

Ethan Smith (1762-1849)
Key to the Revelation
(1st ed., 1833, 2nd ed., 1837)
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(note: the text on this page is still under construction)

K E Y
TO THE
R E V E L A T I O N.
IN
THIRTY-EIGHT LECTURES
TAKING THE WHOLE BOOK IN COURSE.
BY E T H A N S M I T H,
AUTHOR OF "A DISSERTATION ON THE PROPHECIES," "VIEW OF THE TRINITY,"
"VIEW OF THE HEBREWS," "KEY TO THE FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE," ETC.

Second Edition.

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P R E F A C E,

The Apocalypse is a precious part of our holy Revelation. But it is, to a great degree, a sealed book. Is it always to remain thus? God, having given it to man, with commands to study, understand, and improve it, decides in the negative. This book is the finishing piece of the word of God; and is one worthy of God. It may be called a collection of the golden rays of light in the prophecies, in the doctrines, the duties, and motives of the Bible, to a focus; -- a burning point; -- that they may melt the heart of man. It is a most happy blending of majesty, sublimity, and simplicity, in the great things of God. Whenever this book shall be understood, probably its simplicity will excite more surprise, than that excited in the mind of Naaman by the simplicity of the means of his being healed of his leprosy. He looked for great things; but a small one (which at first excited only his contempt) was the means of his cure. A good and cultivated mind and a patient, persevering attention are no doubt essential to a correct exposition of the Revelation.

But these are not enough. To them must be added, not only the new heart, much prayer, and those teachings of the Holy Ghost, essential to the true saint, but also a peculiar unction of soul in the spirit and analogies of prophecy. And one must devoutly feel the sacred hints like these; -- "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." "Not by words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." It was the still small voice, and not the strong wind, the earthquake, or the fire, which made Elijah to wrap his face in his mantle. There is a kingdom which "cometh not with observation;" and which the natural man, -- with ever so great learning, -- does not understand. It is his, who did "not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets." God will so work, as that no flesh shall glory in his presenee. See 1 Cor. i. 18-31.

Between forty and fifty years ago, and early in my ministry, I had a strong desire to understand the book of Revelation; and determined, if possible, to do it. My pastoral preaching, during my long ministry, has been of the doctrinal and practical kind; seldom on the prophecies. But I have long delighted in devoting a part of my time to the study of the propheees. I early wrote a Dissertation on Rev. xiv. 6; and read it to my Association;

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which I have inserted on the above passage, in this book. See page 226. After about eighteen years of my ministry, I was led to form the outlines of the parts of my scheme of the Revelation, which are new. I then visited most able divines in New England, and spent some time in laying my news before them; such men as Rev. Drs. Hemmenway, Spring, Emmons, Morse, Lathrop (West Springfield), Thayer (New Hampshire), Lewis (Connecticut), and received their full and written approbation; and requested that these views might be given to the public. I visited President Dwight, with the full expectation of receiving aid; but he said that such had been the state of his eyes, that he had not paid much attention to the prophecies; and could afford me no assistance. President Moore assured me my scheme on the Revelation was the best he had ever seen. In the next twenty years, I filled up my plan of the Lectures in my KEY. I kept them long, after I supposed them finished, for reexamination, and to watch the signs of the times; being determined to prevent, if possible, my book being added to the many wrecks which line the shores of the apocalyptic sea. I waited especially, to see if the events of the sixth vial, in my plan of the vials, formed between twenty and thirty years ago, would give its testimony in my favor; which it now has fully done.

July 1, 1833.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

Fifteen hundred copies of the first edition sold very soon; and for some time the book has been called for, and none could be obtained. I have deferred the second edition, -- desirous to learn the views of able men on the subject. And it now seems but due to say, that I have heard nothing but commendations of the work. I should not say this, nor what I am about to add, were it not that there is a general deep-rooted prejudice in the public mind against writings on the Revelation. Such is this prejudice, that nothing which can be written on the subject would be likely to gain even candid reading, without considerable to recommend it, and to gain the public confidence. Feeling then, as I do, an interest in this subject, and having devoutly labored so long upon it, I take the liberty to adduce the following testimonials. I asked a celebrated Doctor of Divinity in a first city, for his critical remarks, for the benefit of a second edition. He replied, that he had none to make; that he was pleased with the work at first; and had since been more and more pleased with

it; and was then preaching a course of weekly lectures to his young people, on the Revelation; and had this for his text book. To a friend, sitting by, he added, This is the best work I have seen on the Revelation; you must have it. In the first edition was inserted a vote of the Association of Salem and vicinity, in favor of the work; also testimonials from most of the members of the Central Worcester Association: and from various other ministers; which will not here be reinserted. The following are again given:

From Rev. Mr. BURR. "I have read a considerable portion of the Lectures in your Key &c. in manuscript, and have attended, more or less, to every Lecture, with much satisfaction, I am well pleased with the plan of the work, and with your exposition of that difficult and highly important part of the prophetic Scripture, so far as I can judge. It appears to me that not a few rays of new light are thrown upon this closing part of the volume of Inspiration. I am highly delighted with the numerous and judicious remarks, doctrinal, experimental, and practical, with which the work is interspersed. This work, it appears to me, will be one of the few books which may live, in many improved editions, through the Millennium. It will be thought, I doubt not, by those who discern the signs of the times, a very seasonable and useful publication at this highly interesting period of the church and the world. I therefore hope it will soon be given to the public, and be extensively read."

JONATHAN BURR.

Boston, April 3, 1833.

From Rev. Dr. EMMONS. "When I, many years ago, heard you read to me some of your Lectures on the Revelation, I thought you treated that deep, difficult, and important subject in a very ingenious and lucid manner. I wish to see this work published; and I have no doubt but it will meet the approbation of good judges, and will subserve the great cause which now agitates the minds and awakens the hopes and zeal of the Christian world. The friends of Zion were never more anxious than at present to learn the signs of the times, and what they may anticipate will be the state of the church and of the world, before the Millennium, during the Millennium, and thence to the end of the world. I know all Christians ought, and I trust they will be disposed to promote the circulation of a volume which may serve to enlighten animate them to pursue the best means to bring on the universal spread of the gospel, and the latter-day glory of the church."

NATHANIEL EMMONS.

Franklin, April 15, 1833.

Many of the divines in New-York were from home on account of the sultry season, when I went thither to obtain the printing of the first edition. The following were consulted, and they approved:

From Rev. Drs. BROWNLEE: and DEWITT. "The work, entitled a Key to the Revelation, we have heard explained, and much of it read, by the author, Rev. Mr. Smith. It is the fruit, we understand, of many years' study of the prophecies. And Mr. Smith has evidently bestowed much pains to arrive at the true and correct meaning of the symbolic language

of prophecy. The work is, in our judgment, of deep and labored research. There is much ingenuity in his arguments, and his historical illustrations. It has much that is new; and his theory, -- which is brought forward with becoming modesty, -- seems to us to possess unity and consistency. And it does not consist merely of dry dissertations on

difficult passages, but has a pleasing and edifying spirit of piety pervading the whole. We are persuaded that the book will be interesting and instructive to all classes of Christians: and we recommend it to our friends accordingly."

W. C. BROWNLEE,
THOMAS DE WITT.

From Rev. Mr. PETERS. "Having been favored with the perusal of Rev. Mr. Smith's 'Key to the Revelation,' I am happy to express my entire concurrence with the above recommendation of it by the Rev. Drs. Brownlee and De Witt. It may be read with profit by all who desire to know the signs of the times."

ABSALOM PETERS.

From Rev. Messrs. MCCARTEE, IRVIN, SPENCER and MASON. "We have heard a portion of Rev. Mr. Smith's Key to the Revelation read, and its general views explained by the author; and we are very happy to recommend it to the attention and patronage of the Christian public. It is a work of great research and originality, with many very important and ingenious views of Scripture prophecy. The author has evidently made himself acquainted with the peculiarities of symbolic language, and with the general design, as well as with the particular views of the prophetic Scriptures of which he treats. There is a very happy addition to all this -- in the vein of pious and practical feeling and remark, which runs through the work. It is important, peculiarly at the present period, that such works should be patronized, read, and studied; "for the time is at hand!"

R. McCARTEE,
JAMES IRVIN,
I. S. SPENCER,
ERSKINE MASON.

From Rev. WM. PARKINSON. "Mr. Smith has read to me some of his Lectures on the Revelation; and has added his outlines, views, and the divisions of his book; and, I cheerfully say, that I feel a strong desire to see this work published, hoping it will prove a seasonable help to the church of Christ." WM. PARKINSON.

From Rev. Mr. BALDWIN. "Attempts of inferior and hasty writers on the Revelation have often resulted in mistake, not to say injurious error. Mr. Smith's Key to the Revelation has, in my opinion, better claims to our respect. It is clearly a production of deep thought and research. His plan is, to a good extent, new; and the work throughout is interesting. I have read nothing on the Revelation which afforded me equal satisfaction."

ELIHU W. BALDWIN.
New-York, August, 1833.

Many more might have been obtained for this edition; but it was dispensed with. The two following are added:

From Rev. Dr. SPRAGUE. "From the attention I have been able to render to this work, as well as from the opinions I have heard expressed

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by intelligent readers, I have no doubt but it is a judicious, able work, and is entitled to the public patronage."

W. B. SPRAGUE.
Albany, July 16, 1835.

From Rev. Dr. TUCKER. "Having examined Rev. Mr. Smith's Key to the Revelation, I am prepared to express my approbation of the work. The author, well known by other works, has evinced in this his usual knowledge of the Scriptures; his soundness of judgment, and correctness of sentiment. As a commentary, it is critical and judicious. And as an exposition of this difficult part of the holy Scriptures, it is lucid and convincing."

MARK TUCKER.

Troy, N.Y., July 17, 1835.

A minister, in high repute in his county and State, said, as I lately entered his house, I have been reading your Key to the Revelation; and am highly pleased with it. I have been much prejudiced against writings of this kind; but am now convinced of my error; and am determined to study the prophecies.

The evidence of the divinity of the Revelation rests on that of the divinity of the Bible. If the one is true, the other is true. For the Revelation is a mirror, reflecting the glories of the Bible. And the evidence that each is the word of God is full; and should ever rest on every heart. The want of this cripples the Christian's faith; withholding its support. A concise view of the points of evidence that the Bible is the word of God, is as follows: 1. Man's need of such a book; and hence the presumption that God would give it. The immortality of the soul, and salvation for lost man, are learned here only. And as God conversed with Adam in Paradise, he certainly would reveal his will to his children, if he designed salvation for them. Where then, is such a revelation? The Bible has claims to it, as far superior to all other books that make any claims, as the sun is superior to a glow worm. 2. The fulfilments of its prophecies. A line of the great events, most interesting to the church, from the beginning, have been long predicted. And to this day they have been most clearly fulfilled, and fulfilling; which is a kind of constant miracle in evidence of the truth of the Bible. The divinity of the Apocalypse is here most perfectly demonstrated. Its events have been, and are fulfilling as clearly, in the eyes of men skilled in prophecy, as eclipses (previously calculated) evince the truth of our system of astronomy. 3. Miracles; events out of the course of nature, to vindicate God's word. These have been numerous; and before the eyes of both enemies and friends. And they furnish the highest evidence for the Bible. Suppose a voice from heaven should now say to us, I will give you new evidence of the truth of the Bible. The sun shall now stand still for twenty-four hours; and then go on its course! We all watch for the event; and it is fulfilled! Would this be ample evidence? This we have, in Joshua x. 12-14; and many other miracles equally convincing. 4. The history of Christ on earth. Here is evidence perfect in kind and degree. Long was he predicted; and he fulfilled these predictions in all respects,

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in his person. In the record given of him, the rays of the light of the Bible meet, and demonstrate his divinity, and their own. 5. The testimonies of the Apostles. They testified, not to opinions; but to facts; -- each one of which evinces the divinity of the Bible: viz., Christ's life with them on earth; his miracles; his death; his resurrection; and his ascension to heaven in their full view! Nothing earthly could induce the Apostles to bear these most unpopular testimonies at the peril of their lives, and to seal the truth of them with their blood. 6. The unity of the Bible. Written by different men, at different times, and places, by men unacquainted with each other, in no preconcerted combination, of different habits; and yet all uniting in the same views of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, of fallen man, of the great salvation by Christ, of heaven, of hell, and of the way to each; as well as predicting the same temporal events. This shows that they "wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 7. The excellency of the word of God; its doctrines, duties demanded, and its motives, all being such as are worthy of God, and most happy for his people. 8. Its height and sublimity: being as much above created wisdom, as heaven is above the earth. As well might the infidel tell us, that the sun is but a dark body, produced by some designing man, and is a curse to the world; as to say the same thing of our Bible. 9. Its power on the human soul: -- "being sharper than any two edged sword." "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." The vilest sinners have been tortured by its stings on their consciences. 10. The wonders God has wrought by it: -- in the Apostles' days; in the destruction of paganism in the Roman empire; in ancient Britain with our heathen fathers; in all Christian lands, turning them from paganism; in the mission stations of our day; and in salvations wrought among us. The Bible must have been written by good or bad men. But bad ones would not have written such a book, if they had been able; for they have ever hated it. And good men would tell the truth concerning their inspiration. 12. All objections worthy of note have been often refuted. Thus the Bible is the word of God. And thus the Revelation, -- its finishing touch and the reflecting glass of the whole, -- is worthy of a very different attention than what it has hitherto received!

August 16, 1837.

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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

Our Saviour assures us, at the introduction of this sacred book, that "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." Rev. i. 3. We find here our warrant, and our great encouragement, as well as duty, to study the Revelation with devout and diligent attention. I would contribute my mite to the correct performance of this duty, too generally neglected.

In this Introduction, I purpose to give a concise view of the origin and nature of the figurative language which abounds in it, and in most of the prophetic writings of the Bible; then note the divisions found in the Revelation; and exhibit the duty, benefits and encouragements, which urge to a devout and diligent study of the Apocalypse.

What, then, are the origin and nature of figurative language? This kind of language is a representing of one thing by another; things less known, by things better known; and sometimes the reverse. Things spiritual are often denoted by things natural; as in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper.

This kind of language had its origin in early times, and in the want of a literal language. It came easily into use from necessity (which is the mother of invention); and, from the analogies which were found to exist between different things, it was found to be easy and natural to take the properties of one thing, to represent those of another. People of very limited knowledge of words,

wishing to communicate their ideas (such as they were), attempted to do it by such means as they found within their power; and these means were, figures borrowed from things with which they had some acquaintance; and between which, and the things they wished to express, they discovered (or imagined they discovered) a similarity. Figures thus adopted soon became familiar, and were received as the names of the things thus expressed. From this beginning, men proceeded to compound and improve their figures, as they wished to denote additional qualities, or circumstances; and hence in time arose the Egyptian hieroglyphics, and probably the characters used by the Chinese.

This kind of language had a natural and simple origin, like the following: A child sees and desires an object, but knows not the name of it. He reaches out his hand for it, and, if he can say any thing, he calls it by the name of something which he knows, and between which, and this thing, he imagines he perceives a resemblance. And, till he is better informed, he will, probably, continue to call it by this name. In such kind of simplicity did figurative language originate. And it was not discontinued after the invention and improvement of letters. It then became more definite, as literal definitions could be given of it, and as language improved.

The ancient Egyptians took pleasure in expressing and recording their mental conceptions in figures, which were at once curious and mysterious. And they retained and refined this use of figures, after they made improvement in literature; as did also the other nations of the East. What was at first adopted from necessity, was afterward retained and refined, to embellish their language. Men of the first eminence delighted in this use of their figures; and they often exercised their own and each other's invention with questions involved in this kind of mystery. Hence originated riddles, designed both to please, and to instruct. The Greeks, and then the Romans, caught this manner of embodying their ideas in the language of figures.

It might then have been expected, that Israel, after having resided four hundred years in Egypt, in the dawn of their national existence, would adopt a liberal use of this kind of language; and that the style of their prophets, especially, would abound with it. For, although the prophets wrote by inspiration, yet they were led to record

their inspired conceptions in the language with which they were familiar. Their prophecies especially, might be expected to abound in this kind of language; for they were designed to be veiled in various degrees of mystery, at least for a time. And they were designed to be such as to require the devout and patient investigations of men versed in the language and analogies of prophecy. Hence the passage is appropriate, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter dark sayings of old."

This kind of language is capable of being much more easily understood than many imagine. Literal language is unintelligible till rendered familiar by improvement and use; and even then, it is imperfect. The same word often imports different things and actions; and the true sense in any given place must be learned from the object of the writer -- the exegesis of the discourse; and with this consideration, added to due attention to figurative language, it may be rendered familiar. And it is so, even among people uncultivated. The natives of our continent abound in this kind of diction, of which they form the most ready and perfect conceptions. And we easily understand their figurative communications, in their various talks to our people; and not only so, but we are arrested with the strength and beauty of their communications, much more than we should be with the literal and simple expressions of their ideas.

Figures known in the sacred writings, are derived from the following sources: -- The visible heavens, with the planetary system. -- The region of the air, where winds, storms, lightnings, and thunder are generated. -- The earth, water, fires, earthquakes, minerals, metals, stones. -- The vegetable world; trees, grain, plants. -- The sea, with its waves, billows and depths. -- Cities in peace, and in arms. -- Wars, leaders, armies, battles, conquests and captivities. -- Houses, with their furniture; temples, prisons, courts, judicial proceedings. -- Roads, highways, mountains, deserts, rivers, brooks, springs of water. -- The human body; its sustenance, ornaments, clothing; its diseases; its senses, of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. -- Domestic relations, and blessings. -- Utensils of life -- actions of men -- times and seasons. -- The animal creation; and the feathered tribes. -- Reptiles, and insects. -- Monsters of the earth; and fishes, and monsters of the sea. -- Also assumed forms from the invisible world.

Figures from these sources, with various combinations of properties, natural and unnatural, occasionally super-added, abound in the word of God; and more especially in the prophecies.

The same figure sometimes relates to secular, and sometimes to ecclesiastical things. When the former is the case, the heavens (for instance) mean the system of an empire. "The heavens departed as a scroll!" or, an empire was subverted. "The powers of the heavens shall be shaken!" or, the political world shall be rent. The sun, in that case, denotes the highest government of a nation. Its being turned to darkness, denotes the ruin, or deep perplexity of the supreme civil authority. The stars then denote the subordinate rulers of a nation. Their falling from heaven, means their fall in some revolution. And the moon being turned to blood, denotes tremendous slaughters.

When ecclesiastical things are the object, the heavens (meaning the visible heavens) denote the visible church on earth. The sun then is God, or Christ the Sun of Righteousness. The moon then denotes the elements of this world. "The moon was under her feet." The stars then denote the ministers of Christ; the morning star, Christ himself. "I am the bright and morning star." A failing star is an apostate teacher. Light is holiness; and darkness sin. Dews, showers, and rain are the kind influences of the Spirit of God. And God's raining upon the wicked snares, means his providentially confounding them in their wickedness.

Another thing is to be remembered, -- that while the language of prophecy is figurative, the figures are continually interspersed with language that is literal. As the particles and conjunctions in the sentence are literal, various things

predicated of the figurative subjects that are presented, are no less literal. For instance; it does not follow, that because "the rivers and fountains of water," in the third vial, are not literally so, but are nations; therefore the blood into which they are said to be turned in that vial, is not real blood, but something else denoted by blood. The blood does there mean real blood, into which those nations are in a measure turned in wars! as the angel of the waters exclaims, "They have shed the blood of saints, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they are worthy." Wisdom here is profitable to direct, and will direct the candid, improved mind.

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A few instances of Bible figures shall here be added. A beast is a figure of an empire that is hostile to the church. And as there can be but one supreme power in that empire or region at the same time, so there can be but one beast in the same region at the same time. Let this be well remembered. A horn of that beast is a figure either of its strength, or of some leader in it, as Alexander was the notable horn of the he-goat from the west; or a horn is an emblem of some branch of that power. Add to such a beast an unnatural number of horns, or heads, or accommodate him with wings, and you have a compound figure. And unnatural properties may be added to any amount, to denote additional properties in the power denoted. The Babylonish empire was denoted by a lion, as in Dan. vii.; and eagles' wings are added, to denote the velocity of its conquests. The Grecian empire was a leopard, with four wings, to denote still greater velocity in its conquests; and four heads, to denote four parts, into which the empire was divided. The terrible beast from the sea, with great iron teeth, was the secular Roman empire, as will be seen. This may suffice for this part of the subject, as light will arise upon it throughout the following pages.

The divisions of the Revelation should be noted. These will be found to be seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials, as will be shown in their place. But the Saviour gives to John a division of this book thus: "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." The first here noted was the vision and scene of the first chapter. The second was the seven epistles to the seven churches then in Asia Minor. The third ("the things which shall be hereafter") it is of importance to ascertain. The words of the Saviour give us latitude among all events then future, in which the church should have an interest, and which can be shown fitly to accord with the figures of the prophecy.

No one can claim a right to select several only of the great events then future, to the exclusion of other events of equal or greater magnitude. A man who will do this, must surely give others equal latitude; unless he would set himself up as an oracle. "The things that shall be hereafter," we should surely think must include all the most capital events in the church, or contiguous to her,

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in which she would have a deep interest, and which might well accord with the figure predicting them.

Could then "the things which should be hereafter," when John had this vision, be likely to be restricted to several events only, or several kinds of events, as some have imagined? Would they be restricted to the overturning of the Jewish nation, and the destruction of paganism in the Roman empire? Must the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials, be construed as all alluding only to those events of early times? And may one decide that little or no notice is, in the Revelation, taken of the rise, progress, and destruction of popery, and of Mohammedanism, those prime and vast pillars of Satan's kingdom? -- no notice taken of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, -- that plunging of the dragon from his papal heaven? -- no notice taken of his subsequent persecutions of the Protestants, when hundreds of thousands were destroyed by Jesuitical influence? -- no notice taken of the flight of our pilgrim

fathers to this new world, and planting here a cause of salvation which was to convert the world? -- no notice taken of the flight of the present missionary angel round the earth, to preach the gospel to all nations? -- none, of the terrors of the French revolutions of 1789, and its twenty-five years of most terrific wars, and the subversion of the predominant power of the papal see? -- no notice taken of the present subversion of the Turks? -- and no notice of the utter destruction of all that is anti-Christian, when God assures us, in the Old Testament, he will "gather the nations, and assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them his indignation, even all his fierce anger, and the whole earth shall be devoured with the fire of his jealousy; and he will then turn to the people a pure language, and all shall call upon the name of the Lord, and shall serve him with one consent?" These two events are abundantly given in this same connexion in the prophets. Who can tell then, but they are among the "things which shall be hereafter" in the Revelation? The seventh vial is called "the battle of that great day of God Almighty!" -- alluding to the predictions of the event found in the ancient prophets; as though it had been said, that great day so well known in prophecy! This event then, must surely have occupied a place in the description of "the things which shall be hereafter."

The vials, known as "the seven last plagues," must surely be viewed as having their effect in the overthrow

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of the Mohammedan, the papal, and the infidel powers in the last days, and just before the Millennium; -- even though a modern critic be of a different opinion. * I shall remain confident, that "the things which shall be hereafter," to be written by John, were the line of the most interesting events, in the protection of the church, and in the overthrow of her enemies, through the then future ages of the Christian era. I have never heard an objection, nor an argument against this being the fact, which I could view as possessing even the least weight. And all arguments from analogy, and from the common sense of the case, are fully in favor of it. Why should but several things be noted; and all things else, equally important, and even of greater importance, be neglected?

One thing is found in the prophetic part of the Revelation, of essential interest in its correct exposition. It is this, -- that the prophetic part is found in two great general divisions; each having a plan peculiar to itself. After a notable preparation, in the fourth and fifth chapters, for an unfolding of the events of futurity; prophecies in the first division commence in the sixth chapter, with the opening of the first seal, giving an event near the commencement of the Christian era. It thence moves onward through a period of about two thousand years, and closes in the end of chapter xi., in presenting the battle of the great day of God, under the seventh trumpet, and the millennial kingdom of Christ. A second general division then commences, like the first, with a plan peculiar to itself, -- commencing with the Christian era, and passing onward, as did the first division, through the whole Christian era, giving, under new figures, some things noted in the first division, and others not there noted. When it reaches the Millennium, where the first division closes, it thence proceeds to give a description of that happy period; of an apostasy at the close of it; of the general judgment; and of heaven.

The truth of these two general divisions is manifest to the eye of the intelligent reader. The seventh trumpet closing the first division, is most manifestly the same event with the seventh vial closing the reign of Antichrist, in the second division. Compare the two passages, chap. xi. 14, to the end, with chap. xvi. 17, to the end, and you will see they give the same event, in figures essentially

* See Ichhorn.

and almost precisely the same; and the two events stand in the very same connexion with the Millennium, which both alike introduce; and both alike allude to the Old Testament predictions of their events. The trumpet is, "as God hath revealed to his servants the prophets" (chap. x. 6, 7); and the vial is said to be "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," alluding to the same predictions of it in the prophets; -- that day so well known! (chap. xvi. 14.) These two events being the same, and each description of the same event being the close of its septenary, in its general divisions, -- show that they belong to two distinct divisions, however they do, in this fall of Antichrist, meet in unison.

There is found in these two general divisions every mark of duality of plans. Their events commence in about the same period, and terminate in the same period; and they pursue their objects, each in its own plan, in an independent set of figures. They thus contain every essential mark of two divisions.

When I first discovered that these two general divisions exist in the prophetic part of the Revelation, I supposed it had never before been discovered; and I wondered it had not been, and been improved. When I obtained Scott's Bible, I turned to the passage, and was pleased and confirmed in my views, in finding he had noted it. He says, "The prophecies of this book naturally divide themselves into two parts." And he adds, "Inattention to this has occasioned much perplexity in many attempts to explain those predictions." And, conversing not long since with Professor Stuart of Andover on the general principles of expounding the Revelation, and being very happy to find a good general agreement of our views, I asked him, if he had discovered this general division in the prophetic part of the Revelation? He replied that he had; and that it was most fully evident, that such a division commenced with the twelfth chapter; and that the want of having discovered this had led expositors to leave the subject in darkness.

This duality of courses over the same period, affords a most happy facility in the exposition of the book. Place the two courses of the divisions side by side; and place by them, as a third column, the history of the church, internal and external, during the same period; and these, with the knowledge of the prophetic figurative language of the Revelation, together with the aid furnished in the

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prophecy of Daniel, of which a portion of the Revelation is but an inspired exposition -- furnish a pious, intelligent expositor happily for his work.

With such data, God has kindly furnished us; and no part of it should be overlooked, undervalued, or misimproved. Such an expositor is not now fettered with the old, idle theory, that as the seventh seal contains all the trumpets; so the seventh trumpet must be construed as containing all the vials. This cannot be, and is not correct; for the trumpets and the vials belong to two different general divisions of the prophetic part of the book. But the greatness of the event, the battle of that great day of God, occasions it to be given as the last in the grand septenary of each of these divisions. The two general divisions strike here in unison, in the seventh trumpet, and the seventh vial.

With the facility afforded by the view of these two general divisions, the commentator is not now reduced to a necessity of cutting the prophecies of this book in pieces; -- construing the same events as different events; -- treating things which are synchronical, as being many centuries apart; -- connecting things which have no connexions; and destroying the chronology of most of the events in the book. It is in no small degree painful, to see how much of this is done by men learned in books and letters, not excepting an Ichhorn! Every expositor, destitute of the knowledge and improvement of these two general divisions, is trammelled, and utterly unprepared for his work, even if he had besides all learning.

The other divisions of this book will be shown in their places. The first six seals give a course of judgments on pagan Rome, from the last quarter of the first century, till about the close of the first quarter of the fourth century. The first

four of the trumpets then commence a following course of judgments on the Christian empire, after the revolution under Constantine from paganism; -- fulfilled in the northern invasions on the empire, till the dethroning of its last emperor Momylus. The first of the three wo trumpets then sounded in the rise of Mohammedanism. The second, in the rise of the grand supporter of it -- the Turkish empire. The third will destroy Antichrist. And the vials of the seven last plagues, in the second division, will occupy the space between the second and the third wo trumpets; the seventh of which, and the third wo trumpet will be the same, as has been seen.

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I now proceed to consider the duty, benefits, and encouragement of a devout and diligent study of the Revelation. These are found in the text, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein; for the time is at hand." We observe,

1. Our Lord Jesus Christ demands this duty, as well as encourages it. The language of this text, and the giving of the Revelation, imply a demand of the duty. And seven times in this book, is the same found in these words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Four times, when new scenes of Providence open, it is commanded, "Come, and see!" And, annexed to deep prophecies, is the divine command, "Whoso readeth, let him understand." Shall man object, and say, the attempt is in vain?

2. The fact, that a great section of the Bible consists in prophecies of events then future, tacitly enforces this duty. Little is the objector to the study of the prophecies aware how great a part of the Bible he virtually condemns; and to how great a degree his so doing impeaches the wisdom, and undervalues this great mercy of God.

But, if a part of the prophetic Scriptures may be neglected, where shall the line be drawn? All events now future are known to man only by prophecy. It is here alone that we learn a resurrection, -- a judgment before the bar of God, -- the conflagration of the world, -- the certainty, and the eternity of future retributions of bliss and wo! May the prophecies of these events be neglected? If not, who dares to plead for a neglect of those which assure us of the Millennium; of the battle of that great day of God; of the destination of the Jews; of the vials of the last plagues; and of the events of the Revelation?

3. Much of the ancient preaching of a Saviour then to come, was in types and figures not less dark than are most of the prophecies of the Revelation. Israel had their preaching of Christ, in the brazen serpent, -- in the water from the rock, -- in the sea of brass, -- the candlestick, -- the sacrifices, -- the burning of incense, -- and the clusters of temple emblems, -- "shadows of good things to come!" And would not the very objection, now often made against the study of the Revelation, that it is deep and difficult, have lain with equal weight, at least, against the duty of attempting to discover their Messiah in those

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ancient figures? The affirmative is most manifest. We are assured, that "the rock which followed them, was Christ." They had no express information relative to this, nor to any other type of Christ. But they were "shut up to the faith," to find here their Redeemer, or perish. Nor had they one-twentieth part of the facilities which we now enjoy, relative to the construing of such figurative prophecies. *

The condemnation of those who would not investigate that figurative preaching of Christ, was, their want of faith! "To them was the gospel preached, as well as unto us; but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with

faith in them that heard it." The believers of that day "searched what, and what manner of time," that preaching of the Saviour to come did signify. And the person who trifled then with this duty, was the infidel, on his way to perdition! Such an one, probably, quieted his conscience thus: The construction given to these figurative things, which they say allude to the Messiah to come, appears but fanciful, visionary, and uncertain! Different men may have their different views of them; and one has as good a right to his opinion as another. All cannot be right! and I will believe none of

* I have read from considerable authority, that it is dangerous, if not in vain, to attempt to expound Old Testament types, where inspiration does not expound them. From this principle it follows, that had not the Holy Ghost informed us, that the rock, yielding water to Israel in the- wilderness, was a type of Christ, we should have no right to make such a decision. This is a criticism worthy of the German Neologists! Was the rock to be viewed as inexplicable, till Paul was inspired to assure us it typified Christ? And is the same true of all the types of old? Were they of no benefit to the saints of that day? But what is said of the rock implies that Israel should have understood it, and that the pious did thus. "They drank of that rock; and that rock was Christ," -- meaning, a type of Christ. Mr. Edwards assures us, that if God speaks to the understanding of man, it is enough; though he says it not in so many words. The Bible is full of instructions thus communicated. Implicit instruction is no less valuable than express. Christ blamed the Sadducees for not finding in the words of God to Moses at the bush ("I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob"), the doctrine of the resurrection. But according to the writer I have in view, the Sadducees had only to say, that passage says nothing expressly of a resurrection. The sentiment I here oppose virtually justifies all the rejections of types and shadows by infidels of old. For God had not seen fit expressly to explain them then, but had left this to the faith and ingenuity of his people. And most of the types of the Old: Testament are still thus left. Are they then of no use? Was the candlestick in the temple of no use, till Christ explained it in Rev. i. 20 "Be not righteous overmuch; neither be overmuch wise."

them! We have plain scriptural rules of morality enough; and to those I will attend; and I will leave such figurative predictions for those who delight in them. I have no such delight; for to me they are uncertain, calculated to perplex, and are of no solid benefit! Precisely would this have been, as too many have conversed concerning the study of the Revelation.

4. This neglect is to set our own wisdom above the word of God, and against it. Let another class of men select the doctrinal parts of the Bible for proscription, as being too deep and difficult to be understood. Some of the doctrines are not less deep and difficult than are the prophecies; and they are far from being less displeasing to the carnal mind, which is enmity against God! Let one then, deny the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ, because it is dark and mysterious; let another class of men deny the most displeasing parts of the duties of religion; another, the terrors of an eternal hell! These things, and much of our holy religion, are deep; and, to the wicked among men, they seem mysterious. And where will this course of expunging deep and displeasing things from the Bible end, but in gross infidelity? But Christ says, "I testify to every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, (that) 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 this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book." When I have heard people openly discourage all critical attention to the Revelation, and felicitate themselves that they never spent their time in thus attending to it, I have thought this passage may well make them tremble! It is a remark of Bishop Newton, that "they who censure, or dissuade from the study of the Revelation, do it, for most part, because they have not themselves studied it, and because they imagine difficulties to be greater than they are." I lately saw the following remark in a religious periodical: "The wisest commentators have scarcely effected more than to puzzle themselves, and bewilder their readers, when they have attempted to interpret the prophecies before they are fulfilled. The times and the seasons, the Father hath put in his own power!"

Was the writer of this clause aware how directly this

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sentiment is pointed against Jesus Christ himself? He says, concerning deep prophecies, "Let him that readeth understand." "Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand." How then can a minister of Christ dare thus to seal the sayings of prophecy, while their events are at hand, or are future; and seal them, because they are future? Christ says again, "Blessed is he that readeth the words of this prophecy, and keepeth those things that are written therein." Again: "Ye hypocrites, how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times?" If the prophecies are not to be studied till fulfilled, they are never to be studied; for, in that case, it never could be known when they are fulfilled. The argument of this writer, drawn from the words of Christ to the Jews, is plausible, but is wholly fallacious. Secret things, it is true, the Father has reserved in his own power; and those, it is not for man to know. This was the case with the point concerning which the disciples inquired, and this remark of Christ was made, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" God had revealed no such event as the restoring of a temporal kingdom to Israel! And our Saviour kindly turned them off with the above reply; knowing that a few days, and his pouring out his Spirit upon them, would cure them of this their mistake! But did the Saviour mean by this remark to inform us (as this writer takes for granted), that the Father has revealed nothing to man relative to the times and seasons of the great events which are in fact to take place between the present time and the end of the world? If this is a fact, then our writer's remark is correct; not otherwise. But this is not a fact. God has revealed various of those great events, and has expressly informed of the time of them; and more, he has commanded man to study, and understand those things. Which, then, shall we obey; our heavenly Father; or the man who will not study the prophecies? Is there not; something here that looks like arrogance and impiety; publicly and indiscriminately to blame all who attempt to understand the prophecies? This has been abundantly done; and it gives no small degree of pain, to see good men uniting in it. Let this writer consider, that notwithstanding what our Lord thus said to his erring disciples on that occasion, the Father had revealed to man "the times and seasons" of many things; such as the return of Israel from Egypt; as well as the time of the flood, 120

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years. And the latter took place, we are informed, the "same day" as predicted. God predicted the time of the coming of the Messiah; and the time of the return of the Jews from Babylon. And God has as expressly predicted the times of some of the great future events; and has done it over, and over, and over! as the destruction of Antichrist, at the close of the noted 1260 years. He has given by Daniel, numbers additional to this, as 30 and 43; at the close of which, he says, "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh!" And God has told us of another express number, 666; and given express direction to have it counted and understood! What can be the views of a man who shall then wish to bring all due attention to these directions of Heaven into disrepute, and mistakingly plead the words of Christ himself, too, to sanction it? Let such a man take his own liberty; and to his Master he stands or falls. But let him give to others the liberty he himself takes, without publicly censuring them. Daniel previously understood by book, we are informed, the time of the restoration of the Jews from Babylon, as well as the certainty of the event. And he hence set himself to intercede with God for its accomplishment; and it took place in answer to his intercession. Would not such an employment, excited by such pious attention to the prophecies, be more discreet for us, than to unite in the clamor against such an employment, and against those who attempt to investigate this part of our holy Bible? Peter says of the writings of Paul, "There are many things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do other scriptures."

5. The prophecies were kindly given of God to warn his people of interesting events, while they were still future; that they may be prepared either to escape, or to endure the trials predicted; and may, by their prayers, and talents, aid the accomplishment of good to the church. Daniel, it has been shown, did thus! And thus it should be now, in relation to the fulfilment of prophecy. Some have said, the prophecies were given only that the divinity of the Bible may be evinced after their fulfilment. Was this the only or chief end of the ancient predictions of the coming of Christ in the flesh? that after he had come, man might know the Bible to be the word of God? Is this the only end of the predictions of the final judgment; of heaven; and of hell? no more is it the only (or the chief) end of the prophecies in the Revelation, of the

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great events of the last days. Their design is, that God's people should "not be in darkness, that that day should overtake them as a thief." But that they may be prepared to obey Christ, when he says, (between the sixth and seventh vials,) "Behold, I come as a thief; blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments; lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Much does Christ give the command, at that day, watch, watch, watch! "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers!" -- All of which implies a knowledge of the signs of the times, and of the events then coming upon the world. It is said of the ungodly of that period, "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Of the former it is said, "Thy judgments are far above out of his sight." Of the latter, "When ye see all these things, then know that it is near even at the doors." In the numerous scriptures of this tenor, is fully implied the duty and blessedness of a good knowledge of the Revelation in its predictions and warnings.

6. Events of modern date have much facilitated the exposition of this book. They have furnished a clew to some of the most interesting predictions in it, which were never before furnished. In addition now to the learned labors of past celebrated authors, we have facts, in modern, and in passing events, which prove a rich help to the exposition of this book. Should these facilities be overlooked, we should be most inexcusable; and should appropriate to ourselves the censure of Christ, -- "Ye hypocrites; ye can discern the face of the sky! how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times?"

How is such neglect consistent with the duty of the Christian watchman? Is he not set to give warning of the approach of danger, as well as to comfort the people of God with the promises of good? To do this, the preacher must declare the whole counsel of God, and "diminish not a word." People feel that they have a right to inquire, "Watchman, what of the night?" and that he ought to be able to give them some correct reply. It is given in divine command, relative to the approach of the battle of that great day of God, Joel ii. 1: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the land (earth) tremble for the day of the Lord, for it is nigh at hand."

7. The prophecies in the Revelation open a rich field of devout contemplation, and of the improvement of the

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succession of events of the Christian era, which are there predicted as of signal interest to the church. The line of those events, -- of protection to the church, -- and of wrath upon her enemies, -- God saw fit kindly to foretell, for the rich benefit of his children, to warn them of their dangers, and to assure them of his protecting goodness. And shall such divine kindness be unheeded? What ingratitude and folly! Such events are not to be contemplated merely as things political; but as the works of the Almighty, in vindication of his justice and of his grace, and in faithfulness to his word. This gives to saints a new interest in those events; while their faith is invigorated, and their devotion and confidence in God excited. They hence learn and feel that God is indeed a wall of fire round about Zion; that they who

be with us are more than they who be with the enemy; that the Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob our refuge! - that he will indeed "create on every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, a cloud and smoke by day, and a fire by night; and on all the glory shall be a defence." The histories recorded in the Old Testament are of this kind; such as the deluge; -- the burning of Sodom; -- the bringing of Israel from Egypt; -- the scene at the Red Sea; -- events of Israel in the wilderness, in Canaan, in Babylon; -- numerous protections of the church, and judgments on her enemies; -- these furnish sources of rich Christian instruction and consolation. And no less will the events predicted in the Revelation do it, when duly understood; particularly the protections of the church, and the terrors of divine wrath on her enemies, through the period of the Christian dispensation, and especially near the Millennium. These, when seen in their true light, and duly improved, will nourish and enrich the faith and confidence in God of his dear people. And for these purposes the prophecies of the Apocalypse should not fail of being studied and improved.

With this conviction, I have for many years desired to become myself acquainted with the true sentiments of the Revelation; desiring, that the veil which has so long lain upon it, maybe in a greater degree removed; and that the intelligent and practical improvement may be made of this closing part of the Bible, which the importance of the subject most clearly demands. Most of the expositions, in this key, of events which were antecedent to the sixteenth century, essentially agree with the most approved

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commentators. Relative to events since the early part of the sixteenth century, particularly the first five vials, and the synchronical predictions of the judgments which fulfilled them; -- in these things, my path has been new. No antecedent scheme of the vials has been satisfactory to intelligent readers; and my views of these particulars have had the approving testimony of the best of men.

It will be seen, that I have not cumbered my pages with the views given of many writers on the various subjects; nor with any refutations of those I do not approve. This would have but perplexed common readers, rendered my book unwieldy, and provoked altercation. It is enough for me, after examining all, to give the result of my own judgment on each point; and others may do the same.

If my views are expressed as though I believed them, I yet lay no claim to infallibility. To err, is human; and it would be like a miracle, if, in such a course as I have been led to take, there should be no error. But the events of Providence, for twenty years, have been such as to confirm me in the essential correctness of the views which I had formed before that period. - Several circumstantial errors I have discovered and corrected. I have felt the impropriety of venturing too minutely on the circumstantial parts of future scenes. This has been one sad error of writers on the prophecies, -- seeming to wish to be prophets, instead of being simply expounders of prophecy. If a degree of this has crept into some of my past writings, I have since designed to set a double guard against its creeping into my present pages. May the subjects of the Revelation be examined with that prayerful, candid, and diligent attention, which their solemnity and magnitude demand! And may it be done with that aid of the divine Spirit, -- that holy unction of grace, -- without which, this part of our holy oracles, and the whole Bible itself, will be but a dead letter, -- a savor of death!

LECTURE II.

REVELATION I.

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

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

This book is called the Revelation of Jesus Christ, because Christ, as the Head of the church, gave it to man. The Father is spoken of as having given it to Christ, in allusion to the official inferiority of Christ to the Father, he having engaged, in the covenant of redemption, to operate as Mediator between God and fallen man, and thus to occupy a sphere of subordination to the Father, in the great work of redemption. May this distinction be ever remembered, that this inferiority of Christ to the Father, is not one founded in the nature of Christ, or in any want on Christ's part of being possessed of real, proper, and infinite divinity; but is founded in his undertaking in the work of man's salvation; according to the following inspired testimony; "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." To Jesus Christ, in this his state of official inferiority, God gave this blessed book, as the finishing part of his holy book of grace to man. And Christ communicated the same to his beloved disciple John by a heavenly messenger. The angel Gabriel had, ages before, been sent from God on a similar message to the prophet Daniel; Dan. ix. 21-27. And the prophetic parts of the Revelation may in a sense be called a new and enlarged edition of the prophecy of Daniel, with liberty of paraphrase; especially as it related to events future of the period in which John lived. This Revelation was communicated by one who is called an angel -- a heavenly messenger -- as the term imports. A

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human spirit, sent from heaven on this message, as well answers to the term angel here, as would a person of a superior order. The term imports one who brings a message; -- "one employed to communicate information to another at a distance." On which account, a minister of the gospel is called an angel of his church; Rev. ii. 1. The word angels, when found in the plural, signifies (at least usually) the superior order of intelligences in the invisible world. But when used in the singular number, to denote a bearer of tidings from heaven, it may mean one from that superior order, or one of the glorified saints. Should one of the latter be sent on a divine mission, the word angel would as fitly apply to him as to one of the superior order. Some have hence been of opinion, that the messenger here sent with the Apocalypse to John, was the prophet Daniel. In favor of it, they adduce what he says, chap. xxii. 9, when John (supposing him to have been Christ) falls down to worship him, and the angel says, "See thou do it not! for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book; worship God!" They suppose we learn from these words, that he was one of the prophets; and they think none so probable as Daniel, the "man greatly beloved," and who had been blessed as being inspired to predict various of the same great events found in the Revelation, and of which the Revelation seems to be an inspired commentary. And his keeping the sayings of this book, may seem to indicate such an interest in them, as one would naturally have who had been the honored instrument of their being first revealed! Such conceive that Daniel was sent from above to give an enlarged view of his own former prophecies. Moses and Elijah had before been sent from heaven to converse with Christ on the mount of transfiguration: and Daniel might be sent on the present message. But a belief or disbelief of this, is of no great importance to us.

The object of this message is to us of deep interest: -- "to shew unto his servants things that must shortly come to pass." These, the Saviour calls (ver. 19) "the things which shall be hereafter." These must mean the line of events then future, in which the people of God would have a deep interest. What these things are, must be decided by the facts that are revealed; and not by the caprice of any man. None can have a right to say, they must mean only several great

events; as the overturning of the Jews;

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and of Roman paganism. These events no doubt are given; but by no means exclusively. Many other things then future would be found to be of no less interest to the church, and equally entitled to consideration. Human wisdom must here be exercised, and yet only in humble reliance on divine; "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." No doubt the great course of events, concerning the church, in which she would have a special interest even to the end of the world, will be found to be included in the "things that must shortly come to pass," and "the things which shall be hereafter." This history of events (if it may be so called) beforehand declared, and given in language deeply figurative, must be, construed by pious and sound discretion; taking into view the language of prophecy, and the analogy of things. The chief object of the Revelation is, not to reveal things done in heaven, but things done on earth; and this information is to be most piously gratefully and obediently received.

Ver. 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.

We have here the duty and encouragement of this study; and the rich benefits to be derived from a due and pious attention to this book. The remotest events to occur on earth might be said to be at hand, at the period in our text; such is the shortness of time compared with eternity. And the phrase implies that the events are to be studied and kept in mind while yet future.

Ver. 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.

Seven messages were to be sent from the mouth of

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Christ to the seven churches then in Asia Minor. These messages were not prophetic, as some have imagined; but simply admonitory. See chaps. iv. and v., where is a formal preparation, to unfold events of futurity. They, as such, are full of instruction to the people of God in all ages. What is said here of God the Father, that he "is, and was, and is to come," is an essential glory of real and underived divinity. We have in this phrase the eternity of God, as in the following: "Thus saith the High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity." Let this be remembered, when we shall find the same attribute of underived divinity taken by Jesus Christ to himself.

The seven Spirits in the text, denote the Holy Ghost in his various gifts and graces furnished to men. "There are diversities of gifts; but the same Spirit." In the text we have three in the Godhead expressed: -- "from him that is, and was, and is to come; and from Jesus Christ; and from the seven Spirits" -- "three are thus noted that bear record in heaven!" Grace and peace to man are from these Three, united in one God! which Three are one! Most clearly is this

prime article of the Christian faith here established. The flowing of grace and peace from Heaven is only by Christ, the true witness to the law, government, and mercy of the Godhead; -- who died to redeem; and is the resurrection from the dead; the King of kings; Head over all things to the church, whom he makes kings and priests unto God; to whom be glory and dominion (says the text) for ever and ever. The saints are made kings, as having grace to govern themselves; as having fellowship with Christ in his government of the world; and as being heirs of the crown of glory in heaven. And they are made priests, as having a full interest in Christ's priestly office; and as being themselves prepared, by Divine grace, to offer unto God holy spiritual sacrifices and services, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. In these, they praise their Almighty Saviour for their redemption, and their title to glory.

Ver. 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.

The scene here hinted is one well known in the sacred oracles; -- the coming of Christ to judge the world. Christ

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in humanity is the judge of the world. "When the Son of man shall appear in his glory, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations." -- To learn who this Judge of the world is, see Psalm I. 1, -- "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and called the earth from the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined. Our God shall come -- I am God, even thy God!" Verily, then, Christ is God. And he will thus come. "Unto you that look for him, shall he appear a second time without sin, unto salvation." His coming in the flesh was his first coming. And his literal appearance in our text is his second coming. This is said to be "in clouds!" the true sense of which, the event will unfold. It seems he will be attended with clouds of fire; clouds of angels; clouds of all the saints; and (for aught we know) clouds of the unknown legions of intelligences in the universe. And what clouds of overwhelming splendor will attend, none can now conceive. All then will literally behold Christ, the infinite Judge! -- Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas, all the Jewish rulers, all who have persecuted him in his person, or in his people, or pierced him by their sins. All the multitudes of the papal, and infidel Antichrist; of Mohammedans; of the world of rejecters of his salvation; -- the final Gog and Magog, going upon the breadth of the earth to destroy the church of God; all shall see him; and all destitute of his salvation shall wail in eternal horror! -- while the saints hail their heavenly Bridegroom with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

The Bible furnishes several mystical comings of Christ, which were to be antecedent to the last and literal coming just noted, -- as, his coming in the destruction of Jerusalem; in the revolution in Rome from paganism to Christianity; his coming in the reformation; and especially his coming in the battle of the great day just before the Millennium; and in the introduction of that event. And the coming of Christ in signal judgments is noted as being in clouds. "Clouds and darkness are round about him." Christ's coming in the battle of the great day, in Rev. xiv., is noted as being on a white cloud. And the antichristian nations shall then see him, and shall wail.

Ver. 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.

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Alpha is the first, and Omega is the last letter in the Greek alphabet, in which language the New Testament was first written: which led the Saviour to add, in another text, "the first and the last!"

Ver. 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.

This beloved disciple would thus be known to all the people of God as their companion and brother in the labors and perils of the gospel. He was then suffering, as an exile, in the desolate island of Patmos, in the Aegean Sea, to which he had been banished by a Roman emperor for his Christian faith; and Christ here conferred upon him the signal honor of this vision. The Most High says, "They that honor me, I will honor." No pagan emperor was ever blessed with honors in any degree comparable to the honor now given to this preacher of Christ. Persecuting tyrants may doom to infamy the dearest people of God; but he that sits in heaven can commute the sentence, and make its fulfilment a scene of true glory. Such is the economy of Heaven. Who then would not choose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?

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

The Christian Sabbath is here called the Lord's Day, as the holy Eucharist is called the Lord's Supper. The Sabbath is so called, because that on its morning our Lord burst the bands of death, and finished the provision made for the salvation of lost man. The first day of the week, on the morning of which our Saviour arose, was henceforth adopted as the holy Sabbath, instead of the seventh day as before. This was thenceforth to be celebrated in special commemoration of the resurrection of Christ, the chief corner-stone of the new heavens and new earth; as well as in commemoration of his creation of the world; it was likewise to be a day for special improvement of the ordinances of grace.

Relative to this change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week; -- the prophet Isaiah, predicting

the mission of Christ on earth, as a rod from the stem of Jesse (Isa. xi.), says, "His rest shall be glorious." In the Hebrew original it is, "His Sabbath shall be glorious:" Christ then should have a special, and a glorious Sabbath. The Psalmist, predicting the rejection of Christ, and his yet becoming the Head of the corner, as he did indeed by his resurrection from the dead, says, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will be glad and rejoice in it." (Psalm cxviii.) These prophecies, it is thought, give the change of the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week, as kept by the Jews, to the first day to be kept by Christians. Accordingly, our Lord made special visits to his disciples, after his resurrection, on the first day of the week. See Luke xxiv. 13-43, and John xx. 19-29, where the first day of the week is repeatedly noted as the time of the gracious visits of Christ to his disciples, as well as the day of their convocations for his worship. Paul at Troas waited some time for the arrival of the first day of the week, when Christians would convene, that he might preach to them. And to the Corinthians, Paul gave directions for their performance of their charities and pious donations on that holy day. 1 Cor. xvi. 1,2. These, together with the testimony in our text, of John's being in the Spirit on this day, and having on this day his Revelation, afford testimony to the divinity of the change of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. The example of the inspired apostles is equal to a command of God. And when we add to these arguments, the considerations that the day of Pentecost was on the day following the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, or was on the first day of the week, answering to the Christian Sabbath; as was also the ancient Jubilee; the arguments in favor of this change of the Sabbath are complete. On this day was changed the dispensation of the covenant of grace, from the Mosaic to the Christian; when the Holy Ghost came like a rushing mighty wind, and three thousand were converted to Christ. And this first day of the week gives the true antitype of the ancient Jubilee trumpet, proclaiming liberty and salvation! On this holy day, John was in the Spirit. If Christians now better imitated him in this, they would, no doubt, have more and richer interviews with Heaven. The apostle in our text being thus engaged, heard behind him a loud commanding voice; --

Ver. 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.

Christ asserts his underived divinity; and then orders that the vision should be committed to writing, and sent to the seven churches in Asia, which he names.

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

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

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

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

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

On turning to see who thus addressed him, his eyes fastened on the glorious Mediator, Immanuel, God manifest in the flesh, whom John beheld in vision as descended from heaven, and standing near him in an attitude and appearance which well-nigh drank up his spirits. How changed now was the Saviour from what he was when John had been conversant with him, in the days of his humiliation, in his agonies in the garden, and on the cross, and when John had often leaned on his bosom! The golden candlestick in the ancient temple seemed to stand here before Christ, which gave him the appearance of standing in the midst of those seven branches of the one candlestick, as the Jewish high-priest was wont to stand, to dress the seven lamps. This candlestick was of pure beaten gold, to assure us of the purity of all the true people of God. The branches were seven, to indicate the many particular churches of Christ. They all united in one foot, to assure us that all true churches unite in Christ, and are supported by him. The position and dress of Christ seem to have some allusion to the style of the Jewish high-priest, when seen in the temple in his official habiliments. It is thought this dress and appearance of

Christ, are to be viewed as emblematical of things like the following; -- His flowing outer garment down to his feet, reminds of his mediatorial righteousness, furnished for the salvation of his people, even the vilest. His golden girdle round the breast, tells us of his faithfulness, and of the tenderness of his heart; that his people are set as a seal on his arm and heart, with love which many waters cannot quench, nor floods drown. The intense whiteness of his hair denotes his eternity, and infinite venerableness. His eyes being as a flame of fire, reminds of his omniscience, and the piercing attention he pays to every thing. His feet being like burning brass, and as though they glowed in a furnace, denotes the holiness of all his ways; the excellence and majesty of all his dispensations. The sounding of his voice as the roaring of an ocean in a tempest, denotes the various alarming events of his holy providence against his enemies. The seven stars in his right hand denote his ambassadors, who are ever held and supported by his grace! "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The sharp sword from his mouth is an emblem of the keen power of his word, sharper than any two-edged sword, to save, or to destroy. And his countenance shining as the sun, is a most fit emblem of his infinite majesty.

Here, Christians, is the Being, "whom having not seen ye love: in whom though now ye see him not, yet believing; ye rejoice with joy unspeakable." This is the Personage, sinners, who assures you, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock!" This is he of whom saints glory, when they exclaim: "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

Ver. 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.

Man, being but dust and ashes, cannot, in this his mortal state, see God's face and live. It is then, in mercy to man, that "he holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it." Our Lord, in this his bright manifestation of himself to John, no doubt veiled much of his glory, a full view of which would instantly have extinguished

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his animal life. But such was the view of glory given, that the beloved disciple fell at his feet as dead! But Christ kindly laid his hand upon him, furnishing him with strength, as he had done to the beloved Daniel, ages before, who, on a similar occasion, was sinking at his feet, overwhelmed with his glory. (Dan. x. 8 -- 12.) Most kind was his address: "Fear not! I am the first, and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead, and am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death." Here again, from his own mouth, we learn that he is God! and is the only way to heaven, and sovereign of heaven and of hell; -- to receive to the one, and to banish to the other, whom he will. Such is he who tenders salvation to man.

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

The Apocalypse has a number of grand divisions, as will be seen, each in its place. Here is one of interest. (1.) "The things which thou hast seen," are this introduction of the book, in chapter first. (2.) "The things which are," consist of the seven epistles to the seven churches, which follow in chapters second and third. (3.) "The things which shall be hereafter;" all the events then future, which shall be found contained in the book. The great events of salvation to the church, and of destruction to her enemies, from that time to the end of the world, which the Spirit would unfold in courses of events exhibited in the figurative language of this book.

Ver. 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.

An infallible interpretation is here given of the ancient golden candlestick in the temple, with its seven branches; and of its light on the summit of each branch. That rich emblem is here applied, by Christ himself, to the seven churches then in Asia; each branch is a church; and its light, called a star, an emblem of the gospel ministry in that branch. And thus the candlestick, with its lights,

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was a symbol of all the churches, with their pastors, to the end of the world. This Christ notes as a mystery; or as a

thing denoted by figure. The candlestick was a type of all the visible churches of Christ. Its seven branches denoted their many branches. But all are one in Christ. Christ is in the midst of his churches, as he seemed to stand in the midst of the branches of the candlestick. The thought and assurance of this presence of Christ in his churches, are most animating, and full of salvation. "Zion behold thy Saviour King! -- He reigns and triumphs here!" The church is the pillar and ground of the truth, as the means of upholding the ambassadors of Christ, and the order of his truth and grace. "Ye are the light of the world." Ministers and churches find here their strength and righteousness; -- their Saviour and their God. Christ says to them, "Because I live, ye shall live also." And they triumph and rejoice, "I live; yet not I; but Christ liveth in me." "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." "And the life that I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." The thought is, by the emblem and the unity of the candlestick, deeply impressed, that all the saints are one in Christ. All want of love and union then, is vile, and utterly unworthy of the saints. All true ministers of Christ shine with light derived only from him. "In thy light shall we see light." The churches must keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. They first are pure; then peaceable. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." The candlestick was formed of purest gold. The almost Christian then, is but dross. He has no part nor lot in this bright emblem. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish." Nothing short of the correct and pure Christian faith, heart, and life, can answer to the pure gold of the candlestick! This is a new heart, created in Christ unto good works. Without holiness, no man can see the Lord. And all is not gold that glitters. Counterfeit graces abound. "Five of them were wise, and five were foolish." With holy fear and trembling, then, let each professor say, "Lord, is it I?" "Search me, O Lord, and prove me! try my reins and my heart!" "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me!" Form Christ in me the hope of glory!

Think, Christian, of the glory and dignity of your Saviour and Lord, always present! Dwell on his character as here given, till your whole soul is transformed to love

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and admiration; and till you can constantly breathe out the confident address, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Then live the life of holy faith; the happy life of looking unto Jesus! Then will his love refine your soul. Then will you find rich mines of consolation; rich and most glorious in your heavenly Bridegroom; for ever present, and prepared to save! "He is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Here is our atonement, our righteousness, our life, and our salvation. We will behold his flowing mantle; his girdle of love; his white and infinite venerableness; his flaming eye; the holy footsteps of his burning feet; the two-edged sword of his mouth; his countenance brighter than the sun! We will not fail to listen to the sound of his providences, as the roar of a thundering ocean! And we will lie prostrate at his feet, imploring his life-giving right hand kindly to be laid upon us! We will ever prize and implore his kind, life-giving whisper, It is I; be not afraid. I am he that liveth, and was dead. And because I live, ye shall live also. We will follow him till we come where he is, to behold his face in righteousness, and to be satisfied, awaking in his likeness and glory!

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Ver. 1. Unto the angel of the churches 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.

Ephesus was the metropolis of Lydia in Asia. A church was here early collected: and with this church Christ commences his epistles to the seven churches. Each epistle is directed to the angel of that church. In this term, probably, were included whatever teaching elders there might be in that church. Some suppose the pastor or pastors of each church were all that is meant by the angel of that church. Others suppose it meant, especially, a person who

was a moderator or president of a consociation of the particular churches found in each city named. We read, Acts xx. 17, of elders in the church of Ephesus. And we are informed that the apostles, and others ordained by them, "ordained elders in every city." Those first churches were wont to have a plurality of elders in each church. And we learn, in church history, that in the first Christian ages, contiguous churches were led to form themselves into a kind of consociation, for their mutual benefit; each consociation having a standing moderator; which moderator might be the person denoted by the angel of that church. Whether this were the case; or whether this angel means the eldership of that church, meaning to include all its officers, is not essential. *

Jesus Christ, in each address, gives a description of himself from some of his notable characteristics exhibited in the first chapter of this book, and in different sacred Scriptures. And there seems to be some affinity between the trait of character thus selected, and the state or character of that church. It appears to have been selected for their admonition, or their consolation, as their case required.

To the Ephesian church, the address is thus given, -- from him "who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand; and walketh in the midst of his seven golden candlesticks." Blessed indeed is Zion, that her Saviour and Lord walks in the midst of his churches, by his word, ambassadors, and ordinances, by his spirit of grace, and his government

* Mosheim says, "It is highly probable that the church of Jerusalem, grown numerous, and deprived of the ministry of the apostles. was the first that chose a president. And it is no less probable that the other churches followed so respectable an example." Of these presidents, or ancient bishops, he says (relative to their difference from modern bishops), "they had not power to decide or to enact any thing without the consent of the presbyters (common pastors) and the people." Scott speaks of them as moderators, or censors, elected at the discretion of the churches, and probably (he thinks) with the countenance of the apostles; but that they possessed no official superiority to other teaching elders. Jerome, afterwards when some of these bishops were struggling to be viewed as of a superior order, opposed them, and said, "Let, therefore, the presbyters (common pastors) know, that as by the custom of the churches they are subject to him who is their president; so let the bishops (these standing presidents) know that they are above presbyters more by the custom of the church, than by any true dispensation of Christ." This order of ministers thus arose only by human discretion and custom, and were only first among equals in office. Each city of note seems to have had such a president, or bishop of the churches in that city and vicinity. And this might have been the angel mentioned in the address of each epistle.

of all things. In these, he is a wall of fire round about, and a glory in the midst of her. And Christ's true ministers are assured, that they rest in the right hand of their Lord and Master. "Lo, I am with you always." "My grace is sufficient for thee."

Ver. 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.

Their good deeds, the Saviour first notes to their praise. They had labored in duty; they had patiently endured trials; they had detected and abhorred evil doers; they had examined and exposed false teachers. Paul had warned that church (Acts xx. 29, 30), "For I know that after my departure, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock: also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Soil had taken place. These impostors (as all false teachers do) pretended they were sent of God. This church had tried those false apostles by the word of God, and condemned them as liars. And this their faithfulness Christ especially notes and approves; and this testimony he leaves for the benefit of all, to the end of the world. And the good deeds of this church, the Saviour repeats: -- their patience, their labors for his sake; and their perseverance! Few, perhaps, are the churches, at this period, concerning whom so much good can be said! Much reason, then, have many to tremble, when they peruse the following: --

Ver. 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.

They had suffered the pious fervor of their first gracious affections to abate. In this, they had been guilty of criminal inattention and ingratitude. A speedy repentance of

this sin was demanded; -- to love as they had first loved; or Christ would soon visit them, and dispossess them of their church blessings. This awful judgment was, in after days, executed upon them. Too many have left their first love; while the love of the world has taken its place! Such have reason to be deeply affected with this warning of the glorious Head of the church.

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

The Nicolaitins were a sect of Antinomians who, under the notion of Christian liberty, pleaded for a licentious community of wives. Such a hateful sect existed, and were here, by the Head of the church, condemned. And the Ephesian church had dealt faithfully with these licentious hypocrites: and probably, had cleansed their community from them. And this faithfulness, Christ publicly approves for the benefit of all his churches, from that period.

Tradition has branded Nicholas, one of the seven deacons, as the infamous leader of this sect. It seems probable that this is incorrect, and very injurious. Those seven deacons were said to have been "full of the Holy Ghost." Could one of them, then, be guilty of such enormity? No doubt there were different men of this name. It does not follow that because one by the name of Nicholas, led in this error, it hence must be this pious deacon. This is not to be admitted without positive proof.

Ver. 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.

This is connected with the address to the Ephesian church: yet it is "what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It is equally applicable to all of similar character in all ages; and it is most unhappy that so many who have ears, pay so little attention to what the Spirit of God urges here upon them. This conduct will one day "bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder." Let us hear; and so hear, that our souls may live! Can as much be said in favor of all our churches, as was said in favor of the church of Ephesus? But they had suffered the fervor of their first love to abate! The command to those who have once loved,

is, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." -- "Abound therein more and more." -- "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord." Confidence that we once loved God, with present contentment without it, is not the way to overcome, but to sink in despair!

The motive to overcome here is powerful. Such shall feed upon the antitype of the tree of life. Adam in the garden of Paradise (we are led to believe) was, at the close of his term of trial, to "put forth his hand. and eat of the tree of life, and live for ever." This act was to have been the sealing of his active personal righteousness, as his legal title to an eternal confirmation in holiness and bliss; alluding to which order, our text assures us, that all who overcome shall find, at the close of their season of trial, something in their second Adam well answering to this. Jesus Christ -- "the Lord our righteousness" -- "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" -- will be to them the tree of life indeed, to fix them in eternal holiness and bliss.

Ver. 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;

Smyrna was a large city in Asia Minor. The gospel was early preached here with success; and a church was here found which entirely escaped censure; and which received much commendation. The trait of Christ's character selected for them, therefore, is his eternal divinity, and his death, and resurrection, -- essential glories in the Christian salvation, -- "God manifest in the flesh," "Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

Ver. 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.

They had a severe lot in the early persecutions; but none of their trials were overlooked by the omniscient eye of their Immanuel. Their poverty too, he noted, and would a thousand-fold compensate. And he assured them they were rich. "God hath chosen the poor of this world,

rich in faith, and heirs of his kingdom." "When I am weak, then am I strong." -- Emptied of self, and filled with the fulness of God. And, for their further consolation, Christ assures the church that he was not inattentive to the insults and impertinence of false religionists among them; who, while disturbing their holy order, claimed to be viewed and treated as the true people of God. The term Jews here, means true saints. The Saviour declared, that, instead of such being true saints, they were "of the synagogue of Satan." Many, from that day to the present, have made equally high claims, with no better characters! In these last days, the thing will prove too certain, and the interpretation sure! The high claims of heretics, Christ here calls blasphemy. Such blasphemy has, in our day, been heard; and much more is yet to come. If it has always been a truth that "there must be heresies among you, that those that are approved may be made manifest;" this is more particularly to be the case in the period just before the battle of that great day of God. The Saviour, with his eye fixed upon such, and at the same time upon his dear people, says to the latter, Fear not!

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

As though he should say, "Fear not! for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. Who art thou, that thou

shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die; and of the son of man that is grass? Where is the fury of the oppressor?" "The moth shall eat them up like wool!" Much more happy was this church, than were the persecuting Roman emperors; or than was Alexander, in conquering the world! The latter would die in vexation and despair; but the followers of Christ were heirs of an immortal kingdom. For such, death had no terrors; the devil would cast some of them into prison by his wicked agents, and they should have tribulation ten days. A ten years' persecution was just ahead. Christ hence exhorts them to be faithful unto death, and he would give them a crown of life! Give up your temporal life for my cause, when you are called; and the eternal life of the soul shall take its place.

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Ver. 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.

This solemn direction is repeated. And who would not hear and obey it? What church would not feel a holy ambition to deserve such commendation? Here are the true riches; here is true greatness. O church of the Redeemer, "go thou and do likewise." The second death (the king of terrors to the wicked) will have no power against people of this character. But the promise in the text implies that all who do not overcome, shall be hurt of the second death. They that turn back from God, as well as they who seek not God, will all be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing away from the living God."

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

Pergamos was another city of Asia Minor, to the northward of Smyrna. This church, while it had some things to be commended, had some things likewise to be censured. The trait of Christ's character now was, "he that hath the sword of two edges!" The two-edged sword of Christ will be dreadful where sin is indulged. May delinquent churches remember this, and tremble, and reform!

With this church, Christ begins with commending what good he found among them, evincing that he is more ready to commend than to censure. This is much more the delight of benevolence; while the reverse is the malignant delight of the carnal heart.

Ver. 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.

All their deeds and their trials were before his omniscient eye. Happy the people who act always under the full impression of this great truth! This church dwelt where Satan had a seat (throne). Pergamos was one of

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the head-quarters of the Prince of Darkness. Here were champions of idolatry, of heresies, and of persecution. Here Antipas (an early martyr) had been made to seal his testimony for Christ with his blood. Yet this church, in such perils, maintained its Christian profession and the doctrines of grace. One would imagine they would escape censure. But censurable dereliction is found even here!

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

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

Some base mercenary characters were suffered to continue in their communion. Some who were of a covetous temporizing spirit, similar to that of ancient Balaam, who savored not the things of God, but those of men, and were ready, slyly, to give counsel against God's dear Israel. Such Antinomian counsellors of Satan were by some means retained in the bosom of this church. This spirit of Balaam can operate in many ways, according to time and place; while yet it is the same thing; viz., a covetous worldly spirit, most hateful to God!

This good church embosomed also some who held the impure tenets of the Nicolaitans; abominable to Christ; who practically denied that "fleshly lusts do war against the soul!" that "they who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts!" and that the offending eye, not plucked out, will sink its owner into hell. Sensualists will forget these things: but that church should not have forgotten them, nor held such in her communion. Hence Christ adds:

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

As though he had said; -- with such offenders as these, parley no longer. Take effectual and immediate measures either to reclaim them, or to sever them from your church. Listen not a word to their vile pleas of liberty of conscience, or of sincerity in their sentiments! Hear not

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their vile appeals to charity. Be no longer blinded with such pretences. Purify yourselves at once from such scandals; or you may expect to know the meaning of the sharp sword of two edges. Faithfulness in one point will never atone for sin in another. One leak neglected, will sink the ship! He that offends in one point is guilty of all.

Ver. 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.

This solemn admonition is thus repeated, to show the danger of not yielding the pious attention demanded. Sublime motives to duty are continually presented. Here, they that overcome shall richly partake of that bread of life, typified by the ancient manna, hid in a golden pot in the ark of the covenant. Christ is the bread of life -- the true bread that came down from heaven. The soul that overcomes shall perfectly enjoy him in his full salvation in heaven. And in order for this, such a soul shall be justified by Divine grace, denoted by the white stone here mentioned, in allusion to the process in ancient courts. In the trial of one indicted for a crime -- the judges would vote for his condemnation, by casting into a box a black stone; or for his justification, by casting in a white one. The white stone should be here given in behalf of the true saint. And, to this figure Christ adds a rich appendage, that the white stone of justification has, wrought into it, a new name, which none but the receiver can construe; or none can infallibly know the evidence of grace in the heart of another. This is a thing which a person must see to for himself, by the witnessing of the Spirit of grace. Such witnessing gives meat to eat which the world knoweth not -- joys, with which the stranger does not intermeddle. The white stone of justification has indeed sanctification inscribed on it; and well may the subject of this be noted as having a new name. "Thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name;" the new name of Christians was indeed given to the followers of Christ, and will be the new name given to the Jews, when they shall be called in! A true Christian, is indeed a name which no one truly knows, but by being brought to the possession of it. "The world knoweth us not, because it knew not him."

May ministers and professors, who are called to dwell where Satan peculiarly has a seat, hear and joyfully obey this address of Christ! Such places where Satan's seat is, are many; and the professed people of Christ there are in danger of becoming themselves of a temporizing character; or of being led astray by those who are of such a character. Dreadful indeed is the charge, when it applies, "Thou savorest not the things that be of God; but the things that be of men." Ministers and churches then, have great need to maintain vigilance and prayer, and to be bold, zealous, valiant, and persevering. They must not consult flesh and blood; but the word of God.

Ver. 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;

We have here characters of Christ full of meaning. This city south-eastward of Pergamos, had its true church of Christ; but such were the imperfections found in this Church, that Christ was about to administer solemn warning and reproof. He hence assures them that the address was from Him, before whose flaming eyes their conduct lay open! that their wickedness was before Him, whose feet are like burning brass; or, his ways most pure and holy. But he kindly commences by rehearsing their good deeds.

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

The character of this church it seems had been established by exhibitions of a good degree of charity, or holy love. And they had performed services of faith, of holy patience, and of good works a second time expressed. Happy, if so much good could be said of all the professed churches of Christ. But Christ adds;

Ver. 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.

In some great sin, various of their members were living. And the Saviour saw fit not to call the delinquents, nor their crimes by name; but to denote both by some figure well known. So delicate and wise is the word of Divine reproof! It chooses acceptable words. It presents a kind glass in which people may thus discover themselves, and reform, without being too fatally exposed. Of some, it thus has compassion, making a difference. May public instructors improve this hint of Christ relative to the best modes of public reproofs! May they avoid the Scylla of harshness, needlessly offensive and cruelly personal; on the one hand; -- and the Charybdis of hiding their reproofs, and rendering them ineffectual by false delicacy, on the other.

We know not the particular things here condemned, but that church, no doubt, well understood the reproof. Some wicked character or sect, was there indulged in the church, in a degree similar to the idolatrous Jezebel, the queen of Ahab, who persecuted the prophets of the Lord, and unrighteously put her royal consort into possession of Naboth's vineyard. And made herself both impertinent and hateful by her idolatries. Some wickedness was winked at in this church, which tended to real idolatry, which is spiritual impurity. They pleaded divine authority for their peculiarities; but their pleas were false. Evils, like this, have infested the church of Christ in all ages, -- plausible by the blandishments of innovators, and assuming shades of difference in different times and places.

Ver. 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.

This sect, spiritually licentious, Christ had called upon to repent; but they had refused. And he now denounced that he would soon turn their bed of selfish religion, and of mystical impurity, into a bed of torment; perhaps alluding to the threatening in the prophet, of the same wrath for a similar sin, -- "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire; that compass

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yourselves with sparks! Walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled; lo, this shall ye have at my hands; ye shall lie down in sorrows." As a bed of licentiousness shall end in a bed of eternal torments; so the framers of licentious sentiments, -- forming their sentiments from their own imaginations, and not from the word of God, shall, at the end, lie down in eternal sorrows! And their children -- probably neglected under some sanctimonious pretence, or trained up for annoyance to the faithful saints -- Christ would "kill with death!" probably indicating, that the error of this sect was of-a nature to prove fatal to their families. Thus their own wickedness should correct them; and they, with their neglected children, should perish in their sins. And all the churches, beholding such examples of justice, shall know the judgments of God, and that Jesus Christ is the Jehovah, who knows all hearts, and will render to all according to their real characters!

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

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

Some, by the grace of God, had escaped the pollutions which have been noted. They should walk with Christ in the purity of his salvation, with no additional burdens. These had not known certain depths, in which, it seems, the censured sect had gloried. To these depths they probably gave some specious name of wisdom; but Christ calls them "depths of Satan." The boasted intimacy of this sect, then, was not with God, as they vainly fancied; but with the wicked one. Too many, alas, have made the same mistake, fancying they were led by the divine Spirit; when their leader, in fact, was a fallen angel! So that their boasted depths of wisdom were in reality but "depths of Satan" who transforms himself into an angel of light. Such will turn into crooked ways, and be led forth with the workers of iniquity. But the true disciples of Christ will hold fast till he come.

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

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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.

It is predicted of Christ, in Psalm ii., relative to the heathen and the antichristian world, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, and shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." This has a special allusion to "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," which shall sink the antichristian world. And this event Christ sees fit to ascribe to the persevering triumphant saints. They are noted as doing this work of judgment in the same sense in which they are to "judge the world." They will have perfect fellowship with Christ in those mighty operations; and he will do these things in answer to their prayers for the salvation of Zion. Christ thus puts upon his children the honor of his operations of judgment, even as the two witnesses are said to "have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy; and power to smite the earth with all plagues as oft as they will." The Psalmist gives the same view of this honor put upon the triumphant people of God; that "the high praises of God are in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment upon the people; to execute upon them the judgments written: this honor have all the saints." "Even as I have received of my Father." This honor the Father has officially given to the Son, as Mediator, and as Head over all things to the church, as a part of the reward of his sufferings and humiliation, when he obeyed and died to magnify the law. And Christ gives a participation of the honor of it to his children, in consequence of their obedience to the gospel; as he says in another passage, "He that overcometh shall sit down with me in my throne; even as I have overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Christ had before said to his disciples, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." As the saints are justified, and will be glorified in Christ; so he puts a measure of his honor in governing and judging the world upon them. His saints will have full fellowship with him in these events, and in his destroying the antichristian world, to

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prepare the way for the Millennium: and he will do it in answer to their prayers for Zion, and to complete her salvation.

Christ's giving to all that overcome, the morning star, means his giving himself to them. "I am the bright and morning star." This is indeed the gift of all gifts. "He that overcometh, I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Well does such a promise close with the gracious demand so often repeated, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Seven times over, in this book, is this divine command given in the same words! We have here, then, a perfect testimony given to the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost! And most perfect is the testimony, in this book, borne to the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity of God. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God the Father gave unto him. And it is, at the same time, what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Let the communications thus made sink deep into our hearts. Let them be to us quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. Let them pierce to the dividing asunder, as it were, the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow. Let them be the discerners of our thoughts and intents of the heart. May our sins be purged off. May all the members of the church of Christ see to it that no followers of Jezebel, no seducing characters or practices, are allowed in their hearts, or in their communities; lest they at last find themselves shut out from the holy temple above, and must lie down in eternal sorrows.

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REVELATION III.

Ver. 1. And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

Sardis, southward of Thyatira, was once the renowned

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capital of Croesus; and was the seat of the Lydian kings. The gospel had there triumphed, and a church was collected: but their religion was, at this time, at a very low ebb. Christ, in his address to them, takes the characteristic of his being the official director of the Holy Spirit in his multiform gifts and operations, denoted by the perfect number seven; and of his holding in his gracious power the stars, -- the ministers of the gospel. He thus signifies to a delinquent church, that he it is who can replenish them with graces and gifts; or withdraw from them all gospel blessings, as he may please. The phrase, "the seven spirits of God," is a powerful expression of the different gifts, and operations, and of the infinite fulness of the Spirit of God. Paul alludes to the same, when he tells the Corinthians, "There are diversities of gifts; but the same Spirit." Christ assures this church of his full acquaintance with them; and that while they had a name to live, they were dead. We find this was not the case with all the individuals in that church. But the phrase seems to imply, that it was thus with a majority of them at least. They had taken their lamp without the oil. This is an awful prelude to eternal and most aggravated condemnation; as in the case of the foolish virgins; and of the hope of the hypocrite, that shall perish.

Ver. 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.

They were here warned immediately to awake, and cherish whatever of Christianity was still existing among them, lest it become utterly extinct; to give the more earnest heed to the things which they had heard; to repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; or Christ would soon visit them in some unexpected and fatal manner.

Ver. 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.

Even in this church, thus dead as a body, were contained

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a few faithful members, who were in a good degree uncontaminated with the general corruption of the body. They had dared alone to stem the torrent of evil, and to stand firm. Their walking with Christ in white, may allude to the following facts, that white is a natural emblem of purity, and also of victory; that the singing Levites of old were ordered to minister in their service before God "being clothed in white;" and that the Ancient of days (Christ) appeared to Daniel, and on the mount of transfiguration, in a garment intensely white. These few names then, should walk with Christ in purity and victory. "For they are worthy:" not with legal or condign worthiness; but with a worthiness of congruity or fitness by divine grace within them, and by their interest in Christ. Here is a blessed encouragement, in a time of general corruption, to dare to be bold and singular for Christ, at whatever expense of name, property, or even of life.

Ver. 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.

To encourage, effectually, those few names, and all similar characters, to the end of the world, the general declaration is made that all who thus follow Christ, and overcome, shall be treated as conquerors; -- confirmed in eternal purity; -- shall find their names in the book of life in heaven; -- and shall be owned of Christ before the Father, and all the angelic hosts. Their not having their names erased from the book of life, is spoken only after the manner of men; inasmuch as professors who have never forfeited their characters, are received and spoken of as the righteous, and consequently as having their names in the book of life. And, following the same language, if they fall away, they are noted as turning from their righteousness to iniquity, and having their names taken from the book of life. But the literal fact is, apostates discover only that they never were truly of the righteous; and their names were never in the book of life. Had they been there, they never would have been suffered fatally to apostatize. "The righteous fall seven times, and rise again."

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The Holy Ghost assures us that nothing shall ever separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This address, like the others, is closed with the call to all who have ears to hear, or obey. In view of the charge, "Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead!" let professors tremble; and each one say, "Lord is it I?" "Search me, O Lord, and prove me! Try my reins and my heart!" And may the few faithful names found in dead churches, be stimulated to new zeal. May they "be strong, and bold, and very courageous," at the direction of him who says to them, "Watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit ye like men; be strong." And when the dead mass of false brethren shall sink in ruin; they will be crowned as conquerors before the general assembly of angels and saints. In the darkest scenes, they have it for their encouragement, that "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his!"

Ver. 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;

This city, southward of Sardis, contained a church not to be censured. They were, indeed, according to the name of their city, friendly brethren! The Saviour now takes his name from those traits of character that are most encouraging: - "He that is holy;" or full of pure and perfect love: "He that is true;" and hence is faithful to his promises: "He that hath the key of David;" or has infinite power to save, resting on the covenant of redemption made with him as the antitype of David. "He that openeth, and no man shutteth, and shutteth, and no man openeth;" or, has infinite power either to unfold, or to hide the plan of salvation; to open the door of the human heart, that it shall receive salvation; and also power to open the door of heaven or of hell to the souls of men.

Ver. 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.

All their faithful deeds Christ noted, and would unfold

for their reward. He had set open before them a door both of Christian usefulness, and of eternal glory, which no enemies could close. Such doors Christ opens to the faithful; -- doors of securing a bright reward, and of his conferring it upon them. These saints had "a little strength," moral strength; not from themselves, but from the grace of God, which they had received and cultivated in the most trying days. Such gracious habits of soul Christians may and ought ever to cultivate in the strength of Jesus Christ. Then they have an open door indeed, which the kingdom of darkness can never shut, a door of usefulness and of salvation.

Ver. 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.

This church, too, had been annoyed by vile impostors, calling themselves Jews, meaning here true friends of God. But their claims were false. Christ declared them to be "of the synagogue of Satan!" And these vile characters should, sooner or later, be made to feel and to confess the excellency of the characters they had thus injured. And their confusion in this thing is denoted by the proverbial phrase of their coming and worshipping before the feet of those they had despised and injured; as in the prophet: "They shall come bending unto thee. They shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet." Scenes of eternal and intolerable mortification await all such impenitent offenders of Christ's little ones. Christ had before said, that it had been better for such if a mill-stone were hanged about their necks, and they cast into the sea, than that they should thus offend. Such hints will be found to contain infinite terror to very many, who here delight to torture and oppose the true people of God!"

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

"The word of my patience!" thus called, because that to obey it, in such a time, and to endure the consequent

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persecutions, required great patience; and also because the wonderful patience of Christ towards his enemies, was exhibited in such scenes of their cruelty and outrage! Christ now engaged to such, to keep them in all their future scenes; not from being tried; but from being overcome. A tremendous scene of temptation and terror then awaited the Christians of the Roman earth, in the persecution under the Emperor Domitian. The Roman empire is often spoken of in Revelation, as the earth, and the world. That bloody persecution was then coming "upon all the Roman world, to try them that dwelt upon the (Roman) earth." In this, Christ would sustain that church. Christians in all ages have their special trials, in which their Lord graciously engages to keep them. "Fear not! for I am with thee!" "It is I; be not afraid." The covenant of grace assures, that "in every temptation, God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able; but will with every temptation make a way for your escape, or enable you to bear it." "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness." But such grace is derived and enjoyed only in the way of diligent Christian faithfulness. Hence our blessed Lord adds:

Ver. 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.

Christians are ever to remember, that behold their Lord cometh quickly! and at all times must they "look for, and haste unto the coming of their Lord "and Judge. He may speedily come in their individual death. And the time that may

intervene between this and his final coming, will be as nothing compared with eternity. The grace given to Christians must be held fast; and it requires diligent cultivation, that no enemy may wrest their crown from them, or rob them of their eternal glory. Grant that the crown

of glory is, in the covenant of grace, made certain to all the regenerate: yet this certainty of the end does not preclude the necessity of means of arriving at the end; nor of giving all diligence to persevere, -- of agonizing to endure unto the end: and after all their diligence, it is said, "If the righteous scarcely are saved." -- Such is the manner, on their part, of their reaching salvation.

Their salvation is here noted by their being made a pillar in the temple of glory, that shall be honored with the inscription of the name of God, of the name of the city of glory, and of the new name of Christ. The particular things meant, eternity will unfold! "How can ye understand, if I tell you of heavenly things?" "It does not yet appear what we shall be." Relative to Christ's new name, we know not; it may allude to the new character, under which Christ will appear to eternity in heaven, after he shall have divested himself of his present mediatorial kingdom, at the end of the world. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Surely Christ must, thenceforward, in eternity, appear to the redeemed in some new point of light. And this may, for aught we can tell, account for his "new name," to be inscribed on the redeemed pillars of the heavenly temple. And as things are thus, no wonder Christ repeats his command to have all that have ears, hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches! All other interests sink to nothing before this! Most pitiful, then, is the sleepy state of the Christian world! In how great danger are many who hope, and who profess religion, of coming short of such glory! And how irreparable will be the loss! Many of the children of "the kingdom will be cast out." "There shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God; and you yourselves thrust out!" Awake, then, all who wear the name of Christ! you walk on snares! you are in an enemy's land! Will you sleep in the field of battle? Foes most potent are engaged to rob you of your eternal life, -- your eternal all! Thousands have been thus robbed; and thousands more will be thus robbed! Will you permit yourselves to be found among them? In order to escape, inspiration says, "Be sober; be vigilant; because your adversary the devil as a roaring lion goeth about, seeking whom he may devour."

Ver. 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:

This city was southward of Philadelphia, and on the way to Ephesus. These seven churches lay in a kind of circle. Laodicea is the last; but is far from being the best. The divine Master presents himself to them as the Amen, or immutable Being; one who bears faithful and true testimony concerning them, and all men. "The beginning of the creation of God:" or who, in his constituted mediatorial office, is the "firstborn of every creature;" the first created establishment actually brought into existence. The covenant of redemption was first formed between the Father and the Son, in which Christ was constituted Mediator. And as the humanity of Christ (which was then covenanted to be received in due time) should be created; as the connexion between this and the infinite divinity of Christ, should be created; and as the whole official character of Christ is constituted; so he denominates himself, "the beginning of the creation of God." This text belongs to that class of texts, which presents Christ as officially dependent on the Father, -- made to be both Lord and Christ, -- and his having all power in heaven and on earth, committed to him. This class of

texts alludes not to any natural dependence of Christ, in his divinity, on the Father! For he is one in him! But they allude to his constituted character, as Mediator. Another great class of texts assures us, that Christ is of underived, eternal divinity; the true God; "without Father, without descent, without beginning;" as in Melchisedec.

Ver. 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 spew thee out of my mouth.

The word lukewarm alludes to that state of water which is most offensive to the stomach. Christ would have them understand, that their state of heart, relative to religion, being neither one thing nor another, was most offensive to him. They had their form of godliness, it seems, without the power. They would not take the position of open enemies; nor would they be zealous friends. They seemed determined to reconcile God and mammon. Christ says, "I would that ye were cold or hot!" Be one thing or

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another. Either be zealous Christians; or make no pretence. As he had said to the Jews; "Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt." But, continuing as they were, Christ would soon reject them; even as lukewarm water is thrown as sickening and disgusting from the stomach. So base and contemptible does the Saviour view professors who are neither one thing or another; having a little of religion to quiet their consciences, and yet not enough to mortify their lusts, or to disturb the selfish heart.

Ver. 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.

We have here a most natural trait of the character of hypocrites; in their own imaginations they are rich and happy in spiritual prospects! having no proper idea of their depravity, guilt and wretchedness; -- at ease in Zion; crying Peace! while they are spiritually dead, and sinking in eternal death. God says they are "wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked!" This they will find, when it is for ever too late.

What multitudes are in this wretched case! "Five of them were wise, and five foolish!" If the disciples were struck with a panic, on being informed that one of their twelve was thus wretched; what should be the fear of the present visible kingdom of Christ, when assured that five in ten are thus? This greater danger hardens many, even to a cold insensibility! -- "and knowest not that thou art wretched." Examine yourselves, then, O professors, whether ye be in the faith! prove your own selves, "Search me, O Lord, and prove me! try my reins and my heart."

Ver. 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.

This church was yet within the reach of mercy. An urgent call was once more addressed to them by him who is Wonderful, Counsellor! "I counsel thee." Happy token

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for good, if the counsel might at last be heard! The counsel is addressed in the most appropriate figures. "Buy," -- take

as a gift, -- "gold;" a thing men most value; the gold of heaven, tried and pure. White raiment, too; grace and righteousness. "Buy," take them, that the soul may be adorned; and not be found naked. And eye-salve from Christ, -- the Balm of Gilead, -- the Light of the world, -- the Sun of righteousness. Eyes thus anointed shall see clearly. But in this buying, they must part with -- give up -- all their sins!

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

We have here a sentence most appropriate to the lukewarm, for whom Christ had any design of mercy. Such coldness will but hasten the chastening rod, where there has ever been a spark of grace. The paternal rod must be laid on, to recover. Let the chastised, then, fervently repent, and zealously reform. Let penitent zeal pluck out the offending eye, and cut off the offending foot or hand; lest both soul and body be lost in hell.

Ver. 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.

Although Christ was virtually turned out of doors by this ungrateful church; yet, as though graciously unwilling to leave them to perish, he stands at the door, and most kindly knocks for admittance. If any, then, will come to their senses, and open the door of the heart to this wonderful heavenly visitor; he will come in, and receive such to his holy fellowship and salvation. Jesus Christ does, indeed, knock at the door of the heart of the gospel sinner, and hypocrite. He knocks by his word; by the whispers of his Spirit; by his faithful ministers; by the profession, order and examples of his followers; and by his works of mercy, and of judgment. And, into every heart that graciously admits him, he enters with the riches of his grace. "I will sup with him, and he with me." A blessed fellowship commences. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son." This will yield substantial peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." "And the peace of God, that passeth understanding, shall keep your heart

and mind through Jesus Christ." The grace of God, the love of Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit, are settled on such, as their rich inheritance.

Ver. 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.

Jesus Christ most diligently performed and finished the work assigned him as our Redeemer: and he was hence exalted to the throne of God, where he engages that all who, with his Spirit, encounter the difficulties and perform the duties of the Christian life, shall be exalted to reign with him. "If so be that we suffer with him; that we may be also glorified together." Most pungent warning is in our text implied for all those pusillanimous, faint-hearted pretenders to religion, who will shape their plans to slide by every cross, as though determined never to suffer any inconvenience for the sake of Christ. Such characters have ever abounded. But such "fearful souls" are ranked with the "unbelieving," who shall "have their part in the lake of fire." Those who cheerfully suffer with Christ, are the souls who shall reign with him. "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations; and I appoint unto you a kingdom, even as my Father hath appointed unto me." All others virtually deny Christ; and will be by him denied.

Listen, then, to the way by which to overcome; and to the infinite benefit to your souls, of overcoming. It must be by faith in Christ; and by persevering faithfulness in his strength and grace. And "he that overcometh shall inherit all things."

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

Seven times are we presented, in these epistles, with this solemn warning, in the same words. Why is it thus repeated? The reason is manifest: men are dull of hearing. But, that they should hear, and obey, is of eternal importance. They must hear and obey: or eternally sink in the lake of fire. Hence the same words are repeated to the perfect number seven. Seven is a number much used in this mystical book. We find here at least seven septenaries; or, the number seven, seven times used. We have seven addresses to an equal number of churches;

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seven horns of the Lamb; the seven lamps; the seven eyes of the Lamb (the same as the seven spirits of God); the seven seals; the seven trumpets; and the seven vials.

Vastly important to us is the warning in our text, seven times from the mouth of God, urged in the same words. This should make a deep and practical impression on the hearts of all in Zion. Let those who seldom read them; -- and those who read, but yield no trembling obedience, pause and consider. May all awake, and hear, and obey the warnings in these seven epistles to us from our final Judge! Such they are, though alas, forgotten! They furnish a glass in which every church, and all the members in the visible kingdom of God, may see themselves, and prepare to meet their Judge! Let us be conversant with this most precious heavenly mirror. Let us, with devout souls, and most devout breathings of heart towards God, often place ourselves before it, and form our hearts and lives by it, lest we be condemned at the close of our probation. "The words which I have spoken, they shall judge you at that day."

LECTURE V.

REVELATION IV.

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

The actors in the following scenes are next to be presented; and it must be done in the figurative language of this book. The place chosen for the presentment of them is found to be the third heavens; or the space imagined to be above our visible heavens, above the air and starry regions. Looking upward, John saw in vision (or seemed to himself to behold) an opening in the vault in the upper sky which terminates our sight, when directed upward. From this opening, a trumpet-like voice directed him to ascend thither, and he should learn scenes of futurity.

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Ver. 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.

John seemed to himself instantly to obey, and to lose sight of all things earthly. He now seemed to behold, in a world to him new, beyond that door, God the Father as seated on a throne worthy of himself. But inspiration assures us that no man hath seen God at any time, or can see his face and live. This scriptural representation, and the one in our text, form no disagreement; for the former speaks of seeing God literally, as he is; and in the text, the view given of God is

only figurative, and such as mortal man can endure. This view, given of God the Father to John, was on the same principle with that which, in the close of the Revelation, is given of heaven, in the figure of the New Jerusalem. Similar figurative views had before been given of God; -- as that to Isaiah, "in the year that king Uzziah died;" that to Micaiah, when called before Ahab; and that to Stephen, about to suffer martyrdom. God was said to converse with Moses "face to face," as a man converses with his friend: while the fact was, Moses only heard God's voice from the Shechinah: and while yet God assured Moses, that no man could see his face and live. The Divine appearance to John, in our text, was merely assumed, that God might accommodate himself to mortal man. The scene might be borrowed from the style of earthly monarchs, who have their thrones, robes, and richest gems. The Divine appearance like a jasper and a sardine-stone, was an emblem of God's perfection. Grotius was of opinion, that the jasper in the Revelation means the diamond, the richest of all gems; and it here denotes the power and purity of the Almighty. The sardine-stone, of a red hue, may here remind us of the Divine justice. And the rainbow round the throne denotes the faithfulness of God to fulfil his word. The rainbow is set in the cloud, to show that God will keep his word, never again to drown the world; so, whenever it is appended to any Divine appearance, it indicates God's immutable faithfulness. The greenness of the bow round the throne, in our text, denotes the mild and pleasant effects of the faithfulness of God to man; -- like the still small voice to Elijah after the earthquake, the wind, and the fire.

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Ver. 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.

These elders denote the common members of the church of Christ. Their number is that made by the union of the patriarchs. and apostles; as the gospel church and the church of the Old Testament are essentially one. It is a fact, too, that the priests of old (typical of the gospel church) were divided into four-and-twenty courses. And among the Levites of old, there were also four-and-twenty courses of sacred musicians for public worship. With these things accords the fact in our text, that the representatives of the common members of the gospel church, who are God's royal priesthood, should be exhibited as twenty-four. They appear sitting each one on a seat round the throne of God, which denotes the presence of God with them: "God is in the midst of her." Their clothing of white raiment denotes their purity: and their crowns are an earnest of their eternal glory. They are kings, as well as priests, unto God.

Ver. 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.

These thunders, lightnings, and voices, are most fit appendages of the scene; and they indicate the judgments with which God vindicates his church, and destroys her enemies. The seven lamps burning before the throne, or in the midst of these elders, assure us of the various gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, communicated for the salvation of the people of God; "There are diversities of gifts; but the same Spirit." The Jews viewed seven as a perfect number, to denote a multitude. Inspiration adopts it as such. "I will punish you seven times for your sins;" or many times. Peter inquires of Christ, how oft he should forgive? -- till seven times? Christ assured him, that he must do it not only till seven times, but till seventy times seven. The perfect wisdom of Christ, as the stone and shepherd of Israel, was denoted (Zech. iii. 7) thus, "Upon this stone shall be seven eyes." Upon the same principle, the various gifts of the Holy Ghost are in the text denoted by seven lamps burning before the throne of God.

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Ver. 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.

This sea of glass is in allusion to the great brazen sea, in the temple of old, which was for washing. This vessel was called a sea, on account of its vast capacity; and it was made of brass. In allusion to that ancient sea, in the temple, Divine grace, under the Christian dispensation, was predicted as a "fountain to be opened for sin and for uncleanness." The Christian church, as well as the church of old, should have her sea for gracious cleansing. But in the Christian church, instead of this sea being of brass, impervious to the rays of light, it should consist of pure transparent glass. This is to denote the lucidness of the Christian dispensation, where light has come into the world, the Sun of Righteousness has risen, and his rays now pierce through the whole establishment of gospel cleansing, as rays of light pervade a vessel of glass. This sea of glass is before the throne of God, as the ministrations of grace are under the special eye of Heaven, -- as God dwells in Zion, -- and as he engages his special presence in all Christian assemblies for worship.

The brazen sea of old stood on twelve brazen oxen; three of them facing each cardinal point of the compass. We have here a lively emblem of the twelve apostles, setting their faces in every direction, to carry the gospel through the earth; and in this employment their successors were to follow them, down to the end of the world. We accordingly find in the text emblems of the ambassadors of Christ, as though annexed to this sea of glass; even as the old brazen sea stood upon its twelve oxen. These ambassadors are now denoted by four living creatures, instead of the twelve brazen oxen; one now for each point of the compass. They are rendered in our text four beasts; which rendering is very unhappy. The word in the original is zoa, from zoo, to live; and should have been rendered living creatures. Gospel ministers are here denoted by these emblems, instead of by brazen oxen, as of old -- connected with the emblems of cleansing grace. The word in this book rendered beasts, is thereia. (Chap. xiii. 1-10 and xvii. 3.) That these four living creatures are emblems of the ambassadors of Christ, is evident from the following things; they belong to the fallen

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race of man; for they were redeemed by the blood of Christ. See chap. v. 8-10; where the four living creatures, and the elders (lay members of the church) devoutly prostrated themselves before Christ, saying, "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 kings and priests unto our God, and we shall reign on the earth." "Thou hast redeemed us!" Certainly, then, they are men, and not angels. We repeatedly find that the angels are mentioned besides them, and distinct from them; as chap. v. 11. and vii. 11. "I beheld and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures. and the elders." They are ever distinguished, too, from the common members of the church, known as the ciders. Under the seals, in chap. vi., as new events of providence unfold, each, in turn, of these living creatures says, "Come and see!" q. d. "Come, behold the works of the Lord!" This is a part of the employment of the ministers of the gospel. The connexion of these living creatures with the sea of glass, as the twelve oxen were connected with the brazen sea of old, suggests, that they denote the same characters, -- the ambassadors of Christ. And the employments of these emblems decide the same thing: for they are found (in verses 8-11, of our context) leading the common members of the church in the worship of God.

These emblems of the ministry are said to be "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne!" indicating their nearness to God, and his care of them. The following words of Christ to his ministers, give the true sense of their being in and round about the throne; "Lo, I am with you always." "He that receiveth you receiveth me: but he that despiseth you despiseth me." These stars of Zion our Saviour holds in his own right hand, while he walks in the midst of his golden candlesticks -- the churches. And the text assures us they are "full of eyes before and behind," which are significant of their correct knowledge, and holy vigilance, to examine all things both before them, and after them.

Ver. 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. We have here the various gifts of the ministers of Christ.

We find that these gifts are often noted in different scriptures: "And he gave to some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors, and teachers." And again, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas;" meaning the different gifts of the ministers of the gospel. The first class in the text, is like a lion, -- bold, undaunted, as well as strong. The second like a calf, or a young ox; alluding to the brazen ox under the sea in the temple of Israel, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox;" or shalt support the ministry. This second class of these emblems denotes a class of ministers patient, strong, and though not brilliant, yet profitable; -- means of great good in God's husbandry. The third emblem, with the face of a man, may denote ministers who are argumentative, deep, perhaps very humane. The fourth like a flying eagle, swift of flight; of piercing vision; passing fearlessly over deserts, mountains, lakes; towering toward heaven, and flying to different regions. This emblem may remind us of the flights of missionaries, -- some to the ends of the earth.

Ver. 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.

Their six wings a-piece assure us of their alacrity in duty; that true ministers fly in swift obedience to their Lord and master; as saith Isaiah, "Here am I, Lord; send me!" and Paul, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." Their being "full of eyes within," indicates their gracious self-knowledge, and vigilantly keeping their own hearts, as well as cultivating their mental powers.

Their resting not day nor night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy" -- is most significant. They are themselves holy! "Be ye clean, who bear the vessels of the Lord." One great business of their lives is to proclaim the holy God, and the holiness of God, as well as to call on men to be holy. Let the following hints illustrate this; "I ceased not to warn every man, night and day, with tears." "I have set watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem, who will never hold their peace, day nor night." Their saying, holy, holy, holy, is thought by some to allude to the eternal Three in One, in Him who is, and was, and is to come! that each in this infinite Three is superlatively holy!

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

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

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

The ministers of Christ lead in the holy worship of God; and the churches unite in the same. The casting of their crowns at God's feet, denotes their most feeling and devout confession, that all their salvation, from its origin to the crown of glory, is of the most free and sovereign gift of God. One argument used by them is powerful indeed -- that God made all things, and this according to his own pleasure! While hypocrites and sinners contend with the Divine sovereignty; the true people of God adore him in it, and rejoice that "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" May ministers and churches be ever deeply impressed with a view of the great exaltation and responsibility of their character and standing. Verily their duties, at such a day as this, are great and urgent! What must the many eyes of the

ministers of Christ, (eyes before and behind, and within) discover, at this age of infidelity and of licentiousness! May all Christ's ministers clearly discern the signs of the times -- what is doing -- and what ought to be done! If ever wakefulness and faithfulness were important, they are now important! In the midst of the terrors of the times, just antecedent to the Millennium, let it be remembered, that faithful ministers and Christ's churches, are round about the throne! God is near, and with them, with the rainbow of his covenant faithfulness, which will not fail of bringing salvation to Zion, and desolation to her enemies. They "that be with us, are more than they that be with them." "God is our refuge and strength!" May ministers know, and well cultivate their own proper gifts; and not get out of their place, by attempting to fill that of another. Let them be themselves; and not vainly attempt to be other men. Every man has something of his own; which, should another attempt to imitate, it would be disgusting. A lady said to her minister, while making such an attempt, "What does ail you? I long to see you

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act yourself again!" Should the ox attempt to act the lion; or the lion the ox; or both attempt to be a flying eagle; their success would be but miserable. Let each man learn and improve what is his own. And may hearers learn to be content with what they ought; and not be "puffed up for one against another." People who have chosen their minister; if he be a good man, should be content with him, even if he be not a lion, nor a flying eagle. "Much increase is by the strength of the ox." Benefits derived from ministers of this class, may bear the same proportion to the benefits derived from men far more popular, which the increase by the strength of the ox bears to the benefit derived from lions and eagles.

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Having thus far exhibited the actors of the scenes to be unfolded; another preparatory scene is now introduced. A lively exhibition must now be given of the fact, that no revelation of mercy could be given from God (after man's apostasy), and no merciful predictions of future events, but by an infinite Mediator. All the gracious communications which had been made in the Old Testament from the beginning, of the doctrines, duties, and motives of salvation in the prophecies and promises, had been made only in anticipation of a Saviour to come. And of this, a clear decision must now be given, before entering on the revelation of scenes of futurity. No such gracious revelation from God to man could have been made, after the fall of man, but through one mighty to save. And a council must here be represented as held in heaven, to see if such a Saviour could be found, and hence such an unfolding of the salvation be made! With this view, we are prepared to attend to this chapter.

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

God on the throne holds a book in his right hand -- a book not of modern, but of ancient form. The form of books in ancient days, was a leaf (either a parchment, or the rind of papyrus, or some fit substance), written sometimes on both sides, as in the case of Ezekiel's roll; but

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usually on but one side, and rolled up, the writing inward. If they had matter for more than one leaf, they would write it on another leaf, and roll it over the first; then another; and so on, to any amount. Such a book is seen in the right hand of God the Father, consisting of seven leaves, thus written on the inside, rolled over each other, and sealed on the last edge of each leaf, so that it was, in a sevenfold degree, a sealed book.

The text seems to tell us, that each leaf was written on both sides; but the best expositors agree that this is not the sense of the passage. A wrong sense is given by placing a comma in the passage, where it does not belong. The pointing of the Bible is of human invention, and this passage is mistakingly so pointed as to read thus: "written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals!" whereas the true reading is as follows: "written within, and on the back side sealed with seven seals." The whole account shows this to be the true reading; for the book was sealed, and no part of its writing could have been designed to be seen, till its seal was broken, and its leaf unrolled by a person able to accomplish it. This sealed book was an emblem of events then future, designed for the salvation of the church; and which could be opened only by Christ.

Ver. 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.

The question, of infinite interest to a fallen world, was to be decided; could there be, in the case of fallen man, any hope that salvation, and a merciful unfolding of future scenes, could be given? The inquiry seems great and public, made by a strong angel; probably the greatest agent in the intelligent creation; -- q. d. Is any creature in the universe able to open this book? And no one, *oudeis* (in the original), meaning here, no creature in heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth; -- meaning, living or dead; -- no created being in the universe was found able; which amounts to a divine decision, of most unusual formality, to the real and infinite divinity of Christ;

and that none but the infinite Godhead could furnish a Saviour for lost man.

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

Had not one in the infinite Three in heaven been found disposed to undertake, all men must have wept, and wailed, and gnashed their teeth in eternal wo! But infinite wisdom and goodness found and presented one both able and willing to undertake, and to accomplish.

Ver. 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.

"The Lion of the tribe of Juda." The old rabbinical legend relative to the four standards of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, of which that of Judah was a lion, may, or may not be true. But it is by no means so satisfactory an origin of the figure in the text, as is the following, viz.: Jacob, when he was about to die, and was inspired to foretell the destinations of his sons, speaks of Judah (from whom Christ in his humanity came) as an "old lion!" This appellation then, naturally descended to Christ; -- "the Lion of the tribe of Juda!" One of the elders -- representatives of the church on earth -- communicates this blessed information of the Saviour. It might seem to human wisdom, as though some favored angel, or at least one of the emblems of gospel ministers, would be commissioned to give this information. But it is otherwise. It must be one of the ciders! -- a common member of the church! Was this designed to hint that Adam had been the honored agent to give information to his fallen race of the blessed heavenly secret, that a Saviour was found for lost man? -- that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head? Whether this be here meant or not, so the thing was in fact, as we find in the history of ancient Paradise.

Ver. 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.

The beloved disciple now looked, with solicitous expectation, to see this wonderful "Lion of the tribe of Juda!" And he beheld in the midst of the throne, and of the emblems of the gospel ministry, and those of the private followers of Christ, a Lamb! as having been slain, and recovered again to life! When people look for great things in religion, they are often disappointed, in finding what appears at first small. The Lord is not in the fire, nor in the strong wind, nor in the earthquake; but in the still small voice! Both the lion and the lamb are notable emblems of Christ, in our holy oracles. And the position of this Lamb hints to us, that Christ, through God, is ever in the midst of his ministers and churches, even while he is on the throne of the universe; and he holds his stars in his right hand. The seven horns of this Lamb are emblems of his omnipotent power. His seven eyes are emblems of his omniscient wisdom; and also of his having, at his official direction, the Holy Ghost in all his multiform gifts, and gracious operations, for the salvation of Zion.

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

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.

Christ took the book from the Father. The Father officially communicates to the Son all he has to do as Mediator. It is in this official sense that Christ says, "The Father is greater than I." And the business of both revealing and fulfilling the decrees of God, is thus received by the Son from the Father. And, in view of such a Saviour, and of the economy of divine grace towards men in him, Christ's ambassadors and his whole church prostrate themselves before God and the Lamb in the most humble adoration, praise, and holy obedience. The harps in their hands are emblems of their actual preparation for the business of praise and holy worship, either with or without instruments of sacred music to aid their voices.

And their golden vials, or cups, full of the prayers of the saints, assure us that the true people of God pray much! Their vials are not merely half filled; but they are full! And we here learn that their prayers are odors, in a twofold sense; or both as coming from hearts truly grateful, graciously contrite, and sincere; and as being perfumed with the incense of Jesus Christ in his powerful intercession.

Ver. 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.

The song of salvation by Christ is and eternally will be new, as it will for ever excite in the souls of the redeemed new wonders and joys; and will never appear old, nor in the least degree irksome. We read of a new commandment as given to Christians, that they "love one another." This is the same commandment which they had from the beginning; but it is called new, because attended with new light and obligations under the Christian dispensation. Upon the same principle, the songs of praise to God for the salvation by Christ, will appear new in eternal ages. Those then, who become tired of their religion, have never learned the new song of redeeming grace in our text. The fact here, that the four living creatures and the elders unite in ascribing their redemption to the blood of Christ, further decides, that both

do indeed belong to the human family. And God sees fit to employ these two sets of emblems to denote his true people on earth, consisting of his ambassadors, and the other members of his church. Such is the distinction which God makes between the ambassadors of Christ, and other Christians. But they both adore and praise God that he hath not only redeemed them, but has made them kings and priests unto himself. Levites and priests were types of Christians under this last dispensation. And inspiration sees fit to prefix here the title of kings also; making them a royal priesthood. Christians are priests, as being consecrated entirely to God in the temple of the gospel; and as being prepared by grace to offer to God holy and daily sacrifices, acceptable

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to him by Jesus Christ. And they are kings, as governing themselves by the divine direction, and as having holy fellowship with Christ in his government of the world. "And we shall reign on the earth." In the Millennium, Christ will reign on the whole earth -- not visibly -- but spiritual in the hearts and the holy faith of the world of people. And the reigning of the saints on the earth will be, not by any literal resurrection of those who have died; but by a blessed participation of the whole family of the saints (in heaven, and on earth) with Christ in his millennial reign. The saints in glory will see and know that the blessed cause in which their hearts were bound up, both living and dying, now fills the world! and this fact will add new joys to their heavenly glory. And also the saints on earth will at that time have such fellowship with Christ in his reign of grace, that they too may be said to reign on the earth!

Ver. 11. And I beheld. and I heard 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 I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

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

A grand chorus here arises from all creation, except from the world of despair! -- from the holy angels; -- from all the ambassadors of Christ; -- and all his followers, amounting to millions innumerable! The ministers and people of Christ are distinguished in this universal chorus, as being the people more immediately interested, having been redeemed. In this grand Halleluia, Christ is expressly worshipped and adored; and this too, in the most ample and rich profusion of expressions of wonder and adoration. And the scene closes with a renewed burst of

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rapture from the redeemed. The ambassadors of Christ exclaim, Amen! -- a term of adoring acquiescence, -- and a token for others to follow. Upon which the whole church fall down and worship.

Most rich is this chapter in instruction, and in practical reflections. The opening of the way of gracious communication from heaven is, for lost man, a theme of immortal wonder and praise. And it is a subject worthy of all acceptance and improvement. And great indeed must be the folly, guilt and self-ruin of neglecting it. The thought of the ministers and

people of Christ being in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, furnishes a most commanding motive to gratitude and Christian faithfulness. An ancient prophet assures us, "Jerusalem shall be called the throne of God." And another; "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early!" God governs the world for her salvation. May Christians more diligently learn the new song of redeeming grace; and never become weary of it. The idea, "And we shall reign on the earth," is commanding; and should ever awaken in Christians new and holy zeal. Their sea of glass, too, their luminous fountain for washing from all sin, should set their souls in holy fire of love and gratitude. We are in ourselves denied; and our deep innate depravity too often tills with vanity, folly and guilt. This, every true Christian daily laments; and he feels his need of cleansing grace! and, blessed be God, our sea of glass is ever at hand! We may there daily and hourly wash and be clean. "Wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin!" This sea for cleansing is not only pellucid; but is ample and free for all. God's kings and priests wash here without defiling the fountain; which is ever clear as crystal, like the waters of the river of life in the new Jerusalem. O ye kings and priests of the Lord; dwell on the broad and ample brims of this sea of glass; [see chap. xv. 2,] and keep yourselves pure. It is striking to find that the church there, at the opening of the Millennium, is noted as standing on this sea of glass. Its brims are so ample and firm, that all may, as the kings and priests of God, take their station upon it continually, to enjoy its waters of salvation. They now seem to have David's request truly fulfilled in themselves; "One thing have I desired of the Lord; that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life; to behold

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the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire at his temple." Let us labor, let us pray, that we may enjoy this blessedness! Then shall we indeed answer to the description of Paul; -- "And hath raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And then may we obey the following gracious direction; "Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, who by night stand in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord. The Lord who made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion!"

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REVELATION VI.

The way was now prepared to commence the unfolding of events then future.

First Seal.

Ver. 1. And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

Jesus Christ broke the seal on the last edge of the outer leaf of the book; and, unrolling the leaf, he presented to view its contents; upon which it seemed to thunder. Thunder is a noted emblem of war; and wars tremendous were about to commence. One of the emblems of the gospel ministry officially and audibly said, "Come and see!" We here learn, that when new and interesting events take place, the minister of Christ is to call the attention of his people to them. Come, and behold what God has done, or is doing. "Ye can discern the face of the sky; how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times?" "None of the wicked will understand; but the wise will understand." Of the wicked, inspiration says, "Thy judgments are far above, out of his sight." But it is not to be so with the people of God! they are to behold the fulfilment of the sacred Scriptures. Paul at Thessalonica reasoned three

Sabbath days upon the prophecies, to show that the events then taking place before their eyes relative to Jesus Christ and his evangelical kingdom, were but the fulfilling of ancient prophecies of these events.

Ver. 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.

A white horse is an emblem of victory and triumph. We have in this figure a striking view of the power of God in destroying his enemies, and promoting his cause, which should distinguish that early period. This rider on the white horse was, no doubt, an emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ, marching forth as the Captain of our salvation. "The Lord is a man of war." "The Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great." His crown is an emblem of his official glorification; and his bow, of the weapons of his indignation. He will give victory and salvation to his followers. His going forth, conquering and to conquer, assures us of the glorious triumphs of his gospel, in the ruin of its contending foes, and the salvation of its friends; in the multitudes of its early converts, and their stability in the order of the gospel. Jesus Christ had predicted these very triumphs to take place at this time, when he said to his disciples, "Verily, I say unto you, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." This event, as it took place upon that generation, was the destruction of the Jewish nation, forty years after Christ, and the attendant far more extensive propagation of the gospel. These things did indeed take place upon that generation as a mystical coming of Christ, and this twofold event may be viewed as a lively fulfilment of the figure in our text under the first seal. The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus * the Roman, was an event

* Should it be objected, that the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jews was probably past when the text was written; it may be answered, that this, if it were a fact, would form no objection to the exposition given. It is a notable fact, in this book, that when a series of events is to be exhibited, the commencement of which is already past when the figure of the series is given, the account goes back to the commencement of the series, though it were then past. It will be shown, that such liberty is repeatedly taken in this book of prophecies. The reason is obvious: it is to give the whole series of events, the commencement of which is already past. No objection can lie against this, which is of any avail.

which would not be overlooked in the commencement of the seals, where things of great interest to the church were to be given, from early in the Christian era. Christ had predicted his coming in the destruction of the Jews, and in his remarkable propagation of his gospel, in Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi. And it is most natural to expect, that the series of events in the seals would open with these. The figures in our text to denote the going forth of Christ as the Captain of our salvation, for the united designs of judgment and of mercy, are most appropriate, and are well known in the sacred oracles. As Ps. xlv. 3-6: "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty: and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee." Hab. iii. 3: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. Before him went the pestilence; and burning coals went forth at his feet. Thou didst ride upon thy horses and thy chariots of salvation. Thy bow was made quite naked. The mountains saw thee, and were troubled; the deep uttered his voice, and lifted up his hands on high!"

In Rev. xix. 11 -- 14, we find Jesus Christ riding forth upon his white horse of victory and salvation against Antichrist, at the battle of that great day of God Almighty, as will be shown on the passage. That passage and event furnish us

with an argument in favor of the exposition given of our text. In the text, Christ rides for the destruction of the infidel persecuting Jews (the type of Antichrist), and for the subsequent propagation of his gospel. And, in the similar figure in Rev. xix., he rides forth against Antichrist himself, to sweep the field of his enemies, and prepare the way for his own millennial kingdom. The two great events, -- of ruin to the enemies of God, and of salvation to his friends, -- are usually found in close union through the prophetic Scriptures. Our blessed Lord was thus anointed (Isa. lxi. 1, 2) "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord; and the day of vengeance of our God." The figure in our text accordingly combines things upon this scale; -- ruin to the hostile Jews; and enlargement to the Christian church. Christ rides forth "conquering and to conquer!" The king of Zion has conquered his foes, is conquering, and will conquer them. And vain and mad are the hopes of his

enemies for success against him. As well might stubble, fully dry, dream of vanquishing a glowing furnace, by flinging itself upon it. God will "go through, and will burn them together!" "What do ye imagine against the Lord!" "Our God is a consuming fire." The Jews found him to be thus in the destruction of Jerusalem, and of their commonwealth. They were destroyed as being antichristian; and their destruction was a lively type of the final destruction of the great Antichrist in the last days before the Millennium. Hence the similarity between the event in our text, as type, and that in Rev. xix. as antitype, as will be seen. All ye saints of the Lord, rejoice, even in these perilous times of the last days! Your Captain of salvation is with you, conquering and to conquer. He cheers the souls of his followers with the kind address, "Fear not! it is I; be not afraid." "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Second Seal

Ver. 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 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 seal of the second leaf being broken, and the contents presented, another emblem of the gospel ministry says, "Come and see!" Each minister of Christ should be able to answer the question, "Watchman, what of the night?" And, exhibiting the signs of the times, he should in some fit manner say, "Come and see!" "Come, behold the works of the Lord." This red horse and his rider, -- commissioned to take peace from the earth, and holding a great sword, -- furnish an emblem of another terrible scene of slaughter in the empire, after the destruction of Jerusalem and the commonwealth of the Jews, last noted. This event of the second seal took place in the reign of the emperors Trajan and Adrian, before the middle of the second century. The Jews had greatly multiplied in the empire; and the Romans, by their idolatrous worship of Jupiter Capitolinus, exasperated them to rage and open rebellion. And further to excite and direct their rage, a pretended Messiah arose at this time, by the name of Barrcocab (importing a son of a star), giving out that he was the star that

was to arise, as predicted by Balaam. How signal was this judgment upon the Jews. They had willfully rejected the true star of Bethlehem, miraculously demonstrated among them; and now they were given up to follow an ignis fatuus, -- a glow-worm, -- simply because he was wicked enough to say, he was the star to arise! Miserable, deluded Jews! They must now be visited with another tremendous judgment, in union with the Romans, who also had aided in the death of the Lord of glory. The Jews, in Egypt and Cyprus, led by the vile Barcocab, are asserted to have slain with

vast cruelty, four hundred and sixty thousand of the people of those Roman provinces! This excited against them the vengeance of the empire; and of the Jews there fell not less than five hundred and eighty thousand; and it is said not less than one thousand of their fortresses were destroyed. Eusebius says, upon the events of the times, "The doctrines and church of Christ daily increased; but the calamities of the Jews were aggravated with new miseries."

It is striking to reflect, that the persecutors of Christ and of his people, were thus led to be each other's executioners. We have here, then, an event fully equal to the emblems in this seal, -- a horse red indeed; and its rider wielding a great sword, and having power to take peace from the earth, and that the enemies of the gospel should kill one another.

Third Seal.

Ver. 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.

On the opening of the third leaf, a third emblem of the ambassadors of Christ says, "Come and see!" This testimony to ministerial faithfulness must still be given. Ministers must never sleep on their posts. If they become, as the prophet expresses it, "Dumb dogs, that cannot bark, sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber!" God will make them "contemptible," as false teachers. This black horse seems an emblem of deep affliction, and especially of famine.

In the Lam. v. 10, we read, "Our skin is black, like an oven, because of the terrible famine!" This sense of the figure is confirmed by the pair of balances in the hand of the rider, and by the declaration in the midst of the four living creatures, emblems of the gospel ministry -- "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see that thou hurt not the oil and the wine." It is here ascertained, that the price of a day's work must be given for the usual allowance of food for a day! And this little pittance must be weighed with great exactness! Those balances, and all that is said, betoken famine. Ezek. iv. 16. "Son of man, behold I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment; that they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity."

The church of Christ, during the time of the seals of judgment on pagan Rome, weltered under ten successive bloody persecutions from the pagan emperors. In the time of the fourth persecution, the tremendous famine predicted in this seal took place, under the reign of the Antonines. After the horrid mutual slaughters of the Jews and Romans under the second seal, the famine of the third seal commenced, in the course of the second century. Tertullian testifies of the event, that a scarcity occurred in every city, aggravated with such rains as seemed to threaten a second deluge. This scarcity occasioned great tumult in Rome, insomuch that the emperor, Antoninus Pius, was attempted to be stoned. And he found himself obliged to open his own treasures to supply the hunger of his subjects. And this judgment continued in the succeeding reign of Antoninus the philosopher. The river Tiber overflowing deluged much of the city of Rome -- wafting on its surface people, cattle, and (he various ruins of the country, as we find stated by Eachard. Earthquakes succeeded; the conflagrations of cities, and an infection of the atmosphere. This corrupted the land with infinite numbers of insects, which devoured what little of the fruits of the earth remained; "and (says Capitolinus) produced the most grievous famine." This famine continued in the reign of Commodus; and such was the desperation of the people of Rome, that they raised a sedition, and put to death Cleander, the favorite of the emperor. Frequent wars, scanty harvests, ill-management of public

stores, and various disasters, produced the long and deadly famines of those days, and fulfilled the judgments of this seal, in the second century.

Fourth Seal.

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

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

The contents of the fourth leaf were in turn presented. The fourth ministerial emblem calls the attention of all within hearing, to "Come and see." Thus all the emblems of the ambassadors of Christ, in turn, call for attention to the signs of the times. No one can be exempt from this duty. And those who from popular views or slothfulness, undertake to exempt themselves, do it at their peril. This leaf presents a pale horse, -- an emblem of mortality, with one by the name of Death seated upon him; and an emblem of hell, the place of departed sinners, following him. Death and hell to the wicked are nearly allied. The former delivers over to the latter. "The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes being in torment." Death upon his pale horse, in this seal, has his commission from God to kill a fourth part of men with some of the four usual means of destruction -- the sword, famine, pestilence, and beasts of prey! And soon after the opening of the third century, in the midst of fiery persecutions of the church, a new series of divine judgments upon the empire commenced, answering precisely to this hieroglyphic. Wars, foreign and domestic, raged; thirty competitors laid claim to the imperial crown at once. Twenty actually reigned in the space of sixty years, from Caracalla, A. D. 211, to Aurelian, A. D. 270. Most of these met with violent deaths. And the Persians and northern nations hence gained no small advantage against the empire. Valerian was taken captive by Sapores, king of Persia, and treated with much severity till his death. These wars, with civil contentions, failed not to produce famine; which unseasonable weather rendered severe. These calamities were charged upon the persecuted Christians.

But Cyprian boldly testified, that they were divinely sent according to the sacred predictions, and were inflicted, not because the Christians had rejected the idolatries of Rome, as the enemies pretended; but because the Romans refused the worship of the true God.

Death (meaning pestilence) was numbered among the means of mortality in this seal. And this was fulfilled. Zonaras and Lipsius (mentioned in Mede) inform, that a pestilence from Ethiopia raged for fifteen years together through the provinces of Rome, to their tremendous depopulation. Zonaras says, "Gallus the emperor was very severe to the Christians; many being cut off by persecution." Then (after noting the invasions of the Persians in Armenia; and almost innumerable hordes of Scythians falling upon Italy, Macedonia, Thessaly, and Greece; and hosts from the Palus Maeotis laying waste many provinces) he says; -- "the plague spread itself through the whole east and west; destroying the inhabitants of many cities, and ravaging for fifteen years." Zosimus declares the same; and says, that "so great a destruction of men had never before taken place." Eutropius also assures us, that in the reign of the emperors Gallus and Volusian, "the times were memorable for pestilence and grievous distempers!" And the invasions of wild beasts, at that period, were tremendous. An author in Bishop Newton informs, that five hundred wolves entered at once into a city, where the emperor Maximin the Younger then was. And we are assured, that lions and tigers made war upon the inhabitants of different parts of the empire. God thus visited persecuting Rome, under this seal, with his four noted

judgments; as in Ezek. xiv. 27; "For thus saith the Lord God, how much more when I send my sore judgments; the sword; and the famine; and the noisome beast; and the pestilence, to cut off man and beast?"

Fifth Seal.

Ver. 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

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little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The four living creatures, emblems of the gospel ministry, had all in turn called for attention, on the unfolding of a new scene. This therefore is not now repeated; but was well understood. Nine bloody persecutions had taken place previous to this in the pagan Roman empire (that under Nero, Domitian, Adrian, the Antonines at two periods, that under Maximin, that under Decius, that under Gallus, that under Volusian, and the ninth by Valerian). Thousands innumerable had been thus called to seal their testimony with their blood. One more tremendous pagan persecution was now pending; the tenth and last, under Dioclesian which was to continue ten years. Then the pagan beast was to receive a wound in the head, and die for a long course of centuries; as will be seen under the sixth seal.

In this state of things, the fifth seal is opened. Here the souls (psuchas, lives, meaning the blood of the martyrs), under the altars, where they had been sacrificed, is noted, in figure, as crying to God for vengeance. This seems to be in allusion to the blood of the first martyr Abel. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." The blood of the millions of martyrs shed in pagan Rome, was thus calling for justice on that wicked empire! The inquiry is made by this blood, How long vindictive justice should be delayed? The reply informs, that it must be deferred yet for a time, until more of their brethren (as though spoken to the souls of these martyrs), about to suffer as they had done, should be thus united with them. Their memories, in the mean time, should be blessed; while their souls should be peculiarly exalted in glory. Which things were denoted by white robes (emblems of victory and triumph) being given to every one of them!

The history of these times gives the best comment upon this passage. When the nine persecutions in the empire had taken place, as has been noted, another furious one was still pending; -- that under the emperor Dioclesian, which was of ten years' continuance. As this was approaching, the saints would need the consolation furnished in our text. The events of this seal furnish an implicit prediction of the revolution in the Roman empire, which

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took place after the tenth persecution, which was then just at the door. In this (which will be given under the next seal), God took signal vengeance on the pagan emperors, and their supporters. God would in a degree avenge the blood of the martyrs on them who shed it, according to the cry in our text. He would make, on that generation, inquisitions for blood in kind remembrance of his slaughtered children: and would do it upon a greater scale than in

any of the antecedent seals. . Great judgments had already been inflicted on the Roman persecutors, as has been shown. But these were so small, compared with what should then take place, that the martyrs were in our text represented as feeling themselves to be unavenged. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge!" This seems but a note preparatory to what should soon follow. And, as that is expressed in figures which are calculated to receive more than one fulfilment (as may be shown), the fifth seal may be viewed as a kind of awful preparatory hint of all the signal inquisitions for blood which God would institute before his millennial kingdom; while yet it had a primary allusion to events then soon to be accomplished.

Sixth Seal.

Ver. 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 freeman, 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?

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This scene prefigured the revolution in the Roman empire (which took place in the fourth century) from paganism to Christianity, under the Christian emperor Constantine. We have here an avenging of the blood of the martyrs, indeed; and given in language borrowed from the great judgment day, at the end of the world! I will give a concise history of the scene to which it primarily alluded.

About the year 320, soon after the tenth most bloody persecution in the Roman empire, under the emperor Dioclesian, Constantine, upon the death of his father Constantius, came to the imperial throne. Galerius, who had succeeded Dioclesian, was emperor of one part of the western branch of the empire. And he was inclined still to carry on the Dioclesian persecution. But he was smitten with an incurable disease; as also with a consciousness that it was from an angry God for his persecutions of the Christians. He hence, by a public edict, put an end to the persecution in his part of the empire, and desired the Christians to pray for his restoration to health! But he soon died! "I will make thine enemies come bending unto thee!" Maxentius had got himself declared emperor in his stead; and a large faction followed him. Constantine embraced the Christian religion, and formed a determination to vindicate it. He accordingly marched an army against Maxentius; who met him with an army of 188,000 men. But, in a great battle, Maxentius was defeated; and Constantine became sole emperor of the west. In the eastern wing of the empire, Maximin and Licinius were emperors. The former made war upon the latter, but was defeated with the loss of his army. Maximin, upon this his defeat, put to death many of his pagan priests and soothsayers as impostors, and false flatterers. Soon after, as he was meditating another battle with Licinius, he was divinely smitten with incurable torments, and blindness, and died in despair, -- confessing the guilt of his hostility to the people of God! Licinius was now the only emperor of the east, as Constantine was of the west. The former was disposed yet to carry on the persecution of the Christians. A war soon broke out between him and Constantine, in which Licinius was utterly defeated, and was forced to flee. Again

returning, he renewed the contest; but was again defeated with the loss of 100,000 men, and himself taken prisoner. Soon after, for an attempt upon the life of Constantine, he was put to death. Constantine became now the sole emperor of the whole empire, and

removed the seat of it to Byzantium in the east; which he called from his own name Constantinople.

Constantine now new-modelled the government of the empire; -- abolishing all the powers of paganism; -- establishing Christianity as the religion of the empire; -- and placing the administration of the government in the hands of Christian prefects! The power of persecution was now destroyed. "The great lights, so called, of the heathen world," says Bishop Newton, "the powers, civil and ecclesiastical, were all eclipsed and obscured. The heathen emperors and Cesars were slain; the heathen priests and augurs were extirpated. The heathen officers and magistrates were removed. The heathen temples were demolished; and their revenues were appropriated to better uses!" Here the secular Roman beast received his death wound, in his sixth -- his imperial -- head, and died; which death was to continue till these last days; when the deadly wounded head was to be healed. (Rev. xiii. 3, 12, 14.) This long interim was to be occupied by the rise and predominance of the papal beast; as will be shown on Rev. xiii. 11-18.

The figures in our text, to denote this revolution, are prophetic and appropriate. The sun is a prophetic emblem of emperors and kings, or of first rulers. The moon here is a figure of their armies. The stars, of the various subordinate officers of a government. Hence the darkening of the sun, the turning to blood of the moon, and the falling of the stars, denote the various terrors of a revolution; as might be shown from various passages in the prophets, and especially in the predictions of the battle of the great day; of which event, the judgment of the sixth seal was a lively type and emblem. Joel ii. 10; "The earth shall shake before them, the heavens shall tremble; the sun and the moon shall be dark; and the stars shall withdraw their shining." Isaiah iv. 4; "All the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved; and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth from off the vine; as a falling fig from a fig-tree." Isaiah xiii. 10; "For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened at his going forth; and the moon shall not cause her light to shine." Such is the language of the prophets, relative to most signal national judgments. As in the following; Isaiah ii. 19; "And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for

fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." And Hos. x. 8; "And they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us."

Says the text, "For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" That revolution was a great day of God's wrath to the pagan empire; and the abettors of paganism were not able to stand. It was also a lively emblem and type of the battle of the great day of God, now not far future; and also of the end of the world. The language therefore, which we find appropriated to the battle of that great day, and to the end of the world, was adopted by the prophetic Spirit, and applied to that typical event; not that it was an ultimate accomplishment of it; but because it held a conspicuous rank among the types of it; as did also the destruction of Jerusalem. Both brought a day of God's wrath, indeed, upon antichristian enemies, and afforded a solemn memento of the battle of the great day, and also of the end of the world!

In the event in our text, the pagan Roman beast died! In a still greater fulfilment of the description there given, or in

the battle of that great day of God, the same beast (having obtained the healing of his deadly wound, and, according to another prophetic figure, having arisen from the bottomless pit) goes into perdition; and sinks as a mighty millstone into the depth of the sea, never to rise again before the Millennium. (See Dan. vii. 11; Rev. xix. 19; xi. 15; xvi. 17; xiv. 14, to end; and xviii. 21.) In this scene, our text will receive a much more striking fulfilment, as to the import and amount of its figures, than in the event to which it primarily and in its chronological order applies. The imagery of the sixth seal is manifestly one of those prophetic descriptions, which allude to a rising course of events, as type and antitype, till they are fully accomplished in that last great day for which all other days were made! Hence such events are noted, as a coming of Christ; -- "the great day of his wrath is come!" All such antecedent comings of Christ are but mystical, and not literal; and are thus but types of his last and literal coming to judge the world.

The first six seals thus related to judgments on the pagan Roman empire. "The sixth seal abolished paganism, and planted Christianity as the nominal religion of the empire." Viewing the event described under the sixth seal as a type of the battle of the great day of God, now

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not far distant; its language is of the deepest interest to us. The language of the fifth seal too, being a note preparatory to divine inquisitions for blood, is of interest to this generation. The earth is now deeply defiled with blood. And even our land is not free from it. And blood, wantonly shed, has a voice calling for vengeance, which God will not fail to hear, and answer. The kind and solemn warning then, applies to this very period, -- "Come my people, enter into thy chambers." [See Isai. xxvi. 20, 21.] Christians, awake, and obey. And, O sinner, awake! fly from the wrath to come. "Escape for thy life." It is no time to sleep nor linger at such a day as the present!

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REVELATION VII.

Six of the seals having been opened, and paganism in the Roman empire having been subverted; a new era opens upon the church. But the empire, though now under a government nominally Christian, had resting upon it the enormous guilt of ten bloody persecutions of the followers of Christ; and God had vengeance yet to take upon it. A series of judgments was now about to commence upon the empire, predicted under the figures of trumpets, as trumpets of old were used to sound alarms. Seven trumpets of judgments were to be blown by seven angels; inasmuch as angels are ministers of Providence to fulfil divine judgments on the enemies of God.

But some important representations were first to be given of the sealing grace of the Spirit, -- of the prevalence of Christian prayer in numerous conversions, -- and of a deferring of pending judgments for this great object.

Ver. 1. And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds Of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

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The commencement of the judgments of the trumpets is here denoted by winds that were about to sweep the Roman earth, by invasions of hordes of barbarians from the north. Winds are a noted emblem of such judgments; as Jer. xlix.

36; And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of Heaven; and will scatter them towards all those winds; and I will send my sword after them." The holding of such winds then, implies both that the judgments were coming, and that they were to be deferred for a time. To give a lively view of this, four angels were represented as standing at the four cardinal points of the compass, holding those pending winds, till the chosen of God in the empire should be brought in, and sealed for Christ.

Ver. 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.

This angel of mercy must have been Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, coming like the natural sun from the east. He had the seal of the living God, the power of grace and of life, which is but the impression of the moral image of God upon the soul. Their being said to be sealed in their foreheads, seems in allusion to a custom of ancient times, in which masters affixed some mark upon their servants, to note them as their property; -- also from the custom of labelling articles, to show to whom they belonged. The chosen of God were to be set apart for him, by a mark said to be upon their foreheads, but really affixed to their hearts; impressing there the image of God; and bringing them into the visible kingdom of God under the seal of his covenant. This blessed operation must be accommodated with a season of peace; as was in fact the case in the empire for fifteen years after the judgment of the preceding seal; and, to a considerable degree, for forty years. In this season 144,000 were there converted to Christ;

probably a certain number put for an uncertain; -- said to be of the tribes of Israel.

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

6. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of 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 Zebulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

The number is the square of the number of the twelve patriarchs, and of the twelve apostles, carried out in thousands, to indicate the greatness of the number of the converts of that time. And these converted gentiles are noted as being of the tribes of Israel, from the fact, that the gentile church succeeded the Jewish church, and are called children of Abraham.

Ver. 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.

After this, or presented in vision as a subsequent event, John beheld multitudes innumerable in glory, having come from every region of the earth, and now standing before the throne of glory in sinless perfection; and holding in their hands each a branch from the palm-tree, as an emblem of victory over all their enemies. of sin, Satan, and the world. These we must view as a prophetic exhibition of the amazing multitudes who should, in times then future, and to the end of the world, be in like manner sealed, and should be brought to glory by gospel grace. What follows, to the close of the chapter, confirms the idea, that

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this is a description of the state and glory of the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven. Such a view of that state is most delightful to the church in all ages; but especially to the saints just entering the scenes of tribulation then about to be inflicted on the Roman earth, in which good people would not fail of having some painful participation. This vast company of glorified saints in heaven are presented as saying, with loud voices, "Salvation to our God, and to the Lamb." All the glory of their salvation they ascribe alike to the Father, and to the Son whom they worship as God.

Ver. 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.

The angels are here noted as distinct from the saints in glory, as standing round the throne, and round the elders, and the four living creatures, and prostrating themselves before God in the most profound adoration and worship. They are the guardian spirits of the saints: as says inspiration, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?"

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

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

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

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

17. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. One of the elders calls the attention of John to this heavenly

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company; asking who, and whence they were? that their character and state might be thus drawn out, and exhibited. John refers the question to the interrogator, who himself gives the reply. And the remark, "These are they that came out of great tribulation," may have an emphatic allusion to the martyrs, who had suffered in the ten pagan persecutions. But it must be viewed as including all martyrs in every age; with all the glorified saints in heaven, from first to last; especially before the Millennium. The description substantially applies to all in the world of glory, inasmuch as it is a

general fact, that "through many tribulations the people of Christ enter into the kingdom of heaven." The veil of heaven seems to be drawn aside, not to exhibit here things done on earth, as in most of this prophecy; but to exhibit the glorious state of the saints above. Angels are distinctly given in their own names; as are also the elders, and the four living creatures; denoting the church on earth, and her ministers. But, distinct from all these, we find a company of the human race described as in glory; -- a great multitude, that no man could number, of all nations, kindreds and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and holding palm-branches, as emblems of victory, in their hands. This view of the redeemed in glory is most kindly given as an antidote to the church on earth against the terrors through which she would have to pass, in days of persecutions, and in all the trials of life. It was designed to operate as a needful support and consolation to the people of God, from that time to the end of the world. This description was designed to excite their alacrity in obedience, and in sufferings for Christ's sake; and it should extinguish at once all the vain hopes of men who are not willing thus to endure tribulation for their Lord; but whose economy it is to slide round every cross, and to make their way through life without having to endure any thing for him who died for them! Such fearful and self-pleasing souls are not in the way to be prepared to unite in the songs of those hosts in glory. It would seem rather, that should they be admitted among the ranks of those glorified ones, they would be ashamed of themselves. Whatever descriptions of the glorified saints are found in the sacred oracles, they may be viewed as receiving their finishing touch in our text. We have here their perfect holiness, denoted by their white robes, and by their being washed in the blood of atonement; and they are satisfied

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in God's likeness, in that perfect love which casteth out fear. Their victory is exhibited by their palm-branches in their hands; and they are presented before the throne, beholding God in Christ, and shouting their loud and united praises for redeeming love and salvation. Their perfect services have no interruption of night; nor any alloy in that temple of unfading glory. Hunger, thirst, and every calamity known on earth, are now for ever banished; while they enjoy the presence and fulness of God. Jesus Christ, in the midst of the throne, feeds them with his heavenly treasures; leading them unto fountains of living waters; and wiping all tears from their eyes. In these figurative strokes, every thing is included which heaven can afford: -- things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath ever entered the conceptions of man.

Let the saints in this world of trials, often turn to this description, and be exceedingly joyful in all their tribulations. May it set their souls on a holy fire, and lead the children of God to triumph over the world, over sin and Satan, and every foe; while they most diligently pursue the path of duty. Let timorous souls gird up the loins of their minds, and be bold soldiers of the cross for Christ and the great salvation! for in due time all shall reap who faint not.

REVELATION VIII.

Seventh Seal.

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

This seal was not, like its predecessors, to contain some precise event; but it was to contain all the trumpets, or seven successive judgments, which would occupy the time following the sixth seal; or from about the middle of the fourth century, to the battle of the great day, and the Millennium.

The silence in heaven of half an hour, upon the opening of this seal, may denote the awe and the suspense occasioned by the expectation of great things; but which were not yet discovered. Place yourself before a scene about to be opened, though now hid from your sight. Suppose your expectations to be highly raised relative to the things next to be exhibited. After a little waiting, the curtains are drawn aside; but you at first perceive no definite object;

yet are confident something will soon be presented. What would be your state? It would be a state of breathless silence! no motion, no whisper, no loud breathing! So it is in our text: and half a prophetic hour passes in this silent suspense without being able to learn what is to be exhibited. What is here implied? -- that something great was soon to burst upon their sight; also that it was something not to be soon finished, as were the scenes of the antecedent seals; but should occupy a length of time. The distinct series of things of nearly 1600 years, was then about to commence; and no wonder that half an hour should be devoted to breathless silence and anxious expectations, before any thing distinct should be presented.

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

This silent interval was succeeded by the coming forth of seven angels, to each of whom was given a trumpet, an emblem of the judgment which was to be by him executed. But, previously to the first of these angels commencing his work of judgment, a bright representation was to be given of the reality and the prevalence of the intercession of Christ for the saints; and of the acceptableness of their prayers thus perfumed, and their prevalence with God.

Ver. 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.

This figure alludes to what we have in the ceremonial law, Ex. xxx. 1-10, where God demanded an altar of incense to be made, like a table, twenty-two inches square, and forty-four inches high, of the most durable wood, such as composed the ark of the covenant, that type of Christ. This altar should be overlaid with pure gold; and hence it is called in our text the golden altar; and it was placed

before the veil that was by the ark of the covenant in the holy place." The priests of old were here to make atonement once a year, by putting the blood of the sin-offering upon it; and he also should burn incense upon it every morning and evening, at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice. We find here prefigured both the necessity and the acceptableness of the blood, and the intercession of our heavenly High Priest, who has entered for his people into heaven, there to intercede, having once shed his blood for them. Jesus Christ, then, is this other angel in the text, who, in allusion to that ancient type, is noted as coming and standing by this golden altar, on which he offers much incense, with the prayers of the saints before the throne of God, where the perfume of the incense rises with these prayers to render them acceptable to God. This figure is full of salvation and joy to the true people of God; who are here assured of the way of access to him, and the acceptance with him of their prayers and gracious services, through the blood and intercession of Christ. It is here implied, that the prayers and services of fallen man, performed without an entire reliance on Christ, must be of God rejected. Verily, that golden altar, with its services, was a rich shadow or good things to come, -- of the salvation in Christ for all the broken in heart. The penitent, guilty soul may here venture, with humble boldness, to the throne of grace. A view of the prevalence of such prayers and intercessions follows: -- Christ casts to the earth, with his censer, coals from that golden altar where the prayers of the saints had thus been perfumed;

and voices, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake follow! which scene denotes the judgments then about to commence under the trumpets; and more remotely, all the judgments with which God would vindicate his cause against his enemies; these would be in answer to the prayers of his people for the salvation of Zion. The following words of Christ illustrate this scene; "And shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry unto him day and night, though he bear long with them? I tell you, he will avenge them speedily." What is said of the two witnesses, also illustrates this scene: "These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not; and have power to smite the earth with all plagues as oft as they will." See also Ps. cxlix. 6-9; Rev. ii. 26, 27. This figure assures us of the prevalence with God of Christian prayers, to protect against the enemies of our holy religion. And the way is now prepared to commence the judgments of the seven trumpets.

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Trumpet I.

Ver. 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 the trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

Most of the events which fulfil the trumpets, are secular events, or events political; but they will not be exhibited here merely as such; but as judgments of God in fulfilment of his word, in the protection of Zion, and in the confusion of her enemies. As such, Christians should contemplate them, to increase their devotions, and their confidence in God; even as the historical national events of the Old Testament are to be contemplated. The events of this trumpet are given under an assemblage of figures, such as are used in similar cases in the word of God, especially in the prophecies. The earth, which was the seat of those judgments, means the provinces of the Roman earth, as the earth often means a country then under consideration. The Winds of judgments, which the four angels were (in chap. vii. 1) holding, that they should not for a time blow on the earth (the Roman empire), were now let loose, and began to scour the regions of their destination with vast ravages. The imagery in the text, to denote them, is both rich and scriptural. Storms of hail, with thunder and tornados, prostrate and destroy the blessings of life. They are here taken as fit emblems of wars, foreign invasions, and bloody scenes, which waste and destroy. The prophet Isaiah predicted the invasion of Israel by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, as follows: Isa. xxviii. 2; "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which is a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth." And the invasion of Sennacherib is thus predicted, Isa. xxix. 6; "Thou shalt be visited by the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm, and tempest, and flame of devouring fire." In like manner Ezekiel predicts the divine judgment on the wall built up with untempered mortar: Ezek. xiii. 23; "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will rend it with a stormy wind in my fury; and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it." The following

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strokes in the word of God are in the same kind of diction; "The Lord also thundered, and the Highest gave his voice, hailstones, and coals of fire." "The Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall show the lighting down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering tempests and hailstones." Says Sir Isaac Newton, "In prophetic language, tempests, winds, or the motions of clouds, are put for wars: and thunder, lightning, hail, and overflowing rains, are put for the tempests of war." And he adds, "In like manner animals, and the green grass, express the beauty and fruitfulness of the land; also trees signify people of higher rank;

and green grass people of common condition." The figures in our text then, denoted war, invasion, terrible ravages of the empire; and as hail in those regions usually came from the north; so those judgments should be fulfilled, as was the fact, by invasions from the north. And in the histories of those times we find all this fulfilled.

Upon the death of Constantine, under whose reign the empire enjoyed the peace noted by the staying of the winds; -- his three sons, to whom the empire was divided, began to contend; they thus prepared the empire for foreign invasion: and the historic pages of those times assure us that barbarians from the north of Europe poured forth like storms of hail indeed! Says Guthrie, "Those fierce tribes were scattered over the vast countries of the north of Europe, and northwest of Asia; the subjects of the Russians and the Tartars. Great bodies of armed men, from the vast and wild regions of the north, with their wives and children, issued forth like regular colonies, in quest of new settlements in the south of Europe. New adventurers followed them; and the regions which they deserted were occupied by more remote tribes of barbarians. These in their turn pushed forward into more fertile countries, and like a torrent, these numerous hordes rolled onward, threatening to sweep all away before them. The scourge of God, and the destroyers of men, were names by which the most noted of these barbarian chieftains were known. These savage and furious hordes of human-beings overran (as is well known) and settled in the southern realms of Europe, and the western branch of the old Roman empire. The Suevi and Alans settled in Spain, early in the fifth century; who soon after were themselves overrun by the Goths, who captured Rome, and settled in Italy.

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The Franks soon after subdued and settled in Gaul, from whom it derived the name of France. The Huns, about the middle of the fifth century, invaded Hungary, and settled themselves in that region. The Gepida and Lombards planted themselves in Italy. And the Vandals crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and established themselves in the northern and fertile provinces of Africa," whence they would be found to fulfil another trumpet of divine wrath, as will appear. These things fully answered to the figurative language of our text, and to the time of its events; as says Dr. Lowman: "All the Roman provinces were at once invaded, from the eastern to the western limits:" and Eutropius says, "The Roman empire now nodded with distress:" and Claudianus (in Lowman), "Nothing but the shadow of the Roman name then remained." Mr. Mede informs, that Alaric, with a huge army of Goths, and others, broke into the eastern wing of the empire, especially Macedonia, sparing neither towns nor people: that in Greece he wasted and destroyed with horrible carnage; carrying the same destruction into Epirus, and Achaia, burning and destroying! -- that having thus ravaged in the east, for five years; he passed into the west, and spread desolation far and near! -- that after him, Madagaiso, a Scythian, with an army of 200,000 men, invaded the Venetian territories, carrying slaughter and terror! -- that a third and more deadly army of Vandals and Alans invaded the western wing of the empire, occasioning vast calamities; and that these judgments fulfilled that terrible storm of hail, mixed with fire and blood, alluded to in this trumpet. Gregory, of those times, says, "Such terrors from heaven were then oftentimes stricken in the minds of men, as lightning, flaming fires, and sudden storms occasion." And thus was fulfilled the judgment of the first trumpet on the Roman earth.

The texts, expounded in this lecture, furnish rich materials for reflection. Divine judgments are often deferred for a sealing time! and, at such a time, how important it is to obtain the seal of salvation! Sealing times are nearly allied to days of divine vengeance! -- as in the following: "To declare the acceptable year of the Lord; and the day of vengeance of our God." God is long-suffering; but at the time appointed his judgments will speak, and will not lie. If because judgment against an evil work is not speedily executed, the hearts of sinners are fully set in them to do evil; yet, sooner shall heaven and earth

pass away, than such denounced judgments fail of fulfilment. God will be known by the judgments which he executeth. "Go your way and pour out your vials upon the earth!" "Go ye forth, and slay utterly: but come not nigh to the men that have the mark." The days in which we live render such directions of the deepest interest!

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REVELATION VIII.

Trumpet II.

Ver. 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.

A mountain, in prophetic language, means a kingdom; and a mountain on fire, means a kingdom flaming in war, and burning with indignation for revenge, or for plunder. The sea in prophecy means a realm in a tumultuous state; and sometimes the seat of a power marked out for ruin: in our text it means the latter.

This trumpet denotes another signal step towards the downfall of the Roman empire, after the first fury of invasion, like a storm of hail and thunder from the north. And it was fulfilled by the capital plundering of Rome itself, the seat of the empire, by bloody hordes of Goths and Vandals. The judgments of the first trumpet fell, like a tempest of hail and fire, upon the provinces of the empire; but this second trumpet takes the seat of it. Alaric with an army of Goths, laid siege to Rome, took the city, and plundered it; slaying a vast multitude of its inhabitants, men, women and children; noble and ignoble, priests and laity. But this scene of terror was outdone by another of a similar kind within half a century; when Genseric, with

an army of Vandals from the northern- parts of Africa (where this people had planted themselves from the north as has been noted), landed at the mouth of the Tiber at Rome, and took the city. The burning mountain was now cast indeed into the sea, in prophetic imagery. The ferocious Moors and Vandals had the unrestrained possession and plundering of this vast city, the capital of the world, for fifteen days; when its treasures, sacred and secular, fell a promiscuous prey into the hands of these rapacious legions. When their fury was glutted, and their rage for plunder satisfied; -- Genseric led them back to Africa, conveying thither immense riches, and many captives, among whom was the Empress Eudoxia, with her two daughters. This may be viewed as a finishing of the judgment of the second trumpet; and thus as a notable infliction of divine wrath on that capital city, so long the seat of the pagan persecutions of the church of Christ. As the hail-storm of the judgment of the first trumpet came from the north, this finishing and most capital scene of the burning mountain of the second trumpet, came from a burning clime of the south.

Trumpet III.

Ver. 10. And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon a 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. A falling star, in prophetic imagery, and when secular things are the subject, imports the falling of some civil prince. Thus Isaiah, addressing the king of Babylon after his fall, says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" or, thou light-bearing star; alluding to the day-star, as though this should fall to the earth! What Roman prince then, fell at this time? Their last Roman emperor, Momylus (called Augustulus, or the little Augustus), was, at the time to which this trumpet naturally alludes, put down, -- to the great vexation of the provinces of the Roman empire. Odoacer, king of the Heruli, collected an army in Germany, entered Italy, and put down their last emperor (after taking Rome), and

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assumed to himself the title of the king of Italy: this operated indeed like wormwood on rivers and fountains of water, which renders them bitter. The condition of the kingdoms and provinces of the empire, denoted by the rivers and fountains in our text, was thus embittered and perplexed. For bloody scenes, revolutions, and barbarous governments followed, occasioning bitter anxieties, terrors and much slaughter.

Another bitter scene too, -- one of a religious kind, -- occurred at this period; -- the terrors of the Arian heresy. A star falling from heaven, in things ecclesiastical, denotes an apostate, a false teacher, a fatal heretic: as in Rev. ix. 1; where such a falling star denoted the author of the Mohammedan delusion, as will be seen. The falling star in our text then, may allude to the noted Arian heresy of those days. Both Arius, and his more active followers, may well be called wormwood; because, with all their sanctimonious zeal, and cry of Persecution (a trait of character common to heretics), they were themselves extremely bitter against the orthodox followers of Christ. And their enmities and persecutions did, at that very time, embitter the blessings of life; -- whether this were or were not a fulfilment of our text. Arius denied the doctrine of the Trinity in the Godhead; holding that Jesus Christ is but a mere creature, though of exalted rank, and above angels. And he exhibited his scheme, when he said of his opponents, "They hold that Christ, in his divine person, is not posterior nor inferior to the Father!" And again; "We (Arians) are persecuted, because we say Christ had a beginning!" Though Arius himself lived before the time of the judgment of this trumpet; yet the Arian heresy received a notable revival at this very period. We learn in history that kings and first characters of those barbarous hordes from the north, as they came within the twilight of Christianity, embraced the tenets of Arius; and they became their furious advocates, and the bitter persecutors of the orthodox.

Mosheim testifies as follows: "Towards the commencement of the sixth century, the Arians were triumphant in several parts of Asia, Africa and Europe! Their opinions were openly professed, and their cause maintained by the Vandals, in Africa, the Goths in Italy, the Spaniards and Burgundians, the Suevi, and the greater part of the Gauls." He further proceeds to speak of the Trinitarians as being rigorously treated by them; particularly in Africa

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and Italy, where, he says, "they felt, in a very severe manner, the weight of the Arian power, and the bitterness of their resentment." And this storm, he informs us, was not over, till the Vandals were driven (in 534) from Africa; and the Goths by the arm of Justinian out of Italy." (Vol. i, p. 467.) These Arian persecutions accord so fully with both the chronology and the imagery of this trumpet, that they are here adduced as at least aiding in the fulfilment of its events. They did indeed contribute their full part to the bitter scenes of those days, and were effected by the bitter Goths and Vandals who had been the instruments of the judgments of the two antecedent trumpets.

Trumpet IV.

Ver. 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 darkening of the heavenly luminaries, imports, in prophetic language, the subversion of the civil authorities in a kingdom or empire; the destroying of their civil peace. A writer says, As light is the symbol of joy and safety; so darkness of adversity and misery; and hence, said Jeremiah to the Jews; "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness; and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness." We have here one description of the Babylonish captivity; it caused "gross darkness." The degree of darkness in such passages may hint to us the degree of the judgment fulfilling them. The prophet Isaiah, predicting the judgments of the last days, when God will "cut off the spirit of princes, and show himself terrible to the kings of the earth;" says, "For the stars of heaven, and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth; and the moon shall not cause her light to shine; and I will punish the world for their evil." Ezekiel, also, predicting fatal judgments on Egypt, says, "When I shall put thee out (or extinguish thy luminary); I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud; and the moon shall not give her light; and all the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over

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thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God." Joel, also, says, "The sun shall be turned into darkness, before the great and notable day of the Lord;" meaning the fall of kings in wars and revolutions.

Thus we learn the sense of the prophetic language in our text; that God would darken a third part of the political Roman luminaries; or extinguish that third part of the political light of that empire, which then still remained. It seems, from the history of the fulfilment of our text, that the third part of the light extinguished was not the first third; but the last third; or the part which had till now remained. And this their darkness settled down upon them for both day and night, meaning continually. Rome never again should recover her pristine glory, nor much meliorate her degraded condition. And all this took place upon that empire. After the Gothic kingdom had for some time continued in Italy, -- which kingdom had left to Rome a considerable degree of splendor, and some degree of the power of her senate, consuls, and other magistrates; -- the emperor of the eastern wing of the empire sent his general Belisarius and took Rome. The year following, Vitijes, king of the Goths, besieged Rome with an army of 150,000 men, and reduced it to great extremity. Soon after, Totilas, a succeeding Gothic king, took Rome: and the next year Belisarius took it from him: two years after, Totilas recovered it: and five times in less than twenty years, this riotous city was thus taken and retaken; reducing that capital of the world to a sorry condition. In a short time after, Narses, another general of the emperor in the east, again subdued Rome, and got himself constituted duke of all the realm, with Rome and the other provinces subjected to him. The exarchate of Ravenna was now established, and became the seat of the new government; and Rome lost all its supremacy, and was placed upon a level with other cities of Italy; and thus the last third of the light of this great national luminary was extinct! Darkness settled on all the advocates of the old government; and the judgment in our text was accomplished. The first four trumpets inflicted on Rome after its revolution to Christianity, are the four minor trumpets: but they brought the fall of the Roman empire.

Ver. 13. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo,

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to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound.

Notice is here given, by an angel flying, of the three woes then yet awaiting the guilty world: and these three trumpets are hence denominated the three wo trumpets; or the first, second, and third woes; which were to be still more notable events. They were to relate each to a different power, as will be seen; and were events great, and far distant from each other.

The three trumpets, expounded in this lecture, furnish interesting reflections. By these judgments, God made himself known, -- vindicated his name and government, -- and gives solemn warnings to men on earth. Rome had been great, and had long governed the known world. But long had this wicked empire persecuted the cause of God, and slaughtered millions of the dear followers of Christ; and God poured his judgments upon them. These savage barbarians from the north had their own selfish and bloody designs; and the Most High had his deep, holy and vindictive designs, in the same events. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise God; and the remainder of that wrath he will restrain." These calamities were the wicked deeds of those vile hordes of robbers; and they were yet the righteous dispensations of God: "Ye meant evil against me (said Joseph to his brethren); but God meant it for good." God governed the whole, and fulfilled his word, and his wise designs; yet were the aggressors free agents; and their cruelties were without excuse. God said of the Assyrian, Isa. x., coming against the Jews; "I will send him against the hypocritical nations, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down as the mire of the streets." But of the same Assyrian, God says; "Howbeit he meaneth not so; neither does his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few:" hence God cut off the Assyrian, in his turn, as he did the Romans in the judgments recited. Let transgressors then, tremble! for "the triumphing of the wicked is short!" "When they say, Peace and safety; sudden destruction cometh, and they shall not escape!" "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

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REVELATION IX.

This chapter gives us the fifth and sixth trumpets; or the first and second wo trumpets.

Trumpet V.

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

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.

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 breast-plates, as it were breast-plates 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

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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.

We have here a prediction of the rise and progress of the Mohammedan delusion, propagated by armies of Saracens. A falling star, when the event is a religious concern, is an emblem of some religious impostor. Such an impostor has here a key of the bottomless pit; which imports that he is permitted to introduce a fatal delusion from the world of darkness. His opening the door of the bottomless pit, and a smoke ascending from it, darkening the world around, denote the rise of a fatal delusion from hell. And that smoke's pouring forth locusts of a terrible description, denotes the agents and armies by whom this delusion is propagated. And all the remaining parts of the figurative description are most natural, to give the rise and progress of this delusion.

This falling star was Mohammed; or Sargius, a Jewish apostate monk, a man of literature, who was prime agent to Mohammed in the formation of his Koran, and false scheme. The falling star denotes Mohammed, with this monk included, and whatever aid he found in his infernal plans. This grand impostor had travelled as a merchant in the Arabian caravans, and had noticed, in the regions where he passed, what parts of their religions were most pleasing; and what displeasing to the multitude. And Satan and his own ambitious heart induced him to determine on forming a new system of religion, which should embody the things most pleasing to the human heart; and avoid all the points most displeasing; and to present this system to the world, as a new revelation from Heaven. To effect this object to the best advantage, Mohammed with Sargius his aid retired, in the year 606, to a cave in Mecca in Arabia, where he lived, and there formed his Alcoran, or his new bible. This he fondly imagined would be most readily embraced by all men. Men are apt to imagine that what they furnish and highly esteem, will be by others readily received. But Mohammed seemed not to have been aware that a prophet is not likely to be honored in his own country, and among his own people. In this case, they knew the man too well to believe that he

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had been blessed with any new revelation from God. After laboring a course of years to induce the people of his region to receive his new religion; they became indignant at his mad presumption, and expelled him from their community. He now fled to Medina, another noted place in Arabia, in the year 622; which time is called in his system

the Hegira, or the flight; and it commences their reckoning of time, as the birth of Christ does the Christian era. This man now formed his daring design to propagate his new religion by force and arms. In 629 he raised an army of 10,000 men for this purpose; and in 631 all Arabia was prostrate before him. In about thirty years more, he had overrun the dominions of the Greek emperor as far as Persia. There was then a cessation of this horrid contest for about fifty years, in contentions relative to the Mohammedan succession in government. Upon the settlement of this point of altercation, the plan of propagating their religion with fire and sword was resumed; and, soon after, the western kingdoms of Europe were violently beset by these devouring locusts. And in about one hundred and twenty years from the origin of this delusion, it was thus forcibly extended over the following nations -- Arabia, Palestine, Syria, both the Armenias, most of Asia Minor, Persia, Egypt, Numidia, the States of Barbary, Portugal, Spain, part of Italy, Sicilia, Candia, and Cyprus. And their ambitious rage still glowing, they entered France with an army of 400,000 men. But Charles Martel met them, defeated their armies, and drove them from Europe with the loss of seven-eighths of their hosts. This checked their mighty conquests.

The Arabian armies, by which this delusion was propagated, were denoted by the locusts in our text, coming from the smoke which arose from the bottomless pit. And the figure to denote them, locusts, is striking, on account of their origin, their multitudes, their swift marches, speedy conquests, and their ravages. Arabia, where these armies were collected, was a noted region for locusts in large devouring swarms. Locusts too, have by some naturalists been said to originate in pits and caverns. And Mohammedanism was formed in an Arabian cave. These mystical locusts are said in the text to have power as the scorpions of the earth have power. Scorpions are powerful considering their size; and they have a deadly sting; and deadly venom; and are most hateful to man. And in like manner the Mohammedan armies were most hateful to those whom

they subdued, both in their religion, manners and cruelties. And they were vastly powerful and deadly, till Martel checked them. In one battle (that of Yermak), their general reported that he slew 150,000 men. Their armies were composed of cavalry, and were thus very swift. Green grass, the text informs, they should not destroy; nor trees, nor any green thing. They thus differed from natural locusts. And the Mohammedan armies had their orders from their leaders not to injure fruit trees; nor needlessly to injure animals, nor vegetables. The commission divinely given them in our text, was against the men who had not the seal of God in their foreheads. And these they should not slay; but they should torment them five months; meaning, probably, five months in a year; which is about the time of the ravages of natural locusts; and was about the time the Mohammedan armies did yearly push their conquests.

Many of the people, where the ravages of these mystical locusts took place, had been blessed with the preaching of the Christian salvation by the apostles and early preachers of the gospel; but this blessing had been, by the great mass of the people in those places, rejected. And these furious armies now had their commission against these rejecters of Christ; not indeed to make of them a promiscuous slaughter; but to torment them with their attacks, their exactions, and various kinds of tyranny. The despisers of gospel salvation, in those regions, found that God had plenty of judgments for his gospel enemies! That they, having rejected the gracious mission of Christ from heaven, should now be tormented with the pretended mission of the grand impostor Mohammed! Such is the vindictive economy of heaven. The Jews rejected their true Messiah; and were afterwards cursed with false pretended Messiahs! When people reject true gospel ministers, it would not be strange should they be destroyed with false teachers, and given up to fatal delusions! Relative to those mystic locusts tormenting the people destitute of the seal of God; it is a well-known fact that those armies of Saracens did usually make their incursions upon the regions which they invaded during only the warm months, each season. They would then retire for winter-quarters; and would be ready to enter on new invasions on the opening of the next summer months. In the first two and last two months of each year, their military laws forbade their making any new incursions upon any region. They generally

spent more than half the year at home, in their own families and business. So fully did they accord with this part of the description in the text.

Among the torments inflicted by these Mohammedan powers upon the conquered, were the following: -- infidels who rejected the Christian religion, and also all idolaters, they forced to receive the Mohammedan religion, upon pain of death. But Jews and Christians, having their Bibles, and their religion, they left to the enjoyment of them, upon their paying large sums, which they exacted. Where the payment of such sums was refused; they should embrace the new religion, or die. And the heathen were obliged to embrace their religion, or die. They thus had provision not to have the conquered inevitably put to death; but they must be tormented. These locusts were said to have stings. Various and most stinging indeed were the calamities which fell upon the conquered from their new masters. A noted author says: "Their military laws adjudged such a portion of their captives to bondage. And the condition of these, particularly of the women, was so deplorable (being in the power of men of the greatest licentiousness), that many would prefer death to their condition!" As to the heads of these locusts being like the heads of horses, having crowns, faces of men, hair of women, teeth of lions, and wings sounding as chariots rushing to battle; parts of these figures seem borrowed from the natural locusts, and parts from the actual uniform of Arabian soldiers. The heads of the mounted cavalry might well be said to be heads of horses. And, as to their crowns, the soldier wore a turban something like a crown. His face was masculine, as he wore a part of his beard on his upper lip; and had the strong and fierce countenance of the warrior. But these soldiers wore their hair dressed and twisted in a delicate manner like women. And different twists and dresses of their hair were used to distinguish different bands of the soldiery. Their armor was such as might well be denoted by teeth of lions, and iron breast-plates. And their speed and fury in rushing to battle, were well denoted by sounds of furious wings, and the thundering of chariots. The king of these armies of locusts was said to be an angel of the bottomless pit. His Hebrew name was Abaddon; and his Greek name Apollyon; each of which imports a destroyer. This their king was first, Mohammed, and afterward his successors the caliphs. Each of these was at once their

high-priest, and a leader of their armies. These men were indeed destroyers; and were well called angels of the bottomless pit. All these descriptions were manifestly fulfilled in the armies of Saracens, propagating the Mohammedan delusion. The two antichristian powers, the papal and Mohammedan, were the two colossean pillars of the kingdom of Satan on earth. They were planted as it were side by side; and erected in bold defiance of heaven to destroy, if possible, the cause of the Redeemer. But very different was the purpose of the Almighty Ruler of the world, in the same events. God designed the Mohammedan imposture as a means of executing his righteous judgments on those sections of the earth where the gospel had been preached in its purity, but had been rejected, or corrupted. He designed it as a tea trumpet, thundered on that section of his enemies, to exhibit to all people and ages the danger of rejecting his gospel. If men will not receive the love of the truth that they may be saved; it may be expected that God will send them strong delusion that they shall believe a lie, that they all may be damned who believe' not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. This wo trumpet was tremendous in its nature, and in its long duration. It was to rise with the papal delusion, and to continue about the same length of time, as may be shown. The one may be called the eastern, the other the western antichrist.

Relative to the time of the commencement of this wo trumpet, Mohammed retired to his cave to form his scheme, in the year 606. In about one hundred and twenty years from this period, their conquests were won. Take a medium then, of this hundred and twenty years, as the time for the fair manifestation of this grand imposture to the world, and it gives the year 666. The Koran, embodying this scheme of imposture, was but a horrid bundle of falsehoods, superstition, and licentiousness, propagated by violent armies. And the soldiers were assured that all who fell in battle, propagating this religion, instantly ascended to a sensual paradise; which motive was calculated and designed to render

them fearless, and invincible. Thus terrible was the judgment of the fifth trumpet on the multitudes in the eastern realms, who had rejected Christ and his salvation. So fatally did God subject them to Mohammedan tyranny, and to intolerable calamities. So fatal, even in time, was their rejection of the grace of

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God in the gospel of his Son. "Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord. Do they not provoke themselves, to the confusion of their own faces?" Let gospel despisers beware; for God is still the same; and the judgments in our text are held up in solemn warning.

Trumpet VI.

Ver. 12. One wo is past, and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

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

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

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

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

17. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates 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 fornications, nor of their thefts. We have here the origin and advancement of the Turkish empire, another great supporter of the Mohammedan delusion. A voice from the four horns of the golden altar

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before the throne in heaven, calls forward the event of this trumpet. This is the altar in chapter viii. 3, where Christ

offers much incense with the prayers of the saints, that they may find acceptance with God. This circumstance hints to us, that this wo trumpet is in answer to the prayers of the saints thus perfumed. They pray for Zion; and God fulfils his judgments on their enemies in answer to their petitions. Four angels are loosed that were bound in the river Euphrates, prepared for judgments. These angels import ministers of Providence, by whom he would chastise nations of the papal empire. And they denoted four governments of Turks, located near the river Euphrates. Four governments of Seljukian Turks were indeed found there; one at Aleppo, one at Iconium, one at Damascus, and one at Bagdat. These ambitious powers had long been inclined to extend their dominions; but they had been restrained from it as though "bound" by two causes; the armies of the crusaders from Europe to the holy land, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; and by the attacks of the Tartars on these governments. These restraining causes, at the time of the opening of this sixth trumpet, ceased. The wild crusades closed with the twelfth century; and the invasions of Tartars then became less formidable. The-Turkish empire now in fact, arose, in the union of these four Turkish sultanies, under Ottoman, their first chieftain, about the year 1300. They threw off the Tartar yoke, and formed their plans for conquest. In 1363, they found themselves prepared to cross the Hellespont, into Europe, and commence there most furious ravages. This empire is said, in the text, to have been "prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, to slay a third part of men." As though that voice from heaven had said; This power shall make incursions with increasing success, as of an hour, then of a day, then of a month, and then of a year, to slay a vast portion of the people in those antichristian regions. Each incursion shall increase in length and terror, till they shall fix the seat of their empire in the heart of their enemies' country. And most precisely thus did the events take place. The armies of this Ottoman empire broke into Europe for plunder, and soon retired; occasioning an alarm as of a prophetic hour. Bajazet soon after made a longer excursion, and threatened a general invasion of Greece; but an attack of the Tartars called him home; and the terror in Europe again subsided. This was an alarm for a prophetic day. After a season of rest in Europe,

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he commenced a new attack; took Adrianople, and other portions of Greece. And he besieged Constantinople for eight years, and probably would have taken it; but Tamerlane the Tartar, took this opportunity to renew his attack upon the Turks, which caused Bajazet to raise this siege, and hasten home to protect his own dominions. This third invasion of Greece may well be noted as the alarm of a month, -- or thirty years. But the Turkish invasion of that south-east of Europe was soon after again pursued; when Mohammed II took Constantinople in the year 1453, and made it the capital of the Turkish empire in Europe, established upon the ruins of the Greeks. This may well be called the judgment of a prophetic year, whether definitely or indefinitely calculated. Should it mean a definite prophetic year, or three hundred and sixty years from the time of the Turks becoming established in Europe; it would bring the commencement of their fall to about the year 1818. The history of the Turks gives a clear illustration of the imagery in our text. Their armies were great, consisting chiefly of horsemen or cavalry. They were not usually found with less than 300,000 cavalry and 60,000 infantry. They pressed like lions upon their enemies, and were rapid in their conquests. They enforced the Mohammedan religion. Their way of propagating it was with fire-arms. They subdued Greece, Asia Minor, and great territories in the east. Their hearts flamed with the wildest fire of enthusiasm and rage; and they tormented men with the most absolute despotism. The number of their armies, as stated in the text, is amazing; "ten thousand times ten thousand;" or one hundred million! This number, one would think, must be a great hyperbole. It may, possibly, however, be the number of all their armies, from the rise of their empire to its final extinction. The Turkish soldiery have been vastly numerous. The true sense of the text may be like that of the following scriptures; "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." The passage most forcibly gives the idea, that the armies of the Turks would be vastly numerous and powerful, and fully equal to all the works of judgment assigned them. And they are said, in the text, to have breast-plates of fire, and jacinth, and brimstone. Their horses' heads are like the heads of lions; and, says the text, "out of their mouths issued fire, and

smoke, and brimstone." Suppose, then, that John beheld in vision an army of Turkish cavalry, furiously charging an enemy, and firing over their horses' heads, and many of the enemy falling before them; while their armor was gleaming with burnished brass, as though of real fire; the view would seem to answer precisely to the description he gives in the text. Fire-arms had never been conceived of, when the text was written: but they had come into use when it was fulfilled. The Turks, in this their attack upon Europe, used both cannon, and small arms. The latter they fired over their horses' heads, which gave the very appearance described in the text. They are said to have had tails like those of serpents; and heads on their tails, powerful to do hurt. A poisonous and furious serpent, with a head at each end, full of fatal venom, is a striking emblem of those Turkish soldiers. They both subdued and tormented; and every touch was like that of such a serpent, full of malignity, poison, and death.

The obstinate impenitence of the residue of their enemies, who escaped death, is an affecting part of the sacred story. "The rest of the men who were not killed by these plagues yet repented not!" Judgments should lead men to God with penitent hearts. This only is the happy result of afflictions. But most frequently is it otherwise with people deeply afflicted. And, as the best means of repentance and salvation do, if misimproved, effectually harden; so the most severe judgments, when misimproved, do but harden and prepare the soul for ruin. This was the fatal effect of the judgments inflicted by the Turks on the multitudes who fell under their yoke. *

Happy has been our exemption from such scenes of judgment as are described in these wars. Numerous millions were deluged in these scenes of vexation and ruin. Let us bless God that such has not, as yet, been our lot. We too, might have had the brutal rage of furious and bloody

* The stroke in our text, that "the rest of the men repented not," &c., gives a lively view of the nature of Mohammedism; it brings no one to repentance; it produces no morality worthy of the name. The instance was never found that this religion ever produced a good man: but, like the Bohon Upas tree, it has ever filled its whole atmosphere with poison and death. It was at first a smoke from hell; it then produced nothing better than most hateful devouring locusts; nor has it, from that time to this, produced any character essentially better. No whisper of grace has ever blessed their hateful system; no heavenly dove ever hovered there! but hatred, and blood, and horror have reigned triumphant in all those dark domains.

millions let loose upon us. But God, in our case, has kindly restrained the wrath of man. Had it not been for such restraining goodness of heaven; things like the terrible prophetic hints contemplated, would, long ere this period, have buried us and all nations in desolation and ruin. "The fire of thine enemies shall devour them." Christians, while you contemplate such scenes as are furnished in the first two trumpets; may you joyfully recollect, that the most savage destroyers of the human family can, in all their mighty rage, do nothing more than fulfil the wise and holy counsels of heaven! The keys of death and hell our Saviour holds in his own hand of omnipotent power. And no infernal smoke of delusion can rise; no horrid locusts, as the propagators of error, can ruin or torture men; no Apollyon can desolate sections of the earth, nor horrid Turks destroy a third part of men, unless the great good of God's kingdom requires it; and then the true friends of this kingdom of God shall be eventually safe as the apple of his eye. Let Zion's children, then, rejoice that the Captain of our salvation rules with full control in the midst of his enemies; that he is a wall of fire round about his people, and a glory in the midst of them: and "no weapon formed against them shall prosper." Thus safe are all who confide in the divine government, even in the days of vengeance upon the enemy. Let the saints be joyful in following the Lamb! Then may they confide in their ever-present Immanuel, God with us; whom having not seen they love; in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing, they may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full

of glory, till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.

LECTURE X.

REVELATION X.

Ver. 1. And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

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This chapter gives a notable event, which was subsequent to the second wo in the preceding chapter (which was fulfilled in the rise of the Turks); and was to be antecedent to the third wo, -- the battle of the great day, as we are assured in verse 7. It is a notable descent of Jesus Christ, the angel of the covenant, with his seven thunders, and his little open book. It will aid the exposition of this tenth chapter to consider, that it gives the same event, in this first general division of the prophetic part of the book, with that given in the eighteenth chapter, in the second general division: -- the tenth chapter giving the terrors of the event to the nations; and the eighteenth, the terrors of it to the papal see. It is a signal coming of Christ, not for the final destruction of popery, as in the seventh vial; but for the subversion of its dominant power, as in the fifth vial, as will be shown. Light will be reflected on this chapter, when it shall be shown that it predicts the same event with that found in the closing part of the prophecy of Daniel, as well as in other prophecies. In the signal descent of Christ, in our text, he is "clothed with a cloud." This is a notable prophetic dress of the Saviour, when he comes for judgment. Thus we read of him, "Behold, he cometh in clouds!" -- "Behold, the Lord rideth on a swift cloud!" -- "Clouds and darkness are round about him." Christ came in a cloud of fire to the chosen tribes, fleeing from Egypt, and of confounding darkness to the pursuing Egyptians. Such a cloud is a bright emblem of his presence, of providential protection to his church, and ruin of her enemies. The rainbow on his head, is an emblem of his covenant faithfulness; -- that he was now coming to fulfil some important parts of his word; and that he will in due time fulfil it all. This coming of Christ was on a vast design of judgment. His face appearing like the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire, are emblems (as was shown in chap. first) of his infinite divinity, and of the majesty and purity of his footsteps, in the fiery scenes then pending on his enemies. Several great events had been predicted as the coming of Christ, when it was evidently not a literal, but a mystical coming; -- as that in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish commonwealth; -- that in the revolution in the Roman empire from paganism to Christianity by Constantine: -- that in the reformation from popery, in the days of Luther; -- that in the battle of that great day of God, just before the Millennium; -- and that in our text. It is noted in vision as though it were a literal descent, as is

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usual in language of prophecy. So familiar is this kind of language in the Christian world, that it is common to say, Christ has thus and thus come near to a nation, -- a community, -- or an individual; -- alluding to some judgment, or affliction. Some tremendous coming of Christ on a vast section of the papal earth, our text presents.

Ver. 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.

This little book in the hand of the Captain of our salvation, is an emblem of the fact, that a new and very interesting era, in the events of the last days, is then commencing. A book, in prophetic language, denotes the counsels of God relative to a course of events to commence; as in chap. v. 1, where the sealed book, in the divine hand, was about to be opened. The book in our text is not a book which had been ever before seen, as the fancy of some men have suggested. It was a new book here presented: and it was a symbol of a course of events then introduced, of new and signal interest, between the second and the third wo trumpets, and distinct from both. This book Christ holds in his hand; assuring us, that all events fulfilling it are in the hand of our Saviour; and that his hand and special judgment should now be signally manifest. And the fact, that this book is open, seems a plain indication that when the event thus described should take place, it should be capable of being well understood; or it would be found to be of easy interpretation by the rules and analogies of the prophetic scriptures. Christ sets his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth; -- clearly to show both that he is God of earth and ocean; and that things were now going to take place on both these elements, which would be of deep interest to man. His crying with a loud voice, like the roaring of a lion, assures us that he was now going to take some notorious enemies in hand; as a lion roars, when about to seize his prey! Says the prophet, "God shall cry, yea roar, he shall prevail against his enemies." He is represented as shouting, when about to smite his enemies, as did warriors of ancient days. Seven thunders now utter their voices; -- a strong figure of an unprecedented scene of wars. In Isa. xxix. 6, we find

thunder to be an emblem of war. And seven thunders striking at once, give an idea of those wars being general, and of awful terror; as the number seven, in this book, is a kind of perfect number. Most furious wars and battles then, were to desolate the regions marked out for the operations of this judgment.

To what scene of events then, does this chapter allude? It clearly alludes to a period subsequent to the judgment of the sixth trumpet, fulfilled by the rise and ravages of the Turkish empire in the fifteenth century, as described in the preceding chapter, -- the sixth trumpet, which looses the four angels bound in the river Euphrates, &c. And it is distinctly antecedent to the seventh trumpet; as we are assured in verse 7 of this chapter. Upon the close of the description of the judgment of the Turks, this chapter commences, "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven," -- given as a next great event.

To what then, does this notable descent of Christ allude? What great event on the papal earth did, at the period noted, occur which could answer to the figures here presented? -- It must allude to the scene of horrors introduced by the revolution in France of 1789, which for twenty-five years converted the papal nations of Europe into fields of blood and terror, till the close of the battle of Waterloo! The revolution, -- the reign of terror in France, -- and the following wars and battles, were such as to be fully adequate to the figures in this chapter. It has been calculated that not less than ten millions of the human race perished by the violent measures of these scenes. These horrors are too well known to this generation, to need any thing like a full history of them to be here given. The minds of millions now on the stage retain impressions of those events too deep to be easily removed, or to need here much of any recapitulation of them. Europe was long involved in a terrific blaze of war; in which vast armies were slaughtered in quick succession; kings were hurled from their thrones; and a great part of that quarter of the world was revolutionized! Old governments were torn down, and new ones set up, as in a day. The greatest empires trembled for their existence, and the political world seemed about to be hurled from its foundation! Some particulars of these scenes shall be given in future lectures.

Some of the horrors of the closing parts of these wars, shall here be concisely noted, to evince that this scene was fully adequate to the figurative descriptions given in

this tenth chapter. And let these events which shall be noted, be contemplated not as merely historical events. But let them be piously and devoutly considered, as strokes of divine judgments, inflicted by Jesus Christ on his enemies to fulfil his word, to vindicate his authority, and to prepare the way for the advancement of his own kingdom of grace and salvation. It is in this point of light that we read of the wars and battles of the Old Testament, as a part of the word of God. These scenes we ought to view as in fulfilment of important prophetic scriptures, and in fulfilment of that covenant faithfulness of Christ, symbolized here by the rainbow upon his head, and his feet being as pillars of fire. A new interest will hence be given to the closing events of this descent of Christ, now to be contemplated. The faith of the child of God may fasten upon them as events of deep interest, which fulfil the judgment, and display the glory of the Captain of our salvation!

The terrible empire, which soon after the French revolution of 1789, burst upon the world, seemed about to trample all nations under foot. An universal military despotism was the manifest and most sanguine object of the first leader, the Corsican emperor! Some obstacles yet stood in his way, which he was resolved should be soon effectually removed: and probably what was published in our American gazettes of the day, as the declared sentiments of the emperor Bonaparte, was but too correct; that, after removing several remaining obstacles, "he would henceforth trample on all the rights of neutrality!" Russia and Britain were to be destroyed. An expedition was hence planned and undertaken by Bonaparte into Russia, with an army of vast preparation; an army of four hundred thousand men; the best appointed, probably, that was ever seen to move on the face of the earth! They were soon hundreds of miles in the enemies' territories, and pressing towards the heart of the Russian empire. But it ere-long began to appear, that the power of Russia was not to be immediately crushed; and the arms of the terrible empire were not invincible! In a general battle at Borodino, in which 80,000 men fell in one day, a mortifying conviction was forced upon the invader, that his power was not omnipotent. It seems doubtful which army might claim the victory. But the leader of the invading army was suffered to force his way onward to the ancient capital of the Czars of the north; where he was made to read the death-warrant of his cause. For he found

that, through the astonishing patriotism of his enemies, a sea of liquid fire had been made to roll over that ancient capital; that the habitations of 250,000 people had been doomed to smoke in ashes, that they might afford no accommodation to the French. The astonishment of the emperor, and of his invading army, is related by Count Segur (an eyewitness) as dreadful. He had led his armies hither, fatigued and worn down; but with full expectation of finding the best of winter-quarters, with provisions and plunder, far more than they could manage. And now, to find the whole consumed by relentless flames; he seemed to read the death-warrant of his army! They were in this far distant and frozen region of Russia, at the commencement of a tremendous Russian winter! almost naked, and destitute of food, and now sunk in discouragement, with not a ray of light to dawn upon them! They were many hundreds of miles from their own country; in the heart of an empire of a powerful, numerous, and justly enraged foe, fully prepared for action, and intent on merited vengeance! All will readily believe, when assured that the rash emperor and his army at once commenced their retreat, and fled towards their own region! Too late they found the fact, that they were plunged in a fatal snare; had digged a pit, and fallen into it! The scenes of judgment upon them began to be tremendous. They were worn out with fatigue; dispirited, famishing, and freezing; and surrounded by frightful and well-appointed armies of foes, whom their invasion had rendered furious, and intent on vengeance! What could they do? The worst of certain deaths, with all their horrors, stared them in the face! The French emperor attempted to parley, and to obtain some relief: but all in vain! He was pointedly assured, that not a word should be heard of peace, so long as an invading army was in the heart of Russia! that he had come uninvited to their capital, and might return as he could! The furious Russians assured him, that they were so far from being prepared to close the campaign, that they had but just opened it! The scenes of horror which followed baffle all description, and seem too dreadful to be contemplated. But, as God did in them fulfil some of his predicted judgments on his enemies of the last day; so the events should be piously

contemplated. As a general view of the scenes, -- this northern army was destroyed! and their emperor fled home, accompanied by but one man! Some particulars shall be given. We have here a most tremendous reverse

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to the affairs of France; which, for about twenty-four years, had been almost uninterruptedly successful, to the vast consternation of the world. This retreat became a flight, and that of the most disastrous kind. "Come, behold the works of the Lord! what desolation he hath made!" Truly, "God is known by the judgments which he executeth." Defeats and miseries were poured upon the straggling fugitive armies. And the roads were, for hundreds of miles, strewed with their dead and dying. Thousands upon thousands sunk under the accumulated horrors of cold, nakedness, famine, fatigue, snow storms, the sword, and showers of balls from the vengeful legions of the enemy. Count Segur (an eyewitness) gives a history of this retreat. He says: "The winter now overtook us; and, by filling up the measure of such individual suffering, put an end to that mutual support which had hitherto sustained us. Henceforth the scene presented only a multitude of insulated and individual stragglers. All fraternity of arms was forgotten; all the bonds of social feeling torn asunder; excess of misery had brutalized them. A devouring hunger had reduced these wretched men to the mere instinct of self-preservation; to which they were ready to sacrifice every other consideration. The rude and barbarous climate seemed to have communicated its fury to them. Like the worst of savages, the strong fell upon the weak, and despoiled them. They eagerly surrounded the dying, and often waited not for the last sigh, before they stripped them. When a horse fell, they rushed upon it, tore it in pieces, and snatched the morsel from each others' mouths, like a troop of famished wolves. If an officer or a comrade fell alongside of them, or before a wheel of a cannon, it was in vain that he implored their aid! he obtained not even a look. All the frozen insensibilities of the climate had passed into their hearts. Its rigidity had contracted their sentiments, as well as their features. All, except a few chiefs were absorbed by their own sufferings, and terror left no place for pity. To stop for a moment, was to risk their own life. In this scene of universal destruction, to hold out your hand to your comrade, or to your sinking chief, was an admirable effort of generosity. When unable from total exhaustion to proceed, the individuals would halt, while winter with its icy hand seized on them for its prey. It was then that in vain these unfortunate beings, -- benumbed as they were, -- endeavored to rouse themselves! Voiceless, insensible, and plunged in stupor,

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they would move forward like automata; but the blood, already freezing in their veins, flowed languidly through their hearts, and, mounting to their heads, made them stagger like drunken men. From their eyes, -- now red and inflamed by looking on the snow, by smoke, and by want of sleep, -- there sometimes seemed to flow forth tears of blood, accompanied by profound sighs. One would look on the sky, -- then look at us, -- then upon the ground, with a fixed and haggish stare of consternation! -- this was the last farewell. They dropped upon their knees, and then upon their hands, moving, for an instant, from right to left, or the reverse; -- while from their lips escaped the most agonizing moans. They then fell prostrate upon the snow, perhaps disgorging blood, and were here no more! Their comrades passed by them without ever stepping aside; -- dreading to lengthen their march by a single step. They even turned not their heads to look at them; as the slightest motion of the head, to the left or right, was attended with torture; the hair of their heads and their beards being frozen into a solid mass. Scenes of still greater horror took place in large log-houses, which were found, at certain intervals, along the road. In these, soldiers and officers would rush, huddled together like cattle. The living not having strength to remove the dead that were close by the fire, sat down upon their bodies, until their own turn came to expire; -- when they also served as deathbeds to others. Sometimes the fire would communicate itself to the wood of those sheds, and then all within the walls, -- already half dead, -- would expire in the flames. In Jaupranoni, the soldiers set fire to houses, in order to warm themselves a few minutes. This would attract crowds of wretched men, some of whom the intensity of the cold had rendered delirious, who would rush forward like

madmen, gnashing their teeth, and, with demoniac laughter, plunge themselves into the flames, where they perished in horrid convulsions. Their famished companions looked on without affright; and, it is but too true, that some of them drew the half-roasted bodies from the flames, and ventured to carry to their lips the revolting food! "

Those fleeing distracted legions came to the river Berezina. They must soon cross, or perish, as their furious foes were pressing upon them, and any escape to the right or left was impossible. Cannon, arms, implements of death, threatened to destroy them at once. In despair

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and terror, they flew towards the river, which was rolling with hills of ice. Some plunged in, and perished. Most of them labored to gain the bridge, over which the emperor had just slipped, and fled! All order was banished. The rear of the Russian cannon and musketry filled the air; and the ground was covered with the dead and dying. The multitude pressed upon each other to gain the bridge, till the way was perfectly choked. Many were suffocated and trodden to death. Many hurled their comrades off the bridge, to gain their places. Thousands were plunged into the river, and lost among the blocks of ice. The air resounded with the shrieks and yells of the terrified and the dying, which fell upon the ear when the intervals of the firing of the Russians could permit them to be heard; which added to the matchless horrors! A great part of the residue of the huge army of the north, which till now remained, here sunk in death. The bridge over the river, while loaded with a jam of French soldiers, was set on fire, according to antecedent arrangement, to finish the fatal scene. Here men were at the same time frozen and burned! And while crowds were pressing upon the bridge, and upon each other, the whole bridge gave way, and all the multitudes upon it were precipitated into the rolling surges among the blocks of ice, and to inevitable death! The few who had passed the river, were pursued, and most of them destroyed. Thus ended this huge army of the north! The origin of all the mighty operations for twenty-five years, had been a design to destroy the Christian religion, and all civil liberty from the earth. And the angel of the covenant interposed, as in this chapter, and blasted the impious design! The Russians picked up, and burned in piles, more than 213,000 bodies of their fleeing foe. And-but very few of the 400,000 men ever reached their home.

The emperor, thus vanquished, had the address in France to raise new armies; and a number more of great battles were fought in the closing scenes of the seven thunders in our text. In the battle of Grossgorchon, which place was taken and retaken six times at the point of the bayonet, 20,000 men fell. In the battle of Bautzen, -- a general action of nearly four days' continuance, and with about 300,000 on both sides engaged, -- about 50,000 fell. The Confederation of the Rhine, so called, now revolted from their new imperial master, Bonaparte, and 400,000 men were soon in arms against him, under a host

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of the first generals of the age. A number of furious battles were fought, before the noted battle of Leipsic in Germany. In this, all the remaining armies were now concentrated. The citizens of Leipsic could behold, from their steeples, the armies of the French encircling their city. And soon they could discover the armies of the allied enemies of France forming another exterior circle. The work of death commenced, with six hundred cannon on both sides, which, with more than half a million of small arms, presented a frightful preparation for blood and carnage. The furious contest raged for a day, without bringing any thing to a decision. The second day was then taken up, by mutual consent, in making preparation on both sides, to renew, on the third day, the fiery combat. The third day dawned, on which it was conceived the fate of Europe and the world rested! Five of the most able generals of Europe (Blucher, Wittgenstein, Barclay de Tolley, Bernadotte, and Schwartzenberg) led the allied armies on the one hand; and Bonaparte, with his generals, on the other. Monarchs of allied nations were present, to engage as aids to these powerful generals; or to

stand as anxious spectators of the scene! The work of death commenced; and before nine o'clock it raged through the whole lines. The day was dreadful. The French were defeated, with the loss of 40,000 men. An equal number, probably, were slain on the other side. And the confusion and terror of the French emperor, in his retreat, were exceeded only by his flight from Russia the preceding year. The consequent slaughter of French garrisons, between Leipsic and the French capital, were most disastrous to the latter. The vanquished emperor entered France a second time as a fugitive, and demanded of his astonished people a levy of 300,000 men. The victorious combined armies of 300,000 men followed him. Further scenes of carnage ensued, till Paris was taken by the combined powers, invading in their turn; and the noted emperor was vanquished, and banished to the little island of Elba!

After a season, Bonaparte again found means to appear in France at the head of a mighty army; and the combined powers were once more compelled to take the field against him. But in the general and tremendous battle of Waterloo, he was again defeated, and lost his empire, and was banished to the desolate island of St. Helena, where he ended his days! In the scenes of carnage and terror

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which thus closed, in which the seven thunders of war unitedly roared for about a quarter of a century, we find events which seem fully adequate to the sublime figures in the text, and which do most fully agree with them, both in point of chronology, and in the description of the events. The remaining part of the chapter is deferred to the next lecture.

It is striking to reflect how fully these events accord with other prophetic descriptions of them in the same period, as may be made to appear. It may be shown under the vials, that they are the same with the fifth vial, poured upon the seat (throne) of the papal beast, and filling his kingdom with darkness. Rev. xvi. 10, 11. They are thought to be the same with those in Zeph. iii. 6, 7, where (just before the battle of the great day, which is there given, verse 8, to introduce the Millennium, verse 9) -- God says, "I have cut off the nations; their towers are desolate; I made their streets waste; their cities are destroyed," &c. The scenes are thought to be the same with the dragon's casting out of his mouth floods of water, to cause the destruction of the church, and the earth helping the woman, and swallowing up the floods, Rev. xii. 16. The same with the description in Dan. ii. 41-43, where the feet and the toes of the great image -- meaning the latest remains of the secular Roman empire -- are "part of iron, and part of clay; partly strong, and partly broken," until, under the seventh vial, the stone (Christ) shall smite them, and grind them to powder, in the final battle just antecedent to the Millennium. And they are the same with the descriptions given of the same power as the beast from the bottomless pit, Rev. xvii., which is believed to have been fulfilled in the explosion of French atheism, and the horrors of their revolution and consequent scenes of blood. They are also the same with that descent of Christ, given in chapter xviii., where its effects upon the papal see, and upon its doting multitudes, are described. How terrible are the judgments of Christ against his enemies! He has plenty of justice for them, as well as of mercy for his friends. He proclaimed not only the acceptable year of the Lord; but the day of vengeance of our God! The latter he executes as "Head over all things to the church!" When a violent, extensive, and armed system of atheism arose in the French revolution of 1739, which threatened to banish Christianity, as well as civil

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liberty, from the world; our blessed Captain of salvation saw fit to represent himself as making the descent in our text. He assumed the glorious appearance there noted, and came down! "Darkness was under his feet, and he did fly upon the wings of the wind!" "At the brightness that went before him, his thick cloud passed -- hailstones, and coals of fire! The Lord thundered; the Highest gave his voice -- hailstones and coals of fire! He sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he shot out his lightnings, and discomfited them! Then the channels of the waters were seen, and the foundations

of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils!" This the church may sing, and may add, "He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of great waters!" Such a protector has the church, and such an antagonist has her persecutors! The latter may seem to triumph; but "salvation is of the Lord;" and God will make bare his holy arm in the sight of all nations, and the ends of the earth shall see his glory. Behold then, O Zion, the works of the Lord! Devoutly reflect on his glory, and his kind expostulations. "Wherefore didst thou fear, O ye of little faith?" "In nothing terrified by your enemies, which is to them an evident token of perdition; but unto you of salvation, and that of God." "Who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker who hath stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and thou hast feared continually because of the fury of the oppressor, as though he were ready to destroy; and where is the fury of the oppressor?" The rainbow on the head of Christ in our text, may be seen by the eye of faith depicted on every dark cloud of judgment, be it ever so terrific. Behold the Sun of righteousness shining upon it; and to the eye of faith the rainbow will appear. God with us in those things says, "It is I; be not afraid!" "Say unto Zion, Behold your God." "Your God will come with a recompense, he will save you." "Be strong in the Lord then, and in the power of his might; that ye may be able to stand in the evil day!"

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Ver. 4. And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, [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.

It has been shown in the preceding lecture, that the notable descent of Christ in this chapter must have alluded to the scene of judgments introduced in the French revolution of 1789. These seven thunders prefigured its wars, which were most terrible. Some ideas of the import of these seven thunders, seem to have been communicated to John, which he was about to commit to writing; but he was forbidden to do it. This is not to be understood as though the import of these seven thunders was never to be known on earth. For if they were never to be known; why were they given at all? They were given, and left on record for man, as well as were the other prophecies; and their being sealed up, was only till the time of their fulfilment, as may be shown from Daniel's prophecy, and as we have indicated in the fact, that the "little book" in the hand of the angel (Christ), when the event takes place in our text, is presented as open. This sealing up of the true sense of the scene, is copied from the visions of Daniel, of the same event. Light will be reflected upon this tenth of the Revelation from what we have in Daniel, chapter xii. The prophet Daniel had predicted the rise of the wilful power of the last days, as shall by-and-by be shown. It is said, Dan. x. 1, that "he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision," even as is implied in our text, that John had some understanding of the things uttered by the seven thunders. But Daniel was commanded (Dan. xii. 4) to "shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end!" as again in verse 9, "Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end!" precisely as John was directed in our text, to "seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not!" The former is the parent text of the latter;

both being of the same period and event. The passage in Daniel is followed in the same verse 4th, by information of an event, which should betoken the time when this seal upon the words should be taken off, viz., the missionary spirit of the last days, when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased!" or when the missionary angel of the last day shall fly, to preach the gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; then may the seal be taken off! The little book in the hand of Christ shall then be found open. The event of this judgment shall then have burst upon the world, and may be understood. We may here note, that the prohibition relative to this particular prophecy's being not to be understood till fulfilled, is so far from indicating that other prophecies generally shall not be understood till accomplished, that the indication is just the reverse. The prohibition here is a special case, and attends not the other prophecies; but the divine commands relative to them are, that they may and should be understood, even before their fulfilment, at least in some good degree, as has been shown.

We will now consult the parent prophecy in Daniel relative to the events in this tenth chapter of the Revelation. We find in Dun. x. 1, "a thing was revealed to Daniel; and the thing was true; but the time appointed was long!" This remark, and all that is said upon its event, go to assure us, that the thing then to be revealed was a new event of the last days: and the prohibition resting upon it (which has been noted) shows, that it was something besides, and subsequent to popery and the grand imposture of Mohammed. These had before been predicted, as well as the great eastern monarchies; but now some new and subsequent event of the last days was to be given to close this book; and this was to be sealed up till it was fulfilled. No hint was given, that the time before the antecedent events predicted in Daniel, should be long: but this new thing to be at last predicted, must be attended with this notice, that "a thing (clearly implying a new thing) was revealed to Daniel; and the thing was true; but the time appointed was long!" And he shows it to have been a thing connected with the battle of the great day of God, and the restoration of the Jews; as chap. x. 14, and xii. 1, where the event was to befall the people of Daniel; and was to be the occasion of Christ's standing up for them, and bringing a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.

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With these things in view, we will proceed to examine the thing which was thus revealed to Daniel. The whole of Dan. x. is taken up in preparation for predicting this then far future event; as is also chap. xi. to verse 35. A line of kings is given, in order to introduce Antiochus Epiphanes, a noted tyrannical and persecuting king of Syria, as a type of the infidel power to be predicted. This type, thus introduced, occupies from verse 21 to 35; and then, as is common in predictions of type and antitype, the writer slides, with no formal notice, from the former to the latter, and gives the event which was designed.

Dan. xi. 36, "And the king shall do according to his will." By a king, in such prophecies, is meant not any individual man, but a power, whether an empire, or kingdom, or republic. That a new subject is in this 36th verse introduced, is evident from what has been said; and from this, that the power described before this verse was clearly Antiochus, who lived centuries before the Christian era; but the being introduced in the 36th verse is a power of the last days, and which falls in the battle of the great day of God, at the close of the noted 1260 years, as is shown in the following passages in Daniel. A great power should arise, wilful in violent outrage of all law! It follows, "and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god." By a god here is meant a king, or civil ruler. "I said ye are gods." He shall magnify himself above every civil ruler; or, a war with kings, shall be one of his characteristics. His atheism follows: "And shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." He will, in his early existence, deny the God of heaven. Verse 37, "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers:" or, the power so long venerated by his ancestors as a god, -- the pope, -- he shall at first contemptuously reject and put down, however he may afterward, -- from views merely secular, -- in a degree establish him again. Then follows, "nor the desire of women." With all his outrageous licentiousness and lusts, he shall wage war with the female sex; as though all the tender regard for them which God has implanted in the human breast, had become extinct. Most fully did the French fulfil all this. The latter they fulfilled when they in wanton barbarity beheaded the innocent queen of their own nation, and followed up the event with the outrageous execution of 250,000 of their own innocent females; as was attested and well known at that day. They also abolished the institution of marriage, declaring it to be an insufferable

monopoly; and thus subjected their females to promiscuous brutal lusts! Well might such a trait of character as this be hinted of this infidel power of the last days, by its not "regarding the desire of women!" Paul gives the same trait of the same character, thus: "without natural affection," when describing, in 2 Tim. iii. 1-4, this power of infidelity in the last days; which see. The most fit "natural affection" of man for our female race, would be thus perverted; even that virtuous tender affection for the dear and dependent "help-meet" of man, destined to be the virtuous mother of his offspring! this affection, implanted by the Creator in the breast of man, should be, by this power of iniquity, attempted to be torn up! This stroke has been supposed by some to be the same with that in 1 Tim. iv. 3, "forbidding to marry;" which the papal see fulfilled in relation to its clergy. But it clearly belongs to another and subsequent system of infidelity. See and compare 1 Tim. iv. 1, with 2 Tim. iii. 1, and you will see the latter is an advance from the former. And never did popery so take to itself the character of not regarding the desire of women, as did the infidel power that burst forth in France in 1789. Daniel proceeds, verse 38; "But in his estate shall he honor the god of forces:" or, when this licentious power shall come into operation, as having gained an existence, he shall "honor the god of forces:" shall honor makuzzim * (in the original); fortresses, military munitions. The word in the singular, mahoz, imports, a tower, fortress, strength. In the plural, then, and connected with a huge military force, it must mean its dependence on fortresses, or military munitions, -- on generals, and the arts of war. This was the case indeed with the French. If they had denounced all subordination, all authority and rule; yet were their own eyes necessarily turned to a subordination to their own generals, leaders, and the arts of war. And this soon prepared the way for what follows. "And a god, whom their fathers knew not, shall they honor with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and pleasant things." An emperor, unknown to their fathers, shall they soon receive at the head of this military despotism, with the greatest magnificence. This now is all plain history. Bonaparte was this new god, unknown to their fathers. Verse 39;

* In the margin of many great Bibles, this word mahuzzim is rendered "god's protectors." But this is a phrase, and not a correct rendering. And it is thus phrased to accommodate it, mistakingly, to popery, as though it related to their tutelar saints; but it does not thus.

"Thus shall he (this new power of atheism) do in the most strong-holds with a strange god, whom he shall acknowledge, and shall increase with glory. And he (this new emperor) shall cause them (his people) to rule over many; and shall divide the land for gain." The armies of the new empire, with their foreign god at their head, shall overrun the strong-holds of surrounding nations, whom he will subdue; and he will divide out the conquered nations among favorites for his own aggrandizement.

The prophecy proceeds (verse 40) to give a temporary prostration of this wilful empire, by a furious combination of nations from the north, like a whirlwind; composed of armies of cavalry, infantry, and a navy, or a naval power, ("with chariots, and horsemen, and many ships.") This whirlwind from the north, for a time prostrates his forests (armies), and drives him into his characteristic non-existence;" "who was, and is not, and yet is!" "who had a wound by the sword and did live!" whose feet and toes are "part of iron, and part of clay; partly strong, and partly broken!" Yet he again appears in this prophecy of Daniel, and does wonders, till he goes into perdition at the battle of the great day, when (Daniel informs us at the close of the chapter) "he comes to his end, and none shall help him!" Most perfectly is this picture, as far as the prostration in verse 40, fulfilled in events in France, and in her history of modern days. And

most clear is the light thus reflected on the descent of Christ and the seven thunders, in Rev. x. This tenth of Revelation is thus but an inspired comment on Daniel's prediction of the rise of that wilful power of the last days.

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

6. And swore 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.

We must here again have recourse to the parent text in Daniel's last chapter. After he had seen the things just noted, he beholds the Angel of the covenant (Christ) standing

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upon the waters; and heard him interrogated, "how long it should be to the end of those wonders?" Or, when shall the wilful power (here just described) go into perdition? -- not when one dynasty of it shall be prostrated, and its power of iniquity be for a time checked: for the beast that was, and is not, and yet is, may have a succession of powerful leaders, as had the Roman empire in the first reign of its imperial head, in early days. Those feet and toes of the image, formed of iron and clay, may break before its final fall, and its parts "not cleave one to another," as Daniel assures shall be the case, Dan ii. 40-45. This beast from the bottomless pit will know full well the arts of hiding in his midnight caverns, and of there healing his wounds! But the question here asked of Christ was, When shall that deep and fatal system end? -- that system which nothing will utterly destroy but the exterminating fire of the great and notable day of the Lord! -- when shall this exterminating event take place? Upon the question, the angel Christ, the same with that in our text, lifts up his hand to heaven, and swears by him that liveth for ever and ever, "that it should be for a time, times, and a half time! And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all those things shall be fulfilled." The battle of the great day then, in which this impious system goes into perdition, we here learn, is at the close of the notable 1260 years! All agree, that a time is a year; times, two years; and half a time, half a year; each day in the account standing for a year; and each year being reckoned of 360 days, from the views of the ancients. This time then, is 1260 years; -- the noted time in prophecy for the residence of the church in the wilderness! The probable commencement of this noted period will be shown in the lecture on the papal beast, in Rev. xiii. 11, to end. The thing decided by the oath of the angel of the covenant here, is that this power shall be destroyed at the close of the 1260 years, -- that the time of its duration, after it arose, was from the time of that rise, till the close of the 1260 years. And that oath of the angel, in Daniel, gives the exact sense of the oath of Christ, in our text, which is but a comment upon it. In the latter, his words are, "chronos ouk estai eti!" -- rendered in our translations, "there should be time no longer." Granting the Greek words are capable of giving this sense; they are no less capable of giving the following, -- "the time shall not be yet" (but clearly meaning that it shall not be long deferred).

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The parent text, in Daniel, shows that the latter is the correct rendering here, -- as also does the following verse in our text: "But in the days of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets;" alluding, no doubt, peculiarly to this parent text in Daniel. We hence learn, that the seventh trumpet is future, at the time in our text, but not far future. And the utter destruction of this enormous influence of infidelity would not be till then; and should be no longer deferred than to that event. For the seventh

trumpet is to destroy this very power. and all that is found wickedly connected with it. But, while the sentiment of the oath of Christ in our text, rests on the sentiment of his own oath in Daniel, and hence must mean the same thing; its phraseology goes to correct a mistake, prevalent with many, in the course of the terrors which were to attend the rise and progress of this system from the world below, viz., that this is the battle of that great day of God! The oath says, No, that event is not yet: but in the seventh trumpet (which is still future, though not far distant), the scene shall be accomplished! But the horrors of this descent of Christ, and of the seven thunders, are antecedent to, and distinct from the battle of the great day, -- the seventh trumpet. And the whole union between Daniel and John, upon this subject, shows that these two events are distinct; though the former may be most naturally mistaken by many for the latter. And it was shown, in the preceding lecture, that other prophecies have allusion to these two events, as distinct, and at some distance from each other. Joel assures us, "the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and notable day of the Lord comes." The sun of regal authority should be darkened, and the moon of armies turned to blood, before the seventh trumpet, -- and distinctly from it. Our Saviour, in his predicted coming, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., and Luke xxi., manifestly includes in this his prediction, his coming in the battle of the great day of God, to destroy Antichrist. (To be convinced of this, read 2 Thess. ii., and Rev. xvi. 15, and its connexion.) And among the signs of this coming of Christ, in the battle of that great day, are "wars, and rumors of wars;" meaning that there should be such a signal course of wars, as to seem to imply that there never were wars before. This is the same, probably, with the seven thunders in our text. And Christ there adds, "See

that ye be not troubled," -- in Luke, "be not terrified," -- implying that those wars should be peculiarly terrifying; and then our Saviour adds, as in his oath in our text, "the end (the closing scene) shall not be yet," -- as in Matthew: -- in Luke, "For these things shall first come to pass, but the end shall not be by-and-by," or immediately! We have here the same sentiment with that in our text -- "The time is not yet, but in the days of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished!" These seven thunders terrified the world from the year 1789, for about twenty-five years; till the whirlwind from the north, Dan. xi. 40, prostrated a dynasty of that power, and gave to the world a temporary quietus: and those terrors were indeed mistaken, by many, for the seventh trumpet.

Ver. 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.

The ambassador of Christ is here directed to go and take the little open book, which was in the hand of the angel. It was not given for nothing. Its being open was not without meaning. Its contents -- long sealed up -- should now be known. The time had now arrived when the seal upon it should be taken off, and its contents ascertained. The faithful minister goes to Christ, and prays for the little book. The true sense of Christ's predictions must be learned from him, from his word and Spirit, in view of his signal providences. And such teaching must be from him devoutly sought; and when the humble learner says, Give me, I pray thee, the little book! Christ will say, Take it! Yea, "take and eat it." "Let him that readeth understand." "Thy word was found (says the prophet),

and I did eat it." This is the Bible expression of devoutly and diligently studying the prophetic scriptures, and the great passing events of Providence as fulfilling them. This is the true discerning of the signs of the times. "Ye hypocrites; ye can discern the face of the sky; how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of the times?" It was noted, in a past lecture, that each of the four living creatures, as an emblem of the gospel ministry, when a seal opens a new signal event, calls, "Come and see!" People have a right to inquire of their spiritual guides, "Watchman, what of the night?" And the watchman should be able to give a correct answer. John finds, on eating this little book, what he was before assured would be the case -- "and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; but as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." The first discovery of the contents of this little symbolic book, was sweet. To learn the true sense of these prophetic scriptures, and the correct view of their events -- to learn that God has thus renewedly taken in hand the blessed work of building up Zion -- that the time has come for many to run to and fro, and that knowledge shall be increased; these things afford to the true preachers of righteousness, and the friends of Zion, exquisite pleasure. But when the subject is well digested and understood; when the terrors connected with its fulfilment, -- of judgments upon enemies, and especially of signal trials to the people of God, shall be correctly considered; these contents of the little open book are found to be bitter, and similar to the roll of Ezekiel, that was "full of lamentation, and mourning, and wo." This bitterness of the little book, after being well digested, is here explained by Christ thus: "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings!" As though he had said -- Ye ministers of my gospel, and children of Zion, must again be called to bear testimony for me, before great men of the earth! This, Christ assures, must be done "again!" as though the peculiar kind of prophesying, here in view, had for a time ceased; but must be resumed. If they had fondly hoped such peculiarly trying duties of the Christian religion were done away -- and light and liberty had chased them from the world -- they must, for a short time, be resumed, even before the Millennium. This seems to be the true sense of the bitterness of the little book.

Do we find any thing in the parent text in Daniel (of which our text seems to be but an illustration), to accord

with this? We do indeed. The oath of Christ there assures us, that at the end of the 1260 years, the wilful power which had been presented, should be destroyed; but not till "he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people." Then "all these things shall be finished." It is solemn indeed to find it here taught, that this power (known as the beast from the bottomless pit) is to prevail to "scatter the power of the holy people," just before his destruction. This is the healed head of the secular Roman beast; the same as the new beast of the last day, ascending, full of the names of blasphemy, from the infernal region, and sinking soon in destruction. Rev. xvii. We have thus the explanation of the bitterness of the little book in our text -- the same, we must apprehend, with the slaying of the two witnesses, in Rev. xi. The event is there noted as being at the close of the 1260 years, and is said to be by the "beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit!" the same power with this wilful system in Daniel described. These things will receive further illustrations in their several places. Thus interesting are the trials which yet await the church.

The present inhabitants of the civilized world, who have lived to see half a century, have lived to witness the notable event which is designated by the descent of the adorable Angel of the covenant, in this tenth of Revelation; and it has afforded them a season of great instruction. The people of God in our United States have been most advantageously situated to see and improve those amazing scenes, and to derive the most solid lessons of instruction. We have been happily out of the reach of the immediate scenes of desolation; and yet sufficiently near, to behold and to learn the best lessons of wisdom. Often, during these terrors, did I fancy myself to be like one seated on a promontory, with a good glass, to behold a most tremendous sea-fight between all the navies of the most powerful nations, formed in two lines of battle, and for years together, in a blaze of the most furious contest! -- feeling myself to be sufficiently distant from the power of the fatal shot; and yet sufficiently near to perceive every movement, every discharge, and the fate of every sinking ship. And while thus beholding, I formed my present view of the scenes of this tenth chapter of

Revelation; the correctness of which, all subsequent views have confirmed.

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REVELATION XI.

Ver. 1. And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

3. 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.

This chapter gives a general view of the papal apostasy; of the trials of the people of God as his two witnesses; of the third trumpet; and of the introduction of the Millennium. The reed, in the text, was a ten foot measure, made of reed, a light kind of wood; and was such as was often used to measure land, buildings, or other surfaces. The temple to be here measured was a well-known visible emblem of the church on earth. Says an apostle, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them." The temple of God at Jerusalem, consisted of a capacious covered building, and two courts; an inner and outer court. The inner court joined the door of the large covered building; and was for the priests. The altar for burnt offerings was here placed. And the outer court was for the accommodation of the common people of Israel in public worship. They were not permitted to enter the inner court, the court of the priests, unless individually, and when offering their sacrifices. To the second temple, a third court was added, called the court of the Gentiles, and designed for gentile worshippers. This gentile court was accounted holy in no other sense, than as a part of the holy city Jerusalem. In the large covered building of the temple, was contained the Holy of Holies; and various sacred emblems. This whole pile of buildings was called the temple: and it was an emblem of both the human body of Christ; and of his visible church on earth. The latter are hence known as the temple of

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God; as well as his chosen generation, his royal priesthood, his holy nation, his peculiar people, to offer up special sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. In our text, the temple, comprising the great covered building, and the two courts first built, was to be measured. But the outer court, the court of the Gentiles, was to be left out of the measurement. This court was now presented as an emblem of the apostate and corrupt church of the Romanists, which could no longer endure the measurement of gospel rule. This had become immeasurably corrupt. In the first formation of the ancient tabernacle, Moses was admonished to make all things after the pattern showed him in the mount. By this rule must the church and her concerns be formed; and then she can endure the measurement of the oracles of truth. But that great court of the gentile church, which for 1260 years should torture the true witnesses of Christ, should have no measurement of evangelical truth attempted upon it. It should be viewed and treated as fatally and utterly corrupt! That part of the professed city of God should be trodden under the feet of Gentilism, forty and two months. We here learn that at the commencement of the noted 1260 years (the same as the forty and two months), the papal church became utterly abominable, and was of God utterly rejected.* "The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two

months!" a phrase borrowed perhaps from the words of our Saviour, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled." If the enemies of

* As the 1260 years stand as a notable period in the prophecies; a few remarks for illustration shall here be given. This period we find in Dan. vii. 25; "a time, times, and dividing of times." Dan. xii. 7; "time, times, and a half." Our text, "forty and two months." Verse 3; "a thousand two hundred and threescore days." Chap. xii. 6, and verse 14; "a time, times, and a half time." These all mean the same period -- 1260 years. By a time, is meant, a year: times, two years: and half a time half a year. These make the forty and two months. And all the different expressions of the period, reckoning (as did the ancients) 360 days to a year, give 1260 years. God said to Moses, Num. xiv. 34; "After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, ye shall bear your iniquity, even forty years. In Ezek. iv. 6, the prophet was ordered to lie on his side forty days, as a sign to the people. God said, "I have appointed thee each day for a year." This, therefore, became one mode of reckoning prophetic time; -- a day for a year. And Daniel, chap. ix. 24; in predicting the time of the coming of Christ, hence graduated the period, giving seventy weeks for four hundred and ninety years. All prophetic time is not necessarily thus reckoned. But some is manifestly thus reckoned.

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the church of Christ were to hold Palestine as a realm no better than grossly pagan, till about the close of the noted 1260 years; the immeasurable iniquity of the papal power would hold that vast territory of Christendom, which was within its power, in a state no less degraded and hateful.

Ver. 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.

Much has been said by writers on the question, who are the two witnesses? The different views which have been given, will not be here noted, on this, nor on many other questions in this book. Such a process would so encumber these lectures, that it will not be attempted: it would serve only to perplex. On this question, and on other points generally, I shall take the liberty to give that sense, whether ever before given or not, which, after my best consideration of the subject, shall appear best to accord with Inspiration, the analogy of things, and historic facts. The two witnesses will be here considered as an appellation given to all the true people of God, during the period noted. They are those who can truly endure the measurement of the word of God, as the antecedent texts decide; those who belong to the mystical temple and body of Christ. The description of them may have a special allusion to the true ambassadors of Christ; yet not to exclude his common members.

The phrase, "my two witnesses," seems to imply that some beings are peculiarly known by this appellation. Who then are, in fact, best known by it? The ambassadors of Christ are thus. "Ye are my witnesses," said Christ to them. "Ye are witnesses of these things." "And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and unto the utmost parts of the earth." Those words our Lord addressed to his ministers, just before he ascended; having given them their commission, and promised to be with them always, even unto the end of the world. Here then, are men known, in the word of God, as Christ's witnesses; as also in the following passages: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we (the apostles) are all witnesses." Again: "Whom God raised

from the dead, whereof we are witnesses." "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection." "And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost." "And we are witnesses of all these things, which God did." Ananias said to Paul, "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men." Peter says, "The elders among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness." Who, or what, besides the ambassadors of Christ, can claim such a number of inspired testimonies direct to the purpose? In ten passages they are thus denominated. The witnesses prophesy, or preach, "in the days of their prophecy!" To whom besides does this so fitly apply, as to the ministers of the gospel? The witnesses are noted as "the two prophets; that torment them that dwell on the earth." What other prophets torment them that dwell on the face of the earth? These are the two olive-trees," Zech. iv. 3, II, 14; standing one on each side of the candlestick; and are explained as being Joshua, and Zerubbabel; who unitedly prefigured Christ as our Priest and King. Of them the angel said to Zechariah, "these are the two anointed ones (Hebrew, sons of oil), that stand before the Lord of the whole earth." But who, on earth, are more fitly called anointed ones (sons of oil), standing before the Lord of the whole earth, than the ambassadors of Christ? These are the same with the four living creatures, in this book, who stand between God and the elders, -- common members of the church.

But, although the descriptions of the witnesses have thus a striking allusion to the ministers of Zion; they do not refer exclusively to them. For the witnesses are also the two candlesticks, in the text. But a candlestick is a noted emblem of the whole church of Christ, -- ministers, and common brethren. See Rev. i. 20; and ii. 1, where Christ assures us that the seven stars are the angels (pastors) of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches: and where our Lord thus distinguishes between these two classes of men; and yet treats them as in a close connexion. "These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand; who walk- eth in the midst of his seven golden candlesticks." True. ministers and Christians all unite in bearing their testimony for Christ. And it is testified of the church, including her ministers, as follows; "The Spirit, and the bride say, come." Thus the preachers of righteousness, and all their lay-brethren, form this whole, -- the two witnesses.

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But why is their number noted as two? Whether the duality of the two branches just noted, forms any part of the reason, I will leave. Pastors and churches form but one, and the two witnesses, in fact, form but one general testimony for God. Various biblical considerations, as well as historic facts, favor the idea of a duality of the witnesses of Christ. There must be two witnesses to constitute a legal testimony. See Deut. xix. 15; and Matt. xviii. 16; 1 Tim. v. 19; where two are noted as necessary to warrant conviction. And in the most trying times of the dark ages, God never left his cause without ample witnesses; though their number was often small. In the sacred oracles, we find Moses and Aaron must be associated, to operate as the witnesses of God; Elijah and Elisha; Joshua and Zerubbabel; the disciples must be sent out two and two! And something like a duality seems to have been furnished, to bless the church of the faithful, in the dark ages; -- as, John Huss, and Jerome of Prague; Luther, and Calvin; Cranmer, and Ridley; the Waldenses, and Albigenses. These dualities seem to favor this idea of a duality in the witnesses. In the present time, the church in America, and the church in Great Britain, form the essential two, in commencing and supporting the flight of the missionary angel. And the church of the Jews, and of the Gentiles will be the final means of the conversion of the world, after the battle of the great day shall sweep Antichrist into perdition, and shall leave a remnant over the earth to be brought into the fold of Christ. If these reasons be not fully satisfactory; the sovereignty of God is sufficient; "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Ver. 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.

We have here a striking allusion to the powerful efficacy of holy Christian prayer. It fails not to engage the omnipotence of God in behalf of the persecuted church. "And shall not God avenge his own elect who cry unto

him day and night, though he bear long with them? I tell you, he will avenge them speedily." The witnesses destroying their enemies with fire from heaven, seems an allusion to Elijah's calling down fire from heaven to consume the captains and their fifties, who were sent by the wicked Ahab to take him: as also their having power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, must allude to the drought, occasioned on the idolatrous Israel by the prayers of Elijah. And their turning water to blood; and their smiting the earth with all plagues, as oft as they will, must allude to the plagues on Egypt, inflicted by the instrumentality of Moses in behalf of the liberation of the chosen tribes. The holy oracles honor the saints, in their afflictions from the wicked world, with the possession of a power like this, for their defence. But the true sense is, -- God does these, or similar works of judgment, in answer to their prayers for Zion's salvation; and in vindication of the Christian cause. We accordingly find such language as the following, in the Holy Scriptures, relative to the honor and power of the people of God: "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishment 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 the saints." In one of the prophets, the church, in these last days, is directed to use a new threshing instrument, having teeth, to thresh the nations, and beat them small as powder, that the wind may carry them all away! A great meaning is contained in such figures, which the wicked world will too late discover, to their cost, for all their pride and malice against the cause of Christ on earth. The wicked queen Mary had learned a little of this sentiment, when she felt that she would "rather have ten thousand men in arms against her, than the prayers of John Knox!" Such figures must be viewed as alluding, not to any malevolent vindictive spirit in Christians; but to the influence of their holy intercessions with God in behalf of his cause, and the fulfilment of his word for Zion's salvation. They both allude to, and confirm the/ac<, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." They hint to us what all the effectual fervent prayers of the followers of Christ will avail, when put in operation in behalf of Zion's afflicted cause, and pleading for the fulfilment of God's word, in

the protection of his churches on earth. They know, feel, and rejoice, that vengeance belongeth unto God, and not to them; and they plead with God to build up his own cause in his own way. God then, in his own time and way, performs his work, "his strange work" of judgment, in behalf of his own kingdom of salvation, in which his children adoringly acquiesce; and he condescends to ascribe the event to them, inasmuch as he does it in their behalf, and in answer to their prayers for his own glory. And thus he says, "All things are yours." "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." And he adds, as Rev. ii. 27; "He that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father!" (See Psalm ii. 8, 9.) This commission was given to Christ; and he thus gives it to his faithful children; -- not to be the efficient cause of judgments, as he is; but to have the honor of being one object of his judgments; as interceding for his cause; and as having fellowship with him in his methods of judgment, and of grace.

We learn how we are to esteem the religion of the papal system; immeasurable iniquity and abomination! The same we learn in 2 Thess. ii.; "Whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders; and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should

believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness;" "who opposeth himself above all that is called God, or worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God," in his blasphemous self-exaltations. See the abominations of this character of popery in the second beast, in Rev. xiii. 11, to end; and as personified by the woman, Rev. xvii. 1-5. We have here "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth," -- "drunken with the blood of the saints," -- defiling kings of the earth; and rendering the millions of her deluded votaries drunk with the wine of her filthiness! -- dashing out in her purple, and scarlet, gold, precious stones, and pearls; holding her golden cup filled with immeasurable abomination. This scheme is the most fatal delusion; -- "the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." No fellowship

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is to be held with her. "Come out of her, my people: be not partakers of her sins; that ye receive not of her plagues." Wretched is the nation, or part of a nation, where this polluting system shall prevail, or be thought well of! Where it touches, it will defile and ruin. It will gender infidelity; and lead on to the battle of the great day. "I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn (popery) spake, I beheld till the beast (the atheistical system produced from it) was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame;" "cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented for ever."

May we have our lot with the two witnesses. In order for this, we must possess their character, make and maintain their faithful prayers, and thus wait on the Lord. Things with the two witnesses, and their enemies, will be found ripening to a crisis. The only safety of true Christians will be in living near to God. Then will their prayers bring down for them all needed aid from heaven; and their cause will, in due time, ascend thither, and their enemies will with despairing eyes behold them. Do we then, belong to the true witnesses? To what do we bear witness? Do we truly support the doctrines of grace? -- the duties which God demands of men? -- the gospel motives of salvation? Is this our faithful witness; while many turn away their ears from the truth, and are turned to fables? Is our witness borne for Christ truly practical, as well as evangelical? Is it in the exercise of the new heart which God gives? -- "Created in Christ unto good works; truly born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God? -- having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us? -- beholding the glory of God as he is in himself, and being changed into the same image by the Spirit of the Lord?" Do we carefully avoid the spirit and conduct of such as turn into crooked ways; who cry lo, here; or lo, there; and cannot endure sound doctrine? Do we stand and inquire for the old path, the good way of salvation, where the new-born have gone, denying themselves, taking up the cross, and following Christ? Do we thus in spirit and practice hold forth the word of life, as children of the light, and of the day? Are the enemies themselves constrained to take knowledge of us that we have thus been with Jesus, and have truly learned of him? Decide these

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questions in the affirmative; and the immunities and salvation of the two witnesses will be ours. Their people will be our people; and their God our God!

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REVELATION XI.

(The Slaying of the Witnesses.)

Ver. 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 a 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.

We have here an event of deep interest; to find the sense and the period of which, now claims our attention. I have been of the number of those who fondly hope that this solemn event is past: but on further inquiry, I have been led to doubt of the correctness of this, and finally to apprehend that it is yet future. Various events have been presented to the public as the slaying of the witnesses; most of which may be seen in Bishop Newton on the prophecies (vol. ii., page 226-9); which will not here be adduced. That noted writer gave his own full belief that the event was then still future. One writer has given his opinion that the event took place in the revolution in

France of 1789, when atheism did to some extent triumph on the papal earth, and furious attempts were made to banish Christianity from the world. Probably more may be said in favor of that event's being the slaying of the witnesses, than in favor of any other past event. But, could the few Protestants who were then slain or silenced in France, be entitled to the appellation of the witnesses of Christ on earth? It must be difficult to admit this. Where did the rejoicing of all nations and tongues, which we are assured takes place on the slaying of the witnesses, occur upon the events of that revolution? The state of the nations on the Roman earth, at that time, formed an exact contrast with this. All, except the infidels of illuminism, were terrified at the events of that revolution, and trembled for their own existence: so far were they from "rejoicing, and sending gifts one to another!" Nothing took place at that time, after three years and a half, which could amount to the resurrection of the witnesses, and their ascension to heaven in the sight of their enemies. I shall now state some difficulties which appear in the way of viewing this event as past.

1. The time given for the slaying of the witnesses, seems to show it to be now future. They were to prophesy, clothed in sackcloth, 1260 years; and it is "when they shall have finished their testimony," that they are slain. But the close of the 1260 years brings us to the destruction of the beast from the bottomless pit; as has been shown from Dan. xii. 6, 7, where the oath of the Angel (Christ) that the close of the time, times, and a half (1260 years) brings the end of the wonders, or the destruction of the wilful power there described; which has been shown to be the same with the beast from the bottomless pit which slays the witnesses; and its destruction the same with the seventh vial, or the battle of the great day of God. This event then, is at the close of the 1260 years; and the slaying of the witnesses is at the close of the 1260 years; and the same period being ascribed to each of these events, shows them to be at least very nearly at the same period. And hence, as the end of these wonders, or the battle of the great day of God, is now future (being subsequent to the restoration of the Jews); the slaying of the witnesses must be future. In verses 11-14 of this chapter, we find that the resurrection of the witnesses is near the close of the period assigned to the second wo, as it there soon follows, "The second wo is past, and behold the third wo

cometh quickly!" and the next verse presents it. This forbids that the slaying of the witnesses can be a past event.

2. What is said of the three unclean spirits like frogs, Rev. xvi. 13-16, does the same. For surely the great effect of this threefold agency from the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, must now be future. It is an event to be accomplished between the sixth and seventh vials; thus it is to take place after the destruction of the Turkish government, and to prepare the way for the final ruin of Antichrist. But the object of this general diabolical agency, -- going forth unto the kingdoms of the world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God, -- is to excite the last and most violent attack of the kingdom of Satan on earth upon the cause of Christ. And can this be an event to be accomplished after the slaying and the resurrection of the witnesses? Must not the slaying of the witnesses result rather from this gathering of all the world against Christ, and be the event which brings him down to destroy his enemies? This event of Christ's destroying his warring enemies, is given in chap. xix. 19; "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on the horse, and against his army." I here again ask; can the attack of this same beast upon the witnesses, his having slain them, and their having arisen, and ascended up to heaven, and their enemies having beholden them, be an event long past, when this new violent attack is made upon the church of Christ? Is not this last gathering of all the powers of Satan on earth against the church at the very time of their slaying of the witnesses? This much better accords with all that is testified relative to the event. Jesus Christ (it will then be found) has risen in the majesty of his glory, to cut off the enemy, when the slaughtered witnesses rise from the dead, and ascend up to heaven, and their enemies behold them! The latter stroke indicates their terror and dismay at the sight of the witnesses now triumphant; rather than their courage to make a new attack. No -- as the mystical resurrection and ascension to heaven of the witnesses, evince that Christ has come to vindicate their cause, and to take their enemies in hand (as the decisive battle immediately follows); so the slaying of them is but three years and a half before the commencement of this new interposition of Christ in their behalf, and cannot now be a past event.

3. Other prophecies corroborate this sentiment. Rev.

xiv. commences with a view of the reformation, as will be shown on the chapter; -- the appearing of the heavenly Lamb on Mount Zion! In verse 6, the angel of missions commences his flight round the world; an event now accomplishing. A second angel of general influence follows, -- testifying that "Babylon is fallen!" The flight of this second angel is now manifestly future. A third angel follows, calling on all, upon the penalty of eternal death, to flee from all affinity with the beast, as will be shown upon the passage. This, as might be expected, excites ire and persecution from the enemy thus implicated: and it hence follows, "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus!" These hints, and what follows, imply much relative to new trials of Christian faith and patience. "And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth (from the time of the commencement of these new trials). Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." These warnings, and what still follows, imply much, relative to new and signal trials to the church. It has ever been a fact, that "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." But this text is here a chronological passage, and has a peculiar meaning at a peculiar time. It implies new and signal trials to the living at that time. Hence, Christ is noted as immediately appearing on his white cloud of the judgment and victory of the battle of the great day! He appears there with the sharp weapon of his indignation, now to reap the wicked harvest, and to gather the infidel clusters of the vine of Antichrist. "Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe." -- "Gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe;" and the decisive work is done! This series of events strongly indicates that the slaying of the witnesses follows the flight of this third angel; -- trying the patience of the saints; causing that "blessed are the dead

which die in the Lord from henceforth;" and bringing down the Captain of our salvation for the harvest and the vintage! Now, shall we say or admit, that the slaying, and the triumphant resurrection and ascension to heaven, of the witnesses, are events anterior to the flight of the first missionary angel here, whose mission is now blessing the world?

In Rev. x. the same thing appears. It has been shown that the descent of Christ there, and the seven thunders,

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were accomplished in the infidel French revolution, -- that this was naturally mistaken by some for the battle of the great day: but the oath of Christ corrects this mistake, and assures that the battle was not yet; "but in the days of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound (an event still future), the mystery of God shall be finished;" or the battle shall then commence, and be soon accomplished. And here, subsequent to the seven thunders, is the bitterness of the little book; or the fact, that "thou must again prophesy before peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings;" a kind of prophesying which had been laid aside, but which must again be resumed, before the seventh trumpet, and to introduce that event. Let it here be asked, can this experience of the bitterness of the little book, -- this new prophesying before peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, -- be viewed as accomplished before the descent of Christ, and the seven thunders here given? Surely not. They are future of these scenes. And must they not then be future of the present period?

4. Sentiments of noted writers on this subject are entitled to some consideration; more at least than the mere conjectures of men who have never bestowed any serious and patient attention to the prophecies. Bishop Newton, after giving all the schemes of past authors upon this point, gives his own opinion that the event was still future. Mr. Scott gives as his full belief, that it was future of his day. -- He says, "Many private interpretations (for so they appear to me) have been given of this passage (the slaying of the witnesses), as if it related to the martyrdom of individuals, or partial persecutions, in some times past. I cannot but think that it relates to events yet future; and that it will be fulfilled about the sounding of the seventh trumpet." In a subsequent edition of his Bible (speaking of his former comments on this passage), he says, "Since that time, I have had abundant opportunity of reconsidering my interpretation (of this passage), and of comparing it with those of many others, and with events which have occurred. I must, however, avow my full conviction, that the transactions have not hitherto taken place!" Mr. Scott shows, that the triumphs of persecutors in Germany, Bohemia, Spain and Italy, do not amount to any thing that can be called the slaying of the witnesses. The time of the event, "when they shall have finished their testimony," he proceeds to show, is manifestly future. I will call no man father, upon earth: but the reasoning and views of such men

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as Newton and Scott, will have with me, much more weight, than the confident assertions of men who speak only according to their wishes, and intuitive views, but have never duly investigated the subject.

5. The beast that slays the witnesses, is another besides the papal beast; and therefore no past papal persecutions can amount to it. It is (our text assures) "the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit," that [""]makes war upon them, and overcomes them, and kills them." This is the infidel power of the last days. See Rev. xiii. 3-7; and xvii. 3, 8, 14. This is noted as the old pagan Roman beast, recovered to life, in the last days. It is a power of infidelity, licentiousness, and military despotism. It has already appeared and exhibited its infidel nature and design. It is a beast "that was, and is not, and yet is." It has, at times, only a mystical and invisible existence; but a real one, till it goes into perdition at the battle of the great day of God. This is the mischievous agent in our text. The last part of his existence is noted as terrible, till he goes into perdition; "till his body is destroyed, and given to the burning flame." This is the

beast that with the dragon and the papal false prophet leads the kings of the earth and their armies to the last battle with Christ and his army, -- the church. Rev. xix. 19; Dan. vii. 11.

6. In the scene at the Red Sea, light is reflected on this subject. That destruction of the Egyptians was a type of the destruction of Antichrist, in the seventh vial, as is evident from the fact, that at the close of this vial, "the song of Moses and of the Lamb," is sung; Rev. XV. 3. This teaches that the scene at the Red Sea was a type of the battle of the great day. In the type, Israel had set out for Canaan; the Egyptians had been terrified at the death of the firstborn, and had hastened Israel away. But they afterward pursued them; and the chosen tribes, after they had supposed all danger was past, found their greatest trial of all. So it may be in the antitype. After it is thought all danger is past, and the church is going directly into the Millennium -- her greatest trial, as in that case, may come; the gracious removal of which will occasion "the song of Moses and of the Lamb." (See Exodus xv.)

7. The oath of the angel decides as follows, Dan. xii. 7, relative to the wilful infidel power of these last days; "And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished." This

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he says, when noting the event which closes the 1260 years; or the destruction of this wilful power. It takes place upon his accomplishing "to scatter the power of the holy people," -- the very event in our text! Must not this be now future? Says our text, "And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war upon them, and shall overcome them." At the close of their 1260 years, then, this beast shall, for a short time, "scatter the power of the holy people!" Then he himself shall go into perdition; and the mystery of God shall be finished. The sense of this scattering of the power of the holy people, the event will in due time unfold. This making war upon them, overcoming them, and killing them, must import something of deep concern!

Mr. Scott says, "present appearances do indeed favor the opinion, that the general and successful war of the beast against the witnesses will be conducted under another form and other pretences, and perhaps by other instruments and means, than have been former assaults. Papal persecutors were concealed infidels. And infidels concealed under any other mask, may equally answer to the prediction." Although I had never seen these remarks of Mr. Scott, when I formed and published my sentiments upon this subject, I was struck when I found his sentiments so accordant with my own.

8. An argument to show that the witnesses are not yet slain, is the fact, that none who are in favor of its being a past event, are able to point to it! The description of the event is such, that had it been transacted, none could afterward be at a loss to show the fact. The witnesses are slain; they lie in a street of the great city, unburied; all nations and tongues of the wicked triumph over them; they rise from the dead; they ascend up to heaven, and their enemies behold them. Are things like these to be done in a corner, and unable to be discovered? Impossible. There is, the same hour, a great earthquake, which shakes down a tenth part of the great city, or system. Many are slain, and all are terrified, and confess God's hand. These are great and notable events; have they taken place, and yet none can point them out!

9. It does not become man to disbelieve or undervalue the warnings of the word of God. They are given for important purposes, and should be believed and improved. It would seem natural for erring man to mistake so great

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an event as the flight of the angel of missions over the earth, to plant the gospel in every nation, kindred, tongue, and

people (a thing not yet finished), for the actual dawn of the Millennium. But we find this event is, in Rev. xiv. 6, distinct from the commencement of the Millennium, and antecedent to a number of most important events, which are themselves antecedent to the Millennium. And these events should not be blended or overlooked. If the church has scenes of danger before her, and God has given warning of it; it will not aid the cause of Christ to cry peace, and assure her, her warfare is already accomplished. If soldiers have a battle to fight; it but ill prepares them for it, to assure them they have already gained the victory, and the enemy are vanquished. Should such assurances be given them, lest they be discouraged, would this prepare them for the battle? The Millennium is certain, and will be glorious. But it will be just preceded by the battle of that great day of God; the last and most violent attack of Satan. And no victory must be shouted previous to this, unless by anticipation. The armor must be put on and kept bright, and the warnings of the word of God sounded. If the short depression of the church, in our text, would discourage, if known beforehand; why did Inspiration predict it? This question is of great weight, should it prove that it is now a past event. It was once future, and was predicted. Should it then have been suppressed, lest Christian exertion should be discouraged? It is to be hoped that all Christians are not so mercenary as this; that they follow not Christ for the loaves and fishes; but for the miracles. Those who labor in the cause of Christ, only in the belief that all the worst days to Zion are past, and only good days are before us, and they may live to see the Millennium, -- possibly are not among the best workmen for the kingdom of heaven. When Jeremiah announced to the Jews that they had great evils to experience from the king of Babylon, he was cruelly persecuted; while the prophets (such as they were) who assured them no such trials were ahead, were caressed. But Jeremiah proved the true prophet, and the best friend. The disciples were elated with high expectations relative to a kingdom of Christ, which they should soon behold in vast magnificence. Our Saviour, to correct their error, assured them the Son of man was going to be rejected of the elders, crucified, and put to death. This, with the zealous Peter, was too much. How vastly discouraging!

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"And Peter took Jesus, and began to rebuke him. This be far from thee, Lord. This shall not come unto thee." Jesus turned, and said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men!" True soldiers of the cross will, when acting in character, believe and improve the most trembling warnings of Heaven; and will engage to fight the good fight of faith, though called to seal their warfare with their blood. "He that would save his life, shall lose it." Christ's soldiers are not called to enlist under his banner with a belief that the enemy are already vanquished; nor that the way to heaven is henceforth smooth and bloodless. Such are not the motives which Christ addresses to his true followers. But he does allow them to rejoice, that the greater the cross, the greater the crown. And the rewards of the last great day may convince us, that those who live just before and at the slaying of the witnesses had a lot of duty assigned them not inferior to any of his followers on earth, and not the least animating of them all. If any are disposed to lend their silver, gold and jewels to the tribes of the Lord, with an expectation only of redoubling their property thereby in time; the donations may serve the Israelites indeed; but the donors will lose their reward. Happy are they who aid the cause of Christ with views truly evangelical. We must cast our bread upon these waters of preparing the way for the Millennium; and wait till the days of heaven to find it.

The street of the great city in the text, where the slain witnesses lie, must be shown by the event. It no doubt means in the most open view of the world. The city spiritually called Sodom, and Egypt, and where our Lord was crucified, probably means nothing more than the great ruling infidel system of the day, in whatever land. This is a Sodom, for lewdness; an Egypt, for cruelty and oppression to the people of Christ; and an infidel Jerusalem, for the crucifixion of Christ in his members. The particulars of the slaying of the witnesses; of their lying unburied; and of the joys of the wicked infidel world over them, -- the fulfilment of the text will best unfold. Much is implied in the plain warning given; but the particulars of the description were not designed to make us wise above what is written. The prophecies are to give needful general warnings; but not to make us prophets. If our faith embraces as particularly as God informs, we need go no further. And attempts to do it have but injured the cause of prophecy.

Behold the depravity of the heart of fallen man, that the preaching of the gospel should torment them that dwell on the earth, and that men should be capable, after all the evangelical light which God has given, of forming the deliberate plan of destroying the cause of Christ from the world, and should rejoice and triumph when they think it is accomplished. Truly, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." And the heart of man must be renewed; or his soul is eternally lost. Could a heart of such enmity be happy in heaven? If admitted there, it would again, if possible, slay the witnesses, and even God himself! If the preaching of the gospel on earth "tormented" them; the torment would there be perfect.

Can light then, renew such a heart as this? Could the Spirit of God himself cause light to do it? He could not. For, though he is omnipotent, he cannot perform impossibilities. "God cannot lie!" The carnal heart hates the more, the more the light shines. And nothing can prevent this, but a new creating act of God in that heart! "Created in Christ unto good works." "I will take the stony heart out of your flesh: and will give you an heart of flesh, and will cause you to walk in my statutes." "Because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost that is given unto us." "For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure!" "Thou hast Brought all our works in us." We have here the only ground of hope for fallen man. And, blessed be God, he that made the heart of a free moral agent, can as easily new create that heart, consistently with man's free moral agency and accountability! and all objection to this is worse than idle; it is impious; for it is an arraying of human wisdom against the wisdom of Heaven. And we to him that strives with his Maker. He who allows himself to add to the word of God, or to diminish from it, will find his part wanting in the book of life. Trite Christians are God's witnesses, and do in heart, in profession, and in life, bear witness to the doctrines, duties, and motives of the gospel. People then, who do not thus, fail of possessing the true mark of the people of Christ. Great is the honor which God sees fit to put on his witnesses, to note them as having power to shut heaven, and to smite the earth with all plagues. Truly they may say, "The beauty of the Lord our God is upon us." Let all such be humble, and confident in God. And let them take to themselves the whole armor of God, and be able to stand in the evil day!

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Ver. 11. And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

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. "The triumphing of the wicked is short." The rejoicing and sending of gifts one to another of these hosts of Antichrist, soon close in scenes to them vastly terrific. After the great and notable depression of Zion for three and a half years, Heaven interposed for them by signal events in their behalf, or showers of grace, or both, and produces what is here noted as their resurrection from the dead. Such figures are known in the word of God; as the valley of dry bones, in Ezek. xxxvii., can testify. By giving new strength to the saints, and probably by converting many hitherto dead in sin, a host of intelligent and most zealous Christians God now raises up in a sudden and glorious manner; who step forth, like champions of the faith, to terrify the enemy, and to make them to become, in a manner, like the Roman guards at the tomb of Christ, who stood (or fell) aghast, and became as dead men! Possibly the antitype of this very scene is now fulfilled. This will give such a spring to the Christian cause, as has never yet been witnessed. And, to express the powerful triumph of the reanimated witnesses, and the confusion of the hosts of the infidel world, the former are said to be called by a great voice from above, to ascend to heaven; which they speedily do in the full view of all their enemies. The great providential events, and the power of divine grace, which will form this voice, and the ascending of the witnesses in clouds to heaven, the blessed events not now far distant, will unfold! Such will be the scenes of joy to the friends, and of terror to the enemies of our blessed Lord. Haman will die upon his own gallows; and Judas on his own fatal tree. Terrors and affrights to the enemy will now

awake and multiply; and will close in the fatal plunging of Antichrist into the ocean of divine wrath. *

* For a parent text of the resurrection of the witnesses, see Isa. xxvi. 19; "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead." The events of this chapter clearly are at the period just preceding the Millennium; see Henry, Scott, Lowth. They view this verse as giving a mystical resurrection to the depressed

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LECTURE XIII.

Ver. 13. And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

A great earthquake, in such a connexion, is some great political catastrophe. Some tremendous scene will terrify the antichristian empire. A tenth part of it is said to fall. Some awful dismemberment may take place among its component parts. Seven thousand men are slain. In the original it is, "seven thousand names of men," -- perhaps men of name, or leaders; which would imply an immense slaughter among their followers and people. It cannot mean, in this connexion, that simply 7000 people fell in the event. This would be but a small number indeed, in such a case. Seven, in this book, is a noted perfect number. It probably then means that multitudes innumerable were slaughtered. And the terrified infidels, beholding all this, were constrained to confess the hand of God against them, and to make acknowledgments to his glory.

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

These scenes finish the period of the second wo. The period of the first wo trumpet continued till the blast of the second; and the various scenes of judgment intervening, though not the appropriate event of the first wo, yet were in the period of this wo. And the period of the second wo trumpet was to continue till the opening of the third. And these scenes upon the resurrection of the witnesses, are represented as finishing the period of the

people of God at that time. Upon the passage, Scott says, "in this figurative resurrection, the deceased saints arise," and quotes to Rev. xi. 7-12, and chap. xx. 4-6. He then adds. The last clause may be rendered "the land of tyrants shalt thou cause to fall; or, she (the church) shall prevail against oppressors, and cast them down." The original word (he says) is often translated giants: the church shall cast down the giants! I apprehend this to be the true sense; and that the allusion may be to 2 Sam. xxi. 15-22, where the last four giants that we read of were slain in Canaan. It has been said, Solomon's reign was a type of the Millennium, Ps. 72: and David's reign a type of the terrors just antecedent to it. David had but a hair's breadth escape, from being slain by one of these giants. And the four were soon slain. The people of God thus "cast down the giants" of Canaan. And now in the antitype of that event, after the witnesses arise, they will soon "cast down the giants" of the beast and the false prophet; or God will do it in their behalf.

CHAPTER XI.

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second wo trumpet. Here our question is decided, that the slaying of the witnesses is one of the last events before the blast of the third wo trumpet. But at the time of the descent of Christ, Rev. x., his oath decides that the seventh trumpet

was then not yet, but was some distance future. Hence the slaying of the witnesses was, at the time of the revolution in France, at some distance future! When the witnesses shall have been slain, and raised, and the earthquake (within an hour of the event) shall have taken place; the period of the second wo closes, and the third comes quickly.

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

The events of this passage are not given in their true order. The battle of the great day, in the true course of events, is first; and then the Millennium. All the prophets, and the reason of the thing, unite in this. But in our text, after long and dismal scenes of judgments and darkness, the mind is relieved by being carried at once beyond the horrors of the great battle, into the midst of the millennial glory. The Christian is thus led to see that all the remaining nations and people of the world, after the battle, are graciously brought to constitute on earth, the visible kingdom of God and the Lamb. The commencement of the Millennium arrives. But the tremendous scene, which in fact precedes the Millennium, although in the rehearsal is here thrown behind it, is then given. And the mode of exhibiting it is most significant. The four-and-twenty elders (representatives of the church) prostrate themselves

before God, with souls overflowing with holy gratitude, praise, and adoration. They praise God both for his judgments and his mercies. They adore him as the Being "who is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty." They praise him that he has taken to himself his great power to reign, to introduce his spiritual kingdom in the hearts of all men then remaining on earth. "And the nations were angry." -- Nations have always been more or less angry. But now, in a most emphatical sense, they had been angry! and had cut each other off from the earth! The event long predicted of this very season, God will now have fulfilled; that "the fire of thine enemies shall devour them!" Restraints had now been taken off; and the antichristian nations, like wild furies, had devoured each other. The prediction, "each shall come down by the sword of his brother," had been fulfilled. "And thy wrath is come." Long had God announced to the antichristian world, that the day of vengeance was in his heart. Jesus Christ had predicted "the day of vengeance of our God." This had long been thundered in the ears of guilty nations, but in vain. The alarm had been sounded: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion; sound an alarm in my holy mountain; let all the inhabitants of the earth tremble, for the day of the Lord, for it is nigh at hand." Now this warning is fulfilled; and the church hence adore God. "And the lime of the dead that they should be judged." This cannot refer to the final judgment; for that event does not occur till after the Millennium, and the end of the world. But the judgment in the text is before the Millennium. Several things had now taken place, to each of which this clause might allude. It might be as though the elders had said, -- and the time of the execution of thine antichristian enemies (now dead), whose guilty measure was filled, had arrived, and they were cut off, according to thy word, that their souls might be judged, and disposed of as thy justice and truth demanded. This accords with what we read of the same event in Isa. Ixvi. 24; where, in the Millennium, from one Sabbath to another, all flesh (worshipping before God in their own earthly assemblies) are noted as "going forth (in sermons and histories of the events), and looking upon the men who have transgressed (or the world of infidels who have fallen in that last battle); and their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." The time of these slaughtered infidels to be judged, and punished, had come. And this clause of the text may also mean, "the time of the dead" saints and martyrs, who had been tortured

under the fury of antichristian powers, had come, "that they should be avenged." In Rev. vi. 10, under the fifth seal, where the souls of the martyrs under the altar cry, "How long, O Lord, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?" they use the same Greek word which is here used. And, in the battle of the great day, God does judge and avenge their blood. Such texts as the following are then fulfilled. "And in her (Babylon) was found the blood of prophets, and saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth." "The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no longer cover her slain." "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion." The battle of the great day is thus the time of the martyred saints, that they should be avenged. And the prophets, and saints, and all who fear God, are represented as now being rewarded. If this means the ambassadors of Christ, and saints on earth; these do indeed receive a rich reward, in the introduction of the glories of the Millennium. And if it means to include also the ancient prophets, and saints, then in heaven; they too receive now an additional reward, in the same event. For, if there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth; how vast must be the additional joy in heaven, when all the millions on earth shall become penitent; -- and when the blessed cause of salvation, in which their hearts, living and dying, were bound up, shall now by them be known to fill the world? This must be an additional reward indeed. God grant it may be ours! -- "And shouldst destroy them that destroy the earth." The violent enemies of the church, it may well be said, destroy the earth. Their wicked conduct actually produces great destruction. And it tends, in its nature, to universal destruction. And such destroyers, remaining impenitent, God will destroy. And the same will be matter of everlasting praise in the church of the redeemed.

Ver. 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.

John seemed to behold the ancient temple of Jerusalem, now in heaven. He beholds it opened; and sees the ark of the covenant, as that used to be kept in the temple. This seems designed as a striking symbolical decision, that all these works of judgment, and of mercy, were performed only in the covenant faithfulness of God to

Christ, and to his seed. As though the King of glory had kept the ark of the covenant with him in his heavenly palace; - was ever mindful of it; -- and would now make a clear exhibition of all this to his saints on earth. All is done on God's part, in fulfilment of his covenant with the second Adam, and with his posterity. And the ark of the testament, in the temple of heaven, seems to be the symbolic repository of this covenant. Figures most appropriate then follow, significant of the tremendous judgments, which pour down from the temple, and the ark of heaven, and at once finish the scene with antichristian nations: -- "Lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail!" These are the same figures found under the seventh vial, in the second division of this book, as accomplishing the same event. It is a fact terrible to the enemies of the church, and happy for Zion, that the temple of God, his ark, and covenant, are defended, as though encircled with lightning, voices, thunders, earthquakes, and great hail! "I will be a wall of fire round about." All the elements of nature stand ready at God's direction, to defend the church. And the most terrible warings of those elements are taken, as bright emblems of those desolating and fatal judgments, which shall, ere long, sweep from the earth all the contending enemies of the church. The prophetic descriptions of those judgments are numerous, and of the most terrific kind. It would afford a solemn lesson of instruction if all these were presented in a dense form; but this, the length of the present lecture will not admit. We now arrive at the close of the first general division of the prophetic part of the Revelation.

Various practical reflections here crowd themselves upon the mind from the events of this chapter; but which can be but hinted. God measures his gospel temple by his word: and too many professedly in it are yet unmeasurable. The Romanists clearly are thus. And many others have the mark of the beast. True saints are God's witnesses; and they will, in heart and life, bear their testimony for God at every risk. And if death to individuals be the consequence, yet their cause will arise; and with despairing souls the enemy will behold it; while the triumphs of the wicked will be short. Let us then, take to ourselves the whole armor of God, and be able to stand in the evil day. Let us seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near. The Spirit directs, "Seek the Lord, all ye meek of the earth. Seek righteousness; seek meekness; it may be ye may be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."

(continue reading on page 165 of Part Two)