among Eastern nations especially was celebrated with great pomp and magnificence, the joy and splendor of the occasion being enhanced according to the rank and wealth of the parties. But earth has never witnessed such an event as this special *marriage of the Lamb*. Well may the inhabitants of heaven and earth, in view of this sublime spectacle, swell the song of praise—“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” The special preparations that the bride is making represents the glorious holiness reformation that is now sweeping over the world, gathering God’s people together for the splendid event. “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

“These are the true sayings of God.” They are almost too glorious to be believed; still, they are no idle dreams of fancy: they are true, yea “the true sayings of God.” In the contemplation of such a wonderful event, the beloved apostle was carried away, as it were, with holy enthusiasm, and he fell at the feet of the angel to worship. We do not know just what the motives or impressions were that caused him to do this. But his soul was full, full to overflowing, and he could not but adore and worship. The angel, however, refused the homage thus offered, by the declaration that he himself, also, was the servant of Christ and one of the brethren that had the testimony of Jesus; “for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” The idea is: “I am a fellowservant with you, and we both have his testimony. You bear witness to him now in this present generation; I bear witness to those who are to come. You witness now of his death and resurrection; I tell of his future glory and triumphs. We are both, therefore, engaged in the same good work. The testimony of Jesus and the spirit of prophecy are the same. To God, therefore, we must both bow.” See remarks on chap. 1:1.

11. And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.



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15. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written,
KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

That the person described in this vision is Christ is questioned by no one. He is the same one who appeared to John in the beginning. Then he stood in the midst of the seven golden candle-sticks, the sure defense of the churches, holding the seven stars in his right hand. Now, however, he appears from the opened heavens on a white horse, his mission “to judge and make war.” The description of his person, his names, and his attributes, unmistakably proclaim him the Son of God. He is the “faithful and true,” the name by which he made himself known to the churches of Philadelphia and Laodicea. “His eyes as a flame of fire” denotes omniscience; and as a searcher of all hearts he made himself known to the church of Thyatira. “Many crowns” are a symbol of supreme sovereignty and doubtless signify his many victories. “And he had a name written which no man knew but he himself.” He had names by which he might be known to mortals; but he had one name that no created intelligence could understand: it was known only to him. What that name was, of course, is not given; it could not be. If the human mind could not conceive it, human language could not convey it. We can know him as the Faithful and true Witness, as the Word of God, and as King of kings and Lord of lords; but there is one name that we can not know. His “vesture dipped in blood” refers, not to the blood of atonement, but to the blood of his enemies sprinkled upon his raiment in treading the winepress of God’s wrath, and denotes that he was going forth to the dread work of vengeance. To this I shall refer more fully hereafter. His name is also called “the Word of God,” which, when used as a personal appellation in the Scriptures, always signifies Jesus Christ.

Before considering his mission further and the armies that accompanied him, I wish to call special attention to the nature and the chronology of this event. If the present series of prophetic symbols (which begin with chap. 17) is a narrative of continuous events reaching to the end, then the vision before us is a description of the second coming of Christ, the event which was just previously announced and for which the bride had made herself ready. The usual interpretation given it is, that it is a sublime description of the servants of Christ going forth under his direction to spread the truth everywhere among the nations—in short, that it is the triumph of gospel truth over error under the *providential* government of Christ. That such a meaning can be derived from the vision by taking it in a *figurative* sense there can be no doubt, and this is what commentators



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generally do. They make the whole a figurative description of the triumph of the gospel, Christ being present only by his superintending providence. It is made simply a highly poetic description of the victory of truth and righteousness. In this case, however, the principles of symbolic language are clearly abandoned and a mere ordinary figurative meaning given. If we follow strictly the laws of symbolic language, as we manifestly ought, we shall be compelled to take another view of it.

In the first place, if this does not describe the actual coming of Christ, then his second coming is nowhere described in the Revelation. That so great an event should merely be alluded to in a few places and nowhere symbolically described seems incredible. At the judgment scene brought to view in the following chapter the presence of Christ is *assumed*, but it is not stated. Again, there are no victories of love and mercy described at all in the vision before us; but, on the contrary, it is a scene of fearful judgment—a terrible treading of “the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God,” the complete overthrow of every opposing power; while the beast and the false prophet are represented as taken and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. Surely, this is not the work of the church of God. But let it be remembered especially that this last event takes place under the *seventh* plague, which is the “filling up” of the wrath of God, and that Christ previously announced under the sixth vial, “Behold, *I come* as a thief.” Christ comes in reality when this seventh plague occurs. To represent the glorious triumphs of Christianity by the mission of the church, the gospel and the Holy Spirit, under the symbol of Christ, going forth to judge, to make war, and to tread the winepress of God’s wrath, is at war with every principle of symbolic language.

But can this vision of Christ upon a white horse denote a mere providential superintendence, such as Christ constantly exercises over the church and its spiritual affairs on earth? Certainly not by any principle of symbolic language. Throughout the whole prophecy thus far we have seen that whenever any symbolic agent is brought upon the panorama, whether horseman, or beasts, or locusts, or harlot, or whatever else, it always denotes some corresponding agents appearing on earth and beginning their appropriate work. The symbolic agent is real. But here is a symbolic appearance of Christ. By what law could such a symbolic appearance represent merely a providential superintendence? And if his appearance was necessary in this case, why was it not necessary in every event, to show that it was done under his direction? Again, if this symbolic appearance of Christ is not his real appearance, how can we tell that there is any reality in the appearance of the horsemen of the first four seals, the ten-horned beast, or the harlot woman? What right have we to remove one agent



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from the panorama as an actual agent there any more than another? And if this is not his real appearance, upon what principle of interpretation can we ever establish the fact of his second coming? It is evident to all that, if we can turn this agent into a mere providential one, we can do the same with another, and thus set aside his second coming altogether. Then, what shall we say in the next chapter when some one steals our weapons and declares that the great white throne before which all the dead, small and great, stand is nothing but that providential government of God under which all sinners pass condemnation upon themselves and their sins find them out? If we can deal thus with symbols, we can do anything with them and can make out any meaning we please.

The laws of symbolic language require us to take the appearance of Christ in this vision just as we do the appearance of any other agent, as a real event. We can not consistently give it any other meaning. His *symbolic* appearance must represent his *real* appearance; otherwise, it can never be represented by anything. Jesus appears in his own name and person because there is no other that can represent his infinite dignity and majesty. And the symbols connected with him denote the object of his mission and the work which he performs. His white horse shows him now a glorious conqueror; his crowns denote his supreme dominion; the sword of his mouth and his vesture dipped in blood denote the dread work of vengeance upon his enemies; while the army following him doubtless denotes the "ten thousands of his saints" that accompany him when he comes. Jude 14. The bride has already prepared herself for his coming, and now the eternal union takes place. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

17. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18. That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses; and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

19. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.



21. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.



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The foregoing explanation so nearly covers this ground that little remains to be said. The symbol is that of vast slaughter on a battle-field, which gathers all the birds of heaven and the beasts of the forest to the prey. The enemies gathered for this battle were “the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies,” together with the false prophet. This is the grand confederacy of wickedness formed under the mission of the three unclean spirits that went forth, not only unto the kings of the earth, but also into the whole world. This is not a literal collecting of armies, hence not a literal slaughter upon a battlefield, nor a literal assembling of carrion birds; but it is a symbolic representation of the final and eternal destruction of the allied powers of sin. As will be further described in the following chapter, they were gathered together for the purpose of overthrowing the church of God and anticipated a complete victory in the battle of Armageddon; but the sudden appearance of Jesus Christ to rescue his bride results in their complete overthrow. The special theme of this series of prophecy has been the history of apostate Christendom; hence the beast and the false prophet are represented as being taken and thrown into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. “The remnant” that were slain refers to the other powers of wickedness not embraced in Catholicism and Protestantism. This series being now traced to its close, the narrative returns to take up another important theme of prophetic truth.

CHAPTER XX.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.
3. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

It is commonly supposed that the events here described are to occur at the second advent; but by considering carefully the different things enumerated in this chapter—the binding of the dragon; then a thousand years; after that the Armageddon battle; and last of all the judgment scene, in which all the dead, both small and great, are rewarded, and all the powers of wickedness cast into the lake of fire—it will be seen at once that this is not a continuation of the series of prophecy immediately preceding, but an entirely new theme, running partly parallel with that series, and both ending at the same point—the second coming of Christ and the general judgment, in which the lake of fire is the final doom of the combined powers of wickedness. In that series the beast and the false prophet—Romanism and Protestantism—were the chief powers of evil under consideration; in this series the dragon feature predominates. If this be not true, then

there will be two judgment scenes and the wicked cast into the lake of fire twice.
Positive proof of the position here taken will be given as we proceed.



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The power here referred to as “the Devil and Satan” is also denominated “the dragon.” This use of the definite article shows clearly that a particular character is designated—*the* dragon—and implies that the object has already been introduced. In his first appearance upon the symbolic panorama (chap. 12:3) he is simply styled a dragon, but in every subsequent instance he is called *the* dragon, which proves that the same character is meant. In addition to the former remarks on chapter 12:9 relative to the terms applied to this antichristian power, the following quotation from the People’s Cyclopaedia will throw some light on the subject: “In the mythical history and legendary poetry of almost every nation, the dragon appears as the emblem of the destructive and anarchistic principle.... Like the serpent, the dragon is always a minister of evil ... the object of which is to fight order, harmony, and progress. In Christian art, the dragon is the emblem of sin.... It is often represented as crushed under the feet of saints and martyrs.... Sometimes its prostrate attitude signifies the triumph of Christianity over Paganism.” Art. Dragon. Considering this usage of these terms for ages, it is not strange that they were applied also to that great antichristian, persecuting system of Paganism, which stood before Christianity as its greatest barrier to “order, harmony, and progress.”

The angel that overthrew this public system of Pagan infidelity symbolizes the primitive host of Christians, the ministers in particular. Some have supposed that he represented Christ; but, as already shown conclusively, Christ can not be symbolized by an inferior intelligence, hence always appears upon the scene in his own character, proclaiming his own eternal name. The fact that this angel possessed the key of the bottomless pit is no proof that he is Christ, even though in chapter 1:18 Jesus is said to have certain keys; for in chapter 9:1 we find that a *fallen star*—the symbol of Mohammed—is said to have “the key of the bottomless pit” also. At the most, this expression is only a symbol of power and authority, be it good or bad. In the gospel the same figure is applied to God’s ministers, where they are given authority to bind the powers of wickedness on earth. Mat. 16:19; 18:18. The chain is a symbol of the power to bind.

When Christianity first commenced its warfare with this huge system of error, almost the entire then-known world was under its deceptive influence; but by a long conflict, in which thousands of the noble followers of the Lamb were slaughtered, this antichristian public system of Pagan infidelity was at last completely overthrown, and the final result was, that the civilized world became as completely Christian (nominally at least) as it ever had been Pagan. This great transformation could never have been effected without the undying heroism and whole-hearted consecration of the first disciples of Christ. From this time the dragon *as such*—as a public deceiver of the nations throughout the Apocalyptic earth—was overthrown. This marks the beginning of the thousand years mentioned.



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Since many of the principles of heathenism were copied by the church of Rome, it may be difficult for some to understand at first why it is said that the dragon no longer deceived the nations after being cast down by primitive Christianity; but this becomes clear when we consider what the dragon really was and what the church of Rome was understood to be. A time came when the entire civilized world knew that heathenism as such was wrong and rejected the very idea of a plurality of gods; but they were led to believe that they could adapt many of their former rites and ceremonies to the worship of the one true God in whom they believed and thereby render acceptable service to him, and were sure that the Romish church was the one true apostolic church. It was not the dragon, or heathenism, that then deceived them; it was Christianity—a *false Christianity*. The manner in which the people were deceived during the time following the casting down of heathenism in the beginning has already been considered in chapters XII, XIII, XVII, XVIII, *etc.*, covering the same period of time included in the one thousand years in the vision before us.

We can not apply this period specified as literally one thousand years without varying from every principle of time prophecy in the Revelation, for they are all symbolic; neither can we apply it according to the usual year-day method, which, signifying three hundred and sixty thousand years, would throw this series of events out of harmony with the time-periods allotted to the other themes of truth running over the same ground and terminating at the same point—the general judgment. Therefore, to be consistent, we shall have to apply it as (so far as human knowledge of the exact dates is concerned) an indefinite length of time, on the same principle that “the hour of temptation” in chapter 3:10, the three and one-half days in chapter 11:9, and the “hour” in which the ten kingdoms receive power with the beast (chap. 17:12), *etc.*, are applied.

4. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

We have in this description another division of the subject introduced—a history of God’s people, or one phase of the church, during the same thousand years following the casting down of the dragon.



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“They lived and reigned with Christ.” It was those who had “part in the first resurrection” that were exalted to this honored position with Christ. Millenarians always *assume* that this refers to a literal resurrection at the second coming of Christ, but no such thing is hinted at. Not one word is said about literally resurrected saints reigning. John says, “I saw the *souls* of them which were beheaded for the witness of Jesus ... and *they* lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Nothing whatever is said about any reign on earth at all; but the description shows plainly that it was disembodied spirits that were reigning with Christ in Paradise during the period that followed the casting down of the dragon, which was in reality one of long apostasy and darkness on earth. Before and during this conflict with Paganism the church of God was publicly triumphant on earth. Afterward, during the apostasy, a false church was, in the public view, triumphant, while the church of God was crowded out of sight into the wilderness. However, the reign of God’s saints did not cease; for when they were slaughtered by their relentless persecutors and deprived of their reign on earth, they were, as symbolized by the man-child, caught up to God and to his throne and there “lived and reigned with Christ” during the thousand years under consideration.

This same thought concerning the reign of the martyrs in Paradise while the powers of evil triumphed on earth, was brought to view on the opening of the fifth seal in chapter 6:9-11. “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: 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? 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 fellowservants also and their brethren, *that should be killed as they were* should be fulfilled.” This quotation will make clear one point concerning the refusal of the martyrs to worship the beast and his image. We are not to understand that every soul of the martyrs John saw in these visions reigned during the entire period under consideration; but he beheld the reign of the saints above during the one thousand years, and he saw there the souls of all the martyrs—such as had been slain in the early days of Christianity (chap. 12:11); such as refused to worship the beast and were martyred therefor (chap. 13:7); and also, such as “should be killed as they were” (chap. 6:11) and were put to death shortly after the formation of the image of the beast. Chap. 13:15; 16:6.



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This company of souls that the apostle saw reigning with Christ above were those who had had part “in the first resurrection,” which had made them “blessed and holy.” They were not on earth; they were disembodied spirits above, hence had not been literally resurrected. The Scriptures clearly teach that mankind in their ordinary condition are “*dead* in trespasses and in sins,” and that through salvation, which makes them “blessed and holy,” they are “quicken^d” to a new life in Christ. Eph. 2:1. That this is Scripturally “the first resurrection” is proved most positively by the words of Christ—“Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, *and now is*, when the *dead* shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear *shall live*. He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, *hath* everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is *passed from death unto life*.” John 5:25, 24. Although many other proofs could easily be given, this of itself is sufficient to establish the point that the host of early Christians who had “passed from death unto life” in Christ and who gave their lives gladly for the sake of Christ, constituted the ones referred to as having had “part in the first resurrection.” According to verse 6 it was only on those who had part in the first resurrection that the second death had no power. The church at Smyrna received the sure promise from Christ himself that they should “not be hurt of the second death” (chap. 2:11); and this shows beyond all question that even at that early date they had had part in this first resurrection that makes men blessed and holy.

It is the trick of Beelzebub to deceive souls by causing them to overlook the fact that this first resurrection that made men blessed and holy is of a spiritual nature and to fix their hopes in two literal resurrections at the end. There will be but one literal resurrection then, as is clearly shown by the account given of the judgment in this chapter, verses 11-15. The writer of the Revelation declared positively, “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.” Chap. 1:7. If this does not prove that there is but one literal resurrection when Christ comes, then I would not know how to state such a fact if I desired. Furthermore, Jesus himself, in the same chapter in which he described “the first resurrection,” says most positively that all the literal dead shall be resurrected at the same time. “Marvel not at this,” he says: “the *hour* is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.” John 5:28, 29. This *hour* certainly can not signify more than a short period of time. In their efforts to prove two literal



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resurrections, millenarians always quote with emphasis, “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” 1 Thes. 4:16. In doing so they, either ignorantly or wilfully, wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction; for any one can see at a glance that no such thing as two resurrections is even hinted at. Verses 15-17 simply teach this, that the righteous who are living on the earth at the time Christ appears will not ascend to heaven *before* the righteous dead are resurrected, but the dead will rise first, then they will all be caught up together at one and the same time. The wicked are not mentioned in this connection; for, as stated, Paul was writing this only for the comfort and the edification of the church. In the following chapter, however, their “sudden destruction” at the second coming of Christ is mentioned as a warning to the church.

It is evident that the first resurrection as applied in this connection specified particularly that phase of the church which, as symbolized by the man-child, was caught up to God through martyrdom and there “lived and reigned with Christ.” The other phase of the church, symbolized by the woman, is not said to reign with Christ a thousand years, but, on the other hand, is represented as driven into the wilderness, her public reign on earth being ended by the holy city being trodden under foot of a profane multitude of apostate beast-worshippers; and the two witnesses, clothed in sackcloth, were prophesying only in a few isolated, individual hearts.

A careful study of this scripture, taken in connection with others in the Revelation applying to the same object, will show that all God’s people, both those here brought to view during the thousand years and those following that period, are spoken of as dead people resurrected and reigning. They are considered under two phases—those who, as symbolized by the man-child, were caught up to God through martyrdom and there lived and reigned with Christ; and those who, as symbolized by the woman, were deprived of their public reign on earth and were driven into the wilderness during the same period. The first phase were “priests of God and of Christ” and reigned with him in Paradise (chap. 6:9-11); but “the rest,” the phase symbolized by the woman, did not live and enjoy their public reign again, as in the early days of Christianity, until the expiration of the thousand-year period. It is true that individuals on earth received life from God and were thus spiritually resurrected during the thousand-year period; but the dominant beast-power martyred them by thousands, the two witnesses were then in their sack-cloth state, and thus the public triumphal reign of the saints on earth ceased. The statement of verse five that “the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” should be applied not in an individual, but in a general sense, the same as the reign above during the same period is considered. There is also some doubt as to the authenticity of this sentence.



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It is not found in the Vatican Manuscript, which is one of the oldest in existence; and the Syriac Version, which has come down to us from early days through an entirely separate channel, does not contain it. However, it is evident that the phase of the church symbolized by the woman actually reigns triumphantly on earth after the thousand years is finished; for verses 7-9 of this chapter show that the dragon, combined with Gog and Magog, goes forth on the breadth of the earth to compass the camp of the saints just before the end of time.

The fact that the reign of God's people on earth is divided into two distinct periods is shown also by other prophecies. In the seventh chapter of Daniel is recorded a vision of four great beasts, symbolizing the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires. Verse 18, connected with Dan. 2:31-44, shows that the saints were to possess the kingdom of God before the overthrow of all these four kingdoms, which was actually fulfilled by Jesus Christ appearing during the reign of the Roman empire and planting the kingdom of God in the earth. See Mark 1:15; Luke 12:32; 16:16; Col. 1:13. Then follows a description of the rise of the Papacy, which was to "*wear out the saints of the most High*" for a time, times, and the dividing of times—three and one-half times, or forty-two months, or, prophetically, twelve hundred and sixty years. This, as before explained, reaches to the year A.D. 1530. During this period the public reign of the saints on earth ceased. Then immediately following it is said, "The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it *unto the end.*" This does not refer to the final judgment; it is a spiritual judgment that commences before that time and continues "*unto the end.*" For example of a similar *judgment* see Acts 7:7.

God had a people during the Protestant era who walked in all the light they possessed and who were filled with judgment against the beast-power that had worn out the saints for ages. And though in places some were put to death for refusing to worship the image of the beast that lifeless professors had set up, yet there were from time to time reformations that resurrected many people to life in Christ. A little later, however, the real spiritual reign of the saints is perfectly restored in the pure gospel light of the evening time, and now the next verse is fulfilled, which says, "And 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, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." It is only reasonable to suppose that the public reign on earth would commence gradually and would finally reach its perfect fulfilment, just the same as it ceased gradually in the beginning. Therefore we can not point to a definite date exactly marking the end of the thousand years, any more than we can locate exactly the time of its commencement; but we must be satisfied just to consider this symbolic expression as covering a long period of time during which these important phases of deep truth are considered merely from a general standpoint.



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This special reign of a thousand years above is doubtless brought to our view for the express purpose of making the history of the triumph of Christianity continuous. When interrupted on earth, the scene is suddenly transferred to Paradise; then when the woman comes out of the wilderness and the public reign on earth begins again, while the woman is being prepared as a bride for the coming of the Lamb, the scene, as the following description in verse 9 also will show, is again transferred to earth. The reign above does not in reality cease with the expiration of the thousand years, but we are permitted to obtain a view of it only for that length of time during the down-trodden state of the church on earth. This reign of the martyrs' above is placed in direct contrast with the public reign on earth during the same time, which consisted of multitudes of people worshiping the beast, receiving his image and his mark. What the "thrones" on which they sat and the "judgment" given them signifies, I do not know for certain, but it is doubtless the same exalted privilege and authority which Christ promised to all his over-comers—to sit with him on his throne. Chap. 3:21.

7. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8. And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The loosing of Satan, or the dragon, is the first important point to be considered. Before this matter can be rightly understood, however, we must take into account carefully certain facts regarding his binding. It was not the dragon as a political power that Christianity attacked (it did not labor to that end), but it was its huge public system of false belief that was overthrown. This great system, as opposed to Christianity, can all be summed up under the one word *infidelity*. *Infidel* signifies "a heathen; one who disbelieves in Christ, or the divine origin and authority of Christianity."—Webster. This system was positively an antichristian power that sought by every possible means to destroy the religion of Jesus and to blot out his very name. It failed in the attempt. It was bound. During the long reign of Popery, when the doctrine was be-a-Catholic-or-die, infidelity could not publicly lift its head in the sense in which it was cast down by the early Christians. It had no power over the nations of the Apocalyptic earth to then deceive



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them; but they were greatly deceived by a false Christianity until almost all the world wondered after the beast. The release of the dragon, then, in order to be entirely satisfactory and consistent, must embrace the following points: First, it must at least include the development of a great public antichristian power whose avowed object is to destroy the whole fabric of Christianity. Second, being bound by divine power, his release must be the result of divine permission for a special purpose. Third, the scene of his imprisonment must necessarily be the place of his release; namely, the earth—the Apocalyptic earth—the territory of the Roman empire.

We find all these requirements meeting a most perfect fulfilment in the events described under the pouring out of the first vial, which was done by the direction of Him that sat upon the throne. A sufficient history of that fearful system of infidelity which, through the labors of Voltaire and his coadjutors, spread throughout all Europe has already been given. The very object of the leaders of this movement was the extermination of the Christian religion, and their secret watchword was “Crush the wretch,” meaning Jesus Christ. The dragon was loose in all his terrible features. The Pagans upheld a false belief; these modern worshipers of the dragon did likewise and publicly exalted the “Goddess of Reason” as an object of devotion, setting aside every tenth day for their hellish orgies in her honor. The former endeavored to overthrow the Christian religion; the latter had for its special aim the utter destruction of everything Christian either in name or in character. This devilish system spread over all Europe and almost undermined the whole fabric of society, and threatened to convert the world from Christianity to the worship of the Goddess of Reason. Its foothold gained was so extensive and its effects so far-reaching that prominent historians, D’Aubigne among the number, have denominated the period of its greatest triumph “the day of Reason.” It is one of the three and one-half days covered by the prophecy in Rev. 11:9.

I do not wish to be understood, however, as limiting the release of the dragon and his work to the system of infidelity that had its origin in France. I merely refer to that unfortunate system as the beginning of the dragon’s release and work—the re-introduction to the world of those principles of public hostility to Christianity which had lain buried since the days of Pagan Rome. The dragon in the beginning was a deceptive system, one that “deceived the whole world”; but its deceptions were uncovered by the light of Christianity, and then it became the bitter public opposer of the religion of Christ. In the release of the dragon the order is reversed. He first appears as the public enemy of Christianity in the form already mentioned, but afterwards changes his tactics to milder methods in order the better to “deceive” the people, as we shall see hereafter.



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But there is another chapter in the history of the dragon's career that we must not overlook—his partnership with Gog and Magog. The original signification of the terms *Gog and Magog* is difficult to ascertain, as all known accounts are conflicting. The terms occur in Ezek. 38 and 39 also. In the Revelation, however, it is clear that these terms are applied to Romanism and Protestantism, and under the special leadership of this spirit of antichrist they are gathered together to battle against the saints of the most High. I will again quote the description of this union as given under the sixth vial, which refers to the present time: “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. 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.... And he gathered them into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.” Chap. 16:13-16. It will be noticed that the field of operations under this grand confederation of the three unclean spirits is enlarged so that it includes not merely the Apocalyptic earth, but “the whole world.”

In order to form a confederation of powers each of which holds its own distinctive principles, it is necessary that each make certain concessions, in outward appearance at least, so that they can work together in harmony against a common foe. In this case it will be necessary that three points be conceded before the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet can agree. First, the dragon must not appear in his true character as antichristian; he must be clothed in some different attire in order to “deceive.” Second, Catholicism must stop her work of slaying those who disagree with her and cover up her true principles. Third, Protestantism must cease protesting against the abominations of Catholicism. We are living in the time when this confederation of the powers of wickedness is being effected; therefore we must not expect to see the dragon as a terrible creature with heads and horns standing as the open adversary of God, but we must look for him dressed up in a garb “to deceive.” If necessary he can place himself under a Christian garb without violating his conscience—of which he has none.

It will perhaps be beneficial to give the reader a short account of some of the forms under which the dragon is manifesting himself at the present time in order to “deceive” the people. It will be remembered that, in the description of the first vial, which represented the awful system of infidelity that was spread over Europe, Dr. Adam Weishaupt of the University of Ingolstadt, formed a secret society under the name of the Illuminati in order the better to spread these wicked principles. A quotation was also made showing that “*Freemasonry* being in high repute all over Europe when Weishaupt

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first formed the plan of his society, he availed himself of its secrecy to introduce his new order, which rapidly spread, by the efforts of its founders and disciples, through all those countries." Now, if Freemasonry was such an excellent channel for the dragon to begin his work through, is it not reasonable to suppose that he would still retain his position in that order, and especially since *the very name of Christ* is barred from its rites, rules, and ceremonies? And this thought is especially convincing when we consider the fact that Freemasonry is in its very nature and constitution only a form of Paganism. This vast body is founded on what they call the "ancient mysteries." The following is taken from *Masonic Salvation* by Fred Husted:

"Warburton says: 'Each of the Pagan gods had (beside the public and open) a secret worship paid unto him, to which none were admitted but those who had been selected by preparatory ceremonies called initiation. This secret worship was called "the mysteries."'"

"Mackey, another member of this order, says: 'These mysteries existed in every country of heathendom, in each under a different name, and to some extent under a different form, but always and everywhere with the same design of inculcating (teaching) by allegorical and symbolical teachings the great Masonic doctrines of the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. This one important proposition and the fact which it enumerates (states) must never be lost sight of, in any inquiry into the origin of Freemasonry; for the Pagan mysteries were to the spurious Freemasonry of antiquity precisely what the Masters' lodges are to the Freemasonry of the present day.'

"This is certainly a frank statement, coming as it does from a man who is an acknowledged and highly esteemed authority in matters pertaining to the craft. Daniel Sickles says, 'In Egypt, Greece, and many other ancient nations Freemasonry, that is, the Mysteries, was one of the earliest agencies employed to effect the improvement and enlightenment of man.' Pierson says, 'The identity of the Masonic institutions with the ancient Mysteries is obvious,' which means clearly to be seen, manifest to any and all.

"Masons say that the order is founded on the Bible—that is, unlearned Masons say so. Geo. Wingate Chase, in the *Digest of Masonic Law*, says: 'The Jews, the Turks, each reject either the New Testament or the Old or both, and yet we see no good reasons why they should not be made Masons. In fact, Blue Lodge [first three degrees] Masonry has nothing whatever to do with the Bible. It is not founded on the Bible. If it were, it would not be Masonry; it would be something else.'

"Sickles says in speaking of the third, or Master Mason's degree, 'There are characters impressed upon it which can not be mistaken. *It is thoroughly Egyptian.*' He further says that the tradition is older by a thousand years than Solomon. 'That our [Masonic] rites embrace all the possible circumstances of man, moral, social, and spiritual, and

have a meaning high as the heavens, broad as the universe, and profound as eternity.’
Sickles in Gen. Chiman Rezon.



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“The writer was informed when the charges were given him ‘that our ancient brethren worshiped in high hills and in low vales, and that guards were placed to keep off cowans or eves-droppers.’ By referring to Scripture we at once find the character of those who worshiped in high hills and low vales, and why they needed a guard to keep off eves-droppers. ‘Thou saidst, I will not transgress; when upon every high hill and under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot.’ Jer. 2:20; 3:6. ‘Ye shall utterly destroy all the places, wherein the nations which ye shall possess served other gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree.’ Deut. 12:2. ‘Enflaming themselves with idols under every green tree, slaying the children in the vales under the cliffs of the rocks.... Even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.’ Isa. 57:5-7. They were not afraid of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 7:10; 1 Kings 14:23), and they grew and multiplied in their reigns, and in the reigns of all those of whom it is recorded that ‘they did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.’ Some of the kings of Israel and of Judah destroyed their high places for them and were highly favored of God for so doing.

“Again, ‘The precepts of Jesus could not have been made obligatory upon a Jew. A Christian would have denied the sanction of the Koran. A Mohammedan must have rejected the law of Moses, and a disciple of Zoroaster would have turned from all, to the teaching of his Zend-Avesta. The universal law of nature, which the authors of the old charges have properly called the moral, is therefore the *only law* suited in every respect to be adopted as the Masonic code.’ Mackeys’ Textbook, Masonic Jurisprudence. If the statements just quoted do not place the secret society of Masonry on a footing decidedly Pagan, it is difficult to say just where it does stand....

“Tammuz, or Osiris of Egypt, who is declared to be the original of Hiram Abiff the temple-builder, is still mourned for. Ezek. 8:14. See Young’s Analytical Concordance or any standard Greek Mythology. Now see Piersons’ Traditions of Freemasonry. ‘The Masonic legend stands by itself, unsupported by history, or other than its own traditions. Yet we readily recognize in Hiram Abiff the Osiris of the Egyptians, the Mithras of the Persians, the Bacchus of the Greeks [god of drunkenness, or feasts and the like], the Dionysis of the fraternity of artificers, and the Atys of the Phrygians, whose passions, deaths, and resurrections were celebrated by these people respectively.’ Thus it is clearly shown that each of these ancient nations had its counterfeit Savior and Redeemer, and it is here proved by the words of Masonic Grand Masters, authors, and authorities, that Masonry is of Pagan origin.”



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When we think of the millions of devotees of this form of Paganism, multitudes of church-members and preachers, surely it is not difficult to see that the dragon is loose in deceiving power again. That he is meeting with great success in forming his confederation of all false religions, is obvious. The world's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in the year 1893, is an illustration of this statement. The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet met in "mutual confidence and respect," a "brotherhood" of religions. Theism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Zoroastrianism, Catholicism, the Greek Church, and Protestantism in many forms—all these were represented. And the devotees of these religions met, as they said, "To unite all religion against all irreligion; to make the golden rule the basis of this union; and to present to the world *substantial unity of many religions*." The following are a few extracts from addresses made before the Parliament.

President Charles Carroll Bonney, in the opening address, said: "Worshippers of God and lovers of man: Let us rejoice that we have lived to see this glorious day.... That we are permitted to take part in this solemn and majestic event of a World's Congress of Religions. The importance of this event can not be overestimated. Its influence on the future relations of the various races of men, can not be too highly esteemed. If this Congress shall faithfully execute its duties with which it has been charged, it shall become the joy of the whole earth, and stand in human history like a *new Mount Zion*, crowned with glory, and marking the actual beginning of a *new epoch of brotherhood and peace*. For when the religious faiths of the world recognize each other as brothers, children of one Father, whom all profess to love and serve, then, and not until then, will the nations of the earth yield to the spirit of concord and learn war no more.... We meet on the mountain height of absolute respect for the religious convictions of each other.... This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress arises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife. *It is the brotherhood of religions.*"

Chairman John Henry Barrows, in his address, said: "We are here not as Baptists and Buddhists, Catholics and Confucians, Parsees and Presbyterians, Methodists and Moslems; we are here as members of a Parliament of Religions, over which flies no sectarian flag, ... but where for the first time in large council is lifted up the banner of love, fellowship, brotherhood.... Welcome, one and all, thrice welcome to the world's first Parliament of Religions! Welcome to the men and women of Israel, the standing miracle of nations and religions! Welcome to the disciples of Prince Siddartha, the many millions who worship their lord Buddha as the light of Asia! Welcome to the high-priests of the national religion of Japan! This city



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has every reason to be grateful to the enlightened ruler of 'the sunrise kingdom.' Welcome to the men of India, and all faiths! Welcome to all the disciples of Christ! ... It seems to me that the spirits of just and good men hover over this assembly. I believe the spirit of Paul is here. I believe the spirit of the wise and humane Buddha is here, and of Socrates the searcher after truth.... When a few days ago I met for the first time the delegates who have come to us from Japan, and shortly after the delegates who have come to us from India, I felt that the arms of human brotherhood had reached almost around the globe." World's Parliament of Religions, Chap. III. Similar congresses have since been held. While I never expect to see all these principles of evil under one organized form, yet it is evident that the spirits of devils that have gone forth into "all the world" are uniting them all under one *spirit*—that of Antichrist.

Another form in which the old dragon is manifesting himself and uniting thousands of people against the truth, and one in which the "miracles" ascribed to this latest confederation of Satan are performed, is that of "Christian Science." Attracted by its healing doctrine, multitudes are lured into this deceptive communion of Mrs. Eddy's. At the very best her system is, as every historian knows, only a slight revision of the Oriental Philosophy; and notwithstanding its forged name *Christian*, it is truly subversive of the doctrine of Christ. Her grand central doctrine of the "allness" of mind and the unreality of matter is a true copy of the "fantastic idealism" of the Gnostics. Gnosticism was based on "speculative knowledge." So is Mrs. Eddy's theory. Gnosticism denied the "*true humanity* of the Redeemer, and made his person a mere phantom, and his work a mere illusion." So does Christian Science. Although Mrs. Eddy clamours loudly that her work is *Christian* and her multitude of followers believe her claim, still a careful study of her work Science and Health will convince any unprejudiced person that she utterly repudiates the atonement-work of Jesus Christ by denying his person and the reality of sin and matter. Though the system may contain some good moral principles, yet it has no power to save men from sin, since it denies the existence of actual sin. Her denial of the one personal God—"all is infinite mind, and its infinite manifestations,"— is but a swing of the pendulum from the godless and graceless system of the materialistic philosophy propounded by Darwin and Haeckel and is as absurd and unscriptural (although opposite) as the rankest Pantheism.



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The salvation of the soul through faith in Jesus Christ has absolutely no place in the Christian Science creed. It is nothing but a species of universalism. Individuals of every evil class and character— self-lovers, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, profane, murderers of fathers and mothers, man-slayers, whoremongers, liars, drunkards, sorcerers, perjured persons, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, inventors of evil things, implacable, unmerciful, abominable, and those unto every good work reprobate—any and all of these characters can and do come to the healers of Christian Science, and *not one word is said to them about getting salvation* through repentance and living faith in the Savior; but, on the other hand, they are received as follows: “*As children of God you have a right to the healing of your bodies!*”! The dragon is in it! I warn people to beware. “They are the spirits of devils, working miracles,” and form an important proof that we are near the end of time.

Another form in which the dragon is manifesting his power on the deceptive and miracle-working line is modern Spiritualism. Multitudes of people of all classes are believers in this soul-destroying doctrine. The system is generally acknowledged to be but a modern form of what was anciently styled witchcraft, necromancy, magic, *etc.*, while the mediums of to-day are of the same class as those formerly known as “witches,” “sorcerers,” “magicians.” This they themselves often admit. The system is so well known both in doctrine and in its pernicious effects that I will not devote further space to the matter.[15] In many other forms the dragon is working his deceptions upon the people.

[Footnote 15: For further consideration of this subject read the book “Modern Spiritualism Exposed,” by the publishers of this work.]

Millions of church-members and thousands of preachers are numbered among these antichristian organizations of Freemasonry, Christian Science, Spiritualism, *etc.*, *etc.*, gathered together under the influence of the spirits of devils working miracles, mighty signs, and wonders. On the other hand, the churches are filled with persons who in spirit are nothing but skeptics and infidels. Said T. De Witt Talmage on one occasion, “There is a mighty host in the Christian church, positively professing Christianity, who *do not believe the Bible*, out and out, in and in, from the first word of the first verse of the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, down to the last word of the last verse of the last chapter of the Book of Revelation.” Is it any wonder that such is the case when a large number of the preachers themselves are in reality skeptics? A newspaper



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clipping before me contains the following, uttered on March 28, 1905, by the Rev. B.A. Green, pastor of the First Baptist Church, of Evanstown, Ill., before about a hundred of his fellow ministers: "All the truth in the world is not contained in one book, nor in books of theology, God was too big for one temple and he is also too big for one book. God is everywhere. His truth is found in all good books. The pastor of to-day should read the modern psychology and modern literature, *especially the works of fiction* which deal with religious or social phases of modern life." A large portion of the sectarian ministry reject entirely the Mosaic account of the creation, and accept instead the modern theory of evolution.

The following quotation is from the Rev. Minton J. Savage, pastor of the Church of the Messiah, New York, N.Y., who is an acknowledged leader in the "higher criticism." This was in answer to an attack made on the higher critics by a convention of the American Bible League. "The men who are leading in the higher criticism of the Bible and who are now being assailed so bitterly by the American Bible League, are representative scholars of the world, scientific thinkers, leaders, teachers, who have given us a new universe, a new conception of God, a new idea concerning the origin and nature of man. They are not seeking to support or to undermine anything. They are seeking for the truth as the only sacred thing on earth.

"I would like to consider what this book is about over which all this controversy is raging. It is really not one book, but sixty-six small volumes. They were written during a period of nearly a thousand years, in different countries, by different people. The first book was written about eight hundred years before Christ. The first five books of the Bible were written between five and six hundred years before Christ. The historical books tell us about the day of Judges, then of Kings, the wars of Israel, until the time of captivity. Then the book of Job, purely anonymous, and no one knows who wrote it. Then the book of the Psalms, the hymn-book of the people of Israel, and the books of the prophets. It would be more proper to call them preachers, for they make no effort to foretell anything, but merely told the people that if they followed certain lines of conduct certain things would happen.

"No book was placed in the Bible by anything that claimed to be divine authority. No law concerning the Biblical canon was ever issued by the church earlier than the sixteenth century and that changed nothing; it simply recognized what had come to be a fact. These books drifted together and came to be bound as one, by force of gravity, by common consent, and there are one or two books in the New Testament which scholars could miss without feeling any the poorer.



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“Nobody, then, is assaulting the Bible, for the simple reason that the Bible as such has never made any claim. The Bible does not claim to be inspired; it does not claim to be infallible. No writer of one book is authorized to speak for the author of any other book. One verse is sometimes referred to as meaning something. The writer of the last book in the Bible utters a curse against anybody who should presume to add to or take from the words of that book. He does not say that the book is infallible; he simple curses anybody that interferes with it, as Shakespeare uttered a curse against anybody who interfered with his bones. I suppose that God might have given us an infallible book, if he had chosen, and if he had given us such a book he would have made us sure that it was infallible.”

“If I were compelled to believe that God holds me responsible for Adam’s sin and that the immense majority of the world is doomed to everlasting torment, and that only a selected few here and there are to enter eternal felicity, I might bow my head and accept it, but I could not rejoice in it. It is barbarous. Men who try to make us accept such dogmas are the real infidels of the world, and it is infidelity which they are creating—infidelity a hundred times worse than that which they call by the name. If you would blot out every Bible in the world to-day you would not even endanger its life, nor would you destroy religion.” From *The Toledo News-Bee*, May 14, 1904.

All these allied powers of wickedness in conflict with the few of God’s saints who serve him acceptably, constitute the battle of Armageddon—that battle of the last great day. It is not a literal collecting of armies nor a literal conflict, but a fierce battle between truth and error. The outward indications are that the enemies of God will triumph; but let us remember that it is destined to “end in the victory of Him unto whom triumph belongs.” Fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour them. This symbol is doubtless taken from the circumstance of Elijah where he commanded fire to come down and destroy his enemies; and it will be as with such an overthrow that the powers of wickedness shall meet their doom in that last great day of God Almighty.

11. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14. And death and hell were cast, into the lake of fire. This is the second death.



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15. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

This series of events, as far as it pertains to the doom of evil men, ends properly with verse 10, where the combined powers of wickedness are represented as being cast into the lake of fire. This last event, however, is in the present scene more fully described. It is fitting that the judgment scene should be more fully described; for with this chapter we have the last special history of the powers of evil given. Many times we have been led up to the time of the final overthrow of all the powers of wickedness, but the manner in which that great event occurs has not been perfectly detailed.

Here we have another illustration of that principle of symbolic language laid down in the beginning—that objects and events whose nature forbids their symbolization appear under their own names or titles and their description must of necessity be literal. The appearance of the great God must be considered an actual event; for, as clearly shown, he can not be symbolized, neither can he appear as the symbol of some other object, from the fact that there is no other object of analagous nature of which he could stand as the representative. The resurrection of itself is an event of such a peculiar nature as to forbid its symbolization. What is there analagous to it which could here be employed? There are, perhaps, analagous changes in the vegetable and animal kingdoms; but symbols drawn from that quarter would indicate some political change instead. Paul may, indeed, speak of the decay and the growth of seeds to *illustrate* the resurrection; but the decay of a seed does not *symbolize* the death of a saint, neither does its germination *symbolize* his resurrection. Nor is there any change that can do it. There is the same necessity of speaking of the resurrection in its literal meaning as there was of representing the spirits of the martyrs under their own appropriate titles.

The earth and the heaven fleeing away from before God's presence so that no place is found for them, must be understood as describing the literal dissolution of this world when Christ comes; for it is clear from the Scriptures that such an event will occur at that time. Peter says that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which *the heavens shall pass away* with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, *the earth also* and the works that are therein *shall be burned up.*" 2 Pet. 3:10. Nothing can be found to symbolize perfectly such a mighty event; hence it appears as a literal description of the final catastrophe of this old world.



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It is evident that there are symbols connected with this appearance of God, as truly as there were symbols connected with Christ in his appearance in chap. 19. The *throne* is a symbol of judgment and of supreme sovereignty, its dazzling whiteness indicating the impartiality and justice of the proceedings. The *books*, likewise, are symbols. We are not to suppose that there are literal books in heaven, in which Christ or some angelic secretary notes down all the affairs of earth. The language and the symbols of Scripture are accommodated to the human understanding, hence books are used as a symbol to denote that the character and the actions of men are all as perfectly known and remembered as if they had been recorded in the archives of heaven. The *book of life*, in which the names of the faithful are often said to be inscribed, denotes that God knows all his chosen people. In the following chapter it is called the Lamb's book of life.

This scene, then, as a whole, is a sublime description of the resurrection and the final judgment of all men and the dissolution of the earth on which we now live. That the righteous will be judged at this time is shown by the fact that the book of life, in which the names of the righteous only are recorded (Chap. 21:27; Exod. 32:33), will also be opened; and verse fifteen implies that the names of some during this judgment scene were found recorded in that book. The wicked receive their eternal portion by being cast into the lake of fire; while the reward of the righteous is described in the remaining part of this series, contained in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER XXI.

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.

2. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The events of this chapter are a continuation of the series of prophecy considered in the preceding one, only describing an entirely different phase—the final reward and eternal home of God's people. We have traced many series of prophecies through the long weary pathway of centuries, only to find the termination of the powers of wickedness in the lake of fire at the end of time or their overthrow otherwise set forth under appropriate symbols; but in no instance has the final reward of God's people after the



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judgment been fully described. That glorious event of the future was referred to in chap. 7 as the final in-gathering of the redeemed “of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” The description however, was incomplete. Since the eternal abode of the wicked is referred to often, the subject would seem incomplete without a description of the final glories and triumphs of the redeemed in their future and eternal home. Though their earthly pilgrimage is fraught with sorrow, death, pain, wretchedness, and misery, by the hands of their violent oppressors, yet they shall witness the complete overthrow of all their enemies in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and they themselves shall be rewarded eternally; for “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, neither crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” It is fitting that such a sublime theme should be reserved as the grand climax of the book of Revelation.

With the dissolution of the earth on which we live, which event has just been described, it is evident that the many lines of prophecy leading up to that great event are no longer under special consideration, but that a new theme subsequent to the judgment scene is introduced with the words of the Revelator immediately following—“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.” The heaven, earth, and sea that passed away certainly refers to the earth that now is and to the aerial heaven surrounding it; therefore the new heaven and the new earth brought to view must signify the future and eternal home that Jesus went to prepare. We could not consistently make the one literal and the other symbolical. This accords perfectly with the teaching of the apostle Peter where he says: “The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for *new heavens and a new earth*, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” 2 Pet. 3:10-13.

The holy city of God, the New Jerusalem, is next introduced. Since this meets its fulfilment in the new order of things subsequent to the judgment scene, it must have special reference to the future abode of the saints in the new earth. Many of the symbols here describing the New Jerusalem, and even New Jerusalem itself, are often used to set forth the church of God in the New Testament dispensation. The church on earth and the church of God in heaven are in one important sense the same thing, as they constitute but one family (Eph. 3:15); yet in another sense there is a difference, and the proper distinction must be observed even when the same symbols or titles are used to describe or



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designate both phases. A similar two-foldness is seen in many lines of truth. In Heb. 12:22, 23, we are represented as dwelling in the city of God in this dispensation; yet verse 27 of this chapter and the fourteenth of the following chapter plainly show our entrance into the city at the end. The Scriptures represent God as dwelling on earth in his church, which, of course, is considered in a spiritual sense; but his actual throne and place of abode is in heaven. A new creation brought about by Christ in his first advent is set forth by various texts; still, it remains a fact that a new creation will actually be brought to view after the present world is no more and that the same will be our eternal home. We obtain spiritual life through Christ now, hence have right to the tree of life; yet in another sense our access to the tree of life is at the end and we then enter in through the gates into the city. Chap. 22:14. Hence it is proper to speak of the city of God as both present and future, by observing the proper distinction, just as the Scriptures speak of the church in a twofold sense as being both on earth and in heaven, or of the spiritual kingdom in the present and the eternal kingdom in the end. It is Scriptural to speak of God's throne as being on earth in the midst of his saints in a spiritual sense and also of its being located in heaven. The tree of life is a present realization spiritually and also a future reality. We dwell in the city of God now—in the suburbs, as it were—but we shall “have a right” to it in the future state when we are ushered into the very heart of the great metropolis and stand before the actual throne of the Deity, in the presence of his August Majesty.

In the New Testament dispensation the heavenly elements of the New Jerusalem have descended to earth in the form of the new covenant, and God's people obtain a foretaste of heaven's glory and are made pure even as Christ is pure, and are therefore represented as having “come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22, 23); and God dwells with them in a very important sense. 2 Cor. 6:16. They are one with the redeemed above, and together they constitute one “family in heaven and earth,” all loving the same Father, adoring the same King, drinking from the same fountain of life eternal, and all basking in the same divine light that beams from the throne of God. In another sense, however, there is a difference between them; for they are separated by the line of mortality, one phase being located on earth and the other in heaven. But when at the last day the redeemed of earth have access to the tree of life in its perfect sense, there will be henceforth only one phase to the New Jerusalem, or church of God, which will be in its relation to the new earth, as specially described in the prophecy under consideration, when “*all things*” are made new and “the former things are passed away.”

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5. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The declarations contained in these verses proceed from God himself and announce the fact that he hath now fulfilled all that he designed. His promises to his faithful children are brought to pass, as well as his threatening to his foes. All things are made new and the former things are passed away. Not only has the strife, the commotion, and the sin in the old order of things passed away, but the new creation, wherein dwelleth righteousness, has been introduced, the grand long-looked-for era of eternal blessedness to the saints. Oh, halleluia! “And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” When the seventh angel of chap. 16:17 poured out his vial, the voice of God from the throne said, “It is done,” signifying that the last judgments were complete. Here again the same voice is heard as before, referring to the same thing—the accomplishment of God’s great purposes. The enemies of the church have been overthrown, her long period of warfare has ended, and the eternal day of Zion’s glory has come. Then follow his blessed promises held out to the faithful, and also the reward to the wicked. These are to be understood as referring to these classes, not at the day of judgment, but when the Revelation was given to John and therefore to us. “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things [in the margin, *these things*]: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” “This is the reward in reserve for those who endure through this period of trial and overcome at last. They shall drink of living waters, which will be sweet and refreshing indeed to those who have toiled through this fight; and they shall inherit these things—these new heavens and earth. God shall be their God, and they his sons. Oh, what an honor! what a destiny in reserve for the faithful! with what glorious anticipations may the believer look forward to the revelations of that day, and with Paul say, ‘If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.’”



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“What warning also to the wicked! The same voice that utters the promise, pronounces also the threatening. ‘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.’ God says, ‘These words are true and faithful.’ They came from him who sat upon the throne, the Alpha and Omega. He has put his everlasting seal to them, and pledged his veracity to their truth.” Dear reader, will you accept the word of Him who can not lie and choose to suffer affliction with the people of God until our Lord shall come to call his ransomed home? Or will you decide to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, only to be resurrected at the last great day to “shame and everlasting contempt”? There is no intimation of future salvation for the transgressor. The lake of fire still stands as the symbol of eternal destruction, and into it the fearful and unbelieving and wicked of every name are cast.

9. And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.

10. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11. Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

12. And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13. On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

15. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.



17. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

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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.
22. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.
23. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.
24. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.
25. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.
26. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it.
27. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

We have here a magnificent description of the New Jerusalem, representing the home of the redeemed. The various symbols employed in its description must of course be understood as symbolical. We have no means of knowing just what our future home will be like; but that it will be a place of wondrous beauty and transcendent glory is shown by the fact that everything which is considered grand and glorious in this world is here chosen to represent the home of the redeemed. The symbols selected to describe it are objects of such priceless worth, even exceeding royal splendor, that we pause in astonishment and exclaim, "What must the reality be?" The conditions upon which entrance to this city may be obtained (ver. 27; chap. 22:14) show clearly that our future and eternal home is the chief burden of this vision and not merely our spiritual inheritance in this world.

"In approaching Jerusalem, the traveller is not aware of its proximity, until, ascending an eminence, the glorious city bursts upon his astonished vision, when he is ready to exclaim with the Psalmist—'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great king.'" Psa. 48:2. John was carried to "a great and high mountain," from which commanding point of view he was enabled to survey in all its boundless extent the surpassing glories of the New Jerusalem. Never did imagination conceive anything approaching the sublimity and grandeur of the scene

here described by the pen of inspiration. It was “a great city”—how great we shall soon discover—the *holy* Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.



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The ancient city of Jerusalem was regarded as sacred because in it God had recorded his name, and it contained his holy temple, his place of residence on earth. Thither the tribes of Israel went up to worship; “Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” So, also, this New Jerusalem was “*the holy city*,” an antitype of the former. It is described as “having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” “The glory of God” was that visible manifestation, called the Shekinah, which Jehovah made of himself in the tabernacle of his ancient people. The following facts concerning it will give us an understanding of its signification as connected with the New Jerusalem:

“Jehovah was the accepted King and Lawgiver of his people Israel, and he had his tabernacle among them, where he abode by his presence, where he might be approached and consulted, and make communications of his will. That visible presence was ‘the glory of God’ or the Shekinah; and the Jews regarded it with the highest possible veneration, as the embodiment of the Deity. The sacred writers often speak of it in the same terms as of Jehovah himself. They refer to this when they speak of *seeing God*. ‘Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, *and they saw the God of Israel*.’ Ex. 24:9, 10. ‘I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.’ Isa. 6:1. And again in verse 5: ‘For mine eyes *have seen* the King, the Lord of hosts.’ The spiritual essence of God can not, of course, be revealed to mortal vision, yet there was a manifestation of the Deity which was made visible to the eyes of men, and which Moses and Isaiah speak of as *seeing God*. It is spoken of as the *presence* and *face* of Jehovah. ‘And he said, *My presence* shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.’ Ex. 33:14. ‘And the Lord spake unto Moses *face to face*, as a man speaketh unto his friend.’ Ex. 33:11.”

The New Jerusalem that John saw descending from God—which denotes its heavenly origin—had “the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” It dazzled as the purest diamond. In verse 23 we are informed that it illuminated the whole city so that there was “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*.” In ancient times “the glory of God” filled the *tabernacle*, the place of his abode; but here it filled *the whole city*. In that tabernacle the Shekinah was the manifestation of the divine glory of Jehovah. In the New Jerusalem Jesus Christ, who is “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,” illuminates the entire city of God. Oh, halleluiah!



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In olden times the cities were surrounded with walls, designed as a defense against all enemies. The more important the city, the higher and stronger were the walls built. Having walls, it was necessary also to have gates to furnish ingress and egress to the inhabitants. These gates were in charge of faithful guardians, who had authority to open and to close them according to the regulations of the city. In accordance with this idea the city of God is represented as having "a wall great and high." This wall represents the security of Zion, whose inhabitants within can rest in peace and safety. The three gates on each side represent the free and easy access into the city from every quarter. Anciently, it was customary to give names to the gates of a city, just as we now do to our streets. The gates of this holy city were named after the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, which embraced all God's ancient covenant people, and which denotes the perfection and completeness of our heavenly home as including all the spiritual Israel.

"And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." The twelve foundations, or rather the twelve courses of stone in the foundation, are more fully described hereafter. The names of the twelve tribes were on the gates to denote that the city was composed of God's true and complete Israel, and the names of the twelve apostles are on the foundation to denote that this contains the church which was "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." Eph. 2:20. The system of truth that they preached to the world forms the doctrinal basis of the church of God, they having received it from heaven "by inspiration of God," and their names all appear; and together they constitute one harmonious, solid foundation upon which the church shall stand forever.

The dimensions of the city as measured by the angel are next given as twelve thousand furlongs, or one thousand five hundred miles. By the statement that the length, the breadth and the height are equal, some have supposed that the city was one thousand five hundred miles high. To quote the words of a certain commentator: "The language, however, will bear another meaning, which is far more natural. It is not that the length and breadth and height were severally equal to *each other*, but *equal with themselves*; that is the length was everywhere the same, the breadth everywhere the same, and the height the same. It was perfect and symmetrical in all its proportions. This is confirmed by the fact distinctly stated, that the wall was one hundred and forty and four cubits high, or two hundred and sixteen feet, a proper height for a wall; while it is said only that 'the length is as large as the breadth.'" This writer reckoned but eighteen inches for a cubit, whereas some figure twenty-two. A city one thousand and five hundred miles high with a wall only two hundred and sixteen or two hundred and sixty four feet high, would be altogether out of proportion.



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The wondrous dimensions of this city set forth the fact that our future home far exceeds in grandeur and extent everything that is looked upon as glorious upon earth. Who ever heard of a city one thousand and five hundred miles square? We have had empires so large, but no such cities. In this representation the city does not encompass the entire earth as she in one sense really does, because it would be impossible thus to represent her and at the same time she be represented as a city within the earth, into which the nations bring their “glory and honor.” The ancient city of Babylon with its beautiful hanging-gardens, the very triumph of human skill, and the city itself lying in a foursquare, being fifteen miles on each side, was unsurpassed in human loveliness. But the city of God is represented as *fifteen hundred* miles square, which dimensions are out of all proportion with anything existing on earth; hence its beauty and magnificence must be ascribed to God only.

“And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold like unto clear glass.” The jasper is the same crystal gem before mentioned. What a wondrous wall it must have been! It was not made of such common material as granite, freestone, or marble, which can make the most imposing structures that human pride can rear, and which are fit for the residence of lofty kings; but it was of jasper, clear as crystal. Think of the wall of this holy city being nearly three hundred feet high and stretching around the city six thousand miles, all built of the purest diamond! No stretch of the human imagination can properly compass such a vision. In rearing earthly structures men seek such material as combine durability, cheapness, beauty, and ease of being wrought. Look at this wall! For *durability*, it has the most indestructible material that can be found on earth. For *beauty*, the language of man can not even convey a meagre description of its amazing loveliness. For *cheapness*—God’s riches were inexhaustible, hence it was not necessary to take this into consideration. For *ease of being wrought*—think of the vast amount of labor it requires to cut and shape even one large diamond, it being said to require in some cases years of incessant toil; yet God could afford to build the wall of this city of such material. Oh, wonders of God’s handiwork! How inexpressibly glorious! This, my dear reader, symbolizes the priceless worth of our eternal home, secured through the atonement. Study the plan of redemption. There is nothing equal to it in the universe. “What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and *lose his own soul?*”

Men become greatly agitated over the announcement of the discovery of gold in the Klondyke, in the Australian continent, in California, and with feverish excitement they abandon their homes and rush headlong to the reputed El Dorado, fearing neither famine, storms, deserts, nor the icy northern blasts. But all the gold ever mined from the bowels of the earth is insignificant and forms no comparison with the representation of this city. Its streets and mansions were built, not of common cement, lumber, nor even granite and marble, but *of pure gold*.



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The twelve courses of stone in the foundation of the wall have already been mentioned. It is here particularly described. One might suppose that, according to human custom, rougher material would be selected for the foundation. Not so, however. The most brilliant and costly gems were chosen to lay these courses. Nothing cheap nor common had anything to do in the construction of this marvelous city. It was altogether beyond the reach of men to imitate: it was God's own handiwork; and we can not but admire its wondrous beauty. It is unnecessary to give a minute description of the gems of which these foundation-courses were composed. They were the most beautiful and costly of which men possess any knowledge. In appearance they represent various colors of the most delicate shades. Royal persons wear even the smallest of these gems upon their persons and imagine themselves richly adorned; but in this city of God they appear in such abundance that they are even selected to form the basis, or foundation, of the wall. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl." We have rich necklaces of pearl; but where is the individual that was ever blessed with such a profusion of wealth that he could ornament the gates of a city with pearls? The gates of the New Jerusalem, however, were not merely ornamented or studded with pearls—that were a very small thing for her—but each gate was of one solid pearl. To conceive the immensity of this representation we must consider the size of the gates required to accommodate the multitudes constantly entering and departing from a city. To be in proportion to the wall they would have to be of immense size, and also of prodigious strength in order to resist the assaults of enemies, as they would be the first places attacked. The gate of the temple called Beautiful, mentioned in the Book of Acts, which was in the wall surrounding the temple, is said to have been seventy-five feet high and sixty in width, built of Corinthian brass. Yet immense as they were, those in the New Jerusalem were each of one solid pearl. Oh, beautiful city of God, the home of the saints!

The most prominent object within the walls of the ancient Jerusalem was the magnificent temple on Mount Zion. It was the chief ornament and glory of the city. In the New Jerusalem, however, no temple is seen. Alas! is not this a great defect? What is Jerusalem without a temple where the tribes may go up and worship before the Lord? Oh, they need no temple in this glorious city of God; for there is one there greater than the temple: "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." This doubtless sets forth the fact that the worship of God is pure and spiritual and of free access to all. Under the old dispensation the high priest alone, and he but once a year, was permitted to enter the sacred precincts of the Deity as limited to the inner sanctuary of the temple. Now God's people need no mediating priest to offer up a special



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sacrifice that the will of God might be known; but all are kings and priests who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2:5); yea, as saith the prophet, “they *shall all know me* from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.” Jer. 31:34. No temple is needed that the Shekinah of the divine presence may take up its abode between the cherubim in the most holy place, but “the glory of the Lord” fills the entire city. It can not be confined to a given locality. “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it,” and they constitute the glory of the New Jerusalem as did the temple on Mount Zion that of the old.

“The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.” Can any one conceive the grandeur and the sublimity of the scene when a light that eclipses the sun and the moon is reflected from streets and mansions of gold, or comes streaming through a wall composed of the most brilliant gems of different hues, with gates of solid pearl? No wonder, then, that the poet has denominated it “the beautiful light of God”! The gates are open continuously, for they are not closed by day, and “there shall be no night there.” But “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.” This, my dear reader, is the reward of the New Testament church, “the church of God.”

CHAPTER XXII.

And he showed me a pure river of water of life, dear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

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:

4. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

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.

The description of the New Jerusalem continues in the first five verses of this chapter. By the “river of the water of life” is doubtless meant full salvation, which as a mighty



flowing stream issues “out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” To this fountain of living waters an invitation is now given to all to come and partake to their satisfaction. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Verse 17. As a defense to God’s people in this world salvation is represented as a great wall surrounding them (Isa.



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26:12); but as a source of joy, holiness and happiness, it is a living stream whereof all may partake. While this symbol meets an appropriate fulfilment in the present dispensation, yet salvation will also be the eternal possession of the saints in the world to come, when “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst thereof, shall feed them, and shall *lead them unto living fountains of waters*; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” Chap. 7:16, 17.

In a most appropriate place, upon the banks of the river, grew “the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” The tree of life in the garden of Eden was a symbol of man’s immortality or incorruption, or rather the *means* of it; for after his fall it was securely guarded and he driven from the garden, “lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Gen. 3:22) and thus frustrate the decree of God just uttered—that he should return unto dust and corruption. In the New Jerusalem, however, that tree of life blooms again and bears fruit abundantly, yea continuously, as symbolized by “every month,” and no cherubim with flaming sword are placed to guard all approach to it. The privilege is open; for it is added immediately, “There *shall be no more curse.*” This, then, symbolizes the removal of spiritual death and the impartation of everlasting life in this world and immortality in the next. The tree of life grew on both sides of the river. On this side of the line of mortality we have access to it in one important sense, while those in the future world are preserved also by its healing benefits.

The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit abide in this city. God reveals himself, not to a few chosen priests only through the Shekinah of his presence, but to all his servants—“they all see his face.” As in the ancient tabernacle he manifested himself by “the glory of the Lord,” or the Shekinah, which was represented as “seeing his face”; so, also, the “glory of the Lord” abides in the New Jerusalem, filling the entire city with the holy manifestation of the divine presence. His people are “sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,” by which they possess the name of their Father—not the name of the beast nor of his image, but *the name of the Father.*

“And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.” This city has no need of natural or artificial light, “for the Lamb is the light thereof.” Chap. 21:23. The light of the sun stands connected with the light of a candle and both are represented as unnecessary, which denotes that “there shall be no night there,” but one clear eternal day.



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6. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

The language of symbols is discontinued. With the description of the New Jerusalem closes the grand panoramic scene of this book. Wondrous indeed have been the events of earth prophetically outlined, but we have the assurance that “these things are faithful and true.” A continuous political and ecclesiastical history of that portion of the earth made the subject of Apocalyptic vision, from the dawn of Christianity until the last day, was here written down in advance. After the permanent division of the empire, which occurred under Valens and Valentinian[16] in A.D. 364, it was necessary that the political and the ecclesiastical history of the empire should be divided in the prophecy. This inspiration has done. The downfall of the Western empire is clearly predicted in the symbols under the first four trumpets; but the eclipse is afterwards lifted, and the same Western empire again appears in Imperial form under the control of the Papacy. After giving their power and strength unto the beast during the Dark Ages, the horns afterward turn against the Papacy and rob her of all her temporal authority and power, thus pointing us clearly to the history of modern Europe, in which the prophecy has been actually fulfilled. They themselves end at the judgment of the last day. Thus, the political history of the Western empire is carried through to the end. The Eastern division of the empire is also made a subject of prophecy, and its overthrow is described under the sixth trumpet. This was effected by the second woe, or the rise of the Ottoman power, and that woe is represented as continuing until after the death and the resurrection of the two witnesses and terminating shortly before the end of time. Therefore the political history of the Eastern empire, which has been under the power of the Turks for centuries, is outlined until the end. The ecclesiastical history of the Eastern empire is also given, its most prominent feature being the rise and the development of that pest of Mohammedanism, which rests like a dark cloud over that fair country until this day. In the Western division the rise of the Papacy, its continuation, the rise of Protestantism and its duration, are all clearly outlined, reaching down to these last days. Then the scene is suddenly enlarged and is carried beyond the limits of the earth—the Apocalyptic earth—into “the whole world,” when the powers of wickedness are combined in spirit to antagonize the reformation of holiness and truth which God is using to gather his faithful ones together in preparation for the coming of the Son of God to judgment. In view of these wonderful events of the last days, how comforting the words of the text before us—“Behold, *I come quickly*: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book”!

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[Footnote 16: Some historians give A.D. 395 as the date of the permanent division of the empire. The government of the Eastern and Western divisions was separate from the accession of Valens and Valentinian, in 364, until during the reign of Theodosius the Great, when the West, through the jealous rivalries of different competitors for the throne, had fallen into great disorder. Theodosius twice interposed to right matters and finally took the government into his own hands for the space of four months, in 395, when he died, after arranging for the division of the empire between his two sons Arcadius and Honorius.]

8. And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things.

9. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

The mind of the apostle was so enraptured with the visions he beheld that he could not but adore and worship; but the angel that had been the chosen instrument to reveal these prophecies refused his act of homage and instructed him to “worship God.” Created intelligences are not worthy of such respect; to God alone all honor and praise belongs. Jesus Christ our Redeemer is God—God over all, blessed forever. As such he is worthy of the homage supreme of all our hearts, the praises of all our lips.

10. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.



The popular opinion is that this book of the Revelation is sealed; but John received the direct command, "*Seal not* the sayings of the prophecy of this book." The majority of the teachers of Babylon to-day are fulfilling Isaiah 29:9-11, and that is the reason why it has become to them a sealed book. God makes known the blessed truths of the prophecies of this book to his own beloved children, who walk before him in sincerity and truth. A blessing is pronounced upon us if we keep them. His coming is near at hand, and his reward is with him to render unto every



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man according as his work shall be. No offers of salvation will be extended when Christ appears to give us access to the tree of immortal life and an abundant entrance into the eternal city beyond; but it will then be said, "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." "Dogs" are left without. This term as applied to a person is one of great reproach. It is so among us, and much more so among the Jews, by whom that animal was regarded as unclean. It signifies evil workers. Evil characters of every class will have no part in the heavenly realm, but will be cast into the lake of fire. It will be the perfection of misery to be banished forever from the presence of God and the companionship of all that is good and holy. "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."

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.

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 statements of these verses have been considered heretofore, hence there is no necessity of further comment on them in this connection.

18. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19. And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Here is the most solemn warning against any one who should presume to corrupt the prophecies of the Revelation by adding to or taking away from them. Nor was such a warning needless. This book contains the long history of God's church, and also the history of all her persecutors, painted in colors of deepest infamy, and the final doom that awaits them. These enemies were to ride in triumph over the earth during a long career of centuries, when the children of God should be trodden down beneath their feet, as it were, while they boasted themselves as being the true church, the anointed of heaven. These Revelations were to be handed down to succeeding generations through these very persecutors. The great whore of Babylon had her likeness taken and then committed to her for preservation. Would she not falsify them? Nearly all the early records of the church have been corrupted by the church of Rome. For ages it has been a doctrine of that institution that



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pious fraud was consistent and even commendable when practised to further the influence of that church. Yea, she has proclaimed openly and unblushingly that if her cause could be promoted by deception and lies they were perfectly justifiable; and her practise has been consistent with her teachings. In view of the fact that God's Word was to pass through the depths of this "mystery of iniquity," it is not surprising that we find annexed to this concluding portion of Holy Writ the awful anathema: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 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."

20. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

What importance is attached to the second coming of Christ! Over and over again it is stated distinctly. It is the grand climax unto which all the series of events in this book leads.

"Are you ready, waiting for the Lord?
See, the signs proclaim him near;
In the awful thunders of his Word,
Now his coming steps we hear.

"Now are many running to and fro,
Spreading holiness around;
And the evening light begins to glow,
Soon we'll hear the trumpet's sound.

"Hark! the solemn warning unto all,
Judgment's coming, oh, how soon!
Flee, O man, at Mercy's final call,
Heaven trembles at your doom.

"Christ is coming, oh, the heavenly sight!
Our Beloved can't delay,
For his bride is robed in snowy white,
Ready for the marriage-day."

Amen. "Even so come, Lord Jesus." Then will appear the great "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." In the beginning he "created the heaven and the earth." In



the end, John said, "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." In the beginning Satan entered the domain of God's people to deceive and destroy. In the end he is cast out, and will deceive the nations no more. In the beginning sickness, pain, sorrow, and wretchedness found entrance to the world. In the end "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." In the beginning the people of earth were placed under the iron hand of death, who has claimed his teeming millions. In the end, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.... And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them ... and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." In the beginning



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was a blooming garden containing the tree of immortal life. In the end we find the tree of life again “in the midst of the Paradise of God.” In the beginning a curse was placed upon this earth. In the world to come “there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.” In the beginning the first Adam lost his universal dominion over the earth. In the end we find Jesus Christ, the second Adam, crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, and reigning in triumph and glory forever. In the beginning man was barred from the tree of life and driven from the garden of Eden. In the end, “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.”

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